TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25

“Math Education Shocks: How She’s Open an Anthropology Store!”
Adventures on the Road Less-Academically Traveled
Marya Rapp, Professor of Anthropology

Professor Rapp was closed out of her first choice social science courses and ended up in an anthropology class instead. More than a half-century later, the reflections on the personal and professional consequences of choosing a “small” major that took her on big journeys. Professor Rapp explores the parallels of participating in village life in southern France, in international reproductive rights projects, in American genetics and neuroscience labs, and in the expanding world of disabilities studies. This lecture highlights research and activist projects as they have informed her life as an anthropologist.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 18

Tumor Inequality: Competition and Cooperation among Malignant Cells
Carlos Carmo-Fonseca, Assistant Professor of Biology

Tumors have regions with extremely unequal access to vital resources such as oxygen, glucose, and amino acids. While cells close to the vasculature are well-nourished, distant regions are deprived of nutrition, causing them to starve. Professors Carmo-Fonseca presents an overview of how the causes and consequences of this inequality are studied and how it affects malignant tumor cells.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 24

Changing our Minds: Decision-Making across Development
Catherine Hartley, Assistant Professor of Psychology

How do we make good things happen and avoid bad things? Discovering which actions are beneficial and which are not is a major part of psychological research. However, over the course of development, we accomplish these goals by different means. Professor Hartley presents findings illustrating developmental changes in the learning processes that guide motivated behavior. She discusses the underlying changes in the brain that give rise to these changes and the determinants of learning reflect adaptations to an individual’s particular circumstances.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 1

Anti-immigrant Rage and the Shifting Politics of White Identity
Cristina Beltrán, Associate Professor of Social and Cultural Analysis

Beltrán focuses on works of political theory, cultural studies, and anthropology to explain why immigration, particularly unauthorized or “illegal” immigration, has emerged as one of the most salient issues in contemporary US politics. Even though immigrants and immigration are generally viewed positively and the issue ranks low as a priority for most, for a specific segment of Republicans, immigration (particularly unauthorized immigration) is a key contributor to their political support. The ways this happened and the implications for shaping future political processes are the focus of this lecture.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 8

When do kids learn about batteries? The Physics of Our Cars and Electric Vehicles
Alexis Jerschow, Professor of Chemistry

When and why do batteries fail? This is a surprisingly difficult question. High-profile disasters such as Samsung’s Note 7 battery fiasco highlight the fact that technological advances critically depend on the availability of reliable electrical power storage. One problem is the lack of good and detailed models for understanding what determines the health of a battery. Professor Jerschow outlines his vision for a new, nondestructive diagnostic tool based on magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) that can be fast, safe, and non-invasive. It currently unavailable. This technique could help increase battery safety. Furthermore, this research provides a route to the development of next-generation energy storage devices.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 29

Challenges and Counterfactual Sentences
Lucas Champollion, Associate Professor of Linguistics

Imagine a light bulb connected to two switches, A and B. The light is on if switch A is on. Then the two switches are the same (both up or both down), otherwise it is off. Right now the two switches are up and the light is on. Do you agree with the following sentences?

if switch A or switch B is up, the light would be on.

if switch A and switch B were not both up, the light would be off.

if switch A is up then the light is on. Otherwise it is off.

Do you agree with the following sentences?

(1) If switch A or switch B was down, the light would be off.

(2) If switch A and switch B were both down, the light would be off.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 6

NGOs: The Role of Nonprofit Organizations on the Global Scene
Erica S. May, Associate Professor in the Practice of Economics

NGOs, or nonprofit organizations, have become an increasingly important part of the global economy. They play a crucial role in addressing social and environmental issues. This lecture explores the role of NGOs in promoting social justice, providing aid, and advocating for sustainable development.

SCHOLARS LECTURE SERIES

Irving H. Jay Lowel Lecture Hall, Silver Center for Arts and Science
31 Washington Place

All lectures are scheduled from 5:00-6:00 pm.
Rayna Rapp is Professor of Anthropology. She received her Ph.D. in Anthropology from the University of Michigan. She has published four books and over eighty articles on gender, the politics of reproduction, medical anthropology, and science studies as author, editor, or co-editor. Her latest book, Testing Women, Testing the Fetus: The Social Impact of Amniocentesis in America (Routledge, 1999), received multiple awards. She is currently completing a book with Taya Sebary entitled, Disability Worlds: Creating the “New Normal” Since the Passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Martin H. Abegglen is Assistant Professor of Public Health Nutrition at the NYU College of Global Public Health. She also holds a joint appointment as a Fulbright Scholar at the Department of Population Health. She received her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from Yale University. Professor Abegglen’s research focuses on identifying and affecting environmental and social factors associated with obesity, food choice, and marketing disparities. Her research was funded by the NIH Early Independence Award. She has also testified on various food policy proposals within the NYC Council, NY State Assembly, and NYC Department of Health. Her work has been covered by The Associated Press and CNN.

