



THE HOUSTON SEMINAR

SPRING 2021





THE HOUSTON SEMINAR

The Houston Seminar was founded in 1977 for the purpose of stimulating learning and cultural awareness. Each spring and fall the nonprofit group offers lectures and study tours focused on varied topics that may include art, architecture, literature, music, theater, history, politics, philosophy, psychology, religion, the natural environment, and current trends and events.

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A Note To Our Patrons

As we continue to navigate challenges and new ways of living with COVID-19, the Houston Seminar is offering more courses on Zoom, as well as outdoor, socially distanced in-person experiences around Houston. Please join us as we dive into literature, landscape, history, philosophy, politics, and more. Most of our Zoom courses will be recorded, and will be available on our website for two weeks after they take place. Please note that by registering for Zoom courses, you are understood to be giving your permission to be recorded. Visit www.houstonseminar.org to learn more and to register for courses.

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Courses

Two Timely Questions

TWO TUESDAYS, JANUARY 19 AND 26, 5:00–6:30 P.M.

Zoom invitations will be emailed to subscribers.

For as long as philosophy has existed, human beings have sought to understand the nature of truth, reason, value, reality, and existence. What better time than now to investigate fundamental questions about ourselves and our relationships to each other? Three Houston philosophers, **Gwen Bradford**, **George Sher**, and **Tamler Sommers**, will delve into two important questions and help us think about answers.

January 19: Why Be Moral?

Why should I be just rather than unjust? In a session moderated by Professor Bradford, Professors Sher and Sommers will discuss the tensions between notions of social justice and individual self-interest.

January 26: What Is a Good Life?

What are the essential elements of a good life? Professor Bradford will discuss what makes for a flourishing life and the values arising from the exercise of our uniquely human capacities.

Gwen Bradford is an associate professor of philosophy at Rice University, where she specializes in value theory and normative ethics within the field of moral philosophy. Her book *Achievement* (Oxford University Press, 2015) was awarded the 2017 American Philosophical Association Book Prize. Professor Bradford was the 2019 recipient of the Duncan Award for Outstanding Academic Achievement at Rice University. Recent projects focus on uniqueness, perfectionism, and ill-being.

George Sher is the Herbert S. Autrey Professor of Philosophy at Rice University and is the author of six books including *In Praise of Blame* (Oxford University Press, 2005) and *Who Knew? Responsibility Without Awareness* (Oxford University Press, 2009). The theme of control figures prominently in his most recent book, *Equality for Inegalitarians* (Cambridge University Press, 2014), and a new book entitled *A Wild West of the Mind* will soon be available. Professor Sher's current areas of research include responsibility, unintentional omissions, moral ignorance, and distributive justice.

Tamler Sommers is an associate professor of philosophy at the University of Houston. He works in the areas of moral psychology, free will, and moral responsibility with additional focus on honor, punishment, and revenge. Professor Sommers is the author of *Relative Justice: Cultural Diversity, Free Will, and Moral Responsibility* (Princeton University Press, 2012); *A Very Bad Wizard: Morality Behind the Curtain*, 2nd edition (Routledge, 2016); and *Why Honor Matters* (Basic Books, 2018).

“

Not life,
but
good life,
is
to be
chiefly
valued.

”

Socrates

Vaccines 101: Understanding the COVID-19 Vaccines

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 6:00–7:30 P.M.

Zoom invitations will be emailed to subscribers.

COVID-19 has infected over 40 million people and claimed more than one million lives. Governments and non-profit and multinational organizations around the world are pouring unprecedented amounts of resources and efforts into the development and testing of safe, effective COVID-19 vaccines that could shield us against this disease. Why so many vaccine candidates? How do they work? How safe are they? How are the United States and the world tackling vaccine development, production, testing, and distribution?

Vaccine scientist **Maria Elena Bottazzi**, co-director of Texas Children's Hospital Center for Vaccine Development at Baylor College of Medicine, will guide us to better understand this important topic.

Water, Water Everywhere: Strategies and Success Stories

THREE THURSDAYS, FEBRUARY 4, 11, AND 18, 5:00–6:30 P.M.

Zoom invitations will be emailed to subscribers.

