



# Renaissance Institute



NOTRE DAME OF MARYLAND UNIVERSITY

## Fall 2026

### Lifelong Learning



April 30, 2026

Greetings!

Thank you for your interest in the Renaissance Institute at Notre Dame of Maryland University. For nearly 40 years, Renaissance has provided intriguing learning opportunities for lifelong learners in and around Baltimore. We are proud of the wonderful courses offered each semester as well as the engaging social community provided to Renaissance members year-round.

This fall, we are eager to share the vast array of educational, cultural, and social opportunities available to Renaissance members with you. In this catalog, you will find a number of interesting courses that address diverse topics like history, music, dance, marketing, literature, science, and so much more. And you will see we have many on-campus opportunities throughout the semester as well as many courses provided online.

Notre Dame of Maryland University continues to provide a warm and welcoming home for Renaissance, and members benefit from access to a variety of resources on campus including a world-class library and cultural and artistic activities throughout the school year. We are grateful for the university's continued support and commitment to enriching the lives of our members.

We look forward to welcoming you to the Renaissance community!

Sincerely,

*Barbara*

Barbara Ellen Reynolds  
Director, The Renaissance Institute  
Notre Dame of Maryland University

Explore.Dream.Discover.

Trying something new can take you to places you've never been. Pursue your painting or history passion. Join a writing workshop. Discover new developments in science and technology. Join Renaissance today!

The Renaissance Institute keeps the minds, bodies, and spirits of adults age 50+ inspired and engaged each year. Renaissance was founded in 1989, and the program serves over 300 members each year.

## **RENAISSANCE INSTITUTE MEMBERSHIP**

The Renaissance Institute offers two semesters of non-credit courses, many of which are designed and led by the members themselves, supplemented by excellent outside instructors. As a member, you may take as many classes as you wish from our varied catalog of offerings and, when ready, share your acquired knowledge by teaching courses on subjects you are passionate about. As you will see on the following pages, course topics include public affairs, philosophy, art, languages, qigong, film, computers, yoga, improv and acting, and more.

We also offer member-sponsored activities and travel opportunities. Over the years, members have traveled to Costa Rica, the Canadian Maritimes, the Grand Tetons, and more. There are a variety of clubs and committees that work together to make Renaissance a unique experience each year.

## **RENAISSANCE INSTITUTE MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS**

Renaissance Institute membership benefits include:

- Unlimited course enrollment each semester
- Member-sponsored social events during semester breaks
- Free parking on Notre Dame's campus
- Access to the Notre Dame/Loyola library, dining hall, and fitness center
- Notre Dame student identification card that can be used for student discounts
- Notre Dame student email that can be used for Amazon Prime student discount
- Free download of Microsoft Office 365 with Notre Dame student email

## **RENAISSANCE INSTITUTE MEMBERSHIP WEBSITE**

For more information on Renaissance Institute clubs, committees, and leadership, please check out <https://renmember.com>.

**MEMBERSHIP COST:** \$280 for Fall 2026

**COURSE DATES AND TIMES:** Check out the course details on the following pages. Dates and times for on campus and online courses are provided below.

**MORE INFORMATION:** Contact us at 410-532-5186, or [renaissance@ndm.edu](mailto:renaissance@ndm.edu).

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**Tuesday**

**First 6 Week Classes**

**Sep 15 – Oct 20**

**9:15 AM – 10:30 AM**

**01. Shakespeare, A Fresh Look: Othello (Limit 25)**

**Campus**

**Instructor: George Kessler**

The issues in Othello—jealousy, race, manipulation, deceptive appearances, and more—remain relevant more than four centuries since the play was written. The power of jealousy in contrast to the power of love (shout out to Huey Lewis and the News) is a propulsive force in this play. We will explore through a variety of formats including reading aloud, discussion, film clips, and a skosh of lecture. No advanced reading or prior knowledge of the play is required. Books will be provided.

*Emerging from the mean streets of Baltimore, George Kessler achieved a Baltimore City Public Schools diploma. After 45 years of teaching in the city, he is striving to maintain the barest thread of dignity.*

**02. The 1970s**

**Campus**

**Instructor: Ed Berkowitz**

What was it like to live in America during the 1970s? How did the events of that decade affect our lives? This course will seek to answer those questions, using a lecture and discussion format. There are no prerequisites or required reading.

*Ed Berkowitz lives in Baltimore and taught history at George Washington University for many years. More recently, he has given classes on political and cultural history at the Renaissance Institute.*

**03. Archaeology: Introduction to the World's Greatest Sites, Great Courses – Part 1**

**Campus**

**Instructor: John Meredith**

This course will be an introduction to archaeology that provides answers to the questions: How do archaeologists find ancient sites? What happens during an actual excavation? How do we know how old something is? This course will consist of a series of 30-minute videos presented by Dr. Eric H. Cline, the Director of the George Washington University Capitol Archaeological Group. We will show two videos per class from the Great Courses, and there will be opportunity for discussion. Part 1 will discuss the origins of modern archaeology, and will cover such sites as Pompei, Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Israel. Part 2 will continue with studies of Greece, Syria, China, and North America. Both parts can be taken independently.

*John Meredith is a retired dentist and has been a member of the Renaissance Institute since 2015. He has had a lifelong interest in history and has taught courses in Civil War history, music, and science.*

Tuesday Classes (9/15-10/20, First 6 Weeks)

#### 04. Topics in Medicine #3 - Part 1

**Campus**

**Instructor: Bruce Rosenberg**

In this course, we will discuss various topics in medicine including pandemics past and present, comparison of health care systems in different countries, as well as mainstream clinical topics like endocrine disorders, deep venous thrombosis/pulmonary embolus, etc.

*Bruce Rosenberg attended undergraduate at Washington University in St. Louis in 1971-1975, and medical school at the University of Maryland in 1975-1979. He had his medical residency at University of Maryland Hospital in 1979-1982 and was Chief Resident at GBMC in 1982-1983. Bruce entered the private practice of internal medicine for 44 years and retired in 2023.*

#### 05. Autumn in Ink and Watercolor – Part 1

**Zoom**

**Instructor: Alina Kurbiel**

This course will explore the beauty of autumn using ink and watercolor. Students will work on different seasonal paintings based on photo references, combining expressive ink line with transparent watercolor washes. Subjects include leaves, trees, and autumn landscapes. Emphasis will be placed on observation, composition, and color harmony. Through demonstrations and guided instruction, students will develop technical skills, confidence, and personal expression. This course is suitable for beginners and intermediate students. **Students must purchase watercolor appropriate pens, paper, and paint; a detailed supply list will be provided to registrants.**

*Alina Kurbiel is a signature artist of the Baltimore Watercolor Society. Born in Silesia, Poland, she earned her master's degree before transitioning from a successful technology career in Maryland to traditional art. She specializes in watercolor, ink, and pencil. Her paintings are held in private collections, and she is known for her warm, encouraging teaching style that inspires artistic confidence and growth.*

Tuesday Classes (9/15-10/20, First 6 Weeks)

## **06. Relax and Reset with Qigong! – Part 1**

**Zoom**

**Instructor: Pamela Tanton**

In this class, you will learn a sequence of movements that build on each other as the semester progresses. After a few classes, you will have learned an entire sequence to practice over and over so that you can really get comfortable with the movements. The gentle, flowing movements of qigong stimulate the energy flow in your body, and deep breathing creates a feeling of relaxation. Qigong can help with balance, it gives you lots of nice stretching, and it can relieve stress. It's an ancient Chinese internal healing art. We will perform standing and seated movements; and performing all movements while seated is always an option.

*Pamela Tanton has studied with a Chinese qigong master since 2002, and she started teaching in 2004. She enjoys teaching people of all ages and abilities. It's important to her that her classes focus on enjoyment while learning. And she offers suggestions for ways to adapt the movements for those who may benefit from adjustments.*

## **07. Memory Pictures – Part 1 (Limit 16)**

**Zoom**

**Instructors: Peter Whedbee and Helga Penner**

In this course, members will write on self-selected topics, including non-fiction and poetry models, and read their submissions to the class. Class members will respond in a casual and conversational format. There is no requirement to submit writings, and beginner writers are welcome.

*Peter Whedbee has a BS in Applied IT from the University of Baltimore and has been in RI Prose, Poetry, and Memory Pictures since 2020.*

*Helga Penner has a BA in English from Western Maryland College (now McDaniel College) and an MA in contemporary communication from Notre Dame of Maryland University. She has participated in RI classes including Memory Pictures since 2022.*

## **08. Exploration of Chinese Ethnic Groups – Part 1**

**Zoom**

**Instructor: Eugene Geinzer**

This study of the ethnic groups of China will explore: (1) The Chinese concept of ethnicity; (2) A cursory survey of the 55 officially recognized minorities; (3) How the Beijing Center for Chinese Studies understood its mission to study the ethnic groups; (4) The impact of the largest ethnic group, the HAN, which is 93% of the nation; and (5) A deeper study of approximately 12 of the 55 "minority peoples."

