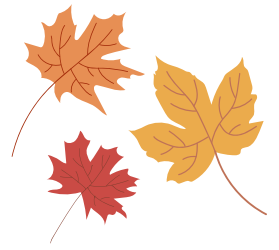


Selim Center

for Lifelong Learning

Learning Post September 2026



A Message from the Director:

Campus came to life this week at St. Thomas as the new academic year commences. Conversations echo from classrooms, old friendships are renewed and new acquaintances made, and the pathways on the quad are suddenly trod by thousands of footsteps each day. At the Selim Center, our fall schedule launches in just two short weeks, and we eagerly await your return to campus to add your presence to our community.

This issue of our newsletter highlights some of our programs that begin in September as well as some fall events to place on your calendars. We will begin to explore our "Work Unfinished" theme on September 22nd when we kick off a three-part series on "Home" featuring St. Thomas philosopher Dr. Chris Toner. "Home" sits at the center of our lives, both as a place and as a concept. Although it is inseparable from our everyday lives and practices as well as our culture and politics, "home" defies any easy definition. Is it best thought of as a building, a specific place, a community? Dr. Toner has spent almost a decade exploring these questions in a forthcoming book and will guide us through thinking about the evolution of home's meaning as well as its importance for our personal, community, and political lives.

On September 23rd, longtime Twin Cities educator Frank Sachs will commence a series on "Disputed Elections," examining aspects of eight presidential elections that have featured significant controversies. Mr. Sachs has more than four decades of teaching experience in both Blake School classrooms (where he received the Presidential Scholars Teacher Recognition Award) and in more than two dozen community and adult education forums.

Thursday mornings in September will see the return of Dr. Dan Pioske, who will follow last year's well-acclaimed series on the Old Testament prophets with a series that explores one of the most beautiful and challenging books of the Bible: the Book of Job. He will be followed on Thursday afternoons by a three-part series that will examine "Polarized Politics" from three distinct perspectives: as a product of unresolved tensions in political theory (Dr. Caleb Goltz), as the result of electoral mechanisms (Dr. Tim Lynch), and as something that can be examined and changed by both institutions and citizens (Dr. Angela High-Pippert).

Finally, two special two-part series begin the first week of October. The first, on Tuesday mornings, features Libby Starling, Senior Development Officer at the Minneapolis Federal Reserve explaining the role of the Federal Reserve and its impact on local neighborhoods and housing markets in the Twin Cities. On Wednesday afternoons, Dr. James Dawes, Distinguished Chair in Human Rights at Macalester College, will tackle "What Happened to Human Rights," first by exploring its roots in human trauma from the ancient world through the 20th century and then by answering difficult questions about its challenges in our present world.

We hope you will join our dedicated instructors and community of eager and curious lifelong learners as we pursue questions both timely and timeless!

-Dr. David Williard, Selim Center Director

In This Edition



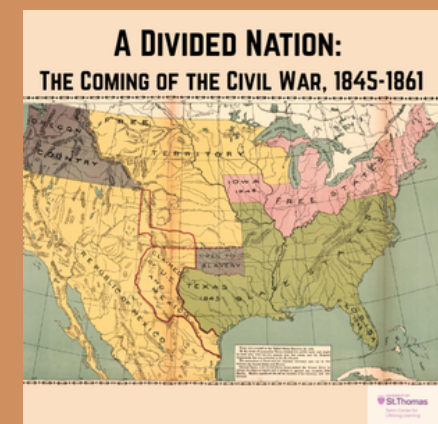
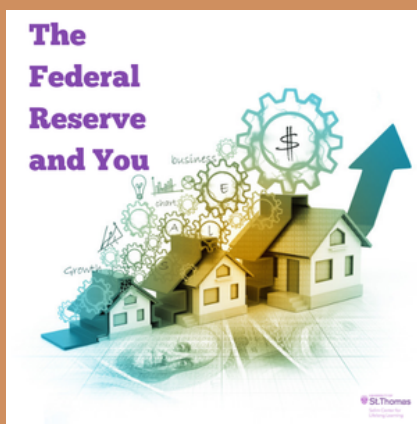
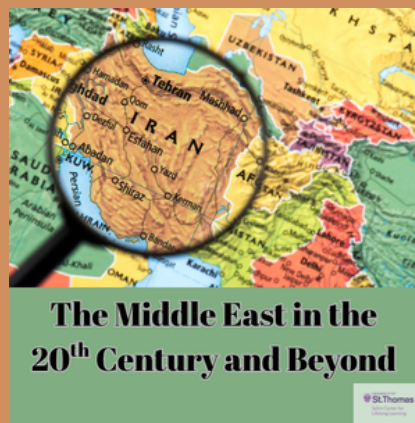
- A message from the Director
- Fall programs
- Campus events
- Tommie Give Day



