
SCHOLAR ADVENTURERS SERIES: Spring 2024

Each SAS must be registered for prior to the program. For the SAS programs including food (indicated by *), please register early and be sure to notify us if your plans change so that we will know how much to order. To receive credit for any virtual SAS, students must submit a paragraph response to a prompt after the program attended.

***1. SPEECH RECOGNITION ADVANCES – ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSION**

Mark Hasegawa-Johnson
Professor, Electrical and Computer Engineering
William L. Everitt Faculty Scholar

Thursday, February 15, 2024
5:15 – 6:30 p.m.
132 Bevier Hall, 905 South Goodwin, Urbana, IL

Speech recognition devices such as Google Home, Amazon's Echo and Alexa, Siri and Cortana assist a wide range of users with tasks; however, these tools are often inaccessible to individuals with speech differences or disabilities. The Speech Accessibility Project at UI aims to address this gap by collecting 1,000 hours of transcribed audio from people with speech-affecting disabilities. “The goal is to make it possible for researchers to train speech recognizers that can cope with that wide range of atypical speech in order to correctly recognize what the person is saying.” Automatic speech recognition is necessary to accessibility and inclusion, and Mark Hasegawa-Johnson’s recent work on these issues is continuing to facilitate sound recognition in language acquisition, musical genre and non-speech audio events, and for those with disabilities.

Mark Hasegawa-Johnson is a Fellow of the Acoustical Society of America and of the IEEE. He is currently Senior Area Editor of the IEEE Transactions on Audio, Speech and Language, and a member of the ISCA Diversity Committee. He has published hundreds of peer-reviewed journal articles, patents and conference papers in the general area of automatic speech analysis, including machine learning models of articulatory and acoustic phonetics, prosody, dysarthria, non-speech acoustic events, audio source separation, and under-resourced languages.

***2. COLLEGE ATHLETES – AMATEURS OR EMPLOYEES?**

Michael H. LeRoy
Professor, School of Labor and Employment Relations
and College of Law

Monday, February 19, 2024
5:15 – 6:30 p.m.
166 Bevier Hall, 905 South Goodwin, Urbana, IL

Are college athletes employees? Recent court cases related to the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) that also reference the Thirteenth Amendment are defining the true nature of the relationship between student athletes and their schools. Comparing more than two centuries of legal developments in the slavery exception doctrine to college athletics, the NCAA’s amateurism rules and systemic racism in college athletics have always co-existed. These court cases have thrown an unexpected light on the racially biased implications of wageless college athletics by comparing amateurism to involuntary prison work. We will discuss these implications, and what these court cases may determine about the future of college sports.

Professor LeRoy has published extensively on antitrust in professional sports, unionization of college football players, immigration and employment policy, strikes and lockouts, and arbitration; testified before the U.S. Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources; consulted with the President’s Council of Economic Advisers in connection with a national emergency labor dispute; and served as an advisor to the President's Commission on the United States Postal Service.

***3. EDUCATION JUSTICE PROJECT – SUPPORTING INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS**

Ella Dennis, Chancellor’s Scholar and EJP Head Office Assistant
Nic Quero, EJP Head Intern

Tuesday, February 27, 2024
5:15 – 6:30 p.m.
103 Bevier Hall, 905 South Goodwin, Urbana, IL

Founded in 2008 on the belief that education is power, Education Justice Project (EJP) is a unit of the UIUC Department of Education that provides for-credit college courses and extracurricular opportunities to folks who are incarcerated at Danville Correctional Center. On top of coordinating advanced coursework and other learning opportunities for our students, EJP facilitates a nationally-recognized reentry guide initiative for people leaving the system, and advocates for stronger higher education in prison programs nationwide.

As a nexus between UIUC and the greater C-U community, EJP welcomes the contributions of UIUC students in various roles. Ella Dennis, EJP's Head Office Assistant, and Nic Quero, EJP's Head Intern, look forward to sharing more about the impactful work being done at EJP and the many opportunities for students to get involved.

