



VASSAR COLLEGE FOR LEARNING INSTITUTE

VCLLI
SPRING 2026

This Page Intentionally Left Blank

LEARNING INSTITUTE AT VASSAR COLLEGE

SPRING 2026 CATALOG OF CLASSES

The Lifelong Learning Institute (LLI) at Vassar College is a volunteer-run organization designed for adults who love to learn and who wish to contribute to the larger community in their pursuit of knowledge.

We are an adult educational program affiliated with Vassar College offering a broad range of non-credit educational courses and activities to members 55 and over. Classes are taught by volunteer members, retired and active faculty, and outside experts.

LLI at Vassar College believes that education is essential at every age. We are called on to continually expand our knowledge, so we might participate fully as citizens in our democracy. The education process is individually motivated as well as collaborative, with new ideas and new skills often introduced by others with a commitment to sharing.

As we age, life experiences enhance our education. We are fortunate that members with unique perspectives, skills, and expertise are willing to share them with us.

Vassar's LLI is committed to forming a community that advances the education of its members in a collaborative fashion. When we study, explore, and discuss together, we model engagement and expansion for each other.

Classes Are Conducted In Person and Via Zoom

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT COURSE LIMITS

Members can register for a maximum of three Eight-Week IN PERSON courses per semester:

Six-Week and Eight-Week IN PERSON classes count as Eight-Week IN PERSON courses.

Two Four-Week IN PERSON classes can be combined to equal one Eight-Week IN PERSON course.

ONLY On-Campus IN PERSON courses count against the above limit.

Off-Campus IN PERSON classes *do not* count against the above limit.

Single Session classes *do not* count against the above limit.

Zoom classes *do not* count against the above limit.

Lunch, Then Learn classes *do not* count against the above limit.

When selecting courses, please note the dates they meet.

Only LLI members may participate in classes; no guests are permitted.

Membership fee does not include books, photocopied material, transportation, or other fees.

FOR ZOOM ACCESS AND LOGIN INSTRUCTIONS,
YOU WILL BE CONTACTED BY YOUR INSTRUCTOR OR CLASS MANAGER

LIFELONG LEARNING INSTITUTE AT VASSAR COLLEGE

SPRING 2026 SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

SINGLE SESSION CLASS – ON ZOOM

On Zoom	11:00 AM – 12:30 PM	
Eleanor Roosevelt: Humanitarian & Civil Rights Pioneer Wednesday: March 25	Single Session	Pg 6

OFF CAMPUS CLASSES – IN PERSON

Beginning Nordic Pole Walking - Various Locations Wednesdays: March 11, 18, 25; April 8	Four Weeks	Pg 21
The Art of the Egg - Poughkeepsie Underwear Factory Thursdays: March 12, 19, 26	Three Weeks	Pg 21
Learning About the Roosevelts – FDR Library and Museum, Hyde Park Wednesdays: April 15, 22; May 6	Three Weeks	Pg 22
Intaglio Printmaking: Etching and Beyond - Poughkeepsie Underwear Factory Thursdays: April 16, 23, 30; May 7	Four Weeks	Pg 22
Gentle Walks in the Hudson Valley - Various Locations Thursdays: April 16, 23, 30; May 7	Four Weeks	Pg 22

FRIDAY ON CAMPUS CLASSES

Friday On Campus	9:30 - 10:45 AM	
The Romantic Era in Classical Music March 13, 20, 27; April 10, 17, 24; May 1, 8	Eight Weeks	Pg 7
Gentle & Accessible Mat Yoga March 13, 20, 27; April 10, 17, 24	First Six Weeks	Pg 9
Poughkeepsie's History March 13, 20, 27; April 10	First Four Weeks	Pg 11
The Future of Water March 13, 20, 27; April 10	First Four Weeks	Pg 12
The Nature of Energy March 13, 20, 27; April 10	First Four Weeks	Pg 12
Current Topics in K-12 Public Education April 17, 24; May 1, 8	Last Four Weeks	Pg 14
Pelvic Health Education for All Bodies/Genders April 17, 24; May 1, 8	Last Four Weeks	Pg 14
The Basic Science of Wine and Winemaking April 17, 24; May 1, 8	Last Four Weeks	Pg 15

Friday On Campus	11:05 AM – 12:20 PM	
Evolution and Literature: An Introduction March 13, 20, 27; April 10, 17, 24; May 1, 8	Eight Weeks	Pg 7
Drawing From Observation and Imagination March 13, 20, 27; April 10	First Four Weeks	Pg 12
Four Great Days March 13, 20, 27; April 10	First Four Weeks	Pg 13
Sex, Drugs and Rock and Roll, Part 2 March 13, 20, 27; April 10	First Four Weeks	Pg 13
Confidence for Life: Planning and Protecting April 17, 24; May 1, 8	Last Four Weeks	Pg 15
Sherlock Holmes With “a little art jargon” April 17, 24; May 1, 8	Last Four Weeks	Pg 15
The Changing Image of “Woman” in Art April 17, 24; May 1, 8	Last Four Weeks	Pg 16
Drawing on Our Creative Nature April 17, 24; May 1, 8	Last Four Weeks	Pg 16

Friday On Campus	1:45 – 3:00 PM	
History of American Style: Federal to Mid-Century March 13, 20, 27; April 10, 17, 24; May 1, 8	Eight Weeks	Pg 8
Latin American Cinema March 20, 27; April 10, 17, 24; May 1, 8	<i>Note:</i> Seven Sessions	Pg 8
Exploration of Your Vision March 13, 20, 27; April 10, 17, 24	First Six Weeks	Pg 10
Fabergé: The Art of Its Own March 13, 20, 27; April 10, 17, 24	First Six Weeks	Pg 10
Poetry of Rock & Roll: Springsteen Edition March 13, 20, 27; April 10, 17, 24	First Six Weeks	Pg 11
America in Depression and War April 17, 24; May 1, 8	Last Four Weeks	Pg 17

Friday On Campus	3:20 – 4:35 PM	
Opera as Politics: No Kings (or Queens) March 13, 20, 27; April 10, 17, 24; May 1, 8	Eight Weeks	Pg 8
Vassar Science Sampler March 13, 20, 27; April 10, 17, 24; May 1, 8	Eight Weeks	Pg 9
Paris in the Nineteenth Century, Part 1: 1800–1850 March 13, 20, 27; April 10	First Four Weeks	Pg 13
The Four Tasks of Mourning April 17, 24; May 1, 8	Last Four Weeks	Pg 17

Tuesday Zoom Classes Begin On Next Page

TUESDAY CLASSES – ON ZOOM

Tuesday On Zoom	11:05 AM – 12:20 PM	
African American Literature: <i>All God's Children Need Travelling Shoes</i> , by Maya Angelou March 17, 24, 31; April 7, 14, 21, 28; May 5	Eight Weeks	Pg 18
The Seniors' Toolbox March 17, 24, 31; April 7, 14, 21	First Six Weeks	Pg 19
Mystical Southeast Asia March 17, 24, 31; April 7	First Four Weeks	Pg 20

Tuesday On Zoom	1:45 – 3:00 PM	
Imagining the Big Moment March 17, 24, 31; April 7, 14, 21, 28; May 5	Eight Weeks	Pg 18
Natural Brain Health and Facial Rejuvenation Strategies March 17, 24, 31; April 7, 14, 21	First Six Weeks	Pg 19
The Poetry of Passion March 17, 24, 31; April 7	First Four Weeks	Pg 20

LUNCH, Then LEARN – FRIDAYS ON CAMPUS – 12:45 – 1:30 PM

Note: Registration for these classes will begin the Monday prior to each class. Lunch may *not* be eaten during class.

