
Fitchburg State University Today

Winter Commencement at 4 p.m. Friday, Dec. 20

The university will hold the [Winter Commencement](#) ceremony at 4 p.m. Friday, Dec. 20 in the Athletics and Recreation Center. Please note the earlier start time, one of many modifications to the ceremony.

[Additional information](#) for graduates may be found on the university website.



The winter ceremony is a ticketed event, and information about how to reserve tickets will be sent to the graduates to their university email accounts on Monday, Dec. 3.

[Commencement information](#)



Recognizing Service

Fitchburg State [observed](#) Veterans Day with a ceremony honoring those who served and paying tribute to a fallen alumnus with the re-dedication of a memorial bench on the university quadrangle.

U.S. Army First Lt. Theodore A. "Ted" Thompson, Jr., born on Sept. 11, 1942, graduated from Fitchburg State in 1966,

where he was a member of the Esoteric Society fraternity. Lt. Thompson was killed in action in Vietnam on Sept. 8, 1968, just three days before his 26th birthday.

Carol Cioffari, Lt. Thompson's sister, recalled her brother and his calling to follow their father's example by joining the service. "We were Army brats," she said, joking that she was the "brat" and her brother was "the good kid."

"It's something he grew up with," Cioffari said. "Teddy was immersed in the military. It's what he wanted to do."

[Read more](#)

Celebrate International Education Week

In honor of the International Education Week (Nov. 18-24), the [Office of International Education](#) is presenting a celebration of global cultures and cuisine at Fitchburg State.



Programs include the [flag identification challenge](#), wherein participants can test their knowledge about the flags from the countries of our international students. All week, a poster depicting the flags will be on display near the North Street Bistro on the lower level of Hammond Hall, and questions will be answered using a QR code. Winners will be announced at **11:30 a.m. Friday** in Hammond Hall.

The Center for Teaching and Learning will hold a virtual presentation for faculty on how to support international students at **3:30 p.m. Tuesday**. The program will offer insights, resources, and practical guidance to help faculty foster an inclusive and supportive learning environment. Three current international students will share their experiences of being at Fitchburg State.

The Holmes Dining Commons will also offer an international dining experience throughout the week, curated by Chartwells.

- Monday (Lunch starts at 11:15 a.m.): *Asia* – Korean favorites like Take a Bao and Kkanpung Saeu.
- Tuesday (Dinner starts at 4:30 p.m.): *Africa* – Nigerian & Ghanaian-inspired Jollof Rice with Spiced Chicken and Plantains.
- Wednesday (Lunch starts at 11:15 a.m.): *South America* – Colombian and Peruvian flavors featuring Pollo a la Brasa with Aji Verde Sauce.
- Thursday (Dinner starts at 4:30 p.m.): *North America* – Traditional U.S. Thanksgiving Meal.
- Friday (Lunch starts at 11:15 a.m.): *Europe* – Irish Corned Beef Dinner and Shepherd's Pie.

Moot Court tournament returns to campus

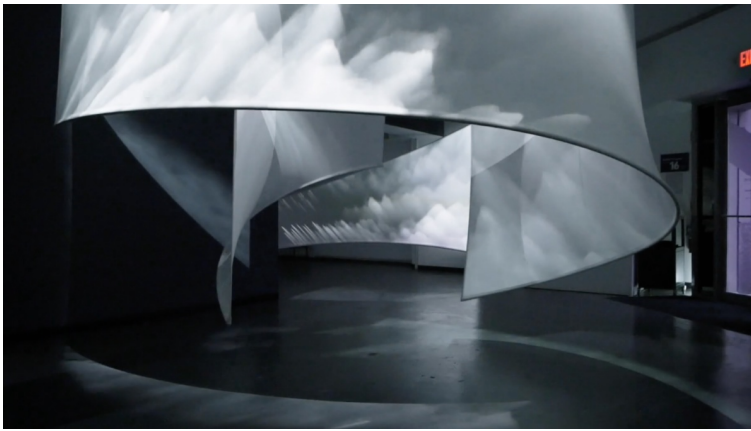
Constitutional questions surrounding whether someone's speech encouraging another person to take their own life is grounds for manslaughter will be among the issues debated by students in the American Moot Court Association's Eastern Regional tournament, taking place **Friday, Nov. 22** and **Saturday, Nov. 23** on campus.

