CAS CONNECTIONS

Fall Term | Issue 27 | October 7, 2026

From the Dean

Greetings, CAS Community,

I hope this message finds you all enjoying the Fall.

The past few weeks in the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) have been incredibly exciting, really showcasing not just the excellence of our students, faculty, and programs, but also the incredible work NEIU, as a public institution of higher education, does to advance the public good and improve lives in the communities we serve. I want to tell you a little about what's been going on and invite you to join and support our mission and work in the CAS.

Our programs and faculty provide students with opportunities to fully explore and develop their skills and abilities to prepare them to do the work of advancing our society. A hallmark of the CAS experience is the opportunity our students have to do cutting-edge, high-impact research with our world-class faculty.

In September, our Student Center for Science Engagement (SCSE), directed by Dr. Jorge Cantú, hosted its 18th Annual Student Research Symposium (featured later on). Not only did the day highlight the success of our students by featuring a keynote address from alumna Dr. Gaby Martinez-Ramirez, who is the Lab Operations Manager at the UChicago Science Incubator, it also offered nearly 40 research presentations by our students covering a range of topics vital to our lives. These presentations included research focused on curing cancer and ALS; on understanding microbial communities in soil, which are crucial if we are going to be able to grow sufficient crops to feed our population; on studying mosses to help us monitor environmental contamination; on understanding the possibilities and challenges of artificial intelligence; on ways to improve children's reasoning; and more. You can check out the full program here. It was truly incredible to see our students, guided by our excellent faculty, working with purpose and intelligence to tackle some of the most pressing challenges we face as a people.

Then, on October 1st, largely through the important work and leadership of Dr. Jeanine Ntihirageza (founder of the Genocide and Human Rights in Africa and the Diaspora (GHRAD) research center), NEIU was graced with a visit from Dr. Jackson Quincy Nahayo who founded the BEEDAY Ubuntu Community in Cibitoke Province, Burundi. In this community, Dr. Nahayo leads a hospital, a farm, and a school that serve the surrounding community. Surviving at age 6 the violence that engulfed Burundi and becoming a refugee, Dr. Nahayo was adopted and raised in Canada where he became a medical doctor, then returned home to Burundi where he formed a community based on the Ubuntu philosophy that a person becomes a full person through other people ("I am because you are"), which meant healing people by feeding and educating them and restoring the human bonds violence tried to destroy. Now, Dr. Nahayo offers opportunities for NEIU students to engage in international internships in his community. Our students give their labor in the hospital, farm, or classroom and in return receive an education and experience no space on campus could otherwise provide.

These are just two opportunities that highlight the unique experiences NEIU offers students. These experiences allow students to receive an education while preparing them for individual professional success, for sure, and also for lives of profound social purpose that advance the public good.

I love and take great pride in all the work my colleagues and our students do at NEIU, yet we struggle to support this work as fully as we'd like. Without large endowments, we work to keep our tuition affordable and accessible, serving students from working-class backgrounds who often lack generational wealth.

So, I invite you to join and support our work here, knowing that any investment you make pays huge dividends for the individual lives of our students and for our collective social life. I see donors with substantial means support already-wealthy institutions or fund already-thriving sports programs, and it always makes me ponder the impact those millions of dollars could have on thousands of NEIU student lives, our institution itself, and by extension, the communities we serve and support.

Check out the program for the SCSE symposium and reflect on the work we do here to promote life. And consider supporting us. Here's a link if you'd like to help.

I'll talk to you again next month!

All the best,
Tim Libretti
Dean, College of Arts and Sciences

IN THIS ISSUE

From the Dean
Student Highlight: Wesal Hammo
Faculty Highlight: Dr. John Casey
Alumni Highlight: Crystal Ortiz
CUSP Student Feature: Adin Wentzel
American Chemical Society Conference
The American Revolution as World History
NEIU Night at the Chicago Sky
18th Annual SCSE Symposium
Upcoming Events in the CAS
You Should Know...
Contacts & Links



STUDENT HIGHLIGHT



Wesal Hammo

What is your major?

I am a math major and I will be graduating this December!

What are your career goals?

My long-term goal is to become a mathematics professor and researcher. I believe mathematics is one of the most valuable yet misunderstood subjects in education, and the stigma surrounding it often discourages students before they have the opportunity to appreciate its creativity, and real-world impact. As an educator, I hope to help students develop both confidence in their abilities and a deeper appreciation for the beauty of mathematics.

In addition to teaching, I am passionate about applying mathematical concepts to biological and public health challenges. I hope to continue using the mathematical tools and analytical skills I have developed to study problems in epidemiology, disease modeling, and disease control, contributing to research that can improve public health outcomes.

What do you like about NEIU so far?

NEIU has given me many opportunities and introduced me to professors who believed in me and encouraged my growth. I especially appreciate their commitment to making mathematics accessible to students from diverse backgrounds. One of my favorite aspects of NEIU is its diversity; I have met people from many different cultures and experiences whose perspectives have enhanced my education.

What are your hobbies?

Outside of academics, I enjoy crocheting, embroidery, hiking, and spending time outdoors. Last year, I even flew to Colorado for a day to hike in the mountains. I also enjoy learning languages and am fluent in Arabic and English, conversational in Spanish, and currently learning American Sign Language (ASL). I also have a dog and a cat.

FACULTY HIGHLIGHT



Dr. John Casey

What do you do at NEIU?

I'm Professor (and coordinator) of the Philosophy Program. In addition to coordinating the Program, I teach courses in critical thinking, formal logic, the history of philosophy and argumentation, among other topics.

