



OLLI at Vanderbilt

Where Curiosity Meets Community | Courses for Adults 50 and Older

SPRING 2026

Registration Opens

Monday, February 9

Registration Deadline

Sunday, March 1

First Day of Classes

Friday, March 6



Welcome to the Spring Term at OLLI at Vanderbilt

As the days grow longer and the campus begins to bloom, we're delighted to welcome you to a new season of discovery, connection and lifelong learning at the **Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Vanderbilt University—Where Curiosity Meets Community.**

This spring term brings a fresh and engaging lineup of courses designed to spark curiosity and inspire conversation. We're excited to welcome a **new instructor for Great Decisions**, offering timely insights into global issues shaping our world. Nature lovers won't want to miss **Nashville Native Orchids: Astonishing Science and Mysterious Folklore**, a fascinating exploration of beauty, biology and local lore. Film enthusiasts can dive into **Delving into Documentaries: How Do They Inspire and Persuade Us**, while stargazers will enjoy returning to the wonders of **Astronomy**, always a favorite.

And of course, many of the OLLI classes you know and love are back this spring. Our popular movement and wellness offerings—including **Yoga** and **Tai Chi**—return to help you stay active and centered. Music and community come together again with **Chorale** and **Steel Drumming**, while longtime favorites like **Mahjong** continue to bring members together for fun, strategy and connection.

Beyond the classroom, our vibrant community remains at the heart of everything we do. From shared interests to shared laughter, OLLI continues to be a place where learning is joyful and friendships flourish.

Thank you for being part of this remarkable community of lifelong learners. We look forward to a spring filled with curiosity, conversation and meaningful connections—and we can't wait to learn alongside you this season.

— *Tara Hamilton, Jenelle Spicer and the OLLI at Vanderbilt Advisory Council*



MISSION STATEMENT

OLLI at Vanderbilt helps adults over 50 rediscover the joy of learning and build community through diverse social interaction.

MEMBER BENEFITS

(Attending class within calendar year)

- Attend courses
- Participate in all special events and day trips
- Stay informed about other Vanderbilt activities and educational opportunities
- Participate in our Shared Interest Groups
- **Annual membership fee and more benefits to come in the future!**

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Spring 2026 Schedule-at-a-Glance

Time	Course	Type	Dates
MONDAYS			
10–11:30 A.M.	Meditating and Relating: You, Me, Us and Our Parts		3/16–4/20
2–3:30 P.M.	Great Decisions 2026		3/16–4/20
2–3:30 P.M.	Ghosts in the White House: The People Behind Presidential Speeches		3/30–5/4
TUESDAYS			
10–11:30 A.M.	OLLI Chorale		3/10–4/21
10–11:30 A.M.	Let's Mahjong! A Six-Week Beginner Course		3/17–4/21
12–1:30 P.M.	Mahjong 102: Playing with Strategy and Confidence		3/17–4/21
2–3:30 P.M.	Preventers of Futures: Ray Bradbury and Other Insightful Writers of Speculative Fiction		3/17–4/21
3–4:30 P.M.	An Astronomy Sampler		3/17–4/21
10–11:30 A.M.	The Scopes Monkey Trial: Then and Now		3/31–5/5
12–1:30 P.M.	Place, Memory and Environmental Psychology		4/7–5/12
4–5:30 P.M.	From Leo XIII to Leo XIV: History of 20th and 21st Century Popes		4/7–5/12
6–7:30 P.M.	Frank Lloyd Wright and Modern Architecture		4/21–5/26
WEDNESDAYS			
10–11:30 A.M.	Nashville Native Orchids: Astonishing Science and Mysterious Folklore		3/18–4/22
12–1:30 P.M.	Delving into Documentaries: How Do They Inspire and Persuade Us?		3/18–4/22
1–2:30 P.M.	Tai Chi for Health, Balance and Relaxation		3/18–4/22
1:30–3 P.M.	Bridge Basics I – An Introduction		3/18–4/22
4–5:30 P.M.	Reading Shakespeare with Film 5 – Hamlet in Grief		3/18–4/22
12–1:30 P.M.	Siberia: Russia's Frozen Wasteland or Economic Heartland?		4/1–5/6
2–3:30 P.M.	The Lost Generation		4/15–5/20
4–5:30 P.M.	Music: Controversies and Curiosities		4/15–5/20

Time	Course	Type	Dates
THURSDAYS			
2–3:30 P.M.	How to Write a Memoir		3/12–4/30
10–11:15 A.M.	Beginner Ukulele		3/19–4/23
11:45 A.M. – 1 P.M.	Intermediate Ukulele		3/19–4/23
12–1:30 P.M.	Gentle Yoga		3/19–4/23
11–12:30 P.M.	Telling Your Story: A Deep Dive into Memoir Writing		3/19–5/7
12–1:30 P.M.	JFK's Quest for Peace: Lessons for Turbulent Times		4/2–5/7
6–7:30 P.M.	AI for Regular People		4/2–5/7
FRIDAYS			
9:30–10:45 A.M.	OLLI Steel Drum – Beginner		3/6–4/24
11 A.M. – 12:15 P.M.	OLLI Steel Drum – Intermediate		3/6–4/24
12:30–1:45 P.M.	OLLI Steel Drum – Advanced		3/6–4/24
2–3:30 P.M.	California Uncovered: A Journey Through Time, Place and Identity		4/10–5/15
SATURDAYS			
1–2:30 P.M.	Writing the Personal Essay: Finding Your Story		4/18–5/23

All classes are listed in Central Time.

COURSE ICON KEY

 **In-Person** – These courses are conducted in person at various locations in Nashville. **These classes are not recorded.**

 **Online via Zoom** – These courses are conducted by OLLI at Vanderbilt online via Zoom. These classes are typically recorded, but there are exceptions. **Check the course description to see if the course is recorded.**

 **Osher Online** – Osher Online offers online courses for OLLI members across the country. You will be joining an online classroom space that includes fellow OLLI members from across the United States, and therefore space is limited. These courses are created and delivered by the Osher National Resource Center at Northwestern University through their online website platform. NRC staff will provide all content, moderators and technical assistance. **These classes are not recorded.**

Spring 2026 Course Descriptions

MONDAYS

Meditating and Relating: You, Me, Us and Our Parts

Mondays, March 16 – April 20

Time: 10–11:30 A.M. CT | **Cost:** \$60

Location:  Online via Zoom

Instructor: Gordon Peerman

Over the course of 50 years of training and practice as a psychotherapist, meditator and meditation teacher, Peerman has watched the previously separate worlds of psychotherapy and meditation increasingly come into conversation with one another. In this OLLI class, he will teach from two bestselling books he has often recommended to psychotherapy clients: Richard C. Schwartz's *No Bad Parts* for intrapersonal exploration and Terrence Real's *Us: Getting Past You and Me to Build a More Loving Relationship* for interpersonal exploration. Both Schwartz and Real are meditators, and while the emphasis in their writings is explicitly on intrapersonal and interpersonal relating, Peerman will tease out how their teachings can be enhanced by the practice of meditation. No prior experience, either in psychotherapy or meditation is required, only the willingness to take what the late Father William McNamara called "a long, loving look at the real."

This class is recorded.

