

Spring 2026 Courses

History • Music • Health & Wellness • Theater
Literature & Writing • Law • Social Sciences • Fine Arts
Politics & Public Affairs • Science & Technology

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Encore Learning Spring 2026 Catalog

TABLE OF CONTENTS



Spring 2026 Course Offerings..... 1

Virtual Course Preview 2

General Information 3

Spring 2026 Course Descriptions 5

 Fine Arts, Theater & Music 5

 Health & Wellness 9

 History 10

 Law, Politics & Public Affairs..... 18

 Literature & Writing 25

 Science & Technology..... 29

 Social Sciences 33

Encore Learning Special Events & Clubs 36

Board, Committee Members & Staff 37

Locations and Maps of Course Sites..... 39

Encore Learning Spring 2026 Courses: Calendar View Inside Back Cover



Encore Learning Spring 2026 Course Offerings

| CATEGORY | COURSE # AND NAME | INSTRUCTOR | DAY | DATE | TIME | SITE |
|-----------------------------------|--|------------------|-----|-------------|---------------------|---------------|
| Fine Arts, Theater & Music | 1002 – Theater Appreciation | Ohlandt | T | 3/3 – 4/21 | 12:00 PM – 1:30 PM | Fairlington |
| | 1055 – Never Too Old to Play | Pilloff | F | 4/10 – 5/7 | 10:00 AM – 11:30 AM | GMU |
| | 1061 – Magic of Motown | Agron | W | 4/8 – 5/13 | 3:00 PM – 4:30 PM | Virtual |
| | 1063 – Dance in Musical Theater | Bush | W | 3/18 – 4/22 | 2:00 PM – 3:30 PM | GMU |
| | 1064 – Dao, Zen, and Creativity | Li | TH | 4/9 – 4/30 | 10:00 AM – 11:30 AM | Virtual |
| | 1065 – Never too Old to Play Some More | Pilloff | F | 4/10 – 5/15 | 12:00 PM – 1:30 PM | GMU |
| Health & Wellness | 2027 – Caregiving for Dementia | Rodgers | M | 3/2 – 4/6 | 10:00 AM – 11:30 AM | Virtual |
| History | 3003 – Arlington History | Van Newkirk | TH | 3/26 – 5/14 | 3:00 PM – 4:30 PM | Offsite |
| | 3044 – Jewish Millennium in Spain | Gorsky | M | 3/9 – 4/13 | 2:00 PM – 3:30 PM | GMU |
| | 3059 – Crusades | Wukitsch | M | 3/9 – 5/11 | 12:00 PM – 2:00 PM | Virtual |
| | 3095 – Hemingway and the Spanish Civil War | Reynolds | T | 3/10 – 3/31 | 12:00 PM – 1:30 PM | Hybrid |
| | 3096 – Intelligence and the Cold War | Siegrist | M | 4/6 – 5/11 | 2:00 PM – 3:30 PM | GMU |
| | 3097 – Arlington Black History | Multiple | TH | 4/2 – 5/14 | 2:00 PM – 3:30 PM | GMU & Offsite |
| | 3099 – 1862: Civil War in Central Virginia | Mertz | T | 3/3 – 3/31 | 10:00 AM – 11:30 AM | Virtual |
| | 3100 – Demystifying Islam | Rehman | W | 4/8 – 5/6 | 12:00 PM – 1:30 PM | GMU |
| | 3101 – Gospel of Matthew and Its Impact | Tambasco | T | 3/10 – 4/14 | 12:00 PM – 1:30 PM | Goodwin House |
| | 3102 – America’s Soundrack | Ruth | M | 3/2 – 3/23 | 12:00 PM – 1:30 PM | Virtual |
| Law, Politics & Public Affairs | 4004 – Global Hot Spots | Multiple | TH | 3/5 – 4/9 | 2:00 PM – 3:30 PM | Virtual |
| | 4064 – Diplomacy Origins, Evolution, Future | Karagiannis | T | 4/7 – 5/12 | 10:00 AM – 11:30 AM | GMU |
| | 4065 – Political Warfare | Duggins | W | 3/4 – 4/15 | 12:00 PM – 1:30 PM | Hybrid |
| | 4066 – Global Tax Game | Michielse | W | 3/4 – 4/8 | 10:00 AM – 11:30 AM | GMU |
| | 4067 – Election 2026: Midterm Blues | Rotondi | TH | 3/5 – 3/26 | 12:00 PM – 1:30 PM | GMU |
| | 4068 – Foreign Policy and Iran | Gailliot | M | 3/2 – 3/30 | 2:00 PM – 3:30 PM | GMU |
| | 4069 – Modern China in Film | Sullivan & Young | F | 3/13 – 5/15 | 10:00 AM – 12:30 PM | GMU |
| | 4070 – Africa 2.0 – A Deeper Look | Nagy | W | 3/4 – 4/1 | 2:00 PM – 4:00 PM | GMU |
| | 4071 – China in Latin America | Albro | F | 4/10 – 5/15 | 12:00 PM – 1:30 PM | Hybrid |
| Literature & Writing | 5004 – Writing A Memoir | Suydam | F | 3/6 – 4/24 | 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM | Virtual |
| | 5076 – Reading War and Peace: Part 1 | Pfordresher | W | 3/4 – 4/1 | 12:00 PM – 1:30 PM | Virtual |
| | 5077 – Writing Japanese Poetry in English | Decker | T | 4/7 – 4/28 | 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM | Virtual |
| | 5078 – American Women Journalists 1876–1976 | Auten | F | 4/10 – 5/15 | 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM | Virtual |
| | 5079 – Tragedy of Othello | Collins | TH | 4/23 – 5/14 | 2:00 PM – 3:30 PM | Virtual |
| | 5080 – Hamlet’s Children | Alter | F | 4/17 – 5/15 | 2:00 PM – 3:30 PM | GMU |
| | 5081 – Classic vs Contemporary Plays | Klein Harbor | W | 4/8 – 5/13 | 10:00 AM – 11:30 AM | GMU |
| | 5082 – The Tempest | Manteuffel | M | 3/23 – 4/13 | 10:00 AM – 11:30 AM | Virtual |
| Science & Technology | 6026 – Science and Data and Stats—Oh My! | Stutts | T | 3/10 – 3/31 | 2:00 PM – 3:30 PM | GMU |
| | 6041 – Generative AI | Fillip | TH | 3/5 – 4/16 | 10:00 AM – 11:30 AM | Hybrid |
| | 6042 – Biosecurity 101 | Ma | TH | 3/19 – 4/23 | 12:00 PM – 1:30 PM | Hybrid |
| | 6043 – Architecture Appreciation | Ardura | T | 4/7 – 5/12 | 2:00 PM – 3:30 PM | GMU |
| | 6044 – Spring Ephemerals | Multiple | T | 3/24 – 4/21 | 10:00 AM – 11:30 AM | Offsite |
| | 6045 – AI Regulations vs Innovation | Shukla | M | 4/13 – 5/4 | 12:00 PM – 1:30 PM | GMU |
| Social Sciences | 7041 – Poverty in the Land of Opportunity | Vor der Bruegge | TH | 4/9 – 5/7 | 12:00 PM – 1:30 PM | GMU |
| | 7042 – Modern Ireland: Roots, Arts, Heritage | Multiple | F | 3/6 – 3/27 | 12:00 PM – 1:30 PM | GMU |



2026 SPRING SEMESTER

March 1 – May 15

Wide variety of courses offered:

- Monday through Friday
- 10:00 AM, 12:00 PM or 2:00 PM

Registration Begins

10:00 AM on Monday, February 2

Check the online catalog for the most recent course updates:

<https://encorelearning.net/courses>

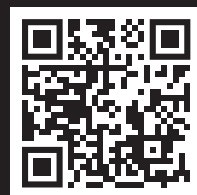
JOIN ENCORE LEARNING

42 COURSES

32 NEW COURSES

- 24 In-Person
- 13 Virtual
- 5 Hybrid
- 16 Recorded

A \$65 annual membership fee is required to register for courses. Each course registration costs \$55. Contact us at info@encorelearning.net or 703-228-2144 for help registering.



www.encorelearning.net



VIRTUAL COURSE PREVIEW

Thursday, January 29 at 9:30 AM

Join us as Encore Learning instructors talk about their upcoming classes.

Whether you are a current member or thinking about joining, Encore Learning invites you to find out more about what is coming in the spring!

We look forward to seeing you there!

Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89282144585>

Zoom Webinar ID: 892 8214 4585



General Information

For more information, go to our website at www.encorelearning.net



What Is Encore Learning?

Encore Learning, a nonprofit educational organization founded in 2002, offers a wide variety of daytime noncredit courses, clubs, special events and activities to help meet the continuing educational and social interests of anyone over age 50. Encore Learning is governed, supported and financed by its members. Our volunteer instructors create a stimulating learning environment through an exciting array of academic subjects. There are no tests or prerequisites, but often some suggested reading. Encore Learning receives valuable assistance through alliances with George Mason University, the Arlington Public Schools Adult Education Program, Arlington Public Library and Arlington County's Office of Senior Adult Programs.

Encore Learning Membership

Membership in Encore Learning costs \$65 per year and begins on the day on which the *nonrefundable* membership fee is paid. Membership renewal adds 12 months to the membership expiration date, which can always be found by logging in to your account online.

Your membership fee is a charitable contribution deductible from income taxes to the full extent permitted by law. All memberships are individual, non-transferable and processed online. To join, select JOIN at our website www.encorelearning.net.

Semester-Long Courses

Encore Learning will hold virtual (via Zoom), hybrid and in-person courses at George Mason's Arlington Campus and other locations for Spring 2026.

Encore Learning will record a select number of courses during the spring term. The decision on which courses will be recorded is based on course format, instructor preference and the resources available. Each course description indicates if the course will be recorded.

Classes are typically scheduled weekdays between 10:00 AM and 3:30 PM. Classes meet once a week for

1.5 to 2 hours and each course lasts from four to 10 weeks. Class sizes generally range from 15 to 95 in cases of some very popular zoom courses.

For virtual courses, you will need a computer, tablet or phone. Courses will vary in format depending on class size and content, with some having ongoing discussion and others reserving questions for the end of class.

Instructions for connecting to each Zoom course will be provided prior to the start of the course.

Course Previews

Encore Learning's fall and spring course previews offer an opportunity for members to hear the instructors describe their courses before course registration begins. Prospective members are also welcome.

Course Registration

Course registration is open only to current Encore Learning members. The fee for each course is \$55 and is *not* transferable. All course registrations are processed online via our website. Course registration for the Spring 2026 semester begins at 10:00 AM Monday, February 2, 2026.

All registrations are *first-come, first-served*; waitlists for filled courses are available online. Members get immediate feedback on their registration status upon payment and receive an emailed receipt, including any waitlist status. To register, go to our website and select REGISTER FOR COURSES/EVENTS.

The registration for a course is not meant to be shared. If any other individual is going to participate in the course with you, they must also register for the course.

Refund of course registration fees is available under certain circumstances. Please visit www.encorelearning.net/about/policies for more detailed information.

Members may also transfer their course registration to another course with available space.

General Information *continued*

Class Media

All course materials provided by instructors will be uploaded to a password-protected webpage on our website (www.encorelearning.net). The course webpage link and password will be shared in the course reminder email sent two to three days before the first class session. We recommend saving this email for easy access. You will also receive notifications with the link and password anytime new materials are added.

Links to all course pages are available through “access class media” in the Courses menu on the main Encore Learning website. However, you will need the password provided in your course reminder email to access them.

Clubs

Encore Learning’s clubs are open to all current members. There are 12 clubs: Breakfast, Bridge, Chamber Music, Cinema, Current Issues Discussion, Electric Vehicle, Global Lunch, Kayak, Mindfulness, Nonfiction Book, Tech Hobbyist and Travel. For information about club activities, please visit our website and click on CLUBS.

Special Events

Special Events include the Encore Learning Presents Series that are free and open to the public. These one-time lectures, panel presentations or films are presented online or in a hybrid format (in-person and online). Many of our Encore Learning Presents events are recorded and available to view on our YouTube channel. Virtual and in-person member tours are also planned. For information about Special Events, please visit our website and click on EVENTS.

Membership Meeting

Encore Learning holds an annual membership meeting to elect a board of directors from a slate of candidates recruited by a nominating committee and to discuss the state of the organization. All current members will be notified of candidates for election to the board and receive a ballot to complete online. Membership meetings are generally held in May.

Volunteer at Encore Learning

Volunteers are the backbone of Encore Learning and work in conjunction with the organization’s part-time staff. There are a number of ways to get involved, whether by joining a committee, becoming an instructor

or class aide, or organizing special events. For more information on volunteering, please visit our website and click on VOLUNTEER.

Support Encore Learning

Encore Learning is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Any donation is a charitable contribution deductible from income taxes to the full extent permitted by law. Members, friends and organizations wishing to support Encore Learning may direct their contributions to our General Fund or to one of the many scholarship funds sponsored by Encore Learning. For more details on Encore Learning scholarships, please visit our website and search for “scholarships.”

Encore Learning Policies

Encore Learning is a nonprofit, equal opportunity organization open to individuals without regard to sex, race, color, religion, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or national origin. For more information, visit encorelearning.net/about/policies.

Contact Encore Learning

Communicating with Encore Learning is easy, email: info@encorelearning.net

Leave a voice message: 703-228-2144




Review/Update


your account information online before registration begins on February 2.



- Note your password for easy access to your account on registration day.
- Choose your desired courses before logging in to register on February 2.
- Register online at 10:00 AM Monday, February 2 for your best chance at a seat in a popular course.
- Opt for a course waitlist if the course is filled.
- Complete your online registration and payment within 20 minutes.
- Sit back and wait for classes to begin.

Spring 2026 Course Descriptions


This semester's offerings include virtual courses taught on Zoom, in-person courses at George Mason University's Mason Square campus, offsite courses at various locations around Arlington, and hybrid courses, which will be simultaneously taught virtually and in-person.

 Virtual classes are noted with the camera icon.

 In-person classes are noted with the people icon.

  Hybrid classes are noted with both icons. All hybrid courses are held at George Mason University and virtually on Zoom.

A select number of virtual courses will be recorded based on the course format and instructor preference. The recordings will be available to registered students within two business days at the end of each class session. Recordings will remain available until July 31, 2026. While the recordings are provided for convenience and to accommodate any scheduling conflicts, they are not intended to replace the benefits of attending in real time, where you can ask questions and participate in discussions.

 Recorded courses are noted with the microphone icon.

Check the online catalog for the most recent course updates and easy access to recommended websites: <https://encorelearning.asapconnected.com/#CourseIndex>

Spring registration begins at 10:00 AM Monday, February 2, 2026.



Fine Arts, Theater & Music

1002 Theater Appreciation

 Instructor: D. Ohlandt

Tuesday 12:00 – 1:30 PM

3/3 – 4/21 (No class 3/31)

Sessions: 7; Locations: Fairlington

Do you enjoy evenings at the theater but want to know more about what you are seeing? Have you ever wondered if knowing about the historical context of a play, a theater company or a performance style would help you better enjoy the production? If so, this is the class for you! Through a series of readings and guided discussions, we will educate ourselves as forthcoming audience members about three shows presented at three theaters in the D.C. area. Class members must arrange for their own tickets.