March 20	Six Maritime Chokepoints and Why They Matter	Pg 23
March 27	Two Remarkable Women: Trailblazers in the Law	Pg 23
April 10	A Little Magic at Lunchtime	Pg 24
April 17	Getting to Yes: Negotiating Without Giving In	Pg 24
April 24	The Atomic Age from 1945 Los Alamos to Now	Pg 24

SINGLE SESSION CLASS – ON ZOOM

Wednesday, March 25	11:00 AM – 12:30 PM
Eleanor Roosevelt: Humanitarian & Civil Rights Pioneer	Limit: 75

Presenters: **Linda Bouchey and Al Vinck**

Eleanor Roosevelt, the most famous first lady of the 20th century, came from an extremely dysfunctional childhood, suffered emotionally from an unfaithful husband, and for years lived under the domination of her mother-in-law. This presentation, “Eleanor Roosevelt: Humanitarian & Civil Rights Pioneer,” will reveal the evolving growth of this extraordinary woman, who became the voice

for those who had none—for women, for Black Americans, for children, for Asians, for immigrants and for the poor. Many of the issues she confronted are still with us today.

Linda Bouchey is a retired Hyde Park social studies teacher. She has been a docent at the FDR Presidential Library and volunteered in their archives.

Al Vinck organized Youth Against Racism at Val-kill for Dutchess County students. He was the history chairperson for the Hyde Park school district and an adjunct professor at Marist College.

Linda and Al co-authored *The Roosevelt Genealogy* for FDR's family, sold in the FDR Library Museum shop. Both have been docents for Wilderstein Preservation and Top Cottage. They served on the boards of both the Roosevelt-Vanderbilt and the Wilderstein Preservations and co-chaired the Eleanor and Franklin Roosevelt permanent exhibition for the Hyde Park school district.

FRIDAY ON CAMPUS – EIGHT WEEKS – IN PERSON

Friday On Campus – Eight Weeks
The Romantic Era in Classical Music

9:30 – 10:45 AM

Limit: 30

Presenter: **Andrew Hartman**

The Romantic Era (approximately 1830–1920) saw classical music reach its peak of popularity and cultural impact. Using a mix of historical and composer biographical content, explanatory information about Romantic Era classical music forms and genres, and generous recorded musical excerpts, we will explore in depth this critical period of classical music history. The goal of the course is to provide a comprehensive understanding of this pivotal era, when classical composers and performers were lionized, numerous professional symphony orchestras were founded, star conductors emerged, most middle-class homes owned a piano and every town that could afford one built an opera house.

Andrew Hartman has presented the course “The Glory of Classical Music” at the Vassar LLI and has taught classical music history at the New York City Opera Guild at Lincoln Center and at several Bruderhof Communities to both school children and adult audiences. He has published a dozen articles on classical music on MusicWeb International, a premier classical music website, and has attended over 1,000 live performances of classical music. He owns a comprehensive collection of thousands of classical music recordings, from which he will provide all musical examples for the course.

Friday On Campus – Eight Weeks
Evolution and Literature: An Introduction

11:05 AM – 12:20 PM

Limit: 25

Presenter: **Judith Saunders**

This course will introduce participants to the emerging field of Evolutionary Literary Studies. We will investigate some of the ways in which literature illustrates and confronts principles of evolutionary biology, focusing on topics such as social environment, competition, mate choice, jealousy, infidelity, status, and reciprocal exchange. Prior knowledge of evolutionary biology is welcome but not expected.

Materials: Primary texts (poems and short stories) will be available online or provided as handouts. Readings will also be assigned from *The Moral Animal: Evolutionary Psychology and Everyday Life* by Robert Wright (Vintage 1994), which participants must purchase.

Note: This class is a repeat of a course given under a slightly different title (Literary Darwinism: An Introduction) in the Fall of 2019. Content and readings will be the same.

Judith Saunders has been engaged in interdisciplinary evolutionary studies for many years. In addition to undertaking collaborative teaching with colleagues in the biological and social sciences, she has published pedagogical and literary critical materials featuring evolutionary criticism. She has applied evolutionary analysis to works by a variety of authors, including Hawthorne, Millay, Hemingway, Wharton, Fitzgerald, Thoreau, Freeman, Hurston and Whitman.

Friday On Campus – Eight Weeks History of American Style: Federal to Mid-Century	1:45 – 3:00 PM
	Limit: 30

Presenter: *David Roberts*

This course is a survey of American architecture, interiors, furniture, fashion and other decorative arts. It will trace how American style has evolved from the Federal period through the mid-twentieth century, reflecting what our lives looked like in different periods of American history.

David Roberts is a graduate of SUNY New Paltz. He has lectured at Vassar LLI, Marist CLS, Poughkeepsie Library, and other venues. He currently is an adjunct at FIT. He has also taught at SUNY New Paltz, Marist University, and Montclair State University.

Friday On Campus – Eight Weeks Latin American Cinema	1:45 – 3:00 PM
	Limit: 100

Presenter: *Mihai Grunfeld*

This course explores the rich and diverse landscape of Latin American cinema, focusing on the cultural, historical and political contexts that shape the region's film narratives. Through a selection of significant films from different countries and eras, we will engage in critical analysis of themes such as identity, memory, power, and resistance, and examine how Latin American cinema has grappled with questions of political identity, social transformation, memory and human connection. Participants are expected to watch the corresponding weekly film *before* each class; class time will be devoted to analysis and discussion.

Note: This course is seven sessions and *begins the second week* of classes, on *March 20*, and will be held in *Blodgett Auditorium*.

Mihai Grunfeld taught Spanish and Latin American Culture and Literature for 33 years as a full-time faculty member at Vassar College, until he retired in 2020. He has traveled and lived extensively in Spain and Mexico and has visited many countries in Latin America.

Friday On Campus – Eight Weeks Opera as Politics: No Kings (or Queens)	3:20 – 4:35 PM
	Limit: 30

Presenter: *Chuck Mishaan*

“Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown” (Shakespeare, Henry IV, Part II). This course will look at the troubled reigns of royal rulers as portrayed on the operatic stage, and the political context in which these operas were created and performed. From the earliest days of opera to the present, the

stage has been a place where audiences receive and react to political messages, sometimes hidden and sometimes overt. We will examine how Enlightenment philosophies challenged the autocracies of the 17th–21st centuries, as well as the autocratic response. The course will include relevant audio and video operatic excerpts.