What are your research interests?

I started my career as a historian of philosophy, specializing in ancient medieval theories of mind. This led, somewhat by accident and somewhat by professional obligations, to an interest in ancient and medieval theories of logic and argument. Nowadays, most of my research concerns informal logic and argumentation. I'm particularly interested in how arguments seem to be adversarial, how they promote or undermine our autonomy, how argument always involves arguing about the rules of argument, and, finally, fallacy theory, or the theory of reasoning badly.

What is your favorite thing about NEIU?

I got asked this question in my job interview (I was already a lecturer). The answer then and the answer now: the students.

Why did you join higher education?

I went to college with the intention of majoring in art. But after a summer working as an assistant to a sculptor, I realized that I needed to make more practical use of my education, so I studied philosophy. I had some exciting and engaging professors who encouraged me to think about continuing my studies.

What are your hobbies/interests?

I like riding bicycles (how I commute to work year round). I also enjoy cooking. I jar my own jam, pickles, and tomatoes. I've made bread every week from the same sourdough starter since 2001 or so. I play the fiddle, though not very well. When not doing that I like reading.

ALUMNI HIGHLIGHT



Crystal Ortiz

What was your undergraduate major?

At NEIU, I was a History Major and Anthropology Minor.

What are you doing now?

I'm currently a CPS high school social sciences teacher.

What did you like about NEIU?

There are so many things I loved about being at NEIU...The student events that built community, starting the History Club, spending time with friends in the Pedroso Center, and having chats and coffee with Professors at the cafe. I definitely feel like I made the most of my time spent there.

Do you have any advice for current students?

Get involved and make the most of your university experience—go to student events, join organizations, ask questions, and don’t be afraid to start conversations with your classmates and professors. There are SO many amazing professors who genuinely want to see you succeed, so take the time to get to know them and let them help you along the way. At the same time, make sure you set aside time to study, stay organized, and produce quality work. Put yourself out there, build relationships, do the work, and remember that the effort you put in now will pay off!

Is there anything else you'd like to add?

First, ask for help early. Struggling with a class, assignment, or personal situation? Don’t wait until you’re overwhelmed to reach out. Second, take advantage of what you’re paying for. Use the library, tutoring, career services, academic advising, student organizations, and campus events. And finally, don’t compare your timeline to everyone else’s. Everyone’s college experience looks different, and you don’t have to have everything figured out.

CUSP Student Feature





Adin Wentzel

The College Undergraduate Scholars Program (CUSP) exists to provide students in the College of Arts and Sciences with academic experiences they would not otherwise be able to have. Experiences include research projects, conferences, seminars, creative activities, and more.

This past summer, we were able to send philosophy major (and anthropology and psychology minor) Adin Wentzel to a seminar using CUSP funds. We asked Adin about his experience, and this is what he had to say:

"This past June, I had the privilege of attending the CU Boulder Summer Seminar in Philosophy. The aim of this annual seminar is to provide promising undergraduate students with the chance to participate in graduate-style seminars regarding specific topics in philosophy.

This year's theme was 'Methods and Models' and covered an array of argumentation formats and techniques such as debunking arguments, inference to the best explanation arguments, and conceptual engineering. The seminar also included a week of work preparing seminarians for the Formal Epistemology Workshop, a three day conference attracting formal epistemologists from high prestige institutions both domestic and international.

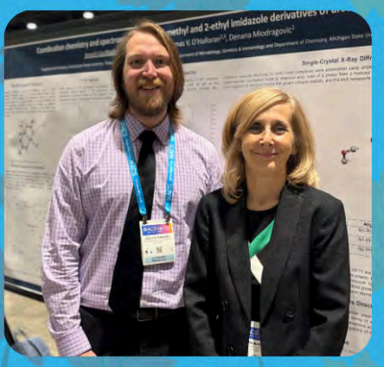
I found the CU Boulder Summer Seminar to be an incredible opportunity to strengthen my networking skills and deepen my understanding and appreciation of philosophical argumentation."

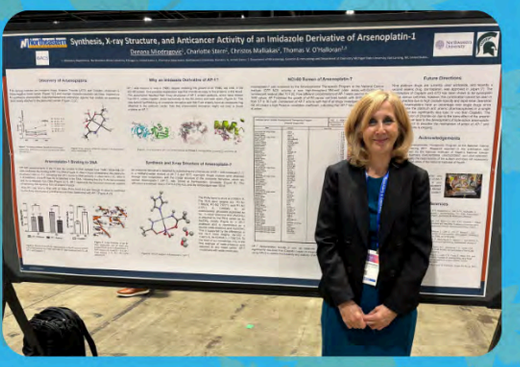
CUSP is entirely funded by generous donations from our community. Through CUSP, you can support a student like Adin!