Gordon Peerman is an Episcopal priest, psychotherapist and mindfulness meditation teacher. He is the author of *Blessed Relief: What Christians Can Learn from Buddhists About Suffering* and his most recent book, *The Body Knows the Way: Coming Home Through the Dark Night*. He leads retreats and workshops on the intersection of contemplative practice and psychological growth. With his late wife, Kathy Woods, led interspiritual gatherings through One River Wisdom School and taught mindfulness practices at Vanderbilt's Osher Center for Integrative Health. At Vanderbilt Divinity School, he taught courses in Buddhist-Christian dialogue and pastoral theology. He leads meditation retreats at St. Mary's Sewanee.

Great Decisions 2026

Mondays, March 16 – April 20

Time: 2–3:30 P.M. CT | **Cost:** \$60

Location:  St. George's Episcopal Church, 4715 Harding Pike

Instructor: Brandon Hulette

Great Decisions is a discussion-based course built around an annual publication of the Foreign Policy Association, a nonprofit organization founded in 1918 dedicated to inspiring the American public to learn more about the world. The *Great Decisions* publication contains eight chapters, each focused on a different foreign policy issue or subject of international importance written by experts in the field. This course will discuss six of the eight topics and be facilitated by Brandon Hulette. Many of the sessions will have a co-facilitator who has expertise in the subject area. Participants are expected to read and be prepared to discuss the topics covered by the publication and under discussion in each class. A syllabus will be sent to all registrants prior to the first class.

Enrollment is limited to 200. This class will not be recorded.

Brandon Hulette is a longtime OLLI instructor who has held appointments in multiple Vanderbilt University departments and manages the Heard Libraries grants program. He has a background in infectious disease epidemiology and public health as well as Civil War and public health history. He is also an Army officer of 23-plus years and current president of Uniformed Services Environmental Health Association.





Ghosts in the White House: The People Behind Presidential Speeches

Mondays, March 30 – May 4

Time: 2–3:30 P.M. CT | **Cost:** \$75

Location:  Osher Online

Instructor: Diana Carlin

Have you ever wondered who writes presidential speeches? This course traces the evolution of speech writing from George Washington's administration to today. Yes, Hamilton helped draft Washington's Farewell Address, but no, Lincoln did not scribble the Gettysburg Address on an envelope. We will study the writing process presidents used and examine drafts from FDR, Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Carter and George H.W. Bush. We will view clips from speeches and from former White House speechwriters describing the process.

Enrollment is limited to 13 participants.
This class is not recorded.

Diana Carlin is professor emerita of communication at Saint Louis University. For 30 years, she has taught courses on and written about First Ladies. She is the co-author of *U.S. First Ladies: Making History and Leaving Legacies* and *Remember the First Ladies: The Legacies of America's History-Making Women*. Carlin has published articles and book chapters on a variety of First Ladies and researches and writes on the topics of women in politics, presidential communication and political debate.

TUESDAYS

OLLI Chorale

Tuesdays, March 10 – April 21

Time: 10–11:30 A.M. CT | **Cost:** \$70

Location:  St. George's Episcopal Church, 4715 Harding Pike

Instructor: Mary Combs

This seven-week course will instruct singers in blending tones, singing in harmony, and in musicianship and vocal techniques, as well as preparing participants to perform a few songs for an audience. The goal for the overall experience is to have fun while making beautiful music together. Be aware that some side effects may occur such as spontaneous happiness, increased memory and motor function, social connection, and movement of the feet and head. Since singing skills build on each other, attendance at each class is encouraged, barring signs of illness, for participants to benefit most from this course.

Enrollment is limited to 50 participants.
This class is not recorded.

Mary Combs has 40 years of experience directing choirs and musical groups in college, school, church, theater and community settings. As a teacher in public and private schools and as director of church choirs, she has worked with all levels of vocal experience and a wide variety of musical backgrounds. As founder and director of the South Cheatham Choral Society, she is known for her talent for guiding singers in developing a "choral sound" while exploring a wide range of musical genres and styles. She graduated with a degree in music education from Lynchburg College in Virginia, with a major in voice. She and her husband, Jody (retired associate dean of libraries at Vanderbilt), have two sons and live in Bellevue.

Let's Mahjong! A Six-Week Beginner Course

Tuesdays, March 17 – April 21

Time: 10–11:30 A.M. CT | **Cost:** \$80

Location:  Second Presbyterian Church, 3511 Belmont Blvd.

Instructor: Joy Marini

American Mahjong, also called Mah Jongg, is a fast-paced, brain-boosting tile game based on the traditional game developed in 19th-century China. Played with four people racing to build specific tile combinations, it's a blend of strategy, memory, pattern recognition and fun. This beginner-friendly course will teach you everything you need to confidently join a game. Over six lively, hands-on lessons, you'll learn the rules, tile sets, game flow and strategy behind this timeless favorite. Learn how to read the Mahjong card, navigate the Charleston (the unique tile-passing ritual) and develop your playing style. By the end of the course, you'll be ready to join local games and host your own Mahjong night. All materials are provided, and you will receive your own card to keep.

Enrollment is limited to 26 participants.

This class is not recorded.

Joy Marini started out curious about American Mahjong and just a little confused, but quickly fell in love with the challenge, strategy and community that come with playing. She now hosts regular games and teaches new players, building a growing Mahjong circle that's as much about laughter as it is about learning. In the classroom, she creates a fun, relaxed space for beginners to gain confidence and fall in love with the game, just like she did. She loves watching the "aha!" moments when new players grasp the rhythm of the game. She emphasizes that you don't need to be a lifelong player to enjoy Mahjong—all it takes is one game to get hooked. A member of the Mahjong Instructors' Guild and an Oh My Mahjong teacher, she is a former physician assistant, corporate leader at Johnson & Johnson and a global health advocate for mothers and children.

Mahjong 102: Playing with Strategy and Confidence

Tuesdays, March 17 – April 21

Time: 12–1:30 P.M. CT | **Cost:** \$60

Location:  Second Presbyterian Church, 3511 Belmont Blvd.

Instructor: Joy Marini

This course takes new players beyond the basics and into the heart of the game. Designed for graduates of the OLLI beginners Mahjong course, this six-week class focuses on building speed, strategy and confidence while strengthening understanding of the National Mahjong League card. Players will sharpen their ability to spot patterns, make quick Charleston decisions, and read exposures, all while developing the mental flexibility to shift from one hand to another mid-game. Each session includes full gameplay, so students can immediately apply what they learn in real time. Through guided instruction and plenty of table practice, students will gain the skills and awareness that separate beginners from confident players. Along the way, they'll also learn table etiquette, defensive play and practical strategies so that they can shout "Mahjong!" By the end of Mahjong 102, players will feel comfortable joining regular games with Mahjong enthusiasts while enjoying the rhythm, challenge and camaraderie that make this game so endlessly engaging. Student Level: Beginner or New Intermediate. Players should have completed the OLLI beginner's Mahjong course or have a basic understanding of tiles and game play. If you'd like to lead or participate in a Mahjong Shared Interest Group, please let us know.

Enrollment is limited to 26 participants.

This class is not recorded.

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Preventers of Futures: Ray Bradbury and Other Insightful Writers of Speculative Fiction

Tuesdays, March 17 – April 21

Time: 2–3:30 p.m. CT | **Cost:** \$60

Location:  Online via Zoom

Instructor: Jennie Miller

While the birth of science fiction is credited to 19th-century writers such as Mary Shelley and H.G. Wells, the genre hit its stride in the middle of the 20th century as innovation and society evolved. By the 1950s, writers of science fiction had a lot to work with, such as the collective embrace of television, the invention of the atomic bomb, and the stirrings of a forthcoming Space Race. Some works of science fiction were largely designed to entertain and amuse. Others presented potential situations for readers to consider by nudging a singular question: *What if ...?* This question defines the umbrella genre of speculative fiction.

