

LIFELONG LEARNING INSTITUTE VASSAR

**LLIVC
SPRING 2022**

LIFELONG LEARNING INSTITUTE AT VASSAR COLLEGE

SPRING 2022 CATALOG

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.

This semester most classes will again be conducted via Zoom.

Members can register for a maximum of three full courses per semester.

When selecting courses, please note the dates it meets.

Four-week courses are half courses and six to eight-week courses count as a full course.

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

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

You Will Be Contacted By Your Instructor With Zoom Access And Login Instructions.

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LIFELONG LEARNING INSTITUTE AT VASSAR COLLEGE

SPRING 2022 SCHEDULE

SINGLE SESSION EVENTS

All sessions occur on ZOOM on THURSDAYS

Thursday, March 24, 11:00 AM - 12:30 PM

New York, the City of Towers: But What's UP with those New Supertalls?

Limit: 50

Presenter: **Ethel Sheffer, FAICP**

New York is no stranger to tall buildings, many of which have become the hallmark of its distinction as a great world city. Recently, we have seen a new breed of pencil-thin towers, some concentrated in an area dubbed Billionaire's Row. These are the supertalls, noteworthy for their wealthy residential occupants, the technological leap in engineering that allows for slim profiles on small lots and mechanical voids that increase their height. Not without controversy, these buildings have been challenged for their effects on nearby parks, their vulnerability to high winds and their disregard for the dearth of affordable housing. This presentation will consider the pros and cons of this new phenomenon.

Ethel Sheffer, FAICP, is an urban planner who has taught at Columbia University and has an extensive knowledge of New York City neighborhoods. She has been a community leader in several noteworthy developments and significant battles and controversies. She is also a member of the NYC Public Design Commission.

Thursday, April 7, 11:00 AM - 12:30 PM

Stars and Stardom: James Cagney, A Case Study

Limit: 100

Presenter: **Sybil DelGaudio**

Most of us have favorite movie performers, but what makes a performer a star? By examining the career of James Cagney, a Hudson Valley resident for 34 years, this presentation will consider the question of stardom and how it has functioned in film throughout Hollywood's history. Questions to consider include: What is the star system? What gave rise to it? How did individual performers become stars? How do they become stars today? The presentation will be illustrated with film clips and slides.

Sybil DelGaudio is retired from Hofstra University, where she was Professor of Radio, Television and Film, and served for six years as Dean of its School of Communication. Her research has been published in books and journals and her production work has combined her interest in animation scholarship with a passion for documentary, resulting in two projects she directed for public television: *Animated Women* and *Independent Spirits*. Both films have been shown on PBS stations around the country as well as at international film festivals, garnering festival prizes and an Emmy for *Animated Women*.

How Animals Adapt to a Changing World

Limit: 100

Presenter: **MJ Wyatt-Ross**

We will examine dramatic physical, mental, migratory and behavioral changes for survival of ten species, including snow leopards, sea lions, hyenas, grizzlies and more. We'll learn how animals thrive in areas thought uninhabitable, overhaul their diets, alter infant rearing traditions, discard and reinvent courtship rituals, create new hierarchies, upgrade predator skills and work better together. This class invites active participation and offers stunning wildlife photography, videos, sound effects, props and problem solving scenarios.

MJ Wyatt-Ross is a trained expedition leader at the Central Park Zoo, explaining animal behaviors, adaptations, mating rituals, physiology and environmental challenges. She has been a frequent narrator of the sea lion feeding and behavioral enrichment sessions. She also teaches a popular Zoom class, "Animals, Animals, Animals!" as part of the nationally renowned Virtual Senior Center sponsored by Selfhelp Community Services. During MJ's forty year career as an award-winning communications strategist, she developed marketing and environmental campaigns for the Nature Conservancy and presentations for global corporate leadership summits and was a speechwriter for CEOs and a governor.