February 4: Galveston Bay and the Storm Surge of Our Nightmares

Every summer, we dread The Big One: a wall of water smashing into Galveston Bay and the Port of Houston, spilling millions of gallons of crude oil and hazardous chemicals into the Gulf of Mexico. As *Texas Monthly* recently described it, “Such a disaster would disrupt global supply chains, cut off the military from much of its jet fuel, contaminate ecosystems in Galveston Bay, and destroy one of the state's core economic engines—not to mention kill a bunch of Texans.”

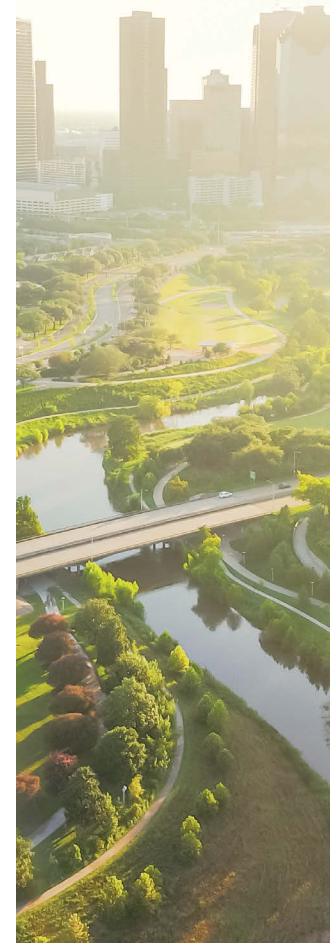
Join a conversation between **Eric Berger** and **Jim Blackburn** about hurricane storm surges, coastal defense barriers, and mid-bay gate proposals.

February 11: Bayous, Reservoirs, Ponds, and More: Strategies for Inland Flood Mitigation

Flood control projects are massive, generational undertakings involving bayou conveyance, retention reservoirs, detention ponds, and private property buyouts. Join a conversation between **Auggie Campbell** and a senior representative from the Harris County Flood Control District to learn about flood mitigation efforts and the paramount need for regional collaboration to address the kind of cataclysmic flooding that doesn't respect municipal boundaries.

February 18: Low-Impact Development: Mitigation for Property Owners

If every individual property owner in Houston took simple measures to mitigate stormwater runoff, the size and scope of immense, big-ticket



engineering solutions to catastrophic flooding could be reduced. **Kevin Shanley** leads a discussion about low-impact development—small-scale approaches for filtering and storing runoff, with an emphasis on conservation and use of on-site natural features to protect water quality.

Eric Berger is the co-founder of Space City Weather and is a certified meteorologist and senior space editor at Ars Technica. He was a Pulitzer Prize finalist at the *Houston Chronicle* for his coverage of Hurricane Ike.

Jim Blackburn is a professor of environmental law in the civil and environmental engineering department at Rice University. Blackburn serves as co-director of the Severe Storm Prediction, Education, and Evacuation from Disaster (SSPEED) Center.

Auggie Campbell is the executive director of the Association of Water Board Directors, the former president and CEO of the West Houston Association, and the co-founder of Houston Stronger, which has successfully advocated for billions of dollars in resilience funding from federal, state, and local public entities.

Kevin Shanley is the former CEO of SWA Group, an international landscape architecture and urban design firm that was instrumental in the landmark 1992 plan for Sims Bayou, saving it from being lined in concrete. He also served as a board member, president, and chairman of the Bayou Preservation Association.

Global Trouble Spots: Mexico, Russia, Syria, and Iran

THREE TUESDAYS, FEBRUARY 9, 16, 23 AND ONE WEDNESDAY, MARCH 3, 6:00–7:30 P.M. Zoom invitations will be emailed to subscribers.

February 9: Mexico—Design or Dilemmas?

Mexico's president, Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO), came into office with 53% of the vote, enormous popularity, a majority in Congress, and vast political capital. Central to his electoral success was widespread unhappiness with the status quo and the promise of radical change. He has been in office over two years now amidst growing discontent with his approach to politics and policy. Critics say that Mr. López Obrador has come up short in meeting Mexicans' expectations of change and has bungled the handling of the Coronavirus pandemic and the greatest economic crisis since the 1930s. **Tony Payan** will examine the structural constraints the López Obrador administration has faced and the issues that are likely to affect the country's future and U.S.-Mexico relations.

February 16: Russia—Design or Deception?

