

'Alchemy' topic of Samuel R. Scholes Jr. lecture

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Dr. Lawrence M. Principe, associate professor at Johns Hopkins University, will deliver the fourth annual Samuel R. Scholes Jr. Lecture at 8 p.m. Monday, April 22, in Nevins Theatre, Powell Campus Center on the Alfred University campus. His topic is "Robert Boyle and the Philosopher's Stone: Taking Alchemy Seriously." Principe has been on the faculty at Johns Hopkins since 1988 and holds dual appointments in the Department of the History of Science, Medicine and Technology and the Department of Chemistry. He earned his first Ph.D. degree in organic chemistry from Indiana University in 1988, and a second in the history of science from Johns Hopkins in 1996. His thesis for his second Ph.D. was "The Aspiring Adept: Robert Boyle and his Alchemical Quest," focusing on the 17th century natural philosopher whose early experiments in chemistry and alchemy helped define "the pursuit of inductive science by controlled experiment." Principe has subsequently published a book based on his thesis, and another on Boyle's correspondence. He is co-author of two more books due to be published by this fall. Principe has published more than 20 articles, many of them about alchemy in scholarly journals, as well as authored book reviews and encyclopedia entries, and presented numerous talks in the U.S. and Europe. He is the winner of several awards, including the Othmer Fellowship from the Chemical Heritage Foundation and the Maryland Professor of the Year Award from the Carnegie Foundation. Principe, who lists Latin, German, Italian, French, Greek and paleographic skills as the "foreign languages" with which he is familiar, earned a B.S. in chemistry and a B.A. in liberal studies from the University of Delaware. Dr. Joshua Fierer, a 1959 graduate of Alfred University, in 1999 created the Samuel R. Scholes Jr. Lecture in honor of his long-time mentor and friend. Scholes came to Alfred in 1932 when his father joined the faculty of the College of Ceramics at Alfred University. A 1937 graduate of Alfred University, the younger Scholes earned a Ph.D. degree from Yale University. He returned to Alfred in 1946 as a member of the faculty in the chemistry department, where he taught until his retirement in 1980.