2021-2022 Schedule
Cullowhee, Main Campus (Wednesdays, 10am – 12pm)
Asheville, Biltmore Park Site (Thursdays, 10am – 12pm)

NOTE: All fall 2021 sessions will be held online via Zoom. The format for spring will be evaluated throughout the fall semester.

FALL 2021:

September 15, 2021
Thomas Rain Crowe – The Baby Beat Generation

Biography:
Thomas Rain Crowe, a child of the Blue Ridge Mountains who literally lived on both ends of the Blue Ridge Parkway growing up, is an internationally-published and recognized author of more than thirty books, including the multi-award winning nonfiction nature memoir Zoro’s Field: My Life in the Appalachian Woods; and collections of poetry including a volume of selected love poems titled Learning To Dance and The Laugharne Poems--written at the Dylan Thomas boathouse in Laugharne, Wales in 1993 and 1995, as well as a conversational memoir Starting From San Francisco: Beats, Baby Beats and the 1970s San Francisco Renaissance. He has been editor of major literary and cultural journals and anthologies and is founder and publisher of New Native Press—a small literary press founded in 1979. He is and has been on the boards of several environmental conservation organizations in western North Carolina over the last 40 years and has spoken widely to large and small groups on the subject of higher consciousness, sustainability and protection of the planet as a resident of western North Carolina and the Southern Appalachians. He lives in the Tuckasegee watershed and the “Little Canada” community of Jackson County in western North Carolina.

Presentation Outline:
Thomas Rain Crowe, is an internationally-published and recognized author of more than thirty books, including the multi-award winning nonfiction nature memoir Zoro’s Field: My Life in the Appalachian Woods; and collections of poetry including a volume of selected love poems titled Learning To Dance and The Laugharne Poems--written at the Dylan Thomas boathouse in Laugharne, Wales in 1993 and 1995 and published in Wales; as well as a conversational memoir Starting From San Francisco: Beats, Baby Beats and the 1970s San Francisco Renaissance. He has been editor of major literary and cultural journals and anthologies and is founder and publisher of New Native Press—a small literary press founded in 1979. He is and has been on the boards of several environmental conservation organizations in western North Carolina over the last 40 years and has spoken widely to large and small groups on the subject of higher consciousness, sustainability and protection of the planet as a resident of western North Carolina and the Southern Appalachians. He lives in the Tuckasegee watershed and the “Little Canada” community of Jackson County in western North Carolina.
Canada” community of Jackson County in western North Carolina. His literary archives have been purchased and are housed at the Duke University Special Collections Library.

September 22, 2021

**Terry Van Duyn** – Expanding Access to Healthcare Coverage in North Carolina

*Biography:*
In 1992, after 20 years in IT, Terry moved to Asheville where began a 2nd career as a community volunteer. She has served in leadership positions with several non-profit organizations including Meals on Wheels, The Council on Aging and Pisgah Legal Services. When the Affordable Care Act was introduced in 2010, Terry became a Healthcare Navigator and helped many people secure insurance, often for the first time in their lives. Long active with the Democratic Party, Terry served as President of the Buncombe County Democratic Women before being appointed to the North Carolina Senate after the death of her predecessor, Senator Martin Nesbitt, in 2014. Elected Democratic Whip by her peers in her freshman year, Terry worked hard to improve public schools, expand access to healthcare, and advocate for a more transparent and effective government.

*Presentation Outline:*
Before serving 3 1/2 terms in the North Carolina Senate, Terry Van Duyn worked as a volunteer ACA Navigator, helping people get health insurance, often for the first time. Through that work she saw firsthand how people suffer simply because they can’t afford to go to the doctor. She has been working to expand Medicaid ever since. In her presentation, Sen. Van Duyn will outline the benefits of extending healthcare coverage, making the case that individual health, the vitality of our healthcare system, and the North Carolina economy in general, will all benefit from Medicaid Expansion. Emphasis will include the move to “managed care”, frequently referred to as Medicaid Transformation, as well at the incentives in the American Rescue Plan, two developments which she believes make the argument for Medicaid Expansion even more compelling, especially for rural North Carolina.

September 29, 2021

**Ted Van Duyn** – Bitcoin/cryptocurrency/investment trends

*Biography:*
Ted has been in the software side of the Information Technology revolution since graduating with a B.S. in Mathematics from the University of Illinois. Why not a Computer Science degree? Back then, they didn’t exist! He also holds a Master’s in Business Administration (MBA) degree from the University of Connecticut. Professionally, he most recently was the CEO of Geriatric Practice Management, a Software as a Service (SaaS) health care company based in Asheville, Chief Technical Officer (CTO) for Conceptual MindWorks, and Sr VP of Research and Development at BMC Software.