Russia, straddling Europe and Asia and long a conundrum on the world stage, continues to assert its geopolitical influence: reinvigorating Soviet-era alliances, nurturing and financing the nationalist/populist

movements sweeping Europe, encouraging Eurosceptic and anti-Islamist movements, and harnessing a global disinformation campaign, all to further its long-held Russian national goals and objectives of empire. This provocative statecraft has been orchestrated by four-time elected president and KGB alumnus, Vladimir Putin. **Robert Moser** will examine this growing and evolving presence in Russia's global influence and its implications for U.S. foreign policy.

February 23: Syria—Endgame or Escalation?

Syria's nine-year civil war erupted into a humanitarian crisis with close to a million Syrians fleeing the war zone for safety in Europe. At the present time, the United States maintains a military presence in Syria with a mission to protect the oilfields and help fight against remnants of the Islamic State. Tensions between U.S. and Russian forces have escalated with Russia's failure to adhere to mutual de-confliction processes and with Syrian and Russian troops attacking opposition forces. **Najib Ghadbian** will explain the ongoing geopolitical and border conflict between Russian-backed Syria and Turkey and the growing hostilities that have led to uncertainty regarding the U.S. role in the region.

March 3: Iran—Negotiation or Confrontation?

Mohammad Ayatollahi Tabaar will examine the dynamics of U.S.-Iranian relations and how the two countries went from a historic nuclear deal to the brink of war. Points of contention, among others, have included Iran's nuclear program and expanding influence in the Middle East. He will discuss increasing tensions in the context of Iran's upcoming 2021 presidential election, Tehran's increasing ties with Moscow and Beijing, and their implications for the U.S. What are the possibilities for a new round of nuclear negotiations or confrontation between Washington and Tehran?

Tony Payan is the Françoise and Edward Djerejian Fellow for Mexico Studies and director of the Center for the United States and Mexico at Rice University's Baker Institute. He is also a professor at the Universidad Autónoma de Ciudad Juárez.

Robert Moser is a professor in the department of government, University of Texas at Austin. He specializes in the study of Russian politics, electoral systems, political parties, ethnicity and elections, and women's and minority representation.

Najib Ghadbian is an associate professor in the King Fahd Center for Middle East Studies at the University of Arkansas. He has been a frequent political commentator for Al-Jazeera Satellite TV Channel since January 2000.

Mohammad Ayatollahi Tabaar is a fellow for the Middle East at Rice University's Baker Institute and an associate professor in the department of international affairs at the Bush School of Government and Public Service at Texas A&M University.

The Many Names of Slavery

THREE TUESDAYS, MARCH 2, 9, AND 23, 4:30–6:00 P.M.

Zoom invitations will be emailed to subscribers.

Slavery in the nineteenth century. Convict labor and leasing in the twentieth. Mass incarceration in the twenty-first. Is there a through-line? The roots of today's inequities in Texas can be traced to the state's settlement by cotton farmers traveling west from the southern United States. Our speakers will guide us to a more informed and nuanced view of Texas history and the efforts to address and end persistent and corrosive race-based public policies.



THIS COURSE IS DEDICATED TO CONTINUING THE LEGACY OF REGINALD MOORE, INDEFATIGABLE ADVOCATE FOR REMEMBERING THE FORGOTTEN CONVICTS AND ENSLAVED POPULATION OF FORT BEND COUNTY.

March 2: Andrew J. Torget, historian and professor at the University of North Texas, will give a lecture based on his book, *Seeds of Empire: Cotton, Slavery, and the Transformation of the Texas Borderlands*. *Seeds of Empire* tells the remarkable story of how the cotton revolution of the early nineteenth century transformed northeastern Mexico into the western edge of the United States and how the rise and spectacular collapse of the Republic of Texas as a nation built on cotton and slavery proved to be a blueprint for the Confederacy of the 1860s.

March 9: Jay Jenkins is the Harris County project attorney for the Texas Criminal Justice Coalition, where he promotes broad justice reforms across Texas. Mr. Jenkins is the president and co-founder (with the late Reginald Moore) of the Convict Leasing and Labor Project. The CLLP builds on years of research assembled by Mr. Moore and is dedicated to researching and publicizing the convict-leasing system and its connection to modern prison slavery. Their work has become nationally known as the result of the 2018 discovery of the remains of 95 African-Americans on a Fort Bend Independent School District construction site.