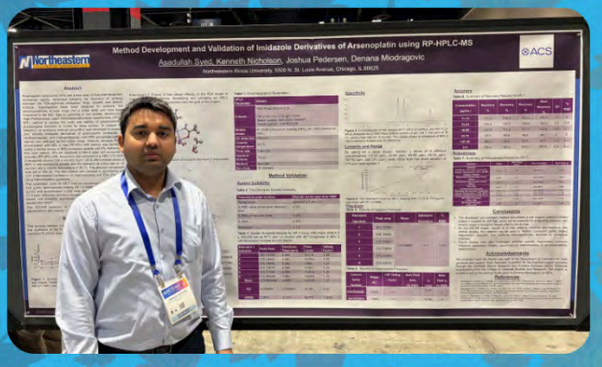
DONATE HERE

American Chemical Society Fall Conference









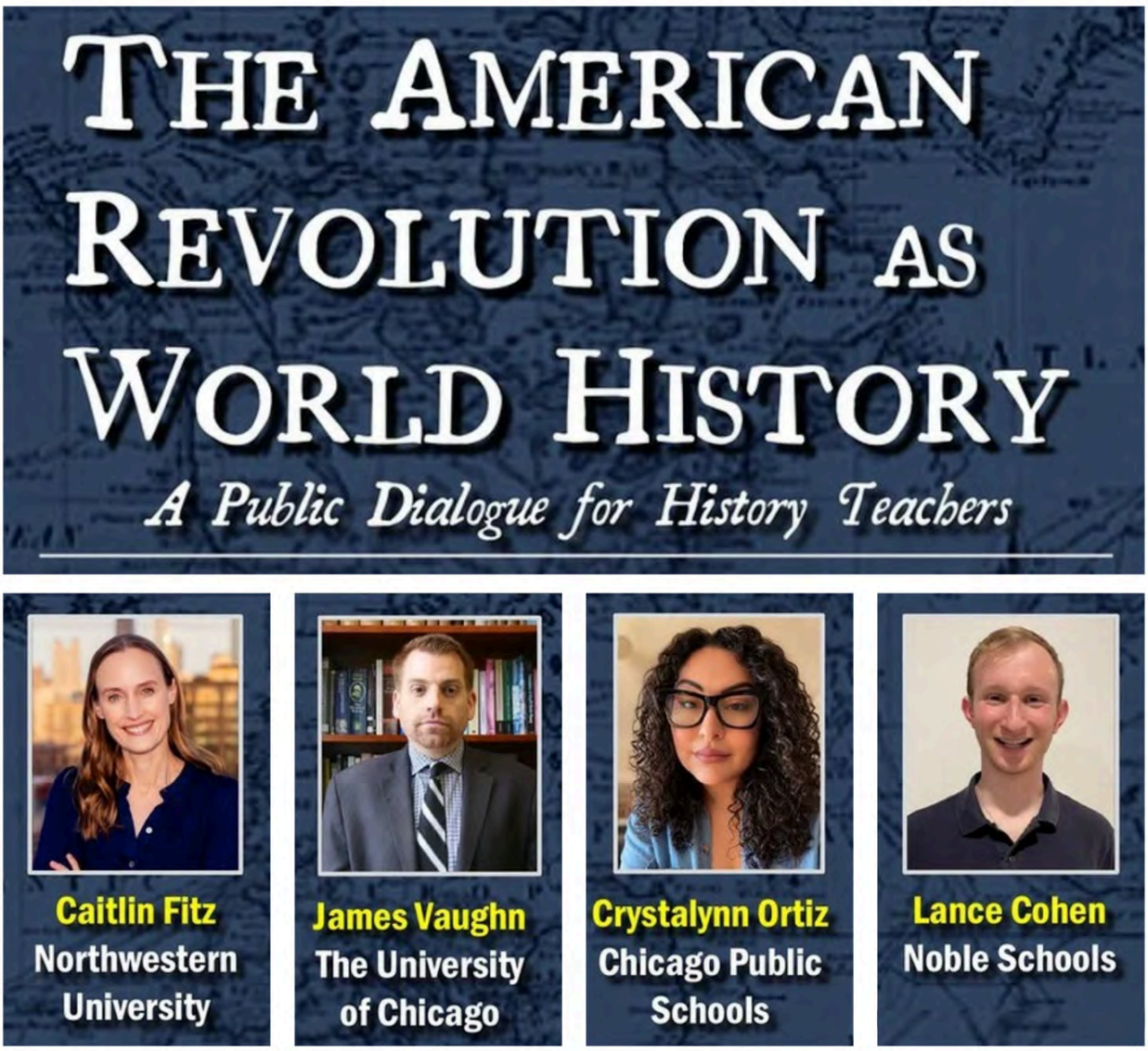


In August, Professors of Chemistry Denana Miodragovic and Ken Nicholson along with students Joseph VanBladel, Asadullah Syed, and Kevin Kelly presented at the American Chemical Society (ACS) Fall Conference. (Student Joshua Pedersen was also a co-author on one of the accepted abstracts.) In particular, Dr. Miodragovic's abstract was selected for Sci-Mix, a special poster session consisting of the most exceptional submissions to the conference.

The ACS Fall Conference is an event for thousands of chemistry professionals to meet to share ideas and advance scientific and technical knowledge. Attendees can explore new research and expand their networks while attending informative presentations and poster sessions.

Presenting at a conference is an excellent opportunity for our students to grow their professional connections and get real-world feedback on research they conduct, and it allows our faculty to stay at the forefront of research in their respective fields. In addition, presenters represent NEIU with pride and make sure our name is known in the research world.

Congratulations to our NEIU presenters!



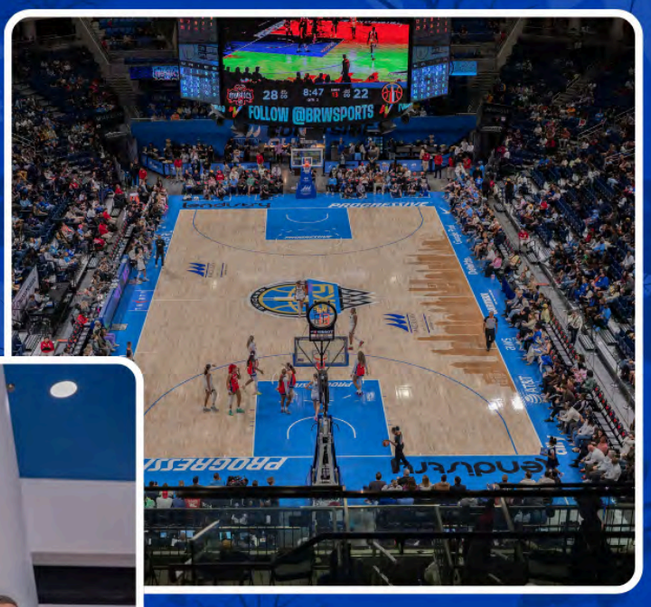
Congratulations to the NEIU History Department on a successful event!