OFF-CAMPUS COURSES

These courses meet **IN PERSON** on **WEDNESDAYS**

First Four Wednesdays --- March 16, 23, 30, April 6 --- 3:30 PM – 4:45 PM

Location: Poughkeepsie Underwear Factory, 8 N Cherry St, Poughkeepsie, NY

Collagraph Printmaking

Limit: 8

Presenter: **Anita Kiewra**

Learn to create a collagraph and print it on the Barrett etching press at the Community Printmaking Studio at the Poughkeepsie Underwear Factory, 8 North Cherry St., 2nd floor.

Collagraphs are texture collages intended for printing, either as relief or intaglio. We will be printing intaglio prints with our collagraphs. We will use a variety of materials to create low relief textures, which will be inked and printed.

Anita Fina Kiewra is a teaching artist who has a Master's degree in art education from the College of Saint Rose. She currently works for Hudson River Housing, leading Upcycle, an arts-based workforce training social enterprise for people transitioning from homelessness. Anita is the manager of Hudson River Housing's community printmaking studio on the second floor of the Poughkeepsie Underwear Factory. She is also a co-founder and co-owner of Queen City 15 Gallery in Poughkeepsie.

Last Four Wednesdays --- April 6, 13, 20, 27 --- 1:00 PM – 2:15 PM

Location: James Baird State Park, 14 Maintenance Ln, Pleasant Valley, NY

Introduction To Pickleball

Limit: 12

Presenter: **Vicky Weinblatt**

Pickleball basic skills, strategy, and game play will be taught during this four-week class.

Vicky Weinblatt has recently retired from IBM/Global Foundries where she worked in supply chain. She has become an avid pickleball player, who enjoys teaching introductory skills. Pickleball is great exercise and the sport has recently taken off in Dutchess County. Her other hobbies include hiking, biking, traveling and just about any other physical activity.

SPRING 2022 COURSES

All courses meet on ZOOM on FRIDAYS

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COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

9:30 AM - 10:45 AM

Eight Week Course (March 11 – May 6; no class on April 15)

Art in Photography: Learning from the Masters

Limit: None

Presenter: **Gary Miller**

An in-depth look at the masters in photography, the lives they led, the methods they used, and how they shaped the vision and styles of other photographers. Edward Weston, Ansel Adams, Irving Penn, Henri Cartier-Bresson and Robert Frank are just a few who fall into this category, but what about the scores of other well-known photographers whose lives were guided by their predecessors? We'll examine these artistic, technological, and personal influences and how this work changed photography and impacted other media.

Gary Miller is a veteran photojournalist, writer, filmmaker and live television director, with over forty years of experience for clients like the New York Stock Exchange, *Time*, *Newsweek*, Fortune 500 companies, museums and galleries. He has taught freelance photography at The New School and is the author of a book on the same subject.

9:30 AM - 10:45 AM

First Four Weeks Course (March 11 – April 1)

Climate Change and the Hudson Valley

Limit: 20

Presenter: **Dave Conover**

This course, hosted by Sustainable Hudson Valley, will feature the latest updates on climate science, the projected impacts climate change will have in the region and insights into potential solutions to both mitigate and adapt to those impacts. Facilitated by SHV's program developer, Dave Conover, the course will include guest speakers on a variety of climate related topics.

Dave Conover is Sustainable Hudson Valley's program developer. He grew up in the Catskills and has an extensive environmental background, including working for many years as Clearwater's education director and later interim executive director. He's a trained educator with the Climate Reality Project and occasionally teaches environmental science at Marist College. Dave has participated in international programs in Russia, the Netherlands, Syria and Greenland. Dave has a BS in forest biology and an MS degree in environmental studies with a science teaching certification.

9:30 AM - 10:45 AM

First Four Weeks Course (March 11 – April 1)

Closing Arguments: A Lawyer's Reminiscence

Limit: 50

Presenter: **Mickey Steiman**

Aging trial lawyers love to tell war stories of their days in the courtroom. Mickey Steiman, with nearly fifty years of experience practicing law, is no exception. In this class, he will draw back the curtain and share some insight into cases that in one way or another left indelible personal impressions upon him and his views of the profession. Class participation and discussion will be encouraged and welcomed.

