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at OLLI NU!



Northwestern
SCHOOL OF
PROFESSIONAL STUDIES

2026 OLLI SPRING TERM

MONDAY, MARCH 2–MONDAY, JUNE 8, 2026



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KEY DATES FOR THE SPRING TERM:

Spring memberships are available for purchase now.

Monday, February 2 at 9 a.m.: Spring registration opens.

Monday, February 16 at 5 p.m.: Spring registration closes.

Monday, March 2: Spring 14-week term begins.

Osher Lifelong Learning Institute

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) is to enable the continuation of learning and intellectual pursuit for a community of mature adults. As a special program of Northwestern University's School of Professional Studies, OLLI offers a comprehensive curriculum of peer-led discussion groups covering topics in areas such as literature, history, politics, science, philosophy, current affairs, and the arts. OLLI welcomes diversity in its membership, and has no academic prerequisites or age restrictions.



FROM THE OLLI DIRECTOR, **EMILY FERRIN**

Dear OLLI Members and Friends,

Spring brings a sense of renewal and possibility, and it's a fitting backdrop for the launch of our Spring Catalog at the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Northwestern University. As days grow longer and schedules begin to open up, spring offers a chance to reengage—with ideas, with questions, and with one another.

This session's offerings reflect that spirit. You'll find study groups that invite deep focus and thoughtful discussion, alongside study groups that encourage exploration, creativity, and fresh perspectives. Whether you're returning to a favorite subject or trying something entirely new, spring is a wonderful time to lean back into learning with intention and curiosity.

This spring also brings something that might be new to you: Social Interest Groups, or SIGs. These member-led groups are centered on shared interests and connection rather than formal learning. SIGs offer a more informal way to engage with fellow OLLI members—through conversation, activities, and community building. If you're looking for another way to connect, I encourage you to try one of our new SIGs this term. You can find a list of current SIGs on MyOLLINU under General Info.

As always, community remains central to the OLLI experience. Our study groups and SIGs alike are spaces where learning happens through conversation, shared inquiry, and connection. I hope you'll take time to browse the catalog, join a study group or a SIG that sparks your interest, and join us for a season of engaged learning and connection.

Warmly,

Emily

Emily Hood Ferrin, PhD
Director, Osher Lifelong Learning Institute
School of Professional Studies
Northwestern University

ACTION ITEMS

RIGHT NOW:

1. Log into the OLLI Online Registration System (northwesternolli.augusoft.net) today.
 - This will ensure you know your username and password before registration day. By preparing early, our team will have the time to help you if you have any difficulty.

2. Purchase your OLLI membership (if you do not have a current membership)*
 - Buy your membership early. Then, when registration opens, all you will need to do is select your study groups and quickly check out.
3. Review the study group offerings and begin thinking about your list of 1st, 2nd, and 3rd choices. Many groups fill quickly, so be open to other options that expand your interests and your exposure to new friendships.

REGISTRATION DAY (Monday, February 2):

Online registration opens at 9 a.m. Registration closes Monday, February 16, 2026 at 5 p.m.

If you need assistance, email olli@northwestern.edu. The first available staff member or OLLI Vollie volunteer will call or email you to assist. This day is extremely busy, so we ask for your patience.

See pages 50 and 51 for membership purchase and registration instructions.



SPRING 2026 MEMBERSHIP OPTIONS

If you are not a current OLLI member, you may purchase one of the following membership types [here](#). See pages 50 and 51 for instructions.

Spring Memberships – Levels, Prices, and Benefits

Level	Price and Terms Included	Number of Study Groups per Term	Benefits Included with Membership:
HALF-YEAR Basic	\$275 Half Academic Year (includes 14-week spring & 4-week summer terms)	1 per term for a total of 2	Half-year members enjoy digital access to Northwestern Library.
HALF-YEAR Standard	\$335 Half Academic Year (includes 14-week spring & 4-week summer terms)	2 per term for a total of 4	
HALF-YEAR Prime	\$380 Half Academic Year (includes 14-week spring & 4-week summer terms)	3 per term for a total of 6	

Spring Trial Membership – Price and Benefits

Trial	\$225 (includes 14-week spring semester & 4-week summer session) Available only to new members and may be purchased only one time.	1 per term for a total of 2	Trial members enjoy digital access to Northwestern Library.
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Beyond the Study Groups ... All OLLI Members Enjoy

- A community of engaged and engaging peers
- Special lectures and noontime events
- Workshops to enhance the OLLI experience
- Special events and cultural opportunities
- Weekly eNotices about campus activities throughout the year
- The opportunity to participate in OLLI committee work

The academic year is divided into 4 terms (two 14-week terms and two 4-week terms):

1) Fall Term (14 weeks)	2) Winter Term (4 weeks, all virtual)	3) Spring Term (14 weeks)	4) Summer Term (4 weeks)
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A new OLLI academic calendar year begins each fall semester. Therefore, full year memberships are only available in the fall. Memberships are valid for the terms purchased and are not transferable to another term or member.

Scholarships: OLLI offers partial scholarships during the fall and spring terms. A limited number of full scholarships may be available. Awards are strictly confidential. [Apply online](#). Scholarships are supported by donations to the OLLI Member Fund.

OLLI SPRING 2026 TERM • BEGINS MONDAY, MARCH 2, 2026

STUDY GROUPS AT-A-GLANCE

KEY

CI: Contemporary and Social Issues

CA: Creative Arts (Performing, Visual, and Literary Arts)

HIS: History & Government

LIT: Literature

STMH: Science, Technology, Medicine & Health

SS: Social Sciences (Philosophy, Sociology, Anthropology, Economics)

CHICAGO IN-PERSON SPRING 2026 STUDY GROUPS—page 13

Monday

NEW 9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m. **CA** Seven Endearing Movies from Israel (7-weeks, meets first half of the term)

NEW 9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m. **HIS** *Goliath's Curse: The History and Future of Social Collapse*

9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m. **LIT** Great Short Stories

1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m. **CI** *The New Yorker*

NEW 1:15 p.m.–4:15 p.m. **CA** Classic Cinema of World War II: Spies, Saboteurs, and Resistance Fighters

NEW 1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m. **CA** The Great Conductors (7-weeks, meets first half of the term)

1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m. **CA** Writing Life's Stories, Group A: Memoir Writing

1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m. **CA** Writing Life Stories, Group C

NEW 1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m. **LIT** The Winter of Our Discontent

NEW 1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m. **STMH** *Extraordinary Knowing* (7-weeks, meets second half of the term)

Tuesday

9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m. **CI** *The Atlantic*

NEW 9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m. **CI** *Who Is the City For? Architecture, Equity and the Public Realm*

9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m. **CA** Rolling Stone Magazine's Top 500 Songs of All Time

NEW 9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m. **HIS** The Mayoralty of Richard M. Daley and Its Consequences for Chicago Today

9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m. **HIS** *The Power Broker*

NEW 1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m. **CI** Becoming Peacemakers

NEW	1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.	CI	The Rise of Christian Nationalism into the Heart of US Power
NEW	1:15 p.m.–4:15 p.m.	CA	Classic Crime Cinema: Best of the “B” Film Noir Movies
NEW	1:15 p.m.–4:15 p.m.	CA	Passion in the Movies Over the Decades
	1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.	HIS	<i>The Black Count: The True Story of a Hero, a Man, and the French Revolution</i>
NEW	1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.	STMH	Exploring <i>Braiding Sweetgrass</i>

Wednesday

NEW	9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m.	CA	Summer of '69
NEW	9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m.	CA	Trailblazing Women in Music (7-weeks, meets first half of the term)
NEW	9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m.	CA	Trailblazing Men in Music (7-weeks, meets second half of the term)
NEW	9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m.	HIS	Clarence Darrow: Attorney for the Damned
	9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m.	HIS	Different Paths
NEW	9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m.	HIS	Exploring Sicily: Crossroads of the Mediterranean (7-weeks, meets second half of the term)
NEW	9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m.	HIS	The Rise and Fall of Clout and the Political Machine in Chicago
	1:15 p.m.–4:15 p.m.	CA	Off the Beaten Path Films: Then and Now
	1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.	CA	Short Stories Inspired by the Paintings of Edward Hopper (7-weeks, meets first half of the term)
NEW	1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.	CA	What Michael Jackson's <i>Thriller</i> Can Teach Us About Today (7-weeks, meets second half of the term)
	1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.	CI	Fighting Global Poverty
	1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.	CI	<i>The Economist</i> A
NEW	1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.	HIS	America in Transition: From the Civil War to World War I
NEW	1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.	HIS	<i>We the People: A History of the US Constitution</i>
NEW	1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.	LIT	American Jewish Short Stories (7-weeks, meets first half of the term)

Thursday

	9:30 a.m.–12:00 p.m.	CA	Capturing Chicago Through Photography
NEW	9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m.	CI	Trapped in Rural America (7-weeks, meets first half of the term)
	9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m.	HIS	Founding Fathers and Democracy
	9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m.	LIT	Espionage: Six Novels, Mostly by Women and Mostly True (7-weeks, meets first half of the term)
	9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m.	LIT	Lone Sleuths: The Solitary Detective in British Mysteries (7-weeks, meets second half of the term)

9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m.	LIT	Readings in Western Culture - <i>Great Conversations 4</i>
1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.	CI	Artificial Intelligence Today: Promise, Risk, and Real-World Impact (7-weeks, meets second half of the term)
1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.	CI	Washington Week
1:15 p.m.–4:15 p.m.	CA	Academy Award Winners and Nominees II
1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.	CA	Deconstructing the Hits! Radiotopia's <i>Song Exploder</i> Podcast (7-weeks, meets first half of the term)
NEW 1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.	HIS	<i>Sin in the Second City</i>
1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.	HIS	<i>The Fate of the Day</i> : Rick Atkinson's Description of the American Revolution

EVANSTON IN-PERSON SPRING 2026 STUDY GROUPS—page 31**Monday**

9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m.	CI	<i>The New Yorker</i>
NEW 9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m.	HIS	<i>The Abyss</i> : Cuban Missile Crisis
9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m.	LIT	Best American Short Stories
9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m.	LIT	Four Masters of the Short Story: Bambara, Krauss, Fitzgerald, Hemingway
1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.	LIT	Chinese Mysteries
NEW 1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.	LIT	The Campus Novel; Then and Now

Tuesday

NEW 9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m.	CA	<i>The Atlas of Art Crime</i> : Exploring the Dark Side of the Art World (7-weeks, meets first half of the term)
NEW 9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m.	HIS	Harry Truman: The Unexpected President
NEW 9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m.	HIS	<i>The American Revolution</i> —Through the Lens of Ken Burns (7-weeks, meets second half of the term)
9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m.	STMH	Get Started with AI (7-weeks, meets first half of the term)
9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m.	SS	<i>Cautionary Tales</i> Podcasts: From Surprising Human Error to Hilarious Fiascos (7-weeks, meets second half of the term)
1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.	CA	From Print to Pictures, the Art of Film Adaptation: Politics and Paranoia (7-weeks, meets first half of the term)
NEW 1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.	LIT	Dickens' Swan Song: <i>Our Mutual Friend</i>
1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.	STMH	Science in the News

Wednesday

9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m.	CA	Creative Writing Workshop
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9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m.	CA	Documentary Films (Wednesday)
NEW 9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m.	LIT	Tapestry of Voices: Short Stories of Ireland (7-weeks, meets second half of the term)
NEW 1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.	CA	The Art World in 7 Weeks (7-weeks, meets second half of the term)
1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.	CA	Theater in Chicago
1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.	LIT	Poetry for Pleasure
NEW 1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.	HIS	Celebrating The Declaration of Independence on its 250th Anniversary (7-weeks, meets first half of the term)
NEW 1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.	HIS	<i>The British Are Coming</i>

Thursday

NEW 9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m.	CA	25 Visionary Magazine Covers
NEW 9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m.	CA	Documentary Films (Thursday)
9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m.	HIS	Ron Chernow's <i>Mark Twain</i> (Second Semester)
NEW 9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m.	STMH	How Interactions Between Plants and Animals Shaped Life on Earth over the Eons
NEW 1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.	HIS	<i>We the People: A History of the US Constitution</i>
NEW 1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.	LIT	Poetry Through the Decades from <i>The New Yorker Magazine</i> (7-weeks, meets first half of the term)
NEW 1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.	LIT	Three Stoppard Masterpieces: <i>The Real Thing</i> , <i>Arcadia</i> , and <i>Leopoldstadt</i> (7-weeks, meets second half of the term)

VIRTUAL SPRING 2026 STUDY GROUPS—page 41**Monday**

NEW 1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.	CA	Female Directors—Female Strength—Female Gaze
1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.	CA	Writing Life Stories—B
1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.	LIT	Literary Masters: Nobel Women
4:00 p.m.–5:30 p.m.	CA	BONUS GROUP: Let's Talk About the Movies (Monday)

Tuesday

9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m.	CA	Exploring The Visual Arts
NEW 9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m.	LIT	Ovid and Virgil
NEW 9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m.	SS	<i>The Ideological Brain</i> (7-weeks, meets second half of the term)
NEW 1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.	CA	Great Photographers and Their Vision
1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.	CA	MacGuffins and More: Hitchcock's Masterworks and the Art of Pure Cinema (7-weeks, meets first half of the term)

1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.	CA	Tuesday at the Movies
1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.	LIT	<i>The Purgatorio</i> —Dante The Traveler, Virgil The Guide —The Journey Continues

Wednesday

8:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m.	CA	Capturing Chicagoland through Photography
9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m.	CI	<i>Foreign Affairs</i>
9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m.	LIT	Literature of Baseball Doubleheader
1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.	CI	Articles from the Sunday <i>New York Times</i>
1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.	CA	Documentary Films

Thursday

9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m.	CA	Poetry in a New Age
NEW 9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m.	HIS	<i>Myth America: The Biggest Legends and Lies About Our Past</i>
9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m.	SS	Shades of Gray
1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.	CI	<i>The Economist</i>
1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.	CA	The New Fiction Writers Workshop
NEW 1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.	HIS	<i>Rescue Board: The Untold Story of America's Efforts to Save the Jews of Europe</i> (7-weeks, meets first half of the term)
NEW 1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.	STMH	How Do Our Brains Shape Reality?
4:00 p.m.–5:30 p.m.	CA	BONUS GROUP: Let's Talk About the Movies (Thursday)

Friday

9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m.	CI	International Relations
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*“Wisdom is not a product of schooling
but of the lifelong attempt to acquire it.”*

~ Albert Einstein

7-WEEK STUDY GROUPS AT-A-GLANCE

How to Register for a 7-week Study Group

Two 7-week study groups = One full (14-week) study group

If you register for a 7-week study group, you may register for a second 7-week study group based on availability. Because the registration system does not recognize 1/2 credits, the office will have to assist with registering you for an optional second study group per the instructions below:

- Register yourself for one 7-week study group and any 14-week groups according to your membership level.
- If you wish to take a second 7-week study group, email the OLLI office with your choice: olli@northwestern.edu. (Please provide two or three options.)
- OLLI staff will register you for your second 7-week study group as quickly as possible and in the order received.
- If your 1st choice is filled you will be added to the wait list. OLLI staff will then attempt to register you for your 2nd choice. If it is also full, you will be added to that wait list as well.
- You will receive an automated email notifying you of the status (registered or waitlisted).

CHICAGO—MEETS FIRST HALF OF THE SEMESTER (March 2–April 17)

Monday

NEW 9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m. **CA** Seven Endearing Movies from Israel
NEW 1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m. **CA** The Great Conductors

Wednesday

NEW 9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m. **CA** Trailblazing Women in Music
1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m. **CA** Short Stories Inspired by the Paintings of Edward Hopper
NEW 1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m. **LIT** American Jewish Short Stories

Thursday

NEW 9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m. **CI** Trapped in Rural America
9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m. **LIT** Espionage: Six Novels, Mostly by Women and Mostly True
1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m. **CA** Deconstructing the Hits! Radiotopia's *Song Exploder* Podcast

CHICAGO—MEETS SECOND HALF OF THE SEMESTER (April 20–June 8)

Monday

NEW 1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m. **STMH** *Extraordinary Knowing*

Wednesday

NEW 9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m. **CA** Trailblazing Men in Music
NEW 9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m. **HIS** Exploring Sicily: Crossroads of the Mediterranean
NEW 1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m. **CA** What Michael Jackson's *Thriller* Can Teach Us About Today

Continued on next page

CHICAGO—MEETS SECOND HALF OF THE SEMESTER (April 20–June 8), CONT

Thursday

9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m. **LIT** Lone Sleuths: The Solitary Detective in British Mysteries
1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m. **CI** Artificial Intelligence Today: Promise, Risk, and Real-World Impact

EVANSTON—MEETS FIRST HALF OF THE SEMESTER (March 2–April 17)

Tuesday

NEW 9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m. **CA** *The Atlas of Art Crime: Exploring the Dark Side of the Art World*
9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m. **STMH** Get Started with AI
1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m. **CA** From Print to Pictures, the Art of Film Adaptation: Politics and Paranoia

Wednesday

NEW 1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m. **HIS** Celebrating The Declaration of Independence on its 250th Anniversary

Thursday

NEW 1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m. **LIT** Poetry Through the Decades from *The New Yorker Magazine*

EVANSTON—MEETS SECOND HALF OF THE SEMESTER (April 20–June 8)

Tuesday

NEW 9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m. **HIS** The American Revolution—Through the Lens of Ken Burns
9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m. **SS** *Cautionary Tales* Podcasts: From Surprising Human Error to Hilarious Fiascos

Wednesday

NEW 9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m. **LIT** Tapestry of Voices: Short Stories of Ireland
NEW 1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m. **CA** The Art World in 7 Weeks

Thursday

NEW 1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m. **LIT** Three Stoppard Masterpieces: *The Real Thing, Arcadia, and Leopoldstadt*

VIRTUAL—MEETS FIRST HALF OF THE SEMESTER (March 2–April 17)

Tuesday

1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m. **CA** MacGuffins and More: Hitchcock's Masterworks and the Art of Pure Cinema

Thursday

NEW 1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m. **HIS** *Rescue Board: The Untold Story of America's Efforts to Save the Jews of Europe*

VIRTUAL—MEETS SECOND HALF OF THE SEMESTER (April 20–June 8)

Tuesday

NEW 9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m. **SS** *The Ideological Brain*



Northwestern
SCHOOL OF
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OLLI SPRING 2026 TERM • BEGINS MONDAY, MARCH 2, 2026

STUDY GROUP DESCRIPTIONS

ICON KEY

	High level of discussion		Preparation: Less than 1 hour per week
	Medium level of discussion		No preparation needed
	Low level of discussion		Movies/documentaries shown
	Participation strongly encouraged		Access to streaming service required
	Participation encouraged		Kindle edition available
	Participation according to comfort level		Digital SLR camera required
	Preparation: More than 2 hours per week		Digital camera or Smartphone required
	Preparation: Roughly 1–2 hours per week		

These icons are located after each study group description and indicate levels of discussion, participation, preparation, and other factors to consider when choosing a study group.