The hypothetical case, inspired by actual cases that drew national attention, will be argued by 46 teams of students from 17 colleges and universities at the regional tournament. Winners will advance to the national tournament in January.



Beyond the free speech issues of the case, the tournament will also have students arguing whether accessing an electronic device using its owner's "face ID" without consent constitutes compelled self-incrimination, a 5th Amendment violation.

[Read more](#)



Kendricken Lecture this Wednesday

The Kendricken Memorial Lecture Series will welcome artist Georgie Friedman for “Light, Video and Experiential Art” at **3:30 p.m. Wednesday** in room G19 of Hammond Hall. The talk is free and open to the public. A reception will follow the talk.

[Georgie Friedman](#)'s work combines science and research with the metaphoric and emotional. She bases her projects on a range of powerful atmospheric, oceanic, and geologic conditions including: hurricanes, space weather, sea level rise, glacier retreat, and volcanic activity. She travels and films on location, then digitally reframes the natural elements utilizing site-specific video installation, single and multi-channel videos, sound, photographic series, and sculptural elements, all to construct new experiences for viewers.

[Read more](#)

ALFA Spring 2025 registration to open

Registration opens **Tuesday, Dec. 10** for Fitchburg State University's Adult Learning in the Fitchburg Area ([ALFA](#)) Spring 2025 [courses](#), with offerings that will include an introduction and exploration of common artificial intelligence platforms, how the U.S. was governed through the Great Depression and World War II, and the basics of novel writing.

There are also courses on the science of psychiatric medication, an exploration of nuclear power and radiation, and decluttering your house. From exercise to outdoor excursions and an introduction to modern art, ALFA offers courses for countless interests.

There are dozens of classes on the calendar, including a five-part interdisciplinary series on the diverse history, cultures and contributions of the African continent and another series on topics of world history.

The [full program](#) is viewable online at fitchburgstate.edu/alfa.

Course Offerings **SPRING 2025**

ALFA Adult Learning
IN THE Fitchburg Area
FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY

Love of Learning Lasts a Lifetime!
fitchburgstate.edu/ALFA



Keep up with campus happenings on the Burg Blog

Follow the [Burg Blog](#) for timely updates of campus life.

Among the recent articles and slideshows, see scenes from the [lighting of the](#)

sponsored by Counseling Services and FAVE; [hot chocolate and churros](#) from Commuter Affairs; a [BIPOC police panel](#) discussion for students in the police program; the Office of Institutional Research and Planning's [research roundtable](#) event; and [giving thanks](#) event sponsored by Alumni and Development.

[Burg Blog](#)

Cultural Events

"American Underground" continues this week

A thriller about prejudice and its dark manifestations is the fall theater production from the Communications Media Department. "American Underground," written by Brent Askari and directed by university Professor Kelly Morgan, continues its run this week at the Wallace Theater for the Performing Arts at the McKay Complex, 67 Rindge Road. Admission is free and open to the public.

In "American Underground," playwright Brent Askari shines a spotlight on America's history of constructing a societal Other. Just like the Irish, Italians, Jewish, Japanese and other waves of immigration before them; Muslims in Askari's fictional, near-future America face persecution on a widespread, deadlier scale.

The play follows Jeff and his family as their ethics and morals are put on trial when they decide to shelter Sherri, a Muslim-American hiding from the Government. Will freedom ring at the end of the story or will the more vulnerable members of our society become just another statistic?

The production is being mounted with two full casts, composed of current Fitchburg State students as well as alumni, who will take the stage on alternating performances.

Remaining performances will be at 7 p.m. **Wednesday, Nov. 20; Thursday, Nov. 21; Friday, Nov. 22;** and **Saturday, Nov. 23.** There will also be matinee performances at 2 p.m. **Sunday, Nov. 24.**

