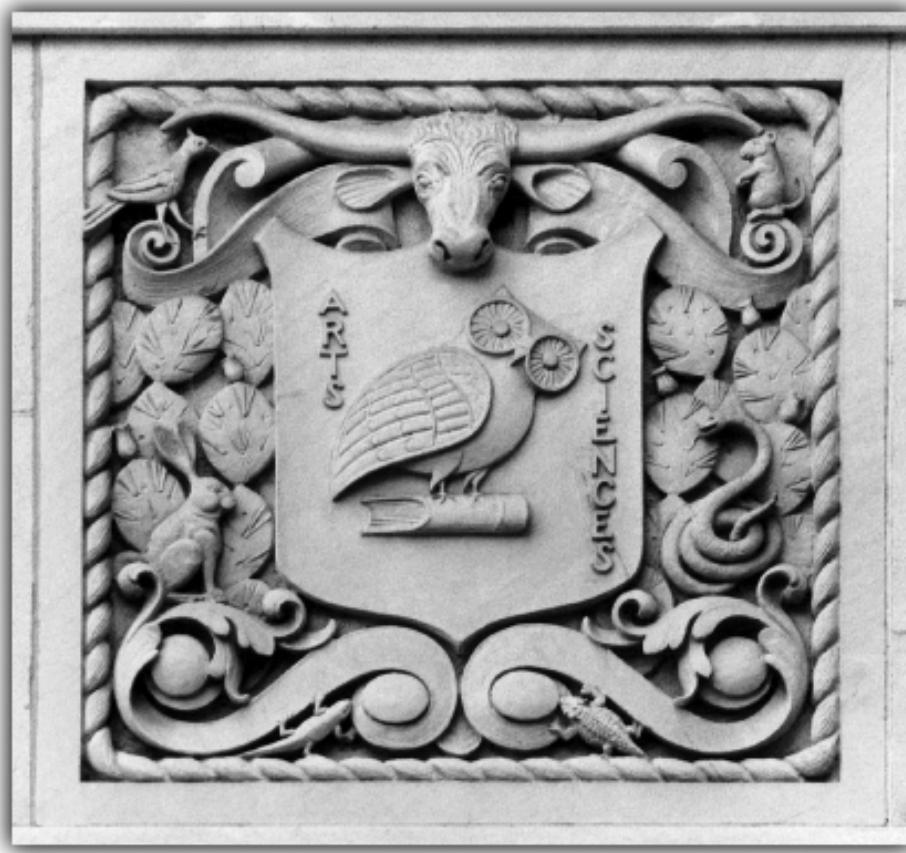


# PLAN II HONORS PROGRAM

## FAMILY DAY



## FALL 2019

THE COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS



THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

# Welcome Plan II Families!

Thank you for joining us for this year's Plan II Family Day. Here is the schedule:

## **10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. - Brunch**, Texas Alumni Center Connally Ballroom

Enjoy a brunch buffet with other Plan II families, students, faculty and staff. Plan II Director Dr. Alexandra Wettlaufer will make remarks at 11:15 a.m., then we will walk across the bridge to Patton Hall (RLP) for the Plan II model classes.

## **11:45 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. - Model Classes (choose one)**

### **RLP 0.130, Helena Woodard - *Difficult Dialogues: Teaching Race and Slavery in Huckleberry Finn***

This class will discuss complexities in teaching Mark Twain's classic, iconic American novel, *Huckleberry Finn*, on the subject of race and slavery. Huck Finn has long been deemed problematic and frequently banned from libraries and classrooms, especially for its pervasive use of the "N" word (some 200 times) and other racial epithets. But should the novel have been re-issued through a new edition, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (Revised edition), Penguin Classics, 1986, edited by Alan Gribben, that deleted those words, and replaced entire passages with language defined as "inoffensive?" We will take a look at side by side passages of Twain's original edition paired with the modern edition of *Huckleberry Finn*. Dr. Woodard will enter into discussion Toni Morrison's comments about her first-time encounter with the novel. Finally, we will discuss the pros and cons of teaching and reading *Huckleberry Finn* as Twain wrote it or as modern editions have reissued it. *Handouts of excerpts from the novel are available at the check-in table.*

### **RLP 0.128, John Morán González - *U.S. Immigration & The American Dream***

The concept of the American Dream has been intertwined with reality of immigration to the United States from the earliest days of the United States. In this model class, we'll discuss the ways that two early commentators—Benjamin Franklin and J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur—advocated for European immigration to the new Republic. Even while touting the promise of the American Dream, they also anxiously reveal the social contradictions that delimits who can be a dreamer as an immigrant.  
*Recommended reading handout available at the check-in table.*

### **RLP 0.126, Michael Starbird - *The 5 Elements of Effective Thinking***

The root of success in everything from academics to business to leadership to personal relationships and everything else, is effective thinking—whether it's thinking disguised as intuition or as good values or as decision-making or problem solving or creativity, it's all thinking. Practical methods of effective thinking can be described, taught, and learned. They are not inborn gifts of a special few. All people can learn them and use them. This talk will describe practical, memorable elements of effective thinking and how to learn them.

### **RLP 0.112, Chris Kirk & Alex Huk, *Ancient Eyes: The tarsier as a lens onto sensory perception and evolution***

This model class will introduce participants to the star of their current Plan II Crucible Course - the tarsier. This small, nocturnal, carnivorous primate native to Southeast Asia is a true "living fossil" that offers a rare glimpse into the evolutionary origins of monkeys, apes, and humans. With enormous eyes, bat-like ears, and almost absurdly long feet, tarsiers present an array of unusual features that make them as bizarre as they are charismatic. These unique attributes make tarsiers an excellent starting point for broader discussions across a range of scientific topics, such as the intersection between behavior and anatomy, and the evolutionary underpinnings of human special senses. Just as the full-semester course is team-taught, the instructors will share their respective expertise in describing tarsiers from multiple angles, and offer insights into tarsiers as a "vehicle" for motivating novel future research.