Contact Information

Selim Center for Lifelong Learning
MAIL OEC 109
2115 Summit Avenue
Saint Paul, MN 55105
Phone: 651-962-5188
email: selimcenter@stthomas.edu
website:
www.stthomas.edu/selim-center

Fall 2026 Programs!



Single-Session Programs



The Midterms and The Nation Lunch & Learn with Professor David Schultz

**Friday, November 6th
12:00pm-1:45pm**

National political analyst and Selim Center regular David Schultz (Distinguished University Professor of Politics and Law, Hamline University) will provide an assessment of the 2026 electoral landscape and its possible meanings. He will discuss national trends, the Minnesota gubernatorial and Congressional results, and the broader context of the nation's political climate and its institutions. Tickets for this event include lunch.

The State of Cancer Research: What We Know and Where We Might Go with Dr. Alpay Temiz

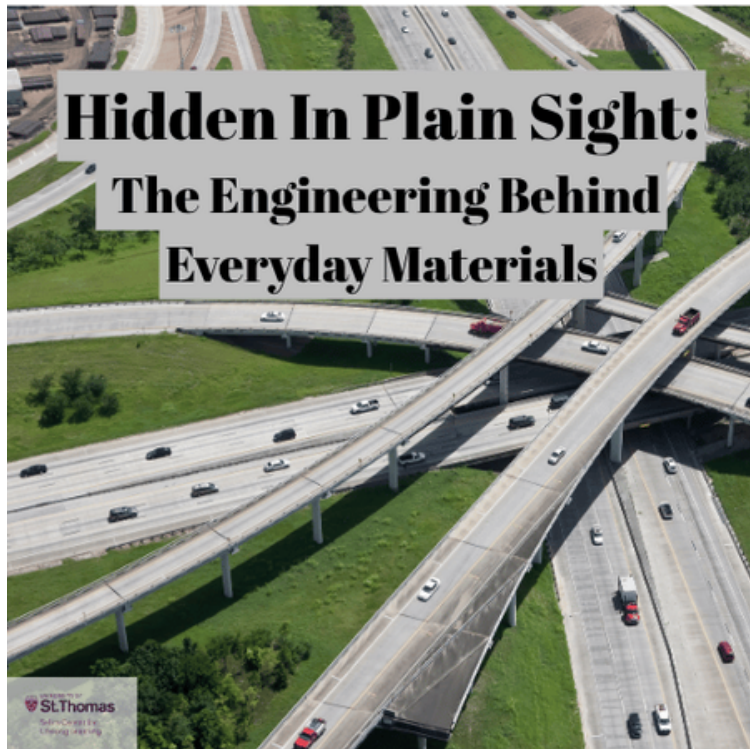
**Wednesday, October 28th
1:00pm-2:45pm**

In this special program, Dr. Alpay Temiz will introduce us to recent breakthroughs in genomics and bioinformatics that have produced substantial progress in identifying genetic markers and gene sequencing in the vast field of cancer research. He will then address how computational algorithms and artificial intelligence may accelerate or even transform cancer research in both genetic modeling and diagnostics and also highlight some of the durable problems within cancer science that remain resistant to breakthroughs.

This program is given in honor of Dr. Al Levitan, longtime friend, generous supporter, and lifelong learner at the Selim Center for Lifelong Learning.



Single-Session Programs



Hidden in Plain Sight: The Engineering Behind Everyday Materials with Dr. Rita Lederle

Wednesday, October 21

1-2:45pm

Come learn what they are really doing when they close your road and why we can't seem to get rid of potholes!

