

University Forum
A Free Lecture Series Fall 2007 895-3401

University Forum is a public lecture series sponsored and funded by the UNLV College of Liberal Arts. All events are free, and no reservation is necessary; simply attend at the time and place shown. University Forum wishes to thank Nevada Public radio for assistance with publicity. Visit the University Forum website at <http://liberalarts.unlv.edu/forum.htm>

Rebels in the Desert: Creating UNLV, 1957-1969

Wednesday September 5, 2007 -- 7:30 p.m. -- Barrick Museum Auditorium
Prof. Eugene Moehring, Department of History, UNLV

When Nevada's regents announced in 1951 that they would sponsor the creation of an extension program to offer college classes in southern Nevada, there was no thought of building a college in the Las Vegas area. Even after the Maryland Parkway campus opened in 1957, and regents designated Nevada Southern as a college within the University of Nevada, Reno, the board had no intention of someday building a university here. It took eight more years of pressure (and even some administrative chicanery) on the part of Dean William Carlson before Nevada Southern was called a university, and another four years of concerted action by President Donald Moyer before NSU became a fully independent university. This presentation traces the 12-year effort by campus heads, faculty, and students to transform Nevada Southern into a university – the vital prerequisite for creating today's UNLV – and includes a book-signing of *UNLV: A History*.

The Climate History of the Earth: A View to the Future

Wednesday, September 12, 2007 -- 7:30 p.m. -- Barrick Museum Auditorium
Prof. Matthew Lachniet, Department of Geoscience, UNLV

Human influence on relatively recent climate change is considered very likely. In fact, atmospheric greenhouse gas concentrations are at levels unprecedented for the past several hundred thousand years, due to fossil fuel burning and land clearance. But what kinds of evidence are used to document the climate of the earth in the past? and what are the implications it offers for the future of the atmosphere here on earth? This presentation offers a view to the future of climate change based on the long-term evidence all around us.

The U. S. Constitution and the 'Lessons of Experience': Does What Made Sense in 1787 Serve Us Well in 2007?

Monday, September 17, 2007 – 7:30 p.m. -- Barrick Museum Auditorium
Prof. Sanford Levinson, W. St. John Garwood and W. St. John Garwood, Jr. Centennial Chair in Law and Professor Government, University of Texas

The U.S. Constitution was drafted by courageous and visionary men who emphasized the importance of learning from experience rather than adhering blindly to tradition. Professor Levinson argues that Americans should today convene a new constitutional convention to address the many defects that more than two centuries of experience has revealed in the Constitution. (A Constitution Day lecture co-sponsored by the UNLV Office of the Provost, the William S. Boyd School of Law, and the College of Liberal Arts)

What's Wrong With the Way Nevada Selects Its Judges? A Legal and Policy Analysis

Thursday, September 20, 2007 – 7:30 p.m. -- Barrick Museum Auditorium
Prof. Tuan Samahon, William S. Boyd School of Law, UNLV

Nevadans elect their judges during contested nonpartisan elections. The Nevada legislature, however, would amend the state constitution to provide for judicial selection by way of a nominating commission with gubernatorial appointment, subject to retention elections. This presentation examines the proposed change in selection method and analyzes the constitutional vulnerabilities of the present system.

The Social Critique of Social Knowledge (or, "But Mom, Crop-Tops are Cute!")

Friday, September 21, 2007 – 7:30 p.m. -- Barrick Museum Auditorium

Prof. Sally Haslanger, Department of Linguistics and Philosophy, and Acting Director of Women's Studies, MIT

What seems cute to a seventh-grade girl is unlikely to seem cute to her parents, whose standards of dress and deportment may differ widely from her own. Parents and children each possess social knowledge that the other lacks, knowledge based upon facts constituted within specific social milieus. Does the situation lead inevitably to relativism about social knowledge, or rather to the possibility of genuine social critique? (Co-sponsored by the UNLV Department of Philosophy and Women's Studies Program)

Dancing under Desert Stars: Ballroom in Las Vegas

Monday, September 24, 2007 – 7:30 p.m. -- Barrick Museum Auditorium

Amanda Haboush, Nevada Institute for Children's Research and Policy, UNLV; Gail Michel-Parsons, Director of Rebel Dancesport Team, UNLV

Both an artform and a sport, ballroom dancing is now more popular than at any time in the last half century. This presentation offers an overview of better-known ballroom dances like waltz, rumba, tango, cha-cha and salsa, to name just a few, and points out some of the opportunities to enjoy ballroom dance in our community. Our presenters will also introduce new programs designed to improve community health and well-being through social dance. Please join us for an informative and engaging evening of dance performance and education.

The Mystery of Labyrinths

Thursday, October 4, 2007 – 7:30 p.m. -- Barrick Museum Auditorium

Gael Hancock, William F. Harrah College of Hotel Administration, UNLV

Mysterious sources of myth and legend from ancient Crete to postmodern science fiction, labyrinths are as fascinating to us today as they were to ancient peoples during millennia long past. People of all ages, from the young in years to the young at heart, walk labyrinths seeking a range of experiences, from simple stress relief, to the satisfaction of solving a three-dimensional puzzle, to the search for profound spiritual connections. Our presenter invites us to join her on a photographic history of labyrinths and also to experience a labyrinth walk for ourselves!