American writer Ray Bradbury gave weight to this concept when he called himself a “preventer of futures” rather than a predictor

of one, and his large body of work supports the concept. This class will explore his most famous novel, *Fahrenheit 451*, as well as a collection of short stories by Bradbury and other prominent writers of science fiction with a dystopian bent, such as Kurt Vonnegut, Arthur C. Clarke and Octavia Butler. Together, we'll look at red flags and warning signs these writers sought to give us more than 50 years ago. Topics of discussion will include, but not be limited to, nuclear war, artificial intelligence, societal structures, free speech, and the loss of literacy. Part-lecture, part-discussion, this course is the best part of an English class without tests or essays.

Enrollment is limited to 40 participants.
This class is recorded.

Jennie Miller was a columnist, features writer and editor for 25 years at the Chattanooga *Times Free Press*, the former *Amarillo Magazine* and *West Knoxville Lifestyle* before focusing solely on teaching high school and college-level literature and composition. Her areas of expertise include British Romanticism, American Dark Romanticism and creative writing. She earned a bachelor's degree from Middle Tennessee State University and a master's from Tiffin University. In her spare time, she nurtures a mixture of interests. She loves traveling and studying a few specialized topics, such as Anglo-Saxon England, semiotics and pop culture, and ancient storytelling. She's a big fan (and stockholder) of the Green Bay Packers, as well as a follower of Formula 1. She lives in the foothills of the Great Smoky Mountains.





An Astronomy Sampler

Tuesdays, March 17 – April 21

Time: 3–4:30 P.M. CT | **Cost:** \$60

Location: St. George's Episcopal Church, 4715 Harding Pike

Instructor: Billy Teets

In this course, we will delve into a wide range of astronomical topics. We begin in Week 1 by examining the astronomer's most essential tool, the telescope. We will explore different types of telescopes and uncover fascinating insights into some of the most iconic and groundbreaking observatories ever built such as the Hubble Space Telescope, the James Webb Space Telescope, and the Vera C. Rubin Observatory. In Week 2, our focus shifts to light itself—the key to understanding the universe. We will discover how astronomers decode the information carried by light to determine the compositions of stars, the astonishing speeds at which galaxies race through space, and more.

Building on these foundations, Week 3 reveals how breathtaking images of modern astrophotography are created. We will explore the role of advanced telescopes and detectors and uncover what it truly takes to produce these dazzling results, often much more complex than when they first appear. During Week 4, we turn our attention to the motions of the day and night sky—subtle patterns you may have overlooked or taken for granted—and

uncover the physical causes behind them. In Week 5, we confront some of astronomy's most common (and not-so-common) misconceptions, separating cosmic fact from fiction. Finally, in Week 6, we conclude with a tour of the springtime sky, highlighting celestial objects that are easily within reach of a small backyard telescope and inviting you to apply what you've learned beneath the stars themselves.

Enrollment is limited to 200 participants. This class is not recorded.

Billy Teets is the STEAM outreach and education program director and resident astronomer for Vanderbilt Dyer Observatory. He engages the community in astronomy through Dyer's monthly public events such as Telescope Nights, Open Houses, lectures, and concerts; leading summer science camps and field trip groups; going out into the community and delivering science content to outside groups, businesses and area schools; and developing materials for distribution in-house and online. Around the observatory, he develops and maintains many of the one-of-a-kind exhibits and oversees maintenance and preservation of the observatory's astronomical equipment. He also actively collaborates with Vanderbilt's physics and astronomy department and teaches intro astronomy classes. He grew up in Clarksville, Tennessee, and earned a B.S. in physics from Austin Peay State University (2004) and a Ph.D. in (astro) physics from Vanderbilt University (2012).

The Scopes Monkey Trial: Then and Now

Tuesdays, March 31–May 5

Time: 10–11:30 A.M. CT | **Cost:** \$75

Location:  Osher Online

Instructor: Douglas Mishkin

In July 1925, Clarence Darrow, William Jennings Bryan and others converged on Dayton, Tennessee, for the Scopes Monkey Trial—an eight-day clash over religion, science, public education, free speech and textbooks broadcast nationwide. One hundred years later, these debates continue. This course explores why the trial happened in Dayton, how Bryan and Darrow became involved, what occurred in the courtroom, whether *Inherit the Wind* reflects reality, who won and lost, and why it still matters today.

Enrollment is limited to 13 participants.

This class is not recorded.

Doug Mishkin is an experienced trial lawyer, partnered with Americans United for Separation of Church and State to foster dialogue in Dayton, Tennessee, site of the Scopes Monkey Trial. He has interviewed Pulitzer Prize-winning historian Edward J. Larson (*Summer for the Gods*), civil rights attorney Fred Gray, and George Washington Law Professor Jeffrey Rosen, president of the National Constitution Center, along with other distinguished lawyers and historians on law, history and constitutional issues.

Place, Memory and Environmental Psychology

Tuesdays, April 7–May 12

Time: 12–1:30 P.M. CT | **Cost:** \$75

Location:  Osher Online

Instructor: Fernanda Blanco Vidal

How much of who we are is shaped by the places we live and experience? This course invites reflection on the psychological and emotional relationships between people and their environments. Drawing on psychology, geography, architecture and design, we will explore environmental psychology and how physical environments shape behavior, cognition, identity and memory. Using place-based methods, we will discuss concepts such as place attachment, identity and cognitive maps. We will reflect on memory, home, trauma, displacement and nature's role in well-being.

Enrollment is limited to 13 participants.

This class is not recorded.

Fernanda Blanco Vidal is a Ph.D. candidate in environmental psychology at the CUNY Graduate Center. She earned degrees in psychology and sociology from the Federal University of Bahia, where she published *Nostalgia, but not Sadness – Psychology, Memory and Forced Displacement*. Her dissertation explores how people's sense of place shifted during the COVID-19 pandemic. With over a decade of higher education experience in Brazil and the U.S., she develops place-based methodologies linking psychology, memory and displacement.



From Leo XIII to Leo XIV: History of 20th and 21st Century Popes

Tuesdays, April 7 – May 12

Time: 4–5:30 P.M. CT | **Cost:** \$75

Location:  Osher Online

Instructor: Olivia Espin

The death of Pope Francis and the election of the first U.S.-born pope have been in the news repeatedly in the last few months, capturing the imagination of many people, including non-Catholics. Who are these men? What are their life stories? How were they similar to and different from each other? In this course, we will discuss the lives and dominant perspectives of the last 10 popes, exploring their most significant positions and their influence on world affairs.

Enrollment is limited to 13 participants.

This class is not recorded.

Olivia Espin is professor emerita of women's studies at San Diego State University and the California School of Professional Psychology. She completed her postdoctoral work at Harvard and is a pioneer in feminist therapy with women from diverse cultural backgrounds. Her recent books include *Women, Sainthood, and Power: A Feminist Psychology of Cultural Constructions* and *My Native Land is Memory: Stories of a Cuban Childhood* (2021 San Diego Book Award). She received APA's Award for Outstanding Lifetime Contributions to Psychology.