- *As You Like It* (Folger Theatre, March 10 – April 12)
- *Appropriate* (Olney Theatre Center, March 18 – April 19)
- *Hamnet* (Shakespeare Theatre Company, March 17 – April 12)

We will begin by reading and discussing the plays/novel before we see the shows. Next, we will see the productions on our own. In the following week's class session, we will explore and discuss what we saw on stage, considering performance style, technique and production values. The instructor, trained in both theater history and dramatic theory, will facilitate the discussions.

Recommended Reading: *Appropriate* (play), Branden Jacobs-Jenkins; *As You Like It* (play), Shakespeare; *Hamnet* (novel), Maggie O'Farrell.

D. Ohlandt holds a PhD in theater studies from the University of Michigan and has more than 15 years of experience directing in community, university and regional theaters. She has taught theater history and practice to students from preschool through adult in a range of settings including traditional classrooms, summer camps and outdoor team-building courses.

Spring 2026 Course Descriptions *continued*

1055 Never Too Old To Play: Introduction to Improvisation (Improv)

 Instructor: Steve Pilloff

Friday 10:00 – 11:30 AM

4/10 – 5/7

Sessions: 5; Locations: GMU

Do you like to laugh? Do you enjoy connecting with supportive people? Do you cherish moments of joy? If you answered “yes” to these questions, then this is the course for you!

We will gather in a safe, encouraging and supportive environment to play and explore. Using our imagination, we will create fun worlds, collaborative stories and an overall sense of connected joy. Class members will learn improv by participating in various games, activities and exercises that involve working together, listening to each other, making choices, and discovering that mistakes can be gifts. They will develop trust, not just in themselves, but also in each other.

Everyone is welcome — no prior improv or theater experience is needed — and you do not need to be funny. Just bring yourself: you are enough!

Steve Pilloff: See adjoining course information for instructor bio.



1065 Never Too Old to Play Some More

 Instructor: Steve Pilloff

Friday 12:00 – 1:30 PM

4/10 – 5/15

Sessions: 6; Locations: GMU

Ready for more laughter, creativity, and connection? This advanced improv course is for those who have completed *Never Too Old to Play* (or have comparable experience with improv or theater) and want to keep exploring the joy of improvisation.

In this class, we will build on the foundations of listening, collaboration and imagination, while introducing new games and techniques that deepen character work, storytelling and scene creation. You will learn how to craft engaging scenes, collaborate creatively, build on each other's ideas, and embrace bold choices, all in a supportive, laughter-filled environment.

The course will culminate in a joyful performance for invited guests, giving you the chance to share your creativity and teamwork on stage. Participation in the performance is optional. No pressure — just play, growth and celebration!

Bring your curiosity, your sense of humor and your willingness to explore. You have already discovered that you are never too old to play. Now it's time to play some more!

Steve Pilloff is a dedicated improv teacher, producer and performer. At George Mason University, where he is a professor in the Costello College of Business, he has conducted improv workshops for various student groups. He also serves as the faculty advisor to the Mason Improv Association. Steve has taught improv classes for Highwire Improv and Improv for PD (Parkinson's Disease) and frequently performs with Washington Improv Theater and at various indie shows throughout the D.C.-Baltimore area. He regularly organizes and produces improv shows in Northern Virginia.

Spring 2026 Course Descriptions *continued*

1061 Magic of Motown: Music, History, Legacy

 Instructor: Mike Agron

Wednesday 3:00 – 4:30 PM

4/8 – 5/13

Sessions: 6; Locations: Virtual and Recorded

Explore Motown's golden era from the late 1950s to the 1970s, a period marked by groundbreaking songwriting, iconic artists and profound social influence. Discover how Motown's innovative production methods shaped its timeless sound, broke racial barriers and adapted to shifting cultural landscapes to achieve worldwide acclaim. Featuring over two dozen legendary artists and more than 70 curated tracks and videos, this course concludes with a celebration of the label's transformative first 25 years. Join us to experience the magic of Motown and its lasting impact on music and culture!

Mike Agron grew up in Los Angeles, the heart of the recording and entertainment industry. He is a former executive and entrepreneur turned storyteller who crafts dynamic seminars on music and film. He has led hundreds of sessions for older adults at The Renaissance Society at California State University, Sacramento, and numerous Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes across the country.

1063 Origins and Development of Dance in Musical Theater

 Instructor: Ilsa Bush

Wednesday 2:00 – 3:30 PM

3/18 – 4/22

Sessions: 6; Locations: GMU

This course will focus on how dance became a critical and evolving element in American Musical Theater. We will start with a look at how musical theater itself came to be a major form of popular entertainment in the U.S., balancing the historical roadblocks to its development and our warm response to European artists bringing their operettas and other theatrical performances here. We will examine the enormous and transformative contributions of African American musicians and dancers to the style and success of American musicals on Broadway and in Hollywood. We will also look at the work of particularly influential dancers and choreographers including Bill "Bojangles" Robinson, John Sublett Bubbles, the Nicholas brothers, Fred Astaire, George Balanchine, Gene Kelly, Jack Cole, Michael Bennett, Katherine Dunham, Agnes de Mille, Hanya Holm, Jerome Robbins, Bob Fosse and others. We will see how the blending of music and movement from Africa, the British Isles and the Caribbean islands created new and powerful approaches to rhythm and dance.

The instructor will provide video links on the course webpage when class begins.

Ilsa Bush, a retired lawyer, began ballet classes at age six and continues to take them. During her high school years, she performed with the New England Civic Ballet, predecessor to the Boston Ballet Company. She earned teaching credentials from American Ballet Theatre's teacher training program and taught ballet technique and dance history at DC area universities and studios for 20 years.

**LIKE US
ON FACEBOOK!**



[www.facebook.com/
EncoreLearningArlington](http://www.facebook.com/EncoreLearningArlington)

**Check Out Our
YouTube Channel**



[www.youtube.com/
@encorelearning2002](http://www.youtube.com/@encorelearning2002)

REMEMBER

check www.encorelearning.net for
the most up-to-date information!

Spring 2026 Course Descriptions *continued*

1064 Dao, Zen, and Creativity: East Asian Arts for Balance and Harmony

🎧 Instructor: Dawn Li

Thursday 10:00 – 11:30 AM

4/9 – 4/30

Sessions: 4; Locations: Virtual and Recorded

Unlock the secrets of Dao and Zen through appreciation of East Asia's classical arts: painting, poetry, calligraphy, music and movement. This four-session experiential course invites artists, poets and the simply curious to explore how *qi* (life force energy), effortless flow, *yin-yang* balance and emptiness all shape creativity. Discover how these ancient principles can awaken fresh inspiration and harmony for your own artistic journey.

Session 1: Learn the core ideas of Dao and Zen and practice simple Tai Chi and *qigong* movements.

Session 2: Explore *qi* as it flows through nature and the human body and engage in expressive calligraphy.

Session 3: Delve into nature painting and poetry and compose a short, reflective poem in groups.

Session 4: Integrate philosophy, art and movement to cultivate vitality and inspired living.

No prior experience required — only curiosity and a willingness to participate. Please wear loose, comfortable clothing for gentle movement.

Recommended Materials: Bring simple art and writing supplies: a notebook or sketchbook, a pen, a brush pen, and several sheets of plain or watercolor paper.

Recommended Reading: *Tao Te Ching* by Lao Tsu, translated by Gia-Fu Feng, Jane English and Toinette Lippe; *The Way of Qigong: The Art and Science of Chinese Energy Healing*, Kenneth S. Cohen.

Dawn Li, PhD, is a writer, educator and entrepreneur with a lifelong passion for Dao and Zen. A native Chinese speaker with a doctorate in language and literature, she has taught Chinese culture at The George Washington University and English at Peking University. She now leads Daoist arts workshops in northern Virginia,

blending philosophy, art and movement. She is the author of *New Dao Fables: Wisdom of the Wild* and a regular contributor to the *Journal of Daoist Studies*.



REFER A FRIEND!

You are our
best source of
information for
prospective
members.

Simply refer them to
our website
www.EncoreLearning.net

Spring 2026 Course Descriptions *continued*



Health & Wellness

2027 Caregiving for Dementia

 Instructor: Dwight Rodgers

Monday 10:00 – 11:30 AM

3/2 – 4/6

Sessions: 6; Locations: Virtual and Recorded

This course is for active caregivers or those who expect to assume a caregiver role for someone with dementia. Parkinson's, Lewy Body disease, Alzheimer's, stroke and many other medical conditions can result in dementia. People affected become dependent, often on family members or close friends who become caregivers. Because caregivers are often restricted in getting out, the course will be virtual via Zoom and limited to 20 participants to permit participation by as many as possible.

Over six weeks, the instructor will make available links to excellent resources, most vetted by Rush Medical Center of Chicago. These will help in understanding dementia and address the role and stresses of being a caregiver. We will cover topics including safety for our loved one and ourselves; the range of caregiver responsibilities (medication monitoring, getting to

appointments); important changes as dementia progresses (when to stop driving, handling loss of agency); finding balance in life as a caregiver; handling your emotions, providing self-care and learning to ask for help; coping when dementia care becomes like a full-time job; finding support groups and supplementary caregivers; and having access to accurate information about the type of dementia you might be dealing with.

The instructor will encourage the class to ask questions and contribute information and experience for the benefit of the group. He has significant experience with Parkinson's and Lewy Body disease, but caregiver responsibilities for those with dementia are similar regardless of the diagnosis. By the end of the course, participants should come away better informed about the role of caregiver and hopefully better equipped to manage the stresses with new tools and resources.

Recommended Websites: Class participants may want to become familiar with [Parkinsons.org](https://www.parkinsons.org); [Davisphinnneyfoundation.org](https://www.davisphinnneyfoundation.org); [Parkinsonsocialnetwork.org](https://www.parkinsonsocialnetwork.org)

Dwight Rodgers has taught courses for Encore Learning in history and mindfulness. His interest in dementia stems from caregiving for his wife, who has a 13-year-old diagnosis of Parkinson's and has experienced the drift toward dementia typical of that disease. He is a long-term resident of Arlington who appreciates the services available close at hand.

VOLUNTEER AS A CLASS AIDE

- Get free parking while attending the class (only for in-person classes).
- Get complimentary course registration for next semester (only for virtual and offsite classes).
- Training on use of audio-visual equipment and Zoom.
- Get to know the instructor and your classmates.
- Be an integral part of Encore Learning.

Spring 2026 Course Descriptions *continued*



History

3003 Arlington History

Instructor: Karl VanNewkirk

Thursday 3:00 – 4:30 PM

3/26 – 5/14

Sessions: 8; Locations: Various Locations in Arlington

While crisscrossing the 26 square miles of Arlington, have you ever wondered who trod this ground before you? This highly popular course surveys the history of Arlington from before the arrival of European settlers to the present. This is not classroom-based; each session will take place in a different historic building or neighborhood. The sessions will look at:

- Arlington before the Europeans
- Arlington in the Colonial Period
- Arlington House: A complex, biracial community that defies easy categorization
- The early 19th century and the Civil War
- Reconstruction and the beginnings of modern Arlington
- White Arlington comes together; Black Arlington endures Jim Crow
- Civil rights and smart growth
- Putting it all together: Field trip to Arlington Historical Museum

The locations and directions for each session will be provided on the course webpage when class begins. Participants will need to provide their own transportation to each class site. Some walking is required.

Karl VanNewkirk served four terms as president of the Arlington Historical Society, has been a docent at the Arlington Historical Museum and edited the Society's annual magazine from 1992 to 2015. He is a former member of the board of directors of the Arlington Black Heritage Museum and a volunteer with the archaeology department at Gunston Hall, the home of George Mason. He is currently working on the story of the Corbett family in Arlington, hopefully for publication in the 2026 edition of the magazine.

3044 Jewish Millennium in Spain

Instructor: Jeffrey Gorsky

Monday 2:00 – 3:30 PM

3/9 – 4/13

Sessions: 6; Locations: GMU

After almost a millennium of harmonious existence in Spain, what had been the most populous and prosperous Jewish community in Europe ceased to exist on the Iberian Peninsula. The 1,000-year history of Jews in Spain is a dramatic chronicle of power and influence, of the horrors of the Inquisition, and finally of the Expulsion of 1492.

It was a community that flourished under both Muslim and Christian rule, enjoying prosperity and power unsurpassed in Europe. But it also endured considerable hardship. Fundamentalist Islamic tribes drove Jews from Muslim to Christian Spain. In 1391 thousands were killed in waves of massacres throughout the country, and more than a third of the Jewish population were forced to convert by anti-Jewish rioters.

A century later, in the Spanish Inquisition, thousands of these converts were accused of heresy. By the end of the 15th century, Jews had been expelled from Spain and forcibly converted in Portugal and Navarre. The instructor shares their stories, including those of important Jewish philosophers, poets, and mystics, and discusses the impact of the racial and religious discrimination and persecution on later cultures.

Recommended Reading: Exiles in Sepharad: The Jewish Millennium in Spain, Jeffrey Gorsky.

Jeffrey Gorsky is retired from the State Department, where he specialized in immigration law. He also worked as senior counsel for the Berry, Appleman and Leiden immigration law firm.

DON'T FORGET!

Spring 2026 Course Preview
January 29 at 9:30 AM on Zoom!

Spring 2026 Course Descriptions *continued*

3059 Crusades: Wars among Christians and Muslims

  Instructor: Tom Wukitsch

Monday 12:00 – 2:00 PM

3/9 – 5/11

Sessions: 10; Locations: Virtual and Recorded

This course starts with pre-Islam times in the Middle East and goes forward into Islam's beginnings and rapid expansion into previously Christian territories. Because of Byzantine corruption and misrule, this expansion was often welcomed by the people of those territories. For years, the Byzantine emperors appealed for help and recruits from the West. Finally, in the late 1090s, spurred mainly by religious fervor, the West reacted. The Byzantines had hoped for trained and disciplined troops but mostly received uncontrollable crowds, who after savaging Jewish communities in Europe were either quickly defeated (sometimes wiped out) or, by chance and due to infighting among their opponents, unexpectedly victorious. Unfortunately, the Christian victories were sometimes accompanied by atrocities. The Christians took Jerusalem, their ostensible goal, in 1099 and held it until the Muslim side achieved unity. Thereafter, amid many battles, the Christians were gradually expelled during the 1100s.

There were many changes of alliances during the Crusades: Christians, Muslims and even Mongols participated on all sides, changing partners even during battles. The theaters of battle stretched from the Middle East to Spain, France, the Baltic Sea and states and the Russian northern frontier. We will try to sift through all of this in 10 two-hour sessions. There exist many exciting stories; some may actually be true.

Tom Wukitsch's fascination with ancient things began while reading his grandparents' collection of *National Geographic* magazines. Early on, he studied Latin, ancient Greek, ancient Semitic languages and Egyptian hieroglyphs. He earned degrees in Semitic languages, ancient history and archeology/archaeometry. After retiring from a long career in the Foreign Service, he studied and taught at the Gruppo Archeologic Romano in Rome and has led Encore Learning study trips to Egypt, Italy, Turkey, Greece and the Aegean islands.

3095 Ernest Hemingway and the Unexpected Consequences of the Spanish Civil War

   Instructor: Nicholas Reynolds

Tuesday 12:00 – 1:30 PM

3/10 – 3/31

Sessions: 4; Locations: Hybrid and Recorded

Traveling to Spain four times in 1937 and 1938, Ernest Hemingway covered the Spanish Civil War for the syndicate North American Newspaper Alliance. He developed a deep attachment to the left-of-center Spanish Republic and was devastated when the loyalist republicans lost the war in 1939 to Franco's right-wing nationalist rebels.