Endangered Wildlife of the American Southwest (slide illustrated)

Tuesday, October 9, 2007 – 7:30 p.m. -- Barrick Museum Auditorium

Mitch Tobin, Scholar, Newspaper Reporter and Author

Drawing on material from his forthcoming book, tonight's speaker will use the American Southwest as a touchstone for evaluating the successes and the shortcomings of the Endangered Species Act, the nation's most powerful and controversial environmental law. The ESA has saved hundreds of plants and animals from extinction, but very few listed species have recovered and no longer need federal protection. Tobin's lecture will be based on his field trips to the harsh, yet fragile habitat where endangered species like the desert tortoise, Mexican gray wolf, and lesser long-nosed bat struggle to survive. Tobin, winner of a coveted Alicia Patterson Fellowship and a newspaper reporter in Tucson for six years, will leave partisan rhetoric behind as he recounts his reporting in the Southwest -- the nation's fastest growing region and one of its biodiversity hotspots. Tobin has helped biologists survey humpback chub at the bottom of the Grand Canyon, fed mice to spotted owls in mountaintop old-growth forests, and tracked a jaguar crossing the U.S.-Mexico border. (Co-sponsored by the UNLV Boyd School of Law, College of Sciences, and Departments of Environmental Studies and Political Science)

The Road to the Viral Superhighway: Emerging Diseases in the Time of Globalization

Thursday, October 11, 2007 – 7:30 p.m. -- Barrick Museum Auditorium

Prof. George J. Armelagos, Goodrich C. White Professor of Anthropology and

Chair, Department of Anthropology, Emory University

An anthropological perspective on the evolving relationship between humans and pathogens provides a framework for understanding newly emerging diseases. Beginning five million years ago, humanity has experienced several 'epidemiological transitions' -- from no disease, to infectious and chronic diseases, to the re-emergence of resistant strains of infectious and rapidly mutating diseases. (Co-sponsored by the UNLV Department of Anthropology and the Anthropology Society)

Screening the Mafia (Why is 'Italian American' Synonymous with Organized Crime?)

Wednesday, October 24, 2007 -- 7:30 p.m. -- Barrick Museum Auditorium

Prof. Ben Lawton, Department of Foreign Languages, and Chair, Interdisciplinary Italian Studies Program and Chair, Interdisciplinary Film Studies Program, Purdue University

Americans are fascinated by the Mafia and its depiction in the media. The lecture will discuss how the cumulative effect of films creates the erroneous impression that all Italian Americans are somehow connected to organized crime and, coincidentally, also with the history and development of Las Vegas. (Co-sponsored by the UNLV Department of Foreign Languages)

The Sex Life of Orchids

Thursday, November 1, 2007 -- 7:30 p.m. -- Barrick Museum Auditorium

Carol Siegel, President, Greater Las Vegas Orchid Society

This presentation will introduce you to the fascinating world of orchid pollination and orchid pollinators. It tells the amazing story of how orchids will stop at nothing to get pollinated. They will lie. They will cheat. They will promise and not deliver. (And if they do deliver, they will give as little as possible.) This amusing and informative talk shows the ways in which orchids use color, pattern, movement, fragrance, traps, sexual mimicry, and outright lies to lure pollinators. (Co-sponsored by The Arboretum at UNLV)

Time-Loops, Superstrings, and Other Weird Stuff: Are Physicists for Real (or Is This Just a Lot of Mathematics)?

Thursday, November 8, 2007 -- 7:30 p.m. -- Barrick Museum Auditorium

Prof. Jody Azzouni, Department of Philosophy, Tufts University

The so-called hard sciences, such as physics, characterize their more theoretical objects in entirely mathematical ways (for example, as 'electron-fields'). Usually no non-mathematical characterization is possible. Our presenter will discuss ways of distinguishing the real objects recognized by science from what is only the language of mathematics used in hard sciences. (Co-sponsored by the UNLV Departments of Philosophy and Physics)

Spilling Over: The Migration between Attitudes Regarding Immigration and Policy Preferences

Wednesday, November 14, 2007 -- 7:30 p.m. -- Barrick Museum Auditorium

Prof. Max Neiman, Program Director and Senior Fellow, Governance and Public Finance Program, Public Policy Institute of California

As in many other areas, the way in which immigration has evolved as an issue in California presages how that issue will develop in other places throughout the United States. Using California as a test case, our presenter will explore how the immigration issue has erupted in California, and also how the issue has influenced other important policy domains, such as public support for education or general government taxes and expenditures. A key feature is also to assess what lessons this topic has for managing a potentially divisive and disruptive policy challenge.

The Culture of War and Peace in Europe, 1789 - 1815

Friday, November 16, 2007 -- 7:30 p.m. -- Barrick Museum Auditorium

Prof. David A. Bell, Mellon Professor in the Humanities and Dean of Faculty, Krieger School of Arts & Sciences, Johns Hopkins University

The concept of 'total war,' usually associated with World War I, actually emerged in the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic era. Our speaker discusses the campaigns waged by European armies on battlefields, city streets, and family farms against insurgents defending their homelands -- and reveals how modern attitudes towards warfare emerged from this unprecedented violence. (Co-sponsored by the UNLV Department of History)

The Grand Canyon: 125 Years of Photography of an American Icon (slide-illustrated)

Thursday, November 29, 2007 - 7:30 p.m. -- Barrick Museum Auditorium

Stephen Trimble, Ansel Adams Award-Winning Photographer and Writer

Ever since Timothy O'Sullivan ran the rapids of the Colorado River with his glass-plate camera in 1871, the Grand Canyon has been a magnet and a challenge for photographers, as well as geologists and writers. In an illustrated talk based on his recent award-winning book *Lasting Light*, Stephen Trimble takes us into the hearts and minds of great photographers as they devote years to seeing, really *seeing*, the Grand Canyon. Trimble interviewed twenty-one of the finest contemporary Grand Canyon photographers, and their profiles will form the basis for the lecture, in which he brings to life the relationship between creative artist and geological landscape, between dedicated men and women and an American icon they have helped to create. Tonight's narrative history of photography at the Grand Canyon places these contemporary artists in context within the history of both American landscape photography and conservation. (Co-sponsored by the UNLV Departments of Geology and Department of Art)