Frank Lloyd Wright and Modern Architecture

Tuesdays, April 21 – May 26

Time: 6–7:30 P.M. CT | **Cost:** \$75

Location:  Osher Online

Instructor: Jennifer Gray

Frank Lloyd Wright designed nearly 1,000 buildings and helped define modern architecture. This course explores highlights of his practice, from Prairie houses to Fallingwater and the Guggenheim Museum, alongside lesser-known projects like affordable housing and city planning. We'll examine how Wright's work reflected cultural shifts in technology, science and politics, offering a deeper understanding of his lasting influence on architecture and modern design.

Enrollment is limited to 13 participants.

This class is not recorded.

Jennifer Gray is vice president of the Taliesin Institute at the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation. Her research explores how modern architects used design to advance social change at the turn of the 20th century. She has curated major exhibitions, including *Frank Lloyd Wright at 150* at The Museum of Modern Art and *The Imperial Hotel at 100*, which toured Japan. Gray taught at Columbia, Cornell and MoMA and formerly served as curator of drawings and archives at Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library.





WEDNESDAYS

Nashville Native Orchids: Astonishing Science and Mysterious Folklore

Wednesdays, March 18 – April 22

Time: 10–11:30 A.M. CT | **Cost:** \$60

Location:  Second Presbyterian Church, 3511 Belmont Blvd.

Instructor: Soraya Cates Parr

Delve into the secret world of the orchid, both tropical and terrestrial, with a focus on the native orchids surrounding the city of Nashville. From romantic to sometimes chilling folklore stories to the bizarre ways in which orchids are pollinated, you will be transfixed into the hidden microsphere of the orchid plant. Ancient rituals, basic orchid biology, history, and surprising animal and bird pollinators are investigated with brilliant photography. Learn about the mystical beliefs and legends surrounding this complex plant from seed to senescence. Join us for an exciting presentation each week, where one to two of the following subjects will be covered with accompanying colorful photography and time allowed for discussion and questions: The Hidden Treasures of Nashville; Tropical or Terrestrial Orchids – What Are the Differences; Basic Orchid Science, including Pollination and Vectors; The History, Customs, Rituals and

Uses of Orchids: From Ancient Mesoamerica to the Present; Climate Change, Sad Exchange; The Ecology of Native Orchids; The Keys to the Native Orchid Genera; The Featured Native Orchids of Nashville, from Seed to Senescence; Authentic Folklore Stories of Native Orchids; Locating Nashville Native Orchids Throughout the Year; Conservation Principles and Notes; An Explanation of Scientific Taxonomy.

Enrollment is limited to 50 participants.
This class is not recorded.

Soraya Cates Parr is an experienced, enthusiastic presenter. As a professional plant and soil scientist, she has contributed her writing, speaking and photography talents to botanical magazines, radio interviews and appearances on local news and PBS-affiliated television shows.

She was Cheekwood Botanical Gardens' orchid and tropical horticulturist for many years. From there, she was mentored by Mrs. E.F. Siegerist (1925–2014), a Harvard Research Fellow. She has won awards for her writings and contributed at AOS (American Orchid Society) Midwest conferences.

Recently, her book, *Nashville Native Orchids: Astonishing Science and Mysterious Folklore* published by Vanderbilt University Press, was reviewed in the Smithsonian's North American Orchid Conservation Center newsletter and in the esteemed *Scientific Journal of the American Orchid Society* as well as *Chapter 16* (Tennessee Humanities).

Delving into Documentaries: How Do They Inspire and Persuade Us?

Wednesdays, March 18 – April 22

Time: 12–1:30 P.M. CT | **Cost:** \$60

Location:  Online via Zoom

Instructor: Sarah Childress

Documentary films are as creative, moving and carefully constructed as any Hollywood film. Arguably, they require even more skill, since they often unfold without a script, draw directly from real life as it happens, and aim to convey what those experiences mean. Film scholar Bill Nichols identified six approaches to documentary filmmaking, which will structure the course: expository, participatory, observational, performative, reflexive and poetic. Each class will begin with a brief introduction to one mode, examining how it develops characters, stories, experiences and arguments through distinctive techniques. We will observe these techniques in clips from some of the most influential documentaries in film history, then apply them to discussion of the week's assigned film.

Our film selections focus on recent works, including *All the Beauty and the Bloodshed* (Laura Poitras, 2022, Kanopy), *Dick Johnson Is Dead* (Kirsten Johnson, 2020, Netflix), *Porcelain War* (Brendan Bellomo and Slava Leontyev, 2024, PBS), *Life After* (Reid Davenport, 2025, PBS), *Backside* (Raúl O. Paz-Pastrana, 2025, TBD), and episodes of the upcoming BBC/PBS Nature series *Parenthood* (Jeff Wilson, 2026, PBS).

The course aims to deepen your understanding of how documentary filmmakers tell stories, re-create experiences, explore ideas, develop themes, inspire empathy and engage both intellect and emotion. No previous film analysis experience is required. The instructor will provide viewing guides, support discussion, strengthen analytical skills, and foster a learning environment that is kind, collaborative, open and dynamic.

This class is recorded.

Sarah Childress is the director of strategy and operations at Nashville PBS and helps independent producers secure national distribution for their films and series. She's taught film courses at Vanderbilt University, Bowdoin College, Belmont University and San Francisco State University; served as the first Nashville Film Festival education and engagement manager;

and produced films exhibited internationally. She serves on the board of the Belcourt Theatre and is a Frist Art Museum docent.

Tai Chi for Health, Balance and Relaxation

Wednesdays, March 18 – April 22

Time: 1–2:30 P.M. CT | **Cost:** \$60

Location:  Second Presbyterian Church, 3511 Belmont Blvd. **OR**

 Online via Zoom

Instructor: Peter Hodes

Tai Chi is an easy-to-learn routine that improves health, balance and relaxation. This low-impact exercise can easily be done by everyone including seniors, people with illnesses and injuries, and even small children. In fact, it is a great exercise for these types of people due to the extraordinary health benefits that result from continued efforts.

No special clothing or equipment is needed. Students can expect gentle movements with no sweating or straining. This course is appropriate for beginners or those with experience. We will learn about body alignment, gravity, motion and power. Students will practice deep breathing and strategies for relaxing and reducing anxiety. We'll have fun and enjoy getting healthy together.

Enrollment is limited to 50 in-person participants and 100 online participants. This class is recorded.

Peter Hodes has always been interested in martial arts and in Asian culture. After graduating from the University of Florida with a degree in Asian studies and studying abroad in Japan, he began practicing tai chi chuan in 1990 on a beach of Thailand. Beginning with a two-day workshop, he stayed for three additional weeks, training daily and learning the traditional Yang-style tai chi of Professor Cheng Man-Ching.

In 2017, he sold his company and, on a whim, began teaching tai chi classes in Nashville. The classes were an unexpected success and have continued to grow and expand since then. Now, he is a full-time tai chi teacher and a strong advocate for this amazing, healthy and relaxing activity. He is "old school" Nashville, having attended H.G. Hill Elementary School and graduated from University School of Nashville in 1985.



Bridge Basics I – An Introduction

Wednesdays, March 18 – April 22

Time: 1:30–3 P.M. CT | **Cost:** \$60

Location:  Second Presbyterian Church, 3511 Belmont Blvd.