The war changed Hemingway's life and work. While in Spain, he started forging links with Soviet intelligence, a little-known consequence of his involvement in the war. He also separated from his second wife, Pauline Pfeiffer, and began a romantic relationship with Martha Gellhorn, who would become his third wife. The course will consider the significance of all these shifts. We will look at Gellhorn as a writer, as well as George Orwell and Arthur Koestler, whose works on the war compare favorably with Hemingway's bestselling novel *For Whom the Bell Tolls*.

Lastly, we will pay particular attention to his secret agreement to work with Soviet intelligence and the role it played in the final years of his life in Cuba and Idaho.

Recommended Reading: *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, Ernest Hemingway; *Love and Ruin*, Paula McLain; *Homage to Catalonia*, George Orwell; *Darkness at Noon*, Arthur Koestler.

Nicholas Reynolds is a historian, biographer and lifelong fan of Hemingway. He wrote the 2017 *New York Times* bestseller *Writer, Sailor, Soldier, Spy: Ernest Hemingway's Secret Adventures, 1935–1961*. Oxford PhD in hand, he served in the Marine Corps as an infantry officer and then as a historian. He later served as a CIA officer at home and abroad. For five years, he was the historian of the CIA Museum, helping to turn artifacts into compelling stories.

Spring 2026 Course Descriptions *continued*

3096 Intelligence and the Cold War

 Instructor: David Siegrist

Monday 2:00 – 3:30 PM

4/6 – 5/11

Sessions: 6; Locations: GMU

This course will address different aspects of the intelligence enterprise (e.g., collection, analysis, human intelligence) using examples from the Cold War. The focus will be on various people involved and what they did rather than on intelligence community structures and functions. The instructor will discuss the importance of perception, deception and information control in managing conflict as well as the use of intelligence as a strategic tool.

Topics are generally in chronological order from the beginning of the Cold War to more contemporaneous events. The sequence will begin with more human-focused subjects and then move on to more technical topics, as follows:

- 1. Strategy and the Role of Intelligence in the Cold War:** Sun Tzu and strategy; waging political conflict in the nuclear age; the role of information management.
- 2. Agents of Influence and Early Espionage:** Soviet infiltration of U.S. and U.K. governments during and after WWII.
- 3. Nuclear Secrets and Counterintelligence:** The atomic spy ring; the rise of U.S. counterintelligence; James Jesus Angleton and the “great mole hunt.”

4. Technical Intelligence and Nuclear Weapons:

Cracking the “bomber gap” and “missile gap” with U-2 aircraft and Discoverer satellites; intelligence and spy craft impact on arms control.

5. Intelligence Analysis and Policy Debates:

National Intelligence Estimates and their strategic importance; the Team B controversy: competing assessments of Soviet intentions.

6. Active Measures to Influence Hearts and Minds:

Soviet disinformation, forgeries and influence operations during neutron bomb protests; Soviet intermediate-range nuclear forces deployment and AIDS disinformation; the evolution of influence operations from leaflets to the cloud.

Recommended Readings: James Jesus Angleton: *Was He Right?* Edward Jay Epstein; “The Art of Terrorism: What Sun Tzu Can Teach Us about International Terrorism,” Caleb M. Bartley; “Team B: The Trillion-Dollar Experiment,” John Prados and Anne Hessing Cahn; *Why the Soviet Union Thinks It Could Fight & Win a Nuclear War*, Richard Pipes.

The instructor will provide hyperlinks on the course webpage when class begins.

David Siegrist has taught both noncredit and graduate courses at George Mason and Georgetown universities. He was the national strategy public policy fellow at GU, where he earned a master’s in government. He also earned a PhD in biodefense from GMU. He recently retired from the MITRE Corporation, where for 16 years his work supported the U.S. government, largely in areas limiting weapons of mass destruction and countering proliferation.

In addition to our courses in
the spring and fall semesters, our
Special Events & Clubs run year-round.

See page 36 for more details.

Spring 2026 Course Descriptions *continued*

3097 Roots, Resistance, and Resilience: Black History & Community in Arlington

 **Instructor: Multiple**

Thursday 2:00 – 3:30 PM

4/2 – 5/14

Sessions: 7; Locations: GMU and Offsite

For more than two centuries, African-Americans have been central in shaping Arlington's history — building its infrastructure, founding its neighborhoods and leading movements for equity and inclusion. Yet their stories have too often been overlooked or even erased.

This course illuminates that rich and complex heritage through guided walking tours in historic Black neighborhoods, first-hand accounts, and in-depth discussions led by local historians, scholars and community leaders. From the lives of the enslaved and free Black families along Columbia Pike to the strength of the Green Valley community, the enduring faith of Lomax AME Zion Church, the activism of John Robinson, the struggles of Fire Station 8 and the resilience shown amid racially restrictive housing covenants, class members will gain a deeper understanding of how Black Arlingtonians forged progress through resistance, cooperation and unwavering hope. Each session reveals how this legacy continues to shape Arlington's identity.

The course concludes with a focus on Black heritage and historic preservation, drawing on examples such as Freedman's Village, Queen City and the Syphax family, to explore methods of documentation, oral history and advocacy. The class sessions will underscore how the preservation of Black heritage deepens understanding of Arlington's past and informs contemporary conversations on justice, belonging and collective memory.

Session 1: Route of Resilience (Jessica Kaplan, 4/2).
Class Location: Columbia Pike

Jessica Kaplan of the Arlington Historical Society (AHS) will conduct a walking tour along Columbia Pike, from Ode Street to Glebe Road. She will discuss the enslaved and their enslavers who lived by the roadway and their contributions to the economy and the building of local infrastructure. She will also focus on the free Black families that made the Pike their home and how some

prospered despite discrimination and burdensome laws. The tour will draw on research from the Memorializing the Enslaved (MEA) project, implemented by the AHS and Black Heritage Museum of Arlington.

Session 2: Green Valley: A Village of Hope During Segregation (Alfred O. Taylor Jr., 4/9).

Class Location: GMU

The speaker will reflect on growing up in the Green Valley neighborhood during the 1930s to 1950s, a time marked by the harsh realities of segregation that yet embodied the spirit that "It Takes a Village To Raise a Child." He will highlight what life was like during that era, as well as how four local churches of different denominations united to provide youth with opportunities for growth, joy and cultural enrichment — opportunities often denied due to racial segregation laws. Dr. Taylor will describe how a framework of expanded families and this collective spirit fostered a sense of belonging, accountability and hope, and how music, mentorship and shared values promoted development of Green Valley.

Session 3: Lomax AME Zion Church: A Beacon of Faith, Freedom and Empowerment (Brenda Cox, 4/16).

Class Location: Lomax AME Zion Church, 2704 S. 24th Rd

This session will explore the pivotal role of Lomax AME Zion Church in shaping faith, identity and activism in Arlington's Black community from its founding in the late 19th century to today. Church historian Brenda Cox will trace the church's origins in Green Valley as a spiritual home for newly freed African-Americans, its function as a refuge and source of strength during the Jim Crow era, its transformation into a hub for civil rights activism and its continuing vital role in civic life and cultural preservation today. Participants will examine how the church nurtured leadership, education, cultural pride and quiet resistance, laying the groundwork for direct action in desegregation and voting rights.

Session 4: The Legacy of John Robinson and the Desegregation of Drew School (Portia A. Clark, 4/23).

Class location: GMU

Explore the remarkable life and legacy of John Robinson, a pivotal figure in Arlington's Black history with whom the speaker worked closely. He was a

Spring 2026 Course Descriptions *continued*

humanitarian, advocate of equal educational rights and an activist in the struggle for desegregation. Clark will describe Robinson's work in the civil rights movement alongside figures including Martin Luther King Jr. and Jesse Jackson. As the founder of the *Green Valley News* in the 1960s, he became a vital communicator and advocate within the community. During segregation, he educated residents about local politics, school policies and civil rights issues, helping to bridge communication gaps during a time of intense social change.

Session 5: Fire Station 8: History and Legacy

(Marguarite Gooden, 4/30)

Class Location: Fire Station 8, 4845 Langston Blvd.

Established in 1918 as the Halls Hill Volunteer Fire Department, Station 8 played critical roles during the 20th century. Notably, it was one of the first all-Black fire companies in the segregated South, created out of necessity because African Americans were denied equal protection and service by white fire departments. The speaker, whose father, Captain Hartman Reed, is the last living original Station 8 firefighter, will share key aspects of the station's legacy, including its founding during the Jim Crow era, its volunteer status and the long fight for official recognition and integration. Hear personal stories of pioneering Black firefighters who risked their lives to serve a community that was systematically underserved and their resistance to discrimination within the county's fire services. Learn the broader context of civil rights progress in Arlington, tying Station 8's history to landmark events such as desegregation, the Civil Rights Act and local activism. Participants will uncover how Station 8 not only protected Halls Hill but became a symbol of dignity, self-reliance and the fight for justice.

Session 6: Documenting Exclusion and Resilience: The Role and Navigation of Racially Restrictive Covenants in Arlington from 1900 to 1968 (Kristin Neun, 5/7)

Class location: GMU Campus

This session will explore racial dynamics among Arlington property owners from 1900 through the Civil Rights Act of 1968. It will examine the history of racially restrictive covenants in property deeds to create largely White, homogenous communities and the resilience Black Arlingtonians demonstrated in the face of such exclusionary actions. The presentation

will highlight the findings of *Documenting Exclusion and Resilience*, a collaborative web-based project created to chronicle this aspect of Arlington's history. This session includes an overview of national and regional developments that acted as a backdrop to the evolution of racially restrictive covenant use, and the key roles that the real estate industry and the federal government played in promoting covenant usage that helped to define Arlington's suburban growth. Participants will learn about research now underway to document property ownership within Arlington's African-American community, including actions to gain and ensure access to housing and preserve communities.

Session 7: Preserving Our Past: How To Protect Black Heritage in Arlington (Craig Syphax, 5/14).

Class location: GMU

This session will explore why preservation matters and how to protect it. Using the stories of Freedman's Village, Queen City, the Syphax family legacy and other enduring institutions discussed in prior sessions, participants will learn how to recognize, document and preserve the people, places and traditions that shaped the county's identity. Through presentation and small-group reflection, they will gain practical tools for capturing oral histories, identifying historic sites and advocating for inclusive preservation. This session empowers participants to keep Arlington's Black history alive, ensuring its stories continue to inform and inspire future generations.

Jessica Kaplan co-coordinates the Memorializing the Enslaved in Arlington project for the Arlington Historical Society (AHS). She is an archivist and historical researcher who has worked at the Library of Congress and the Jewish Historical Society. Currently she edits the AHS magazine and serves on the AHS board.

Alfred O. Taylor Jr., born in 1934, is a lifelong Arlingtonian. He earned a BS in teaching technology from Washington Technical Institute, an MA in adult education, administration and supervision from Federal City College, and an EdD in higher education administration from Virginia Tech. In 1969, he left the U.S. Government Printing Office to help develop the printing and publishing program at Washington Technical Institute. He also taught in Nairobi, Kenya, and

Spring 2026 Course Descriptions *continued*

retired from the University of the District of Columbia in 1999 after 31 years of service. In retirement, Dr. Taylor has authored three books: *Bridge Builders of Nauck/Green Valley: Past and Present*; *What an Amazing Journey: To God Be the Glory*; and *Following the Trail of Trooper Alfred Pride: Buffalo Soldier 1865–1893*. His first musical production, *Creation as Witness Through the Eyes of Hope*, is set to debut in the spring of 2026.

Brenda Cox is the daughter of parents who migrated from Raleigh, NC, in 1941 to Arlington in 1951 when she was three years old as part of the Great Migration. She graduated from Wakefield High School in 1965, after the close of Hoffman-Boston Junior-Senior High School due to integration. She served as a librarian in the DC Public Library system, as well as the social work librarian at Howard University for 10 years. Cox has been a realtor in Arlington since the 1970s and has served as church librarian at Lomax AME Zion Church since 1989.

Portia A. Clark, born in Washington, DC, has lived in Arlington all her life. She attended Arlington Public Schools before integration and began engaging in community affairs when her children entered school and busing was instituted to integrate schools. She worked with Arlington Public Schools on changing busing policies, led efforts to allow Black children to remain at Drew School after third grade and eventually advocated for changes that returned Drew to a neighborhood school. A retired government employee, Clark remains engaged in civic and community matters and currently runs the Community Association of Resources for Education, Enrichment & Economics (CARE), Inc, which helps uplift the Green Valley community.

Margarite Gooden, a lifelong Arlingtonian, earned her BA from Morgan State and an MA from George Mason University. She served at Arlington Public Schools, retiring in 2012 as principal of the New Directions Alternative High School. A passionate advocate for students with disabilities and marginalized youth, she now serves as a commissioner for Arlington's Juvenile Detention Center and vice president of the John M. Langston Civic Association. Gooden played a key role in the fight to preserve Fire Station 8.

Kristin Neun is a retired attorney who now devotes her legal skills and interest in history to contribute to the work

of the *Documenting Exclusion and Resilience* project. For 30 years, she worked on legal transactions and public policy issues related to federal and locally financed affordable housing, community development and health care facilities nationwide. A member of the Maryland and District of Columbia bars, Neun received her JD from American University and an MEd from Marymount University. She is a 40-year resident of Arlington County.

Craig Syphax is a descendant of enslaved people from Mount Vernon and Arlington House and a native Arlingtonian. He is a former board member of the Arlington House Foundation and president emeritus of the Black Heritage Museum of Arlington. A real estate investor since 1998, he manages his properties and is a television producer at Falls Church Community Television.



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See page 2 for details

Spring 2026 Course Descriptions continued

3099 Civil War Shifting Tides: Strategy Changes in 1862 in Central Virginia

 Instructor: Greg Mertz

Tuesday 10:00 – 11:30 AM

3/3 – 3/31

Sessions: 5; Locations: Virtual and Recorded

As the Civil War concluded its first year in the spring of 1862, both the Federal and Confederate armies made significant adjustments affecting the course of the war in central Virginia. Five sessions will cover the following topics:

1. The August 1862 Battle of Cedar Mountain and Federal policies that defined the way pro-Confederate civilians should act in the presence of Federal armies, which was a factor in shaping that fight. Confederate General Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson was surprised at Cedar Mountain but turned the battle around and achieved a victory.
2. The December 1862 Battle of Fredericksburg, including the pressure President Lincoln placed on his army commanders to deliver a victory before the release of the Emancipation Proclamation of January 1, 1863. That tension and communication failures contributed to Fredericksburg being the most lopsided Federal defeat of the war.
3. Landing atop the incessant change in Federal army commanders, General Joseph Hooker made such dramatic improvements to the army that they prompted comparisons with the adjustments made in the Revolutionary War during the winter at Valley Forge.
4. General Hooker’s additional feat of revamping the cavalry. A look at the skirmish at Hartwood Church, the Battle of Kelly’s Ford, and Stoneman’s Raid, tracing the progress (or lack thereof) by Federal horsemen over the first few months of 1863.
5. The human side of Stonewall Jackson and his staff as they spent the winter with the Corbin family and Jackson’s visit with his newborn daughter.

Recommended Reading: The Carnage Was Fearful: The Battle of Cedar Mountain, August 9, 1862, Michael Block;

Simply Murder: The Battle of Fredericksburg, December 13, 1862, Chris Mackowski and Kristopher White; Seizing Destiny: The Army of the Potomac’s “Valley Forge” and the Civil War Winter That Saved the Union, Albert Conner and Chris Mackowski; Chancellorsville: The Battle and Its Aftermath, Gary Gallagher, ed.; Stonewall Jackson: The Man, the Solider, the Legend, James Robertson.