Chuck Mishaan has been presenting courses at Vassar LLI for many years, including his popular “Opera as Politics” series and recently, “The Roaring 20s,” “Between the Wars: Arts and Culture of the 1930s”, “The War and After: Arts and Culture of the 1940s” and “The Fascinating, Frightening ‘Fifties”. His commentary on the intersection of politics and the arts continues with this course.

Friday On Campus – Eight Weeks Vassar Science Sampler	3:20 – 4:35 PM
	Limit: 35

Producer: David Bloom; Presenters: Vassar Science Faculty

Join us for weekly lectures by Vassar science faculty. In this ninth version of the Science Sampler, we will explore objects from the nanoscale (one billionth of a meter) to observations of deep space. We will learn about gene editing, the latest treatments for cancer, the science of volcanic eruptions, and the rocks in your backyard. Planned sessions include:

March 13	Leathem Mehaffey	“What’s All This Stuff About CRISPR?”
March 20	Brian Daly	“Nanoscale Science at Picosecond Timescales: Laser Physics at Vassar”
March 27	Debra Elmegreen	“Galaxies Across the Universe”
April 10	Jeff Walker	“Geologic History of the Hudson Valley” (from your rock samples)
April 17	Colette Salyk	“Observing Planet Formation with the James Webb Space Telescope”
April 24	John Zayac	“Heating Up or Cooling Down”
May 1	Hayley Affronti	“Understanding the Latest in Cancer Therapies”
May 8	Laura Hayes	“How Would Shelly Organisms Respond to Ocean Alkalinity Enhancement, a Proposed Climate Solution?”

David Bloom has been part of the Vassar LLI since its inception and enjoys the opportunity to participate in the development of classes, especially the Science Sampler.

FRIDAY ON CAMPUS – FIRST SIX WEEKS – IN PERSON

Friday On Campus – First Six Weeks Gentle & Accessible Mat Yoga	9:30 – 10:45 AM
	Limit: 15

Presenter: Dana Lucas

In this course we will learn and practice various seated, reclined and standing poses. Class will begin with a short spiritual practice, such as meditation or affirmations. We will be on our hands and knees at times, moving slowly in and out of poses using our breath and resting as needed. Please wear clothes that you can move in freely. Participants must be able to get up from the floor. No prior yoga experience is required. We will work on building strength, flexibility and balance. Consistent yoga practice helps to decrease stress and improve sleep while increasing circulation and our ability to focus.

Materials: Please bring your own yoga mat, and other support materials you may need (i.e., yoga blocks, cushions for knees or a blanket). Please feel free to contact the instructor prior to signing up if you have any questions or concerns or injuries.

Dana Lucas has been teaching yoga since 2007 and has taught various styles of yoga over the years. Dana strives to balance the importance of foundation and alignment while keeping things lighthearted. Her classes are usually infused with laughter (so important for our wellbeing) and a sense of community, where everyone is welcome and encouraged to begin where they are.

Friday On Campus – First Six Weeks Exploration of Your Vision	1:45 – 3:00 PM
	Limit: 6

Presenter: **Nancy LeVine**

This course is designed to help photographers who have reached a certain level of technical achievement but need guidance and constructive critiques to help define their approach to making photographs that resonate powerfully with their ideas. Each student will pick a topic of their choice and focus on it throughout the course. Through viewing the work on a weekly basis, the instructor will encourage reflection on the student's approach and results and offer insights that can help students grow.

Note: This is a repeat of the class given in Fall 2025.

Nancy LeVine is an award-winning photographer who has traveled worldwide on a variety of assignments. Her book, *Senior Dogs Across America* (Schiffer Publishing, 2016), has been featured on The Today Show, Oprah.com, The New York Times LENS Blog, the BBC and others. Her assignment resume is extensive and includes Seattle Children's Hospital, Starbucks, Microsoft, and PBS. Her early career was focused on fashion in New York and Paris. Nancy completed her Master of Arts degree at NYU/ICP. During the initial COVID lockdown, she created a historical photographic record of 88 households in Beacon, New York, entitled *Beacon in Quarantine*.

Friday On Campus – First Six Weeks Fabergé: The Art of Its Own	1:45 – 3:00 PM
	Limit: 25

Presenter: **Gala Leganof**

Journey into the exquisite world of Fabergé, where artistry, history and royalty converge. This course explores the atelier's close connection with the Russian imperial family and consequent influence across the royal courts of Britain, Scandinavia and Siam. We will discover all fifty-six Imperial Easter Eggs—masterpieces of elegance, innovation and imperial intimacy. In 1882, brothers Carl and Agaphon Fabergé, of German descent, took over their father's jewelry workshop in St. Petersburg. With unmatched artistry and sharp business sense, they transformed the shop into a world-renowned jewelry house, turning natural forms—flowers, animals and delicate motifs—into breathtaking masterpieces in metal, wood and gemstone. This course explores the artistic and historical legacy of Fabergé, building on materials from the class presented in Fall 2025 to examine often misunderstood aspects of the Fabergé family. We will also trace how the Fabergé name became associated with mass-market cosmetics in the 1970s-1980s.

Suggested readings: *Fabergé* by Géza von Habsburg and *Fabergé Revealed at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts* by Géza von Habsburg.

Note: This class expands upon the material covered in the Fall 2025 class.

Gala Leganof is a scholar and artist whose work bridges politics and the arts. She earned a B.A. *cum laude* in International Politics from Marist University and an M.A. from McGill University, where she taught undergraduates and published *Understanding American Democracy in the Context of Democracy's Empirical and Normative Evolution*. She pursued further studies in United Nations governance at Columbia University and lectured on international affairs. A lifelong artist, Gala trained with leading artists in Russia, Ukraine, Canada and the U.S., took college arts electives and founded the Leganof Gallery, currently on hold for family reasons.

Friday On Campus – First Six Weeks	1:45 – 3:00 PM
Poetry of Rock & Roll: Springsteen Edition	Limit: 30

Presenters: **Skip Weisman and Nils Linnecken**

Bruce Springsteen is one of America's greatest singer-songwriters, and one of its most powerful storytellers. In this course, you will explore more than 20 of Springsteen's most vivid and powerful songs—many unfamiliar to casual fans—as works of poetry. Although song lyrics are often referred to as poetic, poetic form is not typically applied to song writing, so in these sessions you will experience and discuss Springsteen's application of poetic techniques—metaphor, allegory, allusion and rhyme—to create emotion, connection and meaning to deliver his message. No musical background is required—just curiosity and a love of good stories. Together, we'll listen, read, and discuss what Springsteen can teach us about the American experience and ourselves.

