Contemporary Issues in a Changing World

Sept. 30 - Nov. 11, 2015
Wednesdays, 6:00-7:30 pm
Braselton, GA Town Hall complex

Jim Smith, PhD, Course Facilitator

We see our world changing rapidly. The knowledge base in most traditional fields is doubling every ten years. Our goal in this class is to re-visit what we’ve learned, to stretch and exercise our minds. In some cases our long held beliefs may be challenged, influencing the way we think about what we read or hear. We’ll have ample opportunity to interact with guest speakers who are nationally recognized experts in their fields and they’ll share insight on issues directly affecting most of our lives. And we’ll enjoy the ride!

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NOTE ON SEPT. 30: Due to scheduling conflict with original speaker, we will have either a talk on “The End of Antibiotics” OR the following:

“What Is Radiation All About? From Cellphones to Radon to Medical Imaging . . . and More.”

Course Facilitator, Jim Smith, Adjunct Professor, Rollins School of Public Health, Emory University, and former Chief, Radiation Studies Branch, CDC. (Sept. 30)

What is “radiation” anyway? How can it both cause and cure cancer? Just how radioactive is the food we eat, the water we drink, and the air we breathe? Knowledge of radiation effects on humans has evolved over a century. A complex array of information (and misinformation) abounds, yet the basic concepts are surprisingly straightforward. Through a talk with demonstrations, we’ll learn enough about radiation and its potential health effects to understand the major issues, enlighten our friends, and to ask the right questions of our health care providers.


Michael Chriszt is a vice president and public affairs officer in the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta’s public affairs department. While at Miami University in Ohio, Chriszt earned two bachelor's degrees, one in history and one in diplomacy and foreign affairs. He also earned a master's...
degree there in political science with emphases on international economics and comparative politics. Chriszt is a graduate of executive education programs at Duke University's Fuqua School of Business and the University of Virginia's Darden Graduate School of Business Administration. He is a member of the National Association of Business Economists and the Atlanta Economics Club, where he serves as the group's vice president.

In this role as a vice president and public affairs officer, he is responsible for the Bank's communications, which include media relations, publications, websites, conferences, and outreach activities such as speeches, economic education, and corporate citizenship. Chriszt, an economist, also leads the Atlanta Fed's SouthPoint blog, which provides commentary and observations on regional economic topics. Prior to assuming his current responsibilities, Chriszt was a vice president responsible for the Regional Economic Information Network and the Center for Real Estate Analytics.

“The Changing Landscape of American Politics: 2016 and Beyond,” Alan Abramowitz, PhD, The Alben W. Barkley Professor of Political Science, Emory University (Oct. 14)

Alan Abramowitz is a popular expert on national politics, polling and elections. His expertise includes election forecasting models, party realignment in the United States, congressional elections and the effects of political campaigns on the electorate. In every U.S. presidential election since 1988, his election forecast has correctly and precisely predicted the popular vote winner within two percentage points or less. He holds a Ph.D., Stanford University, Political Science, 1976 M.A., Stanford University, Political Science, 1972 B.A. with High Honors, University of Rochester, Political Science, Abramowitz, the, is the author or coauthor of five books, including "Voice of the People: Elections and Voting Behavior in the United States."


“Reducing Your Cancer Risk: Nutrition and Physical Activity,” Colleen Doyle, MS, RD, Managing Director, Healthy Eating, Active Living Environments, American Cancer Society, Atlanta (Oct. 21)

Colleen Doyle is a Registered Dietitian who has worked in the health promotion field for over 20 years. Colleen has a Bachelor of Science degree in nutrition from Miami University and a Masters of Science degree in Human Nutrition, with a minor in
Ms. Doyle has been instrumental in developing strategies to increase awareness of the importance of diet and exercise for chronic disease prevention and management, and to create changes in schools, worksites and communities that can help improve healthy lifestyles. She has appeared on national broadcasts, including CNN, Headline News, Discovery Health and the Do It Yourself Network, as well as numerous local news and cable television and radio shows on a regular basis. Colleen is a co-author of The American Cancer Society’s *Great American Eat Right Cookbook*, and has contributed to a variety of other books, including The American Cancer Society’s *Healthy Eating Cookbook, Kids First Cookbook, Celebrate! Healthy Entertaining for Any Occasion, Good For You! Reducing Your Risk of Developing Cancer, Eating Well, Staying Well During and After Cancer, What to Eat During Cancer Treatment, and Energy Balance and Cancer.*

“Overview of the New Northeast Georgia Medical Center and its Services in Braselton,” Anthony Williamson, MD, President of Northeast Georgia Medical Center in Braselton (Oct. 28)

Dr. Anthony Williamson oversees all operations of the new Northeast Georgia Medical Center (NGMC) Braselton, a new, 100-bed hospital that opened in the spring. The Medical Center will bring new medical services – modeled around the programs of excellence NGHS has built at Northeast Georgia Medical Center in Gainesville – to the Greater Braselton community. These include heart and vascular services, orthopedics and neurosciences, cancer treatment, surgery and emergency services. Already open on the hospital campus is Medical Plaza 1, home to more than 35 physician practices representing more than 25 medical specialties. Dr. Williamson has been responsible for the strategic planning and operations for the heart and vascular, oncology, imaging and neurosciences service lines; the development of the NGMC Braselton hospital and medical campus; and expansion of services in the Braselton area market. He is a fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives. He and his wife, Stephanie, live in Hoschton with their daughter.

“Lessons My Parents Taught Me: Words of Wisdom from an Emory Expert on Aging,” Theodore Johnson, II, MD Professor, Department of Medicine and Director of the Division of Geriatric Medicine and Gerontology and Director for the Emory Center for Health in Aging. (Nov. 4)

Dr. Ted Johnson is also the Atlanta Site Director and Associate Director of the Birmingham/Atlanta VA Geriatrics Rehabilitation, Education, and Clinical Center (GRECC) at the Atlanta Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center. Dr. Johnson received his MD from Northwestern University Medical School and his MPH from the
University of North Carolina School of Public Health in Chapel Hill, NC. As a geriatrician, Dr. Johnson is particularly concerned with understanding the functional capacity and quality-of-life for people as they age. His general research interest since internal medicine residency has been investigation of lower urinary tract dysfunction (urinary incontinence and other voiding symptoms) in older adults.

He holds additional appointments in Epidemiology (Rollins School of Public Health) and in Urology. He is board certified in internal medicine and geriatric medicine. He sees patients needing specialty care for lower urinary tract disorders at the Atlanta VA Medical Center in Decatur, GA, and at the Wesley Woods Center of Emory University.

"Genetic Screening: The Technology is Here and It's Affordable" Karen Grinzaid, MS, CGC, CCRC, Director of the JScreen Genetic Screening Program, Emory University School of Medicine (Nov. 11)

Karen Grinzaid received her B.A. in Psychology from Northwestern University in Evanston, IL and her M.S. in Human Genetics from Sarah Lawrence College in Bronxville, NY. She is certified in Genetic Counseling by the American Board of Medical Genetics/American Board of Genetic Counseling. She also received certification as a Clinical Research Coordinator through the Association of Clinical Research Professionals.

Ms. Grinzaid is Senior Director of JScreen, a national online Jewish genetic disease carrier screening program based out of Emory University School of Medicine in Atlanta. JScreen’s mission is to improve access to comprehensive, affordable genetic screening for all. She has been part of the Emory University Genetics team since 1986. She has extensive experience in prenatal, pediatric and adult genetic counseling, newborn screening, and Jewish genetic disease screening, clinical care and research. She currently serves as Instructor and mentor in Emory’s Masters in Genetic Counseling training program.