Mickey Steiman (A.B. Colgate University; J.D. Syracuse University College of Law) has been in private practice for thirty-nine years in Dutchess County. He has also served as senior trial attorney in the Office of Special Litigation, United States Department of Justice, Washington, D.C., and has been an adjunct professor at Marist College.

9:30 AM - 10:45 AM

Last Four Weeks Course (April 8 – May 6; *no class on April 15*)

El Muralismo Mexicano *(This course is entirely in Spanish)*

Limit: 20

Presenter: **Mihai Grunfeld**

El Muralismo Mexicano es el fenómeno artístico de mayor importancia del arte mexicano del siglo xx. Tiene su origen en la Revolución mexicana (1910-1920) y se propone como fin difundir a un público masivo una imagen nueva de la cultura mexicana, basada en la ideología de la revolución. Algunos de sus temas principales son la estética indígena, la identidad artística mexicana, la exaltación del trabajo y la lucha de los trabajadores. En las cuatro clases hablaremos sobre México y la Revolución mexicana y los tres representantes principales del muralismo, Diego Rivera, José Clemente Orozco y David Alfaro Siqueiros.

Note: *Esta clase se llevará en español y tiene como propósito ver y hablar sobre los bellos murales de los muralistas. El estudiante tiene que poder entender la presentación del profesor y comentar en español junto con el profesor los murales que vamos a examinar.*

Mihai Grünfeld was born in Romania, where he lived until 1969, when he escaped to the West and eventually settled in the United States. Between 1987-2019, he was a professor of Spanish and Latin American literature at Vassar College. His published books include an autobiography, *Leaving – Memories of Romania* (2008) and *Antología de la poesía latinoamericana de vanguardia* (1995). An unpublished novel was adapted into a 2017 play entitled “*The Dressmaker’s Secret*,” which enjoyed a month-long run in New York City, and his translation of a memoir by Roth Zoltán, a Romanian Holocaust survivor, will soon be published by Yad Vashem.

9:30 AM - 10:45 AM

Last Four Weeks Course (April 8 – May 6; no class on April 15)

Ready, Set, Go – Navigating our Healthcare System

Limit: 60

Presenter: **Maribeth King**

This course will provide helpful information to support decision-making and effective utilization of our healthcare system. Four distinct topics will be presented:

1. Alphabet Soup: MD, DO, RN, NP, PA....what's the difference and whom do I choose?
2. Making the most of your visit: there's more to it than your list of questions.
3. Do I stay or do I go - considerations in choosing care in our community vs. the "Big Apple."
4. What makes for a good death: preparing for our final act.

Each class will allow time for questions/discussion.

A registered nurse for forty-six years, **Maribeth King** graduated from the University of Michigan (BSN) and Boston University (MS - nursing). She holds licenses in New York State as a registered nurse and clinical nurse specialist and is certified as a clinical nurse specialist in oncology (AOCNS). Maribeth has practiced at the University Hospital (Ann Arbor), Beth Israel Hospital, Shriners' Burns Institute (Boston), Henry Ford Hospital and Sinai Hospital (Detroit). For the past thirty-two years she has been a nursing administrator at the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center. She is also a published author on a variety of topics.

11:05 AM - 12:20 PM

Eight Week Course (March 11 – May 6; no class on April 15)

Pioneers of 20th Century Abstraction

Limit: 35

Presenter: **Marilyn Price**

This slide lecture series will offer a close look at the pioneers of 20th century abstraction. We will examine the art and ideas of Kandinsky, Mondrian, Klee and others who moved art in that direction. The Bauhaus and its influence will also be included.

Marilyn Price is a painter, ceramic artist, and teacher. She grew up in Manhattan, where she studied art at the Art Students League throughout high school. She did her undergraduate studies in painting at Cooper Union and graduate studies in art and art history at N.Y.U. and Columbia University. She chaired the art department at Columbia Preparatory School for twenty-nine years and exhibited her paintings and ceramics in N.Y.C., Westchester, and Connecticut throughout that period. After retiring from Columbia Prep, she and her husband moved to the Hudson Valley, where she continues to make art and teach.