*Eugene Geinzer, SJ devoted 12 years to teach in China. Each year he undertook four major trips lasting five to 15 days to visit the various peoples. He and his students would do advanced study to encounter the villagers, explore their habitat, share their home-cooked meals, learn their dances, acquaint themselves with the people's crafts, and sleep in their homes.*

**11:00 AM – 12:15 PM**

**09. Beyond the Veil: Humanity, Immortality, and the Final Horizon – Part 1**

**Campus**

**Instructor: Brendan Dowling**

This course will explore humanity's relationship with mortality and the dream of immortality. We will discuss the questions that arise at the intersection of mortality, meaning, and the veiled margins of human existence. We will also discuss how cultures and religions have grappled with death, the dream of transcending death, and what lies beyond. This quest will serve as a mirror that reveals what we value most: The fragile beauty of a finite life. The class format will include lectures, Power Point presentations, video clips, and group conversation.

*Having recently retired from teaching religious studies at the high school level for 45 years, Brendan Dowling is excited to continue learning. He loves discussing the questions that intrigue us all: Who are we and what is our destiny? He can think of no better place to continue exploring these questions than in a classroom setting of inquisitive people in the Renaissance Institute.*

**10. The Mysterious Etruscans, Great Courses – Part 1 (Limit 30)**

**Campus**

**Instructor: Armand Pulcinella**

This course will be a Great Courses lecture series on the Etruscans, people who pre-date the Roman Empire, lived alongside, and were assimilated by the Empire. We will view two 30-minute lectures per class, with time for questions and additional researched content as needed. Some topics include interactions with the Romans, Etruscan language, religion, and daily life.

*Armand Pulcinella has been a Renaissance member since 2015 and has always enjoyed learning about history. He is a retired pediatrician who is glad he discovered Renaissance.*

**11. Urban Politics and Policy in US Cities**

**Campus**

**Instructor: Susan Baer**

This course will provide an interesting overview of issues in US urban politics and policy. Topics include but are not limited to urban regime theory, city government structure, public transportation, community development, and housing. The course will consist of limited lectures, class discussion, and discussion in small groups.

*Susan Baer earned a PhD in government and politics at the University of Maryland, College Park. After completing a postdoc at Indiana University, Bloomington, she taught in Wisconsin and California where she earned tenure and promotion to associate professor. Most recently Susan taught for the University of Kansas as an online lecturer. She has published many journal articles and chapters of books.*

**12. The Great Baltimore Fire of 1904: Devastation to Determination**

**Campus**

**Instructor: Bev Rosen**

In February 1904, a raging inferno leveled more than 2,000 buildings and reshaped Baltimore forever. Fought with outdated equipment, hindered by incompatible hoses, freezing winds, and shifting weather, the blaze burned for 30 relentless hours. Through vivid photographs and gripping personal stories, including Mayor McLane, courageous firefighters, determined journalists, and even a heroic horse, this course will explore destruction, resilience, and how the Burnt Commission rebuilt a stronger, modern Baltimore from the ashes.

*Bev Rosen, MSW, MBA, MA, is an historian and dynamic lecturer whose programs have engaged audiences for over 30 years. She has taught at institutions including Towson University and Johns Hopkins University and presents widely to academic and cultural organizations. Specializing in Baltimore history, including Jonestown and the Great Baltimore Fire of 1904, her richly illustrated lectures combine scholarship and storytelling.*

**13. The Renaissance Singers – Part 1 (Parts 1 & 2 Required)**

**Campus**

**Instructor: Nancy Heinold**

We are a four-part harmony choir. Anyone who enjoys singing is invited to participate. Music is provided and there are no auditions. Everyone is welcome! This is not a sing-along or a choir that sings Renaissance music. We will perform a variety of musical genres.

*Nancy Heinold has been the conductor of the Renaissance Singers for over 12 years. She has been an organist and choral director of an Episcopal church for over 50 years and has been involved with music all her life.*

**14. Chair Yoga – Part 1**

**Hybrid**

**Instructor: Linda McGill**

Staying seated means that even those who aren't flexible can safely do the exercises. This is an excellent way to loosen and stretch painful muscles, reduce stress, and improve circulation, while lowering blood pressure, protecting joints, and building strength and balance. We will also do some poses at the end of class standing, using the chair as a prop. We will focus on moving with the breath, and start and end class with a meditation, leaving you feeling peaceful and grounded.

*Linda McGill is a Roland Park native of 34 years. She is a certified 500-hour YTT Yoga and Meditation Teacher.*

## 15. Art Talks

**Zoom**

**Instructor: Terry Weisser**

This course will focus on back stories about art—things you won't learn from reading labels in museums. Illustrated lectures and discussion will be presented by specialists including Dr. Gary Vikan, former Director of The Walters Art Museum, Dr. Laura Weigert, Professor of Art History, Rutgers University, as well as others. They will address a variety of subjects from museum heists to the history and technical study of works of art made from enamel.

*Terry Weisser is the former Director of Conservation and Technical Research at the Walters Art Museum. She is a specialist in objects and archaeological conservation with degrees from Swarthmore College and the University of London, Institute of Archaeology. She has specialized in and published on ivory, enamel, and metals and believes in studying cultural objects for what they tell us about people and the times in which they lived.*

## 16. New Yorker Roundtable – Part 1

**Zoom**

**Instructor: Brian Young**

The New Yorker Roundtable is a discussion group to share thoughts on articles in a recent issue of the magazine. Each week, four or five articles will be assigned in advance to be read. Topics of articles will include scientific inquiry, politics, profiles, book reviews, short stories, poetry, and more. During the class, an overview of each article will be given and participants invited to comment on how the article affected them. Comments will be sought on content, writing style, and the reaction of the reader. **Students will need to access copies of the magazine by subscription or purchase.**

*Brian Young is a retired Program Manager from the aerospace industry. He has been leading or participating in discussions of the New Yorker for 13 years.*

## 17. Edgar Allan Poe and Friends: A Study of American Gothic Literature – Part 1

**Zoom**

**Instructor: Bill Davis**

In this course, we will read and discuss a dozen or so stories by E.A. Poe using some of his own defining terms: (1) Stories on the death of a beautiful woman; (2) Poe's monomaniacal narrators and tales of the conscience; (3) Slapstick Gothic (humor); (4) Tales of ratiocination (the detective stories); and (5) Poe's hoaxes. We'll add some Hawthorne stories just for fun. This course will include interactive lectures and discussion.

*William Davis is Professor Emeritus of English at Notre Dame of Maryland University, where he taught literature and writing for 36 years. Bill specialized in Victorian literature, focusing on novelist Thomas Hardy, the New Woman, and the Fallen Woman. He has published widely in these and other areas while teaching and leading theatre trips to London.*

**1:00 PM – 3:00 PM**

**18. Acting 101 – Part 1 (Limit 18; Parts 1 & 2 Required)**

**Campus**

**Instructor: Natalie Pilcher**

This course will be an introduction to the craft of acting. The basics of character development, core theatre terminology, and script work will be explored as the class discovers what it means to be an actor. Beginning theatre games, vocal warm-ups, and acting exercises will be implemented. Each student will have the opportunity to develop a short one- or two-minute monologue of their choosing. The instructor will provide material should class members request it. Short multi-character scripts will also be utilized as part of the work. **A \$5 fee is required for script printing.**

*Natalie Pilcher is an actor, director, teacher, and playwright. Between acting at Theater Project, Allenberry Playhouse, and other theatres, she taught at Catonsville Community College, Peabody Preparatory, the St. Paul's Schools, and Oldfields. She directed productions at these schools and Krieger-Schechter Day School, Jemicy, the Maryland School for the Blind, and more. Natalie was previously an Artist in Residence for the Maryland State Arts Council.*

**1:15 PM – 2:30 PM**

**19. Opera Production - Part 1**

**Campus**

**Instructor: Roger Brunyate**

Any opera production will sound more or less as the composer imagined it, but visually and dramatically it might almost be a new show. Welcome to the work of the opera Stage Director! By looking at many approaches—sometimes to the same opera—we will explore the function of the Stage Director even in the most “faithful” production and ask whether there is any limit to thinking outside the box.