March 23: Sandra Guerra Thompson will present information about contemporary incarceration, including the demographics of jail populations, federal sentencing, forensic science, and wrongful convictions. She will also detail reform efforts toward more equitable sentencing. Ms. Thompson is the Newell H. Blakely Professor in Law and director of the Criminal Justice Institute at the University of Houston Law Center. She teaches criminal procedure, criminal law, prisoners' rights, and prison reform. In 1996, Professor Thompson became the first Latina tenured law professor in Texas.

Gender 101

THURSDAY, MARCH 11, 6:00–7:30 P.M.

Zoom invitations will be emailed to subscribers.

What IS gender? Is it something other than male and female? If so, how can that be? Are we comfortable with the possibility of that, and if not, why not? What about those people who use "they/them" to describe themselves...what is that about? Where does sexual attraction come into play with gender? All these questions and more will be discussed and explored in Gender 101. **Jill Carroll** is a scholar as well as a member of the LGTBQ community and parent to a transgendered child. She will tell her own story and address the definitions and differences between biological sex, gender identity, gender expression, and sexual expression.

Dr. Carroll is a recognized expert on issues of religious tolerance, philosophy of religion, American religion, and religion in public life. She worked for many years as a lecturer and adjunct associate professor at Rice University, where she was executive director of the Boniuk Center for Religious Tolerance, and at several campuses of the University of Houston.



Courtesy:
Convict Leasing
and Labor Project



Memorial Park: Implementing the Ten-Year Plan

THURSDAY, APRIL 8, NOON–1:30 P.M. Zoom invitations will be emailed to subscribers. This program will not be recorded.

Courtesy: Nelson Byrd Woltz

In 2015, a master plan for Memorial Park was unanimously approved by Houston City Council after nearly three years of ecological, historical, demographic, and other research as well as the input of over 3,000 Houstonians. Designed by architectural landscaping firm Nelson Byrd Woltz, the plan focuses on further revealing the historical and cultural context of the park as well as providing extensive ecological restoration to strengthen the unique urban forest setting of Houston's largest urban green space.

A partnership of Memorial Park Conservancy, Kinder Foundation, Houston Parks and Recreation Department, and Uptown Development Authority is committed to delivering a significant portion of the 2015 Master Plan by 2028. This public-private partnership was formed by a catalyst gift of \$70 million from the Kinder Foundation, a \$55 million commitment by the conservancy, and \$50 million of public funds through Uptown Development Authority. The resulting partnership defined a Ten-Year Plan that includes a combination of projects to improve the park's ecological resiliency, honor its history, connect it to other parks and green spaces in Houston, strengthen storm water management capabilities, and positively affect Houston.

Shellye Arnold, president and CEO of Memorial Park Conservancy, will discuss the implementation of the Ten-Year Plan, its completed projects, such as the Clay Family Eastern Glades, its current projects, such as the land bridges over Memorial Drive, as well as its ongoing challenges and developments.

Ms. Arnold joined the conservancy in 2013 from a twenty-year career in change management at Cisco Systems, Hewlett-Packard, Compaq Computer Corporation, and McKinsey & Company and has led the creation and adoption of the 2015 Memorial Park Master Plan, launched its associated capital campaign, and initiated project execution. She has a bachelor's degree from the University of Texas at Austin and a master's degree in public policy from Princeton University's School of Public and International Affairs.



Shellye Arnold



Courtesy: Memorial Park Conservancy





**Yin Yang Dragons:
Articulated Energy**
Artist collab: ARKUNGFU & WEAH
(Angel Quesada & Daniel Anguilu)
Photo: Pin Lim
5102 Navigation



Guardia del 2do Barrio
Artist: ARTKUNGFU
(Angel Quesada)
Photo credit: Angel Quesada
1505 St. Emmanuel

Daniel Anguilu is a well-known street artist who works as a METRORail conductor. Anguilu moved to Houston from Mexico when he was 14 years old with limited English. He learned to communicate through graffiti, painting close to 100 murals across Houston and abroad. He curates the Harrisburg Art Museum, an East End warehouse showcasing the work of graffiti and street artists.

Anat Ronen is a multilingual Houston-based self-taught artist who became a professional artist after her family immigrated from Israel. Ronen's work can be found throughout Houston including on highways, bridges, buildings, churches, and schools, with works also displayed in museums and select shows internationally. In addition to murals, Ronen participates in international street painting and street art festivals.