On Thursday, September 10th, the NEIU History Department joined the Midwest Social Studies Education Hub to host an exciting public dialogue for Chicagoland history teachers on the global significance of the American Revolution. A dynamic panel of scholars and teachers marked the 250th anniversary year of the Declaration of Independence by exploring the significance of the Revolution as a world-historic event, affecting societies throughout the Atlantic World and Latin America.

Historians James Vaughn of the University of Chicago and Caitlin Fitz of Northwestern University presented on the subject. Their presentations were followed by a dialogue led by two Chicago high school social studies teachers: Lance Cohen of UIC Prep and Crystalynn Ortiz of Englewood Stem. Ms. Ortiz is a proud Golden Eagle, having earned both her teaching license and MA in History here at NEIU. The event, held in Lech Walesa Hall 1002, drew more than 70 attendees from NEIU and beyond.

NEIU Night at the Chicago Sky







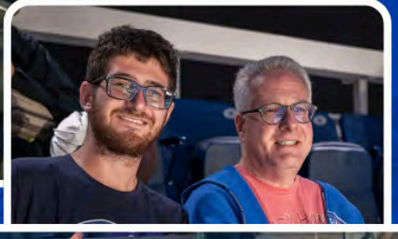










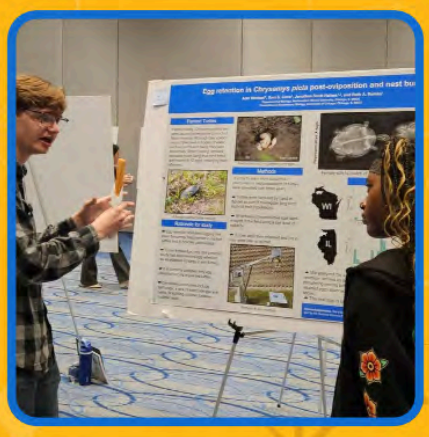




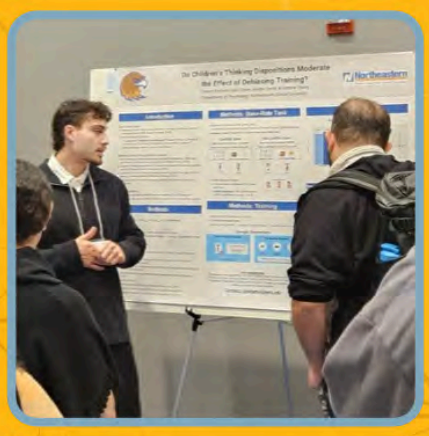


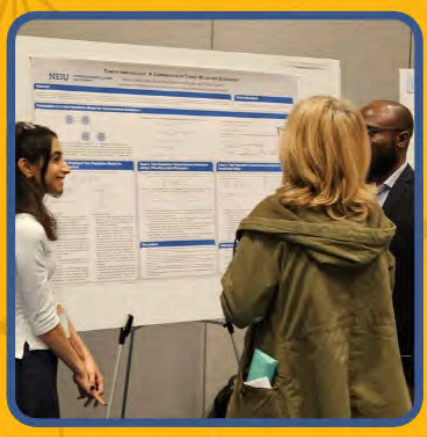
Thank you Golden Eagles for making NEIU Night at the Chicago Sky such a wonderful success! We had a great crowd of students, alumni, faculty, and staff cheering on the Sky and repping NEIU. If you didn't make it this time, keep an eye out next fall. We hope you can join us then!

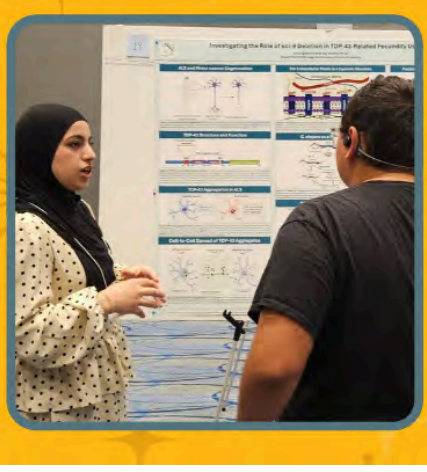
18th Annual Student Center for Science Engagement Research Symposium



On Friday, September 26th, the Student Center for Science Engagement (SCSE) held its 18th Annual Research Symposium.