*4. "THE CERTAINTY TRAP"

Ilana Redstone
Associate Professor, Sociology

Tuesday, March 5, 2024
5:15 – 6:30 p.m.
103 Bevier Hall, 905 South Goodwin, Urbana, IL

Certainty drives both righteous indignation and moral outrage. And each carries a tone of virtuous superiority that makes communication practically impossible. They lead to the kind of contempt and name-calling that's lobbed at the people who don't respond the way we want, when we want it - certainty gives us permission to feel noble in our convictions. Avoiding the Certainty Trap means recognizing that, if the things we care about the most are morally and ethically complex, a specific implication follows: if you see a problem as so simplistic that the answers are self-evident, and anyone who disagrees is either stupid or morally defective in some way, you're probably missing something. Your sense that the answer is obvious is your cue to examine, question, and clarify your thinking.

We will discuss two ways of addressing the problem of certainty: one is to simply recognize the fundamental uncertainty in what we know about the world. The other is to make an intellectual commitment to explaining our positions on heated issues in a way that doesn't hang the argument either on the other person's intent or on a word whose meaning is disputed across political lines.

Ilana Redstone is the creator of the "Beyond Bigots and Snowflakes" video series, and the author of "The Certainty Trap" (to be published in Summer 2024). She is also the Co-Director of the Mill Institute at UATX, working with educators to create classroom spaces where they can challenge settled thinking and explore contentious topics together.

5A. TEA CEREMONY AT JAPAN HOUSE

Jennifer Gunji-Ballsrud
Director, Japan House, and Associate Professor
Kimiko Gunji
Emeritus Director, Japan House
Lindsey Stirek, Assistant Director of Academic Programming
and Teaching Assistant Professor

Wednesday, March 20, 2024
2:50 – 3:50 p.m.
Meet at Japan House, 2000 South Lincoln, Urbana by 2:50 p.m.

Through the study of Japanese aesthetics and traditional arts, Japan House, which was built particularly around the time-honored art form of *Chado*, the Way of Tea, provides an essential opportunity for students to gain a deeper sensitivity towards diverse cultures. Come visit this special place to experience a traditional Japanese tea ceremony in a traditional setting. *Chado*, the Way of Tea, is one of the most revered arts of Japan, and incorporates many other Japanese arts, providing a glimpse into the richness of Japanese aesthetics. During the ceremony you will be served a bowl of *matcha* tea and a Japanese sweet. You will have a brief tour of Japan House before the tea ceremony.

[Wear something that you'll be comfortable in while kneeling or sitting on the tatami mats, avoiding short skirts or shorts; and bring white socks, which symbolize purity (Japan House has some to borrow if needed).]

Jennifer Gunji-Ballsrud, Kimiko Gunji, and Lindsey Stirek will present this special tea ceremony. Jennifer Gunji-Ballsrud is the Director of Japan House and teaches for CHP. Professor Kimiko Gunji, Emeritus Director of Japan House, taught for the CHP and led Chancellor's Scholars on Intercultural Study Tours to Japan many times. Dr. Lindsey Stirek is a CHP

alum who has studied tea with Professor Gunji for over a decade; they are now the Assistant Director of Academic Programming at Japan House, and teach classes on manga, anime, and other Japanese arts.

****Note: this SAS will be limited to the first 15 confirmed registrants, and is offered for students who have not taken the CHP Japanese Arts and Culture class.****

5B. TEA CEREMONY AT JAPAN HOUSE

Jennifer Gunji-Ballsrud	Wednesday, March 20, 2024
Director, Japan House, and Associate Professor	3:50 – 4:50 p.m.
Kimiko Gunji	Meet at Japan House, 2000 S. Lincoln, Urbana by 3:50 p.m.
Emeritus Director, Japan House	
Lindsey Stirek, Assistant Director of Academic Programming and Teaching Assistant Professor	

Through the study of Japanese aesthetics and traditional arts, Japan House, which was built particularly around the time-honored art form of *Chado*, the Way of Tea, provides an essential opportunity for students to gain a deeper sensitivity towards diverse cultures. Come visit this special place to experience a traditional Japanese tea ceremony in a traditional setting. *Chado*, the Way of Tea, is one of the most revered arts of Japan, and incorporates many other Japanese arts, providing a glimpse into the richness of Japanese aesthetics. During the ceremony you will be served a bowl of *matcha* tea and a Japanese sweet. You will have a brief tour of Japan House before the tea ceremony.

