

ST. CHARLES COMMUNITY COLLEGE



DEMOCRACY DAYS

2020



SEPT. 14-17

Go to: stchas.edu/democracymdays

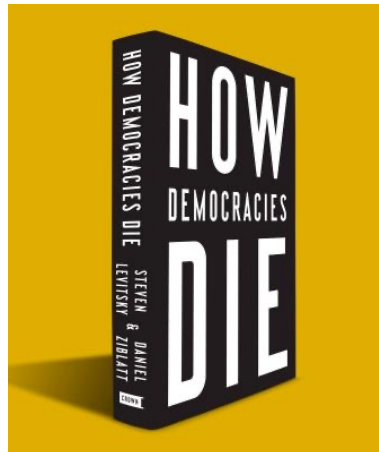
Welcome to the 2020 Pandemic Edition of SCC Democracy Days.

Look at our America – in the throes of an historic health crisis, riven by political differences, facing an uncertain future as we approach a national election on which hinges the future of democracy itself.

This four-day educational forum invites you to listen, learn, participate and commit to further inquiry on the urgent issues of common concern that we are addressing during SCC Democracy Days 2020. This week we examine policing, voting, Black Lives Matter and other subjects vital to the health of a democracy with faculty from seven academic disciplines and two guest speakers who have many years of experience on hand.

There couldn't be a better time to study democracy and to practice it.

The status of democracy in our nation and the world is perilous. The alarm bells have been ringing hard lately ...



Are we witnessing the twilight of democracy? Or will a movement for justice and inclusion prevail? I don't know. What I do know is that if we are truly interested in a democratic society, we have to be educated and involved citizens. I know that we have to move from "not being racist" to being vigorously anti-racist and that we can draw from a long tradition of grassroots democratic action in this country and forge a more democratic union.

Read, discuss, organize. VOTE.

Michael Kuelker
Emeritus Professor of English
Democracy Days organizer 2001 to present

Monday, Sept 14

10 Disability Rights, Education & Democracy

Tracy Bono and **Paige George** explore disability rights, education and legislation. They will bring compelling examples of the fight for disability rights including Bono's personal story regarding her son. Paige George holds a Master of Arts in Professional Counseling. She has worked at SCC for 15 years with over five years serving as the Disability Support Manager. She is a member of the Association on Higher Education and Disability. Her goal is to make SCC a welcoming place for students with disabilities and to remove barriers to students reaching their educational goals. Tracy Bono (SCC Business, SCC Reading) is a parent advocate. She is often a guest speaker at disability rights rally events throughout the state of Missouri, has worked closely with state legislators regarding bills related to disability rights and is an administrator of the International Coalition Against Restraint and Seclusion.

11:30 No Holding Back

E pluribus unum – out of many, one. But are we really? From Coronavirus to the ghosts of the Confederacy, from Black Lives Matter to the Boogaloo Boys, it appears that we are in fact more divided than united. Some have gone so far as to suggest that we shouldn't even try for *one*, we should just settle for *we*.

This presentation explores the significance of our traditional national motto: what does it mean to be *one*? Is there reason to believe that true unity is possible? If so, how might it be brought about? In light of both ancient and modern philosophy, **Chaz DeBord** (SCC Philosophy) argues that a number of popular conceptions of the American nation are inconsistent with true unity. He then describes some conditions for the possibility of unity and points to how these conditions might offer guidance for bringing the American one out of the American many.



1

Inside Elections: The St. Charles County Director of Elections Speaks

Free and fair elections are a cornerstone of democracy. Get the inside story from St. Charles County Director of Elections **Kurt Bahr**. Covid-19 has affected voting practices and the law has changed to reflect this. Director Bahr will discuss safety measures at polling stations as well as absentee voting and early voting by mail, methods which are seeing significant increased usage this year.

REGISTER TO VOTE by Oct 7

@ the SCC Library or SCC Continuing Ed (HUM 103)

@ your local public library

@ www.sos.mo.gov

... and on Nov 3 → VOTE!

Tuesday, Sept 15

10

The Pandemic and Mental Health

As the world is continuing to endure the pandemic, racial injustice protests, unemployment and social and economic uncertainties, it is becoming clear that democracy and its systems are either failing many Americans or is working only for the privileged few. Experts are predicting that the emerging “second curve” of the Covid-19 will be in mental health impacting families, patients, health care workers and others who face trauma while dealing with social isolation and other ordeals relating to the pandemic.

Vi Rajagopalan (SCC Psychology) will examine key issues and precautionary measures that families and individuals can focus on to develop healthy coping mechanisms right now to prevent or curb further escalations in stress related responses.

11:30 It's All Our History

An interdisciplinary panel led by SCC profs representing Psychology, Sociology, English, and Occupational Therapy examine the importance of knowing and understanding African American history. The discussion proceeds from the assumption that we cannot understand the present without knowing and acknowledging US history through the lens of African American history.

