Course Descriptions - Spring 2019

Course descriptions are presented in alphabetical order by Course Leader (CL) last name.

Course codes also contain the day, period and course length information:

- 1Tue, 2Wed, 3Thu designate the day the course is given (Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, respectively);
- In the middle field, 1, 2 or 3 stands for the period in which the course is given on that day;
- In the rightmost field, 10, 9 and 5 stand for the course length in weeks; 5a or 5b means that the 5-week course is given in the first or second half of the semester, respectively.

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### 3Thu-1B-10: Let’s Get Real! Realist Art of the 19th and Early 20th Centuries

**Course Leader:** Suzanne Art

**Course Length/Start:** 10 weeks starting on Feb. 28

**Course Description:**

Just mention the art of the 19th and early 20th centuries and most people will think of the avant-garde—from broad-stroke impressionism to fauvism to cubism and beyond. And yet, it was the realist artists of that period whose names were best known to their contemporaries. While artists of the avant-garde were, broadly speaking, waiting to be accepted by the general public, realist paintings sold like hotcakes.

Realist artists depicted the world as they saw it. They were chroniclers of their times, and their paintings are invaluable resources for those who want to learn about the everyday lives of people of all levels of society during three overlapping historical periods: the Belle Époque in France, the Gilded Age/Progressive Era in the US, and the Victorian/Edwardian period in England. But these artists were also innovators, who challenged the old academic dogma and forged new ways of interpreting the world in which they lived—all while maintaining a realist vision.

In this course, we will study the evolution of realist art, from French artists Gustave Courbet and the painters of the Barbizon School to Édouard Manet, Edgar Degas, and Gustave Caillebotte. We’ll then move on to American artists Thomas Eakins and Winslow Homer, as well as expats James Whistler and John Singer Sargent, who spent most of their time in Europe. And we’ll conclude with a look at the art of George Bellows and the Ashcan School of New York City. There will be a combination of lecture and group discussion.
Books and Other Resources:

All assignments will be online. They will include short biographies and articles on historical background as well as videos featuring art historians and curators discussing specific works of art.

Biography:

I have always loved art and history. My favorite pastime is "experiencing" the paintings in art museums. I have a BA in History, an MA in French Language and Literature, and an MA in Teaching. I taught history for 16 years at a private school. During that time, I also wrote a series of twelve history books, a major feature of which is the study of art in a given culture. I have taught many art history courses at LLAIC.

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2Wed-2C-5b: Artificial Intelligence and Deep Learning: The Amazing, the Frightening, the Future

Course Leader: Donald Bermont

Course Length/Start: 5 weeks starting on April 10 (second half)

Course Description:

Algorithms, Protocols, Profiles, Computer Assisted Intelligence, Machine Learning, Deep Learning, Self-driving cars, and The Internet of Things, have already invaded our lives. They will certainly become more sophisticated, more pervasive, and we will become more dependent upon them whether we want to or not. All of this new technology can help us create a very exciting, healthier, peaceful and more prosperous future. However, there are also great risks of misuse that are both unknown and frightening. This course will help people become aware of the presence and influence of all of this technology, and hopefully help people choose how they can best deal with its impact. In each class we will discuss what all of this is doing to our society and our brains.

Books and Other Resources:

Students will need to be able to access links to articles, and receive and send emails. Weekly preparation time will be about one to three hours.

Biography:

I have really enjoyed my teaching experience at LLIAC, and hope to do it again. I have been very interested in Artificial Intelligence and all of the technology associated with it for years. I have been very aware of its development ever since I got my first smart phone, and since I recognized the need to develop new cognitive skills while discarding old ones.

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1Tue-2B-5a: “Once Upon Today”: An Exploration of the Modern Short Story as Published by The New Yorker

Course Leader: Phyllis Pressman Cohen

Course Length/Start: 5 weeks starting on Feb. 26 (first half)

Course Description:
We all remember reading stories that began “Once upon a time...” that taught us lessons about love and life in days gone by. Through analyzing the short stories published weekly in The New Yorker, we hope to learn something about modern life, while reading some of the best short fiction currently being written. The text will be the Fiction piece from each week's magazine. Expected preparation time should never be more than 1-2 hours weekly.

The course will use the “study group” model, in which everyone will be expected to participate as much as possible and even encouraged to lead the discussion now and then. A person will also be chosen each week to provide a biography of the author.

Note that the stories selected for this “1st 5 weeks” course will be different from those selected for the “2nd 5 weeks” course. Members can enroll in either or both courses.

Books and Other Resources:

Current articles from The New Yorker magazine.

Biography:

I am one of the founders of LLAIC and currently serve as President of the Board of Directors. I have over 10 years of experience leading short story discussion groups at both BOLLI and LLAIC and also co-led a course last spring, titled “Justice: What's the Right Thing to Do?”. My education includes a B.A. degree from Brandeis and graduate work in Library Science at Framingham State. Married since the dawn of civilization, Howie and I have two daughters and four grown grandchildren, all living locally.

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1Tue-2B-5b: “Once Upon Tomorrow”: More Exploration of the Modern Short Story as Published by The New Yorker

Course Leader: Phyllis Pressman Cohen

Course Length/Start: 5 weeks starting on April 9 (second half)

Course Description:

The New Yorker short story course will continue for five more weeks to allow returning snowbirds to take part as well as people who participated in the first five sessions or couldn't fit the course into their schedule. A different set of stories will be reviewed.

We all remember reading stories that began “Once upon a time...” that taught us lessons about love and life in days gone by. Through analyzing the short stories published weekly in The New Yorker, we hope to learn something about modern life, while reading some of the best short fiction currently being written. The text will be the Fiction piece from each week's magazine. Expected preparation time should never be more than 1-2 hours weekly.

The course will use the “study group” model, in which everyone will be expected to participate as much as possible and even encouraged to lead the discussion now and then. A person will also be chosen each week to provide a biography of the author.

Note that the stories selected for this “2nd 5 weeks” course will be different from those selected for the “1st 5 weeks” course. Members can enroll in either or both courses.
Books and Other Resources:

Current articles from The New Yorker magazine.