STUDY GROUP CATEGORIES

Study groups are organized into the categories listed here. You can find each group's category to the right of the study group name on the page.

• CREATIVE ARTS (PERFORMING, VISUAL, AND LITERARY ARTS)	• HISTORY & GOVERNMENT
• CONTEMPORARY AND SOCIAL ISSUES	• SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, MEDICINE & HEALTH (STMH)
• LITERATURE	• SOCIAL SCIENCES (PHILOSOPHY, SOCIOLOGY, ANTHROPOLOGY, ECONOMICS)

CHICAGO STUDY GROUPS: MONDAY

BEGINS MARCH 2, 2026

NEW Seven Endearing Movies from Israel

CREATIVE ARTS

Monday, 9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m. (7 weeks, meets first half of the term)

Eli Libenson, Kevin McCann, David Prosnitz

There is a phrase in Hebrew, “Yisrael HaYaffa,” or Beautiful Israel, which is used to describe the softer side of life in the country. The seven films we have chosen are for the most part tenderhearted and touching; two or three are very funny as well. Some of the movies refer to Israel’s early days and others to more modern times. The movies are relatively unknown (some almost forgotten), but they are gems. The seven movies are: *Over the Ocean; An Israeli Love Story; The Little Traitor; Aviya’s Summer; The Band’s Visit; Fill the Void; and Noodle*. After watching these films together, we will discuss our insights, adding to the enjoyment and understanding of these heart-felt movies. Please join us for this informative and enriching experience.



NEW Goliath’s Curse: The History and Future of Social Collapse

HISTORY & GOVERNMENT

Monday, 9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m.

William Barker, Jim Smith

In *Goliath’s Curse: The History and Future of Societal Collapse* (Alfred A. Knopf, 2025), Cambridge scholar Luke Kemp considers human societies before global climate stabilized enough to permit agriculture, and the rise and collapse of societies after agriculture became possible. Hunter-gatherer societies were generally egalitarian, but later societies generally were not. Drawing on historical databases and on the latest discoveries in archeology and anthropology, Kemp traces the emergence of “Goliaths,” large societies based on hierarchies, whose very structures created vulnerability to collapse—vulnerability that he argues was greater the more unequal and exploitative the society was. Collapse of such societies was sometimes beneficial to their populations and laid the foundation for better societies. Kemp draws on examples from the Bronze Age to today—and from diverse geographies including the Near East, the Americas (both before and after the arrival of Europeans), precolonial Africa, China, Southeast Asia, the Roman Empire, post-Roman Europe, the colonial world, and the more modern world. His account is rich in little-known facts and novel perspectives. Kemp finally examines risks facing our present global society that might lead to its collapse, conditions exacerbating those risks, what remnants might survive a collapse, and how a collapse might be prevented. Join us as we read and discuss these concepts on future societies.



“Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn.”

~ Benjamin Franklin

Great Short Stories

LITERATURE

Monday, 9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m.

Julia Katz, Alan Goldberg

As Pulitzer Prize-winning author Stacy Schiff wrote in *The New York Times*, “A short story is by definition an odder, more eccentric creature than a novel; a trailer, a fling, a warm-up act, a bouillon cube, a championship game in one inning. Irresolution and ambiguity become it; it’s a first date rather than a marriage. When is it mightier than the novel? When its elisions speak as loudly as its lines.” If you enjoy reading fiction and want to explore the succinctness of the short story, join our study group. The very brevity of the form invites lively discussion and differing interpretations of the material. This study group gives a brief but fascinating introduction to a variety of authors. Each study group member acts as discussion leader for one or two stories of their choice, and also shares a brief biography of the story’s author. Two anthologies serve as texts. *The Best Short Stories 2025*, edited by Edward P. Jones and Jenny Minton Quigley (Vintage Books, 2025), contains 20 short stories published in 2023 or 2024. *50 Great Short Stories*, edited by Milton Crane (Bantam Books, 1952), contains 50 short story classics written over the span of a century.



The New Yorker

CONTEMPORARY / SOCIAL ISSUES

Monday, 1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.

Barbara Glatt, Dale Melin Walters, Marylyn Miller

Inside its famous covers and beyond the cartoons, *The New Yorker* is dedicated to quality, topical writings and ideas. Our study group discussions will be as varied as the contents of this distinguished magazine. Join us as we explore art, technology, politics, culture, medicine, fashion, and commentary. You will find your current view of our world expanded. A current online or print subscription of *The New Yorker* magazine is required. All study group participants are expected to be a discussion leader at least once during the 14 week term. This is a hybrid class.



NEW Classic Cinema of World War II: Spies, Saboteurs, and Resistance Fighters

CREATIVE ARTS

Monday, 1:15 p.m.–4:15 p.m.

Bill McGuffage, Steve Greska

In this study group we will watch critically-acclaimed and award-winning films about fearless individuals whose secret and dangerous missions off the battlefield paved the way for the Allied victory over Nazi Germany. Many of them were unsung heroes who gave their lives in the cause of freedom. Among the films that will be presented are: *Casablanca* (1942), *The Man Who Never Was* (1956), *The Counterfeit Traitor* (1961), *The Imitation Game* (Britain, 2014), *Army Of Shadows* (France, 1969), *Flame And Citron* (Denmark, 2008), and others. Join us to watch these classic WW II films and for the sure-to-be-lively discussion following each film.



NEW The Great Conductors

CREATIVE ARTS

Monday, 1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m. (7 weeks, meets first half of the term)

Matthew Corey, Kevin McCann

What makes a great conductor, and how did the art of conducting develop? In this study group, we will consider those questions and more as we learn about some of the great conductors from the early days of western classical music to the present day. With deep listening and engagement of select orchestral pieces as conducted by some of the greats, we will consider differences in interpretation including dynamics, tempo, orchestral practice, and others. From the past greats of Reiner, Bernstein, and van Karajan, up to the great interpreters of the present day (with a particular emphasis on those who've had a strong relationship with the Chicago Symphony), this study group will delight, inform, and open your ears. We will view and discuss the documentary *The Art of Conducting: The Great Conductors of the Past*, which will be supplemented with many other audio and video selections.



Writing Life's Stories, Group A: Memoir Writing

CREATIVE ARTS

Monday, 1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.

Steve Meiss, Orit Carpenter

Are you ready to capture your memories, reflect on cherished moments, and celebrate the people who have shaped your life? Whether you are a seasoned writer or brand new to storytelling, our memoir writing class welcomes you! We create a warm, encouraging atmosphere where everyone's voice is valued and everyone grows as a writer. Each week, you will write up to seven hundred words about a meaningful experience, adventure, or chapter from your life. For example, you might share the story of moving to a new city and the unexpected friendships that made it feel like home, or recall a family tradition—any topic you choose. During each session, we read our pieces aloud and offer constructive feedback. Additionally, each participant will guide a discussion on a published memoir of his or her choice. This might be an entire book or a chapter. Choose a personal favorite or select one from our list. Our study group is proud of its achievements. Participants have published family keepsake books, contributed to local anthologies, and formed lasting friendships through the sharing of stories. Join us and discover the joy of writing your life's stories.



Writing Life Stories, Group C

CREATIVE ARTS

Monday, 1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.

Susan Gillis, Beth Chiaiese

Why write our own stories? Memoir writing may help us capture enduring portraits of the people in our lives or recreate with words the landscapes we once walked. They may provide an opportunity to reflect on our ever changing personal, family, or societal circumstances. Yet writing about one's own life can be daunting. Where does one start? What should be included or not included? What about style? Whether you are a beginner or an experienced writer, we will help one another tackle some of these issues in our memoir writing group. Each week, we will have an opportunity to present our work to a sounding board of like-minded memoirists and give and receive helpful feedback. We will also hone our writing skills by drawing from a wide variety of resources dealing with the genre. If you are interested in writing your life stories, please join us.

NEW The Winter of Our Discontent

LITERATURE

Monday, 1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.

Robert Elliott, Michael Hennessy, David Jacobson

England's first great monarch, King Henry V, is dead; the country erupts in civil war, and William the Conqueror's Norman line of English succession disappears for good. Leave it to William Shakespeare to weave this gritty tale of the War of the Roses. We will read his first tetrad of history plays: *Henry VI, Parts I, II, and III*, and *Richard III*, accompanied by the brilliant BBC film adaptation of the plays, *The Hollow Crown*. The Folger Shakespeare Library editions of the plays are preferred. We will conclude with a critical discussion of Laurence Olivier's 1956 film adaptation of *Richard III*. Join us for 13 weeks of royal murder, intrigue, war, and peace, for awhile, at least.



NEW Extraordinary Knowing

STMH

Monday, 1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m. (7 weeks, meets second half of the term)

Eric Cooper, Ann Stelmach

This study group explores the intersection of scientific inquiry and anomalous human experiences through Elizabeth Lloyd Mayer's groundbreaking work, *Extraordinary Knowing* (Random House, 2008). We will consider Mayer's personal journey, the history of research in parapsychology, the challenges posed by skepticism and scientific norms, and the implications of "extraordinary knowing" for how we understand consciousness, perception, and human potential. Each week we will examine psychic phenomena, intuition, and extraordinary knowing from multiple perspectives—scientific, clinical, philosophical, and personal. Participants will engage critically with questions about consciousness, the limits of conventional science, and how we evaluate extraordinary claims.



CHICAGO STUDY GROUPS: TUESDAY

BEGINS MARCH 3, 2026

The Atlantic

CONTEMPORARY / SOCIAL ISSUES

Tuesday, 9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m.

Robert Rifkin, Barbara Glatt

The Atlantic is one of America's most respected magazines, known for its insightful journalism, elegant writing, and wide-ranging coverage of issues that shape our world. Each month, it offers thought-provoking articles and essays on politics, foreign affairs, science, technology, health, education, culture, and the arts—along with fiction and book reviews. Its digital editions provide timely commentary and fresh perspectives from leading writers and thinkers. In this discussion-based study group, participants will take turns selecting an article or literary work—either from *The Atlantic*'s print magazine or digital site—and leading the week's conversation. Together we'll explore the ideas, evidence, and arguments presented while connecting them to current events and our own experiences. A subscription to *The Atlantic* (print or digital) is required. Bring your curiosity, your ideas, and your voice as we engage in lively, thoughtful discussions that deepen our understanding of today's most pressing topics



NEW Who Is the City For? Architecture, Equity and the Public Realm

CONTEMPORARY / SOCIAL ISSUES

Tuesday, 9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m.

Sandy Bredine, Mark Rosenberg

The city of Chicago is well known for its award-winning architecture, yet too often the public spaces fail to adequately address the long standing inequities of its neighborhoods. In a book that draws from 28 years as an architecture critic for the *Chicago Tribune*, Blair Kamin explores some of the most iconic Chicago architecture and neighborhoods, from the Loop to Trump Tower to the almost completed Obama Presidential Center in Jackson Park. With 55 of his past columns complemented by the photographs of his one-time rival at the *Chicago Sun Times*, Lee Bey, Kamin examines the role of architecture in the lives of the people of Chicago. Using Kamin's book *Who Is the City For?: Architecture, Equity, and the Public Realm in Chicago* (Chicago Press, 2022), we will discuss this collection of columns, supplemented by a field trip or two and hopefully the author as a guest speaker.



Rolling Stone Magazine's Top 500 Songs of All Time

CREATIVE ARTS

Tuesday, 9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m.

Howard Tanzman, Tim Atkins, Laurie Toth

In 2004, *Rolling Stone Magazine* published their list of the top 500 songs of all time. In this study group, we will complete our exploration of this list by reviewing song numbers 410–500. We will listen to each song together and discuss the lyrics, melody, riffs, and other aspects of the song. We will share when and where we first heard the song and evaluate aspects of the band and their works. We will discuss whether we agree with *Rolling Stone* on their rankings. Join us as we have fun learning and reminiscing. Listen to classics from The Beatles, Rolling Stones, Pink Floyd, The Supremes, Bob Dylan, Elton John, Led Zeppelin, and many others. Prior participation in the study group is not necessary. This class is fun!



NEW The Mayoralty of Richard M. Daley and Its Consequences for Chicago Today

HISTORY & GOVERNMENT

Tuesday, 9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m.

Thomas Ross, Ed Klinenberg

Richard M. Daley was a dynamic and very consequential mayor of Chicago. During his mayoralty, following in the legendary footsteps of his father, Richard J. Daley, Chicago transformed from a gritty, rust-belt city to a gleaming, world-class city. Many cultural institutions were rejuvenated, Millennium Park was built, and businesses thrived. However, some governmental corruption was still entrenched, and fiscal shenanigans sometimes hid structural problems with the budget. Join us as we use Keith Koeneman's *First Son: The Biography of Richard M. Daley* (University of Chicago Press, 2013) to explore Richard M.'s mayoralty, the good and bad, with which we are living today.



The Power Broker

Tuesday, 9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m.

Dan Burns, Rosemary O'Shea

HISTORY & GOVERNMENT

Robert Caro's acclaimed biography, *The Power Broker* (Viking, 1974), chronicles the life and influence of Robert Moses, one of the most powerful figures in urban planning and development in the 20th century. In telling the Moses story, Caro describes the way politics really happens, the way things get done in America's City Halls and Statehouses. Serving alongside six New York governors, from Al Smith to Nelson Rockefeller, and five NYC mayors, from Fiorello La Guardia to John Lindsey, Moses was more powerful than any of them, despite the fact he had never been elected to any public office. The book paints a complex portrait of Moses, whose visionary projects transformed New York City through the construction of parks, bridges, highways, and housing. It also uncovers the dark side of Moses' power, revealing how his autocratic methods led to the displacement of countless residents. More than anything, this book is a study of power—the rise to, the use of, the love of, the lust for, and the loss of power. This is the second semester of a two-semester study group. Participation in the first semester is not necessary to enjoy the second semester of this monumental work.



NEW Becoming Peacemakers

CONTEMPORARY / SOCIAL ISSUES

Tuesday, 1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.

Janet Lang, Janet Shlaes, Nan Contel

How do we create engaged dialogue, understanding, and connection in a polarized world? This study group explores the habits and methods of peacemakers—people who skillfully bridge divides and foster civil discourse. Utilizing *10 Habits of a Peacemaker* by Steven T. Collis (Shadow Mountain Publishing, 2024), we will employ experiential conflict scenarios to practice principles of humility, empathy, and active listening. Collis, a law professor at University of Texas, Austin is one of the nation's preeminent First Amendment and civil discourse thought leaders. We will supplement his book with TED Talks and practice building skills bridging political divides with "Braver Angels," a national organization fostering courageous citizenship. Our work will extend beyond the classroom to meet with violence interrupters reducing conflict in their communities, and later we will experience the power of Restorative Justice by participating in a Peace Circle led by a prominent practitioner. To identify and understand our personal default conflict resolution styles, we will also include an optional two hour "Understanding Conflict Styles" Workshop, conducted by the NU School of Professional Studies. Join us to develop your skills to resist outrage and learn how to build peace—one conversation at a time. Are you ready to build some bridges?



*"Lifelong learning is not about keeping up—
it's about staying engaged."*

~ Anonymous

NEW The Rise of Christian Nationalism into the Heart of US Power

CONTEMPORARY / SOCIAL ISSUES

Tuesday, 1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.

Dorothy Balabanos, Tim Atkins, Richard Kern

The separation of church and state has deep roots in American history. However, in the past decade the belief that the United States was founded as a Christian nation and that its laws and institutions should be based on conservative Christian values now has support among an estimated 30% of Americans. Many of our government leaders now support Christian Nationalism. We have seen examples of this in judicial appointments, policy decisions on healthcare and public education, and the inclusion of Christian practices in public spaces. The rise of anti-immigration, antisemitism, and anti-LGBTQ+ beliefs, as well as a return to traditional gender roles and a call for white racial solidarity, are also fueled by Christian Nationalism. Our study group will explore its history and beliefs, its impact on American laws and society, and the pushback it is receiving from many religious and non-religious sectors. We'll be using two *New York Times* best-selling books, *Jesus and John Wayne: How White Evangelicals Corrupted a Faith and Fractured a Nation* (Liveright Publishing, 2021) and *Separation of Church and Hate* (Avid Reader Press, 2025). Supplemental articles, videos and guest speakers will enhance our lively conversations.



NEW Classic Crime Cinema: Best of the “B” Film Noir Movies

CREATIVE ARTS

Tuesday, 1:15 p.m.–4:15 p.m.

Bill McGuffage, Paul Hurder

Film Noir is a sub-genre of the American crime movie and a reflection of post-World War II anxiety. The Film Noir world is marked by themes of fear and fatalism, and morally ambiguous protagonists who are driven by sex, money, or both, to commit abnormal criminal acts. Film Noir visuals are typically shown as dark and shadowy images and in low and claustrophobic camera angles. Complex noir plots may develop by narration or in flashbacks. Classic film noirs like *Double Indemnity* are productions of major movie studios (Universal or Paramount) with major stars, writers and directors. In the same years, small studios known as Poverty Row (Monogram and Eagle-Lion) were grinding out low-budget but high quality noirs that were shown in theaters on the bottom half of a double feature. With the advent of TV in the early 1950s, these “B” list noirs gained popularity as late features after newscasts. “B” listers such as *Detour*, *Raw Deal*, *The Narrow Margin* and others became B+ films and, interestingly enough, were often ignored by the Production Code censors. So join us to watch, enjoy, and discuss this collection of “crime on the cheap” film noirs which are now classics in their own right. Other movie titles will be provided in the study group syllabus.