Instructor: Janice Sardina

This course is the launch pad for your bridge experience! In the first class, you'll learn the mechanics of the game and much of the vocabulary, such as tricks, notrump, trump, declarer, dummy, opening lead, contract. You will play as declarer, defender or dummy. For the next three lessons, you'll discover how to analyze a bridge hand to find the best contract. You'll learn how to use declarer's ABCs to plan the play of the hand and to win more tricks as declarer. In the second half of each session, you will learn bidding based on Standard American 5-card Majors so you and your partner can reach your best contract. In the final two classes you will bid and play full hands to practice all the skills and techniques we studied in the first four lessons.

This class is not recorded.

Janice Sardina first learned to play bridge in 1979 when a group of friends started a monthly bridge group. Since then, she has achieved Life Master status, one of the highest honors the American Contract Bridge League awards. As an ACBL accredited bridge instructor, she enjoys teaching the fun game of bridge to new players and to those who are transitioning from social bridge to duplicate bridge. She is a member of the American Contract Bridge League and the American Bridge Teachers' Association.

Reading Shakespeare with Film 5 – Hamlet in Grief

Wednesdays, March 18 – April 22

Time: 4–5:30 P.M. CT | **Cost:** \$60

Location:  Online via Zoom

Instructor: Russ Heldman

This course will continue instructor Russ Heldman's exploration of the plays of William Shakespeare using film excerpts and text references with online access to the Folger Shakespeare Library. Part 5 will focus solely on the play Hamlet, with special emphasis on the topic of grief, common to all humanity, and the driving force behind Hamlet's thoughts, soliloquies, actions and inactions, as well as other characters such as Ophelia, Laertes and Fortinbras. Hamlet describes his grief by telling his mother, Gertrude, "I have that within which passeth show –." This class will explore specific scenes from the play where the intense feeling of sorrow and pain from loss of a loved one and the outward expression of such grief are challenged by the circumstances of the plot. Heldman is expected to be joined by special guest, actor and teacher Jacob Fishel, who has life experience performing in Shakespeare's plays and other quality works. Fishel previously aided Heldman in the class conversation of *The Winter's Tale*. Students will be asked to read *Hamlet* and be willing to discuss.

Enrollment is limited to 200 participants.
This class is recorded.

Russ Heldman has been a speaker and presenter of William Shakespeare by text and film to adults in the Middle Tennessee area since graduating from Vanderbilt University with a master of liberal arts and science in 2000. He also earned a 1979 B.A. and 1982 J.D. from Vanderbilt University. In addition to Reading Shakespeare with Film, Heldman has developed other popular courses using works of Shakespeare and film to explore certain topics and characters and to shed light on the human condition: Shakespeare and Faith, Shakespeare and Lent: Ashes to Resurrection, Shakespeare and the Law, Shakespeare and the Weight of the Crown, and Shakespeare and Bob Dylan.



Siberia: Russia's Frozen Wasteland or Economic Heartland?

Wednesdays, April 1–May 6

Time: 12–1:30 P.M. CT | **Cost:** \$75

Location:  Osher Online

Instructor: Asya Pereltsvaig

Siberia covers three quarters of Russia's territory but is home to only a quarter of its population. Yet its role in shaping Russia as a vast and wealthy empire is profound. In this course, we will explore Siberia's economic significance, indigenous cultures and history as a penal colony, along with its importance for climate change, environmental issues and Russian-Chinese relations. We will also consider Siberia's role in both the rise and possible fragmentation of Russia.

Enrollment is limited to 13 participants.

This class is not recorded.

Asya Pereltsvaig earned a degree in English and history from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and a Ph.D. in linguistics from McGill University. She taught at Yale and Stanford and has been teaching in lifelong education programs since 2010. Her expertise is in language and history, and the relationship between them. Her most recent book, *Languages of the World: An Introduction* (fourth edition, 2023), was published by Cambridge University Press. She is a popular instructor for several OLLI programs around the country and was the faculty host for the OLLI trip to the Baltic countries and St. Petersburg in July 2017.

The Lost Generation

Wednesdays, April 15–May 20

Time: 2–3:30 P.M. CT | **Cost:** \$75

Location:  Osher Online

Instructor: Ferdâ Asya

This course will examine the cultural transformations in thinking and living that reshaped America and Western Europe between World War I and the Great Depression. Known as the Roaring Twenties, the Jazz Age, and the Lost Generation, this period redefined values and norms. We will explore the vibrant world of 1920s Paris through F. Scott Fitzgerald's *Babylon Revisited* and *Bernice Bobs Her Hair*, Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* and Gertrude Stein's *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, considering the legacy of the era.

Enrollment is limited to 13 participants.

This class is not recorded.

Ferdâ Asya is a professor of English and has taught at universities worldwide and lived in Africa, Asia, Europe, North America and the Middle East. Specializing in 19th–20th century American literature with a focus on Edith Wharton, her interests include international literature and American expatriate writing in Europe. She has published widely on authors from Chinua Achebe to Gertrude Stein and edited *American Writers in Paris: Then and Now* (2025), *Teaching Edith Wharton's Major Novels and Short Fiction* (2021), and *American Writers in Europe* (2013).

Music: Controversies and Curiosities

Wednesdays, April 15–May 20

Time: 4–5:30 P.M. CT | **Cost:** \$75

Location:  Osher Online

Instructor: Emanuel Abramovits

Music has long provoked debate, from Beethoven and Stravinsky's bold innovations to Broadway works like *Annie Get Your Gun* and *South Pacific*, now revisited through modern concerns about race, consent and gender. Is political correctness enriching art or erasing cultural heritage? We will also examine plagiarism and borrowing in pop and film music, with cases involving The Beatles, Pink Floyd, and Peter Frampton. This course blends audiovisuals, anecdotes and humor to explore music's most controversial moments.

Enrollment is limited to 13 participants.
This class is not recorded.

Emanuel Abramovits is a mechanical engineer and has also been a concert promoter for over two decades. He is directly involved in events by international artists like Itzhak Perlman, Gustavo Dudamel, Sarah Brightman, Roger Hodgson, ASIA, Journey, Kenny G., and many more. Abramovits has designed and staged many original orchestral events, including an Event of the Year winner and several world premieres. He served as the cultural director at Union Israelita De Caracas from 2008 to 2019, releasing books and organizing film cycles, concerts and art exhibits. He consistently teaches online and in-person across the U.S.

THURSDAYS

How to Write a Memoir

Thursdays, March 12–April 30

Time: 2–3:30 P.M. CT | **Cost:** \$100

Location:  Online via Zoom

Instructor: Carole Webb Moore-Slater

This eight-week course focuses on the crafting of a short memoir that centers on a specific event or time in the author's life. This creative nonfiction series provides practical guidance to inspire participants to write a personal or family memoir one story at a time. Conducted over Zoom, this interactive and supportive class includes writing exercises during class and at home while encouraging participants to share their insights. The first five classes provide instruction on writing techniques and crafting personal stories before transitioning to a writers' group format for the last three sessions. Each student is encouraged to complete a short memoir to share in classes six, seven and eight, where the group will offer constructive feedback. Completing a short memoir is an achievable and meaningful accomplishment and sharing it with friends or family could be the best gift you ever give.

Enrollment is limited to 20 participants.
This class is recorded.

