

Dean's Weekly

Department of English and Philosophy

11 April 2012

Past Events

1. The Creative Writing Forum hosted a reading and workshop by noted authors Paul Salopek and Siobhan Fallon on Monday 2 April in the Haig Room. The event's title, "Far Flung Travels and Trenchant Tales," reflected Mr. Salopek's and Ms. Fallon's favored subjects and themes. Mr. Salopek is a two-time Pulitzer Prize winning journalist who has covered conflicts on several continents. Ms. Fallon is the author of *You Know When the Men are Gone*, a *New York Times* best-selling collection of short stories centered on the lives of soldiers deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan from Fort Hood and their families who stay behind. Mr. Salopek and Ms. Fallon read from their works and then led the workshop participants in a writing exercise and discussion of their craft. The event was organized and hosted by Dr. Mary Newell, an English instructor in the Department of English and Philosophy, with assistance from English instructor MAJ Richard Hartney.



Siobhan Fallon, Mary Newell, and Paul Salopek lead a writers' workshop in the Haig Room, Jefferson Library.



Paul Salopek, Mary Newell, and Siobhan Fallon following the CFAF Creative Writing workshop.

2. Philosophy instructor MAJ Alex Weis and USMA Band member SFC Sam Kaestner, in conjunction with the West Point Woodwind Quintet plus piano, collaborated on the “Evolution of Beauty” evening lecture on 5 April in Jefferson Hall’s Haig Room. Encouraging cadets to think associatively and innovatively, the event illustrated how art and music from Neoclassical, Impressionism and Abstract Expressionism traditions can facilitate and complement the exploration of larger philosophical ideas. The presentation creatively juxtaposed art by Jacques Louis David, Claude Monet, Mark Rothko, and Chuck Close with the ensemble’s performances of W. A. Mozart, Maurice Ravel, John Cage, and NYU composition student Matt Frey.



Members of the West Point Woodwind Quartet play as part of the Evolution of Beauty evening lecture.

3. On Saturday 31 March, the Department of English and Philosophy sponsored the inaugural event of the “Creative Arts Project at West Point”: a sculpture workshop led by professional sculptor Debra Flocco. Six cadets, three Warriors in Transition from the West Point WTU, and three other West Point community members spent more than four hours creating sculptures under Ms. Flocco’s expert tutelage. Working in an unfamiliar medium taught the cadets new ways of seeing, planning, and executing a creative project. Perhaps most important for their growth as thinkers, it also helped to develop “deep attention,” an extremely important but increasingly perishable skill in a world where creativity too often becomes subservient to the tools of computer technology. In keeping with the broader aims of the Creative Arts Project, the workshop connected cadets and faculty with Warriors in Transition, the West Point community, and the society we serve. Future events for the Creative Arts Project include a display of various forms of art produced by cadets, veterans, and West Point alumni on Projects Day. Tentatively scheduled for the fall semester will be display of the “Graffiti of War” art exhibition, a collection of art produced by soldiers during and after deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan. Additional workshops such as this one will also be forthcoming.



Cadets, Warriors in Transition, and Army family members from the West Point community learn sculpting from Debra Flocco.



Cadets, Warriors in Transition, and Army family members from the West Point community learn sculpting. Pictured to the right of the instructor is Jennifer Saxon, the wife of Department member LTC Mike Saxon.



West Point community member Amy Robert and cadet Logan Bolitho hone their newfound sculpting skills.



Debra Flocco gives Logan Bolitho, a cadet member of the Studio Arts Forum, some tips on creating his first sculpture.