11:05 AM - 12:20 PM

First Four Weeks Course (March 11 – April 1)

Managing Conflict

Limit: 20

Presenters: **Gail Goodman and Ruth Weinreb**

This is an interactive class meant to help people handle difficult conversations. We cover an overview of conflict, the language of conflict and listening skills and other exercises to help people put their new skills into action. Topics include how to navigate family conflicts, political discussions/arguments, and social media's role in promoting conflict.

Gail Goodman and **Ruth Weinreb** have a family mediation firm specializing in adult family disputes. They have mediated landlord/tenant and small claims cases in Manhattan and Westchester courts and have mediated parent/teen conflicts for Family Services of Westchester. They have certification from NYU in Mediation and Conflict Resolution, are certified by the NYS Unified Court System and have a specialized certification in Elder and Adult Family Mediation from Elder Solutions.

11:05 AM - 12:20 PM

First Four Weeks Course (March 11 – April 1)

When Women Won the Vote

Limit: None

Presenter: **Sandra Opdycke**

This class will trace the history of women's long campaign for suffrage, starting with the famous Women's Rights Convention in Seneca Falls NY in 1848 and culminating in the passage of the 19th amendment to the US Constitution in 1920. It was a battle fought all over the country, using many different tactics: lobbying in statehouses and in Congress, writing magazine articles, speaking on street corners, holding tea parties, marching on city streets, dropping leaflets from airplanes and even picketing the White House. It is a story of strong characters and many heartbreaking defeats, but it ends in victory.

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, as well as several co-authored 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 serves as an occasional lecturer at the Center for Lifetime Studies and the Lifetime Learning Institute.

11:05 AM - 12:20 PM

Last Four Weeks Course (April 8 – May 6; no class on April 15)

Sacred Spaces

Limit: 60

Presenter: **Lyla Yastion**

What has prompted human beings through the ages to assign sacred qualities to certain natural landscapes, buildings, and even the concept of a “soul”? We will explore the idea of sacred space by considering examples of sacred land, sacred architecture and the sacred space in the heart - the place of the soul's journey to enlightenment. These three sacred spaces often weave together, as strands in a web. For example, Jerusalem is considered “Holy Land” where mosques, churches and temples are sacred sites of pilgrimage and worship for devotees of Islam, Christianity and Judaism.

Lyla Yastion received her doctorate in anthropology at the University at Albany (SUNY) and taught at the college level as an adjunct professor of anthropology and religious studies for eighteen years, most recently at SUNY New Paltz. She has written two books: *Pause Now: Handbook for a Spiritual Revolution* and *Homesick: Finding Our Way Back to a Healthy Planet*, both published by Hamilton Books. Lyla has been teaching three courses at the lifelong learning centers at Bard, SUNY New Paltz and OLLI through Eckerd College in St. Petersburg, FL (via Zoom). She is a reiki master with training in shamanic healing.

1:45 PM - 3:00 PM

Eight Week Course (March 11 – May 6; no class on April 15)

Aesthetic History of Photography

Limit: None

Presenter: **Robert Stevens**

This course will explore the major aesthetic movements throughout the history of photography and how they related to the other arts. Starting with the invention of photography in the 1830s and how it defined itself in relation to other visual arts, we will then explore the pictorialism movement of the late 1880s, the pure photographic vision of Paul Strand, the clarity of the West Coast photographers, the revolutionary photography of the depression and of Europe between the world wars, the new social landscape photography of the 1960s and conceptual photography of the 1970s and 1980s.

Robert Stevens completed graduate studies at the Visual Studies Workshop Photo Center of SUNY Buffalo, based in Rochester, NY. In 1979, upon graduation, he became an archivist in the *Time-Life Picture Collection* for two years; following that, he was a photo editor at *Time* magazine for almost thirty years. After *Time* magazine, he taught at the School of Visual Arts for twelve years. He was a member of the board of the W. Eugene Smith Memorial Photography Grant. He edited a book of photos of a French photographer, *Yvon's Paris*. He is author of two photo books: *Unintentional* and *Evidence*.