Skip Weisman grew up a 30-minute drive north on “Highway 9” from Springsteen's Freehold, NJ hometown. Forty-nine years after being introduced to Springsteen's *Born to Run* album, Skip has attended 109 live Springsteen performances, with and without the E Street Band, in 10 countries across two continents, including three on the 2025 tour. Skip moved to Dutchess County in 1994 to bring the Hudson Valley Renegades professional baseball team to the community, serving as team president/CEO for eight seasons. From 2002–2023, Skip was a business coach and professional keynote speaker/workshop presenter specializing in leadership and workplace communication.

Nils Linnecken will join the class each week via Zoom. Mr. Linnecken has attended 36 Springsteen shows with Skip in Europe and the United States. On the most recent Springsteen Tour, he surpassed Skip's 106 live Springsteen performances by a few, and loves to share his strong opinions about Bruce's songs and their meanings. He lives in his hometown of Hamburg, Germany, with his wife, Maria, and three children, and owns and operates a tax consultancy with his sister.

FRIDAY ON CAMPUS – FIRST FOUR WEEKS – IN PERSON

Friday On Campus – First Four Weeks	9:30 – 10:45 AM
Poughkeepsie's History	Limit: 35

Presenter: **Shannon Butler**

This course will take a deeper dive into the history of Poughkeepsie and some surrounding areas. Presentations will include “Poughkeepsians: Artists, Eccentrics, and Weirdos,” which looks at some of the city's most interesting characters; “Historic Murders in Dutchess County,” not for the faint of heart; “Long Lost Buildings of the City of Poughkeepsie”; and “Early Cemeteries and Burial Grounds of Poughkeepsie.”

Shannon Butler is the historian for the Poughkeepsie Public Library District. She has served in this role for nearly six years. Previously she served as the historian for the Town of Hyde Park and worked as a park ranger at the Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Site. She is the author of two books, *Hyde Park in the Gilded Age* and *Roosevelt Homes of the Hudson Valley: Hyde Park and Beyond*. She is the co-host of the podcast *All My Favorite People Are Dead* and lives in the city of Poughkeepsie.

Friday On Campus – First Four Weeks

9:30 – 10:45 AM

The Future of Water

Limit: 35

Presenter: Paul Ciminello

Four challenges to the planet's water resources will be examined: (1) Why does society allow entities to own water? (2) How will water supplies meet the growing demand in growing urban areas? (3) What are the implications of surface water degradation? and (4) How are groundwater resources being used and abused? Each topic will be explained, and strategies to address each issue will be discussed. Relevant articles and video materials will be distributed prior to each class.

Paul Ciminello is a retired environmental consultant who focused on environmental investigations and remediation with a particular concern for groundwater. Paul received dual Master's Degrees in Hydrology/Hydrogeology and Public Policy Analysis from Duke University in 1986 and had over 30 years of experience in environmental consulting before retiring in 2019. In addition, Paul has been an adjunct instructor at Marist College since 1999, teaching courses in the Department of Science including "Environmental Investigations and Remediation" and "Introduction to Environmental Issues."

Friday On Campus – First Four Weeks

9:30 – 10:45 AM

The Nature of Energy

Limit: 30

Presenter: Rob Cohen

The Nature of Energy was last offered in Spring 2023. The last three years have brought a host of technical, social and policy changes that have reshaped our consumer options and preferences. This updated presentation focuses on changes from 2023 to 2026 and explores future possibilities for personal energy consumption, including home energy use and a review of home energy strategies, transportation, and evolving energy technologies and policies that affect everyday choices.

Rob Cohen is a retired technologist and farmer who favors sustainable living. His lifelong interest in science, history and understanding how things work shapes his unique approach to staying connected to nature while living and working in an increasingly unnatural environment.

Friday On Campus – First Four Weeks

11:05 AM – 12:20 PM

Drawing from Observation and Imagination

Limit: 16

Presenter: Marilyn Price

This course involves drawing with color from observation handling materials offered in class. Colored paper and chalk pastels will be used to help each participant gain experience in observation, composition and the use of imagination to foster their own individual expression. No art or drawing background is required. The instructor will work with each person individually as needed. Colored paper will be made available; other materials to be supplied by the student are listed below.

Materials: scissors, ruler, glue stick, drawing pad of paper suitable for use with chalk pastels (9" x 12", 11" x 14", or a bit larger) and a small set of primary and secondary chalk pastels (**not** oil pastels) in red, yellow, blue, orange, green, purple, white, and black.

Marilyn Price is a painter, potter and teacher. She grew up in Manhattan, studying art in high school and at The Art Students League. She did undergraduate studies in art at Cooper Union and graduate studies in both painting and art history at N.Y.U. and Columbia University. Marilyn chaired the Art Department at Columbia Preparatory School for 29 years. She retired from that school in the mid-1990s, when she and her husband moved to the Hudson Valley. Here she continues to work in both painting and clay art and teaches at both Vassar LLI and Marist CLS.

Friday On Campus – First Four Weeks
Four Great Days

11:05 AM – 12:20 PM

Limit: 35

Presenter: **Sandra Opdycke**

This course will explore four dramatic days in American history: the day in 1869 when the two halves of the Transcontinental Railroad were joined; the day in 1886 when the Statue of Liberty opened; the Allied invasion of Europe on D-Day in 1944; and the March on Washington in 1963. We will discuss the efforts of the many people it took to plan and carry out each of these days, as well as the legacy they left behind.

Sandra Opdycke, Ph.D., has published books about the women's suffrage movement, the flu epidemic of 1918, the WPA of the 1930s, Bellevue Hospital and Jane Addams, and has co-authored several books on social policy. She worked for a number of years at Hudson River Psychiatric Center, and later taught American History and Urban History at Bard, Vassar and Marist Colleges. She now teaches frequently at the Marist Center for Lifetime Studies and the Vassar Lifelong Learning Institute.

Friday On Campus – First Four Weeks
Sex, Drugs and Rock and Roll, Part 2

11:05 AM – 12:20 PM

Limit: 30

Presenter: **Gary Quartararo**

This class is a continuation of the previous "Sex, Drugs and Rock and Roll" course, which covered aspects of the decades from the 1930s through the 1970s, exploring moments, events, speeches, movements and music of these different historical eras. We will continue this exploration by beginning with the 1980s and 1990s and moving into the 2000s. While this is a continuation, it is not necessary to have taken Part 1.

Gary Quartararo was a high school health educator for 37 years, worked at Adelphi University for 13 years, and has been an adjunct professor at Nassau Community College for over 53 years. Gary has also provided guidance for corporate wellness initiatives.

Friday On Campus – First Four Weeks
Paris in the Nineteenth Century, Part 1: 1800–1850

3:20 – 4:35 PM

Limit: 40

Presenter: **Brian Mann**

This is the first of a two-part course devoted to the history of Paris in the nineteenth century; it covers roughly the period from 1800–1850. (The second part of this course will be taught in Fall 2026). The course hopes to convey a sense of the almost bewildering variety of activity in the "City

of Light," and so we consider as many aspects of this topic as possible: politics, music, literature, art, architecture, technology and more, all within the dynamic context of a rapidly changing city.