Biography:

I am one of the founders of LLAIC and currently serve as President of the Board of Directors. I have over 10 years of experience leading short story discussion groups at both BOLLI and LLAIC and also co-led a course last spring, titled “Justice: What's the Right Thing to Do?”. My education includes a B.A. degree from Brandeis and graduate work in Library Science at Framingham State. Married since the dawn of civilization, Howie and I have two daughters and four grown grandchildren, all living locally.

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2Wed-1C-10: Digital Photography: Discovering (or Re-discovering) the Power of Your Digital Camera

Course Leader: Joel Freedman

Course Length/Start: 10 weeks starting on Feb. 27

Course Description:

The course is designed to give both beginners and photographers with some experience the tools and confidence needed to capture images that can be shared with pride. Through a combination of lectures, AV, demonstrations, and presentations, participants will increase their skills in composing and producing superior photographs. A key element in the course will be close examination by the instructor and class participants of the coursework assignments, that is, pictures submitted each week by those in the class.

Please note: The weekly assignments must be taken on an actual digital camera that enables you to control aperture, shutter speed and ISO, NOT with a camera that is built into an Apple or Android cell phone, or into tablets such as the iPad. You should bring your digital camera with you to class.

The course will start with an overview of how the different settings on your camera influence the photo. We will then discuss various aspects of composition, and how the camera settings affect your composition. All of this will be tied together to help you to take better pictures with your camera for different kinds of subjects.

There will be presentations on landscape, nature and architectural photography as well as portraits. As an important part of the learning process, on different weeks you will be asked to go out and take pictures of specific kinds of subjects, such as buildings, wildlife, landscapes and people, and send in a small number of your photos via email for review and comment.

Classroom lectures and presentations will be supplemented with various papers sent via email. Depending on weather, we will go outside, possibly to some location other than where the classes are held.

Books and Other Resources:

Must have a digital camera (not a smart phone) for taking photos. The following book is suggested, but not required: Arizona Highways Photography Guide: How & Where to Make Great Pictures (Arizona Highways: Travel Arizona Collection, March 7, 2008 by Arizona Highways Editors and Contributor.)
**Biography:**

I have been involved in photography for almost 50 years, starting out in scientific photography. My photographic activities over the past 20 years have initially been during travel in Europe, followed by landscape and nature photography during guided photography tours in U.S. national parks in the West and Alaska, and Italy. I belong to a camera club and compete in the monthly photography competitions. I also exhibit my works in local libraries. I have taught photography courses at the Brandeis BOLLI as well as LLAIC.

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**3Thu-3C-5b: Genetics: from a Monk’s Musings to Mutations and Modern Medicine**

**Course Leader:** Gillian Geffin

**Course Length/Start:** 5 weeks starting on April 11 (second half)

**Course Description:**

This course will provide a basic understanding of genetics—what is DNA, what are genes, and what do they do? No prior knowledge is necessary. We will start with the seminal genetic studies in pea plants by Gregor Mendel around 1860 and finish with the successes—and downsides—of exciting recent genetic treatments of sick people and people with inherited disease. Class participants will be able to understand and form their own judgments about the wisdom of current and proposed applications of genetics.

Mendel may have been a monk, but he was no angel! Although his conclusions were brilliant, were some of his numbers too good to be true? You have your mother’s eyes, your father’s hair, and your grandmother’s dimples: how did that happen? What are mutations: how can they cause human disease? What is the role of mutations in evolution? Should we fool with Mother Nature? We will discuss genetic engineering (GE) and its uses, ethics and safety. What is CRISPR? What do you think about GE foodstuffs or GE in human beings—its potential medical applications, designer babies? Zika, a virus carried by a particular type of mosquito found mostly in South America and the Caribbean but also in the USA, wreaks a devastating toll on babies of infected mothers. Would you release a GE-mosquito, developed to control the spread of Zika, into the environment?

Each class will include a presentation with PowerPoint slides, some videos and class discussion. A list of suggested reading will be emailed to the class each week. There will be no technical reading! Participants should be able to open emails, attached Word and PDF documents and internet websites. Preparation will take about 1-1½ hours each week. No books need to be purchased.

**Books and Other Resources:**

A reading list will be emailed to the class each week, with word and PDF documents attached and some website addresses. No books are required. Suggested reading will include articles of general interest related to the classes

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**Biography:**

I am a physician with medical and science degrees from the University of London. After an internship, I worked in teaching and research in a London medical school. My husband and I with our two toddlers came to the USA for my husband to work for just one year—and within the year we had our third child. That was over half a century ago and we are still here.
I returned to work in research at the M.G.H., teaching research fellows in the laboratory and medical students. I enjoy teaching and have taught science and related subjects at LLAIC and Brandeis, where my husband and I also twice led a science and technology course—teaching is certainly the best way to learn. Much has changed since I taught this genetics course last year at LLAIC, so much of the material will be thoroughly updated for this year’s course.

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1Tue-2D-5b: Frank Sinatra: The Man, the Music, and the Great American Songbook

Course Leader: Allen Green

Course Length/Start: 5 weeks starting on April 9 (second half)

Course Description:

In this course we will review the life and music of an individual considered to be the most popular and influential singer of the 20th century. We will explore Sinatra’s relationship to what came to be known as the Great American Songbook, also known as American Standards, featuring composers such as George Gershwin, Cole Porter, Jerome Kern, Harold Arlen, Jonny Mercer, Frank Loesser, Dorothy Fields, Richard Rodgers, Julia Stiles, Sammy Cahn, Jimmy Van Heusen, and arrangers such as Nelson Riddle, Gordon Jenkins, Don Costa, and Neil Hefti. One session of the course will focus on Sinatra’s role in movies, especially The Manchurian Candidate. The course will also feature Sinatra’s women, his relationships in politics, business and charities, and his ties to the Mafia.

The class format will be mostly presentation with questions and discussion. We will also view and discuss videos and sections of films. Except for one required article, there are no required readings, so preparation time should be minimal.

Books and Other Resources:

“Frank Sinatra has a cold.” Article by Gay Talese, published in Esquire, available online.

Biography:

By the age of 12, I was already seriously interested in Frank Sinatra and wrote an article about him for a school newspaper. Sinatra has been a lifelong interest.

I was an attorney specializing in litigation and entertainment law. I litigated in courts at both the state and federal levels. I have a continuing interest in government and politics. As a professional arbitrator, I got to know Donald Trump. I gave a presentation at LLAIC on the Copacabana, a nightclub that was a former client of mine, where Sinatra performed many times.