Greg Mertz spent a 40-year career working as a historian and interpreter with the National Park Service on the Civil War battlefields of Gettysburg, PA, and Fredericksburg, VA, as well as at the Eisenhower Home. He holds a BS from the University of Missouri and an MS from Shippensburg University. He is the author of *Attack Them at Daylight and Whip Them: The Battle of Shiloh, April 6–7, 1862*. In retirement, Greg conducts battlefield tours in Virginia. He is a frequent lecturer for historical organizations and at symposia.

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Spring 2026 Course Descriptions *continued*

3100 Demystifying Islam

 **Instructor:** Usama Rehman

Wednesday 12:00 – 1:30 PM

4/8 – 5/6

Sessions: 5; Locations: GMU

Many Americans are familiar with “Islam” or “Muslim” but do not really know much about the religion or its adherents. Which God do Muslims worship? Is Islam a religion of violence and extremism, as often portrayed in the media? What are the sects and denominations in Islam, and why is there conflict between them?

This course will dive into the teachings of Islam, providing students with information about its background, practices and beliefs. The aim is to correct misconceptions, showcase the true Islam and highlight how it is not so different from what you yourself may believe.

Usama Rehman is an imam at the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community located in Chantilly, VA. After completing high school in Georgia, he completed a seven-year program in the study of religion and languages at Jamia Ahmadiyya Canada near Toronto. He is deeply interested in comparative religions and has started interfaith/multifaith listening groups to counteract polarization.

3101 Gospel of Matthew and Its Impact

 **Instructor:** Anthony Tambasco

Tuesday 12:00 – 1:30 PM

3/10 – 4/14

Sessions: 6; Locations: Goodwin House Bailey's Crossroads

The destruction of the Jewish temple in Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 CE was a pivotal event in the evolution of both Judaism and Christianity. Judaism began transitioning to the Rabbinic movement, and Christians moved toward a new identity, separate from their Jewish roots. Written in the years following the temple's destruction, Matthew's Gospel confronted the role of the Christian Church vis-a-vis the larger world, secular society and the Judaism with which it was competing. This course will examine the development

of his gospel as a handbook for Church organization and Christian teachings. Class members will find it helpful to bring a Bible to class.

Independent Reading: The Gospel According to Matthew: Volume 1, Barbara E. Reid.

Anthony Tambasco is professor emeritus of Georgetown University, where he taught biblical studies for 35 years and chaired the Theology Department for two terms. He also taught in the Liberal Studies Program in the School of Continuing Studies. He has given numerous presentations in parishes and synagogues, as well as mini-courses at the Smithsonian Institution Associates Program.

3102 America at 250: Voices That Tell Our Story

 **Instructor:** Stephen Ruth

Monday 12:00 – 1:30 PM

3/2 – 3/23

Sessions: 4; Locations: Virtual and Recorded

In celebration of America's upcoming 250th anniversary, this course explores the nation's identity, evolution and challenges through great speeches, songs, theatrical selections and multimedia. Each of the four sessions traces a thematic thread (Founding and Revolution, Nation-Building and Conflict, Civil Rights and Renewal, and Future Visions and Conciliation) using iconic oratory, lyrics, Broadway excerpts, video and audio recordings. We will view and hear material aimed at unpacking rhetorical and musical meaning, reflecting on how our national narrative evolves and how past voices can still speak today. This is not a lecture series but an interactive “story through voices and songs” exercise designed to deepen our appreciation of America's ideals, tensions and hopes as we step into the Semiquincentennial.

Stephen Ruth, emeritus professor of public policy at the Schar School of Policy and Government at George Mason University, has presented numerous courses for Encore Learning. After completing his career as a captain in the U.S. Navy, he taught at GMU for 46 years before retiring in 2024.

Spring 2026 Course Descriptions *continued*



Law, Politics & Public Affairs

4004 Global Hot Spots

🎧 Instructor: Multiple

Thursday 2:00 – 3:30 PM

3/5 – 4/9

Sessions: 5; Locations: Virtual

This course will examine various areas of the world in crisis and the critical foreign policy issues they present for the United States. Experts including former senior government officials and academic specialists will discuss what is at stake in these dangerous hot spots and how the U.S. is responding to them.

Gauging the Status of the War in Ukraine

(Richard Kauzlarich and William Taylor)

The military conflict in Ukraine is entering its 12th year. Join two former U.S. ambassadors who will bring us up to date on the military and economic aspects of the conflict as well as U.S. and international efforts to bring it to an end.

Turmoil in the Visegrad Countries (Tibor Nagy)

In 1991, with the fall of the Iron Curtain, Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia met in Visegrad, Hungary, to foster cooperation among themselves in the military, economic and cultural spheres and promote their shared goal of integration with Europe. The Visegrad 3 and later 4 – as they became known in 1993 when Czechoslovakia had a friendly division into Chechia and the Slovak Republic – were successful in gaining early entrance to NATO in 1999 and the EU in 2004, helped by the unified approach of their respective leaders. Subsequently, however, deep fissures have developed between the EU and NATO and these countries, as well as among the Visegrad countries themselves. Only Warsaw has held a consistently anti-Russian view regarding the “special military operation” in Ukraine. Other divisions have occurred over EU immigration policies, judicial independence, curbs on freedom of the press, support for the LGBT community and respect for the rights of political opponents.

The speaker will describe these disagreements, with special attention to Hungary, whose prime minister faces his first serious election opponent this year after having used his 15 years in power to capture the state and enrich his circle.

Nepal's Decade of Crises (Peter Bodde)

In April 2015 the largest earthquake in over 80 years struck Nepal, killing more than 8,962 people in Nepal and injuring a combined 91,952 in Nepal, India, China and Bangladesh. Major aftershocks occurred in April and May. Because the earthquake took place at a depth of only 5.1 miles, very shallow for earthquakes, the damage to buildings and infrastructure was severe. Many Nepalese were left homeless, but since the quake occurred at about noon Nepalese time, fewer deaths occurred than would have happened at night. Nepal is one of the poorest countries in the world, with little capability to address the damage.

The speaker will describe the reconstruction efforts heavily supported by the United States. He will also discuss the more recent 2025 Nepalese Gen Z protests, which started as a peaceful movement against the government's ban on social media but also against malfeasance on the part of families of Communist, Maoist and social democrat leaders who paraded their wealth while the rest of the population seemed to slide into hopelessness. The protests spiraled out of control, toppling the government, destroying government buildings and the homes and businesses connected to the political elites.

Can the Israel-Hamas Peace Deal Be Sustained?

(Lucy Kurtzer-Ellenbogen)

In October 2025 President Trump secured the Israel-Hamas ceasefire, with release of hostages in exchange for Palestinian prisoners and detainees from Gaza. This overdue achievement, which had eluded the Biden and first Trump administrations since the events of October 7, 2023, was linked to an ambitious, though vague, 20-point plan that attempts to address both immediate Gaza challenges and longer-term requirements for sustainable peace and security. With the devil in the details, questions arise regarding not just the staying power of the ceasefire, but of the Trump administration and regional actors whose coordination and focus will be key to parlaying the ceasefire into something more permanent. What are the pitfalls and opportunities for the U.S. and the region at this fragile moment?

Spring 2026 Course Descriptions *continued*

Can Haiti's Fortunes be Reversed? (Tom Adams)

Haiti has enjoyed only brief periods of prosperity and stability since it declared its independence from France in 1804. There are many reasons, including revolutions, conflict with the eastern half of the island of Hispaniola, interventions by foreign powers, weak and often corrupt governance, and natural disasters. In an effort to stabilize Haiti, a United Nations peacekeeping mission was established in 2004 with a large police and military force that succeeded in halting widespread gang violence, building a national police force and stabilizing the country.

But in January 2010, at 4:53 pm local time, Haiti was struck by a magnitude 7.0 earthquake that reportedly killed approximately 300,000 people and left 1.6 million homeless, making it one of the worst natural disasters ever recorded. Countries rushed to assist, eventually pledging \$4 billion, with about one third of that from the U.S. Stability was restored, and economic progress was made. By 2017 it was felt that that the foreign military and police presence could be withdrawn, but this conclusion was premature. Haiti's governing structures proved unable to manage the country, as gangs overwhelmed the Haitian Police and took control of much of the country and its capital Port-au-Prince. To date, international efforts to help restabilize the country have been ineffective. The speaker will describe past relief efforts, as well as others under discussion, and why there will be no quick and easy fix.

Scheduling Note: The order of sessions has not yet been finalized and will be updated in the online catalog once confirmed. The course is expected to run from March 6 to April 2, with the additional date of April 9 reserved in case a scheduling conflict arises for one of the speakers.

Richard Kauzlarich is a distinguished visiting professor in the Schar School of Policy and Government at George Mason University and co-director of the Center for Energy Science and Policy. He was the officer for Europe in the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (2003–2011). Before that, he was senior deputy to the Secretary of State and the president's special representative to the Newly Independent States (1993–1994).

William Taylor is a former diplomat, government official and military officer who served as ambassador to Ukraine (2006–2009) and charge d'affaires (2019–2020). He also served in Washington as coordinator of U.S.

assistance to former Soviet Union countries in Europe and Eurasia (1992–2002).

Tibor Nagy was assistant secretary of state for African Affairs (2018–2021). From 2003 to 2018 he was vice provost for international affairs at Texas Tech University. He arrived in the U.S. as a political refugee from Hungary after the failed revolution that attempted to remove the Russian-dominated Hungarian government at that time.

Peter Bodde served as ambassador to Nepal (2012–2015) and coordinated U.S. and international rescue and rebuilding efforts in response to the 2015 earthquake. In retirement, he remains involved in helping Nepal by virtue of his leadership in non-profit organizations.

Lucy Kurtzer-Ellenbogen is a senior fellow with the Middle East Institute. Prior to joining MEI, she served at the U.S. Institute of Peace for 15 years where she directed its work on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. An expert in US diplomatic history in the Middle East, regional conflict dynamics, and civil society peacebuilding efforts, she is a frequent presenter, author and facilitator in a variety of forums.

Tom Adams spent over 40 years in foreign policy positions in the U.S. Government, mostly managing foreign assistance. He spent five years (2010–2015) as the U.S. special coordinator for Haiti responsible for rebuilding the country after the devastating 2010 earthquake.



Spring 2026 Course Descriptions *continued*

4064 Diplomacy Origins, Evolution, Future

 Instructor: Alex Karagiannis

Tuesday 10:00 – 11:30 AM

4/7 – 5/12

Sessions: 6; Locations: GMU

The hit Netflix series “The Diplomat” is a fictionalized account that follows a pair of American diplomats (U.S. Foreign Service officers). While it is good entertainment, the reality of diplomacy is more complicated and nuanced. This course will review the origins and evolution of diplomacy and then concentrate on contemporary challenges to U.S. international primacy. It will distinguish between diplomacy and foreign policy, providing a brief overview of analytic approaches to national security and economic security decision-making. The key focus will be on the respective capacities of U.S. national security agencies to shape and execute policy in a more volatile and dangerous international environment as the consequences of diplomatic amateurism for U.S. national and economic security become more profound.

Alex Karagiannis is a retired career Foreign Service officer in the Department of State. In his 36-year career, he served primarily in trans-Atlantic and national security-related positions both domestically and overseas in 16 European countries. In one tour, he was visiting associate professor in The George Washington University, teaching management and leadership in the Organizational Science Department. He earned a PhD in history from Indiana University. He was principal author and project manager for the American Academy of Diplomacy’s report “Strengthening the Department of State.”



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4065 Political Warfare and the Gray Zone

  Instructor: Drew Duggins

Wednesday 12:00 – 1:30 PM

3/4 – 4/15

Sessions: 7; Locations: Hybrid and Recorded

This course explores the theory of political warfare – the employment of all the means at a nation’s command, short of war, to achieve its national objectives – and its historical application in the “gray zone.” We will explore hybrid, asymmetric, irregular and guerrilla warfare in the context of national grand strategy and understand how they have influenced the idea of the nation-state and the development of the international system. Class sessions will cover the following topics:

- 1. War by Other Means:** Sun Tzu, Carl von Clausewitz, Mao Tse-tung, George Kennan and the evolution of political warfare theory; the gray zone as the primary domain of political warfare.
- 2. The Oldest Form of War:** The history of political warfare from Francis Drake and the British East India Company to KGB disinformation on the AIDS epidemic.
- 3. American Irregular Warfare:** The evolution of American political warfare doctrine from the end of the Cold War to today.
- 4. Iran’s Soft War:** Assessing the cultural and historical imperatives that drive Iran’s conceptualization and application of political warfare.
- 5. Russia and the Gerasimov Doctrine:** Putin’s use of political warfare to advance national objectives in Crimea, Syria, Ukraine and the United States.
- 6. China’s Military Operations Other Than War:** The Chinese Communist Party’s use of political, military, legal and economic instruments of national power to “win without fighting.”
- 7. Tying It All Together:** Political warfare’s role in grand strategy and great power competition from the Truman Doctrine to China’s Belt and Road

Spring 2026 Course Descriptions *continued*

Initiative, and the implications for the future of the international liberal order.

Recommended Websites: Mr. Dean Cheng: *Chinese Political Warfare* [YouTube], Center for New American Security, October 15, 2014; “The Inauguration of Organized Political Warfare,” George Kennan, State Department Policy Planning Staff paper, April 30, 1948.

The instructor will provide hyperlinks to these sources on the course webpage when class begins.

Drew Duggins, a PhD student at George Mason University, served 10 years in U.S. Army Airborne and Special Operations communities, with four deployments to Afghanistan. He has 14 years of political warfare experience from the tactical to the grand strategy level. Before attending GMU, he worked as a senior irregular warfare strategist and public policy professional. He earned an MA from the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies.

4066 Behind the Global Tax Game: How Multinationals Move Profits Around the World

 **Instructor: Geerten Michielse**

Wednesday 10:00 – 11:30 AM

3/4 – 4/8

Sessions: 6; Locations: GMU

How do the world’s largest companies — like Apple, Starbucks and IKEA — manage to pay far less tax than you would expect? This six-week course demystifies the sophisticated international tax planning strategies used by global corporations, showing how profits move across borders, how “loopholes” are engineered and how governments and courts have tried to close them.

The course will begin with an overview of the fundamentals of international tax planning (no prior tax or legal experience needed), then dive into detailed, real-world case studies. Along the way, we will see how clever structuring can save billions in taxes and how the push for fairness has reshaped corporate behavior worldwide.

1. **Building Blocks of International Tax Planning:**

How multinationals shift profits through offshore subsidiaries and intra-group payments.

2. **Apple Inc.:** The “Double Irish with a Dutch Sandwich” and its legal and policy fallout in the EU.

3. **Starbucks Corp.:** Earnings stripping and the OECD’s efforts to curb profit shifting.

4. **Medtronic Inc.:** Corporate inversions and how U.S. tax reform reshaped incentives.

5. **SABMiller:** Transfer pricing and how tax authorities challenge internal pricing schemes.

6. **IKEA Group:** The complexity of foundations, ownership structures and tax advantages.

By course end, participants will understand how global firms manage taxes, why governments struggle to respond and how new reforms aim to close the gap between law and economic reality.

Geerten Michielse is a native of the Netherlands and lives in Arlington. He received his PhD from the Katholieke Universiteit Brabant in Tilburg and taught tax law as a tenured professor in the Netherlands. He was a visiting professor in Paris and at Georgetown University. Since 2000 he has worked at the IMF, first as a lawyer drafting tax laws and later as a senior economist designing tax policies. He has advised governments in Africa, Asia, Europe and the Middle East.

