

Southern Appalachian and Place-based Studies

Overview

Website: collaborative.sewanee.edu/

The Collaborative for Southern Appalachian and Place-Based Studies is an initiative bringing together the efforts of faculty, staff, students, and community partners toward building a transformative and replicable model of public scholarship and community action that is fundamentally grounded by a focus on place. Insofar as meaningful understanding of and engagement with a place—whether it be Southern Appalachia or some other place—demands interdisciplinary, trans-disciplinary, and applied approaches, place-based inquiry can catalyze innovative approaches and collaborations that transcend traditional disciplinary, institutional, and academy-community boundaries.

Some central and distinguishing features of the collaborative include:

- place-based pedagogies that draw their strength from a concrete focus on southern Appalachia while also equipping students with skills that are valuable and imperative for engaging meaningfully with any place, including the science of framing (with the help of our colleagues at the FrameWorks Institute) and community-based participatory research
- deeply interdisciplinary and trans-disciplinary collaborations and approaches, with faculty, students, and community partners from a variety of disciplines working together on mutually identified questions emphasizing exploration of humanistic themes from a variety of perspectives
- academic-community collaborations that recognize the value of public scholarship and of bringing together varied sources of expertise and skills to address community needs and visions
- inter-institutional collaborations between Sewanee and Yale, through which we combine the strengths of a small undergraduate liberal arts institution in a rural locale with those of a research-intensive institution with multiple graduate programs in an urban setting

Educating effective, engaged, socially responsible citizens and transformative leaders who act for the public good requires that we give our students the knowledge, skills, and inclination to bring multiple perspectives and approaches to bear on enduring ethical, social, and scientific challenges. The collaborative embraces place-based, interdisciplinary public scholarship as one promising route.

Faculty

Assistant Professor M. Shea

Professor Willis

Courses

Southern Appalachian and Place-based Studies Courses

SAST 220 Place, Memory, and Identity (4)

This course explores critical intersections of memory, identity, and place from a multidisciplinary perspective. Students engage a series of concepts and skills regarding place--abstractly and concretely--as they relate to efforts by individuals, communities, and societies to gain meaning from the past for the present.

SAST 325 Food, Agriculture, and Social Justice in Southern Appalachia and Beyond (4)

This course explores how producing, preparing, and consuming meals become expressions of individuality, social unity, and cultural identity that create intimate relationships not only among people but also between people and the natural world. Historical foundations and current systems of food production are examined with specific consideration given to the ways in which differential production and access to food have created disparities in health and nutrition as well as how the Food Justice movement seeks to address these inequities through restructuring and transforming the current systems of production.