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2Wed-2B-10: Know Thy Adversary: Russian History

Course Leader: Harriet Janel Starrett

Course Length/Start: 10 weeks starting on Feb. 27

Course Description:

This course is intended to develop an overall understanding of the development of the current “nation” – the Russian Federation. We will be using two brief books summarizing the history of what is clearly an unknowable adversary. The Russian Federation has the challenges of enormous, formidable size, forbidding climate, poor transportation links, multiple religions, multiple cultures, and virtually indefensible borders. Many neighboring countries have invaded it. Think about this. How do we live in peace with a country whose traditions, history, climate and potential/real threat to Western and Eastern Civilization is omni-present? The Russians have tried many types of political and economic systems. What can we learn from them? How do we create a positive relationship with them? Or is this possible? What happens if we don’t?

This is not a “lecture course.” There are about 50 pages of reading assigned for each class, and the assignments will be accompanied by detailed questions. Weekly preparation time should be about two hours. We will be learning, and even more importantly, thinking together.

Books and Other Resources:

Russia: A Short History, by Abraham Asher.
Russia in World History, by Barbara Engel and Janet Martin.

Biography:

I have graduate degrees in economic history and business. Prior to a business career I was a college (Northeastern), and high school teacher. My business career began in international consulting with a major firm, working for businesses worldwide. The thrust of the work involved assisting businesses in deciding what products/markets/ to develop, and what their level of investment should be (strategic planning). Following international consulting, I was a director/officer/manager in a number of large companies in the defense, telecommunications, finance, and hospitality industries. I have taught many courses for LLAIC and other lifelong learning programs, mainly in the areas of history and economics.

3Thu-3B-10: Shhh! This Course is a Secret! (Cryptography)

Course Leader: Joel Kamer

Course Length/Start: 10 weeks starting on Feb. 28

Course Description:

For centuries people have been encrypting messages to keep them secret, only to have someone decipher those messages. We will follow the historical record from ancient times to the present (when you use your credit card for a purchase on the internet, it is encrypted — do you ever worry that it can be decrypted or hacked?). Aside from learning the history, we will try our hand at encrypting and decrypting using some of the more famous methods. When we get to the current secure (?) methods of encryption, we will learn about
the mathematics that underlies their security. Finally, we will conclude with an in-depth discussion of the civil liberties of individual privacy vs. public security.

The topics will include: types of cryptography, keys, and the history of cryptography from Julius Caesar through Mary, Queen of Scots, the Zimmerman telegram, the Enigma machine and Bletchley Park, to RSA encryption. Interspersed with the history will be the various ciphers used, how they were broken, and finally computers and cryptography.

The class will be interactive, discussing the reading for the week and reviewing the solution to the cryptography problem posed in the homework. About two hours of weekly preparation time are anticipated. The course requires minimal computer ability.

**Books and Other Resources:**


*The Adventure of the Dancing Men* by Arthur Conan Doyle

*The Gold Bug* by Edgar Allan Poe

**Biography:**

I am a retired Fellow of the Society of Actuaries with degrees in mathematics and actuarial science. I discovered cryptography while reading a math book for fun (yes, there are people who do that!) and found the history and science of it fascinating. I’m looking forward to sharing that fascination with others.

In addition to cryptography, I’ve taught other courses in mathematics and literature at LLAIC and in another lifelong learning program

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**3Thu-28-10: Robber Barons or Captains of Industry? Portraits from the Gilded Age**

**Course Leader:** Dana Kaplan and Sandy Grasfield

**Course Length/Start:** 10 weeks starting on Feb. 28

**Course Description:**

How much can change in 35 years? If you look at the US from 1865-1900, the period known as the Gilded Age, almost everything. America transformed from a war-ravaged federation of states into the most powerful country in the world. The world we live in now—for better or worse—was shaped during this period of astonishing growth and productivity. How did this happen? More importantly, who were the “movers and shakers?” What did we gain and what did we lose?

While the course will look at economics, politics, and technology, we will bring the focus down to a more human scale, by looking at some of the key individuals who created the history. In a series of “portraits,” we will profile some of the famous “robber barons,” like Andrew Carnegie, John D. Rockefeller and J. P. Morgan, who drove the industrial expansion and left their mark on America’s cities and towns, most particularly New York.

But we will also discuss artists and writers, socialites, suffragettes, and a few notable villains. We will explore the world of immigrants as well as the gilded world and conspicuous consumption of the super-rich.
The course will feature a combination of lectures, biographical sketches, and group discussion, with audio-visual support, including slides and YouTube videos. Each week participants will receive suggested readings (online or as pdfs) and recommended videos. Weekly preparation time will be one to one and one-half hours.

**Books and Other Resources:**

Pdfs of book excerpts may be provided. To get the most out of the course, participants should be able to open pdfs sent via email and to view YouTube videos.

**Biography:**

Sandy Grasfield: I was a middle school librarian and media specialist for thirty years. I have taught several courses at LLAIC and elsewhere, including *The History and Politics of Food, The Plays and Memoirs of Lillian Hellman*, and *Great Photographers and Photographers of the Depression Era*. Dana and I have presented two successful courses focused on mystery novels. We also ran a monthly summer book group, “Food and Memories,” focused on culinary memoirs.

Dana Kaplan: I had a varied career as a marketing and sales promotional writer and manager of creative teams. My focus was business-to-business. Among the companies I worked for were Honeywell, Digital Equipment Corporation, Duke Energy and PricewaterhouseCoopers. My greatest regret is not studying a history curriculum at university, and I have been making it up for it since then.

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**2Wed-2E-5a: Energy: How Society’s Needs Are and Should be Met**

**Course Leader:** Karl Kelber

**Course Length/Start:** 5 weeks starting on Feb. 27 (first half)

**Course Description:**

In this course we will discuss where our energy comes from and the basic technology of how we use it. With climate change and the needs of the growing population continuing to strain our energy sources, understanding the sources, infrastructure, costs, efficiency, safety, and environmental degradation effects become more and more important. The class format will include lectures with PowerPoint slides and class discussion, especially about energy policies at the local and federal levels and about what went wrong with nuclear energy. The goal of the course is to help participants understand a broad range of key questions on the topic. We will also consider a specific, micro-level questions: electric vs. internal combustion automobiles. Students will be encouraged to find and share some of their own research material. Some interesting data sources will be presented during the initial class session for those who may be interested.

