Illuminate Your Summer

With an insistent knock on wood, I believe summer is on its way, and as we nurse our cabin-fever wounds, we’re preparing to host a season full of engaged, experiential learning.

Several people have shared that they spent part of the too-long winter thinking about data, information, and the ever-shifting way in which we are presented with, and absorb and process its endless bounty. It’s a blessing and a curse, having so much data readily available in most of our homes, offices, and schools. It can leave one feeling more fractured, less informed (ironically), and hungry for the type of substantive knowledge that comes from personal experience, sustained study, and deep consideration free from the zeitgeist of you must comprehend/decide/declare/know NOW.

Nobel Laureate Toni Morrison writes: “In all of our education, whether it’s in institutions or not, in homes or streets or wherever, whether it’s scholarly or whether it’s experiential, there is a kind of progression. We move from data to information to knowledge to wisdom. And separating one from the other...knowing the limitations and the danger of exercising one without the others, while respecting each category of intelligence, is generally what serious education is about.”

Critical thinking manifests itself in questions, and I would argue that it’s more about the questions we ask than the ones we answer. It’s in the mulling over, the questioning and consideration we give to life’s most confounding questions. It’s in the aha moment that arrives days, months, years, even decades after we first began our investigation. (I’m reminded of the LearningLife student who told me: “Now that I can benefit from Professor McNaron’s insights and guidance, I plan to re-read My Antonia. The first time I read the book I was a 17-year-old high school student with no idea what I was reading. This time around, it was a deeply moving experience.”)

Our cornucopia of information, while essential, is merely a collection of breadcrumbs used in the journey to understanding, to knowledge, to wisdom, and as Susan Sontag wrote, “Information will never replace illumination.”

—Anastasia Faunce
Program Director

“Believe Me”: Seeking Truth in an Age of Disinformation

Thursday, April 4, 7 p.m., $20 (HEDLX007)

Ask yourself: Can the public navigate a sea of disinformation without a compass?

In today’s tumultuous and polarized political climate, journalists and the news media are often accused of bias and of peddling “fake news.” The public, for its part, is both privileged and overwhelmed by having access to more sources of information than ever before. Paradoxically, many people choose to rely exclusively on those sources that simply confirm the viewpoints they already hold.

By tradition, the press has been the watchdog of government, the seeker of truth, and the champion of the right to know. Yet public confidence in the news media has declined, even as threats to press independence—not only in the United States but throughout the world—continue to escalate.

Are the media “the enemy of the American people,” as President Trump has declared? Will the First Amendment to the US Constitution continue to protect journalists as they perform their jobs? Can democracy survive without a free and responsible press?

Join us April 4 when Professor Jane E. Kirtley digs deep into the role of the media in an era of “believe me” and disinformation.

Jane E. Kirtley is the Silha Professor of Media Ethics and Law at the Hubbard School of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Minnesota, where she also is the Director of the Silha Center and an affiliated faculty member of the University’s Law School. Coauthor of the Media Ethics Today (Cognella Academic Publishing, 2016), Kirtley’s Media Law handbook (US Department of State, 2010) has been translated into nine languages.
Galileo on Trial in Italy

Wednesday, April 17, 6:30–8:30 p.m., $55 (LLX167)

Have you ever wondered what Galileo found so fascinating about the Leaning Tower of Pisa and the study of mathematics and science? Or why he was willing to risk his career, his freedom, and even his life for science?

During the Renaissance famous sculptors, artists, and painters used mathematics and science to depict history and religion. Others used their talents to honor those in power. It was also during this time that scientists began to develop a deeper understanding of the world around them. While exciting, this fostered a clash between religion, art, mathematics, science, and politics.

In this seminar we’ll learn how Galileo and his now-renowned contributions to math and science came into conflict with arguably the most powerful institution in Europe, and perhaps the world, during post-Renaissance Italy.

And while Rome, the Vatican, and the Church of Santa Maria Sopra Minerva provided a backdrop to the end of Galileo’s brilliant career, we’ll reflect on what themes and issues surrounding the great 17th-century thinker might be manifested in today’s world.

LearningLife seminars embrace Socrates’s belief in inquiry and exchange; they include both lecture and critical discussion.