*A long-time musician, Roger Brunyate was Artistic Director of the Peabody Opera for 30 years. Before that, he worked as a Stage Director and Designer in Europe, taught art history at Glasgow University, and studied literature at Cambridge. His past 10 years of adult teaching once more allows him to inspire others with the interaction of so many arts.*

**20. Nia Fitness – Part 1**

**Campus**

**Instructor: Rebecca Donnelly**

Nia is a fitness fusion class. What does that mean? That means it combines different fitness forms including dance, martial arts, and healing arts. It is traditionally performed barefoot, but shoes are permitted to avoid pain. We will listen to music, we will move in new ways, and sometimes we will have what is called “free dance” or time to move without instruction for parts of the song. Nia is friendly to all fitness levels and mostly it is just a lot of fun!

*Rebecca Donnelly has a Black Belt in the Nia technique and has been teaching for more than 10 years. When she is not teaching Nia, Rebecca has a healing center called BlueGreen Acupuncture and Bodywork where she practices acupuncture and other healing modalities.*

Tuesday Classes (9/15-10/20, First 6 Weeks)

## **21. The American Revolution, Great Courses – Part 1**

**Campus**

**Instructor: Janet Starkey**

This course will be presented through video lessons from the Great Courses series. Over 24 lectures, we will closely examine the events that led to America's independence from Britain. Each class will include viewing two lectures followed by a brief discussion. This topic is especially relevant as we celebrate America's 250<sup>th</sup> birthday!

*Janet Starkey, a retired Nurse-Midwife, has a deep passion for history—particularly American history. She takes pride in being a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution and enjoys reading and learning about the United States.*

## **22. Devotion and Betrayal in the World of Film – Part 1**

**Zoom**

**Instructor: Amanda Joyce**

Devotion and betrayal are two of the most dramatic elements in the lives of human beings. Films featuring these themes are often intense, complex, and riveting for an audience. Writers, directors, and actors have returned to these stories time and again over decades of cinema history, and in this film class, we will watch and discuss the numerous films in which these tales unfold.

*Amanda Joyce has offered film courses at the Renaissance Institute since 2020. She is fascinated with films and film history from all eras.*

## **23. Poetry Workshop – Part 1 (Limit 17)**

**Zoom**

**Instructor: Susan Marshall**

In this course members will share with one another the poems we have written each week. The instructor will offer a suggestion for theme or form though suggestions need not be followed. This group will welcome and encourage its members with gentle criticism and support as we work to better our own writing.

*Susan Marshall earned an English degree at Notre Dame of Maryland University as an adult in the CE program, followed by a master's degree in liberal studies. She also studied poetry under Sr. Maura Eichner.*

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**Thursday**

**First 6 Week Classes**

**Sep 17 – Oct 22**

**9:15 AM – 10:30 AM**

**24. The Heroine in Western Literature**

**Campus**

**Instructor: Susan Marshall**

Many of us are familiar with the hero journey in literature as illuminated by Joseph Campbell, for one. But what of the heroine? What is her quest and when did her story begin? In this class we will seek answers to such questions as well as accompany the heroine through chosen pieces of literature to be determined.

*Susan Marshall received her BA in English as a continuing education student at Notre Dame of Maryland University. She returned to earn a master's degree in liberal studies. In both programs she studied the journey toward enlightenment through archetypal experience as illustrated in literature through the ages.*

**25. Origins of Jazz – Part 1**

**Campus**

**Instructor: Seth Kibel**

This course will examine the early decades of the music we call jazz. We'll start our exploration in New Orleans, where multiple ethnicities and musical traditions all converged to give birth to this uniquely American genre. We will then take our story to Chicago, in the 1920s, and wind up in New York, which remains the epicenter of jazz from the 1930s up to the present day. We'll encounter colorful personalities like Louis Armstrong, Sidney Bechet, Jelly Roll Morton, and more.

*Seth Kibel is one of the Mid-Atlantic's premier woodwind specialists, working with some of the best bands in klezmer, jazz, swing, and more. Wowing audiences on clarinet, flute, and saxophone, Seth has made a name for himself in the Washington/Baltimore region and beyond.*

**26. The Judaism You Don't Know: Mussar – Part 1**

**Campus**

**Instructor: Rabbi Geoff Basik**

This course will explore the path of Mussar and where it fits within the wisdom tradition of Judaism. Mussar is a path toward personal growth, spiritual development and transformed relationships, and, ultimately, joy! What are the motivations deep within our hearts and minds? Why, despite knowing what is right, do we find it difficult to do it? Mussar—ethics, as opposed to law—anticipated the discovery and exploration of psychology and the unconscious. We will discuss and apply Mussar practices.

*After years in Jewish education, Rabbi Geoff Basik enrolled in seminary in midlife to explore the world of the interior, heart, and soul, and then formed a community to do that with others. Now retired, he is the father of two, grandfather of three, and husband of one and only. His personal interests include food, Tai Chi, and meditation.*

## 27. The Legacy of Roman Britain

**Campus**

**Instructor: Bob Baer**

This course will explore one of the most fascinating and important periods in British history. From 55 BCE, when Julius Caesar first landed, until 409 CE, a society was created that combined classical Roman civilization with that of the native Celtic Britons. During Britain's first era of recorded history, the Romans left a great archaeological record of the cities and towns, forts, villas, and roads they built, including their capital London and Hadrian's Wall. The history includes the great Celtic rebel queen Boudicca.

*Bob Baer was a college administrator with over 40 years in higher education. He was also a history instructor at the Community College of Baltimore County, Johns Hopkins and Towson University Osher programs, Renaissance Institute at Notre Dame of Maryland University, York College-CUNY, and Norwalk Community College. Bob has a bachelor's and a master's degrees in history, and a doctorate in higher education.*

## 28. Advertising 101 – Part 1

**Zoom**

**Instructor: Philip Lassalle**

This course will examine all aspects of advertising, including marketing plans, creative development, and media planning/buying. We will also cover the practical application of advertising on a range of mediums such as social media, the Internet, and more traditional options. Delivery formats will include video, lectures, discussions, and workshops.

*Phil Lassalle has been in advertising, marketing, and public relations for over 40 years. He has worked in a variety of roles in large and small ad agencies, and more recently as President of Philip E. Lassalle Advertising and Marketing Consultants.*

## 29. Optimal Aging for Longevity, Independence, and Quality of Life

**Zoom**

**Instructor: Dan Chapman**

Old doesn't equal weakness! Societal messaging rarely accentuates the importance of proper strength training for individuals over 50. This leads to frailty, falling, and lack of independence. Learn how to optimize your strength, longevity, and quality of life (yes, even if you have pre-existing conditions). Through proper strength and balance training, this course will help you combat arthritis, frailty, chronic illness, and disability. This course will consist of six lectures and a short discussion period.

*Dr. Dan Chapman is a residency-trained Doctor of Physical Therapy, Board-Certified Orthopedic Clinical Specialist, and Older Adult Specialist. He owns Summit Physical Therapy and Performance, a small, locally owned physical therapy and fitness clinic where he and his team focus on helping adults over the age of 50 optimize their physical health.*

Thursday Classes (9/17-10/22, First 6 Weeks)

### **30. Open Studio for Prose Writers – Part 1 (Limit 15)**

**Zoom**

**Instructors: Elizabeth Fanto and Sheila Scriggins**

This will be a prose writing course for committed writers who want to give and receive in-depth feedback. Students will be encouraged to bring their short stories, memoirs, essays, and book chapters to class for reading and gentle critique. This will be a safe space for writers to refine works in progress or try new things.

*Elizabeth Fanto is a graduate of Towson State University, with a bachelor's degree in education and a master's degree in English. She taught high school English in Baltimore County Public Schools for 25 years and taught many classes at the Renaissance Institute for 23 years.*

*Sheila Scriggins graduated from Grinnell College and went on to earn a master's degree in social work at the University of Chicago. She has previously taught two classes at the Renaissance Institute.*

**11:00 AM – 12:15 PM**

### **31. Shakespeare's Henry V: A Play for All Times**

**Campus**

**Instructor: Maggie Ward**

This course will explore Shakespeare's Henry V, through text, video, and class discussion. We will focus on how two iconic filmmakers interpreted this masterpiece of leadership, war, and nationhood. We will consider the play's themes of patriotism, the burdens of kingship, and the brutal realities of battle through an analysis of Laurence Olivier's patriotic 1944 Technicolor adaptation and Kenneth Branagh's grittier 1989 version. Join us as we attempt to discover the play's moral core.

*Maggie Ward was a teacher of English at a local private school for nearly 45 years. She enjoys sharing her love of literature and theater with her friends at Renaissance!*

### **32. A Short Course in Digital Photography**

**Campus**

**Instructor: David Lavine**

Photographic tools, both camera and software, have become so automated that the user no longer must pay attention to the underlying principles. Through illustrated lectures and demonstrations, we will examine shutter speed, aperture, and sensor sensitivity among other controls. Students will be encouraged to make their own pictures with shooting assignments provided by the photographer; these assignments will be optional. The course is designed for students with some experience as well as those who want to learn about photography. Access to an adjustable digital camera or cell phone camera would be helpful.