NEW Passion in the Movies Over the Decades

CREATIVE ARTS

Tuesday, 1:15 p.m.–4:15 p.m.

Margo Sorgman, Adrienne Weiss, Steve Greska

Movies which pull us into the narrative and take us into the center of human exchange often deal with passion, “a strong and barely controllable emotion.” These films explore passion in various forms including romantic love, obsession, artistic expression, a driver for success, and the pursuit of a dream. They often derive from literary masterpieces, have musical scores by great composers, include story lines with memorable dialogue, have complex characters and excellent actors, and blaze across the screen with superb cinematography. They are movies which remain vivid in our memory and help us explore interlocking themes such as: courage, jealousy, integrity, truth, service, spirituality, immorality, and possession.

Study group presenters will be provided with a template of elements to guide discussion of films seen in class. The movies to be discussed are: *The Taste of Things* (2023), *Possession* (1981), *Black Narcissus* (1947), *Unfaithful* (2002), *Network* (1976), *The Fountainhead* (1949), *Damage* (1992), *Anne of the Thousand Days* (1969), *Chinatown* (1974), *Body Heat* (1981), *Hoosiers* (1986), *The Great Santini* (1979), *The Lover* (1992), and the final film to be determined by the class.



The Black Count: The True Story of a Hero, a Man, and the French Revolution

HISTORY & GOVERNMENT

Tuesday, 1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.

Robert Rifkin, Tom Williamson

Tom Reiss's Pulitzer Prize-winning biography *The Black Count: Glory, Revolution, Betrayal, and the Real Count of Monte Cristo* (Broadway Books, 2012), will be our guide as we explore the extraordinary life and times of General Alex Dumas, a Black man born on a sugar plantation in Saint-Domingue, Haiti, to an enslaved mother and a ne'er-do-well French aristocrat, who rose from obscurity to become one of the most remarkable military leaders of his time. Through Dumas's eyes, we will examine the brutality of Caribbean slavery, the promise and contradictions of Enlightenment ideals, the decadence of Paris in the 1780s, the forces that drove the French Revolution and the overthrow of Louis XVI and the monarchy, the Reign of Terror, and the rise of Napoleon. We will also consider how Alex's son, the novelist Alexandre Dumas, later drew upon his father's life story and adventures in creating *The Count of Monte Cristo*. This “groundbreaking masterpiece of narrative nonfiction” teaches us something new on every page. Join us in our exploration..



NEW Exploring Braiding Sweetgrass

STMH

Tuesday, 1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.

Susan Salpeter, Sami Nordmark, Kay Burnett

This study group will explore *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants* (Milkweed Editions, 2013) by Robin Wall Kimmerer, a botanist and member of the Citizen Potawatuck Nation. In a series of essays Kimmerer braids memoir, Indigenous knowledge, scientific inquiry, and plant-stories to prompt deeper questions about reciprocity, gratitude, and humanity's relationship with the land. Themes such as the "honorable harvest," the concept of gift economics, and the living personhood of plants will guide discussion. Through careful reading and discussion, study group members will examine how Kimmerer invites readers to reimagine relationships between humans and the more-than-human world. The text's interweaving of scientific knowledge and ancestral wisdom challenges Western notions of objectivity, offering new ways to understand reciprocity, gratitude, and stewardship of the earth. *Braiding Sweetgrass* is a beautifully written, thought-provoking book that has been on the *New York Times* best seller list for over 288 weeks. Each week we will read a series of essays from the book. Discussion leaders are encouraged to use supplemental materials such as additional readings, pictures, or videos to deepen our discussions and understanding of the themes of the book.



CHICAGO STUDY GROUPS: WEDNESDAY

BEGINS MARCH 4, 2026

NEW Summer of '69

CREATIVE ARTS

Wednesday, 9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m.

Tim Atkins, Celia ("C") Reed

What do you remember about the summer of 1969? For many of us "the music" tops our list. And the music is inextricably part of everything that was bubbling up in American culture that year. This study group will focus on the intersection of music and other aspects of culture, using two documentary films as our lens. The summer of 1969 saw two major concert events that still resonate through our culture today. Everybody knows about Woodstock, and in Harlem there was a series of concerts featuring Black artists who inspired audiences every bit as much. Both resulted in films that bear powerful testament to the energy of change that was sweeping the nation (*Woodstock* and *The Summer of Soul*). Together we will watch both films, experience the celebrations and the challenges of those concerts, and discuss how these musicians and these audiences exemplified their culture. Each participant will choose one or more performances from the films and then bring in other materials to shed light on how the artists influenced and were influenced by the wider culture. Possible topics include: 1969 media (TV, Movies, news, literature), science, student protests, Vietnam, psychedelia, education, finance, civil rights, and more. If you remember 1969, come join our discussions.



NEW Trailblazing Women in Music

CREATIVE ARTS

Wednesday, 9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m. (7 weeks, meets first half of the term)

Glenn Derringer, Steven Barrigar

Explore the groundbreaking contributions of women who shaped the music world in Trailblazing Women in Music. This engaging study group celebrates female artists, composers, teachers, and conductors whose innovation, artistry, and courage transformed genres from classical to pop. Musicians to be covered include Clara Shumann, Alma Mahler, Ella Fitzgerald, Taylor Swift, and many others. Participants will dive into the stories behind influential figures such as pioneering jazz singers, classical composers, pop visionaries, and contemporary trailblazers who challenged industry norms and opened doors for future generations. Through curated listening sessions, multimedia presentations, and lively discussions, study group members will gain a deeper understanding of how gender, culture, and creativity intersect in music history. No prior musical background is required—just a passion for music, storytelling, and the women who made their voices heard.



NEW Trailblazing Men in Music

CREATIVE ARTS

Wednesday, 9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m. (7 weeks, meets second half of the term)

Glenn Derringer, Steven Barrigar

Explore the groundbreaking contributions of men who shaped the music world in Trailblazing Men in Music. This engaging study group celebrates male artists, composers, teachers, and conductors whose innovation, artistry, and courage transformed genres from classical to pop. Musicians to be covered include Wolfgang Mozart, Ludwig Von Beethoven, Ray Charles, Bruce Springsteen, and many others. Participants will dive into the stories behind influential figures such as pioneering jazz singers, classical composers, pop visionaries, and contemporary trailblazers who challenged industry norms and opened doors for future generations. Through curated listening sessions, multimedia presentations, and lively discussions, study group members will gain a deeper understanding of how gender, culture, and creativity intersect in music history. No prior musical background is required—just a passion for music, storytelling, and the men who made their voices heard.



NEW Clarence Darrow: Attorney for the Damned

HISTORY & GOVERNMENT

Wednesday, 9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m.

Judith Myers, Julia Weinshelbaum

Throughout his career, Clarence Darrow defended gangsters, psychopaths, crooked politicians, and greedy corporations. Often he didn't take cases for the money. He did it to make a larger point about constitutional law. Early in his career he defended railroad-union activist Eugene Debs as part of the Pullman strike case. Later, Darrow represented Chicago teenaged killers Leopold and Loeb to make an impassioned plea against capital punishment. He defended Tennessee school teacher John Scopes to spark a national debate about modern science versus religious fundamentalism. Darrow defended Black physician Ossian Sweet against murder charges to expose racial hatred. In this study group you will take a deep dive into the how and why behind several of Darrow's high profile cases and their lasting impact. Also, you will examine the complex evolution of Darrow into the myth that became part of a decades-long cultural zeitgeist. Our source materials, which will be provided via links, will include excerpts from Darrow's autobiography, excerpts from a comprehensive biography of Darrow, transcripts of his legal arguments, articles and newsreel footage from his various cases, and a sampling of the plays, movies, and TV productions that used Darrow and his legal arguments for creative drama.



Different Paths

HISTORY & GOVERNMENT

Wednesday, 9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m.

Joseph Hinkel, Richard Krantz, Margaret Schilt

By the year 1000, China was the most economically advanced and politically developed country in the world, while western Europe remained a fractured group of warring tribes struggling to survive. In the next millennium, western civilization delivered the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution, and transformed the world economy, while China stagnated, a crippled giant. Why the reversal? In their new book *Two Paths to Prosperity* (Princeton Press November, 2025), NU Professor and recent Nobel Prize for Economics recipient Joel Mokyr, along with his co-authors Avner Greif and Guido Tabellini, explore critical differences in culture, society, and institutional organization to answer this question. Join us for a fascinating discussion in economic and comparative history that may inform western responses to China's resurgence in the 21st Century.



NEW Exploring Sicily: Crossroads of the Mediterranean

HISTORY & GOVERNMENT

Wednesday, 9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m. (7 weeks, meets second half of the term)

Pat Stankard, Margaret Marty

Discover the remarkable island of Sicily—one of the world's most fascinating cultural crossroads—as we travel through time and explore the Mediterranean's largest island. Over 5,000 years, thirteen civilizations have ruled here, from the Phoenicians and Greeks to the Romans, Byzantines, Arabs, Normans, and Spanish. We'll learn how this rich layering of cultures shaped the island's landscape and architecture: Greek temples, Roman villas, Byzantine mosaics, Baroque churches, Jewish synagogues, and even World War II bunkers and cemeteries, all overlooked by Mount Etna, Europe's tallest and most active volcano. Together, we'll discuss what makes Sicily so irresistible—and how its conquerors, artists, and storytellers left their mark. Our guide will be *The Invention of Sicily* (Verso 2025) by Jamie Mackay, an engaging storyteller who brings to life the people and places of Sicily's past. Each week, we'll journey through a different era, from ancient empires to modern times, with a few delicious stops to sample Sicilian cuisine. Whether you've visited Sicily before, dream of going someday, or prefer to travel from your armchair, join us for an unforgettable exploration of this vibrant island—its culture, its history, and its enduring magic.



NEW The Rise and Fall of Clout and the Political Machine in Chicago

HISTORY & GOVERNMENT

Wednesday, 9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m.

Maryann Hayes, Robin Charleston

What is the genesis of political patronage in Chicago? In the past, "the city that works" required "clout" for a person to make it big in Chicago, or even to get an entry-level job in the Department of Streets and Sanitation. In *Clout City* (University of Chicago Press, 2025), Chicago historian Dominic Pacyga recounts the social, cultural, and religious forces that led to the rise and fall of clout and "The Machine" from 1871 to the present. Our study group will explore the roots of "The Machine" that ruled Chicago for decades. We will assess how clout and the glory days of "The Machine" shaped Chicago's current political order. If you are interested in Chicago history and politics and are looking for an engrossing book that will generate spirited discussions on these topics, join us!



Off the Beaten Path Films: Then and Now

CREATIVE ARTS

Wednesday, 1:15 p.m.–4:15 p.m.

Paul Hurder, Nadine Caputo

In the United States alone, each year over 900 feature films are released, with many more worldwide. Even the most determined cinefile can only see a small fraction of each year's offerings. We may see a few of the blockbusters, the Oscar winners and the indie films that briefly catch fire. With each passing year, however, scores of fine films are forgotten or overlooked as audiences move on to the next year of new releases. This study group will explore a diverse selection of independent, foreign and overlooked films with which film lovers may not be familiar. The films will not come from any specific era or genre, but as a group will be films that for many reasons were perhaps unseen, under appreciated, forgotten or just left behind. We will view the films in class and then, through analysis and discussion, consider themes of character development, cinematic technique, narrative experimentation, and the social or historical contexts that shaped these films. Where appropriate we will consider where each film fits in a particular director's career and their evolving style. Please join us as we attempt to gain a deeper appreciation for some of cinema's hidden treasures.



Short Stories Inspired by the Paintings of Edward Hopper

CREATIVE ARTS

Wednesday, 1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m. (7 weeks, meets first half of the term)

Diane Dunne, Tim Atkins

Open your eyes and imaginations to the creativity of a gifted 20th century artist as interpreted by a potpourri of award-winning short story writers. A complex and remote man, Edward Hopper created remarkable paintings centered around solitary figures or small groups and set in urban environments—that did not tell stories but, rather, inspired the viewer's stories. The emotional core of his work deals with themes of loneliness, disconnection, and the inner life of modern individuals, rendered through minimal action and stark interiors or exteriors. Join us to discuss these themes and more each week by viewing 1-2 paintings and reading the well-crafted, unpredictable stories they inspired. Authors include Michael Connelly, Jeffery Deaver, Joyce Carol Oates and Lee Child. We will be reading the short story anthology *In Sunlight or In Shadow, Stories Inspired by The Paintings of Edward Hopper* (Pegasus Books, 2016) edited by Grand Master Mystery Writer Lawrence Block. We will post a variety of supplemental materials on MyOLLI and will enjoy a group outing to The Art Institute, followed by lunch.



*“You are never too old to set another goal
or to learn something new.”*

~ C.S. Lewis

NEW What Michael Jackson's *Thriller* Can Teach Us About Today CREATIVE ARTS

Wednesday, 1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m. (7 weeks, meets second half of the term)

Kevin McCann, Tim Atkins

After the dramatic success of his *Off The Wall* album, Michael Jackson asked two questions: Could he produce an album suitable to be played on any radio station during this time when radio formats were very segregated, especially on racial lines? Could he go beyond music, uniting races and cultures worldwide? His record label called him crazy. Do you remember the frenzy created by the *Thriller* album in 1983 and how it excited so many people across the globe? The 40th anniversary re-release of *Thriller* called forth new scholarship and critical re-evaluation with the benefit of four decades of perspective. This re-evaluation also included “insider stories” from those involved in the creation of the original release, along with a trove of podcasts, blogs, and other media. Now we have new tools to help us discuss and debate why *Thriller* remains relevant and to learn if its genius has any lessons for today, given today’s “echo chamber” environment, on how to again find common ground and community. We promise an engaging and thought-provoking re-evaluation. Plus, we’ll listen to legendary music, including from musicians who directly acknowledge *Thriller*’s impact on their own storied work. Red leather jackets and sparkly gloves welcomed, but not required.



Fighting Global Poverty

CONTEMPORARY / SOCIAL ISSUES

Wednesday, 1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.

Joseph Hinkel, Dixie Johnson

Why do the world’s poor borrow to save? Why do they miss out on free lifesaving immunizations but pay for unnecessary drugs? Why do poor children not achieve academically? In *Poor Economics A Radical Rethinking of the Way to Fight Global Poverty* (Public Affairs, 2025), Nobel Prize-Winning MIT Professors Abhijit Banerjee and Ester Duflo answer these questions based on years of global field research. They investigate what the lives and choices of the poor tell us about fighting global poverty. While the principal source of the course discussion will be the newly revised and updated version of their *Poor Economics* book, we will also use source materials available through the free course on *Poor Economics* the authors provide online through MIT, where they teach. Join us as we look at this fascinating research.



The Economist A

CONTEMPORARY / SOCIAL ISSUES

Wednesday, 1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.

Jerrold Levine, Larry Winer

The Economist magazine is known for its informative and thought-provoking reporting on political, social and economic developments around the world. Join us as we review several articles selected from the current week’s issue as catalysts for informed and lively discussion on the critical topics of our time. Subscribing or having access to current editions of *The Economist* (print or digital) is required to participate in the healthy discussion about world affairs. Information on subscriptions is available at 1-800-456-6086 or www.economistsubscriptions.com



NEW America in Transition: From the Civil War to World War I

Wednesday, 1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.

Richard Krantz, Margaret Schilt, Scott Lassar

In the aftermath of the Civil War, America grappled with the challenges of integrating 4 million freed slaves into American society, while contending with political change in Mexico and Canada and imperial expansion westward to the Pacific at the expense of the Native populations. We will read and discuss Chapters 7–12 of Alan Taylor's *American Civil Wars: A Continental History, 1850–1873* (W.W. Norton, 2024) which covers these events and ends with his conclusion in the epilogue: "Restoring the Union ultimately came by excluding southern Blacks from the liberal dream of equal opportunity." After Taylor, we move to a discussion of Jackson Lears' book *Rebirth of a Nation: The Making of Modern America, 1877–1920* (HarperCollins, 2009), continuing the story through the turn of the century. He characterizes the 1870s and 1880s as a period of "...widespread yearning for regeneration," although that regeneration did not fully extend to everyone. Optimism and faith in the power of progress and the destiny of the Republic grew, only to be tested in the crucible of another war, the first World War, opening the door to yet another uncertain future. Join us!



NEW We the People: A History of the US Constitution

HISTORY & GOVERNMENT

Wednesday, 1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.

Carol Dietz, Rosemary O'Shea, Gail Bartlett

We the People: A History of the US Constitution isn't just another dry text on the American Constitution. Best-selling author Jill Lepore, Harvard Professor of History and Law, introduces her 14th book with a quote from Bugs Bunny to Daffy Duck: "It was intended to be amended!" But after centuries of attempts, Lepore believes that Americans have failed to realize the promise of the Constitution and its founding purposes: "One was to prevent change, and the other was to allow for change without violence." Twelve thousand amendments have been introduced in Congress since 1789, and thousands more have been proposed outside—but only 27 have ever been ratified. Most dangerous is that our Constitution has not been meaningfully amended since 1971. Without recourse to amendment, Lepore argues, the risk of political violence rises, as it is doing today. Published on the occasion of the 250th anniversary of our Nation's founding, *We the People* (Liverwright Publishing, 2025) tells a gripping and unfamiliar story of our own past, a story that will destroy your complacency about the promise of our Constitution. Join us and share our discussions of this miracle of American Democracy.



NEW American Jewish Short Stories

LITERATURE

Wednesday, 1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m. (7 weeks, meets first half of the term)

Eli Libenson, Jim Cohn, David Prosnitz

The last two years have been difficult ones for the American Jewish community. A rise in anti-semitism nationwide, a troubling atmosphere on some college campuses, and confrontational protests on the streets have all been part of the mix. American Jewish authors have not yet dealt with this emerging situation in their writing. In this study group we will read American Jewish short stories written in earlier, and perhaps better, times. We will review the stories with appreciation and also have the opportunity to judge for ourselves what has changed and what has not. The texts will be: *Frozen in Time: Twenty Stories* (Lyons Press, 2018) by Chicagoan Joseph Epstein; and *Goodbye Columbus* (Vintage International, 1993), including the five short stories at the back of the book, by Philip Roth. We will also read stories by Isaac Bashevis Singer and Bernard Malamud. Please join us for this timely and thought-provoking class.