Brian Mann taught courses in music history and theory for many years in the Vassar College Department of Music. He is a graduate of the University of Edinburgh (B. Mus) and the University of California, Berkeley (M.A., Ph.D.)

FRIDAY ON CAMPUS – LAST FOUR WEEKS – IN PERSON

Friday On Campus – Last Four Weeks

9:30 – 10:45 AM

Current Topics in K-12 Public Education

Limit: 30

Presenter: **Cora Stempel**

Cell phones in schools? Students using Artificial Intelligence? Attempts to ban books? Use of test scores to evaluate educators? These are some of the issues facing public school teachers and leaders on a daily basis. This course will provide information on how many schools in our region are addressing these issues while trying their best to meet the needs of the students in their care. New York State regulations and district policies will be shared, as well as "stories from the field." Active participation in discussion is encouraged.

Cora Stempel is enjoying her 45th year as an educator. She began as a special education teacher and, over time, has served in a variety of leadership roles including special education coordinator, supervisor of professional development, and assistant superintendent. Recently retired from Dutchess BOCES, where she served as Deputy Superintendent, Cora currently teaches at SUNY New Paltz, coaches new administrators, and provides school leader training on several topics. She volunteers with the Medical Reserve Corps, is an avid hiker and is a proud Nonnie to a four-year-old grandson. Cora and her husband Paul live in Tivoli, NY.

Friday On Campus – Last Four Weeks

9:30 – 10:45 AM

Pelvic Health Education for All Bodies/Genders

Limit: 25

Presenters: **Samantha Fulton and Ali Ece**

This course, for both men and women, is taught by two local pelvic physical therapists. It will include basic anatomy, mechanics, neurology and a whole-body approach. De-stigmatizing and demystifying this special part of ourselves is a key objective. Classes will be part lecture, part self-practice, and will offer plenty of take-home tips. Simple movement (beyond Kegels!) and breathing practices that can be done in a chair will be taught. Bring an open mind and all of your questions that you may feel embarrassed or ashamed to ask your doctor.

Samantha Fulton is a holistic physical therapist with almost 20 years of experience, specializing in pelvic health and chronic pain. She is also a yoga and movement teacher, specializing in working with people who have chronic disabilities, pain and ailments, and with perinatal and perimenopausal women.

Ali Ece is a Doctor of Physical Therapy with 25 years of clinical experience providing psychologically- and trauma-informed care. He is a holistic, integrative physical therapist who specializes in chronic pain and men's health. He holds multiple certifications in pain neuroscience, traumatic stress studies, male pelvic floor therapy and psychologically informed physical therapy.

Friday On Campus – Last Four Weeks

9:30 – 10:45 AM

The Basic Science of Wine and Winemaking

Limit: 30

Presenter: **Arnold Serotsky**

This class will cover the basic sciences—such as biology, chemistry and earth science—of wine production. Session topics will include grapes, vineyard management, the impact of terroir, the biochemistry of wine production and the choices made in the winery. The last class will be an off-site tasting focused on a special wine topic such as women winemakers, organic wines or natural wines. The first three classes at Vassar will not involve consumption of wine. Participants will pay the cost of the wine tasting at the final off-site class.

Arnie Serotsky has taught biology, chemistry, environmental science, and physiology to students from seventh grade through graduate school over a nearly 60-year career as an educator. He has been traveling the wine world, collecting, studying and presenting about wines for almost as long. He also presents wine classes and tastings for the Marist University CLS, It Was a Good Year, Inc., and at fundraisers for not-for-profit organizations.

Friday On Campus – Last Four Weeks

11:05 AM – 12:20 PM

Confidence for Life: Planning and Protecting

Limit: 30

Presenter: **Kelsey Ponesse**

This class is for those who want to learn financial concepts to bring peace of mind, continuity and financial clarity for themselves, their spouse and loved ones. The goal is to share smart financial decisions you can make today, centered around creating a resilient financial foundation and an intentional estate plan. Each week we will explore a key component of planning together and protecting each other financially, focusing on wealth preservation, tax planning, long-term care planning, planning for the surviving spouse and legacy planning.

Kelsey Ponesse is a CPA and Wealth Manager at Marshall+Sterling Wealth Advisors in Poughkeepsie. She has over a decade of experience in the accounting and finance industry, working with clients and the complex financial choices that support their lives, their families' lives and their legacies. Kelsey believes in supporting the Hudson Valley community with financial education, especially for women. She believes that the more you know, the more aware you can be of actions to take for financial security and well-being. She frequently hosts webinars, presentations and educational events on retirement and financial planning topics.

Friday On Campus – Last Four Weeks

11:05 AM – 12:20 PM

Sherlock Holmes With “a little art jargon”

Limit: 35

Presenter: **Candace Lewis**

We will examine the Sherlock Holmes stories both in general and from the perspective of material arts. We will read a portion of one novella and all of four stories, not necessarily the most popular ones. Readings will include:

1.	A Study in Scarlet, Chapters 1 and 2 (19 pgs.) and “A Case of Identity” (20 pgs.)
2.	“Silver Blaze” (29 pgs.)
3.	“The Greek Interpreter” (21 pgs.)
4.	“The Six Napoleons” (24 pgs.)

Materials: An anthology of Sherlock Holmes (for example, *Sherlock Holmes: The Complete Collection*; this can be purchased on Kindle for \$0.99, although it contains no illustrations or notes). Participants interested in books with annotations may seek editions edited by Leslie Klinger and others.

Candace J. Lewis is an art historian with a Ph.D. from the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, in the field of early Chinese art. She taught art history at Vassar College from 1983 to 1993, and later taught art history as an adjunct at Marist College from 1999 to 2010. She has authored or co-authored four books published by Baker Street Press on the subject of Sherlock Holmes, and contributed essays on Sherlock Holmes and art.

Friday On Campus – Last Four Weeks	11:05 AM – 12:20 PM
The Changing Image of “Woman” in Art	Limit: 35

Presenter: **Marilyn Price**

This is a survey touching on the many roles of women as depicted in Western and non-Western art. We will explore “woman” as a symbol of fertility, seductress, nurturer, goddess and more in this slide-lecture and discussion series. We will move from very early representations to works of our own time.

Marilyn Price is a painter, potter and teacher. She grew up in Manhattan, studying art in high school and at The Art Students League. She did undergraduate studies in art at Cooper Union and graduate studies in both painting and art history at N.Y.U. and Columbia University. Marilyn chaired the Art Department at Columbia Preparatory School for 29 years. She retired from that school in the mid-1990s, when she and her husband moved to the Hudson Valley. Here she continues to work in both painting and clay art and teaches at both Vassar LLI and Marist CLS.