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Spring 2026 Course Descriptions *continued*

4067 Election 2026: Midterm Blues

 Instructor: Phil Rotondi

Thursday 12:00 – 1:30 PM

3/5 – 3/26

Sessions: 4; Locations: GMU

On November 3, 2026, voters will elect all 435 members of the U.S. House of Representatives and 35 (of the 100) members of the U.S. Senate. The stakes for both parties, and for President Trump, could not be higher. Republicans hold narrow majorities in both chambers, but the president's party tends to fare poorly in midterm elections. Since 1946, the average midterm loss for the president's party is 25 House seats and four Senate seats. Democrats, too, face challenges. Nationally, party voter registration is hemorrhaging, and the Senate election map is unfavorable.

With history not on their side, Republicans are taking extraordinary steps to preserve their majorities, including off-cycle redistricting (gerrymandering) of House seats and convening a non-presidential election year national party convention. Democrats are attempting to respond in kind.

We will begin by looking at the current makeup of Congress and then turn our attention to the 2026 midterm landscape: What do the New Jersey and Virginia 2025 gubernatorial election results suggest? What is the impact of voter turnout? Who are the vulnerable 2026 candidates? How will the issues, e.g., the Trump tariffs, immigrant deportations, the administration's health policies, affect the outcome of the election? Finally, no discussion of elections is complete without taking a look at campaign finance: PACs and super PACS and the growing influence of "dark money."

When the hurly-burly is over, we will discuss which party likely gets the "Last Hurrah."

Phil Rotondi retired from the U.S. House of Representatives where he served for 25 years in key staff positions including subcommittee staff director, congressional office chief of staff, and legislative director. Following his Capitol Hill career, he worked at the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare as the organization's political director,

where his responsibilities included preparing campaign analyses and managing the day-to-day activities of the Political Action Committee. He received his BA from American University, MS from The George Washington University and Virginia Collegiate Professional Teaching Certification from George Mason University.

4068 Foreign Policy Decision Making and Iran

 Instructor: Stephen Gailliot

Monday 2:00 – 3:30 PM

3/2 – 3/30 (no class 3/23)

Sessions: 4; Locations: GMU

This course offers an in-depth look at how countries, Iran in particular, make important foreign policy decisions. More specifically, how do governments decide what to do when information is limited, the stakes are high and competing interests are in play? We will look at case studies on (1) Iran's military interventions in Iraq and Syria and (2) its response to foreign policy crises involving Israel in April, August and October 2024. By the end of the course, participants will better understand how political leaders, institutions and international events shape foreign policy decisions.

Recommend Readings: Iran's Grand Strategy: A Political History, Vali Nasr; *Revolutionary Iran: A History of the Islamic Republic*, Michael Axworthy; *Iran's National Security Debate: Implications for Future U.S.-Iran Negotiations* (RAND Expert Insights), Ariane Tabatabai; *Iran's Strategic Thinking: Origins and Evolution* (American Enterprise Institute report), Matthew McInnis; *How States Think: The Rationality of Foreign Policy*, John Mearsheimer and Sebastian Rosato; *Risk-Taking in International Politics: Prospect Theory in American Foreign Policy*, Rose McDermott.

Stephen Gailliot is a PhD candidate in political science at the Schar School of Policy and Government at George Mason University. He previously worked on Middle East, Africa, and South Asia issues at the Department of Defense. He earned an MA in International Security from George Mason University and a BA in International Relations from Boston University.

Spring 2026 Course Descriptions *continued*

4069 Modern China in Film

 Instructors: Richard Sullivan & Richard Young

Friday 10:00 – 12:30 PM

3/13 – 5/15 (No class 3/20 and 4/3)

Sessions: 8; Locations: GMU

What do you know about today's China? The country has changed phenomenally in the past 50 years. Now wealthy, China has greatly modernized its infrastructure and developed state-of-the-art technology. Rapid change has also brought unforeseen outcomes such as abandoned urban renewal projects that displaced thousands of citizens. As for China's expanding global role, about 80% of United Nations members have joined the country's Belt and Road Initiative, which aims to promote global economic cooperation.

In this course, we will watch eight films that address and illustrate – but do not necessarily answer – four questions: Who are the modern Chinese? What is China like today? What are the impacts of explosive growth inside China? What are the global impacts?

Recommended Reading: *Other Rivers, A Chinese Education*, Peter Hessler; *Breakneck: China's Quest to Engineer the Future*, Dan Wang; "This Is Why America Is Losing to China," Dan Wang, interview (*New York Times*), September 4, 2025.

Richard Sullivan is a retired federal and private-sector systems/software engineer with nearly 30 years of overseas experience for the CIA. Back in D.C., he developed several large software systems and analyzed system security. After retiring in 1996, he worked with TRW and SAIC to assist the Federal Aviation Administration in modernizing the National Airspace System. He served as vice president of a small aviation consulting firm before retiring again in 2008. He holds an MS in software engineering from George Mason University.

Richard Young was a secondary school teacher with the Peace Corps and also taught at the university level in Warsaw, Poland. Back home, in the Roanoke area, his work focused on community service agencies, where he also served as the director of the agency on aging. In 1983 he and his family moved to Paris to represent Chiaphua, a Chinese manufacturing company. He taught social studies at Wakefield High School from 1994 until 2005. He holds an MA in international relations from the University of Oregon.

4070 Africa 2.0 – A Deeper Look

 Instructor: Tibor Nagy

Wednesday 2:00 – 4:00 PM

3/4 – 4/1 (No class 3/11)

Sessions: 4; Locations: GMU

As a follow-up to his survey course, *Africa's Role in the Contemporary World*, the instructor will delve deeper into some of the major developments affecting the continent. We will look at conflicts and crises; economic development, elusive prosperity and foreign assistance; the new scramble for Africa; and the impact of demographics. This new class will provide the opportunity to watch films and videos that will enhance group discussion. There is no need to have taken the earlier course.

Tibor Nagy was most recently U.S. assistant secretary of state for African Affairs. For 15 years prior, he served as vice provost for international affairs at Texas Tech University, where he is professor emeritus. During his 32-year diplomatic career, he served 22 years at eight African postings, including U.S. ambassador twice (Ethiopia and Guinea) and deputy ambassador four times (Seychelles, Togo, Cameroon and Nigeria). He lectures nationally on Africa and U.S. foreign policy and is co-author of *Managing Overseas Operations: Kiss Your Latte Goodbye*.

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Spring 2026 Course Descriptions *continued*

4071 China's "Belt and Road" Expands: the US, Latin America, and the New Cold War?



Instructor: Robert Albro

Friday 12:00 – 1:30 PM

4/10 – 5/15

Sessions: 6; Locations: Hybrid and Recorded

The biggest story in Latin America over the past 15 years has been the unprecedented growth of China's economic and political influence throughout the region. China's expanding role has raised alarm bells in the United States, which must now contend with a well-resourced competitor offering Latin America an attractive alternative to U.S. policies and preferred economic and political models. China has successfully drawn most Latin American countries into its "Belt and Road" initiative – global development strategy – in the process providing financial support, building large-scale infrastructure, backing new security relationships and promoting adoption of its own information and communication technologies. What does China's emergence as a player in Latin America mean for the U.S., for China and for countries throughout the region? And what does it suggest about the future direction of global geopolitics?

This course will take a close look at the key dimensions of China's growing presence in Latin America, including the distinct phases of its Belt and Road effort and accompanying diplomatic strategies such as Confucius Institutes. But it will also give attention to the various responses of Latin American countries to China's overtures and the U.S. response. Finally, it will consider broader impacts and implications of this U.S.-China regional rivalry, and what it might have to tell us about the future of global geopolitics. Will China's active courting of Latin America create welcome opportunities for countries throughout the region, helping to bring about a more multipolar world? Or is this rivalry one notable front in the development of a new kind of Cold War?

Recommended Reading: "China's Growing Influence in Latin America," Diana Roy; "China and Latin America's Joint Construction of the Belt and Road: Progress, Challenges, and Prospects," Lou Yu; "Latin America Caught Between the U.S. and China," John Polga-Hecimovich.

The instructor will provide hyperlinks to these sources on the course webpage when class begins.

Robert Albro received a PhD in sociocultural anthropology from the University of Chicago. He is associate director of the Center for Latin American and Latino Studies at American University, where his long-term focus has been urban and indigenous politics in Bolivia, as in his book *Roosters at Midnight: Indigenous Signs and Stigma in Local Bolivian Politics*. More recently, he has researched and published on the intersections of cultural policy with climate change, science and technology, human rights and public diplomacy. He is the recipient of grants and fellowships from the Smithsonian Institution, the Library of Congress and the Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs.



When Does My Current Membership Expire?


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Spring 2026 Course Descriptions *continued*



Literature & Writing

5004 Writing A Memoir

 Instructor: Marty Suydam

Friday 10:00 – 12:00 PM

3/6 – 4/24 (No class 3/20 and 4/3)

Sessions: 6; Locations: Virtual and Recorded

This course is based on the instructor's book, *Writing A Memoir* (2nd ed.), which includes subjects he wishes he had been taught before he ever started publishing. Each class will cover a chapter in the book: Getting Started, Research, Story Writing, Organizing, Permissions and Publishing. The format is lecture-discussion-workshop. Class members will write and read their own work and *gently* critique each other's work. Practical exercises will help students get started and keep writing.

This course has produced many successful memoir writers, many of whom have published.

Marty Suydam is a retired Army Corps of Engineer officer, federal Senior Executive Service member, corporate executive and professor. He has written and published several other books on which he has based Encore Learning courses: *Writing A Memoir*, 2nd ed.; *Walks With Charley: Sniffing Arlington Ridge History and Mystery*, 3rd ed.; *Walk Four Mile Run: A Chain of Parks*, 2nd ed.; and *Walks with The Rambler: A Scrapbook of Arlington, Alexandria, & Fairfax, Virginia From the Lens & Pen of The Rambler 1907–1927*.



5076 Reading War and Peace: Volumes I and II

 Instructor: John Pfordresher

Wednesday 12:00 – 1:30 PM

3/4 – 4/1

Sessions: 5; Locations: Virtual and Recorded

If Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace* is on your reading bucket list, but you have not yet mustered the energy to tackle it, here is your chance. The instructor will usher the class through this classic Russian novel in manageable bites by tackling only half of it in the spring 2026 term and finishing it (Volumes III, IV and Epilogue) in the fall 2026 term. Students will read and discuss about 100 pages each week.

The class will take us through the end of Volume II, Part 5. We will meet the main families — the Rostovs, Bolkonskys, Bezukhovs and Kuragins. The story begins in 1805 as Russia prepares for war against Napoleon. Volume II covers 1806 to 1811, a peacetime portion of the epic, where readers learn more about Natasha Rostov and Pierre Bezukhov. This course is for readers new to the novel and also for those who have read it and want to share their experience with classmates. During each session we will open up two measured intervals for remarks and observations by participants led by the class aides.

Recommended Reading: *War and Peace*, Leo Tolstoy, translated by Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky.

John Pfordresher, emeritus professor of English at Georgetown University, taught undergraduate and graduate courses in literature and cultural studies for 50 years. He has published books on Tennyson, Matthew Arnold, Charlotte Bronte and Catholic Studies. His most recent book, *The Secret History of Jane Eyre*, explores how Charlotte Brönte wrote her masterpiece.

REMEMBER

check www.encorelearning.net for the most up-to-date information!

Spring 2026 Course Descriptions *continued*

5077 Writing Japanese Poetry in English: Haiku, Senryu, Tanka & More

 Instructor: Kathleen Decker

Tuesday 10:00 – 12:00 PM

4/7 – 4/28

Sessions: 4; Locations: Virtual and Recorded

Discover the beauty, brevity, and emotional depth of Japanese poetry—written in English. In this engaging and participatory course, you will explore three captivating poetic forms: haiku, senryu, and tanka, learning both their traditional foundations and how they've evolved in modern times.

Through lively discussion and curated examples, you will gain insight into each form's unique rhythm, imagery, and voice. A special session will also introduce renku, a collaborative poetic form that adds a new layer of creativity and fun.

Each week, you will be invited to write your own poems on specific themes, share your work with the class, and receive thoughtful, personalized feedback from the instructor—both during sessions and via email between meetings.

You will also receive an optional reading list with links to helpful resources, supporting your poetic journey beyond the class. Whether you're new to poetry or looking to deepen your craft, this course offers a rich and inspiring way to connect with language, nature, and human experience.

Kathleen Decker, president of the Poetry Society of Virginia, has authored haiku, senryu and tanka books; published an international haiku journal; and was an editor for the World Haiku Association. She created a poetry/music/art film from a 100-line renku she wrote with three other poets.

**SPRING
REGISTRATION
BEGINS**

10:00 AM Monday, February 2, 2026

5078 America's Revolutionary Women Journalists 1876–1976

 Instructor: Janet Auten

Friday 10:00 – 12:00 PM

4/10 – 5/15

Sessions: 6; Locations: Virtual

This spring our Friday Morning Reading Circle will take a break from short fiction to consider the rise of women journalists in America. In the century between the 1870s and the 1970s, American women found a voice in social reform and suffrage, found careers as commentators and columnists, found fame as world travelers and war correspondents.

The course will start with 19th Century crusaders like Nellie Bly and Ida B. Wells, then move to 20th Century reporters-turned-novelists such as Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings and Katherine Anne Porter, as well as track the work of media celebrities from Zelda Fitzgerald and Dorothy Parker to Martha Gellhorn and Joan Didion. A few works of fiction may slip into the mix, but our focus will be on essays and news stories from famous foremothers who dared to write “outside the lines” of convention in a male-dominated profession – and made their voices heard.


Again, we have an affordable paperback anthology to read from (listed below). This two-hour class revolves around PowerPoint lectures on Zoom as well as shared discussion – in chats during class and in mid-class and closing conversations.

Recommended Reading: Journalistas: 100 Years of the Best Writing and Reporting by Women Journalists, Eleanor Mills, ed.

Janet Auten taught literature and composition courses and directed the Writing Center during her 25 years at American University, where she also developed and team-taught a gender studies course, *Women's Voices Through Time*. Her research and publications focus on teaching and 19th-century American women writers. She earned a PhD in composition/American literature and an MA in journalism.

Spring 2026 Course Descriptions *continued*

5079 Tragedy of Othello

 Instructor: Michael Collins

Thursday 2:00 – 3:30 PM

4/23 – 5/14

Sessions: 4; Locations: Virtual and Recorded

Othello is one of Shakespeare's four great tragedies. It deals with issues that seem particularly relevant to our own time — racism and misogyny. Critics argue about whether *Othello* is a racist play and/or a misogynistic play. They also focus their attention on the ways in which *Othello* and the three women are portrayed and treated in the play. But *Othello* also raises another, subtler issue — about the constructs on which we rely to make sense of our lives and the world we live in. These issues will be the focus of our attention as we read and discuss *Othello*.

The course will end just as a production of *Othello* opens in the Shakespeare Theatre Company in Washington. One goal of the course is to introduce or re-introduce participants to the play and thus to enhance the experience of those who attend the performance.

Participants are recommended to read the play in its entirety before the course begins. The script is available online or in many well-edited editions. The Signet Classic Shakespeare and the Folger Shakespeare editions are both inexpensive and well edited. The Arden edition has the most extensive commentary of the three.