*David Lavine received a bachelor's degree in history from the University of Delaware in 1967. After service in the US Navy, he used the GI Bill to study photography at the Maryland Institute College of Art and received an MFA in 1978. He then worked as a freelance photographer and adjunct professor at Anne Arundel Community College.*

### 33. Spanish Fundamentals – Part 1 (Limit 15; Parts 1 & 2 Required)

**Campus**

**Instructor: Tom Binford**

In this course, we will work on Spanish pronunciation, building vocabulary, and learning basic grammar skills, such as present tense verb conjugations and simple future. The focus will be getting students to participate in simple dialogues and talk about oneself. Topics may include a study of food, family, clothing, travel and vacations, professions, etc. The text will be used for grammar, vocabulary, readings of dialogues, culture, and stories. Outside readings and music will be infused throughout the course. **Textbook will be Spanish is Fun-Book One.**

*Tom Binford taught Spanish to high school students at the Friends School of Baltimore for 36 years. Prior to that, he taught students at all levels (elementary school, middle school, and college). Tom received his BA from Wabash College and an MA from the University of Virginia. He also studied in Valencia, Spain and has traveled extensively to many Hispanic countries.*

### 34. Hitchcock

**Campus**

**Instructor: Peter Warren**

Alfred Hitchcock, “the Master of Suspense,” remains one of the most important filmmakers in cinematic history. His films continue to surprise, delight, and influence contemporary filmmakers, and they offer a unique introduction to the study of film. In this course we’ll look at a selection of the director’s work throughout his career, exploring the development of his themes and film style, as well as his impact on other filmmakers. Films will include his early British work such as Blackmail and The 39 Steps, as well as his iconic work in films like Psycho, Vertigo, North by Northwest, and Rear Window. Because class length will not allow for full screenings, students are encouraged to watch the films at home.

*Peter Warren has taught film history and film studies to high school students for more decades than he cares to think about, including at the Bryn Mawr School, the Park School of Baltimore, and, most recently, the Baltimore School for the Arts. A movie theater is his "safe space."*

### 35. Views of the News – Part 1

**Hybrid**

**Instructor: Hollis Jackson**

In this course, we will discuss the current news, with calmness and courtesy to those with different points of views. We want to hear what others think and why. And at the end of each session, we will close with some good news to lower everyone’s blood pressure and elevate their moods.

*Hollis Jackson has been at the Renaissance Institute since 2010. She has taught a variety of classes, and this one has continued for several years.*

### **36. The History of Department Stores in Baltimore**

**Zoom**

**Instructor: Barbara Ressin**

By way of a PowerPoint that includes videos and music, the students will learn how men immigrated to this country from Eastern Europe and built department stores, including in Baltimore, where we all shopped with our mothers and eventually by ourselves. Learn what motivated these immigrants with very little knowledge of the language, society, and culture to create these beautiful edifices. With almost no education and very little money, these men became titans in the community and gave back to the community. Many department stores lasted well over 100 years. What caused the downfall of the department store and how did racial integration play a part in their history?

*Barbara Ressin graduated with a bachelor's degree in education from Towson University and taught for three years in Baltimore City Schools and 25 years in a private school in Baltimore County. She was also an adjunct faculty member at Towson's Osher program, an adjunct faculty member at CCBC Essex, Hunt Valley, and Owings Mills campuses, and a Montgomery County lecturer under Johns Hopkins Oasis.*

### **37. Freedom of Movement – Part 1**

**Zoom**

**Instructor: Linda McGill**

This course will be a type of yoga class that creates a new freedom of movement. It will work on strengthening the posture, core, and helping the body feel stronger and better aligned using simple movements, breath, and relaxation. Other benefits include relieving neuromuscular pain, regaining voluntary control of habitually tight muscles, improving coordination, balance, flexibility, while increasing self-awareness and mindfulness. This class can be done in your bed.

*Linda McGill is a Roland Park native of 34 years. She is a certified 500-hour YTT Yoga and Meditation Teacher.*

### **38. Hippocrates: The Dawn of Medicine – Part 1**

**Zoom**

**Instructor: Jason C. Morris**

Health and wellness as well as healthcare are all-consuming topics of discussion in the United States today. This course will explore the origins of western medicine in ancient Greece and trace its evolution from a religious activity to a serious philosophical discipline. The course format will include lectures and some discussion.

*Dr. Jason Morris is an ancient historian specializing in the history of science and technology. He has a PhD in ancient history from the University of Leicester in the UK, an MA with Distinction in classics from Victoria University Wellington in New Zealand, and a BA in classics and archaeology from Dickinson College in the USA.*

**1:00 PM – 3:00 PM**

**39. Movies in the Afternoon (Limit 25)**

**Campus**

**Instructors: Ted Walman and Joe Lapicki**

In this course the instructors will show selected films that cover different genres. Films will run the gamut from older classics to contemporary cinema. Each class will start with a brief summary of the film including title, year made, plot summary, actors, actresses, and director. The film will then be shown with closed captions. After the film concludes, the instructors will provide additional background information and promote open discussion.

*Ted Walman is a retired optometrist and has a great love of film and extensive knowledge.*

*Joe Lapicki is a retired architect who enjoys sharing the experience of film with Renaissance Institute members.*

**40. Musical Theater: Calling All Singers & Dancers—No Experience Required – Part 1  
(Limit 18; Parts 1 & 2 Required)**

**Campus**

**Instructor: Natalie Pilcher**

This course will teach you to experience a musical theatre song as a monologue. You'll learn to "sell" a song even if you don't think of yourself as a singer. Interpretation is the key. We'll also explore the basics of Broadway style dance movement, including choreography that can be done from a seated position! Enjoying easy breezy steps that can be done by the entire ensemble of actors is a fun way to get a taste of musical theatre. **A \$5 fee is required for script printing.**

*Natalie Pilcher is an actor, director, teacher, and playwright. Between acting at Theater Project, Allenberry Playhouse, and other theatres, she taught at Catonsville Community College, Peabody Preparatory, the St. Paul's Schools, and Oldfields. She directed productions at these schools and Krieger-Schechter Day School, Jemicy, the Maryland School for the Blind, and more. Natalie was previously an Artist in Residence for the Maryland State Arts Council.*

**1:15 PM – 2:30 PM**

**41. Mozart in Context – Part 1**

**Campus**

**Instructor: Robert Weisser**

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, one of the greatest composers of all time, did not exist in a vacuum. He shared a musical language with his contemporaries. We will examine that language, especially the musical forms of his era, along with the music of some of the other composers of the time. Terminology will be introduced. Along the way, we will discover some surprising aspects of the man himself, such as his off-color sense of humor, and learn a bit about the society in which he lived. The course is in two six-week parts, but the first part is not a prerequisite for the second part. No musical background is required.

*Robert Weisser dropped out of Yale to join a rock band in the 1960s. His love of music led him to Peabody, earning bachelor's and master's degrees in music, focusing on composition. He headed the upper school music department at Bryn Mawr School for six years before attending Hopkins and becoming a computer programmer. Robert continues to study, write, and play music in retirement. Currently he is a student at UMBC where he is a novice member of a viola da gamba ensemble.*

**42. Further Tales from Chaucer's Canterbury (Limit 20)**

**Campus**

**Instructor: Stephen Sutton**

This will be a continuation of stories from the Canterbury Tales. We will read and study tales that were not read in the fall 2025 semester. This will include the Miller's Tale, the Reeve's Tale, which is a direct response to the Miller's Tale and the one tale said to be Chaucer's original, the Canon-Yeoman's Tale, and two or three others. Most of these tales are humorous and fun. Our text will be the Penguin paperback modern English translation by Neville Coghill.

*Steve Sutton is a former high school English teacher (35 years) and has taught several literature classes at the Renaissance Institute over the past few years. He always enjoys a good story and a lively class.*

**43. Ballet Basics – Part 1 (Limit 20)**

**Campus**

**Instructor: Susan Sklar**

This course is designed to use the technique of classical ballet to improve strength, flexibility, coordination, posture, range of motion, and balance. Tap into your creative spirit, cultivate musicality, and you will experience the joy of movement. No dance experience is required for this course.