1:45 PM - 3:00 PM

Eight Week Course (March 11 – May 6; no class on April 15)

Opera as Politics: Diversity

Limit: None

Presenter: **Chuck Mishaan**

This course explores works by women, LGBTQ and Black composers and artists. We will focus on four hundred years of opera outside of the traditional repertoire, from Francesca Caccini in 1625 to Terence Blanchard in 2021. Analysis will include political and historical context as well as video excerpts and commentary.

Chuck Mishaan has been presenting his popular *Opera as Politics* course at Vassar LLI for several years. His commentary on the intersection of politics and the arts continues with this course on diversity.

3:20 PM - 4:35 PM

Eight Week Course (March 11 – May 6; no class on April 15)

Exploring Wine and Mead

Limit: 60

Presenters: **Arnold Serotsky and Rob Cohen**

While the wine world is often focused on Europe and California, the climate band on Earth appropriate for growing great wine grapes also exists in the Southern Hemisphere. The first five weeks of class will cover the wines of Chile, Argentina, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand. The last three weeks will be devoted to a study of mead. Mead predates wine by about two centuries. As a wrap-up to our study of wine, we'll explore the history of mead styles and both modern and ancient mead production techniques.

As an alternative to in person tasting, Arnie will recommend examples of wines from each region that are available from local stores, should participants wish to try them and share impressions at the end of each presentation. Rob will also make recommendations about mead and where to find it.

Arnie Serotsky has been involved in wine collecting, wine travel and wine tasting for almost fifty years. He is the vice president and chair of the tasting advisory committee for It Was A Good Year, Inc. (IWAGY), a not-for-profit wine tasting and education organization in existence in the Mid-Hudson Valley since 1980.

Rob Cohen is a farmer who practices sustainable agriculture and a technology consultant focused on helping nonprofit organizations leverage technology. His lifelong interest in science, history and understanding how stuff works shaped his unique approach to staying connected to nature while living and working in an increasingly unnatural environment. Rob is also an enthusiastic homebrewer.

3:20 PM - 4:35 PM

Eight Week Course (March 11 – May 6; no class on April 15)

The Ideal Image

Limit: 25

Presenter: **John McGiff**

Each culture creates its pictorial ideals for the values it cherishes. In paintings, sculpture, monuments and architecture these images are in constant flux, but there are common attributes to how they have evolved. Icons of political power and authority, the ideals of beauty and the general values we cherish are what we've worked to imagine and enshrine in our cultures. This course will look at both ancient and modern societies to investigate the dynamics that have given rise to those images we identify with and are branded by. We will also consider outside influences on these images and their counterparts.

John McGiff has been an educator for thirty years. After receiving an MFA from the University of Pennsylvania in 1989, he worked for seven years as an adjunct at Temple and Drexel Universities, teaching drawing, design and painting, and served one year as a full-time assistant professor of painting at Temple. He later became chair of the arts department at St. Andrew's School, a preparatory boarding school in Delaware. In addition, he has run the Warner Gallery, taught AP art history, painting, drawing and a senior seminar for twenty-two years.

3:20 PM - 4:35 PM

Eight Week Course (March 11 – May 6; no class on April 15)

Vassar Science Sampler

Limit: 70

Presenter: **David Bloom**

In this eight-week course, each week a different professor from the Vassar science faculty will present a lecture:

3/11 Fred Chromey: "**Telescopes and Controversies: James Webb in Space and Thirty Meters on the Sacred Mountain.**"

3/18 Juan M. Merlo-Ramirez: "**Observation of Topological Phases in a One-Dimensional Mechanical System.**"

3/25 Rebecca Pollet: "**How Bacteria Eat Our Veggies.**"

4/1 Katelyn Butler: "**Plant Diseases Threatening Our Favorite Foods.**"

4/8 Colin Aitken: "**We Live in an RNA World.**"

4/22 Kate Susman: "**The Hazards that Lie in the Unnatural, Well-Manicured Lawn.**"

4/29 Mark Schlessman: "**The Sex Lives of Flowering Plants.**"

5/6 Jeff Walker: "**One Billion Years of Geological Turmoil: Geology and Landscape in the Hudson Valley.**"

David Bloom is a retired teacher and founding member of the Vassar LLI. He has enjoyed organizing this course for the past few years.

