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Former American RadioWorks correspondent to give FYS convocation

Summary: John Biewen of the Center for Documentary Studies at Duke University will give the opening convocation for the 2007-2008 First Year Seminar. His presentation will be given on Thursday, Sept. 6, in Edson Auditorium.

(August 23, 2007)-John Biewen of the Center for Documentary Studies at Duke University will give the opening convocation for the 2007-2008 First Year Seminar. His presentation will be given at 7 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 6, in Edson Auditorium.

The presentation is open to the public. Overflow seating will be available in Turtle Mountain Café, located on the main level of the Student Center.

“I have been a fan of John's work for some time and think the breadth of topics that he has covered in his radio documentaries as well as his liberal arts background will make him an ideal speaker for our Convocation,” said FYS coordinator Tracey Anderson, UMM associate professor of biology.

Biewen is the audio programs director at the Center for Documentary Studies. He was formerly a correspondent-producer for American RadioWorks, the national documentary unit of American Public Media. He has produced a large body of work on economic and social issues, as well as investigative reports and historical documentaries.

His reporting has won numerous honors, including the Robert F. Kennedy (2000, 2001), Society of Professional Journalists (Sigma Delta Chi), Edward R. Murrow (RTNDA) and (American Bar Association) Silver Gavel Awards. A graduate of Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter with a degree in philosophy, he lived and taught in Osaka, Japan, from 1985 to 1987.

First Year Seminar at the University of Minnesota, Morris introduces entering UMM students to a college level seminar where discussion and individual performance largely take the place of lectures and tests. FYS is organized in sections of 15 students each, and is designed to be an introduction to the liberal arts at UMM. FYS sections stimulate critical thinking, active engagement in issues and learning about different points of view.

Early in the semester, all sections participate in a common convocation. Then each section explores a specific topic over the course of the fall semester. Finally, all sections come together near the end of the semester for the FYS Jamboree, at which students in each section showcase their semester's work through interactive displays, plays, posters and other performances.

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