*Susan Sklar received her ballet training at various local studios, Goucher, and the University of Maryland. She has performed in productions of Giselle, Swan Lake, La Bayadere, and the Nutcracker. Susan has been dancing all her life and loves sharing her passion with a new generation of dancers.*

#### **44. Peptides and their Importance in Medical and Nonmedical Fields**

**Zoom**

**Instructor: David Wade**

This course will introduce students to the field of peptides, which are small proteins composed of linear chains of building blocks, called amino acids, and their importance in medical (e.g., insulin) and nonmedical (e.g., cosmetics) fields. The global market for peptides is predicted to exceed \$260 billion by 2030. The course will utilize a variety of formats (e.g., lectures, literature readings, discussions, worksheets, hands-on peptide modeling, etc.) to provide the student with a well-rounded survey of the field.

*David Wade, PhD, is a US citizen with over 35 years of postdoctoral research and teaching experience, including work for two Nobel Laureates in Chemistry and a chair of the Nobel Committee for the Medicine Prize, eight years of experience outside of the US in four foreign countries, 74 invited presentations in nine countries, and approximately 100 articles published.*

#### **45. The Twilight Zone in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century – Part 1**

**Zoom**

**Instructor: Miles Greenup**

In each class, we will watch two full episodes of the original TV series, The Twilight Zone. The weekly selections will be chosen for the way they work together to illustrate themes and address questions that remain almost 60 years after the shows were created. We'll also pause for discussion during and after the episodes. This course will not include any of the nightmare-inducing stories in the series (e.g., no monsters outside the airplane window).

*Miles Greenup is a recent arrival in Baltimore and member of the Renaissance Institute. Previously, he was an elementary school teacher in Santa Maria, California.*

#### **46. Ukulele Class – Part 1 (Parts 1 & 2 Required)**

**Zoom**

**Instructor: Ray Forton**

Experience the simplicity, joy, and fun of playing the ukulele. This is an ongoing class. Beginners are welcome and encouraged. This course will include some history of the instrument, basic music theory, learning to read chord charts, strumming patterns, and playing melodies and songs.

*Music making should bring great joy, or at least a few laughs and a good time to both players and listeners. Ray Forton learned the importance of joy in learning music in his 22-year long career as a public school music educator.*

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**Tuesday**

**Second 6 Week Classes**

**Oct 27 – Dec 8**

**9:15 AM – 10:30 AM**

**47. Archaeology: Introduction to the World's Greatest Sites, Great Courses – Part 2**

**Campus**

**Instructor: John Meredith**

This course will be an introduction to archaeology that provides answers to the questions: How do archaeologists find ancient sites? What happens during an actual excavation? How do we know how old something is? The course will consist of a series of 30-minute videos presented by Dr. Eric H. Cline, the Director of the George Washington University Capitol Archaeological Group. We will show two videos per class from the Great Courses, and there will be opportunity for discussion. Part 1 will discuss the origins of modern archaeology, and will cover such sites as Pompei, Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Israel. Part 2 will continue with studies of Greece, Syria, China, and North America. Both parts can be taken independently.

*John Meredith is a retired dentist and has been a member of the Renaissance Institute since 2015. He has had a lifelong interest in history and has taught courses in Civil War history, music, and science.*

**48. Immigration and Human Rights**

**Campus**

**Instructor: Linda Rabben**

Through lectures and discussions, the instructor, guest speakers, and students will explore the evolution of the religious practice of sanctuary and the secular institution of asylum, from ancient to post-modern societies. Readings will include accounts of the development of international humanitarian law, government efforts to limit or undermine asylum, and social movements that aim to welcome and protect the stranger.

*Linda Rabben is a sociocultural anthropologist, a human rights advocate, and an associate research professor at the University of Maryland. Her publications include 10 books and many articles on human rights, international migration, and related subjects. She has done field research in Britain, Europe, the US, and Brazil and worked for nongovernmental organizations including Amnesty International and the Rainforest Foundation.*

**49. Topics in Medicine #3 – Part 2**

**Campus**

**Instructor: Bruce Rosenberg**

In this course, we will discuss various topics in medicine including pandemics past and present, comparison of health care systems in different countries, as well as mainstream clinical topics like endocrine disorders, deep venous thrombosis/pulmonary embolus, etc.

*Bruce Rosenberg attended undergraduate at Washington University in St. Louis in 1971-1975, and medical school at the University of Maryland in 1975-1979. He had his medical residency at University of Maryland Hospital in 1979-1982 and was Chief Resident at GBMC in 1982-1983. Bruce entered the private practice of internal medicine for 44 years and retired in 2023.*

Tuesday Classes (10/27-12/08, Second 6 Weeks)

## 50. The Art and Practice of Primitive Rug Hooking

**Campus**

**Instructor: Ivy Allgeier**

Participants in this course will learn about the art of primitive rug hooking and gain the skills to complete a small rug. This is NOT latch hook—it's much, much more! **There will be a materials fee of \$80.**

*Ivy Allgeier is a fiber fanatic who engages in all sorts of fiber arts including knitting, weaving, spinning yarn, and rug hooking!*

## 51. Autumn in Ink and Watercolor – Part 2

**Zoom**

**Instructor: Alina Kurbiel**

This course will explore the beauty of autumn using ink and watercolor. Students will work on different seasonal paintings based on photo references, combining expressive ink line with transparent watercolor washes. Subjects include leaves, trees, and autumn landscapes. Emphasis will be placed on observation, composition, and color harmony. Through demonstrations and guided instruction, students will develop technical skills, confidence, and personal expression. This course is suitable for beginners and intermediate students. **Students must purchase watercolor appropriate pens, paper, and paint; a detailed supply list will be provided to registrants.**

*Alina Kurbiel is a signature artist of the Baltimore Watercolor Society. Born in Silesia, Poland, she earned her master's degree before transitioning from a successful technology career in Maryland to traditional art. She specializes in watercolor, ink, and pencil. Her paintings are held in private collections, and she is known for her warm, encouraging teaching style that inspires artistic confidence and growth.*

## 52. Relax and Reset with Qigong! – Part 2

**Zoom**

**Instructor: Pamela Tanton**

In this class, you will learn a sequence of movements that build on each other as the semester progresses. After a few classes, you will have learned an entire sequence to practice over and over so that you can really get comfortable with the movements. The gentle, flowing movements of qigong stimulate the energy flow in your body, and deep breathing creates a feeling of relaxation. Qigong can help with balance, it gives you lots of nice stretching, and it can relieve stress. It's an ancient Chinese internal healing art. We will perform standing and seated movements; and performing all movements while seated always an option.

*Pamela Tanton has studied with a Chinese qigong master since 2002, and she started teaching in 2004. She enjoys teaching people of all ages and abilities. It's important to her that her classes focus on enjoyment while learning. And she offers suggestions for ways to adapt the movements for those who may benefit from adjustments.*

**53. Memory Pictures – Part 2**

**Zoom**

**Instructors: Peter Whedbee and Helga Penner**

In this course, members will write on self-selected topics, including non-fiction and poetry models, and read their submissions to the class. Class members will respond in a casual and conversational format. There is no requirement to submit writings, and beginner writers are welcome.

*Peter Whedbee has a BS in applied IT from the University of Baltimore and has been in RI Prose, Poetry, and Memory Pictures since 2020.*

*Helga Penner has a BA in English from Western Maryland College (now McDaniel College) and an MA in contemporary communication from Notre Dame of Maryland University. She has participated in RI classes including Memory Pictures since 2022.*

**54. Exploration of Chinese Ethnic Groups – Part 2**

**Zoom**

**Instructor: Eugene Geinzer**

This study of the ethnic groups of China will explore: (1) The Chinese concept of ethnicity; (2) A cursory survey of the 55 officially recognized minorities; (3) How the Beijing Center for Chinese Studies understood its mission to study the ethnic groups; (4) The impact of the largest ethnic group, the HAN, which is 93% of the nation; and (5) A deeper study of approximately 12 of the 55 "minority peoples."

*Eugene Geinzer, SJ devoted 12 years to teach in China. Each year he undertook four major trips lasting five to 15 days to visit the various peoples. He and his students engaged in advanced study to encounter the villagers, explore their habitat, share their home-cooked meals, learn their dances, acquaint themselves with the people's crafts, and sleep in their homes.*

**11:00 AM – 12:15 PM**

**55. Beyond the Veil: Humanity, Immortality, and the Final Horizon – Part 2**

**Campus**

**Instructor: Brendan Dowling**

This course will explore humanity's relationship with mortality and the dream of immortality. We will discuss the questions that arise at the intersection of mortality, meaning, and the veiled margins of human existence. We will also discuss how cultures and religions have grappled with death, the dream of transcending death, and what lies beyond. This quest will serve as a mirror that reveals what we value most: The fragile beauty of a finite life. The class format will include lectures, Power Point presentations, video clips, and group conversation.