Carole Webb Moore-Slater is an author, writing instructor and community speaker. She has published several books, *including Letters from the Heart 1943–1946* and a children's book called *Dana Doesn't Like Guns Anymore*. She has written articles for various local, state and national magazines. With a strong passion for memoir writing, she has been teaching classes regularly since 2019 for OLLI at Vanderbilt. She has a background in special education and social work, along with a personal interest in writing. Before she retired, she held leadership roles in the disability field, most recently at the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center's University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research and Service.



Beginner Ukulele

Thursdays, March 19 – April 23

Time: 10–11:15 A.M. CT | **Cost:** \$60

Location:  Second Presbyterian Church, 3511 Belmont Blvd.

Instructor: Theresa Romack

This six-week course is designed to introduce the group to the ukulele and group singing. Participants will learn the basics of tuning, strumming, chords and, of course, a few songs. Each week builds on the previous one, with ample time for practice and review. *Ukuleles will be provided for all participants.*

Enrollment is limited to 20 participants.

This class is not recorded.

Theresa Romack graduated from Miami University of Ohio with a bachelor's degree in zoology and a minor in piano performance. She then studied contemporary writing and production and vocal performance on a talent scholarship at Berklee College of Music. Her passion for education started when she was given 10 private piano lessons during her junior year of high school. She has completed professional development courses in education, music and instruction. She has experience working with students of all ages and in various capacities, as well as private and group piano, voice, guitar and ukulele instruction. From 2021 to 2023, she taught general music, bucket drumming and ukulele at LEAD Cameron Middle School in Nashville.

Intermediate Ukulele

Thursdays, March 19 – April 23

Time: 11:45 A.M. – 1 P.M. CT | **Cost:** \$60

Location:  Second Presbyterian Church, 3511 Belmont Blvd.

Instructor: Theresa Romack

This six-week course is designed for players who already have basic ukulele skills and their own instrument. Participants will expand their chord vocabulary, explore new strumming and picking patterns, and build confidence playing in different keys and styles. Emphasis will be placed on group playing and singing, with more challenging songs introduced each week. Students should be comfortable with fundamental chords and strumming before enrolling. *You must have your own instrument to enroll.*

Enrollment is limited to 20 participants.

This class is not recorded.

Theresa Romack graduated from Miami University of Ohio with a bachelor's degree in zoology and a minor in piano performance. She then studied contemporary writing and production and vocal performance on a talent scholarship at Berklee College of Music. Her passion for education started when she was given 10 private piano lessons during her junior year of high school. She has completed professional development courses in education, music and instruction. She has experience working with students of all ages and in various capacities, as well as private and group piano, voice, guitar and ukulele instruction. From 2021 to 2023, she taught general music, bucket drumming and ukulele at LEAD Cameron Middle School in Nashville.





Gentle Yoga

Thursdays, March 19 – April 23

Time: 12–1:30 P.M. CT | **Cost:** \$60

Location: Second Presbyterian Church, 3511 Belmont Blvd.

Instructor: Staci Smith

This gentle yoga class is designed to promote flexibility, balance and mindfulness. Each class will feature slow, flowing movements and gentle stretches suitable for all levels.

Enrollment is limited to 40 participants.
This class is not recorded.

Staci Smith is a certified yoga teacher with more than five years of teaching experience and 25 years of personal practice. She is dedicated to creating a welcoming, inclusive and accessible environment in each class, encouraging students of all levels to explore their practice and cultivate mindfulness. She offers modifications to ensure everyone feels comfortable and empowered on their journey. Outside of teaching, she enjoys hiking, photography, rock hunting and gardening. She wholeheartedly believes that yoga is a way of life that fosters connection, unconditional love and inner peace.

Telling Your Story: A Deep Dive into Memoir Writing

Thursdays, March 19 – May 7

Time: 11–12:30 P.M. CT | **Cost:** \$100

Location: Second Presbyterian Church, 3511 Belmont Blvd.

Instructor: Miriam Mimms

“The past is never dead. It’s not even past.”

— William Faulkner

Everyone has a story to tell about their past. Writing our personal stories helps us make sense of that past and allows us to share meaningful memories with loved ones. If you’re ready to tell yours—even if only to yourself—this introduction to memoir writing may be the nudge you need.

In this generative, eight-week course, we will assemble a tool kit of practical techniques for beginning and more practiced writers. We’ll explore works of notable memoirists, discuss elements that can enliven personal storytelling and develop strategies to strengthen the voice of our lived experiences. Topics include authenticity, ethics, the use of AI and publishing. Participants will aim to complete a chapter-length memoir, sharing prompted writings and workshopping their piece in a supportive setting. Reading and writing assignments are strongly encouraged but optional. A laptop or notebook is needed.

Enrollment is limited to 20 participants.
This class is not recorded.

Miriam Mimms is a writer, memoirist, poet and editor. Her writing has been published in print, her poetry received The Academy of American Poets Prize at Vanderbilt Honorable Mention, and the Sewanee Writers’ Conference awarded her a residency in fiction writing. She earned the master of liberal arts and science from Vanderbilt University with dual concentrations in creative writing and creative arts, as well as a certificate in college teaching from the Vanderbilt Center for Teaching. A seasoned workshop leader, her approach to facilitating writing groups is supportive, encouraging and collaborative. When not working on her latest writing project, she can be found enhancing green space and sustainability initiatives as a commissioner of beautification and environment for the city of Nashville.



JFK's Quest for Peace: Lessons for Turbulent Times

Thursdays, April 2 – May 7

Time: 12–1:30 p.m. CT | **Cost:** \$75

Location:  Osher Online

Instructor: Charles Blum

Throughout his 1,000-day presidency, John Kennedy pursued peace through a broad spectrum of initiatives. He saw a connection between learning and leadership and sought to use military deterrence, diplomacy and soft power in novel ways. In this course, we will explore how his character and life experiences were the origins of those

efforts. We will evaluate his powers of persuasion by listening to key speeches, and we will assess his successes and failures and their relevance to today's world.

Enrollment is limited to 13 participants.
This class is not recorded.

Charles Blum served as a U.S. diplomat and trade policy official for 17 years before launching a consulting firm that operated in Washington, D.C., and Central Europe. He has developed more than four dozen courses focusing on global politics, war and peace, and international cooperation. He earned degrees in history from Eastern University and in international relations from the University of Pennsylvania.



FRIDAYS

OLLI Steel Drum – Beginner

Fridays, March 6 – April 24
(no class on Friday, March 13)

Time: 9:30–10:45 A.M. CT | **Cost:** \$100

Location:  W.O. Smith Music School, 1125 8th Ave. S.

Instructor: Jordan Morrison

This seven-week class will allow participants to dive into the music of the Caribbean. In this hands-on experience, participants will play as a member in the steel band, explore the rich history of the instrument, develop proper playing technique, learn a song, study a bit about music notation and more. The culture and steelpan art form will be a focal point and will require some short and simple “homework” assignments like watching videos, listening to specific music, etc. Regular attendance is key to the success of the steel band and the individual. Everyone in the band plays an important role. Please make every effort to attend each class. This will be a fun, informative and laid-back musical experience that should leave participants excited to learn and play more! Recommendations for enrollment: no musical experience needed but helpful; able to stand for 60–75 minutes; reasonable mobility of fingers, wrists and arms; willingness to practice before class recommended if needed. There may be a concert component with this course.

Enrollment is limited to 19 participants.
This class is not recorded.

