

Selim Center

for Lifelong Learning

Learning Post October 2026



A Message from the Director:

"You made us need to think harder." As one of our instructors, Libby Starling, concluded her series on the Federal Reserve and housing affordability, that was the response that first came to mind for me. Instead of an easy sense of what to do to "solve" the problem of housing affordability--or who to blame for it--the series left me with a deep appreciation of the complex, multifaceted process of explaining causes and making change.

As we approach the midpoint in our fall programming, this embrace of the richly nuanced has been a consistent theme across our series thus far. The complexities grow even deeper when related problems emerge in different series. To stay with housing, for example: if changing rates of home ownership are products of economic conditions and lending rates, how might they also reflect and produce a political environment that reduces local connection and (to quote from our "Polarized Politics" series) "narrows political engagement down to partisanship"? Or, in the humanities: does the ambiguity of Job's response to trauma (from Dan Pioske's series) inform how the "right to trauma" has shaped political recognition in human rights discourse (from James Dawes' series)? In a world that prioritizes the "key takeaway" (in increasingly simplified forms) as a means to hold our attention and direct our action, one of the Selim Center's enduring commitments is to complexity. Our thematic emphasis for this fall, "the work unfinished," asks us to consider that thinking harder can be a great way to make your brain happy at any stage of life and learning.

Allow me to highlight two programs in particular that ask us to consider complex questions that span and even transcend lifetimes. First, on October 29 from 11:45-1:00pm, Dr. Yohuru Williams will lead Selim Center lifelong learners and UST students in a gallery tour of "What We Inherit," a traveling exhibition on the lives and multigenerational legacies of the 314 people held as slaves and sold by the Jesuit order that founded Georgetown University. This program is free for the Selim Center community, but please do register on our website or by informing us via email or in person that you plan to attend.

Second, on November 4, our Tommie Give Day donor appreciation event will focus on "American Veterans in Perspective" in collaboration with the Karon Veterans Resource Center at St. Thomas. After a brief introduction to the relationship between military service and the American population in different historical contexts, a panel of five veterans whose service spans more than five decades will speak with Veterans Center director and Army veteran Norman Ferguson on how they experienced--and remember--their military service, relationship to civilian life, and understanding of their own veteranhood. Ultimately, the program will ask: what continuities do military veterans share across generations, and in what aspects have the identities and experiences of veterans changed over time? Registration for this program is included with any donation to the Selim Center's annual giving campaign made this fall.

With programs like these still to commence as well as those currently in progress, the Selim Center offers many opportunities this fall to explore important topics through complex questions. We hope that you'll tell us what connections within and across our programs provoke important questions for you!

-Dr. David Williard, Selim Center Director

In This Edition



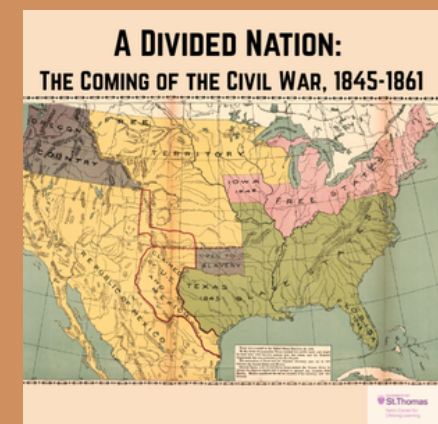
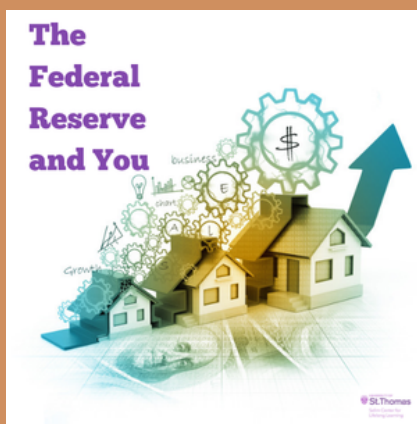
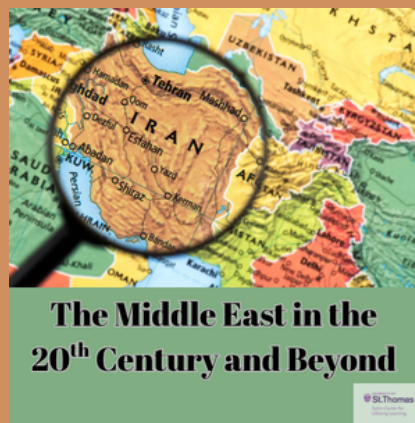
- A message from the Director
- Fall programs
- Campus events
- Good Grief UST
- Tommie Give Day



Contact Information

Selim Center for Lifelong Learning
MAIL OEC 109
2115 Summit Avenue
Saint Paul, MN 55105
Phone: 651-962-5188
email: selimcenter@stthomas.edu
website: www.stthomas.edu/selim-center

Fall 2026 Programs!



