

# Preliminary Program

June 1-4, 2017



"White Ships From Valinor" by Ted Nasmith, used with permission.

## Welcome from Corey Olsen

Signum University and the Mythgard Institute have been around for over five years now, and each time we've hosted a Mythmoot conference, it has been special. As an institution, Signum strives to make serious scholarship on imaginative literature and all the fun that goes along with it available to everyone, and from its inception, Mythmoot has been the place where that mission gets embodied in a local gathering. This year, we have put together our biggest program ever. We've invited more guests, extended the conference an extra day, and discovered a wonderful new venue that enables us to plan the most exciting conference we've ever hosted. Whether you are a casual fantasy fan or a professional scholar, you will find Mythmoot a marvelous opportunity for intellectual explorations, creative expression, and stimulating conversation. I hope to see you there!

Find out more about Mythmoot IV and register at:

<http://signumuniversity.org/event/mythmoot-iv-invoking-wonder/>

# Schedule-at-a-Glance

Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
	<b>Breakfast</b>	<b>Breakfast</b>	<b>Breakfast</b>
	<b>Morning Events</b>	<b>Morning Events</b>	<b>Morning Events</b>
	Official Welcome	Morning Paper Sessions	Morning Paper Sessions
	Morning Plenary Michael Drout	Morning Plenary Verlyn Flieger	Morning Plenary Sørina Higgins
Registration And Lodging Check In	<b>Themed Lunch Anglo Saxon</b>	<b>Themed Lunch Old Norse</b>	<b>Lunch</b>
	<b>Afternoon Events</b>	<b>Afternoon Events</b>	<b>Closing Session</b>
	Afternoon Paper Sessions	Afternoon Paper Sessions	<b>Literary and Creative Tracks</b> Imaginative Literature Tolkien & Inklings Studies Artistic Musical Fandom
	Afternoon Plenary Ted Nasmith	Updates on Signum and Mythgard Programs	
Signum University Graduation	VIP Panel Di Bartolo, Drout, Flieger, Higgins, Nasmith, Olsen		
<b>Dinner</b>	<b>Dinner</b>	<b>Dinner</b>	
<b>Evening Event</b>	<b>Evening Event</b>	<b>Evening Event</b>	
Pub Trivia	Evening Plenary John Di Bartolo	Masquerade	

There will be both a morning and afternoon coffee break on Friday and Saturday and a morning coffee break on Sunday.

Breakfast available 6:30 AM - 8:30 AM (Monday thru Friday); 7:00 AM - 9:00 AM (Saturday & Sunday)

Lunch available 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM (daily)

Dinner available 5:30 PM - 8:00 PM (daily)

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## Special Guests

### John Di Bartolo - Creative Guest of Honor



John Di Bartolo is a writer, musician, and multimedia designer living in Long Island, New York. John spends most of his time working on his many projects including the Middle-earth Network Radio, SwordSong Records, Legendarium News & Media, Oloris Press, MyMiddle-earth, and the Mythgard Institute as well as his nationally touring bands Fathom, King Keltic, and the Lonely Mountain Band. From tabletop role playing games and backyard adventures of the imagination to historical and fantasy reading, bible scholarship, and music composition; the spiritual has ever been tied to imagination for John. He has made it part of his life goal to keep the road well traversed that leads to the cottage of lost play.

