

PAST LEVENTHAL LECTURERS

1982-1983

Lester Thurow, Economic Analyst

1983-1984

David Halberstam, Reporter

1984-1985

Malcolm Forbes, Editor and Publisher

1985-1986

Ellen Goodman, Syndicated Columnist

1986-1987

Arthur Miller, Harvard Law Professor

1987-1988

Hodding Carter III, Former Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs

1988-1989

Elie Wiesel, Recipient of the 1986 Nobel Peace Prize

1989-1990

Charles Osgood, Broadcast Journalist

1990-1991

Jonathan Kozol, Author

1991-1992

William H. Gray III, President, United Negro College Fund

1992-1993

Michael Novak, Religious Educator, Author, and Critic

1993-1994

Leslie Gelb, President of the Council on Foreign Relations

1994-1995

Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler, President, Union of American Hebrew Congregations

1995-1996

David McCullough, Historian and Author

1997-1998

Doris Kearns Goodwin, Historian

1998-1999

Carl Bernstein, Author and Journalist

1999-2000

Clarence Page, News Columnist and Commentator

2000-2001

Morris Dees, Civil Rights Advocate

2001-2002

Deborah Prothrow-Stith, Public Health Leader

2002-2003

Parker J. Palmer, Education Activist and Teacher

2003-2004

Calvin Trillin, Writer and Satirist

2004-2005

Peter Beinart and Jonah Goldberg, Political Commentators

2005-2006

Robert F. Kennedy Jr., Environmental Lawyer and Activist

2006-2007

Charles Fishman, Investigative Journalist

2007-2008

Brigitte Gabriel, News Columnist and Author

2008-2009

Daniel Goleman, Psychologist and Author

2009-2010

Greg Mortenson, Humanitarian

2010-2011

Jonathan Safran Foer, Author

2011-2012

H.W. Brands, Historian

2012-2013

Gwen Ifill, Journalist

2013-2014

Dave Barry, Writer and Humorist

2014-2015

Michio Kaku, Physicist and Author

2015-2016

Nickolas Kristof, *New York Times* Columnist

2016-2017

Ernesto Sirolli, Economic Developer

2017-2018

J.D. Vance, Author

2018-2019

Seth M. Siegel, Author

2023-2024

Eli Saslow, Writer At-Large for *The New York Times*

2024-2025

Robert Samuels, *Washington Post* Journalist

2025-2026

WITTENBERG SERIES

Enlightening Campus and Community

Fred R. Leventhal Family Lecture

“Race, Class, and Identity in American Universities: How Students Experience School – And One Another”

Jeff Hobbs
***New York Times* Bestselling Author**

7 p.m. Tuesday, April 14, 2026
Weaver Chapel



Jeff Hobbs

NEW YORK TIMES
BESTSELLING AUTHOR

Jeff Hobbs is the author of *The Short and Tragic Life of Robert Peace* (2014), which was a *New York Times* bestseller, winner of the *LA Times* Book Award, finalist for the Carnegie Medal and PEN Award in biography, and adapted into the 2024 film *ROB PEACE*. Described by the *Los Angeles Times* as “an honest, insightful, and empathetic account,” the book tells the story of Hobbs’ friend and college roommate Robert Peace, whose life was cut short by violence.

Selected as a 2015 nonfiction finalist for the Dayton Literary Peace Prize, *The Short and Tragic Life of Robert Peace* explores issues of class and race. *Bloomberg Businessweek* praised the book as “captivating... a smart meditation on the false promise of social mobility.”

Named a best book of the year by Amazon and *The New Yorker*, Hobbs’ latest book, *Seeking Shelter* (2025), follows the story of a single mother of six in Los Angeles facing homelessness and poverty. The book was selected last month as the winner of the 2026 J. Anthony Lukas Book Prize. Hobbs is also the author of *The Tourists* (2007), *Show Them You’re Good* (2020), and *Children of the State* (2023), which was a finalist for the 2023 Goddard-Riverside Book Prize for Social Justice.

Since 2014, Hobbs has visited over a hundred schools – from high schools and juvenile halls to colleges and universities – to facilitate conversations about access, entitlement, racism, classism, justice, and identity in modern day America.

A Guggenheim Fellow, Hobbs teaches nonfiction writing at Yale University. He graduated in 2002 with a B.A. in English language and literature from Yale, where he was awarded the Willets and Meeker prizes for his writing. He lives in Los Angeles with his wife and two children.

PROGRAM

WELCOME

Christian M. M. Brady, DPhil (Oxon.)
President

INTRODUCTION OF THE SPEAKER

Erin Hill, M.A.
Senior Professor of Practice
Department of Education

ADDRESS

“Race, Class, and Identity in American Universities: How Students Experience School – And One Another”
Jeff Hobbs

QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

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Following the address, books will be available for purchase, and Jeff Hobbs will do a book signing.

Earlier today, Hobbs met with students in the education, sociology, and English programs during a fireside chat led by Erin Hill.

THANKS

This Wittenberg Series event is made possible by a gift to Wittenberg University from the Fred R. Leventhal family.

ABOUT THE WITTENBERG SERIES

Now in its 41st season, the Wittenberg Series was created in 1982 during President Emeritus William A. Kinnison’s tenure. Since its inception, Nobel Laureates, scientists, significant literary figures, most of America’s foremost modern dance companies, as well as hundreds of prominent psychologists, educators, economists, writers, theologians, urban planners, and historians have visited campus to participate. For more information, visit www.wittenberg.edu/wittseries.

