

In-Person Classes Return This Fall If Safety Allows

In-person classes are back this fall. After more than a year of being fully online, OLLI tested the waters with a few in-person events and classes this summer that went very well.

If safety allows, we're now ready to launch our Fall semester with about half of OLLI classes meeting in person and half either online or in hybrid fashion. Hybrid classes are those that one can attend in person or view on their computer screen.

OLLI recognizes that there is a wide variety of preferences among its members, from folks who love the convenience of online classes and want them to continue, to those who miss gathering in-person to learn together. In our recent survey we discovered that most OLLI

members prefer to have a mix of both in-person and online.

Fall in-person classes cover classical music, Christo and Frank Gehry, Euripides, George Eliot's *Middlemarch*, and more. Online class subjects include the French Revolution, science conversations, opera, and Latin American politics. On page 6 you'll find the schedule of our fall semester. Starting on page 8 are brief descriptions of the classes.

Enjoy reading about them and then



Christo and Jeanne-Claude's "The Gates," in New York City's Central Park, 2005

join us for our fall online **OLLI Open House online, Thursday, September 2 at 3:30pm EDT.** — Megan Whilden

What Could Possibly Be Funny About a Global Pandemic? Rita Nnodim Explains

Comics may call it 'gallows humor.' Some neurologists believe it is a way to boost our dopamine levels and even shore up our immune systems. Either way, there are times when a good laugh is just what the doctor ordered.

It is commonly accepted that in bad times like the global COVID pandemic, people have historically turned to comedy for distraction from the horrors of the world. A recent Google search came up with hundreds of coronavirus, quarantine and pandemic jokes. Some



Professor Rita Nnodim

actually funny.

Greek playwrights found humor in war (Aristophanes, *Lysistrata*) as did renaissance writers during the 'black plague' (Boccaccio, *The Decameron*) and 'Enlightenment' writers on the eve of the bloody French Revolution (Voltaire, *Candide*).

Rita Nnodim, an associate professor at Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA) shows us the value of humor in her online talk **"Humor, Laughter, and Well-Being" on Friday, September 17 at 3pm EDT.** As an Associate Professor and Chair of

the Interdisciplinary Studies at MCLA, Nnodim brings a wide range of knowledge to this subject. She earned her M.A. degree in African Languages and Literature at Johannes—Gutenberg University in Mainz, Germany and her Ph.D. in West African Studies at the University of Birmingham in England.

Nnodim's intense interest in studying a wide range of subjects from international issues and literature, to prison punishment and social justice, to popular cinema in India is ongoing. She remembers being interested in cross-cultural ideas and activities since her childhood. Her interdisciplinary courses, published articles, chapters in books and worldwide scholarly lectures indicate that her

(continued on page 3)

As I See It

With OLLI in Our Lives, We Stayed Connected Through the Pandemic

So much has happened since my last letter in the *Update*. We've been through a gradual reawakening this spring and early summer as vaccines became more readily available and Covid restrictions were slowly eased. We all started with tentative steps; first gathering maskless with one or two friends in an outdoor setting, moving on to slightly larger groups, then finally feeling comfortable enough to meet indoors, unmasked, around a friend's dining room table. I don't know that I'll ever forget the joy I felt at finally being able to catch up, debate and laugh with dear friends and family IN PERSON!



Barbara Lane

I imagine that we've all reflected on the importance of OLLI in our lives as we've dealt with the constraints imposed by the virus and tried to envision a new normal in a post-COVID world. For me, our OLLI's successful switch to all online programming has meant continued intellectual stimulation, meaningful committee work, engaging special events, and most important, the opportunity to stay connected with so many of you. Many members have reported that their initial exposure to Zoom through OLLI allowed them to find creative ways to remain connected with friends and family.

That switch to Zoom also enabled us to produce more programming than ever before for more people—both OLLI and non-OLLI members. We've also been able to attract new members from well beyond the Berkshires. Since 2020, the percentage of OLLI members who reside more than fifty miles from Pittsfield has increased three-fold, from roughly 7 percent to 21 percent. We now have Berkshire OLLI members in Hawaii and California, South Dakota, Texas and New Jersey, and even several in Canada.

Many of you are now asking what's in store for the fall? Our curriculum committees have developed a full roster of outstanding courses in a mix of in-person, online and hybrid formats. Of course, the return to in-person courses will depend on the CDC guidelines and any state restrictions in effect at that time, but we remain very hopeful. I can also report that our IT committee is working to fine-tune the technology so that we'll all have the best possible experience while participating in both online and hybrid courses.