Christine Jelson West joined Houston First Corporation as cultural programs manager in 2015. She serves as the curator and manager for both the permanent and temporary public art programs across all HFC assets. She also programs free public activities throughout the Avenida and Houston Theater districts.

What's with That Wall? Exploring Houston's Street Art

SATURDAY, APRIL 17, 10:00 A.M.–NOON. Self-driving tour of Houston's East End murals. **SATURDAY, APRIL 24, 10:00 A.M.–NOON.** Self-driving tour of Gulfton neighborhood murals. Maps of tour sites will be emailed to subscribers the week before the tours. Stops will include socially distanced, on-site Q & A with artists. **WEDNESDAY, APRIL 21, 6:00–7:30 P.M.** Online panel discussion. Zoom invitations will be emailed to subscribers.

You can't drive around Houston without running into a colorful mural, a graffiti message on a wall or over a bridge, a painted electrical box, or some other form of art on the streets. Who paints them? Are they commissioned works or the artists' choice to claim a canvas around the city? Are the artists self-taught or have they received a formal art education?

The story of Houston's street art scene and its creators is the subject of a discussion panel moderated by artist **Angel Quesada** and features fellow artists **Daniel Anguilu**, **Anat Ronen**, and **Christine West** to answer these questions and discuss the public art phenomenon from an insider's perspective. Meet some of the creators and hear directly from the source some of the challenges and joys of bringing this type of art into existence.

Please join the Houston Seminar for two self-guided driving tours of murals in Houston's thriving East End and the culturally diverse Gulfton area. Artists will be on site for socially distanced discussions about their works and the issues involved in creating these murals.

Angel Quesada has worked as a visual artist, producer, curator, exhibition designer, musician, arts administrator, digital editor, and ethnographer. He concentrates on large scale murals, creating dozens of commissioned pieces across the city. These murals rely heavily on their geographic and physical placement, utilizing the positioning of the sun throughout the day, the movement of shadows, and the societal context to create figurative as well as literal monuments to those places.

Shipwrecked: Rebuilding Lives after Disaster and Displacement

TWO MONDAYS, APRIL 19 AND 26, 5:00–6:30 P.M. Zoom invitations will be emailed to subscribers.

In 2005, Houston responded to Hurricane Katrina by welcoming over 150,000 new neighbors from Louisiana. Since that time, **Angela Blanchard** has studied and mapped the journey of people who have experienced the unthinkable, as they make their way from devastation to rebuilt lives.

"We live in a time of great upheaval. War or weather, loss of health or wealth upend lives and toss people up on unfamiliar shores. How we go on to find purpose and meaning after the unthinkable is the focus of my work."

Blanchard brings in stories from her work with those displaced and with those who helped. From Gulf Coast storms to Australian fires, Syrians resettled in Europe and the Middle East, to civic upheaval in Ferguson and Charlottesville, she finds common elements of help and recovery. The challenge faced by those displaced is to rebuild and recreate lives and communities out of their own imagination. The challenge we face is to welcome the shipwrecked ashore, creating landing places and on-ramps to belonging.

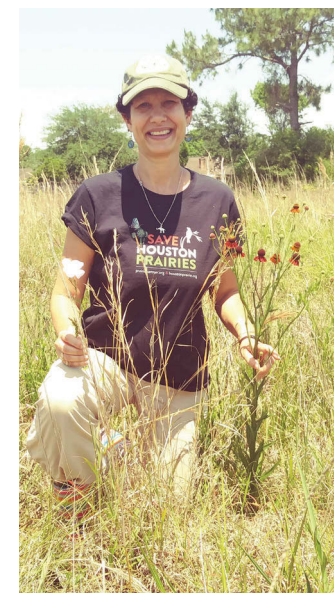
Angela Blanchard is a globally recognized expert practitioner in community development and long-term recovery. Blanchard's breakthrough strategies have successfully revitalized neighborhoods, while providing a powerful road map for cities across the globe. She has worked on six continents, in dozens of cities where leaders have faced the challenge of responding to disruption and inflows of displaced people. Blanchard is a senior fellow at Brown University's Watson Institute for Public Policy and International Development. She teaches a graduate course in urban responses to disaster and displacement. Blanchard advises business, civic, and nonprofit leaders navigating upheaval.