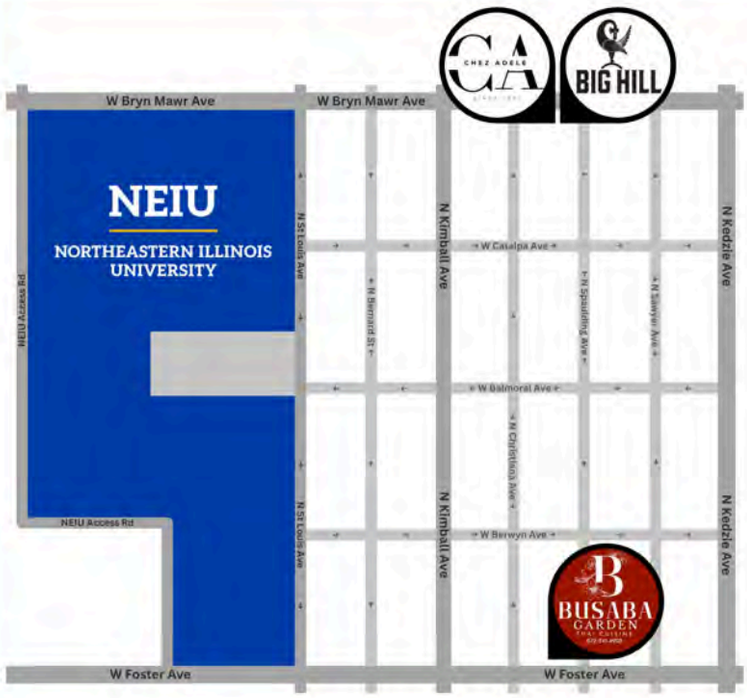
The symposium invites students who completed research internships either through the SCSE at NEIU or at an external site to present what they learned on the topic or subfield within STEM. Participants from local community colleges are also invited to apply with an abstract. Student researchers participate in podium presentations and poster sessions, listen to a keynote address by Dr. Gaby Martinez-Ramirez (an NEIU alumna!), and attend a networking lunch with distinguished guests, mentors, faculty, and peers.

This year's symposium had a fantastic turnout, and all of our students did an incredible job researching, creating posters, and presenting what they learned. If you are interested in participating next fall, reach out to SCSE@neiu.edu to learn more.


UPCOMING
IN THE CAS

DINNER & A SHOW!

Enjoy 10% OFF at these local restaurants when you stop by on your way to see a show or concert at NEIU!



Chez Adele
3311 W Bryn Mawr Ave
Chez Adele, named after Chef Bart's mother, serves authentic West African cuisine alongside smashburgers and other favorites.

Big Hill
3307 W Bryn Mawr Ave
This bar & grill has a fresh take on New American that pleases adventurous and picky eaters alike.

Busaba Garden Thai Cuisine
3246 W Foster Ave
Busaba Garden serves a mix of classic favorites and authentic Thai dishes that the owners grew up loving in Thailand.

Voice Area Latine Heritage Month Celebration | Tuesday, October 7 at 3:05 p.m. | Recital Hall

Jazz Combo | Tuesday, October 13 at 3:05 p.m. | Recital Hall

NEIU Wind Ensemble | Tuesday, October 13 at 7:30 p.m. | Sasha Gerritson Theatre

Faculty Recital: Brian Torosian, guitar presents Celebrating the Centurial Anniversaries of John Dowland and Manuel de Falla | Wednesday, October 14 at 7:30 p.m. | Recital Hall

Guitar Studio Showcase | Thursday, October 15 at 3:05 p.m. | Recital Hall

Faculty Recital: Katherine Petersen, soprano | Tuesday, October 20 at 3:05 p.m. | Recital Hall

Student Recital Hour | Tuesday, October 27 at 3:05 p.m. | Recital Hall

Fourth Annual Department Collage Concert | Tuesday, October 27 at 7:30 p.m. | Sasha Gerritson Theatre

Music Faculty Recital | Thursday, October 29 at 3:05 p.m. | Recital Hall

Fall Opera Scenes | Monday, November 9 at 7:30 p.m. | Recital Hall

Guest Artist: Nils Higdon, percussion | Tuesday, November 10 at 3:05 p.m. | Recital Hall

Music & Dance event details

Get tickets here!

NEIU CINEMA CLUB

Fall 2026 Film Screenings



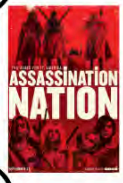
Everything Everywhere All At Once (The Daniels, 2022)

August 25th | 6pm | FA 107



Get Out (Jordan Peele, 2017)

October 20th | 6pm | FA 107



Assassination Nation (Sam Levinson, 2018)

September 8th | 6pm | FA 107



Durkirk (Christopher Nolan, 2017)

November 10th | 6pm | FA 107



Casablanca (Michael Curtiz, 1942)

September 22nd | 6pm | FA 107



Invasion of the Body Snatchers (Philip Kaufman, 1978)

November 17th | 6pm | FA 107



The Sixth Sense (M. Night Shyamalan, 1999)

October 6th | 6pm | FA 107



In The Heights (Jon M. Chu, 2021)

December 1st | 6pm | FA 107



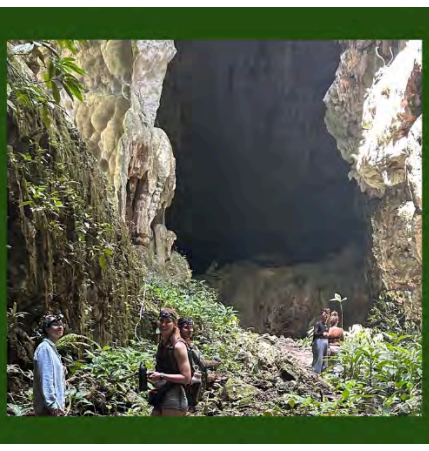
@NEIUCinemaClub (Instagram & Letterboxd)
neiucinemaclub@gmail.com
www.neiucinemaclub.com

Northeastern ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY



Learn more





Study Tour of Belize

Students at NEIU have an opportunity to visit Belize, one of the most biologically and culturally diverse areas in the Western hemisphere! We will explore **rainforests, mountains, beaches, and coral reefs**, learning about geography and environmental concerns in this fascinating Central American country.