I'll close by once again thanking our amazing lecturers, dedicated staff, board members, committee members, and all the other OLLI volunteers who've worked tirelessly for all of us during these challenging times.

Stay well everyone and I'll see you in the fall!
My best, **Barbara Lane**, OLLI President

OLLI UPDATE

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Opera Lectures Will Bring Appreciation to Both the Devoted and Merely Curious

Whether you are devoted to opera or wondering whether opera is for you, Christine Casey is someone you will want to meet. In the fall she will be teaching a six-week online OLLI course about this most extraordinary art form considered by some musicologists to be the oldest active musical genre.

For most of its 400-year history, opera has been the single greatest spectacle available to diverse audiences worldwide. And among Berkshire culture mavens, opera ranks with symphonic music and dance—Tanglewood, Jacobs Pillow—as a most popular entertainment draw. So, in lecturing on opera, Casey will find herself among eager and knowledgeable listeners.



Christine Casey

A Chicago native, Casey said she “found her voice” as a junior in high school. Her mother was a singer. Casey pursued her music education at Northwestern University and developed as a coloratura soprano (come to the class and you will learn what kind of special voice that is). She was a high school choral director for years and has always been devoted to opera and oratorio performance. She directed more than 30 high school musical productions.

Casey was a lecturer for the Chicago Lyric Opera's community outreach

(continued on next page)

A Glimpse at OLLI's New Normal

program for many years. The program presented introductory lectures about two of the upcoming operas of the Lyric season at community centers, libraries, and other local venues. When the Lyric's program ended, Casey continued with the Opera Lovers Lecture Corps program "for another several years." The OLLI chapter at Northwestern University sponsored this program.

Introducing and explaining opera to interested audiences is one of Casey's favorite activities. She and her recently retired husband Don moved to Williamstown in November. Their daughter Erin, an accomplished soprano, teaches voice at Williams College.

In considering how to organize this course, Casey decided to present one opera a week, a format that will show the range—dramatic, comic—languages, and styles of some of the most beloved operas in the popular repertoire.

The course will present Bizet's *Carmen*, whose arias are among the most well-known, Verdi's *La Traviata*, Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro*, Gounod's *Faust*, Puccini's *La Bohème* and Lehar's *The Merry Widow*.

Each week, Casey will show audio clips and photos of important productions of the opera of the week. She will discuss key scenes and story lines and suggest what to listen to and look for to better understand and appreciate opera.

Casey said she hopes attendees will come to appreciate opera as a marvelous and complex human endeavor, bringing together the talents of many kinds of artists—vocal, theatrical, musical, and visual to create a powerful and moving experience.

It might be too much to expect an opera *conoscibili* to reveal his or her favorite works, but Casey did disclose some of her favorite singers. Among the current and recent ones, she named Matthew Polenzani, Lawrence Brownlee, Samuel Ramey, Renee Fleming, Jonas Kaufmann, and Deborah Voigt. Her list includes many brilliant singers who combine the dramatic, vocal, and musical aspects that make opera today so exciting.

— Mal Wasserman

This edition of *OLLI Update* puts the spotlight on ways we are preparing for the end of the COVID pandemic.

Our lead story announces the return of in-person classes this fall. Half our classes will be in classrooms, half online via Zoom or in hybrid fashion, meaning you can attend in person or continue to follow lectures on your computer.

Another page-one story reports on someone who has analyzed the use of humor to cope with the pandemic. Rita Nnodim, a scholar at Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA), will explain in remarks as an OLLI Distinguished Speaker on Sept. 17.

For another take on "the new normal," read a warning (P. 4) from Dr. Jennifer Ashton who advised us at the annual Mona Sherman Lecture to live our lives "as though we're getting ready to go into battle." Ashton, the Chief ABC News Medical Correspondent, discussed the importance of living with a heightened sense of preparedness in anticipation of more great tragedies.

Several articles in this issue report on our OLLI's expanded reach. In her letter to members, OLLI President Barbara Lane notes that the seamless transition to high-quality online classes at the very start of the pandemic helped attract many new members. Lane tells us the share of members who reside more than 50 miles from Pittsfield has increased to 21 percent since 2020. A list on page 4 gives a state-by-state breakdown of new members who have taken courses from OLLI at BCC.

That is part of our 'New Normal.' However, as the COVID pandemic ebbs will our membership numbers ebb? Will we lose members living more than 50 miles from Pittsfield? And will we lose those members who've gotten used to taking OLLI courses from the comfort of home?

Time will tell. But as we pioneer a unique blend of in-class and online learning, it is possible—even likely—our membership won't shrink but continue to grow.