Laura Coffin Koch, PhD, University of Minnesota, is a Morse-Alumni Distinguished Teaching Professor of Mathematics in the University’s College of Education and Human Development who leads an annual Freshman Seminar Abroad to Italy during which students visit Pisa, Florence, Rome, and reenact the trial of Galileo through debate and discussion.

Poetry: A ReIntroduction

Thursday, April 25, May 9, 16 (three meetings), 6–8 p.m., $135 (LLX162)

It comes from the Greek poetica, which is derived from the verb poiein, “to make.” It’s also one of the most ancient and durable art forms. So why does poetry get such a bad rap?

While it’s true that poetry is sometimes taught in a way that makes people feel intimidated, it’s also true that poetry has long been a reservoir to help people understand and voice their relationships with the natural world and one another. (Fact: children throughout the world speak poetry long before they can speak complete sentences in prose.)

A reintroduction of sorts, this course will guide participants through three highly accessible poetry collections: Mary Oliver’s Thirst (April 11), Audre Lorde’s The Black Unicorn (April 25), and Tracy Smith’s Wade in the Water (May 9).

Each of these authors has a distinctive style and voice and despite differing subject matter, a shared passion for finding the right words to express what they have to say and to connect with their readers.

As Professor Emerita Toni McNaron discusses specific poems and highlights alternative ways to approach poetry, she also hopes to “chip away at the resistance and fear associated with little black words made into lines on a page,” so that poetry is seen not as something to be explicatured but to be enjoyed.

Required: Mary Oliver, Thirst (Beacon Press, 2006); Audre Lorde, The Black Unicorn (W. W. Norton & Company, reissue 1995); Tracy Smith, Wade in the Water (Graywolf Press, 2018).

Toni McNaron, see bio on page 22.
The Fallen One: Verdi’s La Traviata

Tuesday, April 30, May 7 (two meetings), 6:30–8:30 p.m., $95 (LLX164)

First performed in Venice in 1853, Giuseppe Verdi’s opera La Traviata (The Fallen One) maintains an unassailable position as one of the best-loved and most frequently performed operas in the world.

Based on La Dame aux Camélias (The Lady of the Camellias or Camille), a novel written by Alexandre Dumas (the younger) just a few years earlier, the opera is notable for conjuring considerable audience sympathy for the sufferings of its main character, Violetta, a disreputable Parisian courtesan dying of tuberculosis who achieves moral redemption by renouncing her true love in order to salvage his family’s honor.

Part of La Traviata’s initial appeal derived from its traditional staging, contemporary with the opera’s date of composition, whereas most operas of the era were set in distant times and often difficult for “modern” audiences to relate to.

However, even today accessibility remains key, and opera novices and connoisseurs alike appreciate the easy-to-follow love story and endless variety of memorable musical ideas and motifs. Of particular note is the significant vocal demand put on the lead female singer, whose extravagant and florid passagework represents the last word in the operatic style known as bel canto.

Tickets to the Minnesota Opera’s production of La Traviata are not included in tuition. However, registered participants will receive information for a 20 percent discount on tickets to the performance of their choice.

Daniel Freeman is a musicologist and pianist who has taught courses in music history at the University of Minnesota and the Smithsonian Institution. He is considered the world’s leading historian in the field of 18th-century Czech music.

Offered in cooperation with the Minnesota Opera.

HEADLINERS

Studying the Beginning of the Universe from the Bottom of the World

Thursday, May 2, 7 p.m., $20 (HEDLX008)

Cosmology is the study of the universe, its origin, composition, and ultimate fate. Once the domain of mystics and philosophers, cosmology has more recently become a vibrant science with fresh data coming in thick and fast.

The contemporary universe is expanding, and by using specialized radio telescopes, scientists can now see the afterglow (the cosmic microwave background, or CMB) from when the universe was hot, formless plasma some 14 billion years ago.

Similarly modern, according to experimental cosmologist Dr. Clem Pryke, is the remarkable idea that the universe we see today was once a subatomic speck that underwent a brief burst of hyper-expansion or “inflation.” As far-fetched as that idea sounds, it turns out to be the simplest and most straightforward explanation for the data that has been collected thus far.

The Inflation Theory also makes an additional (and to-date unconfirmed) prediction: that the hyper-expansion will have injected a “background” of gravitational waves into the fabric of spacetime.

Join us May 2 when Dr. Pryke will discuss some of the history of and evidence for Big Bang cosmology and why we need inflation. He also will highlight the technology and myriad logistics involved in building and operating telescopes at the South Pole, one of the most remote and inhospitable locations on Earth.

