As part of the University’s continuing cooperation with the Duncaster Retirement Community in Bloomfield, monthly lectures are offered on the Duncaster campus. Each lecture begins at 4:45 p.m. and is followed by a light buffet reception, providing an opportunity to talk informally with the speaker and mingle with other participants. Residents of Duncaster and Fellows of the Presidents’ College may attend the lectures, and the reception following without charge. The cost per lecture for non-resident, non-Fellows is $15. The events will be held at Duncaster Retirement Community, 40 Loeffler Road, Bloomfield, Conn. There is parking adjacent to the building.

**SPRING 2017**

- **THE ROMANOVS, RASPUTIN, AND REVOLUTION**
  —Kenneth Poppe
  Tues., Feb. 7; 4:45 p.m.

- **THE SECRET ESCAPE TUNNEL FROM THE HOLOCAUST: THE UNIVERSITY OF HARTFORD’S EXCAVATIONS PROJECT**
  —Richard Freund
  Tues., March 7; 4:45 p.m.

- **CONNECTICUT IN THE SPACE AGE**
  —Michael Robinson
  Tues., April 11; 4:45 p.m.

- **UNDERGROUND RAILROADS AND LIVING BETWEEN WORLDS: THE ENDURING LEGACY OF AMERICAN SLAVERY IN COLSON WHITEHEAD AND TA-NEHISI COATES**
  —Fiona Mills
  Tues., May 9; 4:45 p.m.

Online registration now available at hartford.edu/presidentscollege
FEBRUARY 7

» THE ROMANOVS, RASPUTIN, AND REVOLUTION—Kenneth Poppe

One hundred years ago, a revolution ended the 300-year rule of the Romanov dynasty. Its causes included death and destruction suffered during World War I, which began in 1914 and for which Russia was woefully unprepared. Other causes included extreme poverty and hunger, a lack of meaningful democratic institutions, and the incompetence and unpopularity of the royal family.

Questions and controversies to be considered: Why were efforts to reform Russia before 1917 unsuccessful? What was the nature of Nicholas II’s rule and the significance of his family life? What was the role of Rasputin, a corrupt wandering holy man? How did the events from February to October lead to the Bolshevik Revolution?

KENNETH POPPE has many years of experience teaching history at high schools in Westport, Farmington, West Hartford, and Simsbury. He traveled to the Soviet Union in the 1980s, studied the Russian language at CCSU, and spent a sabbatical year in the Russian Studies Department at Trinity College. He established Russian studies courses, created teaching resources for high school teachers, and presented at state and local conferences. Poppe is past president of the Connecticut Council for the Social Studies.

MARCH 7

» THE SECRET ESCAPE TUNNEL FROM THE HOLOCAUST: THE UNIVERSITY OF HARTFORD’S EXCAVATIONS PROJECT—Richard Freund

In 2016, the University of Hartford spearheaded an investigation of the Ponar Burial Pits outside of Vilnius, Lithuania, using non-invasive geophysical equipment searching for a legendary escape tunnel dug by the Jewish inmates in 1944. The discovery was hailed worldwide and NOVA, the No. 1 science program in the world is making a documentary that will air on PBS in April 2017.

RICHARD FREUND, PhD, is the Maurice Greenberg Professor of Jewish History and director of the University of Hartford’s Maurice Greenberg Center for Judaic Studies. He is the author or co-author of nine books, including Digging through History: From Atlantis to the Holocaust (Rowman & Littlefield, 2012) and Digging through the Bible (Rowman & Littlefield, 2008). He has directed, on behalf of the University of Hartford, archaeological projects in Israel, including: the Cave of Letters, Qumran (site of the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls), Yavne, Bethsaida, Yavne, Nazareth, and Har Karkom, and has done projects in Spain, Rhodes, Greece, Poland, and now a series of projects in Lithuania. He is the author or co-author of over 100 scholarly articles and his work has been featured in Archaeology, Biblical Archaeology, Time, Newsweek, The New York Times and in the media worldwide. His work has also been a part of television documentaries made for National Geographic, NOVA, The History Channel, Discovery, BBC, and CNN.

APRIL 11

» CONNECTICUT IN THE SPACE AGE—Michael Robinson

When President Kennedy drafted an ambitious plan to land Americans on the moon, NASA turned to Connecticut—a center of aeronautical research and industry since the early 1900s—to develop life-support systems, space suits, propulsion systems, and parachutes for the crafts being designed to carry humans into space. Although Florida became the iconic landscape of NASA launches, Connecticut was the Space Age’s Silicon Valley, designer of some of its most sophisticated technologies. Evidence can be seen on the moon itself, in the discarded pile of life-support packs, one for each of the dozen men who visited the moon, left in the lunar dust of Tranquility Base and other sites—all made in Connecticut. And when the oxygen tanks of Apollo XIII exploded en route to the moon in 1970, it was to Windsor Locks’ Hamilton Sundstrand that frantic NASA officials turned, keeping phone lines open all night as they desperately improvised a way to save the failing craft and its three astronauts.

MICHAEL ROBINSON is an associate professor of history at the University of Hartford’s Hillyer College. He is the author of The Coldest Crucible: Arctic Exploration and American Culture (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), winner of the 2008 Book Award for the History of Science in America and The Lost White Tribe: Explorers, Scientists, and the Theory that Changed a Continent (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016). Robinson has given lectures about his work at the American Museum of Natural History, The Explorers Club, The British Library, the Library of Congress, and NASA headquarters among others. He is a frequent guest on radio and television programs including American Experience, BBC World Service, the Smithsonian Channel, and the Travel Channel and has been a news source for the Wall Street Journal, the Christian Science Monitor, the Associated Press, and USA Today.