Lawther–Deer Park Prairie: Pristine Urban Survivor

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 28, 10:00–11:30 A.M. Online lecture. Zoom invitations will be emailed to subscribers. **FRIDAY, APRIL 30, 8:30–10:30 A.M.** Walking tour. In light of social distancing recommendations, subscribers will drive their own vehicles to the site. Driving instructions will be emailed to subscribers. Wear sturdy walking shoes and bring binoculars if you have them.

In the midst of the refinery towers and shipping lanes of Deer Park nestles an exceptional example of a coastal prairie, one of the most endangered ecosystems in North America. The 51-acre Lawther–Deer Park Prairie, a never-plowed, native prairie remnant, teems with more than 400 species of native plants and animals.

April 28: Della Barbato, director of education for the Lawther Prairie, will share the story of the prairie's narrow escape from development in 2014, the rewards and challenges of land conservation in a dense urban area, and the site's ecological significance. She will

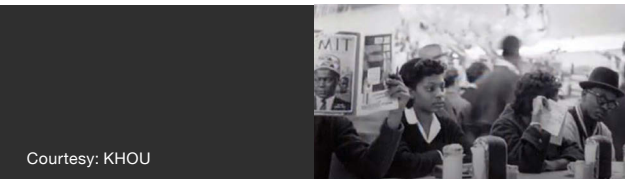




Courtesy: Della Barbato

introduce us to the birds, insects, and plants that we might see on our Friday visit to the park. Resident birds include Eastern meadowlarks, sedge wrens, red-winged blackbirds, and black-bellied whistling ducks.

April 30: Kirsti Harms, executive director of the Native Prairie Association of Texas, will join us as our expert ornithologist. Participants will survey the terrain from the viewing platform, stroll the perimeter of the prairie, and explore other paths while looking out for the wildlife that fills the preserve.



Courtesy: KHOU

Exposing the Historical Structures of Racism in Houston

FOUR TUESDAYS, MAY 4, 11, 18, AND 25, 4:30–6:00 P.M. Zoom invitations will be emailed to subscribers.

Houston is admired for being one of the most diverse cities in America, but it is still one of the most segregated. Are Houstonians prepared to make concessions that are important for the improvement of communities of color and to reject the underlying tradition of white supremacy?

May 4: Communities of Color: Unjust Health Disparities and Impacts

Elena Marks advocates for hard wiring health practices into our community. Institutional racism, discrimination, and inequitable access to food, shelter, and jobs are significant drivers of the very health conditions that lower quality of life and shorten its span. This has become more evident during the COVID-19 pandemic, when 90% of deaths in this country occur in people with underlying medical conditions. Ms. Marks regards the pandemic as a potential turning point in the regional approach to health when we become willing to invest in upstream social services to lighten the downstream need for acute health care.

May 11: The Historical Promise of Democracy in Education

Through the lens of Mabel Wesley (1871–1941) and her son Carter Wesley (1892–1969), **Amilcar Shabazz** will reflect on the fact that Texas was “ground-zero” in the legal work and the debate over Jim Crow and the artificial barriers of race. Prominent white Houstonians have received treatment in the scholarly literature. Learn how the Wesleys made a difference in the history of Houston and how Carter Wesley, as lawyer, writer, editor, and newspaper owner, engaged with the NAACP and Thurgood Marshall over strategies and unintended consequences in the courts and on the ground.

May 18: Transforming Relationships and Institutions through Youth-Led Restorative Justice

Anita Wadhwa explores the current climate that has resulted in the disproportionality of school discipline of students of color in order to understand its domino effects: expulsion, dropping out, and incarceration. Together with some of her students, she shows restorative justice responses that work to derail the reliance on punitive discipline as well as creating environments where all students can achieve success.

May 25: Policing and the Criminal Justice System: Disparities and Reform

Through his work as the chair of the MacArthur Foundation–funded Houston Racial/Ethnic Disparities Committee Data Workgroup, where he leads a research team in a multi-year, large-scale evaluation of the Houston Police Department Body Camera Program, **Howard Henderson** will discuss racial and ethnic disparities across the criminal justice system and policing in Houston. He will offer insights into addressing these disparities, enhancing communication, and engaging the community.

Elena Marks has been president and CEO of the Episcopal Health Foundation since 2014 and a non-resident fellow in health policy at Rice University’s Baker Institute since 2010. Previously she was director of health and environmental policy in the office of Mayor Bill White. She holds a bachelor’s degree from Emory University, a master’s degree in public health from University of Texas Health Science Center, and a law degree from the University of Texas School of Law.