We are currently recruiting students for this year's GES 388 course, which takes place over **Spring Break 2027** (about March 13-March 20, 2027). This is an **ELE-X** course and all students are welcome regardless of major. Expected student cost over and above tuition is about **$2595**, not including spending money.



Scan QR code for **trip itinerary** and **Zoom information session**

Application DUE Friday, October 23, 2026

Have questions or need the application form? Please contact

Dr. Dennis Grammenos (d-grammenos@neiu.edu)
Department of Geography, Environmental Studies & Geosciences
Northeastern Illinois University

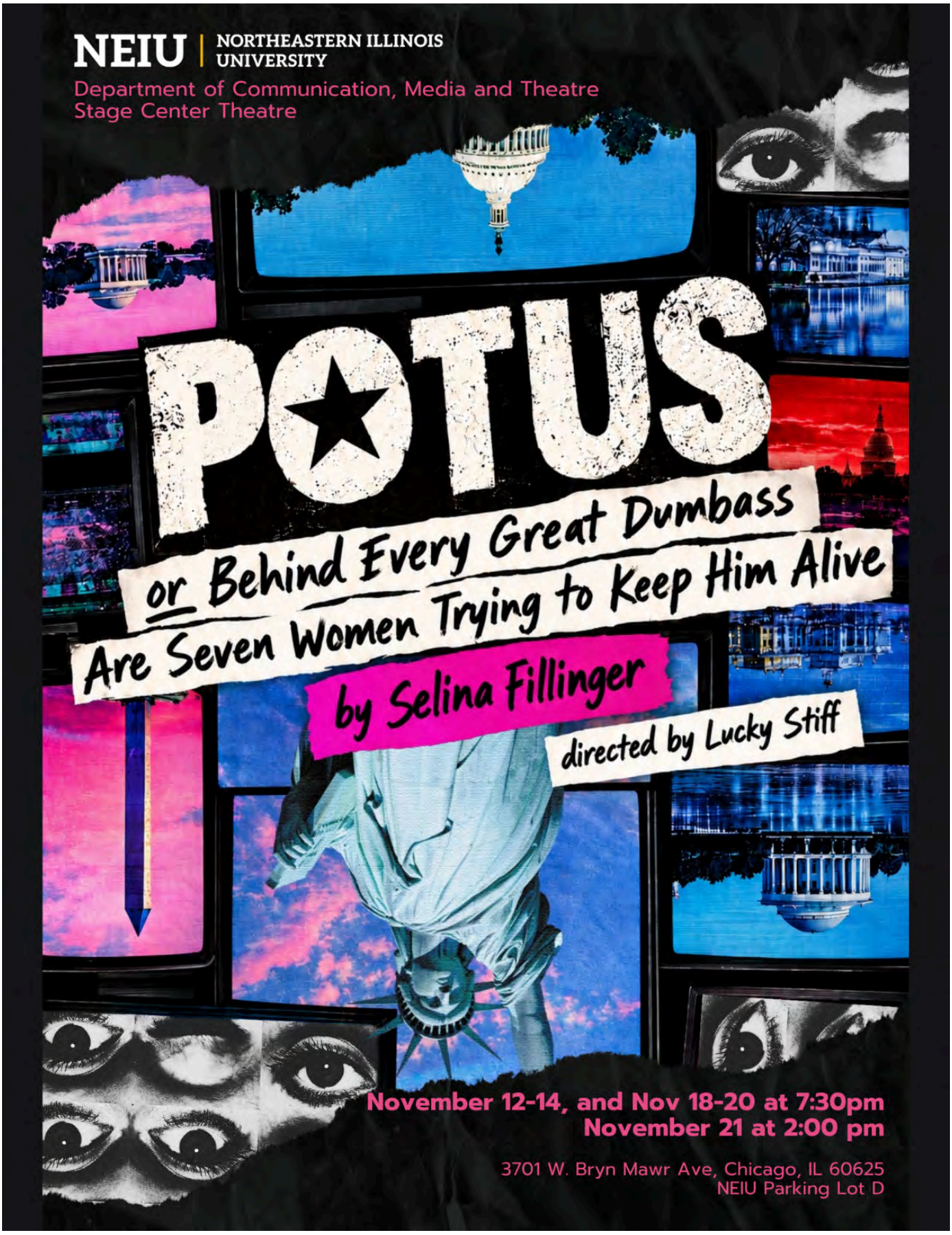
For more information, attend a **virtual info session** on

Friday, October 9th, 7pm - 8pm

Email Professor Dennis Grammenos
at dgrammen@neiu.edu for the Zoom link!







Get tickets here!

Geography Career Fair at Northeastern Illinois University

Wednesday, November 18, 5:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Geography and Environmental Studies at NEIU, in partnership with the Geographic Society of Chicago, is hosting a Geography Career Fair during Geography Awareness Week. The event brings students and alumni together with organizations and professionals working in geography-related fields.

We welcome employers in traditional geography and GIS roles, and equally in adjacent fields: environmental science, sustainability, urban and regional planning, transportation, public policy, community development, natural resources, emergency management, and data analysis.

There is no cost to participate. We provide a table and space for materials. Organizations are welcome whether they are actively hiring, offering internships, or simply want to introduce students to the work they do.

If your organization would like to take part, or if you can suggest someone we should contact, please reach out to Ting Liu at tliu1@neiu.edu.