Not a bad new normal.

Once again, *OLLI Update* is doing double duty as your newsletter and fall course catalog. Pages six through ten list all courses, times, locations, instructors and dates and provide detailed information on the courses themselves.

— Chris Guidette



Chris Guidette

(Funny about Global Pandemic? continued from page 1)

passion for engaging students and colleagues in a wide range of subjects is always active. Research into the effects of Covid is of current concern.

The pandemic and sudden change of our lifestyle challenge us in many ways. Nnodim says she feels "now more than ever, humor and laughter are needed to cope with the unexpected, the vicissitudes of life, with difficult times." In her study of the anthropology of humor, she's found that humor is not only a coping strategy, but also has many other positive benefits on our mental and physical well-being; laughter is important.

Save the date—**Friday, September 17 at 3pm EDT**—to hear and enjoy Nnodim's talk on humor and its effect on our health and ability to cope with the unwelcome changes in our fortunes. You can register for Professor Nnodim's talk online at berkshireolli.org or by calling **413.236.2190**. — Joanna Fribush & Chris Guidette

New Normal Author Advises: 'Get Ready for Battle'

As we adapt to what many now call the "New Normal," we are learning to live with a heightened sense of preparedness for more challenges that can befall us.

That caution and some guidance for coping in this new age came in remarks by Dr. Jennifer Ashton, Chief ABC News Medical Correspondent and author of *The New Normal: A Roadmap to Resilience in the Pandemic Era*. Ashton spoke at OLLI's 11th annual Mona Sherman Memorial lecture in May. The Mona Sherman Memorial Lecture series was established in honor of an extraordinary OLLI volunteer leader, Mona Sherman, by her family and friends.

"We should be living our lives as though we're ready to go into battle. Get ready for battle," warned Ashton. The world must be better prepared for the next pandemic because it surely wasn't ready for this one, she said in her online talk that emphasized the importance of universal vaccination and research to prevent spread of variants of the coronavirus.



Dr. Jennifer Ashton

"I believe the way the President (Donald Trump) handled this, denying its severity (and stymying broad public health responses) did cause loss of life." She was "horrified," she said, "to see the President and many governors giving medical advice without two letters (medical credentials) after their names."

Major lessons to be learned include understanding "we can no longer take a concentric view of global health. Epidemics that break out in India, Africa or Mexico affect us." Ashton said she believes a booster vaccine will be an essential tool in mitigating the spread of the Delta variant, and was pleased to note scientists are developing one.

Despite the loss of nearly 600,000 lives in the United States and the pandemic's devastating

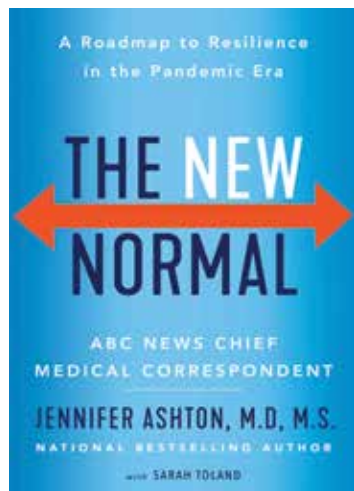
effect on the U.S. and world economy, there are a few "silver linings" to be found in the pandemic, Ashton said. "We have seen how strong the human spirit is and we discovered resilience."

"The virus isn't going anywhere overnight," she said. "The New Normal is built on a simple foundation: thriving in this evolving world demands accepting the New Normal for what it is, not what we want it to be."

Her book details numerous steps to reclaim control of your life and live safely, including taking medical precautions, exercising, finding emotional balance and deciphering complicated medical news to learn what to trust and what to ignore.

Copies of Dr. Ashton's book, *The New Normal*, are available for purchase from OLLI at berkshireOLLI.org.

— Christopher Guidette



With Attractive Programming and Zoom Our Reach has Become Nationwide

OLLI at BCC has once again topped the 1,400-member mark in large part because of our internet Zoom technology, which permitted us to continue delivering smart, intellectually challenging courses to people trapped at home by the pandemic. We have also been able to attract new members well beyond the Berkshires.

Since 2020, the percentage of OLLI members who live more than 50 miles from Pittsfield has increased three-fold from roughly seven percent to 21 percent. We now have Berkshire OLLI members in over thirty states and Canada, and persons as far away as Paris, France have participated in our special lectures. Hawaii, California, South Dakota, Texas and New Jersey are among the states where eager students click the links to our courses.