Weekly preparation should take less than two hours.

**Books and Other Resources:**

Readings and links to on-line materials will be provided at the start of the class.

**Biography:**

I am a retired Electrical Engineer. Most of my career was with Raytheon as part of a team
designing and deploying state-of-the-art radar systems. Later in my career I was more involved with deployment and such issues as input power, site preparations, environmental costs, testing, and logistics. Through these activities I became interested in energy and the topics of this course.

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**3Thu-1C-10: Beginning Drawing**

**Course Leader: Margret Krakauer**

**Course Length/Start:** 10 weeks starting on Feb. 28

**Course Description:**

In a world of technology and electronic media, visual art remains a unique and wonderful activity. If you’ve ever wondered if you can draw, or even if you have experimented with it over the years, this might be the class for you. Learning to draw, and really to work in any visual art, begins with learning to see in a new and more focused way. Using our eyes, and with the aid of simple tools, our hands can learn, through a series of exercises, to express what we see. For me, drawing is joyful, and I hope students find the journey to discover their own creativity as rewarding as I have.

After many years of teaching art, I truly believe that everyone can learn to draw. It’s a little like learning to play the piano; you might not become a celebrated pianist, but you can learn to read music, understand rhythm and timing, understand the keyboard, and, with practice, play a pretty good version of a desired piece.

For the most part, drawing materials are inexpensive, and students will work with a set of graded graphite pencils, erasers, and good quality paper. Each week, through a series of exercises and practice, we will explore the various principles of drawing. We will explore the techniques of drawing realistic objects, starting with getting the basic lines and shapes, and moving on to developing more complex drawings that reflect volume and mood.

No computer skills are required. Suggested preparation time is 1-2 hours per week, but this is not mandatory.

**Books and Other Resources:**

None are required.

**Biography:**

I have advanced degrees in Biology and Social Work but started painting almost 40 years ago when my children were quite young. Most of my study was with the late world-renowned Wayland artist George Dergalis. I have been teaching privately and through the Wayland Recreation Department for 30 years. For 15 years, I also taught drawing courses for children as well as a summer Arts Workshop with potter Phyllis Biegun, but I have concentrated on adults in the past several years. Learn more about Margret Krakauer [http://margretkrakauer.com/](http://margretkrakauer.com/) (note the unusual spelling of Margret).

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**1Tue-2C-5b: Israel: A Small Country with Big Challenges**

**Course Leader:** Margalit Lai

**Course Length/Start:** 5 weeks starting on April 9 (second half)

**Course Description:**

Much of what Americans hear about Israel in the news is about conflict and violence. But there is much more to Israel than exploding buses and Jews and Palestinians killing each other. Let’s dive into what is going on in this small but complicated and diverse country. We will discuss the good, the bad, and the ugly. Our five sessions will focus on these topics: Lively discussion and debate will be encouraged.

1. Israel as compared to the U. S. and to Massachusetts  
2. The patchwork of ethnic groups that make up Israeli society  
3. Israeli youth as compared to American youth  
4. What should a Jewish state look like?  
5. The eternal quest for peace

**Books and Other Resources:**

Readings will be provided by the CL.

**Biography:**

I was born in Israel to parents who fled Germany in the 30s. I came to the US when I was 35. I grew up while Israel was a socialist country and left shortly after it took a sharp Right turn. I lived through important milestones of Israel’s short history – the Six Day War, the peace treaty with Egypt and many of the armed conflicts that became part of our daily lives like mass shootings in the US nowadays. The Six Day War was a watershed for Israel and for me personally. I spent it as a new graduate from nursing school providing care to soldiers in a military hospital 12 hours a day for 4 weeks. Needless to say, it was a traumatic experience that made it impossible for me to get swept away in the general euphoria and shaped my views on wars as a means to solving problems between countries. Since coming to the US I have been visiting Israel every 1-2 years and am in touch with family and friends as well as following the media.

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**3Thu-3A-9: Great Decisions**

**Course Leader:** Carole Levy and Len Glassman

**Course Length/Start:** 9 weeks starting on Feb. 28

**Course Description:**

This is a course prepared by the Foreign Policy Association in which a distinct topic of foreign policy is discussed each class period. Class time will be divided between a video giving an overview of the topic and class discussion. The Foreign Policy booklet for Spring 2019, is required reading. It is divided into eight subjects, with one reading assignment for each class. Approximately one to two hours of preparation time will be required. No prior experience is required except for a special interest in foreign policy and history.

Please note: The format of this course is the same as the Great Decisions course led by Marty Nichols in the fall, but the topics are completely different.
The topics are as follows:
Week 1: Refugees and Global Migration
Week 2: The Middle East Regional Disorder
Week 3: Nuclear Negotiations: Back to the Future?
Week 4: The Rise of Populism in Europe
Week 5: Decoding US-China Trade
Week 6: Cyber Conflicts and Geopolitics
Week 7: The United States and Mexico: Partnership Tested
Week 8: State of the State Department and Diplomacy
Week 9: A general discussion and wrap-up

Books and Other Resources:

The Great Decisions Book for 2019, obtained from the Foreign Policy Association

Biography:

Carole Levy: I have been a member of LLAIC since its founding and have been active in the community leading courses on literature and history, serving on the Curriculum Committee and now a Board member. My past professional experience includes many years of teaching high school English, both in the Boston area and in Israel where I lived from 1970 to 1983. I obtained my B.A. from Penn State University and an M.B.A. from the Heller School. I love yoga, reading, particularly history, travel and six grandchildren, not necessarily in that order.

Len Glassman: I’ve been involved with LLAIC for the last three years. I’m a Boston native. I grew up in Brookline, graduated from Brookline High School, and Northeastern University with a BS in marketing. I’m a lifelong auto and truck parts manufacturer and distributor. I was owner and president of Boston-based Hampden Automotive Sales Corporation for most of my adult life. Today, I own a sales agency with a partner, representing 30 automotive and truck parts companies based all over the world.

