

Course Descriptions, Spring Term 2019

Monday: 10 AM – Noon: How to Listen to and Understand Great Music, Part Two

“Learning how to appreciate the unmatched beauty, genius, and power of concert music can permanently enrich your life. Why is this so? As award-winning composer and Professor Robert Greenberg explains, “Music, the most abstract and sublime of all the arts, is capable of transmitting an unbelievable amount of expressive, historical, and even philosophical information to us, provided that our antennas are up and pointed in the right direction. A little education goes a long way to vitalizing and rendering relevant a body of music that many feel is beyond their grasp.”

This course, from the *Great Courses* DVD collection, features Professor Robert Greenberg, the Music-Historian-in-Residence with San Francisco Performances.

Presenter: Dr. Michael Magnifico : April 15 – June 3 at Geer (8 sessions)

Monday: 1:00 – 3:00 PM: Richard Rodgers with Lorenz Hart and Oscar Hammerstein II

Richard Rodgers’ (1902-1979) work is arguably the centerpiece of the American Musical Theater. The many revivals of his collaborations with Oscar Hammerstein II (1895-1960) attest to that. In the last 10 years alone Lincoln Center has presented *Oklahoma*, *South Pacific*, and *The King and I*. Before he worked with Hammerstein, Rodgers’ partner was Lorenz Hart (1895-1943), with whom he wrote *Pal Joey*, *Babes in Arms*, *A Connecticut Yankee*, and many more. This class will examine the musicals with an emphasis on how changing partners changed the work. There will be many video and audio examples starring a vast array of performers including Al Jolson, Julie Andrews, Alfred Drake, Gertrude Lawrence, Yul Brynner, Mary Martin, Ezio Pinza, Mitzi Gaynor, Desi Arnaz, Lucille Ball, and a host of other favorites.

Instructor: Tom Gruenewald: April 15 – May 20 at Geer (6 sessions)

Tuesday: 10:00 AM – Noon: How to Look at and Understand Great Art, Part Two

“Great art is among the most sublime, meaningful, and redeeming creations of all civilization. Few endeavors can equal the power of great artwork to capture aesthetic beauty, to move and inspire, to change your perceptions, and to communicate the nature of human experience. Great art is also complex, mysterious, and challenging. Filled with symbolism, cultural and historical references, and often visionary imagery, great artworks oblige us—defy us, even—to reckon with their many meanings.

What does it take to truly know what you're seeing when you look at art? What technical skills and knowledge are needed to comprehend the full richness of artworks, to unpack the hidden significance of master paintings, sculptures, prints, and more?”

This course, from the *Great Courses* DVD collection, features lectures by Professor Sharon L. Hirsh, president of Rosemont College.

Presenters: Kathleen and John Robinson: April 16 – May 21 at Geer (6 sessions)

Tuesday: 1:00 – 3:00 PM: Italian-American Immigrants

This four-part documentary is a continuation of our examination of marginalization in the United States. It varies simply because it is a story of *successful* adaptation and assimilation. As we examine the experience of Italian-American immigrants we will consider their success in the context of the larger issue – marginalization.

Instructor: Larry Rand: April 16 – May 14 at Noble Horizons (5 sessions)

Wednesday: 10:00 AM – Noon: Playreading

To welcome spring and lighten our hearts, we'll read from a collection published in 2007 of 36 short comic plays called *Laugh Lines* by authors such as Elaine May, Shel Silverstein, Christopher Durang, Steve Martin (THE Steve Martin) and 32 others. They include "Your Mother's Butt," an insane therapy session in which the client confuses his clothing choices with his maternal nightmares; and "Alone at Last!", in which a young inexperienced couple try to lose their respective virginities together while a chorus of family members and friends constantly interrupts them with warnings on the one hand and critiques on the other. You get the idea.

Reading material: *Laugh Lines: Short Comic Plays*, ed. Eric Lane, Nina Shengold, Vintage Books, 2007

Instructor: Robert Rumsey: April 17 – May 22 at Noble Horizons: (6 sessions)

Thursday: 10:00 AM – Noon: The Dead Cat Bounce and the Wall of Worry

An irreverent romp through the mysteries of economics and finance. We will pierce the veil of baloney and mysticism to reveal an eternal truth: “*no one is an expert on what hasn't happened yet.*” But when it comes to investing the only thing that counts is what you do next. And the odds of making the right decision are no better than a coin flip. But they are slightly better if you can avoid the really bad stuff.

Jerry will draw upon decades of economics and finance experience, during which time he participated in every debacle that you can imagine and some that are beyond belief.

We will take a (sometimes) humorous look at the world of money. One funny thing about money is that it's not funny when you don't have it. It's true that money can't buy happiness...but it can enable you to be miserable in a better neighborhood.

Instructor: Jerry Jamin: April 18 – May 23 at Geer (6 sessions)

Thursday: 1:00 – 3:00 PM: Let's Talk Poetry - Joyfully

By reading aloud and discussing poems we will come to appreciate the special place that good poetry holds in our lives. Learn the joy that can come from thoughtful observation of nature and of human experience, and listen to the rhythm of modern poetic music. More a discussion group than a lecture, this class will be a creation of its members.

Required Text: *Good Poems*, Garrison Keillor, Penguin Books, 2002

Suggested Texts: *The Classic Hundred Poems*, ed. William Harmon, Columbia University Press, 1998; *How to Read a Poem and Fall in Love with Poetry*, Edward Hirsch, Harcourt, 1999

Instructor: Maura Wolf: April 18 – May 23 at Noble Horizons (6 sessions)