Marc A. Mamigonian is the Director of Academic Affairs at the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) and the editor of the Journal of Armenian Studies. He is a trusted advisor for Armenian-American philanthropy. She created the grant-making program of the Cafesjian Family Foundation (Minnesota) and serves on the board of the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) and the executive group of the Armenian Genocide Centennial Committee of Minnesota. Most recently, she translated Special Mission: Nemesis, a French graphic novel about the assassination of Talat Pasha, and edited Taner Akçam’s The Young Turks’ Crime Against Humanity.

Massimo Pigliucci is the K.D. Irani Professor of Philosophy at the City College of New York. He has a background and interest in both evolutionary biology and the philosophy of science. His most recent book, edited with Maarten Boordy, is Philosophy of Pseudoscience: Reconsidering the Demarcation Problem (Chicago Press).

Lou Ann Matossian heads diocesan fundraising for the Armenian Church of America (New York) and is a trusted advisor for Armenian-American philanthropy. She created the grant-making program of the Cafesjian Family Foundation (Minnesota) and serves on the board of the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) and the executive group of the Armenian Genocide Centennial Committee of Minnesota. Most recently, she translated Special Mission: Nemesis, a French graphic novel about the assassination of Talat Pasha, and edited Taner Akçam’s The Young Turks’ Crime Against Humanity.

Khatchig Mouradian is Coordinator of the Armenian Genocide Program at the Center for the Study of Genocide and Human Rights at Rutgers University, where he is also adjunct professor of history and sociology. Mouradian was editor of Armenian Weekly from 2007-2014. He is recipient of the Gulbenkian Armenian Studies research fellowship to study the Armenian community in China in the 20th century (2018) and of the first Hrant Dink Freedom and Justice Medal (2014) of the Organization of Istanbul Armenians. Mouradian is active in genocide and human rights education, delivering more than two hundred lectures and presentations in high schools and colleges nationwide and to varied audiences around the world, including in Armenia, Cyprus, Lebanon, Norway, Switzerland, Syria, and the United Arab Emirates. Mouradian is a PhD candidate at the Strasser Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies at Clark University, currently completing his dissertation, which is titled, “Genocide and Humanitarian Resistance in Ottoman Syria, 1915-1917.”

Brendan Nyhan is Assistant Professor in the Department of Government at Dartmouth College. He studies political scandal and misperceptions about politics and health care. He is a contributor to the New York Time politics/policy website The Upshot. Previously, he served as a media critic for Columbia Journalism Review; co-edited Spinsanity, a New York Times bestseller.

Shawn K. Olson is a doctoral student in environmental sociology at Utah State University. Her research investigates environmental skepticism broadly, including beliefs about climate change. Her most recent work examines social perceptions of large-scale renewable energy installations in the rural American West.
FRIDAY, 24 OCTOBER, 2014, 7 P.M.
WORCESTER STATE UNIVERSITY, GHOSH AUDITORIUM

Introductory Remarks
Khatchig Mouradian

Keynote address
Brendan Nyhan
The Challenge of Denial: Why People Reject Unwelcome Facts

Response & Discussion
Henry Theriault

SATURDAY, 25 OCTOBER, 2014
CLARK UNIVERSITY, HIGGINS LOUNGE, DANA COMMONS

8–8:30 a.m.
Check-In and Coffee

8:30–10:30 a.m.
Moderator
Lou Ann Matossian

Session 1: Modern Strategies and Rhetoric of Denial
Marc Mamigonian
Academic Denial of the Armenian Genocide in American Scholarship: Denialism as Manufactured Controversy
Sara Brown
Genocide Denial in Rwanda and the Role of Women TiGists
Shawn Olson
Wise Contrarians in Climate Science, Politics, and Policy: Exploring the Rhetoric and Strategies of Denial