Veterans in Perspective: A special collaboration between the Selim Center and the Karon Veterans' Resource Center

Wednesday, November 4th

1:00pm-2:45pm

This year's annual supporter appreciation event focuses on veterans and veteranhood in the United States. Developed in partnership with the Karon Family Veterans' Resource Center, our program will feature US military servicemembers from across three generations sharing perspectives on service, citizen-soldierhood, and the relationship of military service to American culture more broadly. While veterans and military service are sometimes stereotyped into singular and often politicized roles, the complexity of their experiences reflects the equally nuanced nature of the citizen-soldier throughout United States history.

As a thank-you to our benefactors, this event is free to all who have made a gift to the Selim Center in the 2026-27 fiscal year. Donations can be mailed to the Selim Center, given in check or cash at the door on the day of the event, or made online via our Tommie Give Day site (website will be shared once it is opened in October).



Multi-Session Programs



Home: An Exploration with Dr. Christopher Toner

September 22, 29, & October 6

1:00-2:45pm

Home is central to our everyday worlds, our literature and legends, and our politics. But what do we mean by "home," and how does home relate to our selves, families, communities, and states? This three part series will begin with a broad exploration of what home has meant to different societies, propose a working model of how we might think of "home" in our modern lives, and discuss the implications for our individual, communal, and political lives that "home" entails in the twenty-first century.



The Federal Reserve and You



The Federal Reserve and You with Libby Starling, Senior Community Development Officer, Minneapolis Federal Reserve

Tuesdays, October 6th & 13th

10:00am-11:45am

What does the Federal Reserve have to do with neighborhood development and home affordability in the Twin Cities? In this special two-lecture program, Libby Starling of the Minneapolis Federal Reserve will explain the structure and function of the Federal Reserve Bank and how the economics of monetary policy affect the real-world questions of neighborhood composition, housing availability, and who gets to own a home in the Twin Cities metro.

Multi-Session Programs



The Middle East in the 20th Century and Beyond



The Middle East in the 20th Century and Beyond with Professor Shaherzad Ahmadi

Tuesdays, October 13th, 20th & 27th

11:45am-1:15pm

In this series, held over the noon hour to promote intergenerational attendance, Professor Shaherzad Ahmadi (Associate Professor of History, University of St. Thomas) will explain how global currents of economic and political change created the national identities and regional politics of the modern Middle East. This story of revolutionary transformation and conservative resistance challenges many assumptions about how both peoples and states encountered the problems of modernization, Western influences, Cold War tensions, and the relationship of religion to politics and everyday life.

Disputed Elections and Constitutional Crises— Frank Sachs (The Blake School emeritus)