CHICAGO STUDY GROUPS: THURSDAY

BEGINS MARCH 5, 2026

Capturing Chicago Through Photography

CREATIVE ARTS

Thursday, 9:30 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

Barbara Schatzman, Jeffery Semel, Michael Silverman, Donald Moel

Practice and grow your creative and technical photography skills with this fun, hands-on study group. Each week we'll explore "best photography practices" such as light, motion, composition, and storytelling, through a combination of member-led class instruction, photo critiques, and photo outings to great Chicago-area locations. You'll learn how to get the most from both traditional DSLR and mirror-less cameras as well as smartphones. Member-led presentations will demonstrate how post-processing software can enhance your photos. Both experienced photographers and dedicated beginners are welcome as this study group creates a dynamic environment for sharing best photography techniques while providing member feedback to help you capture compelling images. By the end of the study group, you'll have stronger skills, a sharper eye, new creative confidence, and a portfolio of photos you'll be proud of.



NEW Trapped in Rural America

CONTEMPORARY / SOCIAL ISSUES

Thursday, 9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m. (7 weeks, meets first half of the term)

Tim Atkins, Robert Kravitz

In this study group, we will read and discuss *Paper Girl: A Memoir of Home and Family in a Fractured America* by Beth Macy (Penguin Press, 2025), a deeply personal exploration of how economic change reshaped a once-thriving Midwestern town. Macy grew up in Urbana, Ohio, where Old Man Grimes and his network of local businesses provided stable jobs, civic leadership, and a clear path to the middle class. Residents owned homes, supported community institutions, and believed education would open doors. "My teachers always told me that I could find a path to the middle class." Macy writes, "And I did. If I were born even ten years later, I would never have made it out." As we follow Macy's story, our discussions will examine what happened when that economic foundation collapsed in the 1980s and 1990s—when industries moved abroad, wages stagnated, and opportunities dwindled. We will explore how declining local investment, weakened public institutions, and loss of stable work contributed to rising poverty, opioid addiction, and reduced access to higher education, and consider Macy's central question: How does a community lose its path to the middle class—and what might it take to rebuild one?



Founding Fathers and Democracy

HISTORY & GOVERNMENT

Thursday, 9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m.

Rich Dubberke, Dea Brennan, Barry Kaplan

On July 4, 2026, we will celebrate the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, the founding document of the United States. To recognize the semi-quicentennial anniversary we will read and discuss two books. The first is a Pulitzer Prize winner by the eminent historian of the founding period, Gordon Wood. The book, *Revolutionary Characters: What Made the Founding Fathers Different* (Penguin Books, 2007 ed.), is a compilation of eight essays concerning eight founding fathers and the Enlightenment. The second book was written specifically for the 250th anniversary and is the first of a series of books: *We Hold These Truths: America at 250*. The book we will read is *Democracy and the American Revolution*, edited by Yuval Levin, Adam White, and John Yoo (AEI Press, 2024 ed.). This book includes comments by five scholars of history and political thought, including Gordon Wood, exploring "how we ought to understand democracy and its connection to the American Revolution." Join us as we delve into these topics.



Espionage: Six Novels, Mostly by Women and Mostly True

LITERATURE

Thursday, 9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m. (7 weeks, meets first half of the term)

Dory Rand, Michael Goodkind

Escape into a diverse selection of six espionage novels including Russian, English, Irish, and American spies in World War II, the Cold War, the Irish Troubles, modern-day England, and more. Most of these books are written by women and most are based on true historical events. Returning spy novel lovers and newbies are welcome! We will read one book per week and have lively discussions facilitated by the co-coordinators and study group volunteers. The books are: *A Most Clever Girl*, Stephanie Marie Thornton (Berkley, 2021); *An Unlikely Spy*, Rebecca Starford (Ecco, 2021); *Northern Spy*, Flynn Berry (Penguin Books, 2022); *Alias Emma: A Novel*, Ava Glass (Bantum, 2023); *The Wealth of Shadows*, Graham Moore (Random House, 2024); and, *The Secrets We Kept*, Lara Prescott (Vintage, 2020).



Lone Sleuths: The Solitary Detective in British Mysteries

LITERATURE

Thursday, 9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m. (7 weeks, meets second half of the term)

Martha Bills, Mary Beth Schroeder, Celeste King

No Watson? No problem. Great Britain is home to unforgettable detective teams, from the amateur sleuth solving mysteries with friends and neighbors to world famous detective duos such as Holmes and Watson. But who needs a sidekick when you have sharp instincts and a good cup of tea? Join us this spring for a lively look at British detectives who go it alone—stories where the sleuth relies on intellect and intuition rather than a partner. We will explore solo crime solvers across the 20th century starting with *A Shilling for Candles* with Inspector Alan Grant by Josephine Tey (Sharp Ink edition, 2023), followed by *Scales of Justice* with Inspector Roderick (“Handsome”) Alleyn written by Ngaio Marsh (Felony and Mayhem Press edition, 2020). Then we fast forward to *The Silent World of Nicholas Quinn* with the sharp but grumpy Inspector Morse written by Colin Dexter (Trusted Media edition, 2021) and *Frost at Christmas* with Inspector Jack Frost authored by R.D. Wingfield (Mass Market Paperback edition, 1987). We will wrap up with *Simisola* (Dell, 2011) by Ruth Rendell featuring detective Inspector Reginald Wexford and *Raven Black* (Minotaur Books, 2018), the first novel in Ann Cleeves’ Shetland mystery series and introducing Detective Inspector Jimmy Perez. We will read one book for each week.



Readings in Western Culture—Great Conversations 4

LITERATURE

Thursday, 9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m.

Marcie Marcovitz, Nancy Kelly-Martin, Anita Fript

Expand your understanding in dialogue with others equally interested in exploring the Western cannon by reading selections curated by the Great Books Foundation. Discussions encourage participants to exchange ideas generated by some of our culture’s most thought-provoking writers, from Antiquity to the Middle Ages, to the Enlightenment to contemporary America. Selections include prose, drama, philosophy, poetry, and essays. For the Spring 2026 semester, we will use *Great Conversations 4* (Great Books Foundation, 2008). We will also read *Candide* by Voltaire in its entirety; any edition or publisher is acceptable. Other authors include Plato, Kant, Thoreau, Shaw, Chekov, and O’Brien. Please join us for lively and thought-provoking discussions.



Artificial Intelligence Today: Promise, Risk, and Real-World Impact

CONTEMPORARY / SOCIAL ISSUES

Thursday, 1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m. (7 weeks, meets second half of the term)

Andi France, Pat Stankard

Are you curious about the profound ways artificial intelligence is evolving and being used in the real world? If so, we invite you to join our discussion on how AI is fundamentally shaking up key sectors such as business, healthcare, education, and politics, and rapidly reshaping daily life. Each week, participants will select two articles: one highlighting a promising or beneficial use of AI—such as breakthroughs in healthcare and medical research, accessibility tools, or scientific discovery—and another that raises important concerns, including misinformation, copyright conflicts, or ethical and regulatory challenges. Together, we'll unpack what happened, who was impacted, and what it may mean for society. We will also listen to and discuss AI-themed podcast episodes which address broader questions about human judgment, creativity, and responsibility. We'll reflect, discuss, respectfully disagree, and leave with a much clearer, grounded grasp of what's real, what's risky, and what's truly revolutionary in the fast-moving world of artificial intelligence. No prior experience with AI is necessary—just curiosity and a willingness to engage with the future as it unfolds.



Washington Week

CONTEMPORARY / SOCIAL ISSUES

Thursday, 1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.

Leonard Grossman, Justin Joseph, Marion Derringer, Laurie Richter

It's been just over a year since a new administration took over in Washington. We have witnessed great changes in the way our country is run. The guardrails we thought would hold have been more vulnerable than we expected. Our country is divided into two camps. Some feel despondent that we are slipping into authoritarianism; others are happy with the new status quo. What will happen over the coming months? Will our democracy survive? And how do we play a part? We try to make sense of it all by providing a forum for discussion of news focusing on Washington and beyond, empowering OLLI members to understand different perspectives on the federal government and other areas of national concern. During each session we will focus on current news stories selected by the participants. This is a fast-paced study group. Participants are expected to be or become keen observers of national news through many different sources. Reading assignments and topics will be distributed in advance. All points of view are respectfully welcomed.



Academy Award Winners and Nominees II

CREATIVE ARTS

Thursday, 1:15 p.m.–4:15 p.m.

Thomas Swanstrom, Dennis Carlin, Arni Miller

For nearly 100 years the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences has presented awards for many aspects of filmmaking and conducts the oldest such ceremony in the world. This will be the second study group featuring films that either were Academy Award winners or non-winning nominees in the Best Picture category. We have included films that both have high ratings among viewers and fit well into an in-person class. Films being considered are: *After the Thin Man* (Van Dyke, 1936), *The Great Dictator* (Chaplin, 1940), *Rebecca* (Hitchcock, 1940), *From Here to Eternity* (Zinneman, 1953), *Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* (Kubrick, 1964), *The Graduate* (Nichols, 1967), *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (Forman, 1975), *Dog Day Afternoon* (Lumet, 1975), *Network* (Lumet, 1976), *The Elephant Man* (Lynch, 1980), *On Golden Pond* (Rydell, 1981), *Dead Poets Society* (Weir, 1989), *The King's Speech* (Hooper, 2010), and *Spotlight* (McCarthy, 2015). Please join us to view and discuss these masterpieces.



Deconstructing the Hits! Radiotopia's *Song Exploder* Podcast CREATIVE ARTS

Thursday, 1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m. (7 weeks, meets first half of the term)

Andi France, Doug Williams

Ever wonder how songs are built? *Song Exploder* is the remarkable podcast where musicians take one of their tracks and tear it apart. It's an intimate deep dive into the sounds and decisions that create a song. With over 300 episodes available, you'll hear the song's DNA isolated and explained by the artists themselves. Guests have included Billie Eilish, U2, R.E.M. and Fleetwood Mac. The podcast frequently dives into iconic film and TV scores, featuring composers breaking down themes for movies (*Moonlight*, *La La Land*) and TV shows (*Severance*, *The Simpsons*), offering a fascinating look at how music shapes narrative. Our podcast host is Hrishikesh Hirway, a musician known for his curiosity and editing style—he even removes his own voice to focus purely on the artist's story! The show has won multiple honors, including two Academy of Podcasters Awards for Best Music Podcast, and inspired a Netflix original series. *Vulture* praised it as “probably the best use of the podcast format ever.” Whether you geek out over songwriting or just love understanding how creative people think, *Song Exploder* turns every episode into a tiny masterclass. We'll turn every song into a scavenger hunt for genius!



NEW *Sin in the Second City*

HISTORY & GOVERNMENT

Thursday, 1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.

Laurie Toth, Tim Atkins, Trudy Hobfoll

Step into the glittering, lawless, and intoxicating world of Chicago's Levee District—where politics, pleasure, and power collided behind velvet curtains. In *Sin in the Second City* (Random House, 2008), Karen Abbott brings to life the infamous Everleigh Club and the two sisters whose luxurious brothel captivated millionaires, politicians, and celebrities while igniting a national moral firestorm. Join our study group as we explore Chicago at the turn of the 20th century—a city pulsing with ambition, corruption, reform, and reinvention. Each week, we'll dive deeper into the true stories of madams and missionaries, detectives and dilettantes, and the strange alliances that shaped modern ideas about morality, sexuality, and women's autonomy. Come ready for vivid storytelling and lively discussion along with behind-the-scenes history of Chicago's Red Light District. We will meet unlikely heroines and crusaders who defied expectations and scandals, power struggles, and questions that still feel urgent today. If you love Chicago history, bold women, or stories that peel back the city's polished façade to reveal its most dazzling secrets, this study group will spark your imagination, and maybe challenge your assumptions. Enter the world of the Everleigh sisters... if you dare.



The Fate of the Day: Rick Atkinson's Description of the American Revolution

HISTORY & GOVERNMENT

Thursday, 1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.

Martha Bills, Betsy Mahon

The second volume of historian Rick Atkinson's “Revolution Trilogy,” *The Fate of the Day: The War for America, Fort Ticonderoga to Charleston, 1777–1780* (Crown, 2025), picks up with George Washington's Continental Army in a disheartened state in the winter of 1777. Defeats by the British in the fall of 1776 saw the Army barely escaping annihilation in the loss of New York. We will follow the fate of the Revolution from the battle of Fort Ticonderoga through the strategically vital areas of the middle colonies and down to the southern colonies. As in volume one of the trilogy, *The British Are Coming*, Atkinson colorfully describes the conduct of the war, the main figures, the diplomacy, and the incredible sacrifices on both sides in compelling detail. Following on the heels of the Ken Burns project, *The Revolution* on PBS, we will read and discuss the events of the middle years of the fight for America's future. Colonists became rebels and then “Americans” as the struggle consumed lives and fortunes, and required national determination and dedication of both sides of the Atlantic.



EVANSTON STUDY GROUPS: MONDAY

BEGINS MARCH 2, 2026

The New Yorker

CONTEMPORARY / SOCIAL ISSUES

Monday, 9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m.

Susan Gaud, Mary Watt, Jeffrey Less

The New Yorker magazine has won multiple awards for its creative coverage of art, technology, politics, personalities, medicine, movies, fiction, fashion, and culture. In each session of this study group, we will examine the varied contents of this distinguished magazine. We will review the current issue from the cover to the cartoons and everything in between. Then we will explore an assigned article in depth with a volunteer leader who has chosen the article. Conversations will be lively and lead to expanded knowledge. Everyone will be encouraged to lead a discussion. A print or digital subscription to the magazine is necessary.



NEW The Abyss: Cuban Missile Crisis

HISTORY & GOVERNMENT

Monday, 9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m.

George Maliekal, Harold Primack

Imagine the superpowers within hours of nuclear war and the fate of millions resting on a few men's decisions. After President Kennedy's failed Bay of Pigs invasion of 1961, the Soviet leader, Nikita Khrushchev, sought to protect Cuba and counterbalance US missiles stationed in Europe. He secretly sent nuclear weapons to Cuba, initiating a standoff that brought two superpowers to the brink of disaster while the rest of the world held its breath. Join us for robust discussions on one of history's most perilous conflicts. We will read *The Abyss: Nuclear Crisis in Cuba 1962* by Max Hastings (Harper Collins Publishing, 2022). Hastings has authored twenty-eight books. Former editor in chief of the *London Daily Telegraph* and editor of the *London Evening Standard*, his masterful narrative reveals how close the world came to annihilation "when eyeball to eyeball the other side finally blinked." Together, we'll explore the events that still reverberate.



Best American Short Stories

LITERATURE

Monday, 9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m.

Sandy Robbins, Randee Phillips

If you enjoy reading fiction and are interested in exploring the power of the short story, our study group is for you. The beauty of our group is that at every session, each member has the opportunity to be an active participant in our discussions. Short stories are carefully written gems of literature. They combine compelling characters, drama, and descriptive language, which lead to lively and thought-provoking discussions. Led by a different member of our class each week, we look closely at characterizations, plot, and themes. We may not always agree, but we always learn from each other every time we are together. Our weekly discussions explore works by up and coming, as well as established authors. You will have the opportunity to lead a discussion for a story of your choice. Our text books are *The Scribner Anthology of Contemporary Short Fiction*, Lex Williford and Michael Martone, Editors, Scribner, Publisher, and *The Best American Short Stories 2025*, Celeste Ng, Editor, Martiner Books, Publisher.



Four Masters of the Short Story: Bambara, Krauss, Fitzgerald, Hemingway

LITERATURE

Monday, 9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m.

Peter Morris, Margot Wallace

Short stories may be short on pages, but they span a world of people, places, and masterful authors. Toni Cade Bambara opens doors to African-American neighborhoods of 1960s Harlem and the Deep South; F. Scott Fitzgerald writes about Americans in 1920s Europe; Ernest Hemingway chronicles country boys becoming men in early 20th century America; and Nicole Krauss documents contemporary fathers, husbands, and lovers everywhere. With their universal problems and all-too-human solutions, these are people you can't help talking about. The short story collections are: Toni Cade Bambara, *Gorilla, My Love*, (Vintage, 1992, ISBN 978-0679738985); Nicole Krauss, *To Be a Man* (Harper, 2020, ISBN 978-0063431035); F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Short Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald: A New Collection* (Scribner, 1995, ISBN 978-0684804453); Ernest Hemingway, *The Nick Adams Stories*, (Scribner, 1981, ISBN 978-1439188422). Get ready for good conversation when you pull up a chair and enjoy the back-and-forth of ideas well shared.



Chinese Mysteries

LITERATURE

Monday, 1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.

Beverly Snell, Roberta Rakove, Angela Pisano, Charles Hayford

Mysteries and detective fiction are usually thought of as the inventions of Edgar Allan Poe, but they have been popular in China for over a thousand years! Our study group will look at Chinese mysteries and, through them, the Chinese people in different times and places. We begin with *Celebrated Cases of Judge Dee*, an 18th century Chinese novel set in the 7th century Tang Dynasty, translated by Robert van Gulik (Dover Publications, 1976). Then we fast forward to modern China in 1928 with *Death in Shanghai* by M. J. Lee (HQ, 2017). We stay in Shanghai but move to the 1990s in *Death of a Red Heroine* by Qiu Xiaolong (Soho Crime, 2003), and end in modern day Hong Kong with *Second Sister* by Chan Ho-Kei (Head of Zeus, 2020). Any edition of the books may be used, and all are available in hard copy, ebook, and audiobook from the library and online. Join us as we explore these mysteries and gain insights into Chinese culture and society!



NEW The Campus Novel; Then and Now

LITERATURE

Monday, 1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.