AI for Regular People

Thursdays, April 2 – May 7

Time: 6–7:30 P.M. CT | **Cost:** \$75

Location:  Osher Online

Instructors: Hod Lipson and Melba Kurman

Back by popular demand, this updated course offers a clear, engaging introduction to artificial intelligence (AI) and how it's rapidly transforming our world. From self-driving cars to chatbots and precision medicine, we will explore how AI works, where it's headed and what it means for society. No tech experience needed—just curiosity! With fresh examples and timely updates, participants will gain a solid understanding of the opportunities and challenges AI presents today.

Enrollment is limited to 13 participants.

This class is not recorded.

This course is co-taught by **Hod Lipson**, professor of engineering and data science at Columbia University, and **Melba Kurman**, author and technology analyst. Lipson directs Columbia's Creative Machines Lab, where his team builds artificially intelligent robots that can design, create and express emotion. One of the world's most-cited academic roboticists, his work has been featured in media outlets such as *The New York Times*, NPR, TED and *Quanta*. Melba Kurman has held roles at Microsoft, Cornell University and several tech startups. She writes about emerging technologies and their societal impact. Together, they co-authored *Driverless and Fabricated: The New World of 3D Printing* and are frequent speakers on AI and innovation. They divide their time between New York City and the Berkshires.

Jordan Morrison has a deep passion for music education, percussion and composition. He has focused his efforts on helping to propel the steelpan art form forward. His recent pan-centric work has resulted in his appointment to the National Society of Steel Band Educators Education Committee, having a professional article published in *The Steel Times*, having steel band compositions highlighted at national conferences, steelpan/steel band compositions being selected for inclusion on the Prescribed Music List, and publishing more than 100 works for steelpan/steel band through multiple publishers. He serves as the music education director at W.O. Smith Music School in Nashville, where he directs the school's steel bands, mentors teachers and wears many other hats. Learn more at jordanmorrisonmusic.com.

OLLI Steel Drum – Intermediate

Fridays, March 6 – April 24

(no class on Friday, March 13)

Time: 11 A.M.–12:15 P.M. CT | | **Cost:** \$100

Location:  W.O. Smith Music School, 1125 8th Ave. S.

Instructor: Jordan Morrison

For those who left Steel Drum Band Beginner wanting to learn and play more, this band will take the challenge up a notch. In this course, participants will refine their technique, work on slightly more advanced music, dive further into some music notation, explore more about the culture surrounding these instruments and more. Regular attendance is key to the success of the steel band and the individual. Everyone in the band plays an important role. Please make every effort to attend each class. This will be a fun, informative and laid-back musical experience that should provide the outlet needed for those who want more after the basics! Recommendations for enrollment: prerequisite of the beginner level is required unless instructor permission is granted through invitation or a short audition; reading music is helpful but not essential; able to stand for 60–75 minutes; reasonable mobility of fingers, wrists and arms; willingness to practice before class recommended if needed. There may be a concert component with this course.

Enrollment is limited to 19 participants.

This class is not recorded.

Jordan Morrison has a deep passion for music education, percussion and composition. He has focused his efforts on helping to propel the steelpan art form forward. His recent pan-centric work has resulted in his appointment to the National Society of Steel Band Educators Education Committee, having a professional article published in *The Steel Times*, having steel band compositions highlighted at national conferences, steelpan/steel band compositions being selected for inclusion on the Prescribed Music List, and publishing more than 100 works for steelpan/steel band through multiple publishers. He serves as the music education director at W.O. Smith Music School in Nashville, where he directs the school's steel bands, mentors teachers and wears many other hats. Learn more at jordanmorrisonmusic.com.

OLLI Steel Drum – Advanced

Fridays, March 6 – April 24

(no class on Friday, March 13)

Time: 12:30–1:45 P.M. CT | | **Cost:** \$100

Location:  W.O. Smith Music School, 1125 8th Ave. S.

Instructor: Jordan Morrison

For those who have made their way through the Beginner and Intermediate courses, this band will seek to challenge participants to whatever level they aspire to. We will dive into more difficult music, more music notation, more advanced terminology, deeper understanding of the culture of pan, more advanced playing techniques, etc. Regular attendance is key to the success of the steel band and the individual. Everyone in the band plays an important role. Please make every effort to attend each class. This will be a fun, informative and challenging musical experience that should provide the outlet needed for those who want to push themselves on their pans! Recommendations for enrollment: prerequisite of the beginner and intermediate level is required unless instructor permission is granted through invitation or a short audition; reading music is helpful but not essential; able to stand for 60–75 minutes; reasonable mobility of fingers, wrists and arms; willingness to practice before class recommended if needed. There may be a concert component with this course.

Enrollment is limited to 19 participants.

This class is not recorded.

Jordan Morrison has a deep passion for music education, percussion and composition. He has focused his efforts on helping to propel the steelpan art form forward. His recent pan-centric work has resulted in his appointment to the National Society of Steel Band Educators Education Committee, having a professional article published in *The Steel Times*, having steel band compositions highlighted at national conferences, steelpan/steel band compositions being selected for inclusion on the Prescribed Music List, and publishing more than 100 works for steelpan/steel band through multiple publishers. He serves as the music education director at W.O. Smith Music School in Nashville, where he directs the school's steel bands, mentors teachers and wears many other hats. Learn more at jordanmorrisonmusic.com.

Did you know?

Course fees only cover *some* of our operating expenses.



Give to

OLLI at Vanderbilt

Donate online at
vanderbilt.edu/olli/ways-to-give

Gifts to OLLI's Annual Fund support organizational operations and other areas of need. Your donation is 100% tax deductible and your contribution is truly appreciated.

California Uncovered: A Journey Through Time, Place and Identity

Fridays, April 10 – May 15

Time: 2–3:30 P.M. CT | **Cost:** \$75

Location:  Osher Online

Instructor: Anthony Antonucci

California is more than a state—it is an idea, a dream and a contradiction. In this course, we will journey from its earliest Indigenous cultures through Spanish, Mexican and American rule, exploring missions, the Gold Rush, the railroad, Hollywood and Silicon Valley. We will challenge myths, highlight overlooked voices, and examine how migration, innovation and cultural change

shaped the Golden State. We will discover what it has meant, and still means, to be Californian.

**Enrollment is limited to 13 participants.
This class is not recorded.**

Anthony Antonucci is a historian whose teaching and scholarship explore the intersections of foreign relations, nationalism, race and immigration policy in U.S. history since 1750. A Fulbright fellow, Antonucci has also held research appointments at the Massachusetts Historical Society, the American Antiquarian Society and the University of Connecticut Humanities Institute. He teaches courses in U.S., world and California history, as well as African American, Latinx and women's studies at colleges across Southern California, including Cal Poly Pomona, the University of La Verne, and Citrus College.

SATURDAYS

Writing the Personal Essay: Finding Your Story

Saturdays, April 18 – May 23

Time: 1–2:30 P.M. CT | **Cost:** \$75

Location:  Osher Online

Instructor: Lisa Stolley

The personal essay, one of the oldest forms of creative nonfiction, blends storytelling, reflection and analysis to give voice to lived experience. In this course, we will explore the personal essay as both art and self-expression. Through readings, discussion, and writing exercises, we will study elements such as narrative arc, scene-setting and reflection.

We will draft our own essays, discovering how this enduring form helps us find our voices and tell our stories with clarity.

Enrollment is limited to 13 participants.
This class is not recorded.

