American Resource Center Newsletter
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Public Lecture: Whose Voices Do U.S. Presidents Listen to on Immigration Policy? by Fulbright Bicentennial Professor Mark Miller

Please join us for a free public lecture by Fulbright Bicentennial Professor Mark Miller on **Tuesday, February 24, at 5 pm**. The lecture will be held at **the Kaisa Library auditorium (7th floor.)** The lecture ends the 6-part lecture series on immigration and minorities in the American culture that was arranged by the Department of World Cultures at Helsinki University and the American Resource Center.

Welcome!

February Is Black History Month

To commemorate and celebrate the contributions to the American nation made by people of African descent, American historian Carter G. Woodson established Black History Week. The first celebration occurred on Feb. 12, 1926.

For many years, the second week of February was set aside for this celebration to coincide with the birthdays of abolitionist/editor Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln. In 1976, as part of the nation's bicentennial, the week was expanded into Black History Month. Each year, U.S. presidents proclaim February as National African-American History Month.

African-Americans by the Numbers (from the U.S. Census Bureau)

45.0 million: The number of blacks, either alone or in combination with one or more other races, on July 1, 2013, up 1.0 percent from July 1, 2012.

74.5 million: The projected black, either alone or in combination, population of the United States (including those of more than one race) for July 1, 2060. On that date, according to the projection, blacks would constitute 17.9 percent of the nation's total population.

3.7 million: The black population in New York, which led all states as of July 1, 2013. Texas had the largest numeric increase since 2012 (78,000). The District of Columbia had the highest percentage of blacks (51.0 percent), followed by Mississippi (38.1 percent).

1.3 million: Cook County, Ill. (Chicago) had the largest black population of any county in 2013 (1.3 million), and Harris, Texas (Houston) had the largest numeric increase since 2012 (18,000). Holmes, Miss., was the county with the highest percentage of blacks in the nation (83.2 percent).

WebPicks

collected by the ARC staff

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American Life

All About the Hamiltons by Rebecca Mead. The New Yorker, February 9, 2015.
A new musical brings the Founding Fathers back to life—with a lot of hip-hop.
http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/02/09/hamiltons

The Death of the Artist—and the Birth of the Creative Entrepreneur by William Deresiewicz. The Atlantic, January/February 2015.
Hard-working artisan, solitary genius, credentialed professional—the image of the artist has changed radically over the centuries. What if the latest model to emerge means the end of art as we have known it?
http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/01/the-death-of-the-artist-and-the-birth-of-the-creative-entrepreneur/383497/

In the Land of the Possible by Evan Osnos. The New Yorker, December 22&29, 2014.
Samantha Power has the President's ear. To what end? http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/12/22/land-possible

Inside the Buzz-Fueled Media Startups Battling for Your Attention by Mat Honan. Wired, January 2015.
Fast, loud, and mostly true. How a new breed of startups is waging a war for your attention. http://www.wired.com/2014/12/new-media-2/

Might At The Museum by Bob Colacello. Vanity Fair, February 2015.
The Metropolitan Museum of Art's big, new move into 20th-century art—propelled by Leonard Lauder's recent $1 billion gift of 81 Cubist masterpieces—is altering the balance of power among New York's biggest museums, a change compounded by the Whitney's relocation downtown and the Museum of Modern Art's controversial expansion plans. Sorting through talk of a growing rivalry between the Met and MoMA for artworks, board members, and prestige, Bob Colacello uncovers the forces at work. http://ow.ly/IZ9P1

The New Modesty in Literary Criticism by Jeffrey J. Williams. The Chronicle of Higher Education, January 5, 2015.
The literary critic is no longer like a detective who doesn't trust the suspect but more the social scientist who describes the manifest statements of a text. http://chronicle.com/article/The-New-Modesty-in-Literary/150993/

The New Republic: A Public Trust Or a Business? by John B. Judis. Columbia Journalism Review, January/February 2015.
How Chris Hughes turned a 100-year-old publication into a "product". http://www.cjr.org/behind_the_news/the_new_republic_chris_hughes.php

The Power of Congress by Sam Tanenhaus. The New Yorker, January 19, 2015.
Before L.B.J., progressives saw bipartisanship as a blight. What happened? http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/01/19/power-congress

Pulp's Big Moment by Louis Menand. The New Yorker, January 5, 2015.
How Emily Brontë met Mickey Spillane. The paperback revolution. http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/01/05/pulps-big-moment

