



Winter 2-14-2014

Event Series to Explore Social History of Les Misérables

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Recommended Citation

Dhue, Hannah, "Event Series to Explore Social History of Les Misérables" (2014). *News and Events*. 2320.

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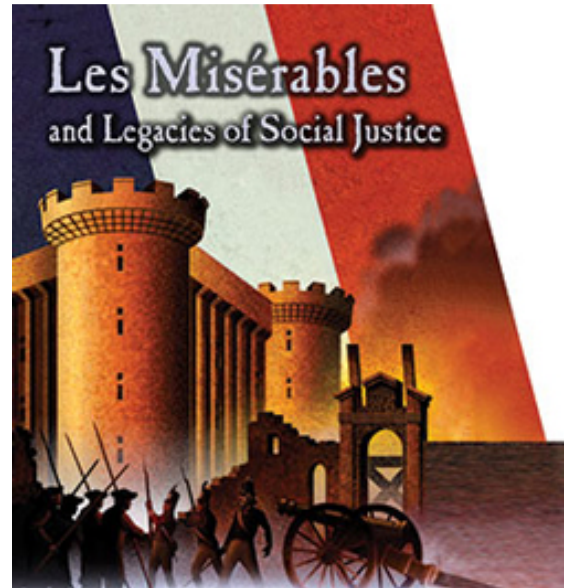
Event Series to Explore Social History of Les Misérables

Feb. 14, 2014

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.— Illinois Wesleyan will present a series of campus events titled “*Les Misérables* and Legacies of Social Justice,” all based on the social history of Victor Hugo’s classic novel. The series will include screenings of two film versions of *Les Misérables*, a Faculty Roundtable Discussion and guest lecturer Professor Casey Harison.

The events, which are free and open to the public, will be held in Beckman Auditorium of The Ames Library (1 Ames Plaza, Bloomington).

“This series, with a focus on Hugo’s *Les Misérables*, will allow our students to understand and appreciate the significance of this particular seminal work from historical, literary, social, philosophical and aesthetic points of view. That’s what a good liberal arts education is all about,” said Associate Professor of History Robert Schultz.



Following is a schedule for the series:

- Monday, Feb. 17: International Film Series (IFS) Screening of the 1958 French version of *Les Misérables* (with English subtitles) at 7 p.m.
- Thursday, Feb. 20: IFS screening of the 2012 American film version of the Cameron Mackintosh musical *Les Misérables* (Starring Hugh Jackman, Russell Crowe and Anne Hathaway) at 7 p.m.
- Monday, Feb. 24: Faculty Roundtable Discussion titled “From the Social Thought of the French Enlightenment to the American Pop Culture Phenomenon: Moving Toward a Critical Understanding of ‘Les Miz’” at 4 p.m.
- Thursday, Feb. 27: University of Southern Indiana Professor Casey Harison’s guest lecture, “Behind the Barricade: The Historical Background for *Les Misérables*” at 4 p.m.

Schultz and Associate Professor of French and Italian Scott Sheridan hope that the *Les Misérables* events will serve as critical discussion pieces surrounding the inauguration of Illinois Wesleyan’s Center For Human Rights and Social Justice on Feb. 21.

Professor Irving Epstein, director of the Center For Human Rights and Social Justice said, “The social justice themes that are expressed in Hugo’s *Les Misérables* are timeless. It is thus fitting and appropriate that a new Center for Human Rights and Social Justice support Professors Schultz and Sheridan in their efforts to bring Professor Harison to our campus. His talk and the accompanying film versions of *Les Miz* will allow us to merge our appreciation of cultural and social history with a more focused understanding of social justice themes.”

“I’ve always considered the period when the last part of the book is set – known as the July Monarchy in France – an important transitional era, and so have retained an interest in it even as I shifted my research into other areas,” said Harison.

Harison earned a bachelor’s degree in political science from the University of New Orleans. He received a master’s degree in history from Louisiana State University and a doctorate in history from University of Iowa. Since 1992, Harison has been a professor of history and the director for the Center for Communal Studies at the University of Indiana (USI).

His expertise on *Les Misérables* has been accumulating since the 1970s, and he conducted his dissertation research on the nineteenth-century French society on which Hugo's novel is based.

The series is sponsored by Phi Alpha Theta History Honors Society, the Department of History, the Department of French and Italian, The Isaac Funk Endowed Professorship Fund, the Western European Studies Team of International Studies and the International Film Series.

For additional information regarding the events, contact Schultz (rschultz@iwu.edu) or Sheridan (sheridan@iwu.edu).

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