Jeffrey Rochman, Sandra Rochman

Join us for a literary trip back to college! We will read and discuss two fine examples of the campus novel genre, *Changing Places* by David Lodge (Penguin, 1979) and *Vladimir* by Julia May Jonas (Avid Reader, 2022). We will explore and compare what these two novels—written over 40 years apart, one in England and one in America—have to tell us, both humorously and seriously, about the lives and characters of professors, spouses, and students. We will be entertained by reliving some of our college memories and perhaps will be enlightened by the authors' insights into the roles of ego, power, and sexuality in the “groves of academe.”



EVANSTON STUDY GROUPS: TUESDAY

BEGINS MARCH 3, 2026

NEW *The Atlas of Art Crime:* Exploring the Dark Side of the Art World

Tuesday, 9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m. (7 weeks, meets first half of the term)

Kenneth Behles, Margot Wallace

CREATIVE ARTS

From high-profile heists to lesser-known forgeries, art crimes often find their way into fictional storylines and popular entertainment. But what about the true stories that inspire these narratives? What about their real-life repercussions on the global art world? These are the questions we will explore in this 7-week study group. Each week we will introduce the people, places, and works of art involved in the most notorious art crimes from around the world. We will examine the crime scene, its historical context, and the range of human motivations behind the perpetrators—greed, revenge, love, idealism, even artistic expression. Using Laura Evans's beautiful book: *The Atlas of Art Crime: Thefts, Vandalism and Forgeries* (Prestel, 2024), supplemented by text and visual media, we will go on a world tour of art crimes, their places and their personalities. Our discussions will be filled with stories of intrigue, controversies, power dynamics, and unexpected motives. Please join us for a captivating exploration of the darker side of art history.



NEW Harry Truman: The Unexpected President

HISTORY & GOVERNMENT

Tuesday, 9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m.

Steve Fisher, Naomi Fisher, George Maliekal

Harry S. Truman rose from humble smalltown roots to become the 33rd President of the United States. His life was at once a surprise and a quintessential American story. Initially a loyal member of the Pendergast political machine in Kansas City, Truman moved from local “pothole” politics to the US Senate where he made a reputation as a corruption fighter. Although never a Washington insider, Truman was selected as the running mate when Franklin Delano Roosevelt sought his fourth term in 1944. Catapulted into the Presidency at Roosevelt’s death in April, 1945, Truman faced a new world order emerging after WW II. His years in the White House laid the foundation for decades of American hegemony abroad and Medicare legislation. His unexpected election to his own full term as President in 1948, made him a political hero to many. Our text *Truman* (Simon and Schuster, 1992), David McCullough’s Pulitzer-prize winning biography of Truman, gives a lively account of this fascinating story. Please join us as we follow the growth of a smalltown, Southern politician to the resolute leader of the free world and champion of “The Fair Deal” at home.



NEW *The American Revolution—Through the Lens of Ken Burns*

HISTORY & GOVERNMENT

Tuesday, 9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m. (7 weeks, meets second half of the term)

Jeff Graff, Michael McGee

As our nation marks its 250th anniversary, come join us for an engaging journey into *The American Revolution*, the newest documentary from acclaimed filmmaker Ken Burns. Far more than a history lesson, this sweeping film invites us to experience the energy, peril, and promise of America's founding era through Burns' signature storytelling style. We will watch and discuss selected episodes, diving into the people, events, and artistic choices that bring this pivotal time to life. How does Burns' vision deepen or challenge our understanding of the Revolution and of the times we live in today? Volunteers will take turns leading the conversations. Expect lively discussion, new perspectives, and maybe even a few surprises about the country we thought we knew. *The American Revolution* is available at the library or on PBS with a subscription. Join us for our seven week exploration of our country's beginning.



Get Started with AI

STMH

Tuesday, 9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m. (7 weeks, meets first half of the term)

Dennis Glenn, Jeff Graff

How do you feel about using AI? Are you curious? A little afraid? This hands-on, in-person study group will help you learn how to get started using AI, and give you the confidence to keep experimenting with this new tool. AI is at its best when it supports your strengths, your creativity, and your wisdom. You will not be alone in this adventure. This 7-week study group will provide you with experience using free AI applications to conduct research, create images and videos, and find easy data solutions in spreadsheets. The close-up view of your AI creations and direct instant feedback from study group members is a great advantage in learning to use this new technology. Prior to our study group, you will receive self-directed learning tutorials, YouTube videos that demonstrate and allow you to practice each task, and a link to the coordinators through which you can get feedback and support. This is a hands-on study group, so participants will be expected to be able to use either their MAC, PC, or tablet and bring them to each session. Join us as we explore this new world of AI.



Cautionary Tales Podcasts:

From Surprising Human Error to Hilarious Fiascos

SOCIAL SCIENCES

Tuesday, 9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m. (7 weeks, meets second half of the term)

Cheryl Esken, Maureen Shayman, Karyn Esken

Having thoroughly enjoyed this podcast study group at the Chicago campus, we are excited to bring *Cautionary Tales* to the Evanston campus during the second seven-week period in spring. This study group will feature a series of podcasts of true stories about human error, mistakes, and fiascos throughout history. Written and narrated by host and writer Tim Harford (the Financial Times, the BBC, author of *The Data Detective*), *Cautionary Tales* brings you fascinating stories about historical failures, analyzing them to find patterns and valuable lessons for the present day. Each episode explores either a tragic or comic event, and each has a moral—like a fable or parable. These podcasts are well produced with music, actors, reenactments, and special audio effects. The study group will discuss two podcasts each week centered around a unifying theme.



From Print to Pictures, the Art of Film Adaptation: Politics and Paranoia

CREATIVE ARTS

Tuesday, 1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m. (7 weeks, meets first half of the term)

Julie Gordon, Art Bloom

Join us as we explore four movie thrillers (and the texts that inspired them), which navigate the murky world of political intrigue. Hitchcock's *Notorious*, based on a story by John Taintor Foote, involves a mix of espionage, Nazis, and the heated chemistry of Cary Grant and Ingrid Bergman. Robert Redford and Faye Dunaway become entangled as they are hunted by a rogue faction of the CIA in Sydney Pollack's *Three Days of the Condor* (novel by James Grady). John Frankenheimer's masterly adaptation of Richard Condon's *The Manchurian Candidate* features Frank Sinatra as he tries to save Laurence Harvey from the dark forces that have brainwashed him. Director Franklin Shaffner brilliantly adapts Gore Vidal's satirical play, *The Best Man*, which features a riveting performance by Henry Fonda as one of several candidates seeking the US presidential nomination, at almost any cost. Our films showcase four of the most iconic male actors of the last century: Grant, Redford, Sinatra, and Fonda—each at the peak of their careers. This is a seven-week study group that meets three hours one week to discuss the text and watch the film, followed the next week with a two-hour discussion/evaluation of the film's adaptation.



NEW Dickens' Swan Song: Our Mutual Friend

LITERATURE

Tuesday, 1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.

Julie Johnson, Michael Singer, Lisa Oberman

Some of us, a few pages into a Dickens' novel, find ourselves wondering why we ever bother to read anyone else. If this describes you—or if you are curious about why others feel this way—this study group may have your name on it. *Our Mutual Friend* by Charles Dickens (Penguin Classics, 1998; originally published in 1864) is one of Dickens' late great novels, his final completed one. It is a rich feast of memorable characters, startling events, brilliant descriptions of Victorian London, humor, and biting satire of a society in which money, birth, social class, and dumb luck all too often determine destiny. How the upper classes "throw away" the lower classes is a major motif. This is a masterpiece for our time, and for any time, showcasing Dickens at the height of his narrative power. Do join us for stimulating discussion.



Science in the News

STMH

Tuesday, 1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.

Brenda Russell, Jeffery Semel, Tom Cotter

We will rely on articles from *Scientific American*, a magazine committed to sharing knowledge, enhancing our understanding of the world, and advancing social justice. Each week, study group members will have in-depth discussions on two articles that cover the most important and exciting research, ideas, and knowledge in science, health, technology, the environment, and society. Coordinators suggest recent articles and members are able to choose topics from *Scientific American* or other science sources. Members may enrich the discussion with additional video or materials. Access to a digital or print subscription to *Scientific American* is required. No scientific background is needed. Simply bring your curiosity and interest in all things science. Join us for great discussions as we learn and laugh together.



EVANSTON STUDY GROUPS: WEDNESDAY

BEGINS MARCH 4, 2026

Creative Writing Workshop

CREATIVE ARTS

Wednesday, 9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m.

Bob Jenkins, Ron Denham, Arthur Altman

This study group is for members who love words and who wish to improve and practice their creative writing skills across the various genres: poetry, creative nonfiction, essay, memoir, and fiction. Members will present their work to the group who will respond with encouragement, critique, and suggestions. Revisions and resubmissions are welcome. Longer works may be submitted in segments. This study group will give members a creative outlet and an opportunity to produce a finished piece of writing of which they can be proud. New and experienced writers are welcome. Members will bring their words, knowledge, humor, tears, fears, desires, perspectives, and wisdom.



Documentary Films (Wednesday)

CREATIVE ARTS

Wednesday, 9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m.

Gloria Gleave, Deb Clamage

Do you love learning about fascinating people, places, and ideas through the medium of film? If so, this documentary film study group is for you. Each week, members will view a documentary film at home and then come together to discuss the film. Members will volunteer to select films and lead discussions. The films reflect the members' interests and passions and can include such wide ranging topics as social justice, biography, environment, music, and personal adventure challenges. The weekly discussions include an analysis of the film's content, aesthetic, and technical aspects. Selected films must be widely available to study group members. The selections may be rented through an online streaming service for a minimal fee, available via the internet at no cost, or borrowed from a library. We will limit any required subscriptions to Netflix. Join us as we explore and discuss a variety of documentary films.



NEW Tapestry of Voices: Short Stories of Ireland

LITERATURE

Wednesday, 9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m. (7 weeks, meets second half of the term)

Anne O'Malley, Linda Bonges

According to a popular saying, "Ireland is a tapestry of songs, stories and spirit." This study group will delve into a wide array of these classic tales. A late career priest ponders the disconnect he experiences with his poor congregants in their rural parish in Daniel Corkery's "The Priest." Edna O'Brien's "Irish Revel" explores a young girl's high hopes and excitement for her first party in town. Will it meet expectations? Frank O'Connor presents a young policeman delicately trying to bring an elderly farmer to justice in "The Majesty of the Law." Our core text will be *The Oxford Book of Irish Short Stories*, ed. William Trevor (Oxford University Press, 2010), an older collection of short fiction. Participants will lead discussions on stories of their choice.



NEW The Art World in 7 Weeks

CREATIVE ARTS

Wednesday, 1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m. (7 weeks, meets second half of the term)

Bridget Stump, Linda Semel

Are you curious about art and culture? Join us in exploring Sarah Thornton's acclaimed book, *Seven Days in the Art World* (W.W. Norton, 2009), a behind-the-scenes journey through the institutions, personalities, and ideas that shape contemporary art today. Each week, participants will read and discuss one "day" in the book. Thornton's writing will take us inside the world of art studios, the minds of art critics and draw the curtain on art prizes, auctions, and more. We'll support our discussions with visuals and media that relate to the book and deepen our understanding of how art is made, valued, and experienced. Discussions will be supplemented by articles, videos, and podcasts. This will be a great group for anyone who loves learning more about the intersection of art and our modern day society.



Theater in Chicago

CREATIVE ARTS

Wednesday, 1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.

Sue Bowker, Stephanie Lerner, Kathy Beavers

Join us for an engaging exploration of theater at some of Chicago's best venues. We'll attend seven productions presented at a variety of theaters, such as Steppenwolf, Goodman, and TimeLine. For each play, we'll devote two sessions: one to discuss the script before seeing the production, and a second after viewing the play comparing the written work with the staged version. Discussion topics will include themes, characters, acting style, direction, and interpretation. Participants will volunteer to lead discussions. Coordinators will purchase tickets for members who wish to attend performances as a group. Members may also invite a guest to join them. Participants are responsible for ticket costs (estimated total \$200–\$300 per/person for the 14-week session) and for obtaining the scripts. Transportation is self-arranged, though carpools can be organized as needed. We often gather for an optional dinner before performances to share conversation and community.



Poetry for Pleasure

LITERATURE

Wednesday, 1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.

Doreen Feitelberg, David Hart

Join us for an exciting and uplifting experience as we discover a wide variety of poets and poetry—some known, some less familiar. Choices may include poetry from different cultures and eras as well as English translations from different languages. Each week a volunteer presents a poet of choice and provides copies of poems for each study group member. The presenter leads with a brief biography and then we take turns reading and discussing the poems. Participation is always lively and challenging and invariably gives fresh and rewarding insights to the work. New and experienced poetry lovers will find that our classes offer stimulation coupled with enjoyment.



NEW Celebrating The Declaration of Independence on its 250th Anniversary

HISTORY & GOVERNMENT

Wednesday, 1:15 p.m.-3:15 p.m. (7 weeks, meets first half of the term)
George Sullivan, Dan Coha, Stephen Schwab

We hold these truths to be self-evident, . . ." As we celebrate the 250th anniversary of the creation of Declaration of Independence, we will consider two distinctive insights into this historic document and its remarkable second sentence. After discussing Walter Isaacson's long essay, *The Greatest Sentence Ever Written* (Simon and Schuster, 2025), we will read Danielle Allen's groundbreaking book, *Our Declaration: A Reading of the Declaration of Independence in Defense of Equality* (Liveright, 2015). Isaacson dives deeply into the famous sentence, analyzing how this revolutionary passage written by Thomas Jefferson, and edited by Benjamin Franklin and John Adams, lays the foundation for the American ideals of unity, equality, and inalienable rights. Based on her teaching experience, Danielle Allen encourages a "slow reading" of the founding document, unpacking the opening statement on a "separate and equal station"; understanding philosophical debates around liberty and equality and how equality is a foundation for liberty; examining how grammar and punctuation can reshape meaning and how collective authorship may have affected the text; and confronting the document's inherent contradictions, particularly regarding slavery. We will conclude by assessing the global impact of the Declaration. Join us as we rediscover a document belonging to all Americans!



NEW The British Are Coming

HISTORY & GOVERNMENT

Wednesday, 1:15 p.m.-3:15 p.m.
Philip Steptoe, Michael Sehr

Two hundred and fifty years ago, our forefathers fought a bitter war for independence from King George III and the mighty British empire. In *The British Are Coming* (Henry Holt and Company, 2019) Rick Atkinson, who has won multiple Pulitzer Prizes for history and journalism, provides a spell-binding narrative history of the initial period of the war, from Lexington to Princeton (1775-1777). It is a gripping saga alive with astonishing characters including George III, Lord George Germaine, Henry Clinton, Benjamin Franklin, Henry Knox, Benedict Arnold and, of course, George Washington. In addition to an analysis of Atkinson's book, we will examine the culture, politics, and cuisine of Colonial life through videos and other supplementary materials, including excerpts from Ken Burns' documentary series on PBS, *The American Revolution*. Bring your cocked hats and your enthusiasm and join us!



EVANSTON STUDY GROUPS: THURSDAY

BEGINS MARCH 5, 2026

NEW 25 Visionary Magazine Covers

CREATIVE ARTS

Thursday, 9:45 a.m.-11:45 a.m.
Margot Wallace, Peter Morris

For the past 100 years, major national magazines, with their inimitable, news-making covers, envisaged some of America's most significant cultural movements. *New York Times' T Magazine* selected national magazine covers that documented and drove these changes. The resulting wide-ranging article, "The 25 Most Influential Magazine Covers of All Time" (*New York Times*, October 1, 2025), is the resource for our history-covering study group. Covers include: Martin Luther King, Jr.—*Ebony* (1968), View of the World from 9th Avenue—*The New Yorker* (1976), Mohammed Ali, *Esquire* (1968), John and Yoko—*Rolling Stone* (1981), and Ellen DeGeneres' "Yep, I Am"—*Time* (1997). In addition, we will add our own short-list of influential cover stories as we prepare to discuss decades of change and the magazines that covered them. Join us in 2026 as we turn the pages!



NEW Documentary Films (Thursday)

CREATIVE ARTS

Thursday, 9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m.

Susan Berkowitz, Susan Kay, Elin Jacobson

Do you love learning about fascinating people, places, and ideas through the medium of film? If so, this documentary film study group is for you. Each week, members will view a documentary film at home and then come together to discuss the film. Members will volunteer to select films and lead discussions. The films reflect the members' interests and passions and can include such wide ranging topics as social justice, biography, environment, art and music, and personal adventure challenges. The weekly discussions include an analysis of the film's content, aesthetic and technical aspects. Selected films must be widely available to study group members. The selections may be rented through an online streaming service for a minimal fee, available via the internet at no cost or borrowed from a library. We will limit any required subscriptions to Netflix. Join us as we explore and discuss a variety of documentary films.



Ron Chernow's *Mark Twain* (Second Semester)

HISTORY & GOVERNMENT

Thursday, 9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m.

Jim Burns, Peg Romm, Janet Jablon

As Mark Twain wrote, "There was never yet an uninteresting life." The proof lies in *Mark Twain* (Penguin Press, 2025), the new biography by Ron Chernow, winner of the Pulitzer Prize and National Book Award for his earlier studies of Hamilton, Washington, and Grant. We'll discuss the second half of the book, focusing on Twain in his 60s and 70s, as he meets an array of fascinating people, including some who earned his trust and others who betrayed it. We'll follow Twain after financial ruin forces him to endure a nomadic European life for nearly a decade, undertake a year-long world speaking tour, and sell his beloved family home in Connecticut. We'll also learn how Twain reacted to stunning personal losses during his later years, even as he wrote some of his most searing prose, much of which he refused to have published before his death. Join us for what the *Los Angeles Times* calls "a masterful exploration of the magnificent highs and unutterable lows of an American literary genius." We will supplement our reading with selected short stories and articles by Twain. We welcome members who did not participate in the fall semester.



NEW How Interactions Between Plants and Animals Shaped Life on Earth over the Eons

STMH

Thursday, 9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m.