Friday On Campus – Last Four Weeks	11:05 AM – 12:20 PM
Drawing on Our Creative Nature	Limit: 12

Presenter: **Carol DiPalo**

What does your art tell you about yourself? Drawing may evoke deep emotions, spark imagination and lead to discovery of your inner lights. In this class we will use mixed media in abstract, expressive and realistic drawings. Exercises are designed to build confidence and support individuals' unique creative responses and styles. You may discover that drawing can be a source of openness and inspiration for further creative connections in creative writing, journaling and poetry. This is an exploratory class, and no art experience is necessary. Weather permitting, we will spend time outside, letting the campus and nature free our drawing.

Materials: Students may use their own sketchbooks and any personal drawing supplies, if they wish. In addition, *there will be a \$10 fee per student for materials provided by the instructor.*

Carol DiPalo moved to the Hudson Valley nearly forty years ago, where she began her career as an art educator. In addition to teaching and sharing a love of art with children, she has worked with many community nonprofits in the Hudson Valley to develop programming and present meaningful art experiences in schools and to college students and adults. Carol is retired from the Arlington School District and continues to create art in mixed media, drawing inspiration from nature and personal history. She is excited to return as a presenter in the Lifelong Learning Institute and to collaborate with peers.

Friday On Campus – Last Four Weeks
America in Depression and War

1:45 – 3:00 PM

Limit: 30

Presenter: Miriam Cohen

Between 1929 and 1945 Americans coped with the crises of a major economic depression and a world war. How did Americans from different backgrounds experience these events? How did experiences vary by class, race, and gender? This class explores the everyday life of Americans at the time, as well as the important political and social transformations—and some continuities—that marked the period. The course combines lecture and discussion. Readings will be drawn from historical documents contained in *The Era of Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1933–1945*, Richard Polenberg, ed.

Materials: Students are required to purchase *The Era of Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1933–1945*, edited by Richard Polenberg.

Note: This course is a repeat of a course offered in Spring 2025.

Miriam Cohen, Evalyn Clark Professor Emerita of History at Vassar College, specializes in the history of American women and twentieth-century American political and social history. The author of two books and numerous articles, she has published widely on the history of women and on the history of social reform in the United States and Europe.

Friday On Campus – Last Four Weeks
The Four Tasks of Mourning

3:20 – 4:35 PM

Limit: 35

Presenter: Shelley Tatelbaum

This class is about understanding and learning the different tasks of grieving. Many people are familiar with Elisabeth Kübler-Ross's "five stages" of grief; William Worden's paradigm offers a more recent development of her theories. Instead of using the term "stages," we will understand that grieving is more of an ongoing task, and this class will help participants understand more deeply why that is so. We will explore William Worden's four tasks of mourning and consider how they can guide us through loss. The class will include both lecture and participant discussion.

Suggested reading: *How To Go On Living When Someone You Love Dies* by Therese A. Rando, Ph.D.

Shelley Tatelbaum is the Founder and Director of the Center for Grief, Loss and Life Transition. She has been a Certified Grief Therapist for 35 years and remains in practice. She helped charter the first hospice in Dutchess County in the 1980s and was its first Director of Bereavement Services. She has been a member of the Association of Death Educators and Counselors for 35 years, where she has presented on the challenges of grief therapy with alcoholics. Shelley also provides in-service training for schools, hospitals and corporations.

TUESDAY ZOOM CLASSES – EIGHT WEEKS

Tuesday On Zoom – Eight Weeks African American Literature: <i>All God's Children Need Traveling Shoes</i> , by Maya Angelou	11:05 AM – 12:20 PM
	Limit: 100

Presenter: **Dr. Jacqueline Goffe-McNish**

The issues in the text reference Angelou's presentation of the culture of Africa; a new perspective on the “March on Washington”; the use of proverbs in the novel; a review of the reverse middle passage experience and the middle passage experience itself; and the presentation of creolization in the novel. Angelou declares at the end of the novel that “Despite the murders, rapes, and suicides, we had survived”. The course will look at the ways in which the cultures of the African Diaspora have “survived”.

Suggested Reading: *All God's Children Need Traveling Shoes* by Maya Angelou

Dr. Jacqueline Goffe-McNish was a professor of English and Humanities at Dutchess Community College for thirty-two years. She served as the Chief Diversity Officer for two years. She served for three terms on the DCC Foundation. She has written two textbooks: *Composition in Fifteen Weeks* by Kona Publishers and *Analysis, Approaches, and Appeals in Introductory Literature* by Kendall Hunt Publishers. She has also published multiple articles in the Community College Journal. She is the superintendent of Sunday school at Bethel Missionary Baptist Church and teaches the Adult Sunday school class. She is actively involved with Poughkeepsie AAUW.

Tuesday On Zoom – Eight Weeks Imagining the Big Moment	1:45 – 3:00 PM
	Limit: 30

Presenter: **John McGiff**

In sculpture and painting, how do artists choose culturally significant stories to depict, and what is their process for building out their vision? How do more contemporary artists take foundational images and remake them to reflect new societal contexts and truths? For example, how does Kent Monkman, a Cree Canadian artist, take the iconic painting by Leutze of Washington Crossing the Delaware and turn it into a contemporary statement about European colonization and the rights of individuals? How do sacred family portraits of the Flemish painter Jan van Eyck influence contemporary portraiture?

John McGiff has been an artist and teacher for over 40 years. He was an adjunct at Drexel and Temple Universities in Philadelphia and was Chair of the Arts Department at St. Andrew's School, an independent boarding school in Delaware, for more than 20 years. He taught studio arts courses and art history and has shown his paintings at numerous venues across the mid-Atlantic region. He and his wife, “The Salt-Point Potter,” live in Dutchess County, New York.

TUESDAY ZOOM CLASSES – FIRST SIX WEEKS

Tuesday On Zoom – First Six Weeks
The Seniors' Toolbox

11:05 AM – 12:20 PM

Limit: 100

Presenter: **John Platt**

This course will offer a “toolbox” of techniques for those of us in our senior years. These practices are short, easy to do, and can be used on an as-needed basis. Topics include better sleep, improved balance, memory support, and stress release. Many of the techniques involve simple breathing methods and gentle, easy-to-learn movements. The class is designed to give us more control over the ups and downs we often endure, helping us better control how our body and mind feel as we move through our day.

John Platt has been learning and teaching Chinese martial arts since 1966. In 1991 he began a serious study of Tai Chi Chuan under various teachers, including Shifu Jiang Jian-Ye, and of Qigong from Masters Lee Holden and Dr. Yang Jwing Ming. He holds Level IV teacher certification from the Santa Cruz Qigong Center and Level III Advanced Instructor Certification from the National Qigong Association. John has taught numerous Qigong programs at the Kripalu Institute in Massachusetts and is currently working on several publications on topics such as energy from trees and Qigong for emotional balance.