*Having recently retired from teaching religious studies on the high school level for 45 years, Brendan Dowling is excited to continue learning. He loves discussing the questions that intrigue us all: Who are we and what is our destiny? He can think of no better place to continue exploring these questions than in a classroom setting of inquisitive people in the Renaissance Institute.*

Tuesday Classes (10/27-12/08, Second 6 Weeks)

**56. The Mysterious Etruscans, Great Courses – Part 2 (Limit 30)**

**Campus**

**Instructor: Armand Pulcinella**

This will be a Great Courses lecture series on the Etruscans, people who pre-date the Roman Empire, lived alongside, and were assimilated by the Empire. We will view two 30-minute lectures per class, with time for questions and additional researched content as needed. Some topics include interactions with the Romans, Etruscan language, religion, and daily life.

*Armand Pulcinella has been a Renaissance member since 2015 and has always enjoyed learning about history. He is a retired pediatrician who is glad he discovered Renaissance.*

**57. The Renaissance Singers – Part 2 (Parts 1 & 2 Required)**

**Campus**

**Instructor: Nancy Heinold**

We are a four-part harmony choir. Anyone who enjoys singing is invited to participate. Music will be provided and there will be no auditions. Everyone is welcome! This is not a sing-along or a choir that sings Renaissance music. We will perform a variety of musical genres.

*Nancy Heinold has been the conductor of the Renaissance Singers for over 12 years. She has been an organist and choral director of an Episcopal church for over 50 years and has been involved with music all her life.*

**58. 6 Objects from the Walters in 6 Weeks**

**Campus**

**Instructor: Betsy Cumming**

In this course, the instructor will pick six objects from the Walters Art Museum and discuss them in relation to art and social history. The instructor will also provide some information about ways to look at art and how to analyze it. This will be a discussion class. Students will need to go to the Walters, hopefully more than once, to look at the object and make notes to share with the class.

*Betsy Cumming has a BA in art history and worked at the Baltimore Museum of Art for nine years. She has taught many courses on a variety of topics in her 20 years as a member of the Renaissance Institute.*

**59. Chair Yoga – Part 2**

**Hybrid**

**Instructor: Linda McGill**

Staying seated means that even those who aren't flexible can safely do the exercises. This is an excellent way to loosen and stretch painful muscles, reduce stress, and improve circulation, while lowering blood pressure, protecting joints, and building strength and balance. We will also do some poses at the end of class standing, using the chair as a prop. We will focus on moving with breath, and start and end class with a meditation, leaving you feeling peaceful and grounded.

*Linda McGill is a Roland Park native of 34 years. She is a certified 500-hour YTT Yoga and Meditation Teacher.*

**60. New Yorker Roundtable – Part 2**

**Zoom**

**Instructor: Brian Young**

The New Yorker Roundtable is a discussion group to share thoughts on articles in a recent issue of the magazine. Each week, four or five articles will be assigned in advance to be read. Topics of articles include scientific inquiry, politics, profiles, book reviews, short stories, poetry, and more. During the class, an overview of each article will be given and participants invited to comment on how the article affected them. Comments will be sought on content, writing style, and the reaction of the reader. **Students will need to access copies of the magazine by subscription or purchase.**

*Brian Young is a retired Program Manager from the aerospace industry. He has been leading or participating in discussions of the New Yorker for 13 years.*

**61. What the Cluck! It's Chickens! (Limit 20)**

**Zoom**

**Instructor: Sharon Harwood**

Who does NOT love chickens! They are fluffy and clucky, scratching and hatching, cackling multi-colored backyard and farm-bred modern descendants of theropod dinosaurs. Goodreads lists 149 must-read books about chickens. Therapists advise raising chickens to calm your nerves. Politicians promise them in pots to lure votes. This course will explore the enduring and endearing attractions of chickens. Participants will be required to create a chicken-themed project to share.

*Sharon Harwood is a retired educator and has presented courses at the Renaissance Institute since 2010.*

**62. Edgar Allan Poe and Friends: A Study of American Gothic Literature – Part 2**

**Zoom**

**Instructor: Bill Davis**

In this course, we will read and discuss a dozen or so stories by E.A. Poe using some of his own defining terms: (1) Stories on the death of a beautiful woman; (2) Poe's monomaniacal narrators and tales of the conscience; (3) Slapstick Gothic (humor); (4) Tales of ratiocination (the detective stories); and (5) Poe's hoaxes. We'll add some Hawthorne stories just for fun. This course will include interactive lectures and discussion.

*William Davis is Professor Emeritus of English at Notre Dame of Maryland University, where he taught literature and writing for 36 years. Bill specialized in Victorian literature, focusing on novelist Thomas Hardy, the New Woman, and the Fallen Woman. He has published widely in these and other areas while teaching and leading theatre trips to London.*

Tuesday Classes (10/27-12/08, Second 6 Weeks)

### **63. Life in Baltimore: Changing Times, Changing Lives**

**Zoom**

**Instructor: Jack Burkert**

Baltimore in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries was an ever-changing city. The lives and lifestyles of the residents will be the focus of this course, from early immigrant arrivals to 20<sup>th</sup> century residents. How did Baltimoreans meet the needs of life essentials (shelter, food, employment) to the opportunities a modern city offered (health, convenience, entertainment)?

*A 1969 graduate from the University of Maryland, Jack Burkert graduated with honors with a degree in history and education. His working life, some 40+ years, was spent in various educator roles. By 2010, Jack's interest in local history led to research, then development of a number of Baltimore history programs that inform and entertain both adults and young people.*

**1:00 PM – 3:00 PM**

### **64. Acting 101 – Part 2 (Limit 15; Parts 1 & 2 Required)**

**Campus**

**Instructor: Natalie Pilcher**

This course will be an introduction to the craft of acting. The basics of character development, core theatre terminology, and script work will be explored as the class discovers what it means to be an actor. Beginning theatre games, vocal warm-ups, and acting exercises will be implemented. Each student will have the opportunity to develop a short one- or two-minute monologue of their choosing. The instructor will provide material should class members request it. Short multi-character scripts will also be utilized as part of the work. **A \$5 fee is required for script printing.**

*Natalie Pilcher is an actor, director, teacher, and playwright. Between acting at Theater Project, Allenberry Playhouse, and other theatres, she taught at Catonsville Community College, Peabody Preparatory, the St. Paul's Schools, and Oldfields. She directed productions at these schools and Krieger-Schechter Day School, Jemicy, the Maryland School for the Blind, and more. Natalie was previously an Artist in Residence for the Maryland State Arts Council.*

**1:15 PM – 2:30 PM**

**65. Opera Production – Part 2**

**Campus**

**Instructor: Roger Brunyate**

Any opera production will sound more or less as the composer imagined it, but visually and dramatically it might almost be a new show. Welcome to the work of the opera Stage Director! By looking at many approaches—sometimes to the same opera—we will explore the function of the Stage Director even in the most “faithful” production and ask whether there is any limit to thinking outside the box.

*A long-time musician, Roger Brunyate was Artistic Director of the Peabody Opera for 30 years. Before that, he worked as a Stage Director and Designer in Europe, taught art history at Glasgow University, and studied literature at Cambridge. His past 10 years of adult teaching once more allows him to inspire others with the interaction of so many arts.*

**66. Nia Fitness – Part 2**

**Campus**

**Instructor: Rebecca Donnelly**

Nia is a fitness fusion class. What does that mean? That means it combines different fitness forms including dance, martial arts, and healing arts. It is traditionally performed barefoot, but shoes are permitted to avoid pain. We will listen to music, we will move in new ways, and sometimes we will have what is called “free dance” or time to move without instruction for parts of the song. Nia is friendly to all fitness levels and mostly it is just a lot of fun!

*Rebecca Donnelly has a Black Belt in the Nia technique and has been teaching for more than 10 years. When she is not teaching Nia, Rebecca has a healing center called BlueGreen Acupuncture and Bodywork where she practices acupuncture and other healing modalities.*

**67. The American Revolution, Great Courses – Part 2**

**Campus**

**Instructor: Janet Starkey**

This course will be presented through video lessons from the Great Courses series. Over 24 lectures, we will closely examine the events that led to America's independence from Britain. Each class will include viewing two lectures followed by a brief discussion. This topic is especially relevant as we celebrate America's 250<sup>th</sup> birthday!

*Janet Starkey, a retired Nurse-Midwife, has a deep passion for history—particularly American history. She takes pride in being a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution and enjoys reading and learning about the United States.*

**68. Devotion and Betrayal in the World of Films – Part 2**

**Zoom**

**Instructor: Amanda Joyce**

Devotion and betrayal are two of the most dramatic elements in the lives of human beings. Films featuring these themes are often intense, complex, and riveting for an audience. Writers, directors, and actors have returned to these stories time and again over decades of cinema history, and in this film class, we will watch and discuss the numerous films in which these tales unfold.