## *This year, our Family Day Model Classes feature these five outstanding Plan II professors*



**Dr. Helena Woodard, Plan II World Literature Professor**, is an associate professor of English and an affiliate faculty for the African and African Diaspora Studies Department at the University of Texas at Austin. She earned her Ph.D. in 1991 from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She specializes in eighteenth-century British Literature, Early Black Atlantic Writings, and African American Literature. She is a winner of the Friars Centennial Teaching Fellowship Award, the African American Diaspora Department Teaching Award, and the President's Teaching Award. She has taught The Novels of Toni Morrison as a graduate course, an Honors course, and a single-author course in the Department of English for more than twenty years. Woodard has published articles that include "The Two Mary's (Prince and Shelley) on the Textual Meeting Ground of Race, Gender, and Genre" and "Margaret Garner and Appomattox: Performing Slavery / Rewriting Opera." She is the author of a newly-released book, titled *Slave Sites on Display: Reflecting Slavery's Legacy Through Contemporary "Flash Moments"*, published by the University Press of Mississippi. She is also the author of an award-winning book, titled *African-British Writings in the Eighteenth-Century: The Politics of Race and Reason*.

She teaches the cornerstone first-year course in Plan II, the year-long **E 303C&D: Plan II World Literature**.



**Dr. John Morán González, Plan II Signature Course Professor**, originally from the border town of Brownsville, Texas, attended Princeton University, graduating magna cum laude with an A.B. in English literature in 1988. At Stanford University, he earned an M.A. degree in 1991, and a Ph.D. in 1998, both in English and American literature. He teaches as a Professor in the English Department and serves as Director of the Center for Mexican American Studies. He is the author of two books: *Border Renaissance: The Texas Centennial and the Emergence of Mexican-American Literature* (2009), and *The Troubled Union: Expansionist Imperatives in Post-Reconstruction American Novels* (2010). In addition, he is a founding member of *Refusing to Forget*, a public history project dedicated to critically memorializing state violence in the South Texas borderlands, 1910-1920. He is currently teaching a first-year Plan II Signature Course **TC 302: Immigration & the American Dream**.

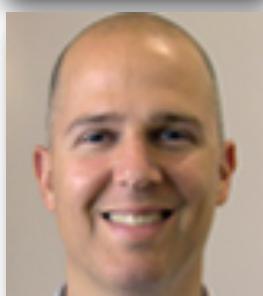


**Dr. Michael Starbird, Plan II Math Professor**, is a Professor of Mathematics and a University Distinguished Teaching Professor at The University of Texas at Austin. He received his B.A. degree from Pomona College and his Ph.D. in mathematics from the University of Wisconsin, Madison. A member of the Academy of Distinguished Teachers since 1998, Dr. Starbird was also the winner of the Chad Oliver Plan II Teaching Award in 1997 and has received many other teaching awards and recognitions. He co-authored, with Edward Burger, the textbook *The Heart of Mathematics: An Invitation to Effective Thinking* and produced an edX MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) titled *Effective Thinking Through Mathematics*. His recent book with co-author Edward Burger is *The 5 Elements of Effective Thinking*. He is long-time professor of **M 310P: Modern Mathematics**.



### **Drs. Chris Kirk and Alex Huk, Plan II Modes of Reasoning Professors**

**Dr. Alex Huk** is the Raymond Dickson Centennial Professor #2 of Neuroscience and Psychology, as well as the Director of the Center for Perceptual Systems and Faculty Director of the Polymathic Scholars Honors Program. He received his B.A. degree from Swarthmore College and his Ph.D. from Stanford. He has received a College of Natural Sciences teaching award, and his research on the neural basis of visual perception has been published in *Nature*, *Science*, and *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.



**Dr. Chris Kirk** is a Professor in the Department of Anthropology and a Research Associate of the Jackson School Museum of Earth History. He received his B.A. in Anthropology from UT Austin and his Ph.D. in Biological Anthropology and Anatomy from Duke University. Dr. Kirk studies the adaptations and evolution of early fossil primates, with a particular focus on the evolution of the special senses. A Friar Centennial Teaching Fellow and member of the Academy of Distinguished Teachers, Dr. Kirk regularly teaches courses for the Liberal Arts Honors program but is team teaching his first Plan II course, **TC 310 Modes of Reasoning**, with Dr. Huk this fall.

## *Support Plan II*

Thankfully, most of the academic programs Plan II coordinates each year costs us little because of the enthusiasm of professors from other departments, the helpfulness of the students' association, and the hard work and loyalty of the staff. But other essential costs not covered by our University budget remain. Over the years, the support we receive from Plan II families has been critical to keeping many of our unique student support programs going, including free printing, peer mentoring, career week workshops, visiting speaker seminars, the senior thesis symposium, and of course, the Plan II office cookie jar.

The process of giving is easy, and your gift is tax deductible. Visit the Plan II Honors website and click on the "Support Plan II" button to make a gift online. Checks made out to the University of Texas at Austin can also be mailed to Plan II or given to a Plan II staff member.

Plan II knows that parents give to their children's education in many ways and not just in dollars. We appreciate your support in all forms. The quality of students that make Plan II the jewel that it is could not happen without you, and we take seriously the trust you have placed in our program.

Thank you, and enjoy the day!



**The University of Texas at Austin**  
**Plan II Honors Program**  
*College of Liberal Arts*

[liberalarts.utexas.edu/plan2](http://liberalarts.utexas.edu/plan2)