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***6. KING GILGAMESH – THE WORLD'S FIRST SUPERHERO**

Rob Chappell	Thursday, March 21, 2024
Assistant to the Honors Director, ACES Academic Programs	5:15 – 6:30 p.m. 132 Bevier Hall, 905 South Goodwin, Urbana

In this presentation, Rob Chappell will give a panoramic overview of how this ancient Sumerian king developed from a historical person into a literary phenomenon. In addition to the Gilgamesh Epic, we will also look at other ancient sources to piece together Gilgamesh's legendary biography and trace the impact of his perennially popular legend from the ancient Near East to the present day. Finally, we will unpack some of the insights that can be gleaned from this epic tale of long ago and far away.

Rob Chappell enrolled at the University of Illinois as a freshman in the fall of 1986. He majored in Latin and obtained his B.A. degree in Classical Philology in May 1991 with Bronze Tablet Honors. He also completed an M.A. degree in Germanic Languages and Literatures at the University of Illinois in May 1996. Rob began his administrative professional career in May 1997 at the UI Graduate College, where he ran its Information Office for three years. He has served as the Assistant to the Honors Director in ACES Academic Programs since April 2000. His master's thesis (on vampirology in a 19th-century Swiss-German novella) was published as a book in 2012, and he continues to lecture and write in his spare time.

***7. FOOD JUSTICE IN BLACK COMMUNITIES: CONTEXT AND IMPLICATIONS**

Bobby J. Smith, II	Tuesday, March 26, 2024
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Assistant Professor of African American Studies

5:15 – 6:30 p.m.

103 Bevier Hall, 905 South Goodwin, Urbana, IL

Food, politics, and power are inextricably linked, and “food power” is a description of how food can be weaponized and used as a form of control between groups in times of conflict. Food power is exercised when one group withholds food, or the means to access or produce it, from another group to manipulate the outcome of the conflict. Throughout history, food has been used simultaneously as a weapon to reinforce racial dominance and as a form of resistance.

Bobby J. Smith, II has recently written “Food Power Politics: The Food Story of the Mississippi Civil Rights Movement.” is a 2023-2024 Research Fellow for the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation initiative Public Libraries Partnering on Food Justice, Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and a 2023-2023 USDA National Agricultural Library (NAL) Scholar-in-Residence; he has previously been a NEH Fellow and an ACLS Fellow.

***8. TO THE MOON: THE ARTEMIS ERA**

Doug Litteken

Structural Engineer, NASA Johnson Space Center
2011 and 2016 University of Illinois alumnus

Wednesday, April 3, 2024

5:15 – 6:30 p.m.

166 Bevier Hall, 905 South Goodwin, Urbana, IL

NASA is going back to the Moon with the Artemis program. This ambitious program will put humans back on the Moon for long term expeditions, for scientific discovery, economic benefits, and inspiration for a new generation of explorers: the Artemis Generation. Hear from UI alum Doug Litteken, NASA Structural Engineer, as he discusses the upcoming Artemis missions and how you can be part of the global alliance to help explore deep space for the benefit of all.

Doug Litteken is a structural engineer at NASA’s Johnson Space Center. His expertise is in the design, analysis and testing of crewed inflatable softgoods structures including low-Earth orbit space stations, lunar surface habitats and Mars transit vehicles. He supports the International Space Station program as the manager for the Bigelow Expandable Activities Module, the only human-rated inflatable habitat, and recently concluded six years as a structural manager for the Orion Multi-Purpose Crew Vehicle. His efforts led to a successful Artemis I test flight in 2022 that took the Orion vehicle on its first trip to the far side of the moon. He received the 2023 Young Alumni Award from the University of Illinois Alumni Association.

***9. THE PHYSICS OF BASEBALL**

Alan Nathan

Professor Emeritus, Physics

Monday, April 15, 2024

5:15 – 6:30 p.m.

166 Bevier Hall, 905 South Goodwin, Urbana, IL

It’s the start of the Major League Baseball season! We will learn more about the dynamics of the collision between the ball and bat and the aerodynamics of a baseball in flight – including new technologies that enable the study of these topics with unprecedented precision.

Alan Nathan has been engaged in this baseball research for over two decades, and he is regularly consulted about this work by national organizations. Professor Nathan has served on the editorial board of the journal *Sports Engineering* and has served on panels advising Major League Baseball, the Amateur Softball Association, the NCAA, and USA Baseball. His previous research focused on the field of intermediate energy nuclear physics, particularly the study of the quark structure of the nucleon, using the Compton scattering reaction as a probe.