Clem Pryke, PhD, University of Leeds, is a Professor of Physics in the School of Physics and Astronomy and the Minnesota Institute for Astrophysics in the College of Science and Engineering at the University of Minnesota. An experimental cosmologist and educator, he has played a leading role in the construction and operation of a series of CMB telescopes at the South Pole in Antarctica, as well as the analysis of the data produced by these telescopes.
For many of us, the next decade will bring transitions in both work and life. As we think about what’s to come, after our primary careers, it can be challenging to envision, let alone create, a fulfilling and secure future. What’s more, we’re expected to leap into that future overnight. But retirement isn’t an event, nor is it a one-size-fits-all proposition. It’s a process that takes time, especially as we look toward post-career lives that are likely to last as long as our working lives.

Encore Transitions is an annual series of four courses designed to help you prepare for a successful post-career life by focusing on personal, professional, and social satisfaction, as well as timely financial and health matters.

You may take individual courses ($155) or the four-course series ($495). Tuition includes meals and refreshments. No discounts.

**Pathways to Post-Career Life**
May 3, 9 a.m.–4 p.m. (LLX085)
Course includes: *Encore Transitions* (Dr. Kate Schaefer), *Relationship Evolutions* (Dr. Kate Schaefer), *Internal Compass: Identifying Values, Talents, and Priorities* (Bill Lindberg), and *Thrive: The Broaden and Build Theory of Positive Emotions* (Amy Gunty).

**Financial Planning for Retirement**
May 10, 9 a.m.–4 p.m. (LLX087)
Course includes: *Unretirement* (Chris Farrell), *Social Security and Medicare Primer* (Rhonda Whitenack), *Estate Planning: Your Financial Foundation* (Karen Hansen), and *Retirement Planning Basics* (Andrew Thelander).

**Aging Well, Being Well**
May 17, 9 a.m.–4 p.m. (LLX088)

**Launching Your Future**
May 31, 9 a.m.–4 p.m. (LLX089)
Course includes: *A Purposeful Quest* (Barbara Hoese), *Finding Meaning, Money, and Happiness in the Second Half of Life* (Chris Farrell), *The Best Age: Framing, Naming, and Embracing Our Years* (Sally Brown), *Reset: Mental Programming for the Next Chapter* (Robyne Robinson), and the Encore Transitions resource fair.

*Offered in cooperation with the University of Minnesota’s Office of Human Resources.*
FROM THE FIELD | The EPA: Scientific Integrity in the Balance

Tuesday, May 21, 6–8 p.m., $55 (LLX168)

Established in 1972, the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is charged with protecting human health and environmental systems by regulating air and water quality, drinking water quality, pesticide and herbicide use, and contamination and emission cleanups. Yet recently it has begun to move in a direction diametrically opposed to its Congressionally mandated mission, and a number of rules and programs have been rolled back to the benefit of chemical manufacturers and the oil, gas, and coal industries, and the detriment of human and environmental health.

Of equal concern are the changes that have been made to the EPA’s scientific advisory committees, which have been disbanded or repopulated with industry representatives who support a deregulation agenda and have little to no background in gathering evidence-based data.

This seminar will detail how scientific advice is generated and used to support decisions at the EPA, and how changes to the system are being bolstered by selective and dubious scientific evidence, therefore undermining the integrity of science and the health of the earth and its inhabitants.

LearningLife’s From the Field series provides a firsthand look at the professions that shape and the practitioners who influence our world.

Deborah Swackhamer is Professor Emerita of Science, Technology, and Public Policy at Humphrey School of Public Affairs, and Environmental Health Sciences in the School of Public Health at the University of Minnesota, where she directed the Water Resources Center for 12 years. She served as Chair of the US EPA Board of Scientific Counselors 2015–2018 and currently serves on the National Academy of Sciences Board of Environmental Science and Toxicology.