Starting Soon



The Middle East in the 20th Century and Beyond

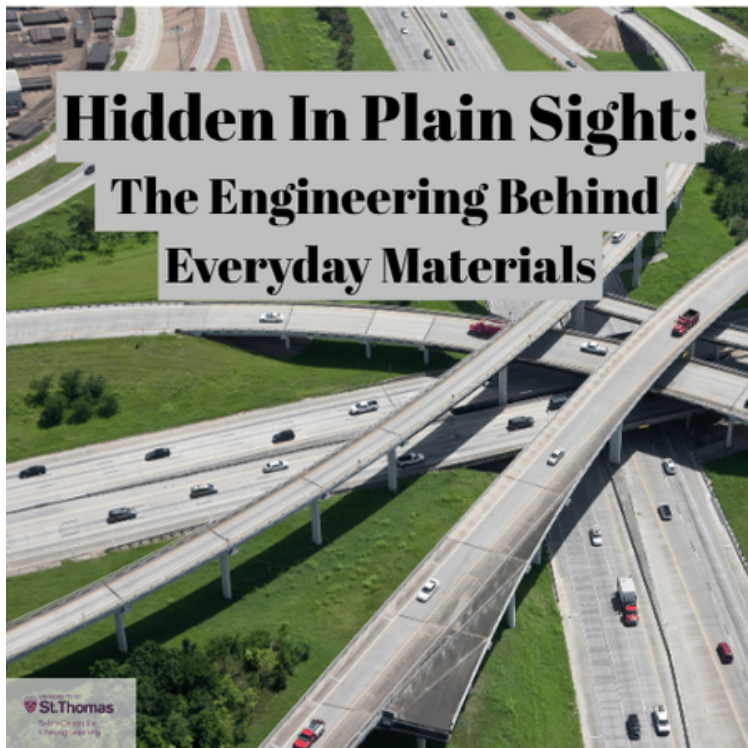


The Middle East in the 20th Century and Beyond with Professor Shaherzad Ahmadi

Tuesdays, October 13th, 20th & 27th

11:45am-1:15pm

In this series, held over the noon hour to promote intergenerational attendance, Professor Shaherzad Ahmadi (Associate Professor of History, University of St. Thomas) will explain how global currents of economic and political change created the national identities and regional politics of the modern Middle East. This story of revolutionary transformation and conservative resistance challenges many assumptions about how both peoples and states encountered the problems of modernization, Western influences, Cold War tensions, and the relationship of religion to politics and everyday life.



Hidden In Plain Sight: The Engineering Behind Everyday Materials



Hidden in Plain Sight: The Engineering Behind Everyday Materials with Dr. Rita Lederle

Wednesday, October 21

1-2:45pm

Come learn what they are really doing when they close your road and why we can't seem to get rid of potholes!

Starting in October



World War II in China with Dr. Connor Mills

October 22, 29 & November 5

10:00-11:45am

For Americans, the Chinese theater of World War II can too often be regarded as a sideshow to more decisive campaigns. Yet the war in China began earliest (in 1931), lasted longest (14 years), produced among the highest human costs, and involved a bewildering array of belligerents. For Japan, China was the principal objective of imperial ambition, and more than 75% of all Japanese Army personnel deployed during World War II would fight in the Chinese campaigns. Moreover, the war in China yielded consequences of profound significance for the global 20th century and fundamentally influenced the origins and course of the Cold War.