I’m married with two grown children. We live in Framingham. I’ve always had a passion for fishing on Cape Cod. My boat is based there. I play pickle ball, golf, and spend much time with my two grandchildren who live nearby. I’ve always had an insatiable interest in both history and current events.

2Wed-1B-10: The Case for Optimism

Course Leader: Mary and Richard Mansfield

Course Length/Start: 10 weeks starting on Feb. 27

Course Description:

Are you pessimistic about where our country and the world are headed? About the future effectiveness of our government and our economic system? Perhaps you have spent too much time following the news. Steven Pinker’s new book, *Enlightenment Now: The Case for Reason, Science, Humanism and Progress*, may be the antidote that you need. Pinker builds a strong, data-based case that in diverse areas – life, health, prosperity, safety, peace, knowledge, and happiness – the world has been getting better for the last 400 years, and that this progress is due to three developments that blossomed 400 years ago, during the Enlightenment: reason, science, and humanism.
During the first six weeks of this course we will read about two-thirds of this book and critically analyze Pinker’s case for optimism. This part of the course will culminate in a class discussion of the strongest arguments supporting Pinker’s case and the areas where his case may be weakest.

In the second part of the course we will consider what benefits optimism, confidence, and a positive attitude may provide, psychologically. For this part of the course we will read, analyze and discuss Martin Seligman’s book, Authentic Happiness: Using the New Positive Psychology to Realize Your Potential for Lasting Fulfillment. This readable book has many self-assessment exercises that will enable you to examine Seligman’s principles of positive psychology in terms of your own life and experiences.

This course will use a variety of instructional formats: presentations (especially to summarize key points from readings), large and small group discussions, and observation and discussion of video clips. Weekly preparation time will be about two hours.

**Books and Other Resources:**


Martin Seligman, *Authentic Happiness: Using the New Positive Psychology to Realize Your Potential for Lasting Fulfillment*

**Biography:**

Richard: After teaching courses on policy and politics for the past three semesters, I was concerned about the generally pessimistic view that the readings and discussions were producing and was delighted to discover Steven Pinker’s optimistic book. As a consultant in leadership and organizational behavior, I was also influenced by research demonstrating the importance of self-confidence and a can-do attitude in many leadership jobs. In my first career as a university professor I specialized in developmental psychology. I have also taught a course on creativity.

Mary: In my most recent career, as an educational consultant, I helped students, mostly at the high school level, discover their strengths and find colleges and other educational institutions enabling people to build on their strengths. I have also worked as a college admissions director and as a consultant to teachers. I have developed and taught a course on the horse in literature, history and art, and I have co-developed and co-taught a course on moral judgment. Richard and I have co-taught courses titled “Issues in American Education,” “American Dream in Crisis,” and “Beyond IQ and Talent.”

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**2Wed-1A-5a: Opera Buffa–Comedy Tonight!**

**Course Leader:** Lois Novotny

**Course Length/Start:** 5 week course in two consecutive class periods starting on Feb. 27

**Course Description:**

Operas are often about heroic and tragic subjects, with many principal characters not surviving until the final curtain, but comic opera—with no deaths to encumber the story!—have long been popular with audiences. This course will look at opera buffa, the Italian comic opera from Mozart through mid-19th century, and see what composers did to make their operas funny. We will consider the elements that contribute to comedy, including plots, character types, singer types, and musical devices, and then see how they are applied in five of the most famous comic operas of the period: Mozart’s Le Nozze di Figaro,
January 11, 2018

Rossini’s *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* and *L’Italiana in Algeri*, and Donizetti’s *L’Elisir d’Amore* and *Don Pasquale*. Since the staging can be an important factor in any opera, but perhaps especially in a comic one, after seeing most of one production, we will look at portions of other versions to see different approaches to the same subject. While a large part of each class will be watching the performances in DVDs, there will be time for discussion. No prior knowledge of opera or music is required.

Not much preparation time is required, beyond looking at the synopses provided and an occasional short reading. Students should be able to read synopses provided as links or PDFs, as well as links to YouTube videos.

**Books and Other Resources:**

No books are required.

**Biography:**

After completing all course work for a Ph.D. in musicology, it became apparent that the job market for college teaching (the only work for which the degree was relevant) had completely ceased to exist. Since learning something that had a job and salary attached to it seemed like a good idea, I went to law school. I attend performances of concerts, opera, and ballet in Boston and New York (still have a Met subscription). On travels to Europe, I am fortunate to have been able to see opera in Parma, Palermo, Naples, Rome, Venice, Milan, Prague, Budapest, Paris, and at many of the great opera houses, including La Scala, La Fenice, and the Maryiinsky and Bolshoi theaters. I’ve had the pleasure of teaching *Shakespeare, Opera, and Ballet: Transforming One Art Form into Another* and *Puccini’s Heroines (not all meet tragic ends)* at LIAIC.

1Tue-3A-10: The Jewish Jesus, Part II

**Course Leader:** Rabbi Robert Orkand

**Course Length/Start:** 10 weeks starting on Feb. 26

**Course Description:**

For anyone interested in understanding the profound effect Jesus had on the world, it’s important to realize that his actions and teachings didn’t emerge from a vacuum. Rather, they were the product of a fascinating dialogue with—and reaction to—the traditions, cultures, and historical developments of ancient Jewish beliefs. In fact, early Judaism and Jesus are two subjects so inextricably linked that one cannot arrive at a true understanding of Jesus without understanding the time in which he lived and taught. This course will explore the environment in which Jesus lived and how Judaism influenced him.

The first part of this course was held in the Fall of 2018. Please note that having taken this course is not a prerequisite for taking Part 2, and different material will be covered. The topics this term include: Jewish Ritual Purity and the “Sons of Light;” The Dead Sea Scrolls—the earliest Hebrew Scriptures; Who Were the Essenes and was Jesus One?; The Reign of Herod the Great; Pontius Pilate: A Roman Ruler; Anarchy in Judea; Jesus Predicts the Destruction of Jerusalem; Rabbinic Judaism’s Traditions about Jesus; Jesus’s Apocalyptic Views; Jesus’s Teachings and Sayings in Context.

The class format will be mainly lecture, with the opportunity for questions and some discussion.
Books and Other Resources:

No student preparation time is required, although some readings might be sent by email. Students will need to be able to open documents sent by email.