Wednesdays, September 23, 30 & October 7

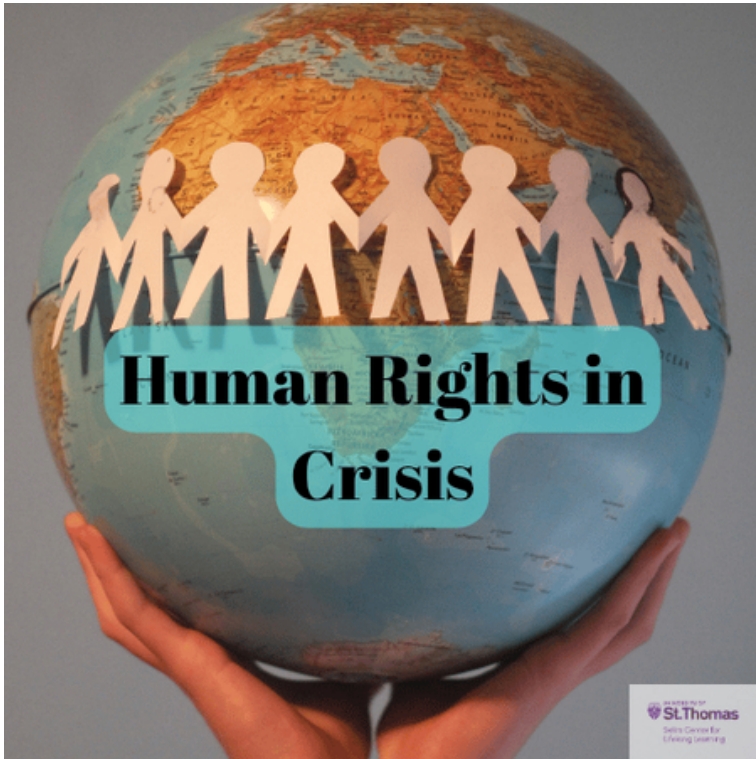
10am-11:45am

Contrary to our popular perceptions, approximately one in four U.S. presidential elections has seen significant accompanying controversy. Four Presidential elections' results have been disputed, while in two others the nominating process came under great criticism for irregularities. In two more elections, the winner of the popular vote lost the Electoral College vote, and two where the final results could have been heavily disputed but the losing candidate did not protest and in one they did and lost anyway. Frank Sachs, teacher at the Blake School for more than four decades and recipient of the Presidential Scholars Teacher Recognition Award, will discuss why all these elections were disputed, how the disputes were resolved, what was the impact on the presidency, and American history.

Disputed Elections and Constitutional Crises



Multi-Session Programs



Human Rights In Crisis with Dr. James Dawes (DeWitt Wallace Distinguished Professor, Macalester College)

**Wednesdays, October 7 & 14
1:00pm-2:45pm**

In this two-part series, Professor James Dawes will explore the relationship between human understandings of trauma and rights from ancient Greece to the algorithmic present. How do we remember terrible events without becoming trapped by them? How do we tell stories about suffering that are honest about the past but still leave room for hope? What happens to human rights if we create artificial intelligence systems more intelligent and powerful than we are?

The Book of Job with Professor Daniel Pioske

**Thursdays, September 24th, Oct 1 & 8
10:00am-11:45am**

In this series, Dan Pioske (Associate Professor and Associate Chair of Theology, University of St. Thomas) explores the Book of Job. Among the most beautiful and challenging books of the Old Testament and one of the greatest literary and theological works of the ancient world, Job raises enduring questions about suffering, justice, faith, and God that have resonated throughout both the Jewish and Christian traditions.



Multi-Session Programs



Polarized Politics: Causes, Attributes, and Responses with Professors Goltz, Lynch & High-Pippert

**Thursdays, September 24, Oct 1 & 8
1:00pm-2:45pm**

Drawing on their combined expertise, this series features three faculty members from the University of St. Thomas political science department who will explore the complex problem of polarized or "frozen" politics in modern American life. The series begins with deep tensions in political philosophy, moves to an assessment of the electoral and communicative mechanisms that select for polemics and punish compromise, and concludes with how both institutions and citizens can find alternatives to totalizing political identities.

World War II in China with Dr. Connor Mills

**October 22, 29 & November 5
10:00-11:45am**

For Americans, the Chinese theater of World War II can too often be regarded as a sideshow to more decisive campaigns. Yet the war in China began earliest (in 1931), lasted longest (14 years), produced among the highest human costs, and involved a bewildering array of belligerents. For Japan, China was the principal objective of imperial ambition, and more than 75% of all Japanese Army personnel deployed during World War II would fight in the Chinese campaigns. Moreover, the war in China yielded consequences of profound significance for the global 20th century and fundamentally influenced the origins and course of the Cold War.



