



Course Descriptions, Winter Term 2017

Monday: **10 AM – Noon: Much Ado About Everything: Dante's Paradiso**

In this course, we'll finish off this great epic poem, traveling up the celestial spheres to the top of heaven, the point where we begin to see the transition from the high Middle Ages to the early Renaissance. Even if you didn't join us for the Inferno and the Purgatorio this last fall, and even if you didn't get your will corrected properly, feel free to come along and complete the journey with us—and get your intellect set right in Dante's strange and marvelous universe. Please purchase John Ciardi's translation of the Paradiso, available at Oblong Books in Millerton, NY. Also, please read Canto 1 of the Paradiso for our first session.

Mark Scarbrough: January 16 – February 20 at Geer (6 sessions)

Monday: **1:00 – 3:00 PM: Moby Dick:**

In the six sessions of this course we will examine Melville's novel, exploring, among other things, its mighty themes and its "bold and nervous lofty language." Whether you are coming to the novel for the first time or again after a number of readings, you should find in it something new. For the first session read through Chapter XIII.

John Toffey: January 16 – February 20 at Geer Conference Room (6 sessions)

Tuesday: **10:00 AM – Noon: Some Surprising Images in Biblical Art**

This course will consider a number of Biblical images, primarily in Italian art from the early Renaissance through the Baroque, approximately 1300 to 1650. These images, mostly painting, some sculpture, are 'surprising' in that they appear to depart from their literal sources to express an expanded truth. Sometimes the texts offer little visual detail, sometimes they express a narrower vision than the artist is willing to accept, and on rare occasions there is no text at all. As a result, the artistic imagination roams freely, creating 'surprising' images, some of which we know well but haven't thought about in just this way. Note: The five sessions will be conversational in format. Everyone will have more fun, and greater insight, if we all contribute.

George Faison: January 17 – February 14 at Noble Horizons (5 sessions)

Tuesday: 1:00 PM – 3:00: On Memoirs: A Continuation

This workshop will offer a continuation of our examination of the art of writing memoirs. It will be prefaced by a discussion of the characteristics of good memoir writing and is designed to help people discover their stories in a supportive environment. Students will be asked to write short pieces from prompts and share them with the class as well as read excerpts from contemporary and classic memoirs. With a Master*s Degree in creative non-fiction and a background writing biographical sketches and magazine articles, Brenda Underwood will help participants explore the significance of people, places and events in their lives. Students will be encouraged to draw stories from memory and organize them into a narrative.

Brenda Underwood: January 17 – February 21 at Noble Horizons: (6 sessions)

Wednesday: 10:00 AM – Noon: Playreading:

This term we will revisit Beth Henley. This collection of plays is set in various time frames. We will read plays of the past, present and future. Please obtain *Beth Henley: Collected Plays, Volume II, 1990-1999*.

Rosemary Farnsworth: January 18 - March 8 at Noble Horizons (8 sessions)

Thursday: 10:00 AM – Noon: Booms, Busts, Bubbles, and Bastards

We begin with a warp speed review of basic economic concepts to provide an understanding of the current state of the US and global economy.

Then on to some of the great booms and busts -from the Dutch Tulip Mania of 1637 on through the Great Depression and the not so terrific Great Recession. When will have the next one? Surely we can trust the economists, who have predicted 7 out of the last 3 recessions, to give us a head up.

Then Mr. Jerry’s favorite part: “the Bastards”. Why do they proliferate in the booms and hide out in the busts? We’ll meet some famous white collar crooks and some you never heard of, and you’ll be introduced to Jerry’s haircut hypothesis of Bastard outing.

We’ll conclude with a look into our economic future. Things we already know and the unknown unknowns. Although Mr. Jerry pretends to know everything about anything, in fact when it comes to the future your guess is just as good as his.

Jerry Jamin: January 19 – March 9 at Geer Chapel Room (8 sessions)

Thursday: 1:00 – 3:00 PM: Reading Shakespeare – Aloud

Reading Shakespeare – Aloud .Reading Shakespeare's plays can present special challenges. The unfamiliar words, peculiar spellings and opaque allusions often throw us a curve, but much of this confusion may be eliminated when Reading Shakespeare – Aloud! Often, the sound of the words being spoken carries the meaning along even when one might stumble over individual word meanings. In this course, we will read "The Merchant of Venice." There will be some discussion of interpretation but mostly we will seek the pleasure of hearing these memorable characters through our own efforts to, as Hamlet would put it, 'speak the speech"! To warm up we will read a sonnet or two.

Mark Alan Liebergall and Sarah Tames: January 19 – March 9 at Geer (8 sessions)

Friday: 10:00 AM – Noon: "Well, It Seemed Like a Good Idea at the Time" This course will look at six events in American history that, for the most part, failed to live up to their initial aims or expectations.

Session One. "The First Great Awakening"- In the 1730s, a wave of religious revivals swept the Reformed churches in the Thirteen Colonies, particularly in Massachusetts and Connecticut , upsetting the authority of church and state. Though there was little lasting impact on the religious feelings of the colonies, the challenge to the established authority may have impacted the decision of the colonies to declare independence from Great Britain.

Session Two- "Benedict Arnold, Ethan Allen and Gen. Guy Carlton"- The interaction between these three men involved heroism, religion, treason and a loss of a significant opportunity for Great Britain in the Revolutionary War.

Session Three- "American Deist of the Revolutionary Era"- This session will look at the history and various tenets of Deism plus the ideas of some of its followers who were important in American history. The followers included Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Tom Paine and Ethan Allen.

Session Four- "Manifest Destiny"- The movement to greatly expand the territory of the United States impacted the election of President James K. Polk, the annexation of Texas, war aims of the Mexican War and the run up to the American Civil War.

Session Five- "The Presidential Election Compromise of 1876"- The compromise between Democrats and Republicans that resulted in the election of Rutherford B. Hayes affected the country to the extent that its impact is still felt today.

Session Six- "National Aspirations, and Disappointments, in the Treaty of Versailles"- This session will look at the various "treaty aims" of the involved countries and whether they were achieved. We will also look at the impact of the treaty leading up to WWII.

Tom Key: January 20 – February 24 at Noble Horizons (6 sessions)