Brenda Russell, John Doherty

The constant evolution of plants allowed many of our favorite prehistoric creatures to develop, by oxygenating the atmosphere, coaxing animals onto land, and forming the forests that shaped our ancestors' anatomy. It is impossible to understand the history of our planet, or our future, without them. Our text is *When the Earth Was Green: Plants, Animals, and Evolution's Greatest Romance* by Riley Black (St Martin's Press 2025), the winner of a Friend of Darwin Award in 2025. Each chapter stars plants and animals, underscoring how the interactions between species have shaped our world. The author brings readers back in time to prehistoric seas, swamps, forests, and savannas where critical moments in plant evolution unfolded. We explore how fossil plants allow us to touch the lost worlds of billions of years ago. Each petrified leaf and root shows us that dinosaurs, saber-toothed cats, and even humans would not exist without the evolutionary innovations of their leafy counterparts. Join us to explore the crucial role of plants in Earth's evolution, connecting ancient history to present day. We complement our text by selective supplementary materials. Participants are expected to lead a session and be actively engaged in discussion.



NEW *We the People: A History of the US Constitution* HISTORY & GOVERNMENT

Thursday, 1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.

Mary Hummel, Jerry Bernstein

We the People: A History of the US Constitution isn't the history text you might expect. Best-selling author Jill Lepore, Harvard Professor of history, law and national media personality, introduces her 14th book (Liveright Publishing, 2025) with a quote from Bugs Bunny to Daffy Duck: "It was intended to be amended!" But for two centuries, Americans have failed to realize the full promise enshrined in our Founding Fathers' Constitution—the ability of the people to change it without threat of punishment or violence. That power resides in its amendments. However, from 1789–1971(182 years), only 27 of more than 12,000 proposed amendments have been ratified by Congress. Without sufficient government or political response, frustration mounts, and the risk of political violence rises, as we know. So, what can We the People do right now to remedy this threat to our democracy? Lepore's answer, Active Citizenship, is not a passive concept. It is her invitation for us to learn the gripping story of our past, and call on fellow Americans to participate, deliberate, evaluate ideas and then act together to create a new vision and collective roadmap for shaping our country's future. Join us to share your ideas!



NEW Poetry Through the Decades from *The New Yorker Magazine* LITERATURE

Thursday, 1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m. (7 weeks, meets first half of the term)

Lee Nemchek, David Mathers

Last year marked the centenary of *The New Yorker*, and the anniversary was celebrated with the publication of two volumes, one for fiction and the second for poetry. This study group will explore the evolution of modern and contemporary poetry through the lens of *A Century of Poetry in The New Yorker 1925–2025* (Knopf, 2025), a monumental anthology that captures a hundred years of poetic voices. The book is organized into seven chronological groupings, and we will cover poetry from each one. As we take turns reading and discussing poems selected by participants, our focus will be on analysis and interpretation, with attention to the social contexts and artistic movements surrounding each group of poems. Together, we will engage with a diverse range of poets and styles, deepening our appreciation of poetry as both art and cultural commentary.



NEW Three Stoppard Masterpieces:

The Real Thing, Arcadia, and Leopoldstadt

LITERATURE

Thursday, 1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m. (7 weeks, meets second half of the term)

Abe Brustein, John Drodow, Naomi Fisher

Prolific and brilliantly original, Sir Tom Stoppard has produced a remarkable body of work as a playwright and screenwriter over 50-plus years. We will discuss three of his most widely admired plays: *The Real Thing* (1982), *Arcadia* (1993), and *Leopoldstadt* (2020). *The Real Thing* has been called the greatest play about love written in the late 20th century. *Arcadia* is a complex tragicomedy which fuses many seemingly disparate themes into a coherent and ultimately deeply moving play. *Leopoldstadt* is a play about a Viennese Jewish family before and after its devastation by the Holocaust. The story was inspired by Stoppard's discovery in his mid-50s that he came from a Jewish family impacted in the same way. Until then, Stoppard had been unaware of his heritage and identified as simply British. We will also read Stoppard's 1999 essay "On Turning Out to be Jewish" published in *Talk*. It is timely that *Leopoldstadt* will have its Chicago-area premier this June. Any editions of the plays may be used. All are available in print and electronic formats. Anyone is welcome to join us, whether new to Stoppard's plays or already an admirer.



VIRTUAL STUDY GROUPS: MONDAY

BEGINS MARCH 2, 2026

NEW Female Directors—Female Strength—Female Gaze

CREATIVE ARTS

Monday, 1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.

Bob Moss, Laurie Bederow

This study group will celebrate the work of thirteen female film directors whose storytelling through the eyes of “the female gaze” enhances our appreciation of their work. Our examination of their films from over the past sixty years will lead us to a definition of the female gaze, its key elements and how it shows up in film. Referring to the gaze of the female spectator, character, or director, “the female gaze” represents women as subjects having agency—often challenging the objectifying lens of the “male gaze.” In these director’s works, the women characters are protagonists with complex inner lives. The gaze can be seen from any or all of three viewpoints: 1) The filmmaker’s perspective (often female, but not exclusively); 2) The characters’ interactions within the story; and 3) The audience’s experience, especially female viewers. We will focus on a group of international directors and both old and new films. We will study via streaming films directed by: Claire Denis, Alice Diop, Debra Granik, Scarlett Johansson, Ellen Kuras, Hisako Matsui, Anna Muylaert; Lila Neugebauer, Sarah Polley, Céline Sciamma, Celene Song, Agnès Varda, and Chloé Zhao.



Writing Life Stories—B

CREATIVE ARTS

Monday, 1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.

Bill Kudlaty, Michael Graff, Steven Brown

Why write your story? For your family and friends? Or simply to reflect on your life? Writing helps us reflect on, document, and share our experiences. Each week one-half of the group writes a long form story. Each writer from that group emails the text—up to 1500 words—to the study group members; when we meet on Zoom, the writer reads it aloud. Members respond verbally and later send more detailed written comment to the reader. New this year, to stimulate extra writing, each week prompts are given and members are invited to submit shorter pieces which are read as time allows. Whether you are an experienced writer or just starting out, our study group is here to help. On our MyOLLI website we provide guides to writing and to the art of memoir. Together we tackle the challenges of organizing and clarifying our writing. In this study group, a workshop for writers, members tell stories that range from joyful to heartbreak. We provide an excellent opportunity to write and reflect on events and chapters of your life. Come join us.



Literary Masters: Nobel Women

LITERATURE

Monday, 1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.

Robert Relihan, Marilyn Green Rebnord

The Nobel Prize in Literature has been awarded since 1901. During that time eighteen of the laureates have been women. Not surprisingly, half of them have been named in the current century. We will read and discuss works by seven of the nine laureates who were novelists. These works display a remarkable breadth: *After the Divorce* by Deledda Grazia (Bel Paese Classics, 2025) offers a view of the social constraints placed on women in late-nineteenth-century Sardinia; *The Good Earth* by Pearl Buck (Washington Square Press, 2020) formed America’s understanding of China for the mid-twentieth century; *God Help the Child* by Toni Morrison (Vintage, 2016), her final novel, explores the many issues confronting several generations of an African American family. The other works we read will represent authors from the UK, South Africa, Romania and Poland: *The Grass is Singing* by Doris Lessing (Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2008); *July’s People* by Nadine Gordimer (Penguin Books, 1982); *The Passport* by Herta Müller (Serpent’s Tail, 2016); and *Drive Your Plow Over the Dead* by Olga Tokarcuk (Riverhead Books, 2020).



BONUS GROUP: Let's Talk About the Movies (Monday)

CREATIVE ARTS

Monday, 4:00 p.m.–5:30 p.m.

Trish Ronan, Tim Atkins, Suraleah Michaels, Barry Blitzsten

If you like discussing and analyzing movies, this bonus group is for you. Every three weeks, the movie for discussion will be listed on the MyOLLIINU website. After viewing the movie at home for the first time, study group members will view the movie a second time at home, referencing interesting articles and video clips (posted in the Sessions tab) which will deepen your enjoyment of the film. Our emphasis will be on how the story is told using the techniques of film-making. The movie selections for Spring, 2026 are: *Hedda* (DaCosta, 2025); *Jay Kelly* (Baumbach, 2025); *Sentimental Value* (Trier, 2025); *Frankenstein* (Del Toro, 2025); and *Left-Handed Girl* (Tsou, 2025). Please note that movies are tentatively chosen, and may be subject to change depending on streaming platforms and price. The group will meet on March 9th, March 30th, April 20th, May 11th, and June 1st. Members may register for only one of the two “Let's Talk About the Movies” Bonus Groups.

**VIRTUAL STUDY GROUPS: TUESDAY**

BEGINS MARCH 3, 2026

Exploring The Visual Arts

CREATIVE ARTS

Tuesday, 9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m.

Roger Heuberger, Mary Ferazza

In this study group, participants are encouraged to share their experiences with painting, sculpture, photography, architecture, art movements, or creative techniques. Active discussion is a core part of every presentation—everyone's knowledge and opinions are welcome. Volunteer presenters choose a subject for our examination, prepare talking points, and present a mix of text, audio, images, or video. Coordinators assist with content preparation if needed. The coordinators select the first week's topics; after that, study group members suggest topics based on their particular interests. The format includes one or two local field trips. There are no prerequisites or required readings except for materials presenters may suggest. Possible topics include Caillebotte, Ashcan artists, Calatrava architecture, Velázquez, Bernini's sculptures, Rembrandt, and conceptual art. Presenters often say they learned more than expected and that meeting the research challenge was rewarding. The main goal of our study group is to enjoy and discuss art in a fun, inclusive setting.

**NEW Ovid and Virgil**

LITERATURE

Tuesday, 9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m.

Michael Dolesh, Janet Jablon, Judith Myers

When Emperor Augustus Caesar ascended the throne of ancient Rome in 37 BCE, two of the most famous Roman authors, Ovid and Virgil, sought his favor by writing two works that exemplified the beliefs and traditions of Rome. In *Metamorphoses*, the poet Ovid created a compendium of stories, legends, and myths, many of which originated with the Greeks, depicting the ancients' beliefs about the creation of the world, the troublesome and dangerous relations with the gods, and the amorous adventures of mortals. Ovid's stories inspired many later authors of Western culture, including Shakespeare and Chaucer, as well as artists such as Michelangelo and Bernini. Virgil created the epic story of the founding of Rome in his *Aeneid*. It begins with the Trojan hero Aeneas fleeing the destruction of Troy by the Greeks. Along his journey, we encounter Aeneas' ill-fated love affair with Queen Dido of Carthage and his journey through the underworld until he finally conquers the Italian hills which will become Rome. Our texts are *Metamorphoses* translated by Stanley Lombardo (Hackett, 2010) and *The Aeneid* translated by Sarah Ruden (revised ed. Yale Press, 2021). Join us as we read and discuss these spirited and entertaining journeys through the Roman imagination.



NEW *The Ideological Brain*

SOCIAL SCIENCES

Tuesday, 9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m. (7 weeks, meets second half of the term)

Steve VanderVoort, Stuart Brown

Are you curious about why people see the world so differently? Why it's so hard to change their minds?

Join our study group inspired by Leor Zmigrod's *The Ideological Brain* (Henry Holt, 2025), a fascinating look at how our beliefs are shaped not only by culture and experience but also by the way our brains work. Zmigrod's research blends neuroscience, psychology, and politics to show how the mind can become either open and flexible or locked into rigid patterns of thought. Together, we'll explore what makes ideologies so powerful, how they form, and what it takes to think beyond them in today's polarized world. Whether you love lively conversation, want to understand your own thinking better, or just enjoy exploring big ideas, this study group is a great place to start.



NEW Great Photographers and Their Vision

CREATIVE ARTS

Tuesday, 1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.

Rick O'Konis, Michael Jablon

Photography can communicate, inform, document, and entertain. It is a tool used by reporters, educators, scientists, storytellers, and artists. But what is it about some images that enables them to rise to the level of art? In this study group, we will examine the medium of photography through the lens of some of its greatest practitioners. What is it that makes the work of Ansel Adams, Edward Weston, Henri Cartier-Bresson, or Cindy Sherman so compelling? We will be looking at the work of these photographers, and many more, whose photos have risen to the top of the profession. Each week, study group members will research and present the work of some of the greats using articles, documentaries, other videos, and, of course, the photos themselves.



MacGuffins and More: Hitchcock's Masterworks and the Art of Pure Cinema

CREATIVE ARTS

Tuesday, 1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m. (7 weeks, meets first half of the term)

Jim Gecker, Jim Burns

From 1943 to 1960, Alfred Hitchcock perfected the psychological thriller, crafting films that probe the darkest corners of human nature while revolutionizing cinematic technique. These seven masterworks explore the director's recurring themes: suspicion, guilt, chance encounters, mistaken identity, voyeurism, and the thin line between sanity and madness. As we discuss *Shadow of a Doubt* (1943), *Notorious* (1946), *Strangers on a Train* (1951), *Rear Window* (1954), *Vertigo* (1958), *North by Northwest* (1959), and *Psycho* (1960), we'll analyze how Hitchcock transformed genre entertainment into profound psychological studies through ingenious scripts, innovative camera work, groundbreaking editing, iconic performances, and unforgettable musical scores. We'll explore how Hitchcock manipulated audience identification and built unbearable suspense through visual storytelling rather than dialogue—what he called “pure cinema.”

Participants will watch each film in advance via streaming or DVD. We'll use as a text *The Art of Alfred Hitchcock: Fifty Years of His Motion Pictures* by Donald Spoto (Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2d ed. 1991) and share discussion questions before each session.



Tuesday at the Movies

CREATIVE ARTS

Tuesday, 1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.

Michael Pierce, Hillel Furlager, David Buffen

Welcome to our exploration of musical films that celebrate the art of dance! In this series, we will be watching a selection of films that not only captivate with their enchanting melodies and engaging narratives, but also showcase exceptional choreography and high-energy dance performances. From classic gems to contemporary masterpieces, these musicals highlight the transformative power of dance, weaving it seamlessly into their storytelling to evoke emotion, convey character, and celebrate the joy of movement. We will view: *Singing in the Rain* (1952, Stanley Donen); *Top Hat* (1935, Mark Sandrich); *Silk Stockings* (1957, Rouben Mamoulian); *An American in Paris* (1951, Vincente Minnelli); *Funny Girl* (1968, William Wyler); *In the Heights* (2021, John Chu); *Cabaret* (1972, Bob Fosse); *Guys and Dolls* (1955, Joseph Mankiewicz); *All That Jazz* (1979, Bob Fosse); *Chicago* (2002, Rob Marshall); *Saturday Night Fever* (1977, John Badham); *FAME* (1980, Alan Parker); *Dirty Dancing* (1986, Emile Ardolino); and *Grease* (1978, Randal Kleiser). We watch each week's movie in advance of the class. Participants must obtain the movies on their own, which can usually be found through streaming services or from their local library on DVD or Kanopy. Discussions will be led by class participants. Let's dance!!



The *Purgatorio*—Dante The Traveler, Virgil The Guide— The Journey Continues

LITERATURE

Tuesday, 1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.

Bob Eder, Rosemary O'Shea

Join us for *Purgatorio*, the second canticle of a fascinating journey through the classic epic poem *The Divine Comedy* by Dante Alighieri. Members of the study group should read *The Inferno* before the spring session begins. In *Purgatorio*, a 35-year-old Florentine, Dante, struggling with failure and apparently spiritual death, has exited Hell, guided by the shade of the Roman poet Virgil, and they begin climbing the mountain of Purgatory. Virgil represents the voice of reason; Dante is the pilgrim and protagonist. In Hell, sinners are punished because they died unrepentant, having chosen their sins over God, and are condemned to eternal damnation. In Purgatory, souls are not damned; they are saved but imperfect, and must undergo purification to prepare for Paradise. As our text, we have chosen the *Purgatorio* translation by Robert Hollander and Jean Hollander (Vintage Books, 2004). The readings and related/supplementary materials will provide for robust conversation over the course of the semester.



VIRTUAL STUDY GROUPS: WEDNESDAY

BEGINS MARCH 4, 2026

Capturing Chicagoland through Photography

CREATIVE ARTS

Wednesday, 8:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m.

Richard Fisher, Howard Frank

This study group is designed to improve members' photographic skills and build connections among study group members. Sessions will alternate between virtual sessions and in-person group photography shoots (indoor and outdoor, often selected by study group members). The virtual sessions will include image reviews, discussion of photographic techniques, post-processing methods, tips and tricks, and discussion of upcoming field exercises. Our virtual sessions also will feature study group member presentations of a favorite photographer, photographic technique, or place to photograph. This study group is open to any OLLI member who owns a digital camera where the exposure can be adjusted (ideally with a manual exposure mode). Members also must have a computer (PC or Mac), basic computer skills, and access to photographic editing software such as Photoshop, Lightroom, or Photoshop Elements. Mentoring is available to help study group members learn camera features, photographic techniques, and processing methods. Please join us to expose yourself to new areas of photography and the Chicago area and develop new photographic techniques and friends.

**Foreign Affairs**

CONTEMPORARY / SOCIAL ISSUES

Wednesday, 9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m.

Gary Benz, Gene Mackevich, Jim Perlow

This study group is made up of fellow students who love to read and desire to learn about the countries of the world through their interactions with one another. We encourage and attract people who have inquisitive minds and are serious about learning and exchanging ideas. We take pride in being inclusive and not intimidating by being welcoming and accepting of a wide range of opinions that are documented and convincingly expressed. We start with material from *Foreign Affairs*, a bimonthly magazine published by the Council on Foreign Relations, but we don't stop there. Discussion leaders may supplement weekly readings with materials from think tanks (such as Brookings) mainstream periodicals (such as *The Economist*, *Financial Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Times*) and topical books. The goal of this study group is to be interactive with a healthy exchange of ideas, while still being fun and rewarding. In doing so, we create our own "think tank" and try to resolve problems and world issues.

**Literature of Baseball Doubleheader**

LITERATURE

Wednesday, 9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m.

Mark Rosenberg, Benjamin Schwartz, Bob Shaevel

Although doubleheaders are unusual in the major leagues, this spring the Literature of Baseball group is presenting its doubleheader, *Why Baseball Matters* (Yale University Press, 2019) by Susan Jacoby, and *The Soul of Baseball* (William Morrow, 2007) by Joe Posnanski. In *The Soul of Baseball*, Buck O'Neil takes Joe Posnanski on a cross-country journey to explore a time when African Americans were not welcome in the major leagues. Yet they played a high level of baseball that has just recently been recognized by Major League Baseball. Along the way, readers see baseball from the sandlot to the ballpark, encountering such all-time greats as Willie Mays, Satchel Paige, and Monte Irvin. In *Why Baseball Matters*, Chicago-born and passionate White Sox fan Susan Jacoby presents a book that is part memoir and part discussion of the game's evolution. She addresses the challenges facing baseball as a game and as a business. Our study group will follow spring training, and as a bonus, The World Baseball Classic in March. As usual, there will be lively discussions and a guest speaker or two, as well as a possible baseball game field trip.