Biography:

I retired from the pulpit rabbinate in 2013 after a career spanning more than 40 years, the last 31 in Westport, CT. Prior to that I served congregations in Florida and Illinois. I have taught adult learning courses at LLAIC, Temple Beth Elohim in Wellesley, and Temple Beth Shalom in Needham.

1Tue-1A-10: A History of Jewish Women in Music

Course Leader: Judy Pinnolis

Course Length/Start: 10 weeks starting on Feb. 26

Course Description:

This class examines the history of Jewish women in music. We look first to early origins about the roles of Jewish women in music, including rabbinic restrictions and "Kol Isha" and the impact of these rulings on Jewish women for centuries. We look at various communities around the world and stop to examine a few communities in more depth, such as Syrian Jewish women and Indian Jewish women. We turn to Europe and explore various time periods and the participation of Jewish women in musical arts. Finally we will spend a number of weeks looking at Jewish women and their roles in music in America and Canada—inside and outside the synagogue and the Jewish community. We end with an overview of how women are setting new directions for Jewish music today.

Books and Other Resources:

All readings will be provided as pdfs or Word documents online. Students need to be able to download and print a pdf or read a WORD document from their computer. Materials will be sent by email to participants.

Biography:

I am currently the Collection Assessment Librarian at Berklee College of Music/Boston Conservatory at Berklee. For over 20 years, I was a librarian at Brandeis University. I have taught Jewish music history in the School of Jewish Music at Hebrew College, and at the School of Sacred Music at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in NYC. I run a website called The Jewish Music WebCenter at <http://www.jmwc.org>, and have written many scholarly articles for encyclopedias, other reference works and journals. I've been writing about Jewish women musicians in various ways over the course of 40 years.

1Tue-3B-10: A Guided Tour of Three Popular Verdi Operas

Course Leader: Phil Radoff

Course Length/Start: 10 weeks starting on Feb. 26

Course Description:
Among the best known—and best loved—of Verdi’s operas are the three first presented within a few years of one another in the early 1850s: *Rigoletto*, *Il Trovatore*, and *La Traviata*. The course will cover all three of these ‘Middle Period’ masterpieces, from Overture to final curtain. We’ll also consider how the librettos differ from the contemporary plays (two French, one Spanish) on which they were based. The course will be primarily of the lecture-demonstration variety, with written questions and related materials provided by email in advance of each session to guide the participants’ reading and listening.

We will start by considering some of the operatic forms in common use in earlier periods of opera history in order to see how the musical forms used by Verdi in these three operas relied on or departed from the earlier models. Approximately three class periods will be allotted to each of the operas. To the extent time is available, excerpts of some of Verdi’s later operas will also be presented to show how his music developed.

**Books and Other Resources:**

Students will need access to recordings (audio or video) of the operas and the librettos in translation. I will provide links to these materials in my initial email message. Additionally, students may, but are not obliged to, purchase copies of the English National Opera Guides to each of the operas. They are relatively inexpensive and available from on-line booksellers. Various versions of the operas may also be purchased from these on-line sellers, borrowed from the Minuteman Library System, or watched or listened to through on-line YouTube links. Any version of the operas and the librettos is acceptable.

**Biography:**

I have undergraduate and graduate degrees in physics and worked as a physicist before switching to law. I held various legal positions in private practice, with the US Government, and as inside corporate counsel before retiring in 2004 from Raytheon Company.

I have led various opera courses at LLAIC and BOLLI since about 2006. I have also given hour-long opera talks at both organizations and at local libraries, usually in advance of a high-definition broadcast by the Metropolitan Opera.

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2Wed-1D-10: Writing Your Memoir, One Story at a Time

**Course Leader:** Myrna Rybczyk

**Course Length/Start:** 10 weeks starting on Feb. 27

**Course Description:**

Has a family member or friend ever said, "You should write these stories down. Your memories are so interesting, and you ought to share them!" An autobiography is writing about your life; a memoir is writing from your life. Using a theme circle, we will be crafting the stories of your life, writing in a short form, one at a time. We all have stories to tell, but the hardest part seems to be getting started, and in-class writing activities are helpful in making that start. Writing from life can bring tears of joy and sadness, puzzlement, resolve, and many other feelings as you touch upon significant memories. Writings are shared in a confidential, supportive atmosphere. We will focus on finding one's voice and will not be making grammatical or structural suggestions. We listen with acceptance, speak from experience and maintain confidentiality in a safe environment. New members are welcome, and those who have done the first semester are encouraged to focus on areas which they wish to explore more deeply.
No computer ability is required. Weekly preparation should take 2 to 4 hours.

**Books and Other Resources:**

There are no required books.

**Biography:**

I have taught this class three times for LLAIC, co-leading with Carole McNamee for two sessions. I also teach this class at Church of Christ UCC in Millis, where we are into our twentieth-ninth month.

My background is in Music Therapy. I graduated from New England Conservatory of Music with a Bachelor’s degree in Music and a Major in Music Therapy. I worked as a Visiting Therapist for four and one half years at The McLean Hospital. For two and a half years of that time I was Assistant Director of Orchard Home for Girls, a branch of New England Home for Little Wanderers. I taught high school chorus and band at Monadnock Regional High School in Swanzey, New Hampshire. Following that I worked for four years at Medfield State Hospital (MA) as Head Music Therapist. Since 1970, I have taught piano, guitar and voice in my studio, Millis Music Studio, in my hometown and since 2000, have been Director of Music at Church of Christ Congregational UCC in Millis.

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**3Thu-1A-10: The Golden Years of Foreign Films II: Ten More from the 50's and 60's**

**Course Leader: Peter and Naomi Schmidt**

**Course Length/Start:** 10 week course in two consecutive class periods starting on Feb. 28

**Course Description:**

The years spanning 1950 to 1969 introduced the American movie-going public to the novelty of great foreign films, providing a contrast and alternative to the standard Hollywood fare. As a follow-up to our previous Foreign Films course, we invite you to join us in viewing and discussing ten additional such films, some serious and others more light-hearted. Our expectation is that each will be not only enjoyable, but also thought-provoking. In the ten class sessions (each a double period) we will view one of the films together and follow with discussion, the subjects ranging from artistry and technique to symbolism and meaning. The films that we have chosen are from a variety of countries and in a number of languages: *The Man in the White Suit, M. Hulot’s Holiday, Pather Panchali, Wild Strawberries, The 400 Blows, Knife in the Water, Viridiana, The Shop on Main Street, The Battle of Algiers, and Yojimbo.*

Each week’s class will be devoted to one film of approximately 90 to 120 minutes in length, followed by a short break and then approximately one hour of discussion.

