During the Covid-19 pandemic, public debates about the validity of scientific findings and the value of science overall have intensified, as some Americans have actively resisted and even denied the legitimacy of scientific guidance about how to address the disease. What are the social and psychological drivers of public skepticism about science? How can skeptics be convinced otherwise? According to Naomi Oreskes, professor of the History of Science at Harvard University, people won’t be persuaded with more science or more facts. They deny scientific findings because they do not like the implications of their veracity—what Oreskes terms “implicatory denial.”

To convince deniers, their fears and ideologies must be addressed. Some Americans hold a worldview that prioritizes the inviolability of individual rights and the sanctity of the economy above all else, and adhere to an ideology of “limited government.” Oreskes contends, “This runs very, very deep in American culture. It ties into an extraordinary individualism that you don’t generally see in other places in the world. We tend to be more resistant to collective action in the United States than people in other countries. And it ties into this very, very deep idea in American culture that the government that governs best governs least.”

Naomi Oreskes will explore the complexities of Americans’ denial of scientific findings and skepticism about science in her 2020–21 Cressman Lecture “Can Science Be Saved?” on Friday, March 12, 2021 at noon via Zoom. As Oreskes explains, “Many Americans think that we face a general crisis of trust in science. With the rejection of mask-wearing by many Americans—as well as many of our political leaders—it is easy to come to that conclusion. But evidence shows that the vast majority of Americans do, in fact, trust science. Scientists (along with doctors and nurses) remain among the most respected and trusted figures in American life. How—

Vien Truong has worked to bring equity, social justice, and climate justice to the front lines of the environmental movement and policy making. “Climate justice work is a fight for a new economy, a new democracy, a new relationship to the planet and to each other. When we win this fight, we will win the world that we want. The future is worth fighting for.”

Truong’s parents, nine siblings, and grandmother fled war-torn Vietnam in a boat, rowed 500 miles toward Macau, were intercepted and sent to a refugee camp where Truong was born. They came to Oregon and worked as migrant farm workers following the harvest across the state. Subsequently they moved to Oakland, California where her parents worked low-wage jobs in sweatshops while supporting their large family. Truong, who grew up amid the poverty and violence of 1980s Oakland, was the first in her family to attend college. She earned a BA at UC Berkeley and a JD at University of California’s Hastings College of Law. Deeply committed to her Oakland community, she works to bring resources for reducing pollution and creating the infrastructure for sustainable economic revitalization.

Truong serves as the Director of Climate justice advocate fights for the future continued on page 3

Vien Truong 2020–21 Tzedek Lecturer

Science historian explores skepticism about science continued on page 3

Naomi Oreskes 2020–21 Cressman Lecturer
Research Fellows

Kristen Bell, Law, “Philosophy of Punishment Behind Bars.”

Burke Hendrix, Political Science, “Allies, Not Subjects: American Indian Responses to American Republicanism, 1776-1934.”


Yvette Saavedra, Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, “Living la Mala Vida: Transgressive Femininities, Morality, and Nationalism in Mexican California, 1800-1850.”

Emily Scott, Environmental Studies and History of Art and Architecture, “Particulate Matters: on Air, Art, and Justice.”


Alternates


Katherine Kelp-Stebbins, English, “How Comics Travel.”

Teaching Fellows
Roy Chan, East Asian Languages and Literature, and Lanie Millar, Romance Languages, SPAN/CHN 199 The Chinese in Latin America. Coleman-Guitteau Professorship in the Humanities.

Corinne Bayerl, Comparative Literature and Clark Honors College, COLT 211 African American Writers in France. Coleman-Guitteau Professorship in the Humanities.


2021–22 OHC Faculty Fellows have been selected

Fellows give talks in winter term
January 22—“Running the Redwood Empire: Indigeneity, Modernity, and a 480-mile Footrace.” Tara Keegan, PhD candidate, History, and 2020-21 OHC Dissertation Fellow. Register: ow.ly/iVxS50CF4D4


February 5—“Revolutionary Melodrama: Tales of Family, Kinship, and the Nation of Modern China.” Shuangting Xiong, PhD candidate, East Asian Languages and Literatures, and 2020-21 OHC Dissertation Fellow. Register: ow.ly/DCkV50CF4LW


February 19—“The Formation of a Multicultural Mediterranean in Chateaubriand’s and Byron’s Works.” Fabienne Moore, Romance Languages, 2020-21 OHC Faculty Research Fellow. Register: ow.ly/FiyB50CF5fB

February 26—“Art and Work in the Greek Sculpture Industry.” Kristen Seaman, History of Art and Architecture, and 2020-21 OHC Faculty Research Fellow. Register: ow.ly/wrA450CF5o8

March 5—Earth Matters on Stage: Ecology, Environment and American Theater. Theresa May, Theatre Arts. Register: ow.ly/aKvj50CF5wo

Thank you for helping us reach our matching gift challenge goal of $20,000! And thanks to Amy and Alex Hauglind for their match.
Climate Justice for former presidential candidate Tom Steyer’s political action committee and is the principal of her firm, Truong & Associates, where she advises lawmakers, universities, and organizations globally on developing an inclusive workforce, creating sustainable economies, and equitable environmental policies. She formerly served as CEO of the Dream Corps, and led Green For All, a national initiative that puts communities of color at the forefront of the climate movement and equality at the center of environmental solutions. 