Teach or Perish by Jacques Berlinerblau. The Chronicle Review, January 19, 2015.
My undergraduates' career plans are a peculiar mix of naked ambition and hair-shirt altruism. If they pursue investment banking, they do so not merely to make money. Rather, they wish to use their eventual wealth to distribute solar light bulbs to every resident of a developing nation. They'll apply to the finest law schools in hopes of some day judging war criminals at The Hague. Countless want to code. They dream of engineering an app that will make tequila flow out of thin air into your outstretched shot glass. My students, I suspect, are receiving their professional advice from a council of emojis. http://chronicle.com/article/Teach-or-Perish/151187/

Economy & Politics

The Democrats in Opposition by Harold Meyerson. The American Prospect, February 3, 2015.
Where should the Democrats go now? Losing both houses of Congress frees them to function as an opposition party, not just to the Republicans, but to a political economy that serves fewer and fewer Americans.
http://prospect.org/article/democrats-opposition

Europe's Intensifying Immigration Debate by Tino Sanandaji. National Review, January 12, 2015.
Immigration chaos brings down Sweden's libertarian Right.
http://www.nationalreview.com/article/396177/europes-intensifying-immigration-debate-tino-sanandaji

Is China Coming Down to Earth? by Brian Bremner. Bloomberg Businessweek, January 22, 2015.
The total debt of the world's No. 2 economy is roughly $18 trillion, or about 200 percent of GDP.
http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-01-22/china-s-risks-in-shedding-debt-fueled-investment-led-growth

The Many Causes of America's Decline in Crime by Inimai M. Chettiar. The Atlantic, February 11, 2015.
The dramatic rise of incarceration and the precipitous fall in crime have shaped the landscape of American criminal justice over the last two decades. Both have been unprecedented. Many believe that the explosion in incarceration created the crime drop. In fact, the enormous

growth in imprisonment only had a limited impact. And, for the past thirteen years, it has passed the point of diminishing returns, making no effective difference. We now know that we can reduce our prison populations and simultaneously reduce crime.
http://www.theatlantic.com/features/archive/2015/02/the-many-causes-of-americas-decline-in-crime/385364/

Policy Priorities for the 114th Congress by Cato Institute. White Paper, February 4, 2015.
Pundits have lately been declaring the 112th and 113th Congresses the "least productive" in recent history. Why, they passed fewer than 600 laws between them! One leading writer even called the 113th "by just about every measure, the worst Congress ever," surely overlooking the Congresses that passed, for instance, the Fugitive Slave Act, the Indian Removal Act, the internment of the Japanese Americans, Prohibition, conscription, or indeed the income tax. http://www.cato.org/publications/white-paper/policy-priorities-114th-congress#gPQER6:zvp

Global Challenges

The U.S. will be the Chair of the Arctic Council from May 2015 through May 2017. We will be highlighting Arctic issues in the Global Challenges section of the WebPicks.

Critics of Oxfam's Poverty Statistics Are Missing the Point by Vauhini Vara. The New Yorker, January 28, 2015
How poor is poor? The global wealth gap is real, and worse than we think. http://ow.ly/IZ9FD

In 10 Years, No One In Helsinki Will Even Want to Own a Car: 3 Simple Ideas That Are Making Cities Sustainable by Shannan Stoll. Yes! Magazine, January 15, 2015.
An app that combines the affordability of ride sharing with the reliability of taxis. Playgrounds built as sponges for reusable greywater. From Finland to California, the cities of the future are here. http://ow.ly/IZ9Am

Introducing The Post's New Energy and Environment Online Section.
Washington Post recently launched a new energy and environment online section. It will deconstruct these issues with an audience of consumers, policymakers, executives and scientists in mind — in the United States and around the world. If you are interested in these issues, be sure to bookmark this section. http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/energy-environment/

Arctic Issue: Obama Administration to Propose New Wilderness Protections in Arctic Refuge — Alaska Republicans Declare War by Juliet Eilperin. Washington Post, January 26, 2015.
The Obama administration will propose setting aside more than 12 million acres in Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge as wilderness, the White House announced Sunday, halting any chance of oil exploration for now in the refuge's much-fought-over coastal plain and sparking a fierce battle with Republicans, including the new chair of the Senate Energy Committee. http://ow.ly/IZ9bm

Solar Parking Lots Sound like a Great Idea. Why Aren't They Catching On? by Rowena Lindsay. The Christian Science Monitor, January 28, 2015.
Solar canopies over parking lots would help reduce energy costs and work toward ending urban island effect. What is preventing this practical application of solar energy from becoming mainstream? http://ow.ly/IZ90I

The Troll Hunters by Adrian Chen. MIT Technology Review, December 18, 2014.
We've come up with the term "troll" for someone who spreads hate and does horrible things anonymously on the Internet. Internet trolls are unsettling not just because of the things they say but for the mystery they represent: what kind of person could be so vile? Swedish journalist Aschberg sat face to face with an Internet troll, trying to answer this question. http://www.technologyreview.com/photoessay/533426/the-troll-hunters/