Female Tastemakers: Women of Wine

Tuesdays, June 4, 11, 18 (three meetings), 6:30–8:30 p.m.
Campus Club, Coffman Memorial Union, East Bank campus, $135 + 30 wine fee (LLX173)

Did you know that for much of history, allowing women to make wine was forbidden in most parts of the world? It was also considered bad luck for a woman to be in attendance when wine was being made (or cellared). And while Pliny the Elder alludes to the saying in vino veritas (“in wine there is truth”) in Naturalis Historia, his opinion that women’s menstruation spoiled wine—caused barren fields and unproductive crops—was a misconception held by many wineries and distilleries well into the 20th century, and women were therefore banned from working during their cycle. (Catavino.net)

Fast forward to the present day and you will find that women are not only wine-makers, but winery owners, vineyard managers, and sommeliers. In almost every region of the world, they hold positions that are integral to this fast-growing industry.

This course explores a variety of wines created by some of the most famous women in winemaking, including Cathy Corison (California), Lalou Bize-Leroy (France), Arianna Occhipinti (Italy), and Susana Balbo (Argentina), who was recently recognized as one of the ten most influential women in the wine world.

You’ll learn about the wine and winemakers’ histories, cultures, and geographies, as well as the ins and outs of tasting.

No wine experience is necessary. A $30 fee, payable to the instructor at the first class, will cover the cost of wine for all sessions.

Leslee Miller is a dually certified sommelier through the International Sommelier Guild and the Court of Master Sommeliers. She is owner of the wine-consulting firm Amusée, and cofounder of the national wine club Sip Better.
Deductive Logic: The Best Stories of Sherlock Holmes

Thursdays, June 13, 27, July 11, 25 (four meetings), 10 a.m.–noon
Sessions one, two, three: Continuing Education and Conference Center
Session four: Elmer L. Andersen Library, Minneapolis West Bank campus, $165 (LLX172)

Much has been written about the world’s most famous consulting detective, and this course will look at the characters, times, and world of both Sherlock Holmes and Doctor John H. Watson as expressed through a selection of the original stories by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

The selected stories will be read in tandem with essays from About Sixty: Why Every Sherlock Holmes Story Is the Best. Written by various Sherlockians, each essay makes the case as to why its selected tale is to be considered Conan Doyle’s finest. According to editor Christopher Redmond, “What they have written is compelling evidence that any one of the Sherlock Holmes stories can be the best; it’s all a matter of what the reader is looking for.”

Literary critic Michael Dirda of The Washington Post adds, “The deductive logic brought to bear by the various essayists would certainly earn the admiration of Holmes himself.”

It seems that even the author preferred certain stories in the Holmes canon. In a 1927 article for The Strand Magazine, Conan Doyle listed his favorites as... Wait! Are you intrigued? Do you want to know his darlings? There’s a class for that and this is it!

Inject some mystery into your summer! Join curator Tim Johnson to learn about all things Sherlock, discuss select stories and essays, tour the exhibition “Dark Places, Wicked Companions, and Strange Experiences,” and visit the University’s renowned Sherlock Holmes Collection. Magnifying glass included.


Tim Johnson is Curator of Special Collections & Rare Books and the E. W. McDiarmid Curator of the Sherlock Holmes Collections for the University of Minnesota Libraries. In these capacities he oversees the rare book collection and over 150 special collections, including the world’s largest gathering of material related to Sherlock Holmes as a cultural icon.

learninglife
The Normandy Invasion: A 75th Anniversary Retrospective

Wednesdays, June 19, 26 (two meetings), 2–4 p.m., $95 (LLX171)

Perhaps one of the most dramatic events of World War II came with the Allied invasion of Normandy on June 6, 1944, when approximately 156,000 US, British, and Canadian forces landed on five separate beaches along France’s Normandy coast and forever changed the course of the war. As the world marks the 75th anniversary of D-Day, this retrospective provides details of how the historic invasion was achieved.

To begin, we’ll look at the history of Norman invasions: the Vikings, the Norman invasion of England in 1066, and the subsequent projects for a cross-channel invasion that were never carried out. We’ll then examine the extent of planning and preparation for the Normandy Invasion (aka Operation Overlord), which illustrates how industrialization came to dominate warfare in the 20th century.

Even with astute planning and extensive preparation, the outcome of Overlord was not secure until after six weeks of momentum inland, when the Allies broke out of the Normandy beachhead and advanced to the liberation of Paris (August 26). This then led to the surrender of Germany on May 8, some 11 months following D-Day and what was to become the largest of all amphibious military assaults in history.

**John Kim Munholland** is Professor Emeritus of the University of Minnesota where he taught courses on modern European history for 42 years. A frequent LearningLife instructor, he also is a Smithsonian Journeys Expert whose past and forthcoming teaching excursions include those to Normandy.

