Climate change and other alterations to the Earth caused by human activity are often described in apocalyptic terms: as Armageddon, or the end of the world. Nowhere is this more true than in the Arctic, where the rates of warming are twice that of temperate regions and have been visible for decades.

Bathsheba Demuth will explore the Chukchi Peninsula, in far eastern Arctic Siberia, in her 2020–21 Clark Lecture “The Reindeer and the End of the World” on Tuesday, May 4, 2021 at noon (PDT) via Zoom.

The indigenous Chukchi people have traditionally been herdsmen and hunters of reindeer; those who live along the coasts of the Arctic Ocean, the Chukchi Sea, and the Bering Sea have customarily hunted sea mammals such as seals, whales, walruses, and sea lions.

Russia launched a series of vigorous military campaigns against the Chukchi in 1729. The Chukchi put up a ferocious resistance and, when surrounded, they frequently committed mass suicide rather than surrender. By the 1760s, the Russian government decided that the cost of vanquishing the Chukchi was too high in terms of money and troops and ended the war on the condition that the Chukchi cease attacking Russian settlers and pay the yasak (the yearly tax that native Siberians paid in furs).

In the 1930s, the Chukchi were continued on page 3
UO’s Prison Education Program wins Mellon grant

The University of Oregon’s Prison Education Program, directed by Shaul Cohen, received a $481,000 grant from the Mellon Foundation to increase its educational programming in prisons around the state. The award will build on the work the Prison Education Program has done since 2007 to serve incarcerated Oregonians and to offer UO students an opportunity to take classes in a range of subjects and to learn with and from their incarcerated classmates.

The award will fund three separate initiatives that will help increase access to higher education courses, lectures, and materials in facilities across Oregon.

The Prison Education Program will be able to train additional faculty members from the humanities to offer their classes in prisons, which enables the program to offer more courses and a greater depth of subject matter inside prison walls.

The funding will also allow the Prison Education Program to broadcast more UO programming on televisions throughout all 14 prisons in Oregon. The program has been airing an in-prison show and lectures since 2019.

In addition to the OHC, the program partners with the Wayne Morse Center for Law and Politics and the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art to give incarcerated Oregonians access to community programs that are recorded on campus. The award will also allow the program to hire a former inside student, who earned a bachelor’s degree through the UO while incarcerated, to manage Prison Education Program TV.

The third component of the Mellon award is a pilot program that will offer educational materials to incarcerated individuals in isolated settings within the prisons, including solitary confinement and mental health units.

The Prison Education Program grew out of the UO’s Inside-Out Program, started in 2007 by former OHC Director Steven Shankman, which offered credit courses that included a mix of UO students and incarcerated students. Hundreds of UO students and more than 1,000 incarcerated students have gone through the program since its inception. The UO program has grown to be one of the largest in the nation.

This story was excerpted from Around the O.

Former fellow awarded NEH grant

Tara Fickle, associate professor of English, has been awarded a 2021 NEH fellowship for her project “Behind Aiieeeee!: A New History of Asian American Literature.” The fellowship will fund the research, writing, and digital development of a book examining the publication history of one of the first anthologies of Asian American literature, Aiieeeee!

In the eyes of mid-twentieth-century white America, “Aiieeeee!”—so often seen on the silver screen and in comic books—was the one-dimensional cry of Asian America, their singular expression of all emotions—it signified and perpetuated the idea of Asian Americans as inscrutable, foreign, self-hating, undesirable, and obedient. Aiieeeee! is an anthology published in 1974. The editors reclaimed that shout, outlining the history of Asian American literature and boldly drawing the boundaries for what was truly Asian American and what was white puppetry. The third edition was published in 2019 with a new foreword written by Fickle.

“Behind Aiieeeee!?” gives readers, especially students, the resources and contextual information they need to fully appreciate Aiieeeee! and the field of Asian American cultural production more broadly. This will be done through a combination of traditional and non-traditional media platforms, including a scholarly monograph and a series of critical essays. At the heart of the project is a digital humanities component, in the form of a digital edition and companion.

Fickle was a 2017–18 OHC Ernest G. Moll Faculty Research Fellow. That project led to the publication of her first monograph The Race Card: From Gaming Technologies to Model Minorities (NYU Press, 2019), which explores how games have been used to establish and combat Asian American racial stereotypes. The book won the 2020 American Book Award given by the Before Columbus Foundation.
forced into Soviet economic collectives which disrupted their indigenous lifestyles. The Chukchi Peninsula became a region of mines and gulags. It’s a place that has experienced radical changes with Russian contact, the founding of the Soviet Union, and then with its dissolution.