Michael Collins is teaching professor of English and dean emeritus at Georgetown University. He is editor of *Shakespeare's Sweet Thunder: Essays on the Early Comedies*; *Reading What's There: Essays on Shakespeare in Honor of Stephen Booth*; and (with Michael Scott) *Christian Shakespeare: Question Mark*. He has published numerous essays on Shakespeare and regularly reviews productions for the *Shakespeare Bulletin*. He has taught courses for secondary school teachers at the Folger Shakespeare Library and Shakespeare's Globe in London.

5080 Hamlet's Children

 Instructor: Iska Alter

Friday 2:00 – 3:30 PM

4/17 – 5/15

Sessions: 5; Locations: GMU

William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* has long been considered among his most critical works, perhaps even his best. As such, it has served as instigation and inspiration for the fictive work of other authors who have regarded this tragedy as an imaginative challenge. Over the course of six weeks, we will read Maggie O'Farrell's *Hamnet* (a novel about the playwright's aptly named son), John Updike's *Gertrude and Claudius* (a *Hamlet* prequel) and Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* (a play concerning what happens when minor characters are brought to the fore). Students might also wish to reread the Shakespearean source text.

Recommended Reading: *Hamlet*, William Shakespeare; *Hamnet* (novel), Maggie O'Farrell; *Gertrude and Claudius* (novel), John Updike; *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, Tom Stoppard.

Iska Alter is professor emerita of English at Hofstra University. Her specializations are American literature, Shakespeare and English Renaissance drama. Her work has appeared in *Modern Drama*, *Theater History Journal* and *Shakespeare Survey*. She is the author of *The Good Man's Dilemma*, an analysis of the fiction of Bernard Malamud. She earned her BA at City College of New York, an MA at the University of Wisconsin and a PhD at New York University.

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Spring 2026 Course Descriptions *continued*

5081 Creative Age: Classic vs. Contemporary Plays

 Instructor: Tessa Klein Harbor

Wednesday 10:00 – 11:30 AM

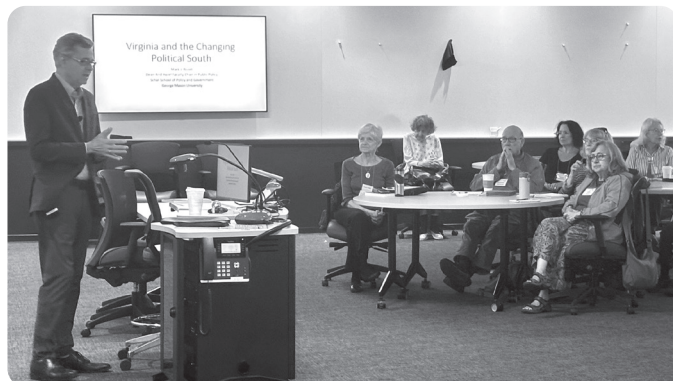
4/8 – 5/13

Sessions: 6; Locations: GMU


Discover your creativity and deepen your appreciation of theatre in this six-week Creative Age class with the Educational Theatre Company (ETC). Participants will read, discuss and analyze one classic and one contemporary play, comparing how each reflects its time and society. Through guided group readings and lively discussion, the class will explore themes, characters and dramatic structure — considering how playwrights across eras approach universal questions of love, power and identity. Whether you are revisiting old favorites or encountering new voices, you will engage in thoughtful conversation and creative reflection in a welcoming, supportive space.

This course will cover *Our Town* by Thornton Wilder and *The Wanderers* by Anna Ziegler. Students will be assigned sections of each play to read before each class. Reading the full plays in advance is not required.

Tessa Klein Harbor has been a teaching artist with ETC's Creative Age program since 2023. She has performed in numerous shows in the DMV and appears regularly at Studio Theatre, Shakespeare Theatre, Round House Theatre, Theater J and Olney Theatre. Her Broadway and off-Broadway credits include Tony Award-winner *War Horse* at Lincoln Center and many shows at the Irish Repertory Theatre. She holds a BFA from Carnegie Mellon University.



5082 The Tempest: Shakespeare's Final Masterpiece

  Instructor: Tom Manteuffel

Monday 10:00 – 11:30 AM

3/23 – 4/13

Sessions: 4; Locations: Virtual and Recorded

The Tempest is the last play Shakespeare wrote as full author, and it is aglow with magical realism, the barely glimpsed discoveries of the New World, and the deep reflections and regrets of age. At the same time, it is as full of comic characters as any of his earlier plays. It has it all! And it is one of the few plays for which he wrote an original plot. It is the worthy capstone of Shakespeare's remarkably innovative 20-year career. We will look particularly at the enchanting language Shakespeare invoked to convey the characters, their fantasy environment and their moving story.

Tom Manteuffel has presented courses at Encore Learning on various topics in art history, technology and literature. He is a retired cybersecurity engineer with graduate degrees in philosophy and computer science.

VOLUNTEER AS A CLASS AIDE

- Get free parking while attending the class (only for in-person classes).
- Get complimentary course registration for next semester (only for virtual and offsite classes).
- Training on use of audio-visual equipment and Zoom.
- Get to know the instructor and your classmates.
- Get to be an integral part of Encore Learning.

Spring 2026 Course Descriptions *continued*



Science & Technology

6026 Science and Data and Stats — Oh My! (You can do this!)

 Instructor: Michael Stutts

Tuesday 2:00 – 3:30 PM

3/10 – 3/31

Sessions: 4; Locations: GMU

Do not be confused or intimidated by data! Confront it, scrutinize it, evaluate it. This course aims to help participants become more informed and discerning consumers of scientific and other data-driven findings that we encounter daily. The instructor will help students gain a working knowledge of the scientific method, the terms and techniques associated with statistics and data analysis, and how these processes can sometimes go awry. Participants will emerge not only more comfortable with these concepts but also with the healthy skepticism that is at the core of good science.

The course will cover the following topics:

- **The Scientific Method and Process** will explain hypothesis development and testing that is the foundation of scientific inquiry and study.
- **Data and Statistics** will provide an overview of basic statistical concepts and terms (no equations!).
- **Data Analysis** will discuss how scientific data is analyzed, interpreted and presented.
- **Science Done Wrong** will show how science can be done incorrectly due to incompetence, unconscious bias or, occasionally, outright fraud, but also by outside forces distorting or misrepresenting its processes and findings.

Recommended Reading: *How to Lie with Statistics*, Darrell Huff; *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Thomas Kuhn; *The Undoing Project: A Friendship that Changed Our Minds*, Michael Lewis; *Statistics Done Wrong: The Woefully Complete Guide*, Alex Reinhart; *The Art of Statistical Thinking*, Albert Rutherford and Jae Kim.

Michael Stutts earned a PhD in clinical psychology from the University of Louisville, followed by an internship at the University of Virginia School of Medicine and fellowship training in clinical neuropsychology at Virginia Commonwealth University/Medical College of Virginia. His patient care, research and teaching at Eastern Virginia Medical School focused on clinical/geriatric neuropsychology and rehabilitation psychology. He retired from EVMS as professor emeritus in 2018 after a 33-year career.

6041 Generative Artificial Intelligence: Exploring Tools, Techniques and Critical Thinking

  Instructor: Barbara Fillip

Thursday 10:00 – 11:30 AM

3/5 – 4/16 (No class 4/2)

Sessions: 6; Locations: Hybrid and Recorded

Curious about Generative Artificial Intelligence and how it differs from other AI? Whether you already use it in your daily life or not, there is a lot to learn and keep up with as GenAI tools continue to evolve rapidly.

This course will introduce you to tools like ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude and Perplexity, and show how they can support research, writing, learning and organizing information. No technical background is required — just curiosity and a willingness to experiment.

You will learn how to:

- Recognize the strengths and limits of generative AI
- Match your goals to the right tool, from ChatGPT to Perplexity
- Apply critical thinking in generating queries and evaluating AI-generated responses
- Use prompting techniques to get more useful and reliable results

Topics and use cases include:

- Travel planning and itinerary design
- Technology troubleshooting
- Creative pursuits such as writing and visual arts
- Financial, legal and medical research (with added caution)

Spring 2026 Course Descriptions *continued*

We will also discuss the broader impacts of generative AI: the opportunities it opens up, the risks it introduces and how to use it responsibly.

Barbara Fillip earned a PhD in international affairs from the University of Pittsburgh, a Project Management Professional certification and a Permaculture Teacher certificate. She spent two decades supporting individual, team, project and organization-wide learning in two industries: international development and aerospace. She has taught adults in organizational and academic settings, completing seven years as an adjunct faculty member in the Schar School of Policy and Government at George Mason University. She is currently exploring the future of aging, longevity and sustainability through creative writing and AgeTech technology solutions that support lifelong learning and well-being.

6042 Biosecurity 101: History, Policy and Global Risks

 **Instructor: Kimberly Ma**

Thursday 12:00 – 1:30 PM

3/19 – 4/23 (No class 4/2)

Sessions: 5; Locations: Hybrid and Recorded

What exactly is “biosecurity”? While the term and more formal literature about it are still fairly young, the roots of the field date back many centuries to human civilization’s earliest relationship with disease and biology. We will begin with an overview of the history of the global biosecurity field and definitions of terms. In week 2, we will cover the “real world” practice of biosecurity in relevant U.S. government agencies, with examples of relevant biosecurity sectors and jobs. Finally, in weeks 3 and 4, we will discuss ongoing debates in the field regarding the Biological Weapons Convention, security for gene synthesis (the “printing” of DNA) and “dual use research of concern.” The final session will include a tabletop exercise for a hypothetical biological incident.

Kimberly Ma has worked for a congressional national security commission as well as federal contractors for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Department of State and Department of Homeland Security. Her areas of expertise include biosecurity capacity-building, public health preparedness and biotechnology policy.

She earned a BA in molecular biology and Japanese from Dartmouth College and an MS in biohazardous threat agents from Georgetown University. She is currently pursuing a PhD in biodefense at George Mason University.

6043 Architecture Appreciation

 **Instructor: Gus Ardura**

Tuesday 2:00 – 3:30 PM

4/7 – 5/12

Sessions: 6; Locations: GMU

This course will begin with a brief overview of how architecture evolved over time into the forms we see today. We will touch on Greek, Roman, Muslim, Romanesque, Gothic, Renaissance and Modern styles. Architecture embodies aesthetics, function, technology, culture, politics, urbanization, environmental issues, landscapes and more. It is a fusion of art and engineering. Unlike art, however, it needs a client or donor, and it must be practical and adhere to the client’s budget. Unlike engineering, it strives to go beyond just technical excellence. Good architecture strives to address our feelings and, if done well, make our lives richer and happier. It provides a symbolic reflection of our culture.

The instructor, a retired architect, will offer an overview of the field and how it addresses our social concerns. Guest speakers will share their expertise on focused aspects of the field, from community to urban architecture.

Recommended Readings: The Architecture of Urbanity, Designing for Nature, Culture and Joy, Vishaan Chakrabarti; Why Architecture Matters, Paul Goldberger; Verify in Field: Projects and Conversations, Eric Howeler and Meejin Yoon; What Goes Up, the Right and Wrongs to the City, Michael Sorkin; The Gothic Enterprise, A Guide to Understanding the Medieval Cathedral, Robert Scott.

Gus Ardura, a registered architect in Virginia, has 45 years of corporate practice experience. In 2021, he retired from HDR, Inc., where he was senior vice president and director of federal architecture for 17 years. Before that, he worked for several large national firms and was managing director of Hillier Architecture and Cannon Design offices in Washington, DC. He has worked on numerous major university, commercial and

Spring 2026 Course Descriptions *continued*

civic projects around the world. Since retirement, he has continued to do smaller-scale residential projects and serves on various design review committees.

6044 Spring Ephemerals

 **Instructor: Multiple**

Tuesday 10:00 – 11:30 AM

3/24 – 4/21

Sessions: 5; Locations: Offsite

Spring is on its way! Join us from late March to mid-April at five beautiful locations to learn about our natural surroundings in this lovely season. We will meet at local parks with knowledgeable guides and look for early spring wildflowers and wildlife. Dress comfortably for the weather and for walking on uneven, unpaved and possibly slippery surfaces. Students must be comfortable walking 2.5 miles during each class session.

Session 1: Roosevelt Island, DC. (Rob Barnovsky, 3/24)

Although the island looks like it developed naturally, it was designed by landscape architects at the Olmsted Brothers firm and cleared, graded and replanted by the Civilian Conservation Corps. Explore the 2.5 miles of trails through swamps, marshes and woodlands and discover what grows in those habitats.

Location: The entrance to the park is from the northbound George Washington Parkway or a 10 to 15-minute downhill walk from the Rosslyn Metro.

We will meet at the bridge by the parking lot. Portable toilets should be onsite.

Session 2: Riverbend Park – Great Falls, VA

(Rob Barnovsky, 3/31)

The park is on the Potomac River just upstream from Great Falls National Park. Spring is wildflower time in the park. Carpets of Virginia bluebells decorate the trails, usually beginning in mid-March and peaking in early April. Spring beauties, wild ginger, Dutchman's breeches and trout lilies are also common.

Location: 8700 Potomac Hills Street, Great Falls
Parking is \$7 per vehicle. Carpooling is suggested.
A restroom is onsite.

We will meet in the grassy area to the right of the boat ramp.

Session 3: Winkler Botanical Preserve – Alexandria, VA (Soup Fick, 4/07)

Now part of the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority, the Winkler Botanical Preserve was originally created by the Winkler family's Catherine Winkler Herman, her daughter Tori Thomas and the Winkler Foundation in 1979 to protect the unique and special area during the development of Mark Center. The private lodge on the grounds is named after Herman as Catherine's Lodge. Enjoy multiple trails, streams, a lake and a waterfall surrounded by woods and native plants, creating an urban oasis in Alexandria's West End.

Location: 5400 Roanoke Avenue, Alexandria
A restroom is available. Parking is limited. Carpooling is recommended.

Session 4: Fort C.F. Smith Park – Arlington, VA

(Rob Barnovsky and Blake Lindsey, 4/14)

This beautiful 19-acre site offers a half-mile of trails through a lush tree canopy and an open meadow, which offer different habitats for spring wildflowers. A man-made creek provides a water source for birds and other wildlife. In addition, there are preserved earthworks of the Civil War fort built in 1863 and many other outstanding features.

Location: Fort C.F. Smith Park, 2411 24th Street N, Arlington

Meet at the Hendry House. A restroom is available.

Session 5: Bon Air Park – Arlington, VA

(Rob Barnovsky, 4/21)

Though the 24-acre park is known for its beautiful garden with 120 varieties of roses, it is also home to display gardens created by Master Gardeners for sun-loving, shade-loving and native plants. Native wildflowers also make their home along the woodland paths and creek.

Location: 850 N Lexington St., Arlington

Restrooms are available across Wilson Boulevard at Bluemont Park, 601 N Manchester St, Arlington, VA 22203

Spring 2026 Course Descriptions *continued*

Rob Barnovsky is a naturalist at Long Branch Nature Center. He has a bachelor's degree in biology and has worked as a naturalist in the eastern United States and at a raptor rehabilitation center in Ohio. He was an interpretive ranger for the National Park Service at the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area and the first-ever naturalist for the city of Jacksonville, FL. He has also worked as a naturalist and natural resources specialist for Fairfax and Loudoun counties. Rob has been doing environmental education in public parks for more than 34 years.