Design Thinking

Thursday, June 20 (one meeting), 1–5 p.m., $95 (LLX092)

The emerging field of Design Thinking takes design concepts from professional realms such as architecture, film, fashion, and design and applies them to broader society. The process, which focuses on deep listening, holistic thinking, creativity, collaboration, experimentation, and “user” experience and engagement, is used in a variety of fields (business, education, urban planning, health care) as well as to engage with issues of cultural, political, and environmental significance. But it doesn’t stop there.

The process also is useful to individuals who are working toward expansive or specific goals. There are no limits to what can be envisioned through Design Thinking. Use it to plan a large-scale project such as starting a business, building a house, or developing a ten-year career plan or something smaller in scope such as designing a high-yield garden, inventing and marketing a product, or creating a long-term strategy to improve your health.

In this course, you’ll use the systematic steps of empathy, problem definition, ideation, prototyping, and testing to advance your own creative vision while interacting in small groups to harness the power of collective design thinking.

Tuition includes refreshments.

**Virajita Singh**, Assistant Vice Provost, Office for Equity and Diversity; Senior Research Fellow and adjunct faculty, College of Design, University of Minnesota, trained as an architect in India and the United States, and applies design thinking to a variety of fields and contexts.
An Artful Life: Drawing for Beginners

Monday–Thursday, June 24–27 (four meetings), 10 a.m.–1 p.m.
Regis Center for the Arts, Room W244, West Bank campus, $245 (+ $30 supply fee) (LLX103)

As children, drawing was as natural as breathing: we could spend hours building magnificent worlds. Some of us continued to draw, but others let the artistic urge fall to the wayside. Why did we intentionally let slip something so healthy for our hearts, minds, and souls?

In this immersion, you'll heighten your visual awareness by using keen observational skills that help you draw what is seen rather than its symbol. A variety of techniques and media will be introduced, both to encourage experimentation and to help you find your natural drawing style. You'll learn different ways of observing and representing objects and people through quick gesture sketches and long-study drawings.

Projects will focus on a variety of subject matter (still life, landscape, the human figure) and introduce drawing concepts sequentially—each new concept and technique building on the previous. Sessions will begin with lectures and demonstrations related to concepts important to the novice drawer, including mark-making, line quality, media experimentation, and observation of shape, angle, and proportion. Over time, you'll hone your hand-eye coordination and become attuned to your own visual sense and style.

No previous experience necessary. Participants will be required to purchase or provide their own supplies. A supply list will be sent upon registration. Complete kits are available at Wet Paint, Saint Paul, for $30.

Laura Stack, MFA, University of Kansas, is a Minneapolis artist who teaches in the Department of Art at the University of Minnesota. She is represented by Circa Gallery, is a member of Rosalux Gallery Collective, and has exhibited her work locally, nationally and internationally.

Offered in cooperation with the University’s Department of Art and the Regis Center for Art.

Positive Psychology: The Science of Well-Being

Tuesdays, July 9, 16, 23, 30 (four meetings), 2–4 p.m., $165 (LLX131)

In the past two decades, Positive Psychology has emerged and grown, building optimistic steam as a bold new approach to studying (and treating) the variances of the human condition.

It began in 2000 when Dr. Martin Seligman, then-president of the American Psychological Association, challenged researchers to consider not only how to prevent and treat mental illness but also how to help people thrive. The focus, he posited, should not be on deficits and problems but rather human strengths and well-being.

Since that time, experimental and cross-sectional research has come to better understand the psychological processes that enhance human strength and resilience. These, in turn, help to foster a life characterized by significant engagement with the world—a life lived fully.

This course takes a long and practical view of Positive Psychology. Through lectures, presentations, and hands-on experiments, we'll engage in a rigorous examination of the current research in the field and then discuss how these findings relate to our own life experiences—from adversity to triumph and everything in between.

Throughout the course, participants will gain a more profound understanding of the processes that specifically support human thriving and become more adept at employing activities that increase life satisfaction, purpose, and meaning.