Weaving a story of devoted Bolsheviks, Chukchi nomads, and herds of reindeer, Demuth will ask what kinds of narratives suit the empirical experience of radical change, what is lost when we emphasize rupture, and what is gained by paying attention to the ruins left by past ways of living as we face a transformed Arctic and planet.

Bathsheba Demuth is an assistant professor of History and Environment and Society at Brown University. She is an environmental historian, specializing in the lands and seas of the Russian and North American Arctic. She is interested in how the histories of people, ideas, places, and non-human species intersect. Her interest in northern environments and cultures began when she was 18 and moved north of the Arctic Circle in the Yukon. For over two years, Demuth mushed huskies, hunted caribou, fished for salmon, tracked bears, and otherwise learned to survive in the taiga and tundra.

Demuth’s book Floating Coast: An Environmental History of the Bering Strait, published in 2019, offers a comprehensive history of Beringia, the Arctic land and waters stretching from Russia to Canada. These frigid lands and waters became the site of an ongoing experiment: How, under conditions of extreme scarcity, would modern ideologies of capitalism and communism control and manage the resources they craved?

Demuth’s lecture is free and open to the public. Registration is required to participate in the live Zoom event. Register at [phc.uoregon.edu](http://phc.uoregon.edu). The talk will be recorded and available for viewing on the OHC’s YouTube channel. For more information contact [phc@uoregon.edu](mailto:phc@uoregon.edu).

### Faculty advocate for the humanities

Six UO humanities faculty participated in the 2021 [National Humanities Alliance](https://www.nationalhumanitiesalliance.org) (NHA) Humanities Advocacy Day on March 10th, asking Congressional staff for funding to support federally funded humanities research programs such as the National Endowment for the Humanities. These budgets are funded annually through appropriations passed by Congress. Participants included Tara Fickle, English; Nathalie Hester, Romance Languages; Daniel Rosenberg, Honors College; Maram Epstein, East Asian Languages and Literatures; Riki Saltzman, Oregon Folklife Network; and David de Lorenzo, Special Collections and University Archives.

Senator Jeff Merkley (D-OR) now chairs the appropriations subcommittee with jurisdiction over NEH, NEA, the National Archives, and other small independent programs for the arts and humanities, giving the state of Oregon important visibility on these funding issues.

In addition, David de Lorenzo and an Oregon community college faculty member joined representatives from Princeton, Vanderbilt, and the University of Iowa to meet with the staff director to Senator Merkley’s subcommittee. He appreciated meeting the Oregon constituents.

In past years, UO has had only one or two participants in the annual NHA meeting and follow-up advocacy day. The cost of travel coupled with the timing during dead week or finals has been a barrier to attendance. This year’s virtual event led to increased participation. Membership in the NHA is funded by the UO President’s Office.
Stephon Alexander blends the worlds of theoretical physics and jazz music

Stephon Alexander, professor of Physics at Brown University and the President of the National Society of Black Physicists will give a talk “What a Scientist Learned from Jazz about Innovation” on Thursday, April 22, 2021 at 4 p.m. (PDT) via Zoom as a guest of the UO Physics Department. The event will be hosted by the OHC and sponsored by the OHC’s Endowment for Public Outreach in the Arts, Sciences, and Humanities.

Alexander, who was born in Trinidad and moved the U.S. at eight, is a theoretical physicist specializing in cosmology, particle physics, and quantum gravity (String Theory and Loop Quantum Gravity). He has held previous appointments at Stanford University, Imperial College, Penn State, Dartmouth, and Haverford College. He is Executive Director of the Harlem Gallery of Science and an Affiliate Professor in Africana Studies at Brown.

Alexander, a jazz saxophonist, also explores interconnections between music, physics, mathematics, and technology though recordings, performance, teaching, and public lectures. He has performed and collaborated with Will Calhoun, Brian Eno, Marc Cary, Vernon Reid, Ronnie Burrage, and Jaron Lanier. He authored the book *The Jazz of Physics: The Secret Link Between Music and the Structure of the Universe* published in 2017, which uses jazz to answer physics’ most vexing questions about the past and future of the universe. Following the great minds that first drew the links between music and physics—a list including Pythagoras, Kepler, Newton, Einstein, and Rakim—*The Jazz of Physics* reveals that the ancient poetic idea of the “Music of the Spheres,” clarifies confounding issues in physics.

The lecture is free and open to the public. The Zoom link will be posted at [ohc.uoregon.edu](http://ohc.uoregon.edu) on April 20.