*Amanda Joyce has offered film courses at the Renaissance Institute since 2020. She is fascinated with films and film history from all eras.*

**69. Poetry Workshop – Part 2 (Limit 17)**

**Zoom**

**Instructor: Susan Marshall**

In this course members will share with one another the poems we have written each week. The instructor will offer a suggestion for theme or form though suggestions need not be followed. This group will welcome and encourage its members with gentle criticism and support as we work to better our own writing.

*Susan Marshall earned an English degree at Notre Dame of Maryland University as an adult in the CE program, followed by a master's degree in liberal studies. She also studied poetry under Sr. Maura Eichner.*

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**Thursday**

**Second 6 Week Classes**

**Oct 29 – Dec 10**

**9:15 AM – 10:30 AM**

**70. Art Deco-International Style between the World Wars**

**Campus**

**Instructor: James White**

Art deco is the international style that predominated visual arts, architecture, and product design from the 1920s until 1940s. Art deco style, which followed art nouveau, was influenced by cubism, futurism, Russian ballet, and the discoveries of Mayan buildings and Tutankhamun's tomb. This course will focus on items that could be found in a middle-class house (e.g., cocktail shakers, depression glass, hood ornaments, smoking accessories, jewelry, radios, and photographs). Every lecture will have deco items from the presenter's personal collection.

*Jim White is a retired USDA scientist and has been interested in art deco his whole life. He started collecting art deco items in 1985 when he moved into historic Greenbelt. He is a member of the Art Deco Societies of Washington (ADSW) and New York. Jim has written for the ADSW magazine Trans-lux. Last year, he attended the centennial meeting of the 1925 Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes, which gave art deco its name.*

**71. Origins of Jazz – Part 2**

**Campus**

**Instructor: Seth Kibel**

This course will examine the early decades of the music we call jazz. We'll start our exploration in New Orleans, where multiple ethnicities and musical traditions all converged to give birth to this uniquely American genre. We will then take our story to Chicago, in the 1920s, and wind up in New York, which remains the epicenter of jazz from the 1930s up until the present day. We'll encounter colorful personalities like Louis Armstrong, Sidney Bechet, Jelly Roll Morton, and more.

*Seth Kibel is one of the Mid-Atlantic's premier woodwind specialists, working with some of the best bands in klezmer, jazz, swing, and more. Wowing audiences on clarinet, flute, and saxophone, Seth has made a name for himself in the Washington/Baltimore region and beyond.*

**72. The Judaism You Don't Know: Mussar – Part 2**

**Campus**

**Instructor: Rabbi Geoff Basik**

This course will explore the path of Mussar and where it fits within the wisdom tradition of Judaism. Mussar is a path toward personal growth, spiritual development and transformed relationships, and, ultimately, joy! What are the motivations deep within our hearts and minds? Why, despite knowing what is right, do we find it difficult to do it? Mussar—ethics, as opposed to law—anticipated the discovery and exploration of psychology and the unconscious. We will discuss and apply Mussar practices.

*After years in Jewish education, Rabbi Geoff Basik enrolled in seminary in midlife to explore the world of the interior, heart, and soul, and then formed a community to do that with others. Now retired, he is the father of two, grandfather of three, husband of one and only. His personal interests include food, Tai Chi, and meditation.*

**73. Advertising 101 – Part 2**

**Zoom**

**Instructor: Philip Lassalle**

This course will examine all aspects of advertising, including marketing plans, creative development, and media planning/buying. We also cover the practical application of advertising on a range of mediums such as social media, the Internet, and more traditional options. Delivery formats will include video, lectures, discussions, and workshops.

*Phil Lassalle has been in advertising, marketing, and public relations for over 40 years. He has worked in a variety of roles in large and small ad agencies, and more recently as President of Philip E. Lassalle Advertising and Marketing Consultants.*

**74. The Later Plantagenets: 1250-1485**

**Zoom**

**Instructor: Carol Friedrich**

This course will follow the Plantagenet rulers of England from the death of King John to the death of King Richard III. It will include the War of the Roses, Agincourt, and the Princes in the Tower. We will also address Shakespeare's plays about the era. The instructor will use lectures, Power Point, films, and group discussion.

*Carol Friedrich has taught courses previously at the Renaissance Institute. In her earlier life, she taught primary school in Glassboro, NJ. Carol also spent a lot of time as a union representative for the New Jersey Education Association. In her spare time, Carol likes to read, socialize, and try new restaurants.*

**75. Open Studio for Prose Writers – Part 2 (Limit 15)**

**Zoom**

**Instructors: Elizabeth Fanto and Sheila Scriggins**

This will be a prose writing course for committed writers who want to give and receive in-depth feedback. Students will be encouraged to bring their short stories, memoirs, essays, and book chapters to class for reading and gentle critique. This will be a safe space for writers to refine works in progress or try new things.

*Elizabeth Fanto is a graduate of Towson State University, with a bachelor's degree in education and a master's degree in English. She taught high school English in Baltimore County Public Schools for 25 years and taught many classes at the Renaissance Institute for 23 years.*

*Sheila Scriggins graduated from Grinnell College and went on to earn a master's degree in social work at the University of Chicago. She has previously taught two classes at the Renaissance Institute.*

**11:00 AM – 12:15 PM**

**76. Imagining Childhood: How Children’s Literature Shapes—and Reflects—Growing Up Campus**

**Instructor: Maggie Ward**

From fairy tale forests to contemporary coming of age stories, children’s literature has always revealed what a society believes children are—and should become. This course will explore how ideas about innocence, agency, danger, imagination, and identity have evolved from the 1700s to the present. Join us as we trace how authors across centuries have imagined childhood, and what their stories tell us about ourselves.

*Maggie Ward was a teacher of English at a local private school for nearly 45 years. She enjoys sharing her love of literature and theater with her friends at Renaissance!*

**77. Celebrity and Fame Photography**

**Campus**

**Instructor: David Lavine**

This course will be an exploration of how photographers have contributed to the culture of celebrity by inundating the world with pictures of famous people. Abraham Lincoln became well known through the publication of flattering photos taken by Matthew Brady. John F. Kennedy's good looks were enhanced by the camera during the 1960s. Photos of Lindbergh and Hemingway publicized their accomplishments, whereas Kim Kardashian and Paris Hilton have become famous just for being publicized. The course will be delivered through lectures and discussion.

*David Lavine received a bachelor's degree in history from the University of Delaware in 1967. After service in the US Navy, he used the GI Bill to study photography at the Maryland Institute College of Art and received an MFA in 1978. He then worked as a freelance photographer and adjunct professor at Anne Arundel Community College.*

**78. Spanish Fundamentals – Part 2 (Limit 15; Parts 1 & 2 Required)**

**Campus**

**Instructor: Tom Binford**

In this course we will work on Spanish pronunciation, building vocabulary, and learning basic grammar skills, such as present tense verb conjugations and simple future. The focus will be getting students to participate in simple dialogues and talk about oneself. Topics may include a study of food, family, clothing, travel and vacations, professions, etc. The text will be used for grammar, vocabulary, readings of dialogues, culture, and stories. Outside readings and music will be infused throughout the course. **Textbook will be Spanish is Fun-Book One.**

*Tom Binford taught Spanish to high school students at the Friends School of Baltimore for 36 years. Prior to that, he taught students at all levels (elementary school, middle school, and college). Tom received his BA from Wabash College and an MA from the University of Virginia. He also studied in Valencia, Spain and has traveled extensively to many Hispanic countries.*

## 79. The History of Baltimore City Parks

**Campus**

**Instructor: Jennifer Liles**

This course will be a lecture/discussion course on the history of the Baltimore City public parks—the locations, purpose, and history of the parks. We will examine an overview of the park movement and discuss the Olmstead Family and their importance to the park movement as well as to Baltimore's parks. Many topics will be raised during this class, including class, race, gender, how the various phases of the park movement were put into place, and who they did or did not benefit. We will also have time to talk about personal connections to the parks discussed.

*Jennifer Liles is a local public historian, and her research and classes are often big topics on the history of Baltimore and its residents. Often with some humor and personal anecdotes, in her lectures history begins to come alive and a bridge between people of all ages, races, genders, and classes will be built. Jennifer loves history and often bases her classes on rabbit holes she finds herself in when researching topics, so each semester is another journey into the mind of Jennifer Liles.*

## 80. Views of the News – Part 2

**Hybrid**

**Instructor: Hollis Jackson**

In this course, we will discuss the current news, with calmness and courtesy to those with different points of views. We want to hear what others think and why. And at the end of each session, we will close with some good news to lower everyone's blood pressure and elevate their moods.