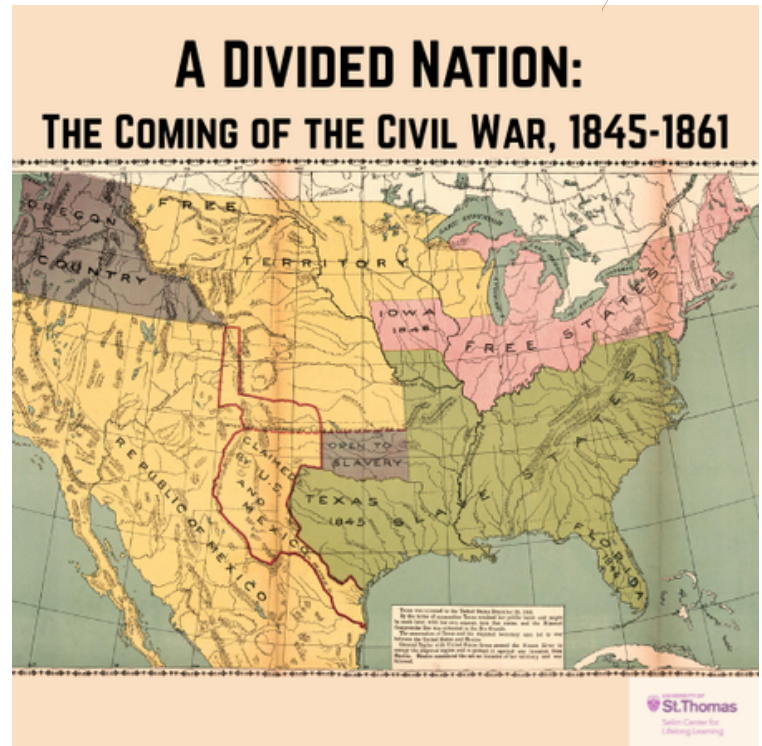
Multi-Session Programs



A Divided Nation: The Coming of the Civil War with Dr. David Williard

**Tuesdays, October 6th & 13th
10:00am-11:45am**

Explaining how an optimistic American public whose economy and borders were relentlessly expanding and whose political tensions seemed to have been effectively suppressed charted a course that ended in the bloodiest and most revolutionary conflict that the United States has ever witnessed poses a challenge for both historians and for public memory. This three-part series will integrate contingent political and institutional developments with explanations stemming from broader cultural and economic conditions, beginning with the invasion of Mexico in 1845 and culminating with the declaration of an insurrection by President Lincoln in April 1861.



All of the above classes are offered both in-person and online via Zoom.

Please make sure you are selecting the format you are planning to attend during the registration process. All in-person programs will take place in the OEC Auditorium, except for the Dr. Schultz Lunch N' Learn (which will be held in Woulfe Hall on the 3rd floor of the Student Center)

To register for any of the above programs, click on the program image to take you to our registration page or visit our website at:

<https://www.stthomas.edu/selim-center/programs>

Impromptu programs may be added as opportunities arise throughout the semester. To stay up-to-date on our programming, consider following us on Facebook. Click here to check out our [Facebook page!](#)

What's Happening on Campus?



In addition to Selim Center programming, be sure to check out these other events happening soon at UST!

September 29, October 13, October 27--Intergenerational Peace Lunch with the Jay Phillips Center for Interreligious Studies

- Peace Meals gather people from different faith traditions, religious identities, and cultural backgrounds who commit to share lunch and engage in honest discussions. While building greater awareness and understanding of each other's worldviews, questions, concerns, and hopes, the program also cultivates the leadership skill to facilitate conversations across lines of difference for professional, civic, and community settings. This fall, the Jay Phillips Center has partnered with the Selim Center to foster a space for intergenerational discussion and dialog. There is no cost to participate. If you are interested in participating in the Peace Meals lunch series, please contact the Selim Center directly by phone or email for further details on registration.

November 7--Readings in Common: A Partnership with the Dougherty Family College

- Join students from Professor Claudette Webster's "Critical Thinking in Literature and Writing" course and other Selim Center lifelong learners to read and discuss Abdi Nor Iftin's memoir *Call Me American* and its resonance across generational perspectives. The cost to participate is \$35 and includes a copy of the book. To register, please contact the Selim Center by phone or email.

A very limited number of seats are available for Selim Center lifelong learners at each of the following events to meet distinguished visitors, engage in conversation with them alongside St. Thomas students, and receive signed copies of the author's books. Contact the Selim Center either by phone or email for further details!

- **October 7 – "The Meaning of Your Life" with Arthur Brooks**, Professor at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.
- **November 17—"America at 250" with Dr. Lindsay Chervinsky**, Executive Director of the George Washington Library at Mount Vernon

Tommie Give Day 2026



Save the date!

Tommie Give Day 2026 will be held on November 10, 2026. Last year, thanks to our generous Selim Center donors, we raised over \$11,000 to help support lifelong learning! We are hoping to break that record this year, but we need your help!

The giving page will go live on October 27 and will run through midnight on November 10. [Click here to check out the countdown](#) and to learn more about the initiative.

As an added incentive, any donor to the Selim Center who makes a gift between now and November 4, is invited to attend out upcoming program titled "Veterans in Perspective." See page 4 of this newsletter or check out our website below for more info on this collaboration between the Selim Center and the Karon Veterans Resource Center.



Contact Information

Selim Center for Lifelong Learning
MAIL OEC 109
2115 Summit Avenue
Saint Paul, MN 55105

Phone: 651-962-5188
email: selimcenter@stthomas.edu
website:
www.stthomas.edu/selim-center