Truong co-led the coalition to pass and implement California’s Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (SB 535), creating the biggest fund in history for the poorest and most polluted communities. It has invested over $1.5B in disadvantaged communities most harmed by fossil fuel pollution, and served as a model that has been replicated in other states. Truong has received numerous congressional, state, regional, and local awards for her work advocating on behalf of those most vulnerable to climate change, including a White House Champion of Change award for her work on climate equity.

Truong’s lecture is free and open to the public. Registration is required to participate in the live Zoom event. Register at: ohc.uoregon.edu. The talk will be recorded and available for viewing on the OHC’s YouTube channel. For more information, contact ohc@uoregon.edu.

Undergraduate fellows announced

The Humanities Undergraduate Research Fellowship (HURF) Program, a collaboration between the Oregon Humanities Center, the Office of the Vice President for Research and Innovation, and the Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program, provides humanities undergraduate students with an opportunity to undertake a 16-week research project under the guidance of a UO faculty mentor during the winter and spring terms, and to present their work at the Undergraduate Research Symposium in May. During the fellowship period the cohort of fellows meets regularly to workshop their projects and participate in seminars on topics such as developing research skills; communicating research orally and in writing; understanding the ethics of research; and preparing for graduate school and/or other career opportunities.

2021 HURF Fellows


Bita Habashi, English, “The Representation of Middle Eastern Women Writers in High School Curricula.” Faculty mentor: Kara Clevinger.

Abigail Kellems, Music Composition, “The Impact of Diversity and Inclusion on Environmental Composers.” Faculty mentor: Robert Kyr.


Jude Stone, Political Science, “Racial Influence on Transgender Hate Crime Verdicts.” Faculty mentor: Alison Gash.

Maya Ward, Political Science, “Transgender Reproductive Care: Politics vs. People.” Faculty mentor: Krystale Littlejohn.

Alternate

Maxwell Ely, Journalism, Public Relations, and Political Science, “The Role of the Press Secretary During a Scandal.” Faculty mentor: David Markowitz.

“Bathsheba Demuth

2020–21 Clark Lecturer

“The Reindeer and the End of the World”

Tuesday, May 4, 2021
Performance artist Meredith Monk visits virtually

Jacqueline Cordova-Arrington, assistant professor of flute, has organized the School of Music and Dance’s 2021 Trotter Visiting Professor residency. Groundbreaking performance artist Meredith Monk will participate in a virtual residency February 20–26, 2021. Arrington’s goal was to devise an experience that would help students learn how to take creative risk in the arts. Originally developed in 2019, Arrington knew the topic was important, but she couldn’t imagine how significant this experience would be in 2021. Performers around the world are now asking themselves: What is the true purpose of the arts? How do my artistic and cultural values fit in a performance? Is a performance career viable in an age of pandemic, racial reckoning, and political unrest?

Meredith Monk is a composer, singer, director/choreographer, and creator of new opera, music-theater works, films, and installations. Recognized as one of the most unique and influential artists of our time, she is a pioneer in what is now called “extended vocal technique” and “interdisciplinary performance.” Monk creates works that thrive at the intersection of music and movement, image and object, light and sound, discovering and weaving together new modes of perception.

According to Arrington, “Meredith Monk’s contributions in the field of composition and interdisciplinary collaboration have paved the way for artists of various disciplines to explore identity and creative risk freely and successfully. The three major threads of Meredith’s success—creativity, perseverance, and risk—woven together, have produced a vitality that is directly aligned with the spirit of the School of Music and Dance, and is especially relevant to musicians reimagining their careers in light of our current historical landscape. I could not imagine anyone else guiding our students and community through such artistically challenging times. Meredith’s past and present creative work confirms that the creation of art is possible and necessary.”

Monk’s residency is cosponsored by the OHC’s Endowment for Public Outreach in the Arts, Sciences, and Humanities. Events will include a streamed concert, an interactive movement workshop titled “Dancing Voice Singing Bodies,” a live discussion with University of Oregon performance faculty, a conversation with SOMD faculty member Brian McWhorter about her most recent composition written during the pandemic Indra’s Net, and more. The event schedule, including times and updates, is forthcoming and will be available on the School of Music and Dance’s website music.uoregon.edu.