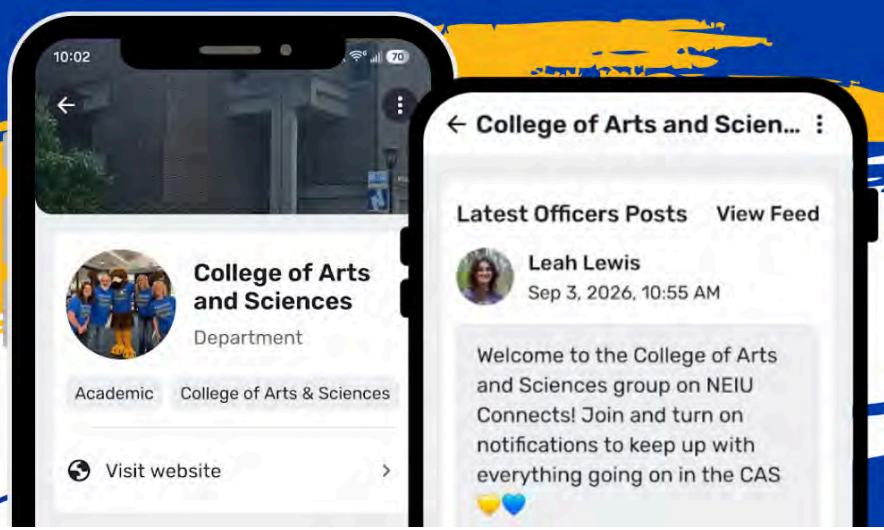
YOU SHOULD KNOW...

NEIU | College of Arts and Sciences
NORTHEASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

NEIU CONNECTS

Join us on CampusGroups today!

1. Download **CampusGroups** from your app store
2. Look up **NEIU Connects**
3. Log in with your NEIU username & password
4. Stay connected!

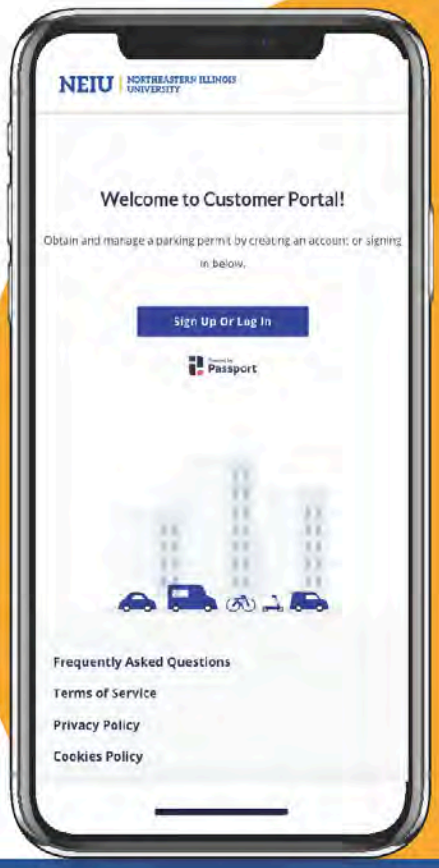


Sign up here!

NEIU | NORTHEASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

NEIU Students: Blue Lot Parking

Registered NEIU students can now park in campus BLUE lots for no additional cost!



No stickers or tags needed.

- Simply register your vehicle through the NEIU Permit Portal
- Student parking permits are digital and tied to the registered vehicle.
- Parking registration must be updated every semester.
- $0 Permit fee

How to Apply

1. Visit the NEIU Permit Portal.
2. Create or log into your account.
3. Register your vehicle.
4. Enter your Student ID.
5. Submit your application.
6. Monitor the NEIU Permit Portal for approval notification.

Scan the QR code to go to the NEIU Permit Portal.

Guest Parking

Guest parking is still available through the Passport Parking app or Text2Pay.

Parking Lot Rentals

Parking lot rental requests can be sent to: events@neiu.edu

Register your vehicle here!

Northeastern
ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

WE'RE LOOKING FOR NEW MEMBERS

Open Members
Welcome!

HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATION
NORTHEASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

Become an Advocate
Support Campaigns
Organize Events
Share New Ideas

DIGNITY. JUSTICE. RESPECT. FOR ALL

HAVE A PASSION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS?

SCAN OUR QR CODE FOR MORE INFORMATION

Northeastern ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
Biology

BIOLOGY ADVISING

(Aug. 17 through Dec. 22, 2026)

Gain advice about course selection, registration, and graduation requirements

In-person – Located in BBH-342

Just walk in; no appointment necessary

MONDAYS	**2:00 – 4:00 pm**
TUESDAYS	**4:00 – 6:00 pm**
THURSDAYS	**11:00 – 1:00 pm**

Virtual – Scan QR code or go to https://tinyurl.com/biologyNEIU to make a Zoom appt. during these time periods:

WEDNESDAYS	**4:00 – 6:00 pm**
FRIDAYS	**Noon – 2:00 pm**

Biology advisors can also answer questions at:

bioadvising@neiu.edu

Make an appointment

Get a locker on the 3rd floor of BBH!

Lockers can be reserved for the semester, at no cost. If you would like a locker, then please scan the QR code below to fill out the locker reservation form. Lockers will be assigned first-come, first serve.



tinyurl.com/BBHLOCKERS

SCAN ME

If you have any questions, email icontre2@neiu.edu or stop by BBH-358G.

Northeastern ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

Post-Baccalaureate

Certificate in Pre-Health

catalog.neiu.edu/arts-sciences/biology/post-baccalaureate-certificate-pre-health



The Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in Pre-Health at Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU) is tailored for career changers with a bachelor's degree who need to complete the prerequisites for health professional programs. This comprehensive certificate fulfills the core requirements for admission to health professional programs, including:

Medicine • Dentistry • Optometry
Physician Assistant • Physical Therapy
Pharmacy • Veterinary Medicine

Why complete the Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in Pre-Health at Northeastern?

