

UW-Eau Claire: Journalist, educator and historian Dr. Jelani Cobb visits UW-Eau Claire for special presentation

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The University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire welcomes Jelani Cobb on Nov. 3 for a special combined presentation of The Forum series, “Racing Toward Justice” series and the annual Martin Mogensen Education Lecture.

Cobb, a longtime staff writer for The New Yorker and dean of the Columbia Journalism School, is one of the nation’s preeminent voices on the intersections of race, history, politics and culture in America. He is a frequent contributor and commentator on CBS News, MSNBC, Al-Jazeera, CNN, National Public Radio and more.

Cobb, born and raised in Queens, New York, received a bachelor’s degree from Howard University and earned a Ph.D. in American history at Rutgers University in 2003. Prior to joining the Columbia Journalism School, Cobb was an associate professor of history and director of the Africana Studies Institute at the University of Connecticut.

Cobb’s presentation will take place in the Ojibwe Ballroom of Davies Center at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 3. A reception and book signing will follow the presentation.

In-person or livestream tickets are free of charge but required for entry; see online ticketing to reserve a seat or receive the streaming link.

In addition to the evening’s Forum presentation, Cobb will visit history and

communication journalism classrooms to talk to students.

“Dr. Cobb will speak directly with students studying both journalism and history during his visit,” says Jodi Thesing-Ritter, campus director of the Center for EDI Training, Development and Education. “The opportunity for our students to meet with national experts on issues and challenges facing our world today is vital in building their critical thinking skills. I am always impressed by the way our students take in these experiences and then actualize their learning through seeking to make positive social change in our world.”

This special event is sponsored by multiple campus programs, units and departments:

The Forum series.

Center for Racial and Restorative Justice.

Gender & Sexuality Resource Center.

Multicultural Student Services.

Visiting Minority Scholars and Artists program.

Center for EDI Training, Development and Education.

Pablo Foundation.

UW-Eau Claire Foundation.

College of Education and Human Sciences.

Department of Education for Equity and Justice.

“We are incredibly fortunate to welcome Jelani Cobb, an award-winning journalist, documentarian and story weaver,” says Catherine Emmanuelle, director of the Center for Racial and Restorative Justice, which hosts the “Racing Toward Justice” speaker series.

“Cobb’s expertise in examining the history of racial inequalities from slavery to Jim Crow laws helps to illuminate the more contemporary issues of health care, voting rights and mass incarceration of Black Americans.”

Cobb’s Nov. 3 presentation, titled “The Half-Life of Freedom: Race and Justice in America Today,” will provide what Emmanuelle calls a “timely and courageous space for our campus and the greater community to grow our understanding and create a more just campus, community and world.”

Cobb earned a Peabody Award and the Walter Cronkite Award in journalism for his 2020 documentary on PBS’s “Frontline,” titled “Whose Vote Counts?” Cobb’s 2016

documentary, “Policing the Police,” earned him an Emmy nomination in 2017, and he was a finalist for the 2018 Pulitzer Prize in political commentary.

The Pulitzer organization described his body of work as one “combining masterful writing, a deep knowledge of history and a deft reporter’s touch to bring context and clarity to issues of race at a time when respectful dialogue on the subject often gives way to finger-pointing and derision.”

Cobb has authored and edited a dozen books, including “The Substance of Hope: Barack Obama and the Paradox of Progress,” “The Essential Kerner Commission Report” and most recently “The Matter of Black Lives,” an anthology of The New Yorker’s most groundbreaking writing on Black history and culture in America.

Cobb currently directs the Ira A. Lipman Center of Journalism and Civil and Human Rights at the Columbia Journalism School.