### Michael Drout - Academic Guest of Honor - Germanic Philology



Dr. Michael D. C. Drout is a groundbreaking Anglo-Saxon scholar and teacher. His work ranges from lexomics to meme-theory to fantasy scholarship, and his talent extends from systems development to voice performance. Mike is the Prentice Professor of English and Former Chair of the Department of English at Wheaton College, where he has been engaging students in philology and literature for more than two decades. In that capacity, he has created philological textbooks and language study approaches that are used around the world, while the treasure trove of recorded works on his Anglo Saxon Aloud project and the Recorded Books' Modern Scholar Series continue to help students and scholars alike. Mike is also a renowned Tolkien scholar, best-known for his work on Tolkien's essay "Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics" through his edition of *Beowulf and the Critics* (2002) and as co-editor of the annual scholarly journal *Tolkien Studies* since its inception in 2004. Recently, Mike's research has focused on applying lexomics to medieval literature. Some of the results of that work have been published in *Beowulf Unlocked: New Evidence from Lexomic Analysis* (2016). Scholars of philology and medieval and fantasy literature are indebted to the various ways Professor Drout has contributed to the furtherance of these fields.

### Verlyn Flieger - Academic Guest of Honor - Tolkien and Inklings Studies



Verlyn Flieger is an author, editor, and professor emerita in the Department of English at the University of Maryland at College Park. She teaches courses in comparative mythology, medieval literature, and the works of J. R. R. Tolkien. Flieger holds an M.A. (1972) and Ph.D. (1977) from The Catholic University of America, and has been associated with the University of Maryland since 1976. Professor Flieger has also taught several courses at Signum University. Her best-known books are *Splintered Light: Logos and Language in Tolkien's World*, *A Question of Time: J. R. R. Tolkien's Road to Faerie*, *Interrupted Music: The Making of Tolkien's Mythology*, and *Green Suns and Faërie*, a collection of her published essays on Tolkien. She has edited several short works by Tolkien, including "Smith of Wootton Major," the critical edition of "On Fairy-stories" (with Douglas A. Anderson), and "The Story of Kullervo." Flieger



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has also published several young adult fantasy novels and short stories. She is co-editor of *Tolkien Studies: An Annual Scholarly Review* with Michael D. C. Drout and David Bratman.

### **Sørina Higgins - Academic Guest of Honor - Tolkien and Inkling Studies**



Sørina Higgins is the Chair of the Department of Language and Literature at Signum University and a PhD candidate, Teacher of Record, and Presidential Scholar at Baylor University. Her interests include British Modernism, the works of the Inklings, Arthuriana, magic, and performance theory. She holds an M.A. from Middlebury College's Bread Loaf School of English, where she wrote about *Sehnsucht* in the works of C. S. Lewis. She blogs about British poet Charles Williams at *The Oddest Inkling*. Sørina is the editor of an academic essay collection on The Inklings and King Arthur (forthcoming from Apocryphile Press) and has previously published an edition of *The Chapel of the Thorn* by Charles Williams. As a creative writer Sørina has published two books of poetry, *The Significance of Swans* (2007) and *Caduceus* (2012), and would be working on a novel or two if she weren't, you know, in grad school.

### **Ted Nasmith - Creative Guest of Honor**



Ted Nasmith is a world-recognized artist, illustrator, and scholar who has been creating Tolkien-inspired illustrations since the age of fifteen. His first artistic publication (1987 *J.R.R. Tolkien Calendar*) officially launched his career as a Tolkien artist. His substantial body of work has been featured in many Tolkien calendars, cover art for editions of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, and the illustrated *Silmarillion*. More recently, Ted has been commissioned to create artwork for the world of George R.R. Martin (*A Song of Ice and Fire*). Ted's other interests include music, whether listening, performing, or composing, as well as book-reading in a variety of genres, movies, live theatre, photography, and a deep love of skies, weather, and natural beauty. He recorded a highly praised music CD in 2007, fulfilling a longstanding ambition for his musician 'alter ego', and hopes to expand on this offering in the future.