Lisa Stolley is a professor of English at the University of Illinois Chicago and Northwestern University and a published fiction author. Her short stories have appeared in numerous literary journals, earning an Illinois Arts Council Award, a Pushcart Prize nomination, and first prizes from the *Washington Review* and *Georgia State Review*. Her nonfiction has been published in Today's *Chicago Woman* and *Chicago Reader*. Stolley teaches scientific writing at UIC's School of Public Health and is a legal writer for immigration attorneys.



Spring 2026 Registration Form

FOR MAIL ONLY

Online Registration is fast and the best way to ensure your spot in class. Registration deadline is March 1, 2026. Form and payment must be received by this date.

**OLLI at Vanderbilt
PMB 407760
2301 Vanderbilt Place
Nashville, TN 37240**

Name _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone _____ Home Cell

It is important that you provide us with an email address to receive course updates.

Email address _____

Returning Member New Member: If new member, referred by _____

☛ Select the courses you'd like to register for in the left column.

Register	Course	Cost
<input type="checkbox"/>	Meditating and Relating: You, Me, Us and Our Parts	\$60
<input type="checkbox"/>	Great Decisions 2026	\$60
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ghosts in the White House: The People Behind Presidential Speeches	\$75
<input type="checkbox"/>	OLLI Chorale	\$70
<input type="checkbox"/>	Let's Mahjong! A Six-Week Beginner Course	\$80
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mahjong 102: Playing with Strategy and Confidence	\$60
<input type="checkbox"/>	Preventers of Futures: Ray Bradbury and Other Insightful Writers of Speculative Fiction	\$60
<input type="checkbox"/>	An Astronomy Sampler	\$60
<input type="checkbox"/>	The Scopes Monkey Trial: Then and Now	\$75
<input type="checkbox"/>	Place, Memory and Environmental Psychology	\$75
<input type="checkbox"/>	From Leo XIII to Leo XIV: History of 20th and 21st Century Popes	\$75
<input type="checkbox"/>	Frank Lloyd Wright and Modern Architecture	\$75
<input type="checkbox"/>	Nashville Native Orchids: Astonishing Science and Mysterious Folklore	\$60
<input type="checkbox"/>	Delving into Documentaries: How Do They Inspire and Persuade Us?	\$60
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tai Chi for Health, Balance and Relaxation	\$60
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bridge Basics I – An Introduction	\$60
<input type="checkbox"/>	Reading Shakespeare with Film 5 – Hamlet in Grief	\$60
<input type="checkbox"/>	Siberia: Russia's Frozen Wasteland or Economic Heartland?	\$75

Continued on the next page.

Register	Course	Cost
<input type="checkbox"/>	The Lost Generation	\$75
<input type="checkbox"/>	Music: Controversies and Curiosities	\$75
<input type="checkbox"/>	How to Write a Memoir	\$100
<input type="checkbox"/>	Beginner Ukulele	\$60
<input type="checkbox"/>	Intermediate Ukulele	\$60
<input type="checkbox"/>	Gentle Yoga	\$60
<input type="checkbox"/>	Telling Your Story: A Deep Dive into Memoir Writing	\$100
<input type="checkbox"/>	JFK's Quest for Peace: Lessons for Turbulent Times	\$75
<input type="checkbox"/>	AI for Regular People	\$75
<input type="checkbox"/>	OLLI Steel Drum – Beginner	\$100
<input type="checkbox"/>	OLLI Steel Drum – Intermediate	\$100
<input type="checkbox"/>	OLLI Steel Drum – Advanced	\$100
<input type="checkbox"/>	California Uncovered: A Journey Through Time, Place and Identity	\$75
<input type="checkbox"/>	Writing the Personal Essay: Finding Your Story	\$75

TOTAL: \$ _____



Spring 2026 Registration

Beyond the Classroom

SHARED INTEREST GROUPS

Looking for new ways to engage with your OLLI peers? Consider joining one of our Shared Interest Groups! Visit vanderbilt.edu/olli to learn how.



SPECIAL EVENTS

Looking for exciting events around town to enjoy with OLLI peers? Please make sure you are receiving our monthly newsletter and pay close to attention to our website and emails. Visit vanderbilt.edu/olli to subscribe.

Policies and Procedures

CLASS CANCELLATION POLICY

On rare occasions, we are forced to cancel classes for unforeseen circumstances. Should this occur, we will post a notice on our website and Facebook page, and emails will be sent to enrolled members. For this reason, it is **EXTREMELY IMPORTANT** for all students to provide us with an up-to-date email address and to check your email on a regular basis. OLLI programs are canceled when Davidson County Public Schools are closed to students because of adverse weather. Davidson County Public Schools' delays in opening do not affect OLLI's schedule. If Davidson County schools close early due to impending weather, we typically do not cancel classes, but please look for an email from our office under those circumstances. Zoom courses/lectures may be able to continue despite adverse weather, and decisions on Zoom courses/lectures will be made on a case-by-case basis; look for an email from the OLLI office on the day of the lecture/class.

NAME BADGES – NEW

A permanent name badge is now made available to all members who are enrolled for in-person activities, including courses, SIGs, special events, etc. We ask that you wear your name badge at **ALL OLLI EVENTS**. We will provide the first name badge for free. If you lose or misplace your name badge, you can receive a new one for a donation of \$25. Wearing your name badge is required, and classroom assistants, SIG leaders and other volunteers will be checking for them. Please make sure your name badge is visible when entering class or joining an activity.

PHOTO WAIVER

By registering for an OLLI program either online, over the phone or in person, participants give permission to Vanderbilt University to take and publish photographs, video, audio or other impressions of their image or voice (collectively “photographs”). Participants will not be compensated for any photographs or other likeness that may be used in this capacity. To opt out of accepting the photo waiver, email OsherVU@vanderbilt.edu.

COST STRUCTURE

Courses are individually priced. Costs are listed in the course descriptions and on the registration page of this catalog. They will also be listed online as you register for courses. There will be no discounts, gift cards or scholarships for Osher Online courses.

GIFT CERTIFICATES

Give the gift of learning! Gift certificates make great presents for birthdays, holidays or other special events. Email OsherVU@vanderbilt.edu for more information.

REFUND POLICY

Due to the low cost at which these courses are offered and the additional cost it would take to process a refund, no refunds are given to those who wish to withdraw. Members can transfer into another course (in the same term, in the same price tier) on a space-available basis or receive credit to apply to the cost of a future course.

SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

OLLI is pleased to provide financial assistance for members who may be otherwise unable to take part in our OLLI community.

CODE OF CONDUCT

OLLI at Vanderbilt's goal is to create environments that maximize the learning experience for all members. Many of our programs offer a forum for the lively and sometimes passionate exchange of views. To that end, our learning community follows principles of courtesy and mutual respect that promote reasoned discourse and intellectual honesty. Opposing viewpoints are honored and appreciated to preserve the dignity of others. Violations may include, but are not limited to, denigrating others' views or opinions, threatening behaviors, offensive or abusive language, disruptive classroom conduct, sexual harassment or discrimination, and monopolizing discussions. Personal attacks will not be tolerated.

Members who do not or cannot adhere to these principles may be removed from class and/or activities and denied the privilege of future participation.

ADDITIONAL POLICIES

By registering for a course, lecture, study trip or event, participants agree to hold Vanderbilt University and its employees harmless in the event of personal injuries, accidents, property damage, delays, and losses of any kind.

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