Tuesday On Zoom – First Six Weeks
Natural Brain Health and Facial Rejuvenation Strategies

1:45 – 3:00 PM

Limit: 20

Presenter: **Janice Hardgrove**

Participants will learn and practice simple, gentle yet effective techniques to: increase circulation, blood flow, nutrients and oxygen to the head and brain, supporting neurogenesis (the creation of new brain cells); release tension in the head, neck and shoulders, improving posture, breathing, and stress reduction; recognize and reverse unhelpful physical and emotional habits that impact brain health; and stimulate the lymphatic system, enhancing nutrient flow and drainage. Positive side benefits may include improved facial appearance, complexion and reduced wrinkles. These exercises require no equipment and can be done seated, making them suitable for all ability levels.

Materials: A bottle of water each session, and a small mirror in which you can see your full face. In addition, general brain health information will be distributed to class members before or during the first session.

Janice Hardgrove is a certified Integral Yoga instructor with over 25 years of teaching experience and holds Pilates teacher training certification. Most recently, she became certified in the Face Yoga Method, studying directly with its creator, Fumiko Takatsu, and has been teaching this method for over a year. Having just turned 75, she knows firsthand the importance of keeping both mind and body active as we age.

TUESDAY ZOOM CLASSES – FIRST FOUR WEEKS

Tuesday On Zoom – First Four Weeks
Mystical Southeast Asia

11:05 AM – 12:20 PM

Limit: 50

Presenter: **Nathan Rosenblum**

An intriguing exploration of the spiritual heritage of Southeast Asia (Thailand, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and neighboring regions) awaits. We shall examine the ways in which many different cultures have come together in the area over thousands of years. Artwork, film and music will help demonstrate the different aspects of this process. Ultimately, we will see the great significance of the region to our world today.

Dr. Nathan Rosenblum is an ordained interfaith minister and scholar of mysticism and the esoteric. With degrees in literature, history, and metaphysical philosophy, his work demonstrates the interconnectedness of spiritual ideas with many areas of study. Having lectured and taught in New York City and many other settings, he works to provide a deeper understanding of these concepts and their relevance to people's lives.

Tuesday On Zoom – First Four Weeks
The Poetry of Passion

1:45 – 3:00 PM

Limit: 25

Presenter: **Marcy Heidish-Dolan**

“I would rather die of passion than of boredom,” wrote Vincent van Gogh. Would you? How would you define this passion? Is it all about sensual pleasure or intangible belief? Is it driven by an art or a cause? Whatever its form, passion grabs you. Its hallmarks are intensity and commitment—its emotional energy cannot be ignored. This course will explore poets’ views on passion as seen in love, nature, place and service, drawing on writers such as Mary Oliver, Pablo Neruda, Billy Collins, Ellen Bass, and others who, in Seamus Heaney’s words, “set the darkness echoing.” Poems will be emailed in advance of each class.

Suggested Readings: The books *Joy* by Christian Wiman and *Thirst* by Mary Oliver.

Marcy Heidish-Dolan is an award-winning author of 18 published books: poetry, fiction and nonfiction. She is a recipient of a Schubert Fellowship and a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. A Vassar College honors graduate, Marcy has taught creative writing and English Literature at Georgetown, George Washington, and Fordham Universities. For almost twenty years she was a regular weekly volunteer at a local shelter for homeless women. Marcy and her husband are long-time residents of Washington, D.C.

OFF CAMPUS CLASSES – IN PERSON

Note: SPECIAL DATES, TIMES, AND LOCATIONS

Off Campus – Four Weeks – In Person
Wednesdays, March 11, 18, 25; April 8
Beginning Nordic Pole Walking

11:00 AM – 12:00 PM
Various Locations
Limit: 12

Presenter: **Marty Zlotkin**

This course introduces participants to the basics of Nordic Pole Walking, a low-impact exercise that promotes balance, stability, strength, and cardiovascular health. By engaging both the upper and lower body, Nordic Pole Walking can help reduce joint stress, support mobility, and enhance overall physical well-being. The activity may also be beneficial for managing chronic pain, improving mood, and supporting weight management.

All walks take place on level ground and established walkways and are adaptable to individual ability and comfort. Walk distances will not exceed two miles, and participants may turn back at any point.

Note: Participants are encouraged to consult with their physician before beginning the course.

The first session will focus on learning basic technique and will be held at the Vassar Noyes House Field. Sessions two and three will be guided walks on the Walkway Over the Hudson (approximately one and two miles, respectively), and session four will either be an additional guided walk on the Walkway or another local rail trail.

Participants are required to provide their own Nordic Walking poles, available through online retailers and some sporting goods stores. For safety and effectiveness, quality poles are recommended; you should expect to pay approximately \$40 for a pair. Participants unfamiliar with Nordic Pole Walking may wish to review introductory videos available on YouTube prior to the first session.

Marty Zlotkin is retired from business and is a working artist. He is also a beginner Nordic pole walker, with “shot knees” from years of running, and is feeling healthy again thanks to this form of exercise.

Off Campus – Three Weeks – In Person
Thursdays, March 12, 19, 26

1:00 – 2:30 PM
PUF Community Printmaking Studio
Poughkeepsie Underwear Factory

The Art of the Egg

Limit: 8

Presenter: **Anita Fina Kiewra**

This course explores several traditions and techniques of egg decoration. We will create:

Pysanky	Traditional Ukrainian Easter eggs with multiple layers of color;
Etched eggs	An offshoot of traditional egg decorating using etching to create pierced, decorated shells;
Experimental techniques	Polished eggs decorated by masking and polishing, printing on eggs, piercing and decorating the interior of the egg, and other inventive approaches.

Anita Fina Kiewra is a teaching artist (M.S. Art Education, The College of Saint Rose) working in community development for Hudson River Housing, where she leads HRH Made, an arts-based workforce training social enterprise for people transitioning from homelessness. She manages the Community Printmaking Studio on the second floor of the Poughkeepsie Underwear Factory. Anita is a member of the National Association of Women Artists and the Tivoli Artists Gallery and exhibits her work locally and regionally.

Off Campus – Three Weeks – In Person Wednesdays, April 15, 22; May 6	11:00 AM – 12:00 PM FDR Library and Museum, Hyde Park
Learning about the Roosevelts	Limit: 80

Presenter: **Jeffrey Urbin**

This course is a three-part series exploring the lives of Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt. Sessions will include the following topics: Franklin and Eleanor—Two Halves to a Whole; Letters to the Roosevelts; FDR and Hyde Park; and Becoming Eleanor Roosevelt. Sessions will be held at the Wallace Visitor and Education Center at the FDR site in Hyde Park.

Jeffrey Urbin is the Education Specialist and Director of the Pare Lorentz Film Center at the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum in Hyde Park, New York. He is responsible for developing all the Library's education programs and materials for students ranging from second grade through college, as well as adult learning and public programs across the country and around the world.

Off Campus – Four Weeks – In Person Thursdays, April 16, 23, 30; May 7	1:00 – 2:30 PM PUF Community Printmaking Studio Poughkeepsie Underwear Factory
Intaglio Printmaking: Etching and Beyond	Limit: 8

Presenter: **Anita Fina Kiewra**

Explore printmaking techniques using an etching press, including embossing, chine-collé, etching and drypoint. Students will learn and create artwork using a different technique each week, printing on the studio's etching presses as well as learning about methods they can use to print at home.