Carlos Camonna-Fontaine is Assistant Professor of Biology and member of the Center for Genomics and Systems Biology. He received his Ph.D. in Cell and Developmental Biology from University College London, UK. The main focus of his lab is to understand how cells organize to form multiscale structures and to coordinate in collective processes. Prior to joining NYU, Professor Camonna-Fontaine was an independent research fellow at the Computational Biology Program at the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center. He received a K99/R00 Pathway to Independence award during his postdoctoral research and was awarded the Beddington Medal for his doctoral studies.

Catherine Helbling is Assistant Professor of Psychology. She received her Ph.D. in Psychology from NYU. Professor Helbling’s research examines how learning and decision-making change as the brain develops from childhood to adulthood. Her research has been published in prestigious journals including Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, Nature Communications, and Psychological Science. She is the recipient of the NSF CAREER Award, the Klingenstein-Simons Fellowship in Neuroscience, the Jacobs Foundation Early Career Fellowship, and the Association for Psychological Science Janet Taylor Lappe Award.

Cristina Beltran is Associate Professor of Social and Cultural Analysis and Director of Graduate Studies. She received her Ph.D. in Political Science from Rutgers University. Her research focuses on modern and contemporary political theory, Latinx and U.S. ethnic/racial politics, and feminist and queer theory. She is author of The Trouble with Unity: Latinx Politics and the Creation of Identity (Oxford University Press, 2015), which received numerous awards including the American Political Science Association’s Ralph Bunche Award and Cuba’s Casa de las Americas prize for the best book on Latinxs in the United States. Her second book, Presencia, Líos, and Bajar: Sexual Desire in Punchinello Times is forthcoming in 2019.

Alexey Jershov is a Professor of Chemistry and Director of Undergraduate Studies. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Ljubljana, Slovenia, and came to NYU after postdoctoral research at the University of Lausanne, Switzerland, and UC Berkeley. His research focuses on the development of magnetic resonance methodology from medical to materials science applications. He has published numerous articles in prestigious journals and received the CAS Golden Dragon Teaching Award in 2019. Recently, Professor Jershov has been awarded the Diamond Jubilee Visiting Fellowship at the University of Southampton in the UK.

Lucas Chamollin is Assistant Professor of Linguistics. He received his Ph.D. in Linguistics from the University of Pennsylvania. He teaches introductory undergraduate courses in linguistics, semantics, and natural language processing as well as graduate classes on semantics. His research focuses on the meaning of logical words like “and,” “or,” and “if” as they are used and understood by ordinary speakers of English. He uses techniques from semantics, philosophy, and computer science to study language. He is the author of Parts of a Whole: Continuity as a Bridge Between Aspect and Measurement (Oxford University Press, 2018).

Robyn d’Avignon is Assistant Professor of History. She received her Ph.D. in Anthropology and History from the University of Michigan. An ethnographer and historian, Professor d’Avignon conducts research on conflicts over natural resources, scientific research, and de-colonization in colonial and post-colonial Francophone West Africa. At NYU, she teaches classes on African History of all time periods, nature and technology in the modern world, and on the relationship between Africa and NYU. Her book project—Shaker Geology: The Search for Subterranean Knowledge in West Africa—explores the pre-colonial and colonial roots of ongoing debates over the rights of agrarian households to mine gold.

David Kanter is Assistant Professor of Environmental Studies. He received his Ph.D. in Science, Technology, and Environmental Policy from Princeton University. His research focuses on the interconnected challenges of nitrogen pollution, sustainable agriculture, and climate change. He has written numerous articles on the relationship between environmental and economic issues. Prior to NYU, Professor Kanter was a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Earth Institute at Columbia University.

Maureen Mohar is Associate Professor of Music. She received her Ph.D. in Anthropology from NYU. Among other things, her research focuses on African American music and culture and the construction and performance of race and gender in music. She is the author of Right to Rock: The Grateful Dead Coalition and the Cultural Politics of Race (Duke University Press, 2004) and of several articles in journals such as American Ethnologist, Journal of Popular Music Studies, Women and Music: A Journal of Gender and Culture, and the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum website. She received a 2013–14 Fordham Fellowship for her research on the contribution of African American women such as Big Mama Thornton, the Shirelles, and Tina Turner among others to rock. Her book on the subject, Beyond Brown Sugar: Voices of African American Women in Rock and Roll, 1952–2004, is under contract with Duke University Press.

Theo Ly is Associate Professor of Social and Cultural Analysis. She received her Ph.D. in American Studies from NYU. Her research focuses on the relationship between culture, economy, social networks, and immigration and labor studies. She is the author of The Beautiful Game: Asian American Men, American Dreams, and Fashion (Duke University Press, 2010) and co-editor of both All Americans: Popular Culture, Global Migration, and the Color Line (University of Tennessee Press, 2007) and Technofuturist: Race, Technology and Everyday Life (NYU, 2020).

Kimberly Meisel is Associate Professor of Economics. He received his Ph.D. in Economics from MIT. He teaches and works in the field of econometrics, where he studies how to learn about economic agents’ motives in situations with strategic interaction. He has written numerous articles on game-theoretic models, matching markets, and economic networks. He has also been working on various statistical problems concerning, e.g., causality, data exhibiting non-standard forms of dependence, inference when it is impossible to learn about key aspects of a problem.