### **Corey Olsen - Signum University President**



Dr. Corey Olsen is the President of Signum University and Mythgard Institute. In addition to teaching classes on J.R.R. Tolkien, Chaucer, and modern fantasy literature for Signum, Dr. Olsen has extended the concept of the digital classroom to include non-traditional outlets. Through the Mythgard Academy, he offers free weekly lectures on works of speculative fiction chosen by Signum University supporters, and he has embraced the "new literature" of cinema and video game adaptations through interactive programs such as The Silmarillion Film Project and in-game discussions of Lord of the Rings Online. Dr. Olsen obtained his B.A in English and Astrophysics from Williams College in 1996, going on to Columbia University where he obtained his M.A. in 1997, M.Phil in 2000, and his Ph.D in Medieval Literature in 2003. Upon graduation from Columbia University, Dr. Olsen obtained teaching positions at Temple University, Columbia University, Nyack College, and Washington College. In

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2011, Dr. Olsen started Signum University and the Mythgard Institute. His undergraduate and graduate teaching subjects include J.R.R. Tolkien, Arthurian literature, Chaucer, and Sir Thomas Malory.

## Special Events

### VIP Panel - Invoking Wonder

*Moderator: Sørina Higgins, Signum University Chair of the Department of Language and Literature*

Mythmoot's panel on Invoking Wonder will feature special guests as well as Signum University President Dr. Corey Olsen. Panel speakers will discuss the concept and techniques of invoking wonder in the contexts of art and academia.

### Masquerade

Come one, come all! Included in your Mythmoot IV package is an Invitation to join us Saturday evening after dinner for a ball masquerade. Proper attire and costumes requested; however, casual dress accepted. Guests in costume have the option of competing for prizes.

### Creative Spaces

The Mythmoot program includes time for informal Inklings discussions, music-making circles, Lord of the Rings Online (LOTRO) playing, poetry slams, readings of student fiction, exposition in Germanic languages, or any creative venture.

The NCC features a firepit, walking trails, a speakeasy, and other campus settings which could all serve as settings for these information activities. Please email us at [events@mythgard.org](mailto:events@mythgard.org) if you would like to lead an activity; for example, "I'd like to lead a discussion about the Inklings in the speakeasy," or, "I'd like to lead a poetry reading at the firepit."

### Themed Lunches

**Old Norse and Anglo Saxon:** These lunches will be an opportunity for Signum language students to practice and converse together. Designated space will be set aside for language tables.

**Please sign up by emailing [events@mythgard.org](mailto:events@mythgard.org). Sign in sheets will also be provided at registration on Thursday.**

### Pub Trivia

Pit your arcane knowledge against similarly arcane people. Claim the honor and glory of knowing more obscure Tolkien trivia than anyone else! There will be prizes (besides the honor and glory).

### Signum University Graduation Ceremony

Mythmoot IV will host the first-ever graduation ceremony for Signum University. Celebrate the hard work and perseverance of our graduates.

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# Information

## Registration

The registration fee covers breakfast, lunch, dinner, snacks, and beverages during the 3 days of the conference (Dinner on Thursday, June 1<sup>st</sup> through Lunch, June 4<sup>th</sup>). The registration fee covers full access to all conference events including the masquerade ball on Saturday evening. It also covers full access to the NCC facility, including WiFi, hiking and biking trails, 24-7 fitness center, firepits, speakeasy pub, and more. Register here:

<https://www.regonline.com/registration/checkin.aspx?EventId=1898982>

Please note that lodging is separate. After you register for Mythmoot, secure the **special group rate** here: <http://tinyurl.com/MythmootLodging>

## Refund Policy

A full refund of the registration fee, minus a \$20 processing fee, will be made if a request is received before April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2017. After that date we will not be able to refund any portion of the registration fee. You will also need to contact the NCC to cancel any reservations you may have made with them. The Reservation Desk at NCC is at 703-724-6170.

## Venue information

Mythmoot IV is taking place June 1-4, 2017 at the National Conference Center in Leesburg, VA. This newly renovated facility is very large (think Gormenghast or a Guild heighliner or Gondor...) but is in a beautiful rural setting. You can see more images and find out more at <http://www.ConferenceCenter.com>

## Room and board information

The NCC offers two types of rooms. Single rooms are available for \$89/night (plus taxes). The single rooms are small and will only be comfortable for one person. Guest Suites are also available for \$119/night (plus taxes). Guest Suites are considerably bigger than Single rooms, have king or queen size beds and would be comfortable for couples.