- Dedicated Pre-Health Advising
- Personalized Support
- Intimate Learning Environment
- Faculty-Mentored Research Opportunities
- Hands-on Laboratory Experience
- Networking and Leadership Opportunities
- Pre-Health Events
- Entrance Exam Preparation
- Tutoring Services

Admission Requirements

- Bachelor's Degree from an accredited college or university
- Cumulative GPA of 2.5 or above.

David Nissim-Sabat
Director of Pre-Professional Advising
College of Arts and Sciences, BBH 148A
dnissim@neiu.edu | (773) 442-0000

neiu

SCHOLARSHIP RESOURCES

NEIU University and Private Scholarship Opportunities

https://www.neiu.edu/financial-aid/scholarship-opportunities

The links on this page will take you to other scholarship directories, so be sure to explore it thoroughly!

NEIU College of Arts and Sciences Scholarships

https://www.neiu.edu/academics/colleges-departments/arts-and-sciences/college-arts-and-sciences-scholarships

These scholarships are for students in the College of Arts and Sciences. Email cas@neiu.edu with any questions.

Private Scholarship Spotlights

https://www.neiu.edu/financial-aid/scholarship-opportunities/private-scholarship-spotlights

Explore the links on this page to find scholarships that may be available to you from outside of the university.

Northeastern ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

College of Arts and Sciences

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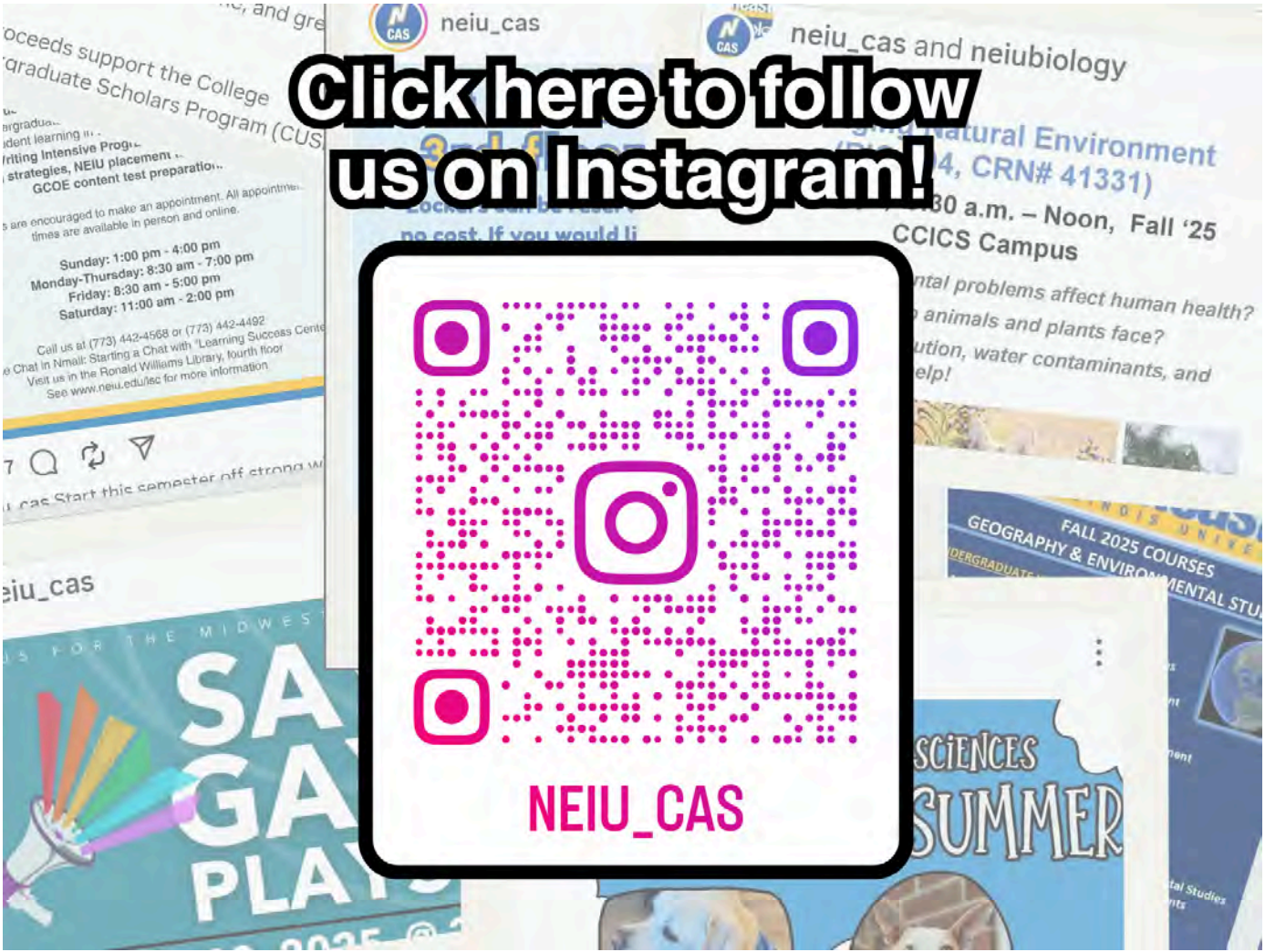
Pre-Professional Advising information

CAS Website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