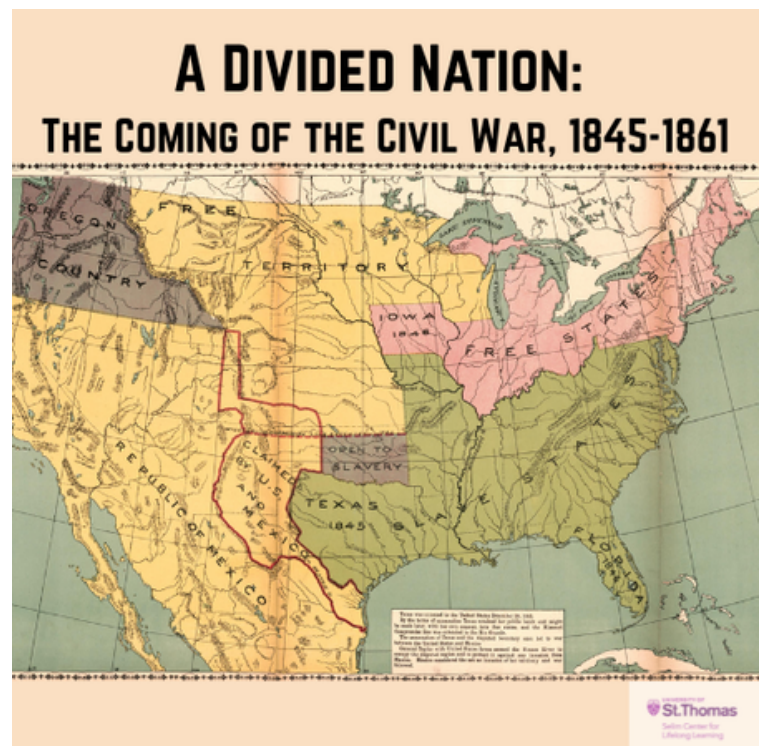


A Divided Nation: The Coming of the Civil War with Dr. David Williard

October 22, 29 & November 5

1:00pm-2:45pm

Explaining how an optimistic American public whose economy and borders were relentlessly expanding and whose political tensions seemed to have been effectively suppressed charted a course that ended in the bloodiest and most revolutionary conflict that the United States has ever witnessed poses a challenge for both historians and for public memory. This three-part series will integrate contingent political and institutional developments with explanations stemming from broader cultural and economic conditions, beginning with the invasion of Mexico in 1845 and culminating with the declaration of an insurrection by President Lincoln in April 1861.



October 28th Special Event



The State of Cancer Research: What We Know and Where We Might Go with Dr. Alpay Temiz

**Wednesday, October 28th
1:00pm-2:45pm**

In this special program, Dr. Alpay Temiz will introduce us to recent breakthroughs in genomics and bioinformatics that have produced substantial progress in identifying genetic markers and gene sequencing in the vast field of cancer research. He will then address how computational algorithms and artificial intelligence may accelerate or even transform cancer research in both genetic modeling and diagnostics and also highlight some of the durable problems within cancer science that remain resistant to breakthroughs.

This program is given in honor of Dr. Al Levitan, longtime friend, generous supporter, and lifelong learner at the Selim Center for Lifelong Learning.

Donor Appreciation Event



Veterans in Perspective: A special collaboration between the Selim Center and the Karon Veterans' Resource Center
Wednesday, November 4th
1:00pm-2:45pm

This year's annual supporter appreciation event focuses on veterans and veteranhood in the United States. Developed in partnership with the Karon Family Veterans' Resource Center, our program will feature US military servicemembers from across three generations sharing perspectives on service, citizen-soldierhood, and the relationship of military service to American culture more broadly. While veterans and military service are sometimes stereotyped into singular and often politicized roles, the complexity of their experiences reflects the equally nuanced nature of the citizen-soldier throughout United States history.

As a thank-you to our benefactors, this event is free to all who have made a gift to the Selim Center in the 2026-27 fiscal year. Donations can be mailed to the Selim Center, given in check or cash at the door on the day of the event, or made online via our Tommie Give Day site (website will be shared once it is opened in October).

November Lunch Event



The Midterms and The Nation Lunch & Learn with Professor David Schultz**

Limited tickets still available

**Friday, November 6th
12:00pm-1:45pm**

National political analyst and Selim Center regular David Schultz (Distinguished University Professor of Politics and Law, Hamline University) will provide an assessment of the 2026 electoral landscape and its possible meanings. He will discuss national trends, the Minnesota gubernatorial and Congressional results, and the broader context of the nation's political climate and its institutions. Tickets for this event include lunch.

All of the above classes are offered both in-person and online via Zoom.

Please make sure you are selecting the format you are planning to attend during the registration process. All in-person programs will take place in the OEC Auditorium, except for the Dr. Schultz Lunch N' Learn (which will be held in Woulfe Hall on the 3rd floor of the Student Center)

To register for any of the above programs, click on the program image to take you to our registration page or visit our website at:

<https://www.stthomas.edu/selim-center/programs>

Impromptu programs may be added as opportunities arise throughout the semester. To stay up-to-date on our programming, consider following us on Facebook. Click here to check out our [Facebook page!](#)

What's Happening on Campus?



In addition to Selim Center programming, be sure to check out these other events happening soon at UST!

October 13 & October 27--Intergenerational Peace Lunch with the Jay Phillips Center for Interreligious Studies

- Peace Meals gather people from different faith traditions, religious identities, and cultural backgrounds who commit to share lunch and engage in honest discussions. While building greater awareness and understanding of each other's worldviews, questions, concerns, and hopes, the program also cultivates the leadership skill to facilitate conversations across lines of difference for professional, civic, and community settings. This fall, the Jay Phillips Center has partnered with the Selim Center to foster a space for intergenerational discussion and dialog. There is no cost to participate. If you are interested in participating in the Peace Meals lunch series, please contact the Selim Center directly by phone or email for further details on registration.