March 11: **Frederick R. Chromey, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus of Astronomy at Vassar**, directed the Vassar College observatory from 1990-2016. His interests include optical and infrared observations of nearby galaxies and astronomical instrumentation.

March 18: **Juan M. Merlo-Ramírez, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Physics and Astronomy**, has been at Vassar since 2019. His research focuses on near-field microscopy, plasmonics, and more recently on topological phases of matter in classical systems. Juan is a first-generation college attendee; as such, he is interested in the dissemination of scientific knowledge by science books for kids.

March 25: **Rebecca Pollet, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Chemistry**, has been at Vassar since 2020. She teaches courses in biochemistry and chemical fundamentals. Her research lab focuses on characterizing proteins important in carbohydrate utilization by the human gut microbes.

April 1: **Katelyn Butler, Ph.D., Lecturer in Biology**, has been at Vassar since 2020. Her recent scholarship has centered around evidence based and inclusive teaching in biology. She teaches courses in energy flow in biological systems and information flow in biological systems.

April 8: **Colin Aitken, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Biology**, has been at Vassar since 2017. He studies the molecular machinery that reads genes to assemble protein molecules. His research and academic interests include biochemistry, molecular biophysics and next-generation sequencing.

April 22: **Kathleen Susman, Ph.D., Associate Dean of the Faculty and Professor of Biology**, has been at Vassar since 1991. Her research and academic interests focus on neuroscience and behavior, stress physiology, evolutionary development and science communication.

April 29: **Mark Schlessman, Ph.D., Professor of Biology**, has been at Vassar since 1980. He is an evolutionary biologist who loves plants and is especially interested in the ways that angiosperms distribute stamens and pistils among their flowers in order to specialize more on either the male or the female component of reproductive success. He is also working on a study of the flora of the Vassar College Ecological Preserve and on digitizing the Vassar Herbarium. He is semi-retired, teaching half time. He is co-chair of the College Arboretum Committee and oversees the class tree program.

May 6: **Jeff Walker, Ph.D., Professor of Earth Science**, has been at Vassar since 1988. His dissertation research was on crystal structures of clay minerals in low-grade metamorphic environments. From this base he has expanded his work to include studies in agricultural sustainability, the agricultural heritage of the mid-Hudson region, and sustainable community development. He maintains an active interest in low-temperature metamorphism, focusing most recently on studies of the stratigraphy and metamorphism of low-grade rocks of the Hudson Valley.

3:20 PM - 4:35 PM

First Four Weeks Course (March 11 – April 1)

Psychology and Film

Limit: 50

Presenter: **Denise Morett**

Film provides a powerful art medium for exploring topics in psychology. This course examines several films from a psychological perspective. Films have a tremendous impact in our society in countless ways, including entertaining, inspiring and teaching. Students will watch films, via

streaming or through Vassar Moodle, that reflect multiple psychological themes including lifespan, trauma, psychological disorders, grief and resilience. We include discussion about the psychology of the viewer's experience, the filmmaker/production, depictions of psychology and psychologists/healthcare, and psychological issues/treatment.

Dr. Morett is the bestselling author of *Lifeline*, a licensed psychologist with a private practice, and a consultant to various hospitals and facilities. She has taught college level psychology courses as well as conducted workshops and trainings throughout the over thirty years of her career. She has been an instructor for VCLLI in past semesters. Her varied interests include the use of expressive arts, particularly film, as it relates to the human condition and topics in psychology.