All rooms have their own bathroom and shower, hairdryer, large work desk, ironing board, flat screen TV, and coffee maker.

## Amenities

WiFi will be available. There is plenty of free parking at the Conference Center. The Conference Center also has a 24-7 fitness center, and hiking and biking trails. There is a Starbucks close by, a

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Wegman's about 10 minutes away, and a Trader Joe's and Whole Foods located about 30 minutes away.

## **Disability Accessibility**

The national Conference Center is equipped with ramps, rails, and elevators, and most conference activities will occur in close and easy proximity to our attendees' lodging area. If you require further information on disability accessibility, please contact The National Conference Center at 703-729-8000.

## **Travel information**

The closest airport to the National Conference Center is Dulles International Airport (IAD), which is approximately 15 miles away. The NCC runs a shuttle to and from the Dulles Airport, which is \$35 each way. For more information about the shuttle, contact the Reservation Desk at 703-724-6170. Taxis and renting a vehicle are other options for getting to and from Dulles.

Reagan National Airport (DCA) is approximately 40 miles away. Baltimore-Washington International Airport (BWI) is approximately 70-80 miles away.

We regret that we cannot arrange ride-shares or room-shares. We encourage you to use Facebook and other social media to make these kinds of arrangements with your friends and acquaintances.

## **Contact Information**

Contact us at [events@mythgard.org](mailto:events@mythgard.org) if you have any questions, concerns or are experiencing problems with the registration or lodging reservation websites.

## **About Signum University**

Signum University is an accessible and affordable digital campus that fosters a vibrant and open academic community, cultivates intellectual exchange between students and teachers, and enriches staff through vocational experience and teamwork. Signum University is dedicated to creating an online learning platform that cultivates positive intellectual exchanges for our entire community, including students, auditors, faculty, and staff. This is achieved by focusing on five core values:

- Education is interactive and informative
- Online education is valuable
- Excellent education is affordable
- Rewarding education is accomplished through teamwork
- Lasting education is thorough

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Signum University offers a rigorous Master in Language and Literature program as well as Certificate programs and two auditing options.

## About Mythgard Institute

The Mythgard Institute is the public outreach arm of Signum University. Mythgard offers many opportunities for online engagement through a variety of programs, completely free of charge to anyone with a digital device and internet connection.

For example:

- The Mythgard Academy offers free, interactive online classes in fantasy, science fiction, and other works of speculative literature.
- The Silmarillion Film Project is an intellectual exercise to imagine what a multi-season television adaptation of J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Silmarillion* might look like. Discussions run the gamut from framing narratives to casting and design choices to musical scores.
- Mythgard has a presence on *Lord of the Rings Online*, the massive-multiplayer online roleplaying game based on J.R.R. Tolkien's world of Middle-earth. Players can have their characters ("alts") join the Mythgard kinship, and anyone is free to attend our bi-weekly lore chats and group adventures in-game.
- Exploring the *Lord of the Rings* is Mythgard's newest weekly lecture series conducted in-game for players across all servers. Dr. Olsen conducts his sessions as Narnion the Gondorian Loremaster from our very own Lore Hall. After the lecture he leads attendees in a field trip through the landscape of Middle-earth as envisioned in the game.
- The Signum Twitch channel allows listeners to watch all of our many adventures going on in-game live with a chat feature that allows for open, real time discussion.
- The Mythgard Guest Lecture Series invites world-renowned scholars, authors, and other persons of note to talk about their passion projects. These interactive online experiences are more than just lectures, though – live participants can ask questions and join in the conversation through our classroom interface.
- And, almost all of our Mythgard content is recorded and made available for free on the Signum University YouTube channel.