Participants should be able to handle emails with attachments and use the internet. Weekly preparation time will be approximately one hour.

**Books and Other Resources:**

Readings will be provided by the CLs as email attachments.

**Biography:**

Peter Schmidt: My professional careers were in physics and machine vision engineering. I have given a number of courses at lifelong learning organizations in a variety of subjects,
some science-related (e.g., *Five Physicists Who Changed the World View; Quantum Mechanics without a Wrench*), and others not (e.g., *Three Masterpieces: From Drama to Film and Opera; The Humanity of Heinrich Böll: Selected Short Stories*). I also co-led a previous version of a Foreign Films course with Naomi Schmidt.

Naomi Schmidt: I was originally trained as a physicist, taught computer science at Brandeis, and then worked for 16 years at both Brandeis and MIT in the field of academic computing. I have been a Study Group Leader for *Invitation to the Dance* and *Science Fiction*, as well as co-leading *Who’s Afraid of 20th Century Music?* and a previous Foreign Films course with Peter Schmidt. I also led *The New York Experience, Utopianism, The 1920s*, and *The 1960s* with Tamara Chernow.

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**1Tue-2A-10: Manipulation: Hidden Influences Affecting How We Choose Our Cereal, Politicians, Clothes, Spouses and Life Desires**

**Course Leader:** Sandy Sherizen

**Course Length/Start:** 10 weeks starting on Feb. 26

**Course Description:**

We are all being manipulated daily, much of which is invisible and unrecognized. Elements of manipulation are essential factors in our important decisions. Yet, it is often difficult to know that we are being manipulated, by whom, how and even if it is good for us.

This course will explore the notion that manipulation is so important we need to understand it in order to make essential personal and societal decisions. We will explore a number of forms of manipulation and how they influence our choices. Among the forms to be examined will be Psychological, Physical, Interpersonal, Economic, Ideological and Technological.

We will cover fascinating examples such as placebo elevator bottoms, consumer advertising, manipulative personalities, magic tricks, con artists, Disney World lines, lying and neurological cognitive biases. Topics will also include how politicians create their brand, how the media select what they will cover, negotiating strategies, and self-manipulation. Personal examples will be solicited from class members. Discussion and interaction are important aspects of this course. Those who wish can present a 10-minute report on a topic of interest after discussion with course leader. Students should be able to access e-mails sent by the instructor. Weekly preparation time will be 2-3 hours.

**Books and Other Resources:**

I will prepare a packet of course readings composed of articles from the mass media, academic journals and policy papers. This will be distributed at the first class and reproduction costs will be collected.

**Biography:**

Trained as a sociologist, I then went bad and became a criminologist and then really bad by becoming a computer security and privacy professional. I have taught at various universities, led seminars, been interviewed by various media, and given speeches internationally on a variety of topics. As an ex-president, I am active at Congregation Beth El in Sudbury. Flunking retirement, I have volunteered to teach ESL to adult immigrants and I continue to serve on a patient research ethics and safety board at Brigham and Women’s Hospital. I love teaching subjects which are important but are often relatively
unknown and/or misunderstood.

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**3Thu-2D-10: Ben Franklin: Co-Founder of Our Country**

**Course Leader:** Marvin 8der

**Course Length/Start:** 10 weeks starting on Feb. 27

**Course Description:**

The American Revolution wouldn’t have happened as it did without Benjamin Franklin. He utilized his personal charisma in difficult diplomatic efforts to overcome daunting obstacles in order to achieve France’s military and financial support for Washington’s military campaigns. Franklin was also instrumental in drafting the four required documents needed to achieve American independence: The Declaration of Independence, The U.S. Constitution, and the Treaties with Britain and France. Franklin was the singular signee of all four of these documents. He also spent fifteen years in England and France in pursuit of American goals.

This brilliant man excelled in his many careers: printer, journalist, business man, legislator, diplomat and widely renowned scientist with no formal training. He was the ultimate multitasker when his scientific interests overlapped with his other careers. His scientific achievements earned honorary acclaim and world renown. Success in his professional world; however, did not always extend to his family life. He treated his wife benevolently but like a valued employee. He also struggled in his relationship with his loyalist son. He was especially cavalier in appreciating how his fifteen years in France impacted on his family.

Franklin remained an ardent loyalist only until it became clear that his repeated efforts to gain reconciliation for the Colonies would not happen, after which his focus turned into ardent support for Independence.

Throughout his life Franklin’s beliefs about frugality, industry, and his abhorrence of arbitrary authority and entitlement through birth dominated his social perspective. He valued concern for community interest that was tempered by an insistence that it not encourage dependence and thus undermine industry.

We will explore how his life experiences contributed to the person he became and how this learning may have relevance in the present. Emphasis will be on maximizing class discussion. Members will be expected to spend 2-3 hours per week in preparation.

**Books and Other Resources:**

*Benjamin Franklin*, by Walter Isaacson, Simon & Shuster, 2004. The Course Leader will provide some additional reading materials.

**Biography:**

I have a PhD in psychology and have practiced both as a clinician and as an organizational consultant. I have led many courses on diverse topics LLAIC and other lifelong learning programs. My course topics have included International Hot Spots, Innovators of Political Thought, Cults, Elections, George Washington, Lincoln, Benjamin Franklin, Teddy Roosevelt, and Hamilton. The courses on founders are approached with emphasis on understanding the person’s personality, accomplishments, why they did what they did and the impact it had on the country.
1Tue-3C-5b: Five Portraits of Outstanding Leadership

Course Leader: Joanne Tuck

Course Length/Start: 5 weeks starting on April 9 (second half)

Course Description:

In the book *Forged in Crisis, The Power of Courageous Leadership in Turbulent Times*, author Nancy Koehn tells the stories of five individuals driven by higher purpose, willing to make great personal sacrifices, carrying out their life’s work in times of great inner and outer turmoil. Ernest Shackleton led his stranded men home to safety in England. Lincoln saw the country through the brutal Civil War and brought an end to slavery. Frederick Douglass, an escaped slave, relentlessly campaigned for abolition. Dietrich Bonhoeffer stood up to the Nazis and defied Hitler nobly and courageously. Rachel Carson was challenged as a female biologist and wrote Silent Spring, the book that changed our thinking about the environment.