Amy Gunty, PhD candidate and researcher, Institute on Community Integration, College of Education and Human Development, University of Minnesota, works with military families, prevention and intervention programs for families, and community integration efforts for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
Ancient Wisdom/Modern Science

Wednesdays, July 10, 17, 24, 31 (four meetings), 10 a.m.–noon, $165 (LLX169)

Complexity theory is the study of both complexity and complex systems. Interdisciplinary in nature, complexity theory grew out of systems theory in the 1960s, making it a relatively new science. Or is it?

Drawing on natural-science research that examines uncertainty and nonlinearity, the tenets of complexity theory are echoes of ancient wisdom. It was near 500 BCE when Lao-tzu founded Taoism, Gautama Buddha founded Buddhism, and Heraclitus founded a school of thought that lives on today as “process philosophy.”

These contemporaries all considered the impermanence of worldly things (the Many) and the mysterious creative fount (Unity) from which they arise. For Lao-tzu that mystery was the Tao (the Way), for Buddha it was Bodhhi (Truth), and for Heraclitus it was Fire (eternal change as the only constant). All stressed the changing nature of things, but also the Unity that is their source.

Complexity theory speaks of the parts and wholes of complex systems and describes how these two systemic levels interact. Curiously, complex systems are dynamic yet also resilient, persistent, and stable over time. More curious yet, they “self-organize,” bringing order from chaos in a way that we can describe but not fully understand.

In this course, we’ll examine ancient traditions and modern science for their unique insights and for the many ways in which they echo and synergize one another. The result? A new understanding of how we see the world and ourselves, as well as how we can best effect change in the world and in ourselves.

John B. Miller is a Senior Fellow of the University of Minnesota’s Bakken Center for Spirituality and Healing, where in 2008, he helped to found the Whole Systems Healing program. He received his BA in Ancient Studies with a special interest in religions and philosophies from the University and his MA in Education from Augsburg University.
Acrylic Painting Primer

Monday–Thursday, July 15–18 (four meetings), 10 a.m.–1 p.m.
Regis Center for the Arts, Room W244, West Bank campus, $245 (+ $30 supply fee) (LLX174)

This immersion is an introduction to the fundamentals of painting with acrylic. As contemporary and historical artists and paintings are introduced for reference and inspiration, you’ll explore abstraction, painting from observation, brushwork, value, color mixing, composition, and a variety of techniques—to encourage both experimentation and the discovery of your natural painting style.

Daily studio sessions will begin with demonstrations related to concepts important to the novice painter as well as projects that focus on a range of subjects, including still life, nature, and the human figure.

The majority of time will be devoted to practicing techniques and working on projects, all while receiving individual feedback from the instructor.

No previous experience necessary. Participants will be required to purchase or provide their own supplies. A supply list will be sent upon registration. Complete kits are available at Wet Paint, Saint Paul, for $30.

Laura Stack, see bio on page 14.

Offered in cooperation with the University’s Department of Art and the Regis Center for Art.

Self-Publishing: A Comprehensive Overview

Mondays, July 15, 22, 29 (three meetings), 4–6 p.m., $135, LLX170

So, you’ve written a book. Maybe you’ve even penned your acknowledgements, secured copyright permissions, and pondered the title page. Of course, there are fonts, formats, signatures, trim size, and bindings to consider, not to mention issues related to ISBN, CIP, CMYK, DPI, RGB, RRP...

Face it: the nuts and bolts involved in graduating from writer to published author can be daunting. From publishing workflow, copyright, and ISBNs to book printing, distribution, and marketing, this one-day immersion provides a comprehensive overview of the self-publishing world.

We’ll begin by learning how to differentiate between traditional, self-, and “vanity-house” publishing. We also will discuss the different types of editors (and how to find the ones you need), as well as print-on-demand publishing and ebooks. By the end of the course, you will feel better informed and more equipped to take that exhilarating next step toward publication.

Patti Frazee, MFA, Hamline University, is a writer, editor, and publishing consultant. She has been a proofreader and editor for Llewellyn Worldwide, Hazelden Publishing, and several Fortune 500 companies, and assisted dozens of authors with manuscript development and copyediting. Frazee’s novels include Out of Harmony (CreateSpace, 2012) and Cirkus (Alyson Books, 2006), which was a finalist for a Minnesota Book Award and nominated for a Lambda Literary Award.
Art Cities of Italy: Florence, Rome, Venice

Tuesdays, September 10, 17, 24, October 1 (four meetings), 6:30–8:30 p.m., $165 (LLX179)

This survey of the history of Italian art opens in Florence with the works of Early Renaissance painters like Giotto, who transformed the art of the Late Middle Ages with a new spirit of human emotion.