10:30–11 a.m.
Coffee Break

11 a.m.–1 p.m.
Moderator
Tanner Akçam

Session 2: Political Uses of Denial
Jennifer Dixon
It’s Not What You Think: Rhetorical Adaptation and International Norms
Alex Hinton
Hidden Genocide and the Politics of Memory in Cambodia
Mark Gottlieb
The Tobacco Industry’s Mass Production of Doubt and Denial

1:15–2:15 p.m.
Lunch

2:30–4:30 p.m.
Moderator
Diikran Kalianian

Session 3: Countering Denial: How and When?
Ken MacLean
Genocide Denial and the Historian’s Ethical Responsibility to the Past
Emma Frances Bloomfield
Addressing Rhetorical Patterns of Denial: When Climate Change, Evolution, and the Holocaust Never Happened

4:30 p.m.
Coffee Break

4:45–6:30 p.m.
Session 4: Summing Up and Open Discussion
Johanna Volllhardt, Richard Hovannisian, Massimo Pigliucci

Tanner Akçam is Professor of History at Clark University, where he holds the Robert Aram and Marianne Kalosdarian and Stephen and Mariam Mugar Chair in Armenian Genocide Studies. An internationally recognized human rights activist, he was one of the first Turkish intellectuals to recognize the Armenian Genocide. He is the author of several books including, most recently, The Young Turks’ Crime against Humanity: The Armenian Genocide and Ethnic Cleansing in the Ottoman Empire (2012), which earned the Middle East Studies Association Albert Hourani Book Award (2013) and was named one of the year’s best books on the Middle East (2012) by Foreign Affairs.

Emma Frances Bloomfield is a Ph.D. candidate in the Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism at the University of Southern California. She is currently writing her dissertation on the intersections between science and religious rhetoric and how they negotiate material and symbolic reality. Specific areas of study include how these intersections raise issues of fact, truth, and expediency, and the dichotomy between religion and science; and the ways in which groups attempt to bridge the gaps and establish blended identities.

Jennifer M. Dixon is Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science at Villanova University. She earned her Ph.D. from the University of California, Berkeley in 2011 and was a Research Fellow in the International Security Program of the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at Harvard University’s Kennedy School of Government. Her research lies at the intersection of international relations and comparative politics. She focuses on the politics of memory, genocide and mass violence, and the diffusion and impact of international norms. She is currently working on a book manuscript, Changing the State’s Story: Continuity and Change in Official Narratives of Dark Pasts.

Deborah Dwork is Rose Professor of Holocaust History at Clark University and founding Director of the Strassler Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies at Clark University. She is a leading authority on university education in this field. Specific areas of study include how these intersections raise issues of fact, truth, and expediency, and the dichotomy between religion and science; and the ways in which groups attempt to bridge the gaps and establish blended identities.

Mark Gottlieb is executive director of the Public Health Advocacy Institute at Northeastern University School of Law. For more than 20 years, his research has addressed legal approaches to reducing harm caused by tobacco industry products, book and trial coordinating a movement for tobacco company accountability; reduction of tobacco smoke exposure; and restriction of the sale of tobacco products. He also directs research pertaining to tobacco and food industry argumentation about responsibility; and has been a principal investigator for research products addressing child health. He has authored or co-authored pieces in the New England Medical Journal, American Journal of Public Health, Journal of the American Medical Association, PLoS Medicine, and Tobacco Control. His views on industry tactics affecting public health are sought by journalists.

Richard G. Hovannisian is Professor Emeritus of History and First Holder of the AEF Chair in Modern Armenian History at UCLA. He is currently Chancellor’s Fellow at the Chapman University and Adjunct Professor of History at USC for academic support to the Shoah Foundation Institute.

Ken MacLean is Associate Professor of International Development and Social Change at Clark University. He conducts research in Southeast Asia and has worked extensively with human rights NGOs in the region. His first book, The Government of Mistrust: Illegibility and Bureaucratic Power in Socialist Vietnam, is forthcoming from the University of Wisconsin Press. He is currently working on two book-length projects, on the production of “fact” regarding mass atrocities in eastern Burma/Myanmar and the forces that shape freedom of expression and censorship in the Vietnamese “blogosphere.”