Articles from the Sunday New York Times

CONTEMPORARY / SOCIAL ISSUES

Wednesday, 1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.

Mitchell Harrison, Hilmon Sorey, Carole Bass

The *New York Times* is one of the world's greatest newspapers covering a wide range of events. Today, it has some of the most renowned writers and photographers who cover news all over the world. We are living in extraordinary times and the articles of this paper shed light on everything from climate change, foreign and domestic political strife, to bold technological innovations. Together we take a deep dive into "All The News That's Fit To Print." Study group members choose four articles from the previous Sunday *New York Times*. Access to current print or digital *The New York Times* editions is required.



Documentary Films

CREATIVE ARTS

Wednesday, 1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.

Colleen Leahy, Madelyn Seckler, Laurie Bederow

In this study group we will explore the art, craft, and cultural significance of documentary filmmaking. Participants will engage with a wide range of documentary styles while examining how documentaries shape public discourse, represent truth, and navigate ethical complexities. A list of possible documentaries for viewing will be distributed, and members may nominate additional recent films. These films may be sometimes interesting and sometimes controversial. Study group members will choose which film they wish to present and then will lead the discussion. Films are watched in advance at home. There may be a fee to watch some of the assigned movies. Join us for a study group of fun and discovery.



VIRTUAL STUDY GROUPS: THURSDAY

BEGINS MARCH 5, 2026

Poetry in a New Age

CREATIVE ARTS

Thursday, 9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m.

Judith Myers, Michael Dolesh, Judith McCue

If you are interested in learning about poetry, or are a long-time reader of poetry, this virtual study group is for you. We welcome people discovering poetry for the first time, as well as more experienced poetry lovers. Each week, we read and discuss a selection of contemporary poems chosen by the study group participants. We read aloud the poems giving careful attention in our discussion to the poet's meaning, style, and content. We are always on the hunt for new poems and poets, but we also revisit poems and poets we have read before just because we like them. Poets we have discussed recently include Joanna Klink, Carl Dennis, Louise Erdrich, Arthur Sze, and Ada Limón. In addition, we will have occasional sessions when study group members share a favorite poem with the group. Join us for an enjoyable and informative member-led study group focusing on what still moves people today about poetry.



NEW *Myth America: The Biggest Legends and Lies About Our Past*

HISTORY & GOVERNMENT

Thursday, 9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m.

James Smith, Laura Ann Wilber

In *Myth America: Historians Take on the Biggest Legends and Lies About Our Past* (Basic Books, 2022), a team of historians dissects the myths, misunderstandings, and falsehoods surrounding twenty major concepts in American History. The topics are both diverse and significant: American exceptionalism, the founding, immigration, America First, the magic of the marketplace, the New Deal, the Great Society, the Reagan Revolution, Confederate monuments, police violence and many other important subjects. Editors Kevin M. Kruse and Julian E. Zelizer note that we live in an age of disinformation in which the line between fact and fiction has become tenuous. This age stands apart from others in that much of the disinformation, deceptions, and distortions are deliberate, and intentional. The historians in this volume meticulously analyze the twists and spins that have been imparted to the facts about each of the subjects they consider, with many of those twists and spins serving the interests of partisan agendas. You will emerge from this study group with a much clearer understanding of each of the topics we cover, and also with an education on how history can be bent, folded, spindled, and mutilated.



Shades of Gray

SOCIAL SCIENCES

Thursday, 9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m.

Steve VanderVoort, Sami Nordmark, Steven Barrigar

Are you naturally curious? Do you like to explore issues that may or may not have any right or wrong answers? Then join us in this lively discussion group where we will explore such subjects as reparations, cancel culture, sex, virtual reality, politics, love, free speech, climate change, failure, happiness, and much, much more. Helping us along on this journey of discovery will be Sean Illing, journalist, author, and philosopher, in his podcast *The Gray Area* which is available on Vox and Apple and Google Podcasts. Each week we will listen to an episode dealing with a particular subject and then come to the study group prepared to discuss our thoughts and responses to what we heard. We expect to hear a wide variety of reactions from study group members that will lead us to new ideas and insights we can explore together. We look forward to having you join us in this unique learning experience.



The Economist

CONTEMPORARY / SOCIAL ISSUES

Thursday, 1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.

Jennifer Gainer, Mark Goldberg, Elliott Hartstein, John Donovan

The Economist weekly magazine is widely acclaimed for its thoughtful and stimulating analyses of world news, politics, and business. It also has sections on science, technology, books, the arts, and extensive reports on particular issues of current interest. This long-running study group welcomes new members, interested in current events, who can enrich our discussions. Each study group participant is required to lead or co-lead a weekly discussion. This involves selecting 8-12 articles from the current weekly issue and developing the questions needed to get the lively conversations started. Given the uncertainty of the mail, a digital subscription to *The Economist* is highly encouraged. It may also be available through your library. Information on subscriptions is available at subscribenow.economist.com.



The New Fiction Writers Workshop

CREATIVE ARTS

Thursday, 1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.

April Ware, Bruce Hochstadter

In two seven week workshops we will explore the elements of writing craft that give our stories that extra sparkle and make our audience want to take the journey with us. We will dive into such craft elements as creating tension, making characters multidimensional, great openings and shaping narrative style. Along with peer review of your written works of up to 25 pages, we will explore the craft of short stories by famous writers. Our first workshop will be facilitated by a graduate student from Northwestern's Fine Arts Program. Let the narratives of the published works and creative genius of your peers inspire you to bring the plots of your stories alive. Storytellers of all levels are welcome. Join the adventure of creating great fiction.



NEW Rescue Board: The Untold Story of America's Efforts to Save the Jews of Europe

HISTORY & GOVERNMENT

Thursday, 1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m. (7 weeks, meets first half of the term)

Michael Sirota, Neal Goodfriend, Nancy Tarpey Cole

Reading *Rescue Board: The Untold Story of America's Efforts to Save the Jews of Europe* by Holocaust historian Rebecca Erbelding (Doubleday, 2018), we will explore the harsh Congressional immigration policy that kept most Jewish refugees out of America, even as Hitler and the Nazis closed in. In 1944, Franklin D. Roosevelt created the War Refugee Board, and put a young Department of the Treasury lawyer John Pehle in charge. Pehle led a team of D.C. pencil pushers, international relief workers, smugglers, diplomats, millionaires, and rabble-rousers across four continents and a dozen countries. Together, they forged identity papers, maneuvered food and medicine into concentration camps, recruited spies, leaked news stories, laundered money, negotiated ransoms, and funneled millions of dollars into Europe tricking the Nazis. They bought weapons for the French Resistance and sliced red tape to allow Jewish refugees to escape to Palestine. In this remarkable work of historical reclamation, Rebecca Erbelding pieces together years of research and newly uncovered archival materials to tell the dramatic story of America's little-known efforts to save the Jews of Europe. Please join us as we explore this fascinating historical episode.



NEW How Do Our Brains Shape Reality?

STMH

Thursday, 1:15 p.m.–3:15 p.m.

Bob Jenkins, Bill King

Our minds don't simply record the world—they actively construct it, piecing together fragments of sensation and memory into coherent experience. But what happens when these neural constructions falter or deceive us? Through two groundbreaking books, we will explore how the brain creates our sense of reality, consciousness, and self. In *The Illusionist Brain: The Neuroscience of Magic* (Princeton, 2023), neuroscientists Jordi Camí and Luis Martínez reveal how magicians exploit or "hack" the same mental shortcuts our brains use every moment—showing us that perception is creative inference, not passive reception. Nobel laureate Eric Kandel's *The Disordered Mind: What Unusual Brains Tell Us About Ourselves* (Robinson, 2020) further illuminates how the brain builds experience, emotion, and identity by examining neurological and psychiatric disorders. Together, we will grapple with profound questions: Is free will an illusion? How do memory, attention, and expectation shape what we perceive? What do disorders reveal about typical brain function? Through close reading and discussion, we will investigate perception, trauma, neurodiversity, and the biological foundations of mind. No science background required. Join us to probe the mysteries, limits, and surprises of the mind.



BONUS GROUP: Let's Talk About the Movies (Thursday)

CREATIVE ARTS

Thursday, 4:00 p.m.–5:30 p.m.

Trish Ronan, Tim Atkins, Barry Blitzsten

If you like discussing and analyzing movies, this bonus group is for you. Every three weeks, the movie for discussion will be listed on the MyOLLINU website. After viewing the movie at home for the first time, study group members will view the movie a second time at home referencing interesting articles and video clips (posted in the Sessions tab) which will deepen your enjoyment of the film. Our emphasis will be on how the story is told using the techniques of film-making. The movie selections for Spring, 2026 are: *Hedda* (DaCosta, 2025); *Jay Kelly* (Baumbach, 2025); *Sentimental Value* (Trier, 2025); *Frankenstein* (Del Toro, 2025); and *Left-Handed Girl* (Tsou, 2025). Please note that movies are tentatively chosen, and may be subject to change depending on streaming platforms and price. The group will meet on March 12th, April 2nd, April 23rd, May 14th, and June 4th. Members may register for only one of the two “Let's Talk About the Movies” Bonus Groups.

**VIRTUAL STUDY GROUPS: FRIDAY**

BEGINS MARCH 6, 2026

International Relations

CONTEMPORARY / SOCIAL ISSUES

Friday, 9:45 a.m.–11:45 a.m.

Phil Bashook, Bob Steiner, Jay Edelston

Our world is undergoing rapid change and rising uncertainty. Economic and political multipolarity and shifting alliances are increasingly shaping the global landscape. International affairs are more complex than ever. This study group aims to understand the complexity through careful analysis and thoughtful discussion. We respectfully include United States politics when US events have direct global consequences. We draw on a broad range of reputable sources—international news outlets, respected foreign-policy journals, engaging podcasts, authoritative websites, and compelling opinion pieces. Each week, a different group member leads the conversation by selecting reading materials (typically around 20 pages) and offers questions to encourage a lively discussion. Join us for stimulating, wide-ranging conversations about the global scene.





2025–2026 ACADEMIC CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER 2025

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OCTOBER 2025

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NOVEMBER 2025

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DECEMBER 2025

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JANUARY 2026

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FEBRUARY 2026

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MARCH 2026

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APRIL 2026

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MAY 2026

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JUNE 2026

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JULY 2026

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AUGUST 2026

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OLLI session dates and registration periods:

■ Fall Session:

14 Weeks, September 2–December 8, 2025
Registration August 4–August 18, 2025

■ Winter Session (all virtual):

4 Weeks, January 20–February 16, 2026
Registration December 15, 2025–January 5, 2026

■ Spring Session:

14 weeks, March 2–June 8, 2026
Registration February 2–February 16, 2026

■ Summer Session:

4 Weeks, July 6–July 31, 2026
Registration June 8–June 22, 2026

■ Break between sessions

OLLI and Northwestern University will be closed on the following days:

■ Monday, September 1, 2025

■ Thursday, November 27 and Friday, November 28, 2025

■ Wednesday, December 24, 2025 through Thursday, January 1, 2026

■ Monday, January 19, 2026

■ Monday, May 25, 2026

■ Friday, June 19, 2026

■ Friday, July 3, 2026

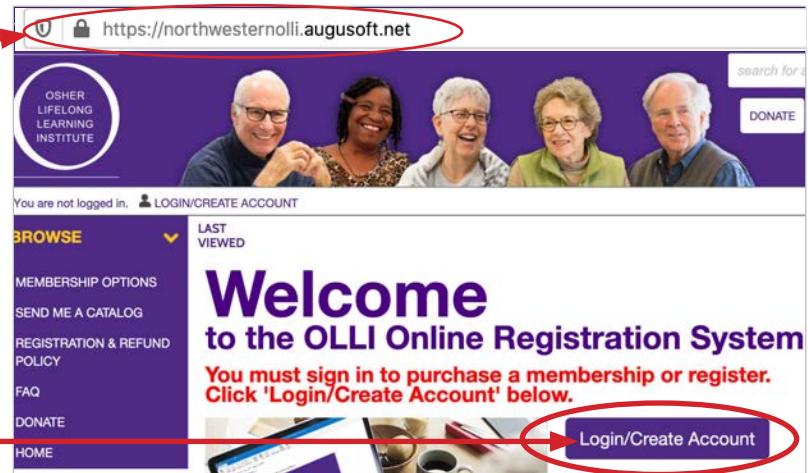


HOW TO PURCHASE MEMBERSHIP AND REGISTER FOR STUDY GROUPS

- Go to the OLLI Online Registration System (Augusoft) which can be accessed at:
<https://northwesternolli.augusoft.net>

- Click Log In/Create Account.

- This takes you to the Sign In page.



Sign In

Use your username and password to sign in here.
Please note that the password is case sensitive.

Student

Username

[Forgot your username?](#)

Password

[Forgot your password?](#)

Sign In

New Students

Click Create New Profile to create your own username, password and profile.

Create New Profile

EXISTING USERS:

If you are a current or former member and have a Profile in the system:

SIGN IN to Your Account with your Username and Password.

- Make sure the option says **Student** in the pull-down menu.
- If you have forgotten your Username or Password, click on the **Forgot Your Username?** or **Forgot Your Password?** links.

DO NOT CREATE A NEW PROFILE

NEW USERS:

If you are a new user, please create a new profile.

Click **Create New Profile** and follow the prompts.

- On the Profile Creation page, select Student Profile (single user) button, click Submit.
- Fill in the necessary information for Step 1, Step 2, and Step 3 tabs.
- Click **Submit** to register your account.

If you need assistance, email olli@northwestern.edu.

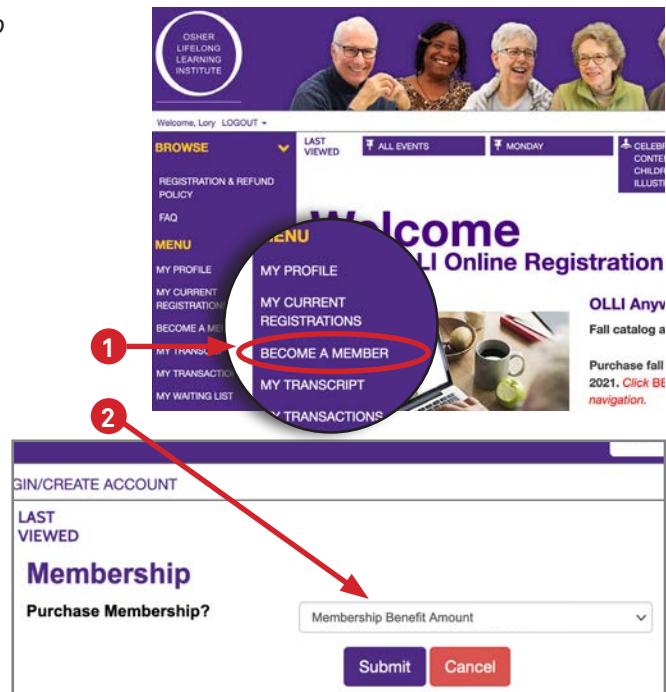
New Members who have created a profile and Existing Members who have signed in can now continue to **Purchase Membership**—instructions on next page.

HOW TO PURCHASE MEMBERSHIP AND REGISTER FOR STUDY GROUPS, CONT

PURCHASE MEMBERSHIP:

Spring Trial and Spring Half-Year memberships are available to purchase this spring. OLLI members with a full-year membership do not need to purchase a spring membership; the spring term is included in your current membership.

1. On the Welcome home page, click **BECOME A MEMBER** in the purple column on the left.
2. On the **Membership** page, select the membership option you wish to purchase from the drop-down menu.
3. You will then be led to your cart page. Continue with the prompts to check out.
 - OLLI accepts Visa, Mastercard, American Express, or Discover.



1. On the Welcome home page, click **BECOME A MEMBER** in the purple column on the left.

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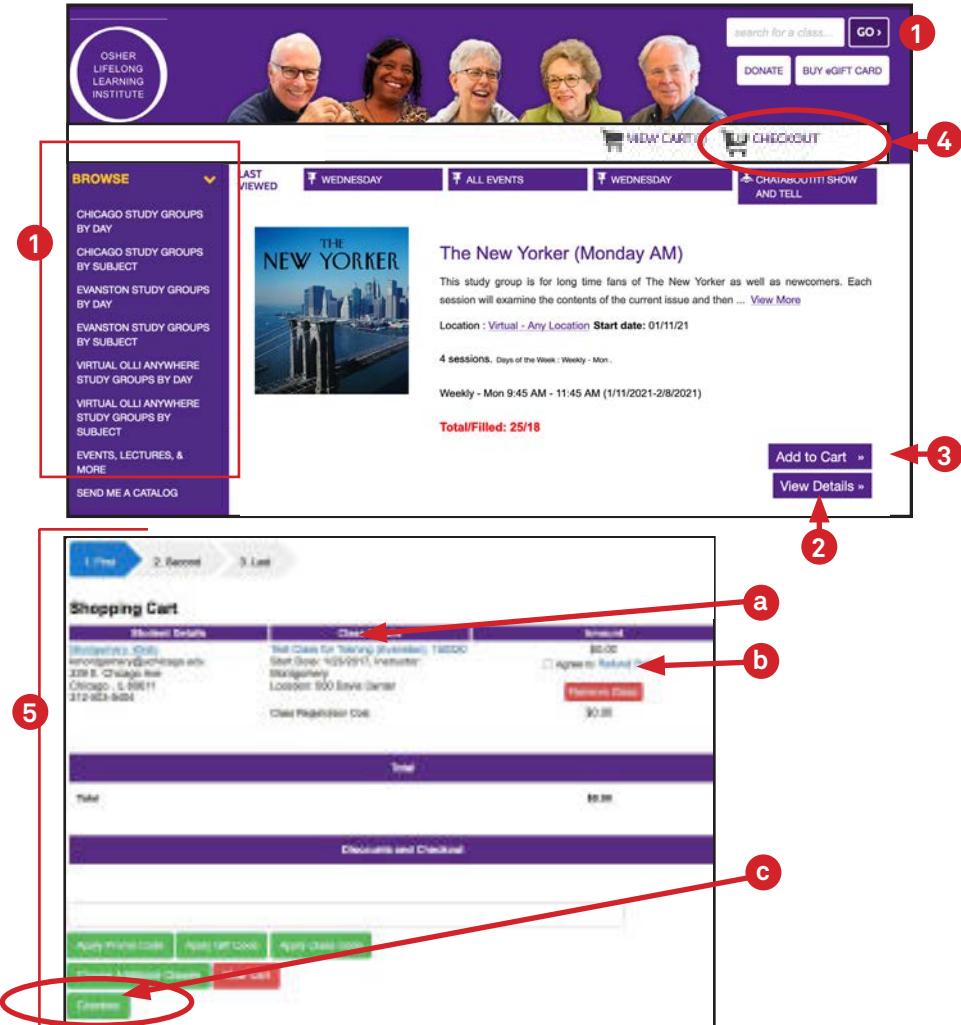
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REGISTRATION:

1. **BROWSE** Study Groups by location, by day, or by subject area. Or, type a portion of the title in the **SEARCH** bar at the top right of the page.
2. For more information about a Study Group click **View Details**.
3. Once registration is open, to register for a Study Group click **Add to Cart**.
 - To register for additional Study Groups, repeat Step 1 through 3.
4. **Important:** To complete your registration click **CHECKOUT** at the top right of the screen.
5. **Finish your checkout:**
 - a. Review your selections
 - b. Click the **Agree to Refund Policy** box
 - c. Click the green **CHECKOUT** box at the bottom of the screen.