A Texan by birth, Amilcar Shabazz is professor of history and Africana Studies in the W. E. B. Du Bois Department of Afro-American Studies at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. His academic emphasis is on the political economy of social and cultural movements, education, and public policy. His book *Advancing Democracy: African Americans and the Struggle for Access and Equity in Higher Education in Texas* was the winner of the T. R. Fehrenbach Book Award and other scholarly recognitions.

A native Houstonian, Anita Wadhwa is a classroom teacher and restorative justice coordinator at YES Prep Northbrook High School, author of *Restorative Justice in Urban Schools: Disrupting the School to Prison Pipeline*, and a contributor to the recently released anthology, *Colorizing Restorative Justice*. She is co-founder of Restorative Empowerment Youth and hires former students to train organizations in Houston in restorative practices.

Howard Henderson is the founding director of the Center for Justice Research and professor of justice administration in the Barbara Jordan–Mickey Leland School of Public Affairs at Texas Southern University. He was recently a committee co-chair of Mayor Sylvester Turner’s task force on policing reform. Professor Henderson is the author of *More Than Race: Minority Issues in Criminal Justice*, revised 1st edition (Cognella, 2013).

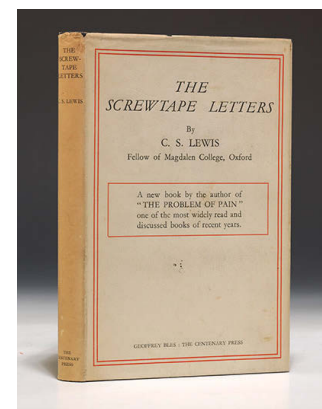
C. S. Lewis: Allegory of the Soul

THREE WEDNESDAYS, MAY 5, 12, AND 19, NOON–1:30 P.M.

Zoom invitations will be emailed to subscribers.

C. S. Lewis was a brilliant writer, scholar, theologian, and philosopher. He is recognized as one of the intellectual giants of the twentieth century. “His works do not exist in an abstract realm of pure thought” (William Wordsworth): they are an allegory of the soul. In his final interview in 1963, Lewis said, “Writing comes as a result of a very strong impulse, and when it does come, I for one must get it out.”

Deborah D. E. P. Mouton, Houston’s poet laureate emeritus, returns to explore the world of C. S. Lewis and to provide a perspective on his thinking from his early to his mature years. She will begin the course with *The Screwtape Letters* (1942), a satirical novel and best seller, followed by *The Great Divorce* (1944), a Christian allegorical tale, and *The Four Loves* (1960), an exploration of the nature of love—in Lewis’ words—“to love at all is to be vulnerable.”



Deborah D. E. P. Mouton is an internationally known poet, educator, activist, and author of *Newsworthy* (Bloomsday Literary, 2019). As the executive director of VIP Arts Houston, she builds bridges that amplify the voices of artists around the nation. Ms. Mouton wrote the libretto for *Marian's Song*, a Houston Grand Opera commission, which premiered in March of 2020. The three books for this series will be read in the order mentioned above.



Courtesy: Orange Show Center for Visionary Arts

Smither Park: Celebrating the Artist in Everyone

SATURDAY, MAY 15, 4:00–7:00 P.M., 2441 Munger Street, Houston, Texas 77023. Socially distanced presentation and docent tour. Refreshments will be served.

Meet us at Smither Park to explore the magical environment envisioned by artist Dan Phillips and arts patron Stephanie Smither and created by over 300 artists. Composed of elaborate mosaic work made out of recycled and found materials, the park extends over an exuberant half-acre of ground adjacent to Houston's singular Orange Show Center for Visionary Art (OSCVA). As part of our study tour of one of Houston's unique treasures, subscribers will hear from a special speaker and will then break into smaller, docent-led groups to explore the park. Docents will also guide us through Jeff McKissack's dreamlike Orange Show monument, built between 1956 and 1979, as an ode to the health benefits of the orange. Mr. McKissack also published a manifesto to promote the humble orange, *How You Can Live 100 Years and Still be Spry* (1960).