Anita Fina Kiewra is a teaching artist (M.S. Art Education, The College of Saint Rose) working in community development for Hudson River Housing, where she leads HRH Made, an arts-based workforce training social enterprise for people transitioning from homelessness. She manages the Community Printmaking Studio on the second floor of the Poughkeepsie Underwear Factory. Anita is a member of the National Association of Women Artists and the Tivoli Artists Gallery and exhibits her work locally and regionally.

Off Campus – Four Weeks – In Person Thursdays, April 16, 23, 30; May 7	11:00 AM – 12:00 PM Various Locations
Gentle Walks in the Hudson Valley	Limit: 25

Presenters: **Teresa Quinn, Maureen King, and Sue MacLean**

This course offers Vassar LLI members the opportunity to build community and get some exercise while enjoying the beauty of the Hudson Valley. Four walks are planned, each week in a different location in Dutchess and Ulster Counties, with an educational component. The walks range in length and are in the easy-to-moderate category, accommodating varied mobility levels. All walks will begin at 11:00; end times will vary based on location.

Maureen King is a retired Vassar College administrator who finds joy in walking the many scenic trails of the Hudson Valley.

Sue MacLean is a retired social studies teacher who loves to hike in the Hudson Valley and enjoys introducing groups to local history, different locations and new adventures.

Teresa Quinn is a retired Vassar College student affairs administrator. She looks forward to sharing her passion for hiking and being in community with Vassar LLI members in the beautiful Hudson Valley.

LUNCH, Then LEARN

FRIDAY – SINGLE SESSION CLASSES – ON CAMPUS – 12:45 – 1:30 PM

Note: Registration for these classes will begin the Monday prior to each class. Lunch may *not* be eaten during class

Friday, March 20	Six Maritime Chokepoints and Why They Matter	Limit: 30
------------------	---	-----------

Presenter: **Martin Charwat**

This class will look at six critical maritime chokepoints—three primarily military and three principally economic—to see why control of them has been crucial to prosperity and military control of the oceans during the past two centuries. The chokepoints are: the Strait of Malacca, the Strait of Hormuz, the Bab el-Mandeb, the Dardanelles, the Strait of Gibraltar, and the Panama Canal. We will explore their geography, history and strategic importance in global affairs.

Martin Charwat is a graduate of the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service and served in the United States Information Agency in Brazil and Washington, D.C. He was a founding member and president of the World Affairs Council of the Hudson Valley and has been a frequent presenter in the Great Decisions series at the Marist Center for Lifetime Studies.

Friday, March 27	Two Remarkable Women: Trailblazers in the Law	Limit: 30
------------------	--	-----------

Presenter: **Diane O'Leary**

The backstories of two remarkable and colorful local attorneys, Charlotte Frank, born in Poughkeepsie in 1917, and Susanna Bedell, born in Hungary in 1918, are truly fodder for historical fiction. With careers peaking in the 1980s, they were trailblazers, paving the way for the women who followed. Their lives were shaped by history, the culture of their times and significant personal losses. With personas so different, their stories have many parallels, including ties to Vassar College—particularly for Susanna, who likely would not have survived World War II without receiving a scholarship to Vassar, for which she was forever grateful.

Diane O'Leary, admitted to the bar at age 40, is retired after forty years of involvement in the law, first as a paralegal and student, followed by thirty years in private practice, most spent on Collegeview Avenue. She received the highest rating via peer review and was honored by the New York State Bar Association for her contributions to the profession and the community. A true believer in lifelong learning, she taught in the Marist Paralegal Program early in her career and continues to be an eager student enrolled in Vassar LLI.

Friday, April 10

A Little Magic at Lunchtime

Limit: 30

Presenter: **Sudhir Desai**

Sudhir will perform a few illusions for the entertainment of our members. This is almost a repeat presentation of the show he did in Fall 2025. Although the series is called “Lunch, Then Learn,” this session will be more like “Lunch, Then Enjoy”.

Sudhir Desai started his magic journey when he took a class at the LLI called Magic for Grandparents. He enjoyed the class so much that he joined the Society of American Magicians and its local chapter, Al Baker Assembly 35, right away. He has been performing for friends and family since then and currently serves as the secretary of Assembly 35.

Friday, April 17

Getting to Yes: Negotiating Without Giving In

Limit: 30

Presenter: **Kathryn Lazar**

Getting to Yes is a brilliant little book written by members of the Harvard Negotiation Project that offers a concise, step-by-step strategy for reaching mutually acceptable agreements in every sort of situation—legal disputes, marital and parenting conflicts, neighbor issues, workplace problems and more. In this session we will explore the core principles of *Getting to Yes*: separating the people from the problem; focusing on interests, not positions; working together to create options that satisfy all parties; and negotiating effectively with people who are more powerful, refuse to play by the rules, or resort to “dirty tricks.”

Suggested Reading: *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In* by Roger Fisher, William Ury and Bruce Patton.

Kathryn S. Lazar is a local attorney and a graduate of Reed College and Cornell Law School. She was instrumental in founding the Battered Women's Program, the Dutchess County Mediation Center, the Hudson Valley Collaborative Divorce and Dispute Resolution Center, and her law firm, now Lazar, Schwartz & Jones LLP. Kathryn has taught mediation and collaborative law to lawyers, mental health professionals and financial professionals throughout the eastern United States, across Canada and in several European venues. She has worked with thousands of individuals and couples to assist them in working out their post-marital arrangements.

Friday, April 24

The Atomic Age from 1945 Los Alamos to Now

Limit: 30

Presenter: **Galina Vromen**

What was it like to live in World War II-era Los Alamos, New Mexico, where the world's first atomic bomb was built? What were the considerations that went into using the bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki? How did the use of the bomb influence nuclear policy after the war? Inspired by the research for her historical novel, *Hill of Secrets*, set in WWII Los Alamos, author Galina Vromen will bring alive that momentous period and discuss its impact on nuclear proliferation today.

Suggested Reading: *Hill of Secrets* by Galina Vromen.

Galina Vromen spent more than a decade as a reporter, mostly for Reuters News Agency, in Europe, Mexico and Israel. After retiring, she used her research and writing skills to create her debut historical novel, *Hill of*

Secrets, based in WWII Los Alamos, which was described as “infectiously readable” by Booklist and has garnered thousands of five-star ratings on Amazon. Her research for the book sparked her interest in the aftermath of the use of the bomb, and she has become well-versed on issues of nuclear arms today. For more information, see www.galinavromen.com.

Vassar College Lifelong Learning Institute
124 Raymond Ave., Box 160, Poughkeepsie, NY 12604

Office: Blodgett Hall 115
Phone: 845-437-7229
E-mail: lli@vassar.edu
Website: lifelonglearning.vassar.edu