Course Title: Stanford Saturday University, 2017
Course Code: SSU 109

FEBRUARY 11TH SCHEDULE:

Welcome, Refreshments, and Check-in: 8:45 am

Opening Remarks: 9:15 am
Charles Junkerman, Dean of Stanford Continuing Studies

Session 1: 9:30 - 10:40 am
Misled by the Map: Geography Gets Political
Speaker: Martin Lewis, Senior Lecturer in International History, Stanford

The standard political world map, structured around sovereign states, is a seemingly straightforward document that is actually quite misleading. In this talk, Martin Lewis argues that this map purports to depict the current geopolitical configuration but actually shows the world the way the global foreign-policy establishment thinks it ought to exist. As a result, some de facto countries are omitted whereas some nonexistent ones are included. This state of affairs enables diplomatic pretense to trump geopolitical reality in our most basic depiction of the world. Many problems and much mischief can result from such a blinkered world view.

Session 2: 10:50 - 12:00 pm
Tipping Point for Planet Earth: How Close Are We to the Edge?
Speaker: Liz Hadly, Paul S. and Billie Achilles Chair of Environmental Biology; Faculty Director, Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve, Stanford

Zika virus. The migrant crisis. Climate change. ISIS. Food scarcity. Drinking water contamination. What we read in the news almost every day now seems like a string of unrelated crises, but in fact it is quite the opposite. We are poised on the brink of a dangerous tipping point that we will hit in just a decade or two—if we don’t start doing things differently. In this talk, Professor Hadly will discuss what each of us can do to help the world tip in a direction that is good for people and the planet, rather than one that will forever harm both.

Lunch: 12:00 - 1:20 pm
Session 3: 1:30 - 2:40 pm
Finding Meaning in an Unjust World
Speaker: Robb Willer, Professor of Sociology, Stanford

The search for meaning and purpose in one’s life is a defining feature of the human experience. But the existence of suffering and injustice in the world challenges us to justify these seemingly self-centered goals. Many scholars have explored the suffering of others as a roadblock to personal fulfillment. In this lecture, Professor Willer will navigate this tension, offering insights from past research on the way people cultivate meaningful lives without ignoring injustice.

Session 4: 2:50 - 4:00 pm
Young Blood for Old Brains
Speaker: Tony Wyss-Coray, Professor of Neurology and Neurological Sciences, Stanford

Every culture and civilization has its dreams about eternal youth, but what if there is something to it? In this talk, Professor Wyss-Coray will share an amazing development in aging research that could revolutionize how we understand aging and treat age-related diseases.

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES:

1) Martin W. Lewis
Senior Lecturer in International History, Stanford

Martin W. Lewis is a senior lecturer in the Department of History at Stanford, where he teaches world history and global geography. His early work focused on the intersection of environmental problems, economic development, and religious practices in the Philippines, but he later turned to the global scale, writing on the geographical foundations of world history, global divisions and world regionalization, and the development and spread of language families. He has also written extensively on environmental philosophy and politics, advocating an eco-modernist approach and criticizing green romanticism. Martin Lewis received PhD in geography from the University of California at Berkeley in 1987. He is the author of Wagering the Land: Ritual, Capital, and Environmental Degradation in the Cordillera of Northern Luzon, 1900-1986 (University of California Press) and of Green Delusions: An Environmentalist Critique of Radical Environmentalism (Duke University Press), and the co-author of The Myth of Continents: A Critique of Metageography (University of California Press) and Diversity Amid Globalization: World Regions, Environment, Development (Prentice Hall). Martin Lewis is also the co-author (with Asya Pereltsvaig) of a forthcoming book on historical linguistic entitled The Indo-European Controversy: Facts and Fallacies in Historical Linguistic (Cambridge University Press). He also blogs about geographical and historical topics, particularly those that are in the news, at GeoCurrents.info.
2) Elizabeth Hadly
*Senior Fellow, Stanford Woods Institute for the Environment; Paul S. and Billie Achilles Professor in Environmental Biology; Senior Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education, Stanford*

Elizabeth Hadly is a professor of biology and of geological and environmental sciences at Stanford. She first became interested in her field after exploring the Smithsonian Institution and wild lands in the west as a child. Following her undergraduate and graduate studies, she has conducted extensive research throughout North and South America on the ecology and evolution of vertebrates. She is especially interested in the biogeographic history of mammals around the world, most recently working in India and Costa Rica. She now studies the evolution and ecology of vertebrates and the influence of the Holocene warming on the population biology of vertebrates, community assembly, and history of living organisms in North and South America.

3) Robb Willer
*Professor of Sociology, Psychology (by courtesy), and Organizational Behavior in the Graduate School of Business (by courtesy), Stanford*

Robb Willer is a professor in the Departments of Sociology, Psychology (by courtesy), and the Graduate School of Business (by courtesy) at Stanford University. He received a PhD in Sociology from Cornell University. Professor Willer’s teaching and research focus on the bases of social order. Most recently, his work has focused on morality, studying how people reason about what is right and wrong and the social consequences of their judgments. His research involves various empirical and theoretical methods, including laboratory and field experiments, surveys, direct observation, archival research, physiological measurement, agent-based modeling, and social network analysis. He has received grants from the National Science Foundation, the California Environmental Protection Agency, and the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation. His research has also received widespread media coverage including from *the New York Times*, *the Wall Street Journal*, *USA Today*, *the Washington Post*, *Science*, *Nature*, *Time*, *U.S. News and World Report*, *Scientific American*, *Harper’s*, *Slate*, *CNN*, *NBC Nightly News*, *The Today Show*, and *National Public Radio*. Willer was the 2009 recipient of the Golden Apple Teaching award, the only teaching award given by UC Berkeley’s student body.

4) Tony Wyss-Coray
*Professor of Neurology and Neurological Sciences, Stanford*

Tony Wyss-Coray oversees an eponymous lab which studies immune and injury responses in aging and neurodegeneration. Wyss-Coray initially studied at the Institute of Clinical Immunology at the University of Bern in Switzerland, but he now lives and works in California. At Stanford since 2002, he’s also a health scientist at the Veterans Affairs Palo Alto Health Care System. Deeply interested in figuring out ways to combat diseases such as Alzheimer’s, he serves on the scientific advisory board for the Alzheimer Research Consortium and on the international advisory board for Advances in Clinical and
Experimental Medicine. In 2013, he was given a Transformative Research Award by the director of the National Institutes of Health. He received a PhD in immunology from the University of Bern, Switzerland.