Soup Fick currently serves as the Preserve Program and Facility Manager at NOVA Parks, where her responsibilities include creating educational and recreational programming for diverse learners and managing the 44-acre Winkler Botanical Preserve since November 2022. She spent over a decade with Fairfax County Government as a school health aide and teacher, alongside roles at West Family YMCA, Putnam Museum and Science Center, Conner Prairie, and the Center of Science and Industry (COSI), focusing on visitor services and group instruction. She earned a BA in English from The Ohio State University.

Blake Lindsey is an Arlington County park historian at the Civil War Visitor Center. He was previously employed in public history at Ford's Theatre and the U.S. Capitol Visitor Center. His writing on the DC area's Civil War history has been featured in publications across the country.

6045 Regulating Artificial Intelligence: Balancing Innovation and Responsibility

 **Instructor: Neelam Shukla**

Monday 12:00 – 1:30 PM

4/13 – 5/4

Sessions: 4; Locations: GMU

Have you ever wondered why Artificial Intelligence (AI) needs regulation and who decides on the rules? As AI systems become more powerful and pervasive, questions around accountability, fairness and safety are taking center stage. Whether you are a policymaker, technologist or simply curious about the societal impact of AI, this course unpacks these evolving frameworks that shape how it is governed around the world.

Class members will learn about and discuss:

- The key reasons for regulating AI, including ethical use, transparency and accountability.
- Real-world issues such as whether AI tools are exacerbating polarization and how regulation might help address this problem.
- Contrasting approaches to AI: How Europe prioritizes precaution and rights-based governance, while the U.S. emphasizes flexibility and innovation. What about China?
- The challenges of oversight in AI development and deployment.
- The implications of regulation for start-ups, researchers and global competitiveness.
- The European Union's AI Act and its global influence.
- Data privacy, algorithmic bias and explainability.
- The global race to create safe, trustworthy and fair AI systems.

This framework will allow us to discuss how governments and international bodies are working to balance innovation and responsibility. How much control is necessary to protect society without slowing progress? How might global collaboration define the next era of AI governance?

Neelam Shukla, a doctoral student at GMU's Schar School of Policy and Government, holds master's degrees in economics and in public management from Johns Hopkins University. She has extensive experience working in tax administration for the government of India. Her research includes the regulatory implications of AI across various sectors, particularly taxation.

When Does My Current Membership Expire?

Log in to Member Account Manager—it's on the very first screen under My Account Info

Spring 2026 Course Descriptions *continued*



Social Sciences

7041 Poverty and Disparities in the Land of Opportunity

 Instructor: Anne Vor der Bruegge

Thursday 12:00 – 1:30 PM

4/9 – 5/7

Sessions: 5; Locations: GMU

Arlington's vision statement describes a "world class, caring, and inclusive" community. Yet 11 percent of our neighbors are living in poverty, with tens of thousands more one emergency away from instability. Not only here, but across our country, the ideals of America as the Land of Opportunity are undermined by the reality that millions work hard, play by the rules, but can barely get by — much less ahead.

This course will examine economic disparities both in Arlington and nationwide. We will start with data on poverty in Arlington and examine how lack of truly affordable housing, childcare and living wages affect the overall health of our community. We will explore why the Arlington Community Foundation (ACF) sees the displacement of our lowest-income neighbors as the greatest threat to our community's health and viability.

Borrowing heavily from Matthew Desmond's *Poverty, By America*, we will take a national perspective on historic and current policies and systems that perpetuate poverty. For example, Desmond's book describes America's unique form of capitalism that aims to guard fortunes rather than spread prosperity and opportunity. There are also false narratives and stereotypes about low-income people. We will compare these with actual data and see how immigrants are scapegoats for our economic anxieties.

Finally, we will cover promising proposals to change systems and structures to allow for increases in income, self-determination and belonging for our lowest-income neighbors.

Guest speakers will include residents who perform essential services for our community while struggling to make ends meet and living under threat of displacement. Members of ACF's Shared Prosperity team will also address the county's affordability challenges.

Recommended Reading: *Poverty, By America*, Matthew Desmond; "Arlington's Living Wage Gap for Essential Jobs," ACF; "Why Arlington's Low-Income Residents are Being Displaced and Why it Matters," ACF; "It's Not Just Wages: Retailers Are Mistreating Workers in a More Insidious Way," Adele Waldman, *NY Times*.

Recommended Viewing: "Matthew Desmond: Poverty, By America, and What It Takes To Close the Poverty Gap," *The Daily Show*; "the Arlington Benefits Cliff," ACF [YouTube].

The instructor will provide hyperlinks to these sources on the course webpage when class begins.

Anne Vor der Bruegge served from 2014 through 2023 with the Arlington Community Foundation, where she led its economic mobility initiatives and demonstration pilots to prevent displacement of low-income residents. From 2016 to 2022 she convened Safety Net Arlington, a collaborative group of local human services leaders and also served on the leadership teams for Destiny 2027 (Arlington's equity initiative) and the Arlington Child Care Initiative. Before joining ACF, Anne led numerous public-private initiatives after earlier working at Jubilee Jobs and DC Central Kitchen in DC. She earned an MA in planning and community development from the University of Virginia.



Spring 2026 Course Descriptions *continued*

7042 Modern Ireland: Rooted in Her History, Arts and Heritage

 Instructor: Multiple

Friday 12:00 – 1:30 PM

3/6 – 3/27

Sessions: 4; Locations: GMU

This course begins with two sessions about present-day Ireland, focusing on changes during the last 35 years, the lure and the lore of Ireland and its influence in the world. Then we will dive deeper into Irish heritage, exploring its history and literature in the works of important writers including James Joyce and William Butler Yeats.

Through four presentations, we will learn about Ireland's transformation into a rich and progressive country; the thriving Irish indigenous culture and national identity; the creation of an authentically Irish literature that enhanced this identity, with examples of important literary works; and a deeper look at Yeats and his important contributions.

Ireland 1990–2025 — A Country Transformed

(Patrick Meskell, March 7)

Ireland has undergone a remarkable transformation in the last 35 years. On every dimension — social, economic, demographic, political, cultural — the country is barely recognizable from pre-1990s Ireland. It has changed from an inward-looking, very socially conservative, church-dominated, relatively poor and stagnant country into one of the richest and most socially progressive and vibrant countries in the world. This includes Northern Ireland and the end of the “Troubles” there.

What are the data illustrating these changes, and why have they occurred so dramatically in such a short period of time? What are the opportunities and challenges presented, and how have they affected the Irish people? What about Ireland's role in the wider world and in the U.S.? How are the next 35 years likely to unfold?

Recommended Reading: We Don't Know Ourselves: A Personal History of Modern Ireland, Fintan O'Toole.

Arts and Culture in Ireland — From Cuchulainn to the Book of Kells to Yeats to Riverdance to Kneecap (Patrick Meskell, March 13)

Despite repeated invasions and over 800 years of

colonization, an Irish indigenous culture has not just survived but thrived — in Ireland and internationally. Irish people live their lives close to and with the arts, which have been a feature of everyday life beyond just theaters, performance spaces and galleries. The national identity is tied to pride in Irish artistic expression and its popularity all over the world. There is a revival in learning the once almost-extinct Irish language and ancient mythologies, beliefs and practices. Irish arts and culture have also found a new source of energy and inspiration as the country absorbs a huge population of immigrants. Ireland now uses her “cultural capital assets” to present the country to the world and exert its influence and soft power internationally.

Irish Tradition, Identity, and Literature

(Michael Collins, March 20)

The class will begin by discussing the efforts of Yeats, Lady Augusta Gregory and John Millington Synge, in the late 19th and early 20th century, to preserve and draw upon traditional Irish myths, songs and ballads to create an authentically Irish literature and an authentically Irish identity. It will then look closely at Joyce's *The Dead* (1907) in which the tension between modern (urban) Ireland and traditional (rural) Ireland is played out at and after a Christmas party in Dublin. Finally, it will consider a contemporary play, *The Weir*, that reimagines in our own time the culture and values of the western region of the country.

Recommended Reading: The Dead, James Joyce (from Dubliners); The Weir and Other Plays, Conor McPherson.

Politics and Poetry: W.B. Yeats and Political Violence

(Christopher Griffin, March 27)

Yeats won the Nobel Prize for literature in 1923. As a poet, dramatist, mystic, prophet and senator, he wrestled with the “terrible beauty” of political violence in many apocalyptic poems during World War I, the Irish War of Independence and the Civil War during the period 1916 to 1923. “The Second Coming” is one of his famous descriptions of living in terror. The rotten state of a country where “things fall apart; the centre cannot hold” can be diagnosed by how often the poem is quoted. The instructor will also quote from his grandfather and namesake to show how local struggles in County Galway influenced Yeats' “The Second Coming” and “Meditations in Time of Civil War.”

Spring 2026 Course Descriptions *continued*

Paddy Meskell grew up on a small farm in Ireland and developed a life-long love for Irish history, politics, arts and culture. He graduated from the University of Limerick, which awarded him an honorary degree in philosophy. Later, he studied organizational learning and behavior at George Mason University. Meskell came to the U.S. in 1988 and joined the Silver Diner in 1996, where he served as executive vice president and member of the Board of Directors. In 2013 he became chair of the board of directors of Solas Nua, a DC-based Irish arts organization dedicated to bringing contemporary Irish theater, artists, musicians and writers to U.S. audiences.

Michael Collins is teaching professor of English and dean emeritus at Georgetown University. At Georgetown he taught courses on modern British and Irish poetry and drama. He has published essays on Irish writers such as Synge, Samuel Beckett, Joyce and Seamus Heaney and conducted literary tours of Dublin.

Christopher Griffin, from County Galway, studied literature at Trinity College Dublin, University College Dublin, and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

For 28 years he taught humanities to working adults at Strayer University in DC, and for eight years was a part-time lecturer in Irish literature and history at The George Washington University. Since 1992 he has taught classes at the Politics and Prose bookstore in DC, served as an expert on two dozen Smithsonian Journeys, and lectured for Smithsonian Associates. He especially enjoyed presenting at the Yeats International Summer School in Sligo and the Gregory Yeats Autumn Gatherings at Coole and Thoor Ballylee.



REVIEW/UPDATE

your account information online before registration begins on February 2.

- Note your password for easy access to your account on registration day.
- Choose your desired courses before logging in to register on February 2.
- Register online at 10:00 AM Monday, February 2 for your best chance at a seat in a popular course.
- Opt for a course waitlist if the course is filled.
- Complete your online registration and payment within 20 minutes.
- Sit back and wait for classes to begin.

Encore Learning Special Events & Clubs

Encore Learning's special events and clubs provide a variety of activities to complement our academic course offerings. Our special events and clubs run year-round, so no need to wait to become a member! All special events are announced by email and are posted on our website. Email our office at info@encorelearning.net to subscribe to our special event email announcements or to join a club.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Encore Learning Presents — Co-sponsored with the Arlington Public Library

Encore Learning Presents events are open to the public and include lectures, panels and film screenings. Recent presentations have included discussions with Ken Avis on the History of Popular Music in No Va, Dan Sherman on composer Richard Wagner, deep dives into Arlington History, and talks on immigration stories, politics, and more. These virtual events are free and are usually scheduled from 3:00 to 4:30 PM on Monday afternoons. Visit Encore Learning's YouTube channel for a list of previous events and to view recordings. Note: not all Encore Learning Presents events are recorded.

For Members: Tours of Museums, Historical Sights and More

We also offer group tours as a benefit of membership. Recent tours have included the Victims of Communism Museum, Area 2 Farms, GWU Museum, and the National Cryptologic Museum. Upcoming member tours include tours of the DEA Museum, the National Academy of Science building, the Octagon House and the Milken Center.

Many member events are free, although some may require tickets, entrance or other fees. Check event listings for details and to register for these member events. Events requiring registration are for members only.

CLUBS

Another benefit of membership is the opportunity to expand your social network with other members who have similar interests. We currently have 12 clubs that promote lifelong learning, personal growth, physical activity and social engagement. Club membership is open to all current Encore Learning members. Club membership is free, but some club activities might involve visiting a location (e.g., restaurant, museum, kayak rental, movie theater) that charges a fee. Please

visit our Clubs page on our website for more club details. Contact the office at info@encorelearning.net with questions or to join a club.

Breakfast Club — Meets weekly for breakfast and lively conversation at La Madeleine in Falls Church.

Bridge Club — Meets monthly for light refreshments and to play social bridge.

Chamber Music Club — Attends Friday Morning Music Club's free noon concerts the first and second Friday of the months of October through May, at St. George's Church in Arlington.

Cinema Club — Meets monthly at the movies and discusses the film afterwards at lunch.

Current Issues Discussion Group — Meets twice a month virtually to discuss a topic that has been chosen by club members. Discussions are always polite and insightful, and participation is encouraged.

Electric Vehicle Club — Meets virtually monthly to discuss electric vehicle topics.

Global Lunch Club — Meets monthly to enjoy the area's great global cuisine. Twenty to 30 members come together at a local restaurant for a social and culinary adventure.

Kayak Club — Meets twice a month May – October at Fletcher's Boathouse. Novice and experienced kayakers are welcome to join for fun adventures on the Potomac. No equipment needed.

Mindfulness Club — Meets virtually weekly for meditation, discussion and exploration of the mindfulness tradition.

Nonfiction Book Club — Meets bimonthly at Arlington Central Library for lively discussions about nonfiction works chosen by club members.

Tech Hobbyist Club — Enjoy tinkering with new technology? The Tech Hobbyist club meets virtually weekly.

Travel Club — Meets virtually monthly to hear presentations about members' fascinating travels and discusses travel related topics. Recent discussions included health issues while traveling, and recommended tour operators.

Board, Committee Members & Staff

Thank you to the Encore Learning

Board • Academic Programs Committee • Publications Committee • Staff
for all of the hard work and dedication in preparing for the Spring 2026 semester.