During the Quattrocento (1400s), Florentine artists such as Donatello, Masaccio, and Botticelli were achieving major advances in composition and technique. At the same time, under the Medici, masters of the Italian High Renaissance like Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo melded observation of the world around them with careful study of the classical heritage of ancient Greek and Roman art.

With the coming of the Reformation and clashes between Catholics and Protestants, artistic focus shifted to Rome, its fervid atmosphere characterized by the dramatic paintings of Caravaggio and the Baroque structures and fountains of Bernini.

With the Risorgimento—movement toward Italian unification in the 19th century—Italian art increasingly reflected the political and social foment of national aspiration. This course will close with a look at the rise of Italian modernism and some of its distinctive stylistic movements (Futurism, for example) that led into the 20th century.

learninglife

These explorations of the Italian art cities of Florence, Rome, and Venice will include brief “visits” to major museums and cultural institutions as a means to highlight the treasures that await visitors—be they in person or virtual.

Art historian Allan Kohl has taught courses on ancient, medieval, and Renaissance art at the Minneapolis College of Art and Design, where he is the visual resources librarian. His previous LearningLife courses include historical celebrations of baseball and American popular culture, the art of the Civil War, and the art and design history of New York, Paris, London, Athens, Vienna, Istanbul, and other cities.

Offered in cooperation with the College of Food, Agriculture, and Natural Resource Sciences Office of International Programs and the College of Education and Human Development.
The Power to Overcome: Memoirs of Survival

Thursdays, September 12, October 3, 24 (three meetings), 6–8 p.m., $135 (LLX175)

Historically, memoirs were written by people of privilege and notoriety, predominantly white men who, late in their lives, looked back on successful careers, arranging and embellishing memories to make a coherent story about triumphing over life’s obstacles. But today, memoir has been adopted and adapted by people whose lives are quite different from those earlier writers.

Women, political radicals, LGBTQ community members, and people from the working class have recently given us memoirs that record struggles faced and barriers crashed through. These writers see the genre as a path to examining the environments and situations from which they’ve come and which have allowed them to achieve goals they never dreamed possible. The difference: a traditionally “polite” form of writing has become psychologically framed and politically astute.

In this course, we’ll discuss three such memoirs: James McBride’s *The Color of Water*, which spent more than two years on the *New York Times* bestseller list; Jesmyn Ward’s *Men We Reaped*, which was called one of the best books of the century by *New York Magazine*; and Casey Gerald’s *There Will Be No Miracles Here*, about which author Marlon James marveled, “Somehow Casey Gerald has pulled off the most urgently political, most deeply personal, and most engagingly spiritual statement of our time by just looking outside his window and inside himself.”


Toni McNaron is Professor Emerita of English at the University of Minnesota where she has been the recipient of five awards for outstanding teaching, including the College of Continuing and Professional Studies Distinguished Educator Award.

Writing About the Past: Become a Popular History Storyteller

Monday, September 16 (one meeting), 4–7 p.m., $70 (LLX176)

History is riding a wave of high interest, with many publications seeking factual historical stories and Oscar-winning movies focusing on tales of the past. With long experience as an author of articles, essays, books, and podcasts on history-related topics, award-winning author Jack El-Hai will lead this fast-paced journey into the process of writing about history for general audiences.

The course will cover how to identify historical nonfiction stories that resonate today, as well as how to research topics, interview sources, organize your findings, structure stories, blend in personal experience, find markets, and bring your work to the attention of readers.

There also will be an opportunity to discuss your ideas and ask questions.

Minnesota Mycology: Study, Forage, Savor

Thursday, September 19, 6-8 p.m., Continuing Education and Conference Center
Saturday, September 21, 10 a.m.–2 p.m., William O’Brien State Park
Wednesday, September 25, 6–8:30 pm, Campus Club, Coffman Memorial Union,
East Bank campus, $180 (LLX050)

With more than 5,000 species of mushrooms found in the region, identifying species can be challenging. The most commonly asked questions: “What is this?” and “Can I eat it?” Led by mycology enthusiast Kathy Yerich, this course allows you to first learn about, then forage for, and finally savor the mushrooms of Minnesota.