Books and Other Resources:


Biography:

For many years, I taught Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior and Social Movements at Wentworth Institute of Technology. I received degrees from B.U. in History and Social Education and studied the Holocaust and Civil Rights extensively at Facing History. I found my teaching experience of Reconstruction (1865-1877) Its Legacy in Our Time and 5 Portraits of Outstanding Leadership at LLAIC to be very rewarding. I hope to have another successful term of learning and exploration of our past and its impact on the present.

1Tue-1B-5b: How the Massachusetts Legislature Works and What it Does

Course Leader: Joel Winett

Course Length/Start: 5 weeks starting on April 9 (second half)

Course Description:

In this course we will learn about the Massachusetts form of government as specified in the Massachusetts constitution and the practices of the legislature. State representatives and/or senators will be invited to come as guests to many of the class sessions to discuss their roles and responsibilities and how they interact with other legislators, specifically the legislative leadership. We will ask them what they do for their constituents and see how the public can influence the success of getting a bill enacted. We will ask them to talk about what they believe is needed to be effective.

We will track the enactment of a legislative bill and see how the public can increase the chances of getting a bill enacted. Finally, we will highlight some of the accomplishments of the State Legislature and identify issues that we would like to see addressed by legislation.
The format of the class will be primarily facilitated discussion. Weekly preparation will take half an hour or less. Participants should be able to open emails and email attachments and follow links to on-line material.

**Books and Other Resources:**

There are no required books. The Course Leader will provide links to on-line material and may send articles in pdf format.

**Biography:**

I am an enthusiastic follower of local, state, and federal elections and am involved in a number of Framingham city committees. I was a Framingham Town Meeting member for 42 years and Town Moderator for 2 years. While a member of Town Meeting I was the chair of the Rules Committee and the clerk of the Ways and Means Committee. I am currently the chair of the Cultural Council, the vice-chair of the city Seal Development Committee, and am on the Mayor’s Bylaw Review Committee.

I have a BSEE and an EE degree from M.I.T. and an MSEE from Columbia University. I have taken many government classes at Framingham State University and other schools. I have taught a class in Town Meeting for Framingham 5th grade classes. My professional experience has been as a Software Development Manager and Quality Assurance Manager.

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**2Wed-2F-5b: LILAC Players** (No course fee)

**Course Leader:** Maryann Wyner

**Course Length/Start:** 5 weeks starting on April 10 (second Half)

**Course Description:**

LILAC Players will meet during the last five weeks of classes with the goal of presenting our play(s) during lunch on the last class day. Members will use scripts, so no memorizing is involved. We will add props and costumes each week. The selection of play(s) is yet to be decided. We always have fun reading, rehearsing, and bonding.

Plan to spend up to one hour per week in preparation. Members need to be able to open and reply to emails.

Although this is listed as a course, there is no charge. For more information contact Marynn Wyner at mawyner@gmail.com

**Books and Other Resources:**

There are no required books. Members will be given copies of the script(s) to be used.

**Biography:**

I have been involved in theater since high school as an actor, a stage manager and a properties manager. After one short time on stage at Clark University as a corpse, I waited until my teaching days to get involved. After receiving a BA from Clark, I went on, while teaching, to get a MA in English at Simmons College. At Chapel Hill-Chauncy Hall in Waltham, I served as the assistant director and occasional actor for over 30 high school performances. After retiring from teaching, opportunities arose at Temple Shir Tikva where I performed in *Fiddler on the Roof,*
Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, and The Megillah According to Grease. For several years I worked at Dover-Sherborn Middle School as a library assistant and have recently been subbing as well as doing some tutoring. As a teacher, acting was always part of the job, so getting involved in the LILAC Players allowed me to delve into something that has always made me smile.

3Thu-2C-10: The Tragic, the Comic, the Melodramatic, the Absurd: the Many Faces of Anton Chekhov, Master Dramatist

Course Leader: Lois Ziegelman

Course Length/Start: 10 weeks starting on Feb. 28

Course Description:

Chekhov’s great contribution to drama was his ability to combine reality with theatricality: to interweave the threads of comedy, tragedy, melodrama and farce with so skillful a hand as to create the illusion of life itself. The names of his disciples and admirers read like a compendium of modern drama: Shaw, Pirandello, Garcia Lorca, Clifford Odets, Samuel Beckett, Tennessee Williams, Arthur Miller. Yet in the depth of his humanity, the breadth of his perception, and the skill of his craftsmanship Chekhov surpasses them all.

Chekhov is especially close to my heart because in the 20 years I worked at Framingham State College with my own theater company of students, faculty, and professionals from the community, his plays—both serious and comic—were by far the favorites of both actors and audiences. Both the pathos and the humor really resonated! My hope is to create through my course a community of ardent “Chekhovians.”

Class sessions will include a combination of lecture and discussion.

Books and Other Resources:

We will read these plays: The Seagull; The Cherry Orchard; The Proposal; The Jubilee; and The Bear. Most are available in various collections of Chekhov’s plays.

Biography:

I have been actively involved in theatre nearly my whole life, beginning in high school with the Peterborough Players and the Boston Children’s Theatre and later as a member of a travelling group presenting children’s theatre in many New England towns while attending Boston University.

My first degree was an M.S. in Speech and Theatre from BU. I also received an M.A. in English literature from Boston College. Years later I returned to school, inspired by a wonderful course in Great Books, with a wish to teach world literature at the college level. I earned a Ph.D. in English literature at Brandeis. Before I had even finished my dissertation, I received an offer from Framingham State College to teach World Literature and Drama, where I taught for 31 years. I received five fellowships from the National Endowment for the Humanities. I have studied, taught and performed works ranging from Classical Antiquity through the 20th Century.

Since my retirement I have led courses in world literature and drama at several lifelong learning programs, including LLAIC.