2026–2027 Encore Learning Board

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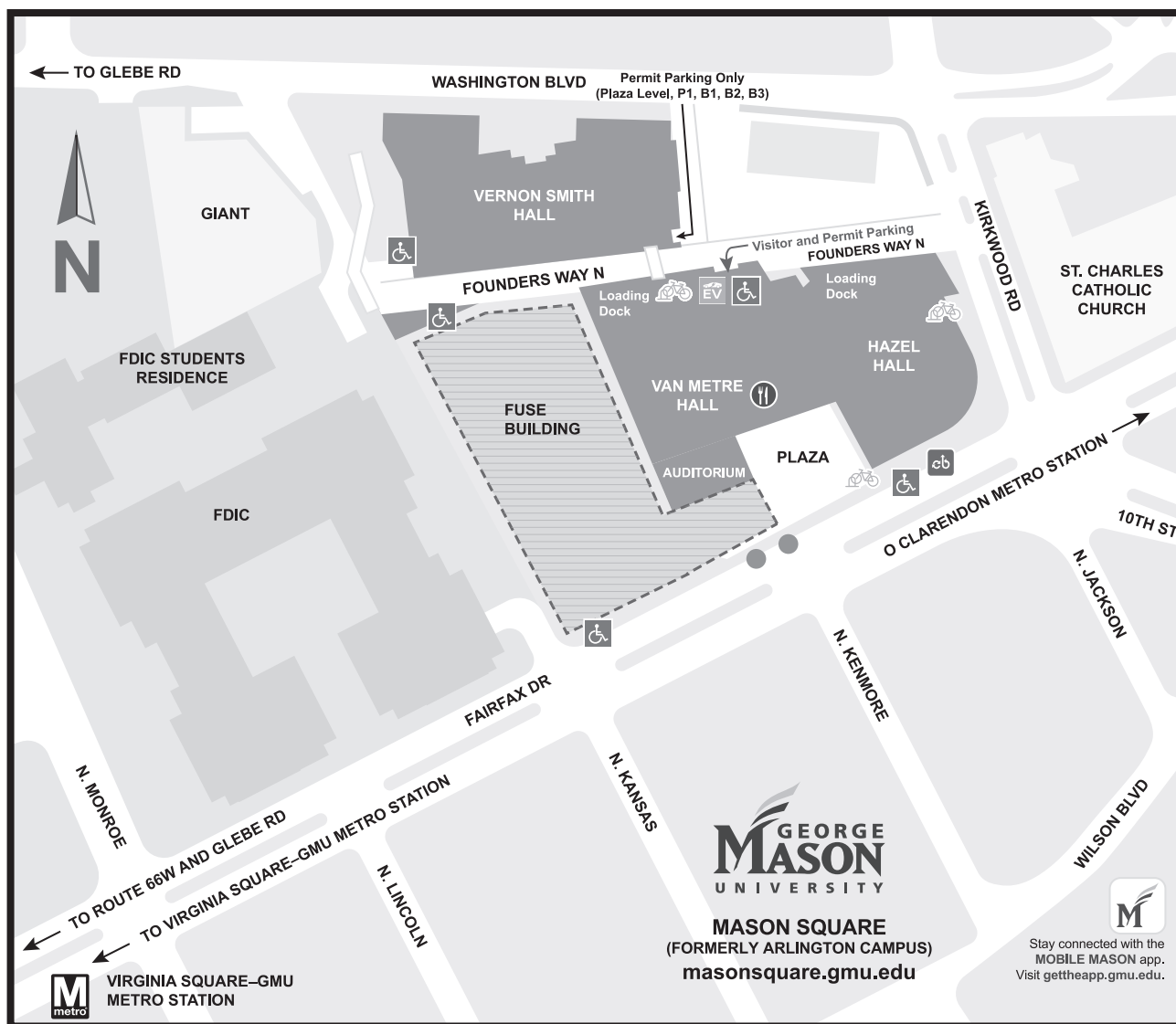
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Encore Learning extends
our **deepest gratitude** to the **Royer
Fund** for the generous donation, which
has made this printed catalog possible.

Jack Royer passed away
September 9, 2024.

George Mason University (GMU)



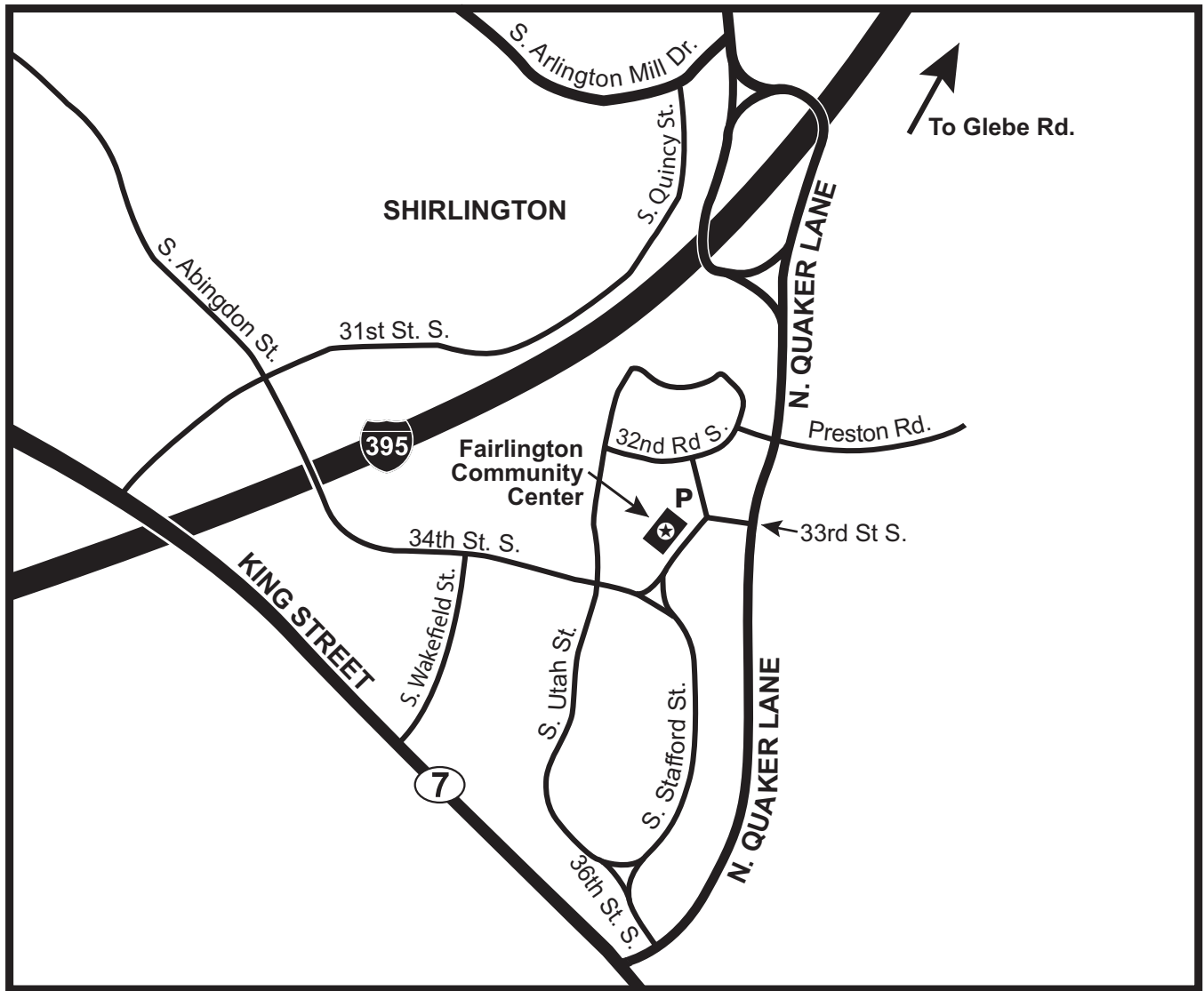
GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY, ARLINGTON CAMPUS – 3351 Fairfax Dr., 22201

The Van Metre Hall garage is the only garage on campus open to visitors; the rate is \$5 per hour or \$9 for two hours and the entrance is off N. Kirkwood Rd. Parking in the garage requires an account to be set up with Metropolis at <https://www.metropolis.io/parking>. Four-hour metered parking is available along the median on Fairfax Dr. near St. Charles Church and on N. Lincoln St. One- and two-hour metered parking is available on other surrounding streets. For more information on parking, visit: <https://transportation.gmu.edu/arlington-campus/>

PARKING COSTS ARE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STUDENT

Locations and Maps of Course Sites

Fairlington Community Center (FCC)



FAIRLINGTON COMMUNITY CENTER — 3308 South Stafford St., 22206

Free parking on adjacent lot. Limited street parking is available.

OTHER OFFSITE COURSE LOCATIONS

For information on additional offsite course locations please visit
<https://encorelearning.net/courses/locations/>

HELP SPREAD THE WORD about Encore Learning



Don't toss out this catalog!

If you're done with it, consider passing it along to a neighbor, friend, fellow club member, or anyone who might appreciate all that Encore Learning has to offer.

Keeping your copy?

Clip the section below to share the joy of Encore Learning with someone else.



Welcoming Everyone Over 50 To Classes, Clubs And Events

Power Up Your Brain! Learn Something New!

Encore Learning, a nonprofit organization founded in 2002 for those over 50, offers a wide range of more than 70 noncredit courses in the fall and spring. The courses cover fine arts, theater, music....health and wellness....politics, public affairs....literature and writing....science and technology....and the social sciences, all taught by leading experts from universities, government, nonprofits and corporations. More than 30 Special Events a year feature notable speakers, panel discussions and film screenings.




Find out more and join our growing community of active, interesting and friendly neighbors over 50! Members live in Arlington, Alexandria, Falls Church, Fairfax, DC and wherever you Zoom. Scan the QR code or go to www.encorelearning.net.


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Encore Learning is a gateway to fun! Make new friends and meet new neighbors who share your interests. Share ideas! Engage in lively discussions during classes and Special Events. Join a Specialty Club! There are 12 clubs to choose from: breakfast, bridge, chamber music, cinema, current issues, electric vehicle, global lunch, kayak, mindfulness, nonfiction books, tech hobbyist, and travel. Volunteer! Our treasured volunteers power every aspect of our organization.



Encore Learning Spring 2026 Courses: Calendar View

 Virtual classes are noted with the camera icon.
  In-Person classes are noted with the people icon.
  Recorded classes are noted with the microphone icon.

 Hybrid classes include an option to register for either an in-person class at Mason or a virtual class on Zoom. For in-person course locations, check our online catalog.

| | M | T | W | TH | F |
|-----------|---|---|---|---|---|
| MORNING |   10 – 11:30 AM 2027 – Caregiving for Dementia Rodgers 3/2 – 4/6 |   10 – 11:30 AM 3099 – Civil War in Central Virginia Mertz 3/3 – 3/31 |  10 – 11:30 AM 4066 – Global Tax Game Michielse 3/4 – 4/8 |    10 – 11:30 AM 6041 – Generative AI Fillip 3/5 – 4/16 (skip 4/2) |   10 AM – 12 PM 5004 – Writing A Memoir Suydam 3/6 – 4/24 (skip 3/20 and 4/3) |
| |   10 – 11:30 AM 5082 – The Tempest Manteuffel 3/23 – 4/13 |  10 – 11:30 AM 6044 – Spring Ephemerals Multiple 3/24 – 4/21 |  10 – 11:30 AM 5081 – Classic vs Contemporary Plays Klein Harbor 4/8 – 5/13 |   10 – 11:30 AM 1064 – Dao, Zen, and Creativity Li 4/9 – 4/30 |  10 AM – 12:30 PM 4069 – Modern China in Film Sullivan and Young 3/13 – 5/15 (skip 3/20 and 4/3) |
| | |  10 – 11:30 AM 4064 – Diplomacy Origins, Evolution, Future Karagiannis 4/7 – 5/12 | | |  10 – 11:30 AM 1055 – Never Too Old To Play Pilloff 4/10 – 5/7 |
| | |   10 AM – 12 PM 5077 – Writing Japanese Poetry in English Decker 4/7 – 4/28 | | |  10 AM – 12:00 PM 5078 – American Women Journalists 1876–1976 Auten 4/10 – 5/15 |
| NOON |   12 – 1:30 PM 3102 – America's Soundtrack Ruth 3/2 – 3/23 |  12 – 1:30 PM 1002 – Theater Appreciation Ohlandt 3/3 – 4/21 (skip 3/31) |    12 – 1:30 PM 4065 – Political Warfare Duggins 3/4 – 4/15 |  12 – 1:30 PM 4067 – Election 2026: Midterm Blues Rotondi 3/5 – 3/26 |  12 – 1:30 PM 7042 – Modern Ireland: Roots, Arts, Heritage Multiple 3/6 – 3/27 |
| |   12 – 2:00 PM 3059 – Crusades Wukitsch 3/9 – 5/11 |    12 – 1:30 PM 3095 – Hemingway and the Spanish Civil War Reynolds 3/10 – 3/31 |   12 – 1:30 PM 5076 – Reading War and Peace Pfordresher 3/4 – 4/1 |    12 – 1:30 PM 6042 – Biosecurity 101 Ma 3/19 – 4/23 (skip 4/2) |  12 – 1:30 PM 1065 – Never too Old to Play Some More Pilloff 4/10 – 5/15 |
| |  12 – 1:30 PM 6045 – AI Regulations vs Innovation Shukla 4/13 – 5/4 |  12 – 1:30 PM 3101 – Gospel of Matthew and Its Impact Tambasco 3/10 – 4/14 |  12 – 1:30 PM 3100 – Demystifying Islam Rehman 4/8 – 5/6 |  12 – 1:30 PM 7041 – Poverty in the Land of Opportunity Vor der Bruegge 4/9 – 5/7 |    12 – 1:30 PM 4071 – China in Latin America Albro 4/10 – 5/15 |
| AFTERNOON |  2 – 3:30 PM 4068 – Foreign Policy and Iran Gailliot 3/2 – 3/30 (skip 3/23) |  2 – 3:30 PM 6026 – Science and Data and Stats – Oh My! Stutts 3/10 – 3/31 |  2 – 4:00 PM 4070 – Africa 2.0 – A Deeper Look Nagy 3/4 – 4/1 (skip 3/11) |  2 – 3:30 PM 4004 – Global Hot Spots Multiple 3/5 – 4/9 |  2 – 3:30 PM 5080 – Hamlet's Children Alter 4/17 – 5/15 |
| |  2 – 3:30 PM 3044 – Jewish Millennium in Spain Gorsky 3/9 – 4/13 |  2 – 3:30 PM 6043 – Architecture Appreciation Ardura 4/7 – 5/12 |  2 – 3:30 PM 1063 – Dance in Musical Theater Bush 3/18 – 4/22 |  3 – 4:30 PM 3003 – Arlington History Van Newkirk 3/26 – 5/14 | |
| |  2 – 3:30 PM 3096 – Intelligence and the Cold War Siegrist 4/6 – 5/11 | |   3:00 PM – 4:30 PM 1061 – Magic of Motown Agron 4/8 – 5/13 |  2 – 3:30 PM 3097 – Arlington Black History Multiple 4/2 – 5/14 | |
| | | | |   2 – 3:30 PM 5079 – Tragedy of Othello Collins 4/23 – 5/14 | |

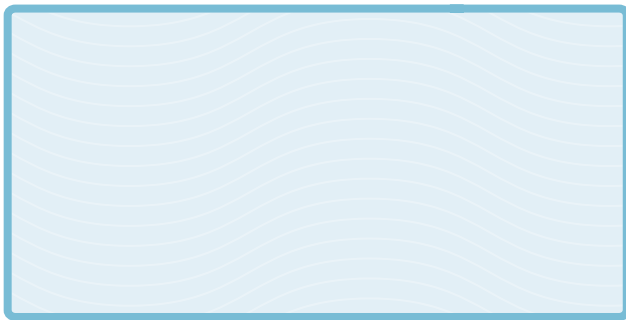


Encore Learning
2110 Washington Blvd., Room 349
Arlington, VA 22204

Registration Begins at 10:00 AM Monday, February 2, 2026



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Encore Learning Spring 2026

Become a Member

Membership in Encore Learning is open to all individuals over 50 years of age, regardless of residence. Membership brings you:

- **Educational Value** — Access to high-quality college level courses at rates far below those charged by most other educational institutions in the Washington, DC area.
- **New Friends** — Opportunities to socialize with other members through our specialty clubs, special events, and while taking courses.
- **Insight** — Participation in Encore Learning special events offered throughout the year, including lectures and tours.

Members may register for courses, join our clubs, and reserve space in members-only Special Events.

Annual membership dues are \$65 per person. Members may register for as many courses as desired at \$55 per course.

About Encore Learning

Encore Learning was founded in 2002 as Arlington Learning in Retirement Institute and thrives today with nearly 1,000 members and offering more than 60 courses and 50 events each year for those over 50. More than 150 volunteers plan and teach courses; procure outstanding speakers and tours; and lead our dynamic clubs. Join us to get involved. You will make new friends, gain new insights, explore local treasures, and expand your world.

Contact Information

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