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Woodrow Wilson Fellow Dr. Susan Shaw To Address the Ethics of the Anthropocene on Muhlenberg College Campus

Environmental health scientist and marine toxicologist will deliver a series of lectures as a Woodrow Wilson Visiting Fellow at Muhlenberg College from October 22 to 25.

New York, NY — Dr. Susan Shaw, a leading environment scientist, founder and director of the Shaw Institute and professor at the State University of New York, Albany's School of Public Health, will visit Allentown, PA next week as a Woodrow Wilson Visiting Fellow at Muhlenberg College, where she will deliver a series of lectures on topics related to key health threats we face in the Anthropocene era. Dr. Shaw's visit will last from October 22 to 25, and her lectures will include one public talk and eight classroom presentations.

"I appreciate this opportunity to address the Muhlenberg community and raise awareness about the alarming consequences of the fossil fuel age, the Anthropocene," Dr. Shaw said. "The planet is warming at breakneck speed, our oceans are choking with plastics, and every person on Earth has hundreds of untested chemicals in their body. It is vital for everyone to understand the ethical dimensions of our actions and the broader implications they will have for humankind."

Dr. Shaw's lectures throughout the week, one of which is open to the public, will cover a variety of topics related to her research and expertise. Subjects will include the hazards of photochemicals, chemical exposure, plastics and human health, the aftermath of the Gulf of Mexico oil spill, and occupational cancer in the fire service.

Her visit is sponsored by the dean of academic life and Muhlenberg College's Center for Ethics, which selected as its fall 2018 theme: The Ethics of the Anthropocene: Crisis Earth. A program of the Council of Independent Colleges, Woodrow Wilson Visiting Fellows has, for more than 45 years, brought prominent scientists, artists, diplomats, journalists, business leaders and other professionals to campuses across the U.S. for substantive dialogue with students and faculty members.

Public Talk: "Science, Lies and Politics"

On October 23, Dr. Shaw will give a *public talk* in the Great Room (111-113), Seegers Union at 7:00 p.m. Drawing on a 30-year career in environmental science, she discusses the raging war on science and its consequences, stating, "Science plays a critical role in human survival but politics are driving us to planetary ecocide." In this impassioned talk, first delivered to an audience of 1200 at the 2017 TEDxMidAtlantic SUPERPOWERS event in DC, she points to positive trends ahead, including a revolution in renewable energy across all sectors. The question is, can we get there in time?

The schedule of Dr. Shaw's *classroom lectures* is as follows:

October 22

- **"Regrettable Substitutions: Replacement Chemistry Is Not Always Green"** from 11:00 to 12:15 a.m., Trumbower 348. In this talk, Dr. Shaw will discuss her decades of researching toxic chemicals in marine wildlife and people, and the implications of our weak regulatory structure that allows

substitutes that are chemical cousins of the original compound.

- **“Chemical Exposure and Cancer Risk Among Fire Fighters”** from 12:30 to 1:45 p.m. at 3405 Shankweiler will be part of Environmental Health curriculum.

October 23

- **“Reckless Endangerment: The BP Oil Spill Revisited”** from 11:00 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. as part of Introduction to American Politics in which Dr. Shaw will show clips from *The Big Fix* and share insights from her investigation of the politics surrounding the BP spill and its impacts in the Gulf.

October 24

- **“Marine Ecotoxicology: Notes from the Field”** from 11:00 to 11:50 a.m. in the New Science Building 314 will cover her Institute’s long-term project *Seals As Sentinels* that documented flame retardants and other pollutants that have weakened the harbor seal population along the Northwest Atlantic coast.
- In **Writing for the Media**, from 3:30 to 4:45 p.m. in Watson 115, Dr. Shaw will be interviewed by the students who will generate articles about her work for the college newspaper and local media outlets.

October 25

- **“OverExposure: Chemical Hazards in the Arts”** in Printmaking I, from 9:00 to 10:00 a.m. in Baker Center for the Arts, will cover Dr. Shaw’s experience with toxic darkroom chemicals that resulted in *OverExposur*, the book she wrote with Ansel Adams in the 1980s.
- In **“Crisis Earth/OCEANS”**, from 10:05 to 10:45 a.m. in Shankweiler, Dr. Shaw will discuss the converging impacts of petrochemicals, plastics, and climate change on the world’s oceans, with a special focus on microplastics and human health.
- **“Chemical Pollution, Climate Change and the Vanishing World of Marine Mammals”** from 11:00 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. in Trumbower 149, will cover the human impacts that are driving the global mass extinction of marine wildlife and the Institute’s ambitious project with Sweden to address the loss of whales, dolphins, and seals from three oceans.

About Dr. Susan Shaw



An environmental health scientist, marine toxicologist, explorer, author, and passionate ocean advocate, Susan Shaw is widely known for her pioneering research on the toxic legacy of man-made chemicals in the ocean environment. She is credited as the first scientist to show that flame retardant chemicals used in consumer products have contaminated marine mammals and commercially important fish stocks in the northwest Atlantic.

On March 17, 2012, Dr. Shaw received the Explorers Club Citation of Merit Award for “extraordinary feats of exploration and research” and her leadership role in ocean conservation before more than 1,000 people at the Explorers Club Annual Dinner ceremony at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, New York City. Shaw chairs The Explorers Club State of the Oceans Forums highlighting solutions to the crisis facing the world’s oceans.

An outspoken and influential voice on ocean pollution, Shaw dove in the Gulf of Mexico oil slick in May 2010 and has informed the national debate on the hazards of chemical dispersants. She currently leads an investigation on the effects of oil and chemical dispersants in the Gulf ecosystem and serves on the U.S. Department of Interior's Strategic Sciences Working Group, a team of scientists charged with assessing consequences of the oil spill and recommending policy actions. She appears in several documentary films on the Gulf disaster including Animal Planet's Black Tide: Voices of the Gulf and Green Planet's The Big Fix, the Official Selection documentary at the 2011 Cannes Film Festival.

A Fulbright Scholar with dual degrees from Columbia University in film and public health/ environmental health sciences, Shaw published *Overexposure*, the first book on the health hazards of photographic chemicals, in 1983 with Ansel Adams. She is the director and founder of the Shaw Institute (<http://www.shawinstitute.org>) and professor at The School of Public Health, Department of Environmental Health Sciences, State University of New York, Albany.

The recipient of numerous awards, Dr. Shaw is a Fellow of the Explorers Club, a Woodrow Wilson Visiting Fellow, and was named Gulf of Maine "Visionary" by the Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment.

In 2011 Shaw received the Society of Women Geographers' highest award, the Gold Medal, joining the ranks of Amelia Earhart, Margaret Mead, Jane Goodall, and Sylvia Earle. She is the 19th woman to receive the Society's Gold Medal in 78 years.