This panel examines how knowing and understanding this history can affect everything in society from accessibility of jobs and homeownership, to mental health and access to adequate medical care, and this panel calls for the inclusion of African American representation in our current education system as a standard, not an elective. Panelists include **Marvin Tobias** (Psychology), **Dana Prewitt** (Sociology), **Rachel McWhorter** (English) and **Courtney Barrett** (Occupational Therapy). Moderated by **Grace Moser** (History).

Recommended → bit.ly/ANTIRACISMRESOURCES
Anti-racism resources for white people

| Stage of white identity development (Helms) and their corresponding beliefs/thoughts/actions | Resources *When purchasing books, please purchase directly from authors or local bookstores. | What to do next? |
|---|--|---|
| <p>CONTACT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "I don't see color." - "Talking about race brings disunity." - Belief that racism is caused by talking about race. - Belief that you aren't racist if you don't purposely or consciously act in racist ways. | <p><i>Activities:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack (Peggy McIntonsh) <p><i>Podcasts:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Whistling Vivaldi (NPR) <p><i>Videos:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "I'm Still Here," by Austin Channing Brown (Art of the Sermon) 2. "White Awake" by Daniel Hill (FSP Chicago) <p><i>Articles:</i></p> | <p>Educating yourself is important -- utilize resources about racial inequality and biases.</p> |

This visual comes from the above link of anti-racism resources. Because let's face it, among white folks there exists a strong reflex tendency to deflect discussions about race by saying "I don't see color" or by delegitimizing such discussions in the first place. How we can proceed down a path of greater awareness and understanding? Education is key. And fortunately, there are abundant and growing sources for studying and responding to race in America.

1 **‘You Can’t and I Won’t’: The Controversy Over Social Distancing During the 1918 Influenza Pandemic**

Stephen Randoll (SCC History) explores the history of the 1918 pandemic in America and its bearing upon our current health crisis. The 1918 pandemic, a subject of Randoll’s graduate studies in history, claimed 675,000 lives in the US and upwards of 50 million people globally.

Wednesday, Sept 16

10 **Poetry and Democracy in the American Tradition**

How can poetry teach? And what does American poetry about democracy have to teach us in 2020, a year of acute challenge and change? When we study poetry and democracy, we realize that democracy is not only a system of governance; it’s a way of thinking and being, something that can inform the very acts of writing and reading themselves. **Michael Kuelker** (SCC English) will elaborate. Examples in this hour will spring from Walt Whitman (“I speak the password primeval, I give the sign of democracy”), the Harlem Renaissance, contemporary poetry slams, the verse of current US Poet Laureate Joy Harjo & many others who have taken part in the grand parade of American poetry.

11:30 **Civic Engagement in the Wake of 2020**

This panel, chaired by **Bryonie Carter** (SCC English), will detail how instructors and students are pursuing activism, social justice, and service-learning projects in their remote and virtual classrooms. Panelists include **Lindsay Brand** (SCC English), **Grace Moser** (SCC History) and **Audra Notgrass** (SCC student).

1 **Racism, Police and the Black Lives Matter Movement**

A panel of SCC faculty discusses racism in the US and the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement. **Dana Prewitt** (SCC Sociology) examines contemporary institutional racism from a sociological point of view, focusing on economic, educational, and health disparities. **Paul Roesler** (SCC Political Science) explores evidence of widespread discrimination in policing and shifting public opinion in favor of police reforms. **Marvin Tobias** (SCC Psychology) looks at updated research on bias and behavior and the role that racism has played in the response to the movement. **Grace Moser** (SCC History) speaks about the importance of understanding and including black history in our narratives so we can understand context.

Thursday, Sept 17

10 The Stock Market Indexes: Not a Macroeconomic Indicator

This presentation by **William Baca-Mejia** (SCC Economics) contests the mainstream view in economics that reduces democracy to a simple efficient resource allocation of the market. In news about the state of the economy, indexes of the stock market have been presented as indicators that reflect the well performance of the economy, suggesting that the higher these indexes, the higher the well-being of a nation. This is a misconception because it is the trends in consumption, business real investment, government purchases and exports (in terms of foreign consumption and investment) as well as unemployment and inflation what gives us a sense of how well the economy is doing. Along with data and theoretical principles, we will present the case of how an economy should be evaluated.



Sgt. Heather Taylor is retiring at the end of September after 20 years on the police force and stepping down from the executive position at the Ethical Society of Police in St. Louis. She is enrolling in law school.

11:30 A Conversation on Police Reform with Sgt. Heather Taylor

Gabe Harper (SCC Political Science) will introduce some calls to reform the police including the push by some activists to “defund” the police. **Sgt Heather Taylor** will then discuss her observations on policing in America and her observations on these reform proposals. Sgt Taylor is a homicide sergeant with the Metropolitan Police Department of the City of St. Louis, and she is the President of the Ethical Society of Police (ESOP), an organization founded within the St. Louis Police Department to address race-based discrimination.

1 **The Myth of Voter Fraud**

A panel of faculty from SCC's Political Science department will discuss allegations of voter fraud, including voter I.D. and concerns with absentee voting during a pandemic. The panel will discuss past allegations as well concerns about the 2020 presidential election and President Trump's suggestion to postpone the election.