Wait for the screen that says "Your transaction has been processed successfully."

You will receive a confirmation email of your registration. **If you do not receive the confirmation email, your registration is not complete.**



1. BROWSE Study Groups by location, by day, or by subject area. Or, type a portion of the title in the SEARCH bar at the top right of the page.

2. For more information about a Study Group click View Details.

3. Once registration is open, to register for a Study Group click Add to Cart.

4. Important: To complete your registration click CHECKOUT at the top right of the screen.

5. Finish your checkout:

- Agree to Refund Policy
- Checkout



2024 HONOR ROLL OF DONORS

Thank you to the following donors who generously made gifts to OLLI during the calendar year 2024.
The 2025 Honor Roll will be published in February, 2026.

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The 2024 Honor Roll of Donors lists donations February 1, 2024 through January 31, 2025. The 2025 Honor Roll of Donors will be announced after January 31, 2026

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[Donate Today!](#)



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Contributing to the OLLI Member Fund has a direct impact on your personal experience. Gifts are used for OLLI NU strategic priorities such as:

- Enhanced academic enrichment opportunities: special programs and guest speakers
- Acoustic improvements, hearing assistance devices, and sound transmission systems to provide better accessibility for all members.
- Increased diversity and outreach activities
- Need-based scholarships



Scan the QR code or click here to give to the OLLI NU Member Fund

Your contribution—at any level—demonstrates your commitment to and appreciation for OLLI.

2025–2026 POLICIES AND INFORMATION

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Choice and Flexibility

Remember, every study group will have a limited number of seats in order to maintain the high quality, discussion-based learning model that Northwestern OLLI is known for. As a result, not everyone may get into their first choice. However, members are often pleasantly surprised and pleased by their second, third, or even fourth choice study group which expands their interests and their friendships. In the spirit of lifelong learning, we encourage members to keep an open mind when registering. There are many outstanding study groups from which to choose!

Membership Purchase and Registration

Participation in the OLLI program is based on membership. Membership allows you to join a given number of study groups in each term (varies by membership level). Membership also gives you access to lectures, workshops, enrichment opportunities, and other benefits through Northwestern.

REGISTRATION ASSISTANCE

Membership Purchases and Registration are through the OLLI Online Registration System (Augusoft).

If you need assistance, email olli@northwestern.edu. The first available staff member or OLLI Volunteer will call or email you to assist.

ADDITIONAL STUDY GROUP PURCHASES

Additional study groups, beyond those included in your membership, can be purchased for an additional charge. To purchase additional study groups, email olli@northwestern.edu.

- **14-week term (Fall or Spring)** = Prime +\$65 / +\$33 for a 7-week;
Standard +\$105 / +\$53 for a 7-week; Basic +\$150 / +\$75 for a 7-week
- **4-week term (Winter or Summer)** = Prime +\$50; Standard +\$80; Basic +\$100

Changes to your membership type are only allowed in specific circumstances which must be approved by the Director. If approved, changes are subject to an administrative fee.

REGISTRATION

You MUST be officially registered through the OLLI office for all study groups and bonus groups you attend.

Registration for study groups is on a first come, first served basis. If a study group is full, members will be placed on a waiting list and will be notified only if a space becomes available. Should space become available, members will be added to a study group in the order in which they have been wait listed. We encourage you to register for an open study group in case the waitlisted group does not become available.

OLLI accepts Visa, Mastercard, American Express, or Discover.

Unless otherwise noted, you must be a current member of OLLI to register for OLLI events.

Trial memberships are available only to new members and may be purchased only one time.

REGISTRATION ADD/DROP

Please make your selections carefully. Changes to study group selections may ONLY be made by the OLLI office. Changes are subject to study group availability.

Changes may only be made up to the end of the second week of the fall or spring term or the first week of winter or summer term.

If your plans have changed and you can no longer participate in a study group or bonus group you must notify the OLLI office.

Refund Policies

UNUSED MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS: Refunds are **NOT issued** for unused membership benefits. If you are unsure of your plans for the year, we recommend that you purchase a half-year membership.

EVENTS: Refunds are **NOT issued** for academic enrichment or social events, including but not limited to prepaid meals, theater tickets, and prepaid tours.

EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES: Issuance of refunds for extraordinary circumstances are at the discretion of the OLLI Director.

METHOD: Qualifying refunds must be issued in the exact form as payment was made (i.e. to the same credit card that was used to pay for the transaction). Allow 6 weeks for processing.

NEW MEMBERS ONLY: If you participate in OLLI at Northwestern University for the first time and find that this program is not a good match for you, you may be eligible for a full or partial refund under the following circumstances:

If you started in the fall or spring term and you notify the OLLI Director in writing **within two weeks** of the start of the term.

If you started in the winter or summer term and you notify the OLLI Director in writing **within one week** of the start of the term.

Attendance Policies & Expectations

While occasional absences may be unavoidable, OLLI Membership is based on the expectation that you will register for, attend, and actively participate in study groups.

Members who are unable to attend the **first two weeks** of the fall or spring term are required to notify the study group coordinator of their absence, and (if possible) provide an expected date of return to the study group. Members who fail to notify their study group coordinator of their absence may be dropped from the study group at the end of week two.

Members who are unable to attend the **first week** of the winter or summer term are required to notify the study group coordinator of their absence, and (if possible) provide an expected date of return to the study group. Members who fail to notify their study group coordinator of their absence may be dropped from the study group at the end of week one.

Members who sign up for a study group and fail to attend at least half the scheduled sessions without communicating with the coordinator and the office may be refused registration/membership in the future.

If you require special accommodations, please contact the OLLI office prior to registration.

RSVP carefully to events and workshops, understanding that while there may be no cost to you, there is a cost to the program.

OLLI prohibits video recording of any study group by members or coordinators.

HEALTH & SAFETY REQUIREMENTS AND INFORMATION

Safeguarding the health and safety of our members and staff remains top priority. Northwestern OLLI continues to listen to the science and follow CDC guidelines, state mandates, and [Northwestern policies related to all COVID-19 safety protocols](#). If these guidelines, mandates, or policies change, Northwestern OLLI will adjust accordingly.

OLLI members should follow a common sense/common decency approach:

- Stay home if you are sick
- If you become ill with a bad cold, flu, or Covid-19, or other highly contagious disease, we encourage you to let your study group know so that they can monitor their own symptoms. However, we cannot require anyone to do so.
- Stay home until you are fully recovered—fever-free and/or symptom-free for at least 24 hours.

NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY MULTIMEDIA RELEASE AGREEMENT

For good and valuable consideration, as a current or former member of Northwestern Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, you grant Northwestern University (the "University") and its agents and assigns the right to record your appearance and participation on digital recordings, videotape, audiotape, film, photograph or any other medium and to use, publish, reproduce, modify, distribute, and publicly exhibit without limitation for promotional and marketing materials to be used by the University, television networks, and on websites, including but not limited to the University's website, iTunes, iTunesU, and the University's page on YouTube, such recordings, in whole or in part, without restrictions or limitation for any purpose that the University in its sole discretion deems appropriate. You further consent to the University's use of your name, likeness, voice, and identifying information in connection with such recordings. You release the University, its successors and assigns, its agents, and all persons for whom it is acting from any liability by virtue of any blurring, distortion, alteration, optical illusion, or use in composite form, whether intentional or otherwise, that may occur or be produced in the recording process, or any misspellings or inaccuracies, and you waive any right that you may have to inspect, approve, own, or control the finished recordings. You agree that neither you nor your heirs shall be entitled to any compensation for the use of your name, photograph, likeness, or other image of yourself.

NORTHWESTERN'S POLICY ON DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT

Northwestern University does not discriminate or permit discrimination by any member of its community against any individual on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, parental status, marital status, age, disability, citizenship status, veteran status, genetic information, reproductive health decision making, or any other classification protected by law in matters of admissions, employment, housing, or services or in the educational programs or activities it operates. Harassment, whether verbal, physical, or visual, that is based on any of these characteristics is a form of discrimination. Further prohibited by law is discrimination against any employee and/or job applicant who chooses to inquire about, discuss, or disclose their own compensation or the compensation of another employee or applicant.

Northwestern University complies with federal and state laws that prohibit discrimination based on the protected categories listed above, including Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. Title IX requires educational institutions, such as Northwestern, to prohibit discrimination based on sex (including sexual harassment) in the University's educational programs and activities, including in matters of employment and admissions. In addition, Northwestern provides reasonable accommodations to qualified applicants, students, and employees with disabilities and to individuals who are pregnant.

Any alleged violations of this policy or questions with respect to nondiscrimination or reasonable accommodations should be directed to Northwestern's Office of Equity, 1800 Sherman Avenue, Suite 4-500, Evanston, Illinois 60208, 847-467-6165, equity@northwestern.edu.

Questions specific to sex discrimination (including sexual misconduct and sexual harassment) should be directed to Northwestern's Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Equity, 1800 Sherman Avenue, Suite 4-500, Evanston, Illinois 60208, 847-467-6165, TitleIXCoordinator@northwestern.edu.

A person may also file a complaint with the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights regarding an alleged violation of Title IX by visiting www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/complaintintro.html or calling 800-421-3481. Inquiries about the application of Title IX to Northwestern may be referred to Northwestern's Title IX Coordinator, the United States Department of Education's Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, or both.

AVOIDING MICROAGGRESSIONS

To reduce the possibility of unintended harm to fellow OLLI members and to help OLLI be fully inclusive, we encourage all members to educate themselves on microaggressions and be mindful of this information as they engage in OLLI classrooms. Microaggression education can be found under Tips and Tools within the MyOLLINU website.

OLLI MEMBER/STUDENT CONDUCT RULES AND PROCESSES

Adapted from SPS Rules and Regulations of Student Conduct. All students are subject to applicable Northwestern University-enacted policies and standards.

Students admitted into the Northwestern University Osher Lifelong Learning Institute Program (OLLI), offered through the School of Professional Studies (SPS), are SPS students taking non-credit courses in peer-led, discussion format.

OLLI students are subject to the following student conduct policies, rules and processes from the time of a student's registration for OLLI courses throughout participation in the OLLI community. These policies extend to student interaction with each other and with Northwestern staff and faculty, in and outside of the classroom.

Community Expectations: All OLLI students, as members of the Northwestern and SPS community, are expected to conduct themselves maturely and exemplify behavior consistent with Northwestern community standards. Northwestern students are expected to not only excel in the classroom but to engage in socially responsible behavior and to model exceptional conduct, character, and citizenship in class and beyond. All members of the Northwestern community are expected to engage with each other with respect and consideration. All students are expected to be respectful of OLLI and SPS staff time and resources.

Classroom Expectations: All course participants are expected to behave in a manner conducive to a successful and enjoyable learning experience. Sometimes, relatively harmless things can affect the classroom dynamic; for example, some students are so eager to participate that they unintentionally dominate class. Students must think about their role in class as an individual student but also as an integral part of a group experience. Some disruptions are of a more serious nature and cannot be tolerated.

Prohibited Conduct: All OLLI students are subject to applicable University-enacted policies and standards including but not limited to those in the Northwestern University Student Handbook. Any violation of these policies or assisting or encouraging others in the violation of these policies, may lead to student conduct action, including sanctions.

Prohibited and restricted conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Endangering self or others, including but not limited to the physical, psychological/emotional well-being of any person
- Interfering with the learning of others, including but not limited to in-person behavior, online behavior or use of University resources or systems to interfere with the work of another student, a faculty member, or a University staff member, or that otherwise interferes with normal operation of University systems or processes
- Acts of fraud, misrepresentation, or dishonesty including misuse of University documents or knowingly furnishing false information to the University
- Acts of sexual misconduct, discrimination and/or harassment
- Failure to comply to the reasonable request or instruction of a university staff member or emergency personnel acting in an official capacity

Scope of Conduct: OLLI students are subject to SPS Conduct Policies and applicable University-enacted policies found in The Northwestern Student Handbook. Conduct processes are adapted to the parameters dictated by offering peer-led non-credit programming. Northwestern and SPS reserve the right to review and resolve reports of alleged misconduct occurring from the time of a student's OLLI course registration throughout their time being a member of the OLLI community.

OLLI MEMBER/STUDENT CONDUCT RULES AND PROCESSES, CONT.

Student Conduct Process: All alleged violations of conduct by OLLI students will be reviewed by the program director to determine next steps. Options include, but are not limited to:

- close the case due to insufficient information
- resolution of case by OLLI director
- refer case to Northwestern University's Office of Community Standards, Office of Civil Rights and Title IX Compliance, and/or other appropriate University office or unit. *Per Northwestern's reporting obligations, all allegations of sexual misconduct (including sexual assault, sexual exploitation, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, and sexual harassment), discrimination based on a protected category, and harassment based on a protected category are referred to the Office of Civil Rights and Title IX Compliance.*

The director will consider whether interim action is appropriate when notice of an alleged violation is received.

Notification: When a conduct violation allegation is determined to move forward, the OLLI student involved (respondent) is notified via correspondence by OLLI leadership. Notification will typically include a brief description of the alleged misconduct, including the time, date and place the incident allegedly occurred, and a list of any University policies allegedly violated. The notification letter will include a request for a written response to the allegations within a reasonable amount of time, not to exceed two weeks of receipt.

Standard of Evidence: Northwestern University Office of Student Conduct and SPS use the preponderance of the evidence standard in reviews. This means that the conduct administrator(s), determine *more likely than not* what occurred.

Participation: The University expects students to participate promptly and fully in all aspects of the student conduct process. If a student elects not to participate in any part of the process, the case may proceed without the respondent's participation. Respondents may be held accountable for any outcomes issued, even if they fail to participate.

Determination of Responsibility, Notification and Sanctions: Outcomes determined by SPS will be communicated in writing in a reasonable timeframe following student written response receipt, or following the deadline provided for response. The Outcome Notification letter will be added to the student academic record. Using preponderance of the evidence standard, OLLI leadership will determine whether the respondent is responsible for the alleged policy violation and, if so, will issue appropriate sanctions, from warning to program dismissal at sole discretion of program director.

SPS reserves the right to take appropriate action for violations of this policy or other applicable University policies, up to and including dismissal of an OLLI student from the program.

Reports of alleged bias or hate-related incidents can be reported to the Bias Incident Response Team. Information on filing reports can be found on the web page:
<https://www.northwestern.edu/inclusion/respectnu/incident-report.html>.

The Northwestern University Student Handbook can be viewed at:
sps.northwestern.edu/student-handbook

LOGISTICS, SERVICES, AND RESOURCES

OLLI Office Location and Hours:

Chicago (Wieboldt Hall):

339 E Chicago Avenue, Room 412
Chicago, IL 60611

Evanston:

500 Davis Street, Suite 700
Evanston, IL 60201

Hours: Monday–Friday, 8:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m. (less a flexible hour for lunch)
OLLI staff work remotely on Fridays throughout the Spring term.

OLLI Contact Information

EMAIL: olli@northwestern.edu

Intercampus Shuttle

Fully operational and available to OLLI students with a current Wildcard that contains your photo.
[Click Here](#) for shuttle information.

Wildcards

Wildcards are only issued before the fall semester and only to OLLI members who purchased a **full academic year membership**. 2024-2025 Academic Year Wildcards are valid through September, 2025.

Wildcard ID Discounts

wildcardadv.northwestern.edu

University Police

EVANSTON: 847-491-3254

CHICAGO: 312-503-8314

EMERGENCY: 911

northwestern.edu/up

OLLI HELP DESK:

<https://spsolli.sps.northwestern.edu/>

NU Libraries

Northwestern Library holds over 8 million items making it the 11th largest private university library.

OLLI members have access to the NU libraries and databases, however only full-time members with Wildcards have borrowing privileges.

Evanston Main Library:
[Click Here](#) for more information.

PHONE: 847-491-7658

EMAIL: library@northwestern.edu

GUIDES: libguides.northwestern.edu/OLLI_libguide

LIBRARIAN: Tracy Coyne
tracy-coyne@northwestern.edu

WEBSITE: library.northwestern.edu

The OLLI Way

As a lean staff, we do the very best we can to provide an outstanding experience for each and every OLLI member. Our community values kindness, patience, positivity, and respect—something we call The OLLI Way. These values are critical as members, staff, and volunteers interact with one another. They are especially important as we manage the logistics, fun, and excitement associated with each new OLLI term. Thanks to all of you for embracing the OLLI Way.