Concert Band and Community Orchestra Concert on Nov. 21

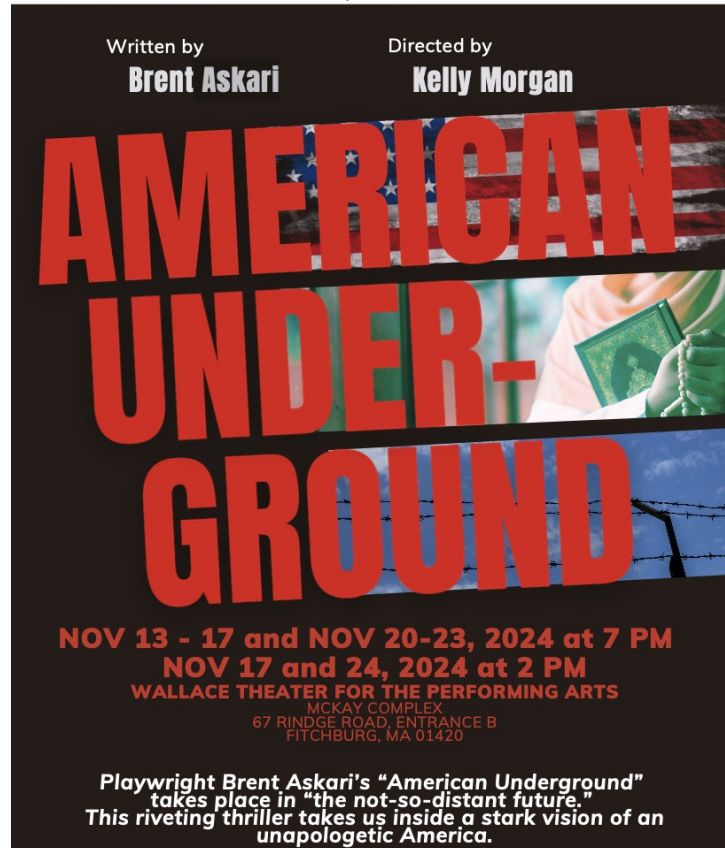
The Community Orchestra and Concert Band will perform their fall concert at 7:30 p.m. **Thursday** in Weston Auditorium, 353 North St. Admission is free and open to the public.

The concert, "Music of Sun and War," will feature music from the video games Skyrim and Celeste featuring guest pianists, **Professor Jane Fiske** and Cindy Schilling. The Community Orchestra is led by **Professor Hildy Schilling** and the Concert Band is led by **Associate Professor Amy McGlothlin**.

Donations to the university's Falcon Bazaar food and necessities pantry will be accepted at the door. Donors are encouraged to bring shampoo and single serving macaroni and



Fitchburg State University's
Communications Media Department
in association with
The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community of Fitchburg, MA
presents





Faculty Notes

Professor Erin Rehrig (Biology), chair of the Biology and Chemistry Department, has been [selected](#) for inclusion in the American Association of State College and Universities (AASCU) Department Chair Leadership Institute to be held in January and August in Washington, D.C.

The new program is designed for current department chairs who serve at state colleges and universities and aspire to be dynamic, strategic, and empathetic leaders. Institute participants will gain a national perspective on the importance of the department chair in serving the institutional mission, leading with an equity mindset, delivering value and ensuring student success.

Rehrig joined the Fitchburg State faculty in 2011 and has been a full professor since 2023.

Professor Eric Budd (Economics, History and Political Science) attended the annual meeting of the Northeastern Political Science Association in Boston. He chaired the panel "Assessing Ongoing Militarized Conflicts" and was supposed to be the discussant for the panel "Political Violence and Conflict Resolution." Unfortunately that panel imploded when 3 of the 4 panelists were unable to get funding, due to the general lack of support for faculty scholarship.

Professor Laura Garofoli (Psychological Science) recently attended the National Diversity Congress (NatDC) Women in Leadership 2025 conference. The NatDC is dedicated to advocating for inclusion and a better understanding on how to combat sexism, racism, heterosexism, ageism, and ableism in the workplace.

"As a multiracial woman with administrative aspirations, I thought it would be a great opportunity to connect with other women like me in higher education and to learn about their paths to and through their leadership roles," Garofoli said. "I really enjoyed the sessions on inclusive leadership practices, career advancement, and knowing your worth. There were so many wonderful perspectives that were shared about how women like myself have had difficulty joining 'the conversation' or 'making the move,' and how to change that. There was such a rich depth of knowledge and experience in every room that it made these sessions invigorating and inspiring. I often struggle with knowing my own worth, so being around strong women leaders who do know their worth was eye-opening and edifying."

Professor Katherine Jewell (Economics History and Political Science) and **Associate Professor Kevin McCarthy** (Communications Media) presented at a plenary session at the recent Society for U.S. Intellectual History [annual conference](#) on history and podcasting with Kellie Carter Jackson of Wellesley, Dylan Gottlieb of Bentley, and Natalia Mehlman Petrzela of the New School.

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