*Hollis Jackson has been at the Renaissance Institute since 2010. She has taught a variety of classes, and this one has continued for several years.*

## 81. Cathedrals of Consumerism: The History of National Department Stores

**Zoom**

**Instructor: Barbara Ressin**

By way of a PowerPoint that includes videos and music, the students will learn how men and women immigrated to this country from Eastern Europe and built the department stores where we all shopped with our mothers and eventually by ourselves. Learn what motivated these immigrants with very little knowledge of the language, society, and culture to create these beautiful edifices. With almost no education and very little money, these men and women became titans in the communities, gave back to these very same communities and many department stores lasted well over 100 years. What caused the downfall of the department store and how did racial integration play a part in their history?

*Barbara Ressin graduated with a bachelor's degree in education from Towson University and taught for three years in Baltimore City Schools and 25 years in a private school in Baltimore County. She was also an adjunct faculty member at Towson's Osher program, an adjunct faculty member at CCBC Essex, Hunt Valley, and Owings Mills campuses, and a Montgomery County lecturer under Johns Hopkins Oasis.*

Thursday Classes (10/29-12/10, Second 6 Weeks)

**82. Freedom of Movement – Part 2**

**Zoom**

**Instructor: Linda McGill**

This course will be a type of yoga class that creates a new freedom of movement. It will work on strengthening the posture, core, and helping the body feel stronger and better aligned using simple movements, breath, and relaxation. Other benefits include relieving neuromuscular pain, regaining voluntary control of habitually tight muscles, improving coordination, balance, flexibility, while increasing self-awareness and mindfulness. This class can be done in your bed.

*Linda McGill is a Roland Park native of 34 years. She is a certified 500-hour YTT Yoga and Meditation Teacher.*

**83. Hippocrates: The Dawn of Medicine – Part 2**

**Zoom**

**Instructor: Jason C. Morris**

Health and wellness as well as healthcare are all-consuming topics of discussion in the United States today. This course will explore the origins of western medicine in ancient Greece and trace its evolution from a religious activity to a serious philosophical discipline. The course format will include lectures and some discussion.

*Dr. Jason Morris is an ancient historian specializing in the history of science and technology. He has a PhD in ancient history from the University of Leicester in the UK, an MA with Distinction in classics from Victoria University Wellington in New Zealand, and a BA in classics and archaeology from Dickinson College in the USA.*

**84. Voices of Maryland**

**Zoom**

**Instructor: Kay Pulcinella**

This course will introduce a different speaker each week who will share insights on their area of expertise. The format will be lecture, most likely with accompanying Power Point or photos. Time for questions and comments will be included. You can look forward to being introduced to more fascinating voices from Maryland.

*Kay Pulcinella has been a Renaissance Institute member since 2014 and is currently serving her third year on the Council. This will be the fifth Voices of Maryland class Kay has coordinated.*

**1:00 PM – 3:00 PM**

**85. Musical Theater: Calling All Singers & Dancers—No Experience Required  
(Limit 18; Parts 1 & 2 Required)**

**Campus**

**Instructor: Natalie Pilcher**

This course will teach you to experience a musical theatre song as a monologue. You'll learn to "sell" a song even if you don't think of yourself as a singer. Interpretation is the key. We'll also explore the basics of Broadway style dance movement, including some choreography that can be done from a seated position! Enjoying easy breezy steps that can be done by the entire ensemble of actors is a fun way to get a taste of musical theatre. **A \$5 fee is required for script printing.**

*Natalie Pilcher is an actor, director, teacher, and playwright. Between acting at Theater Project, Allenberry Playhouse, and other theatres, she taught at Catonsville Community College, Peabody Preparatory, the St. Paul's Schools, and Oldfields. She directed productions at these schools and Krieger-Schechter Day School, Jemicy, the Maryland School for the Blind, and more. Natalie was previously an Artist in Residence for the Maryland State Arts Council.*

**1:15 PM – 2:30 PM**

**86. Mozart in Context – Part 2**

**Campus**

**Instructor: Robert Weisser**

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, one of the greatest composers of all time, did not exist in a vacuum. He shared a musical language with his contemporaries. We will examine that language, especially the musical forms of his era, along with the music of some of the other composers of the time. Terminology will be introduced. Along the way, we will discover some surprising aspects of the man himself, such as his off-color sense of humor, and learn a bit about the society in which he lived. The course is in two six-week parts, but the first part is not a prerequisite for the second. No musical background is required.

*Robert Weisser dropped out of Yale to join a rock band in the 1960s. His love of music led him to Peabody, earning bachelor's and master's degrees in music, focusing on composition. He headed the upper school music department at Bryn Mawr School for six years before attending Hopkins and becoming a computer programmer. Robert continues to study, write, and play music in retirement. Currently he is a student at UMBC where he is a novice member of a viola da gamba ensemble.*

Thursday Classes (10/29-12/10, Second 6 Weeks)

**87. Ballet Basics – Part 2 (Limit 20)**

**Campus**

**Instructor: Susan Sklar**

This course is designed to use the technique of classical ballet to improve strength, flexibility, coordination, posture, range of motion, and balance. Tap into your creative spirit, cultivate musicality, and you will experience the joy of movement. No dance experience is required for this course.

*Susan Sklar received her ballet training at various local studios, Goucher, and the University of Maryland. She has performed in productions of Giselle, Swan Lake, La Bayadere, and the Nutcracker. Susan has been dancing all her life and loves sharing her passion with a new generation of dancers.*

**88. Kaleidoscope**

**Campus**

**Instructor: Vivian Appel**

This course will bring together six speakers who will share an area of expertise or special interest. Past topics have included art, architecture, medicine, science, social movements, travel, and family history. Renaissance Institute members will be urged to be speakers.

*Vivian Appel is a retired lawyer and court administrator who moved from Eastern Pennsylvania to Maryland six years ago. She plays golf and mahjong and is developing her skills as a sewist. Vivian is an avid traveler; in 2025, she travelled to France, Botswana, and Zambia. In 2026, she returned to Botswana in the spring and plans to visit Morocco in the fall.*

**89. Computer Basics and Beyond (Limit 15)**

**Campus**

**Instructors: Barbara Ellen Reynolds and Laurie Rosenberg**

This course will be a hands-on computer class for PC users (not Mac). The interactive sessions will include instructor demonstration as well as active participation during class and brief homework sessions. Topics will include computer set up, email settings and usage, tips for staying safe online, Zoom usage, and social media.

*Barb Reynolds is the Director of the Renaissance Institute. She is an adult learning and program management expert, with over 30 years of service in AmeriCorps. She joined Renaissance as a new member in 2025 and is thrilled to continue supporting the program this year.*

*Laurie Rosenberg is a member of the Renaissance Institute Council. Laurie has a degree in accounting and information system management and was the owner of multiple small businesses. She was also the Comptroller and Property Manager for a multi-million dollar industrial complex for over 20 years. Laurie loves learning, teaching, and all things Renaissance (plus her great grandson!).*

Thursday Classes (10/29-12/10, Second 6 Weeks)

**90. Ukulele Class – Part 2 (Parts 1 & 2 Required)**

**Zoom**

**Instructor: Ray Forton**

Experience the simplicity, joy, and fun of playing the ukulele. This is an ongoing class. Beginners are welcome and encouraged. This course will include some history of the instrument, basic music theory, learning to read chord charts, strumming patterns, and playing melodies and songs.

*Music making should bring great joy, or at least a few laughs and a good time to both players and listeners. Ray Forton learned the importance of joy in learning music in his 22-year long career as a public-school music educator.*

**91. The Twilight Zone in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century – Part 2**

**Zoom**

**Instructor: Miles Greenup**

In each class, we will watch two full episodes of the original TV series, The Twilight Zone. The weekly selections will be chosen for the way they work together to illustrate themes and address questions that remain almost 60 years after the shows were created. We'll also pause for discussion during and after the episodes. This course will not include any of the nightmare-inducing stories in the series (e.g., no monsters outside the airplane window).

*Miles Greenup is a recent arrival in Baltimore and member of the Renaissance Institute. Previously, he was an elementary school teacher in Santa Maria, California.*

**92. TED Talks**

**Zoom**

**Instructor: Nancy St. Pierre**

TED Talks were created to explore subjects in the areas of technology, education, and design. The Talks encompass various areas of science, entertainment, and any topic that is of interest. Speakers are experts in their field. We will watch TED Talks on a certain subject each week and take time for discussion after each one. This will be an interactive discussion class and participation is optional.

*Nancy St. Pierre has presented various classes at the Renaissance Institute. She is interested in various topics and excited to present optimistic subjects. Nancy loves to quilt and is currently working on a yearlong Block of the Month project, stretching her quilting knowledge.*



*Come for the classes; stay for the friendships!*

*“Renaissance filled my retirement life with so much learning, teaching, and making so many friends I never could have met. Thank you, Renaissance!”*