***10A. INTRODUCTION TO NATIONALLY COMPETITIVE SCHOLARSHIPS: FOR STUDENTS GRADUATING AFTER AUGUST 2025**

David Schug, Director

National and International Scholarships (NIS)

Lara Kusnetzky, Assistant Director, NIS

Chancellor’s Scholar/s (TBA)

Wednesday, April 17, 2024

5:00 – 5:50 p.m.

212 Honors House

The National and International Scholarships Program <http://www.topscholars.illinois.edu/> serves high achievers from all colleges and majors by encouraging and assisting students in applying for prestigious scholarships. Many Chancellor's Scholars have utilized this campus resource. Students may apply for some scholarships as early as their sophomore year. While many other awards are for study, work, or research after graduation, the time to start planning for these applications is now. The session will outline a variety of awards for future academics, environmentalists, public servants, activists, teachers, and leaders from any conceivable field; and provide tips on how to prepare for these opportunities while making the most of a student's time at the University of Illinois.

Note: Students who attended a Scholarships presentation in a previous semester may attend this SAS, but will not receive additional SAS credit; however, if a student is a presenter at this SAS and was not a presenter previously, he or she will receive SAS credit.

***10B. APPLYING FOR NATIONALLY COMPETITIVE SCHOLARSHIPS NOW: FOR STUDENTS GRADUATING BEFORE AUGUST 2025**

David Schug, Director
National and International Scholarships (NIS)
Lara Kusnetzky, Assistant Director, NIS
Chancellor's Scholar/s (TBA)

Wednesday, April 17, 2024
6:00 – 6:50 p.m.
212 Honors House

The National and International Scholarships Program <http://www.topscholars.illinois.edu/> serves high achievers from all colleges and majors by assisting students in applying for prestigious scholarships. Many Chancellor's Scholars have competed favorably in these competitions, and others have used their applications as a foundation to apply successfully for other opportunities. The session will outline a variety of awards, such as the Fulbright and Rhodes, and provide tips on creating competitive applications.

Note: Students who attended a Scholarships presentation in a previous semester may attend this SAS, but will not receive additional SAS credit; however, if a student is a presenter at this SAS and was not a presenter previously, he or she will receive SAS credit.

11. MEMORIAL STADIUM TOUR – 100 YEARS OF HISTORY

Dennis Craig, Campus Historic Preservation Officer

Friday, April 19, 2024
3:00 - 4:15 p.m.
1402 South 1st Street, Champaign
Meeting/gate location will be sent with confirmation

The Memorial Stadium was built in 1923 to honor Illinois men and women who gave their lives for their country during World War 1, and their names appear on 200 columns that support the east and west sides of the stadium. The stadium was dedicated officially on October 18, 1924, historic for the dedication as well as for the Homecoming victory where Harold E. "Red" Grange scored six touchdowns, which remains the single greatest performance in the stadium's history. In 1986, Memorial Stadium was nominated among 62 other sites, including Soldier Field, Wrigley Field, the Rose Bowl and Yale Bowl, to become a national historic landmark. Come learn more about the architecture and history of Memorial Stadium!

Dennis Craig, three-degree Illinois alumnus who is also a Bronze Tablet honoree, left the private sector as an architect to become the UI's Campus Historic Preservation Officer. When he's not managing projects to ensure the UI is compliant with the National Historic Preservation Act, he's responding to inquiries like the one from a granddaughter of a contractor on the Mumford House or a woman whose great uncle carved one of the statues at Memorial Stadium. And of course, he's the go-to person whenever a newly unearthed time capsule is discovered. (He thinks there are at least twenty or thirty still buried around campus.)

****NOTE: For logistical reasons, this SAS will be limited to the first 25 confirmed registrants.****

***12. UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM (URS) PRESENTATIONS and CHP SYMPOSIUM ON UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH XXXIII**

Chancellor's Scholars	Monday, April 22, 2024
who have been accepted to present at the 2023 URS	5:10 – 6:50 p.m.
and CHP's 2022 Summer Research grant recipients	212 Honors House

You are invited to learn more about other Chancellor's Scholars' research! Come hear other Chancellor's Scholars before they present at the Undergraduate Research Symposium (which all students are welcome to attend, and will take place on April 25, 2024, more info in a future CHP NewsBytes).

Note: Students who attended the URS presentation in a previous semester may attend this SAS, but will not receive additional SAS credit; however, if a student is a presenter at this SAS and was not a presenter previously, he or she will receive SAS credit.