*Presentation Outline:*
We’re going to take a look at the impact of crypto currencies from their effective start in 2009 to current manias. There are literally thousands of crypto currencies in “circulation”, even some created as a joke like the popular Dogecoin! We’ll talk about their growing impact from investors like you to legal tender in countries like El Salvador. News stories seem to pop up
about these currencies daily, running the gamut from organized crime to foundational technologies like BlockChain to derivative applications such as Non-Fungible Tokens (NFTs). What’s it all about, where’s it going? We’ll talk.

**October 6, 2021**  
**Chris Cooper** – Political issues from an academic perspective  
*Biography:*  
Christopher A. Cooper is Robert Lee Madison Distinguished Professor and Department Head of Political Science and Public Affairs at Western Carolina University. He has received Western Carolina University’s highest awards for research (University Scholar, 2011) and teaching (Board of Governors Teaching Award, 2013) and was named the 2013 North Carolina Professor of the Year by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

Cooper’s published academic research features over 50 refereed journal articles and book chapters on NC politics, state politics, southern politics, and political behavior. He is also co-author of The Resilience of Southern Identity: Why the South Still Matters in the Minds of its People (University of North Carolina Press) and co-editor of The New Politics of North Carolina (published by the University of North Carolina Press).

Cooper is a frequent source for news stories about North Carolina, as well as national politics and he has been quoted hundreds of times in a variety of media including the New York Times, Washington Post, Christian Science Monitor, Boston Herald, Al Jazeera, Charlotte Observer, Asheville-Citizen Times, The Hill, National Journal, Raleigh News and Observer, North Carolina Insider National Public Radio (All Things Considered and Morning Edition), USA Today, CNN, FOX News, WUNC, Blue Ridge Public Radio, WFAE (Charlotte) ABC News, and ESPN.com. He has been called “obsessive about North Carolina politics, but in a good way” by the New Yorker Radio Hour and “the Yoda of local political experts” by WLOS.

**October 13, 2021**  
**Thomas Rain Crowe** – Activism and the Arts: A Personal Perspective

**October 20, 2021**  
**Land of Sky & SW Commission** – Broadband issues in the mountains and other regional issues  
*Biographies:*  
Ryan Sherby, CEO and WCU alum, was previously the executive director of the Southwestern North Carolina Planning and Economic Development Commission. Before becoming CEO of BalsamWest, he provided consulting services to BalsamWest, EBCI, Drake Enterprises, and Municipal Utilities.

Sarajane Melton, Director of the Southwestern Commission Area Agency on Aging is a resident of Jackson County. She has a BSW and an MHS with a concentration in Gerontology from WCU. She has been employed by the Southwestern Commission since 1997.

*Presentation Outline:*
I. Sara Nichols-Land of Sky Regional Council-Will describe broadband issues from the public/government perspective. What is working, what the challenges are, and what the future may look like with regards to funding and the importance of issues like digital literacy.

II. Ryan Sherby-Balsam West- Will explain internet issues from the perspective of a private provider.

III. Sarajane Melton-Southwestern Commission Area Agency on Aging-Will discuss the types of programs that are available to older populations.

IV. Ginger Hill-Land of Sky Area Agency on Aging- Will connect these two issues and discuss some of the initiatives that she is undertaking to provide senior populations with access to broadband and the digital literacy skills they need to stay connected to resources they need.

October 27, 2021
Mountain True – Naturalist

November 3, 2021
Jeffrey Vickery – Religious tolerance or intolerance

Biography:
Jeffrey Vickery is currently in his 17th academic year of teaching as an adjunct instructor in the Department of Philosophy and Religion at WCU. He teaches courses regarding the history, thought, and practice of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. In addition, Jeffrey serves as co-pastor of Cullowhee Baptist Church (located across the street from Hunter Library) with Rev. Tonya Vickery. Jeffrey and Tonya have been married for 32 years and have two daughters who are flourishing as adults with careers, relationships, and graduate education in either Chapel Hill or Portland, Maine.