October 29--What We Inherit Guided Tour

- From 11:45-1:00pm, Dr. Yohuru Williams will lead Selim Center lifelong learners and UST students in a gallery tour of "What We Inherit," a traveling exhibition on the lives and multigenerational legacies of the 314 people held as slaves and sold by the Jesuit order that founded Georgetown University. This program is free for the Selim Center community, but please do [register on our website](#) or by informing us via email or in person that you plan to attend.

November 7--Readings in Common: A Partnership with the Dougherty Family College

- Join students from Professor Claudette Webster's "Critical Thinking in Literature and Writing" course and other Selim Center lifelong learners to read and discuss Abdi Nor Iftin's memoir Call Me American and its resonance across generational perspectives. The cost to participate is \$35 and includes a copy of the book. To register, please contact the Selim Center by phone or email.

A very limited number of seats are available for Selim Center lifelong learners at each of the following events to meet distinguished visitors, engage in conversation with them alongside St. Thomas students, and receive signed copies of the author's books. Contact the Selim Center either by phone or email for further details!

- **November 17--"America at 250" with Dr. Lindsay Chervinsky**, Executive Director of the George Washington Library at Mount Vernon

Good Grief

Everybody grieves. It is part of the human experience. Yet we all struggle with what to do or say in the face of grief. Grief literacy is a global movement designed to increase public awareness and understanding of grief as a normal response to loss and encourage relevant support. We have joined this movement with Good Grief, St. Thomas! All are welcome.

Join Us Oct. 19-22, 2026 for a weeklong event to explore grief literacy, culminating in an inspirational conversation with local artists on the "art of grief."

Below is a flyer showcasing the week's events, and you can view the schedule and register [here](#). Hope to see you at Good Grief, St. Thomas!



GOOD GRIEF, ST. THOMAS! The Art of Grief

Everybody grieves. It is part of the human experience. Yet we all struggle with what to do or say in the face of grief. When faced with this challenge, we often turn to art to capture what we are thinking or feeling. The **art of grief** is the practice of using creative expression (i.e. painting, writing, music, photography, or other artistry) to process loss, find meaning, & build connection. Please join us for the second biennial **Good Grief, St. Thomas!** to explore the art of grief.

OCTOBER 2026

MON 19 10 a.m.-4 p.m.	GRIEF LITERACY 101 Learn about grief & how we can respond as a compassionate community. Create, reflect, & share about grief through a variety of artistic mediums. No experience necessary—come as you are. Contribute to the Memorial Tattoo Project & “Before I die, I want to...” chalkboard wall. Register online. Location: Scooters
TUES 20 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.	STORIES OF MEANING THROUGH LOSS — AN INTERGENERATIONAL CONVERSATION CIRCLE We all have experienced losses in our lives — large & small - a lost relationship, a sports injury or a loss of a loved one. Telling our stories & listening well to the stories of others is part of grieving well & growing into meaning making. Sharing with those from different generations offers unique perspectives based on lived experiences & cultures. Join us for small group story circles with elders & students. Free. Register online. Location: LIB 108
WED 21 5-6:30 p.m.	PANEL WITH GRIEF-INFORMED PRACTITIONERS CEUs available This panel will feature experts, thought leaders & licensed practitioners across the helping professions to discuss what it means to be grief-informed. Free. Register online. Location: Woulfe Alumni Hall
THURS 22 5:30-8:30 p.m.	THE ART OF GRIEF CEUs available A pre-reception will feature appetizers & artwork created during the week. Music by the Donne Unite Choir. Followed by an inspirational conversation with local artists Sequoia Nagamatsu, Ryan Stopera, & Elayna Waxse sharing their experiences with the art of grief. Free. Register online. Location: Iversen Center for Faith Full Hall ICF LL16

Learn more and register:

→



link.stthomas.edu/goodgrief

Tommie Give Day 2026



Tommie Give Day 2026 will be held on November 10, 2026. Last year, thanks to our generous Selim Center donors, we raised over \$11,000 to help support lifelong learning! We are hoping to break that record this year, but we need your help!

The giving page will go live on October 27 and will run through midnight on November 10. [Click here to check out the countdown](#) and to learn more about the initiative.

As an added incentive, any donor to the Selim Center who makes a gift between now and November 4, is invited to attend out upcoming program titled "Veterans in Perspective." See page 6 of this newsletter or check out our website for more info on this collaboration between the Selim Center and the Karon Veterans Resource Center.



*Donations of \$100 or more made during the Oct. 27-Nov 10 giving window are also eligible for the Tommie Rallie Kit (pictured here) as a thank you gift. [Click this link for more info.](#)



Contact Information

Selim Center for Lifelong Learning
MAIL OEC 109
2115 Summit Avenue
Saint Paul, MN 55105

Phone: 651-962-5188
email: selimcenter@stthomas.edu
website:
www.stthomas.edu/selim-center