International Relations

5 Reasons Arming Ukraine Won't Work by Paul J. Saunders. National Interest, February 12, 2015.
With Secretary of State John Kerry joining incoming Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter as well as Republican Senators John McCain and Lindsey Graham in publicly supporting U.S. efforts to supply lethal arms to Ukraine's government to aid it in its war against separatist rebels and Russian troops in eastern Ukraine, it may look like a bipartisan consensus is emerging behind the idea. http://ow.ly/IZabv

E-Stonia and the Future of the Cyberstate: Virtual Governments Come Online by Eric B. Schnurer. Foreign Affairs, January 28, 2015.
Last December, Estonia took the unprecedented step of offering any person in the world a chance to become an Estonian e-resident, a title that grants the holder access to many of the country's top-notch online government services. Acquiring this status would allow, say, an Indian entrepreneur to establish an Estonian company that he runs from Dubai but which does the bulk of its business in Spain; he'd also be able to use his electronic signature to execute contracts with customers throughout the European Union—and pay no taxes by keeping his profits in Estonia. No wonder that 13,000 people have signed up to beta-test the program in its first nine weeks of operation.
http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/142825/eric-b-schnurer/e-stonia-and-the-future-of-the-cyberstate

The Fight for Mosul: Learning from the Past by Renad Mansour. Carnegie Article, February 11, 2015.
The Islamic State will only be ousted from Iraq's second largest city if Sunni tribal forces join the fight. That will require rebuilding their trust in Baghdad. Mosul, Iraq's second largest city, has been occupied by the self-proclaimed Islamic State since June 2014. The situation for its residents, Moslawis, is deteriorating, and the isolated city has two to four hours of running water and electricity per week and no functioning Internet or mobile phone networks. It is, moreover, becoming a staging ground for Islamic State radicalization.
http://carnegie-mec.org/2015/02/11/fight-for-mosul-learning-from-past/i23h

How I Learned to Love the Draft by Joseph Epstein. The Atlantic, December 28, 2014.
A veteran of the Cold War–era draft argues that once again sharing the burden of defending the country would produce better foreign policy—and better Americans. http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/01/how-i-learned-to-love-the-draft/383500/

State Sponsor of Terror: The Global Threat of Iran by Daniel L. Byman. Brookings Blogs, February 11, 2015.
Iran's leaders have used terrorism since they took power in 1979. Over 35 years later, Iran continues to use terrorism and to work with an array of violent substate groups that use terrorism among other tactics. http://ow.ly/IZaeL

Study Guides Collection DVDs

Are you familiar with our Study Guides Collection yet? A collection consisting of dozens of books that prepare you for SAT, IELTS, TOEFL, and other tests, and include materials on American universities and studying in the U.S., are available for homeloan from the ARC.

We have recently added two DVD sets to the collection. *Upgrade Your Writing* and *Writing a Great Research Paper*, both consisting of 10 parts, introduce you to the world of writing. *Upgrade Your Writing* series makes it easier than ever to develop basic writing skills: it helps middle school students through adults (especially challenged learners requiring remediation) take their written communication to the next level.

Writing a Great Research Paper series is a step-by-step guide to constructing a paper that's technically correct, refreshingly original, and truly compelling. With this user-friendly series, you can: recognize the value of true scholarship; master essential research techniques; dramatically improve your writing; and keep yourself motivated, productive, and relaxed throughout the entire process.

The strategies you'll learn will apply to any research paper assignment - in high school, college, graduate school, and beyond.

http://finland.usembassy.gov/video-collection.html

Scoop-It Arctic Issues

Arctic Issues

The United States will be the Chair of the Arctic Council from May 2015 through May 2017. The ARC will be monitoring Arctic-related articles and reports closely, and will be adding them on the Global Challenges section of the WebPicks.

We have also recently launched a Scoop.It page dedicated solely on monitoring Arctic-related materials. The page will be updated regularly and is available at www.scoop.it/t/arctic-by-americanresourcecenter

Image: Ice ridges in the Beaufort Sea off the northern coast of Alaska, Spring 1949. U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Did You Know?

George Washington's Birthday is celebrated as a federal holiday on the third Monday in February. It is one of eleven permanent holidays established by Congress.

George Washington was born in Virginia on February 11, 1731, according to the then-used Julian calendar. In 1752, however, Britain and all its colonies adopted the Gregorian calendar which moved Washington's birthday a year and 11 days to February 22, 1732.

This year George Washington's Birthday is celebrated on February 16. The U.S. Embassy Finland is closed but the ARC remains open. Welcome!

Read more at http://www.archives.gov/legislative/features/washington/

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