Faculty Spotlights

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 21

NAKED MOLE-RATS: THREE PERSISTENT MYTHS
Stan Braude, Professor of Practice in Biology and Curator of the Danforth Campus Arboretum
10:00 AM – 10:45 AM | SEIGLE 109
Naked mole-rats are an amazing species: they live in large families, are almost blind and hairless, and yet are able to disperse more than two kilometers from where they were born. But many of the premature conclusions about their social life have persisted in the popular and scientific literature long after having been disproven. We will discuss some of these.

INEQUALITY AND THE ECONOMICS OF PAY DIFFERENTIALS
Glenn MacDonald, John M. Olin Distinguished Professor of Economics and Strategy, Olin Business School
10:00 AM – 10:45 AM | SEIGLE L0002
Pay differs greatly across individuals, occupations, and stages of life. These differences are important determinants of many aspects of quality of life, and are some of the most misunderstood aspects of our economic life. Where do they come from and why do they look the way they do?

INNOVATION IN DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE
Chandler Ahrens, Associate Professor
10:00 AM – 10:45 AM | SEIGLE 301
Creative problem solving is at the heart of design. Rather than waiting for inspiration, developing a design process helps to guide you through complex problems. Problems are given their name because usually there are many interrelated parts with varying relationships to each other; therefore, the design process must be flexible, inclusive of many parameters and able to generate new conditions.

THE ENDGAME FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP: LEVERAGING CAPITALISM FOR GOOD
Joe Steensma, Professor of Public Health
11:00 AM – 11:45 AM | SEIGLE 301
The lecture deconstructs capitalism as a set of legal fictions that many people believe are “unchangeable” and inherently unfair and inequitable. In this lecture (which is the first lecture in a course by the same name) students learn how to leverage ANY operating system to solve big, complex problems. The lecture is a wild ride through history, corporate law, money, power and lies. In the end, however, participants will see how they can harness the power of all of this to solve some of the seemingly intractable problems of our time.

WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY FULL CIRCLE: FROM SHARKS TO VIRUSES TO CANCER
Anthony Smith; Assistant Dean, Lecturer in Biology & Biomedical Sciences
11:00 AM – 11:45 AM | SEIGLE 109
Follow the trail of one Washington University alumnus, from early childhood fascinations to college enlightenment to a career that brings him full circle, back to his alma mater. Sprinkle in some sharks, viruses, and cancer, and you have a compelling journey.
“I’M SCARED OF PARENTS”: TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Lyndsie Schultz, Lecturer
11:00 AM – 11:45 AM | SEIGLE L002

Have you ever wondered what teachers really think about parents, or have you ever felt uncomfortable in your child’s school? Although professional development (PD) has been shown to positively impact teachers’ beliefs regarding actively engaging culturally and linguistically diverse families, most teachers lack experience in designing meaningful school-family partnerships. In this interactive presentation, Professor Schultz will first discuss challenges teachers across a variety of contexts face when trying to create inclusive school environments for families. We will then consider what parents want from their child’s school and co-construct possibilities for future collaborations between families and schools.

PAST AND PRESENT PARASITE INFECTIONS IN THE UNITED STATES

Theresa Gildner, Assistant Professor of Biological Anthropology
1:00 PM - 1:45 PM | SEIGLE L006

What are parasites? Why don’t we talk about them very much in the U.S.? How might these infections influence health disparities today? In this talk I’ll discuss past infection patterns in the U.S., as well as some of my recent work that suggests parasitic disease may still play an important (but underappreciated) role in shaping current health patterns.

DISABILITY PORTRAYALS ON THE SILVER SCREEN AND BEYOND

Kathy Kniepmann, Associate Professor of Occupational Therapy & Neurology
1:00 PM - 1:45 PM | SEIGLE 104

What is disability? Can a disabled person live a meaningful life? Why / not?? Movies, books, and other media provide a wide variety of messages about disability that generate a kaleidoscope of pity, fear, existential angst, hope, awe and more. Messages can mirror the worst of social stigma and marginalization or open windows to a more inclusive world. Some highlight symptoms and neediness while others include characters who rise (perhaps unrealistically) far above all odds. We explore these issues in my undergraduate course “Images of Disability: Portrayal in Film and Literature.” By analyzing images of the disability experience, students improve critical thinking, increase disability awareness, identify ableism and utilize information literacy skills. We will discuss selected movie clips and excerpts from literature.

POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY DURING A PANDEMIC: PERSPECTIVES ON MINDSET AND RESILIENCE

Tim Bono, Lecturer in Psychological & Brain Sciences
4:00 PM – 4:45 PM | SIMON 1

The last two years have posed challenges and adversity unlike anything we have ever seen. As trying as the pandemic has been, there are opportunities to extract meaning in ways that allow us to emerge even stronger. This presentation will draw on research from the behavioral sciences that offers implications for coping through hardship in ways that promote psychological health and well-being.

HOW TO EAT PIZZA LIKE A MATHEMATICIAN

Karl Schaefer, Lecturer in Mathematics
4:00 PM – 4:45 PM | SSEIGLE L006

Have you ever folded the edges of a slice of pizza when you pick it up to eat it? An engineer will tell you that folding the edges increases the stability of the slice and helps keep the toppings in place -- but why is that the case? In this talk, we’ll discuss the mathematical theory of curvature and some of its real-world applications, including sending packages in the mail, making maps of the globe, and folding pizza.