November 10, 2021
Lisa Leatherman – History, present and future of Duke Energy

November 17, 2021
Nadine Charlsen

Biography:
An Asheville-based urban landscape watercolor artist and instructor, Nadine Charlsen is recent past-president of the River Arts District. She received a BS in Education from Kansas State Teachers College, MA from Wichita State University and MFA from Brooklyn College. Her 31-year career as a theatrical lighting designer in New York City taught her how to incorporate light, shadow, scale, color and texture to create artistic drama. Inspired by architecture, cityscapes and serene countryside settings, her work has gained wide recognition and in numerous publications. Nadine's artist statement reads: "My watercolors are improvised on the urban landscape — gritty, stark, rough — to engage a deeper emotion. My studio is the ever-changing world around me. I do long-distance bike trips and paint and photograph as I go. I love visiting noisy cities and bustling streets. Every day is a different wonder, a new world to live in the moment. My career in theatrical design allowed me to work in many art mediums and explore scenic painting of large backdrops, sculpture and 3-D mixed media. My motivation to paint is for you and I to escape for a moment to another place and find joy in reliving the moment together."
December 8, 2021
Ricardo Nazario-Colon
During the 2016 Presidential Election, CNN sent reports to Welch, WV for a piece on why America’s white working class feels left behind. The story painted Appalachia as a homogenous region populated only by poor white coal miners and farmers but when poet Dr. Ricardo Nazario-Colon traveled through the areas wooded, rural hills, he noticed something different.
SPRING 2022:

January 19 & 20, 2022

John Lane – Artistic/writer's perspective on environmental issues

Biography:
John Lane is professor of English and Environmental Studies at Wofford College. His books include Circling Home, My Paddle to the Sea, and Coyote Settles the South. He also coedited, with Gerald Thurmond, The Woods Stretched for Miles: New Nature Writing from the South. He has published several volumes of poetry, essays, and a novel, as well as a selection of his online columns, The Best of the Kudzu Telegraph. Whose Woods These Are is his most recent work.

Presentation Outline:
An investigative procedure, in this case in environmental writing, for assessing literary activity over time.
How do we figure out what our personal project has been over time?
As I move through my 60’s personal curation of my “eco-literary project” has become more and more important to me. I would like to present brief selections from my published books ranging from 1970s to the present—poetry, creative nonfiction, and even my two novels—and associate each a creative practice or theme through a single word or phrase.
There will be discussion and interaction about methods you might use to arrange your own creative life work and relationship to nature in such a way.

January 26 & 27, 2022

Michelle Sorensen – Travel Experiences/Post-COVID travel

February 2 & 3, 2022

Boyd Owle – Governance of the Cherokee nation

Biography:
Boyd Owle was born and lived in Cherokee all his life and worked for the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians before retiring after 42 years. After retirement, he was elected three times to the Tribal Council for the Birdtown Community. He enjoys being a member of the Tribal Council and representing his community and the tribe as a whole.

Presentation Outline:
The Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI) live in the heart of Western North Carolina in part of their ancestral lands defined by the Qualla Boundary. What do you know about the tribe and their relationship with the United States? Boyd Owle, a member of the Tribal Council will talk about tribal governance, how they are organized and their interface with the county, state and Federal government. He will talk about how the EBCI with their casino and related businesses has brought great dividends to WNC in terms of the economy with approximately 4300 total positions. Additionally, he will explore the relationships among NC politicians, the EBCI, the Catawba Tribe and the state recognized tribe, the Lumbees.

February 9 & 10, 2022

Jonathan Marchal – Blue Ridge Naturalist program

Presentation Outline:
Community Science Needs You!
Native plant and animal populations in our state face a number of challenges, including habitat loss, climate change and invasive species. Conservation scientists are working to document the species across our state in an effort to understand how these organisms are impacted by these threats, however, there are not enough scientists to create a full picture. Community Scientists, also called citizen scientists, are everyday people who contribute observations of plants and animals to state, national and international conservation projects. Learn how you can use a smartphone as a powerful conservation tool as we explore mobile apps such as iNaturalist, eBird and Nature's Notebook.

**February 16 & 17, 2022**
*Penny Smith* – NC/SC in the Revolutionary War

**February 23 & 24, 2022**
*John Boyle* – Local journalism

**March 2 & 3, 2022**
*Darin Waters* – Racial equality/Black Lives Matter

**March 9 & 10, 2022**
*YiQuing Yang* – Immigration, culture, prejudice and aging

**March 16 & 17, 2022**
*Bounty & Soul* – Healthy eating and lifestyle

**March 23 & 24, 2022**
*John C. Campbell School* – Folk school history and culture

**March 30 & 31, 2022**
*Rob Young* – Climate Change

**April 6, 2022**
*Luncheon at Lake Junaluska*

**Note to the membership:**
The above are the topics and speakers selected by the Curriculum Committee. This may change based on speaker availability.