The OSCVA now encompasses the Orange Show monument, John Milkovich's Beer Can House, the Art Car and Art Bike parades, and the recently completed Smither Park. These vibrant cultural assets represent a living example of how individual visions can dramatically enrich a neighborhood and a city. Learn how these spaces came to be and what can be achieved when an array of individuals come together in the spirit of creativity and community. As befits the locale, participants will be invited to indulge in some creative self-expression. Materials will be supplied or you can bring your own.

Enrollment:

You may enroll online, and by mail, email, or phone. Once registration is complete, a confirmation of enrollment will be sent by email.

Discounts:

Teachers and students with a school I.D. at an accredited institution may attend classes for a discounted fee. Please call the registrar to enroll.

Refunds:

You will receive a partial refund if you cancel at least two weeks before a course begins; a 20% cancellation fee will be charged. If your enrollment has caused others to be turned away from a limited-enrollment class, no refund will be issued unless your place can be filled. Refund policies for courses involving travel will differ.

For further information, email registrar@houstonseminar.org, telephone (713) 666-9000, or visit houstonseminar.org.



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The Houston Seminar is pleased to offer online enrollment at houstonseminar.org

Please contact us if you would prefer to receive an online-only version of the brochure.

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PLEASE ENROLL ME/US IN THE FOLLOWING COURSES:

Two Timely Questions Two Tuesdays, January 19 and 26, 5:00–6:30 P.M. \$25/session	<input type="checkbox"/> January 19
	<input type="checkbox"/> January 26
Vaccines 101: Understanding the COVID-19 Vaccines Tuesday, February 2, 6:00–7:30 P.M. \$25	<input type="checkbox"/> February 2
Water, Water Everywhere: Strategies and Success Stories Three Thursdays, February 4, 11, and 18, 5:00–6:30 P.M. \$25/session	<input type="checkbox"/> February 4
	<input type="checkbox"/> February 11
	<input type="checkbox"/> February 18
Global Trouble Spots: Mexico, Russia, Syria, and Iran Three Tuesdays, February 9, 16, 23 and one Wednesday, March 3, 6:00–7:30 P.M. \$25/session	<input type="checkbox"/> February 9
	<input type="checkbox"/> February 16
	<input type="checkbox"/> February 23
The Many Names of Slavery Three Tuesdays, March 2, 9, and 23, 4:30–6:00 P.M. \$25/session	<input type="checkbox"/> March 3
	<input type="checkbox"/> March 2
	<input type="checkbox"/> March 9
Gender 101 Thursday, March 11, 6:00–7:30 P.M. \$25	<input type="checkbox"/> March 23
	<input type="checkbox"/> March 11
Memorial Park: Implementing the Ten-Year Plan Thursday, April 8, Noon–1:30 P.M. \$25	<input type="checkbox"/> April 8
What's with That Wall? Exploring Houston's Street Art Saturday, April 17, 10:00 A.M.–Noon, Wednesday, April 21, 6:00–7:30 P.M., and Saturday, April 24, 10:00 A.M.–Noon \$50 (each tour - includes panel) \$25 (panel only)	<input type="checkbox"/> April 17 Tour
	<input type="checkbox"/> April 21 Panel
	<input type="checkbox"/> April 24 Tour
Shipwrecked: Rebuilding Lives after Disaster and Displacement Two Mondays, April 19 and 26, 5:00–6:30 P.M. \$50/2 sessions	<input type="checkbox"/> April 19 & 26
Lawther–Deer Park Prairie: Pristine Urban Survivor Wednesday, April 28, 10:00–11:30 A.M. and Friday, April 30, 8:30–10:30 A.M. \$65 (lecture and tour) \$25 (lecture only)	<input type="checkbox"/> April 28 & 30 Tour & Lecture
	<input type="checkbox"/> April 28 Lecture only
Exposing the Historical Structures of Racism in Houston Four Tuesdays, May 4, 11, 18, and 25, 4:30–6:00 P.M. \$25/session	<input type="checkbox"/> May 4
	<input type="checkbox"/> May 11
	<input type="checkbox"/> May 18
	<input type="checkbox"/> May 25
C. S. Lewis: Allegory of the Soul Three Wednesdays, May 5, 12, and 19, Noon–1:30 P.M. \$25/session	<input type="checkbox"/> May 5
	<input type="checkbox"/> May 12
	<input type="checkbox"/> May 19
Smither Park: Celebrating the Artist in Everyone Saturday, May 15, 4:00–7:00 P.M. \$65	<input type="checkbox"/> May 15
Total	



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Spring 2021

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