We’ll begin in the classroom with a lecture that defines what mushrooms are, surveys the species found in the region, and details the characteristics essential to species’ identification.

The next session will have you foraging at William O’Brien State Park. Mushroom identification is a tactile and sensory experience, so we’ll spend time observing, touching, and smelling specimens, all of which can help to distinguish species.

And finally, the taste test! We’ll meet at the Campus Club where chef Beth Jones will prepare small plates that feature locally sourced wild and cultivated mushrooms. In addition to offering tips on how to use mushrooms in your own kitchen, the soirée will include a visit from a gourmet mushroom cultivator who will discuss the ins and outs of the ever-expanding local mushroom industry.

Throughout the evening, a cash bar will feature wines, beers, and cocktails with suggested pairings for the courses. Tuition includes food. Space is limited. Registrations must be received by September 18.

Kathy Yerich, BFA, University of Minnesota, is vice president of the Minnesota Mycological Society and a member of the North American Mycological Association. She is coauthor of Mushrooms of the Upper Midwest: A Simple Guide to Common Mushrooms.

Beth Jones, executive chef, Campus Club, University of Minnesota, honed her cooking skills and became a proponent of the local foods movement while at Lucia’s in Minneapolis.

Ian Silver-Ramp, BS, University of Minnesota, is founder and co-owner of Minneapolis-based Mississippi Mushrooms.

Courtney Tchida is the Student Programs Coordinator for the Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture and Cornercopia Student Organic Farm.

Offered in cooperation with the Campus Club of the University of Minnesota, Cornercopia Student Farm, Minnesota Mycological Society, and Mississippi Mushrooms.

Minnesota Mycology: Small Plate Soirée

Wednesday, September 25, 6–8:30 pm, Campus Club, Coffman Memorial Union,
East Bank campus, $70 (LLX051)

What is this? Can I eat it? According to mycology enthusiast Kathy Yerich, these are the most commonly asked questions about mushrooms, and this soirée offers you the opportunity to learn about and sample some of the more than 5,000 species found in our region.

Hen of the Woods. Chicken of the Woods. What’s the difference? Yerich will discuss Minnesota mushroom species and detail the characteristics essential to their identification. As she presents, chef Beth Jones will serve small plates that feature locally sourced wild and cultivated mushrooms.

In addition to offering tips on how to use mushrooms in your own kitchen, the soirée will include a visit from a gourmet mushroom cultivator who will discuss the ins and outs of the ever-expanding local mushroom industry.

Throughout the evening, a cash bar will feature wines, beers, and cocktails with suggested pairings for the courses. Tuition includes food. Space is limited. Registrations must be received by September 18.

Kathy Yerich, BFA, University of Minnesota, is vice president of the Minnesota Mycological Society and a member of the North American Mycological Association. She is coauthor of Mushrooms of the Upper Midwest: A Simple Guide to Common Mushrooms.

Beth Jones, executive chef, Campus Club, University of Minnesota, honed her cooking skills and became a proponent of the local foods movement while at Lucia’s in Minneapolis.

Ian Silver-Ramp, BS, University of Minnesota, is founder and co-owner of Minneapolis-based Mississippi Mushrooms.

Courtney Tchida is the Student Programs Coordinator for the Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture and Cornercopia Student Organic Farm.

Offered in cooperation with the Campus Club of the University of Minnesota, Cornercopia Student Farm, Minnesota Mycological Society, and Mississippi Mushrooms.
HEADLINERS 2019-2020 Season

It’s hard to believe, but the current Headliners season ends in May! We’ll return for our 14th season on October 10, 2019.

First up in the Headliners house, the always-engaging Timothy R. Johnson who is Morse-Alumni Distinguished Teaching Professor of Political Science and Law at the University of Minnesota. He’s also a part of the President’s Distinguished Faculty Mentorship Program, and a recipient of the Red Motley Award of Teaching Excellence and the John Tate Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Advising. His Headliners topic: The US Supreme Court. Oyez! Oyez! Oyez!

Series tickets for the 2019–2020 season go on sale in May and as always, offer the best deal in town: seven events for the price of four! ccaps.umn.edu/headliners

Help us to keep you up to date!

To continue to receive news about LearningLife’s offerings, including notices about the publication of new courses and online catalogs, please ensure you are subscribed to LearningLife News, our bimonthly enewsletter. You may subscribe online or by calling 612-624-4000.