



## Course Descriptions, Winter Term 2020

• **Monday: 10:00 AM – Noon: A King, a Duke, and a Count with a Woody: Jazz Royalty of the Swing Era:** Benny Goodman, Duke Ellington, Count Basie, and Woody Herman. A nostalgic look back at the Big Band Era from the 1920's through the 1960's. We will review the lives, artistry, bands, and associates of these four stellar leaders. We will also listen to an admittedly subjective selection of their best and most interesting music and discuss what makes it great. Our last class will include works from the classical repertoire associated with these "jazzers".

NOTE: Jitterbugging, while not technically prohibited, is at your own risk and may be frowned upon by the Health authorities.

**Instructor: John Robinson: January 13 - March 2 at Geer (8 sessions)**

• **Monday: 1:00 – 3:00 PM: Biochemistry and Molecular Biology: How Life Works:** This course, from the Great Courses series, is an accessible and entertaining introduction to this vital discipline, heavily-illustrated and tailored to viewers with no more of a science background than high school chemistry.

**Instructor: Lynn Whelchel: January 13 – March 2 at Geer (8 sessions)**

• **Tuesday: 1:00 –3:00: Shakespeare’s Plays:** We will read and discuss Shakespeare’s four Roman plays, so-called because they are set either directly in or in the orbit of the Eternal City. “Titus Andronicus” was Shakespeare's first tragedy, and its blood-drenched atmosphere is often considered to have been a send-up of his contemporary purveyors of horror such as Christopher Marlowe. “Julius Caesar,” that staple of our schooldays, is Shakespeare's most classic play, severely restrained in structure like his Roman models and dappled with quotations from Ovid and Horace, as well as a meditation upon tyranny and power politics. “Antony and Cleopatra” stars (I use the word deliberately) Cleopatra, perhaps the most fully realized of all Shakespeare's heroines and a woman who has been called “the world's first celebrity”, famous for being famous. “Coriolanus” is Shakespeare's most overtly political play and explores what William Hazlitt called “the insolence of power” and its rewards and costs as exemplified in the career of the Roman general. All the plays were written at least in part to rebut the charge made by Ben Jonson and others that Shakespeare knew “small Latin and less Greek.”

**Instructor: Robert Rumsey: January 14 – March 3 at Noble Horizons (8 sessions)**

- **Wednesday: 10:00 AM – Noon: The Good, The Bad, and the Ugly:** There are 193 sovereign countries. Most have occupied the Bad or Ugly buckets for a substantial portion of their histories. Occupancy rates in the Good bucket are much lower.

Because your President relies solely on his capacious gut to make national security decisions, our intelligence agencies have found alternative activities to justify their budgets.

The Central Intelligence Agency has made its international data base available to me on a need to know basis. I have been allowed to select only eight countries for our course. The non-disclosure agreement does not permit me to reveal their identities until our class starts. But I can disclose that the “Secret 8” does not include Liechtenstein or Paraguay.

“The Good, the Bad and the Ugly” is a classic western movie. The Hollywood portrayals of Bad and Ugly behavior are less awful than the stuff that countries do while pretending to be Good. The country that you think is Good when you go to sleep can be Bad or Ugly when you wake up. Bucket changing is a never ending process. Yogi said “it ain’t over till it’s over”, but it’s never going to be over.

There are no prerequisites for this course, but a sense of humor may help you to prevail over the Bastards. Perhaps.

**Instructor: G.A. Jamin: January 15 – February 19 or later at Geer (6-8 sessions)**

- **Wednesday: 1:00 – 3:00 PM: How Churchill Changed the World:** A presentation of the Great Courses' program featuring Great Britain's most celebrated statesman, Winston Churchill, and his varied talents as a politician, public servant, soldier, writer and artist as well as his many significant contributions to the world.

**Instructor: Bruce Montgomerie: January 15- March 4 at Geer (8 sessions)**

- **Thursday: 10:30 AM – 12:30: Bach’s Christmas Oratorio:** One week on each of the six cantatas in the larger work, with healthy doses of Prussian history and Continental politics of the time. **Note carefully: This course is being offered with the cooperation of the Norfolk Library.** There is ample parking around the Norfolk town green as well as in the main section of town behind the library. Class members should reserve the library’s parking lot for those with mobility issues.

**Instructor: Mark Scarbrough: January 9 – February 13 at Norfolk Library (6 sessions)**

• **Friday: 10:00 AM – Noon: Beginnings, Endings and a Beginning of an End:**

1. Bonnie Prince Charles, the Battle of Culloden and the End of the Stewart Attempt to Regain the English Crown
2. Events Leading to the Colonies Rebelling Against Great Britain. Were they Sufficient to Justify Rebellion?
3. A Time Line Oriented Survey of the Major Revolutionary War Battles in the Northern Colonies
4. Events Leading to the Secession of the Confederate States of America. Were they Sufficient to Justify Civil War?
5. The Civil War Chattanooga-Atlanta-Nashville Campaign that Destroyed a Major Confederate Army.
6. WW II Deception of the Germans by the British as an Important Part of the Normandy Invasion

**Instructor: Thomas Key: January 17 – February 21 at Noble Horizons (6 sessions)**

• **Friday: 1:00 – 3:00: Playreading:** We'll read and discuss plays by Terrence Rattigan (1911-1977), at least to all appearances a “veddy proper” British playwright who was popular during the 1940s and 1950s. He wrote carefully constructed, “well-made” plays, both comedies and semi-tragedies. He claimed that he wrote for a posited “Aunt Edna,” an upper middle-class, completely conventional British theatergoer who knew what she liked and made no apologies for her taste. Rattigan reached his peak just before the advent of the “kitchen sink dramas” centered on the “Angry Young Men” of postwar British society. These antiestablishment plays rejected precisely the kind of drama, both in technique and subject matter, at which Rattigan excelled. His reputation as a result remained under a cloud for much of the rest of the twentieth century, although his work lately has begun to experience a revival of sorts. I suspect that the huge success of “Downton Abbey” may have something to do with this by resurrecting interest in the mores of the British social elite. Given all this, it is tempting to see Rattigan's plays as charming and refreshing interludes from post-modern angst and Continental complexities. But are they? We shall see.

We'll read "The Winslow Boy", "The Browning Version", "Separate Tables", "The Deep Blue Sea", and "Ross". And if time permits, "Who Is Sylvia?". Amazon has them, but they're not cheap, and I got mine as gently-used paperbacks (their term) from [AbeBooks.com](http://AbeBooks.com) for reasonable prices. You may have to search AbeBooks for the right combination. Vols. II and III have them all except for "Winslow", which I'll supply. Let me know if you have a problem or a question.

**Instructor: Robert Rumsey: January 17 – March 6 at Noble Horizons (8 sessions)**