Arizona: 7	Nebraska: 1
California: 16	New Hampshire: 5
Colorado: 1	New Jersey: 22
Connecticut: 37	New York: 175
Florida: 20	Ohio: 3
Georgia: 1	Ontario: 2
Hawaii: 7	Oregon: 1
Indiana: 1	Pennsylvania: 8
Kentucky: 1	Rhode Island: 4
Maryland: 4	South Carolina: 2
Maine: 2	South Dakota: 2
Massachusetts: 1028	Texas: 3
Michigan: 3	Vermont: 10
Minnesota: 1	Virginia: 5
North Carolina: 3	Washington, D.C.: 7
	Washington: 8

New OLLI Directors

A Publisher and Diplomat Accent Volunteering

The OLLI Board welcomed two dynamic and highly qualified new members at its June meeting. Malvina Wasserman and John Dickson were both elected for two-year terms.

MALVINA WASSERMAN



Malvina Wasserman is a woman of many interests and accomplishments. She studied biochemistry at UC Berkeley on the west coast and history at City College of New York and State University of New York on the east coast. Wasserman's first career was in publishing. Working for Harper and Row, she ultimately served as Sponsoring Publisher of their physical sciences college textbook program. She also held Senior Vice-President positions in two medical communications companies, Excerpta Medica (a division of Elsevier) and AM Medica.

Wasserman became a social studies teacher at a public high school in the Bronx, "at an age when most people are planning retirement." She found the new task extraordinary, both because of the tragic neglect and deterioration of New York City Public Schools (where she had once attended) and because of the gratification she found guiding her students to museums and historical sites around the city and seeing how those trips expanded their horizons.

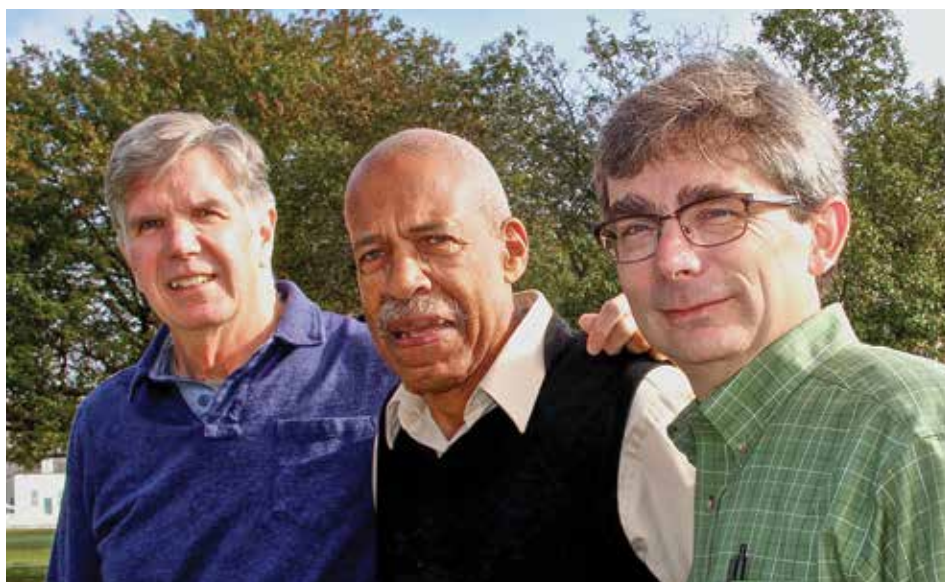
Since retiring to Great Barrington in 2013, Wasserman has volunteered at the Berkshire South Regional Community

Center, the Mason Library, and the Berkshire Bach Society.

Wasserman has been an enthusiastic member of OLLI for six years. She has taken more than 25 courses and has facilitated two courses during this time. She also serves on the *OLLI Update* staff and the Summer 2 Curriculum Committee. She is also assisting OLLI Vice President Gordon Josephson to revise our organization's strategic plan.

Wasserman says she finds OLLI has wonderful instructors and an engaging curriculum which offers delightful social and cultural activities. She said she was particularly impressed with how OLLI leadership and staff transitioned to Zoom technology during the pandemic and is optimistic about the prospect of "hybrid courses" (taught simultaneously in classrooms and online) this fall.

JOHN DICKSON



John Dickson (left) at Hancock Shaker Village with two guest lecturers in his Historic Preservation in Pittsfield course: Churchill Cotton of the Samuel Harrison House (center) and Will Garrison (right), formerly of the Berkshire Historic Society.

John Dickson is a diplomat and "public historian" who retired to Pittsfield in 2010. He lives in a restored 1850s-era family home with his wife Mary, and with much-anticipated visits from three children and three grandsons.

After serving in Gabon with the Peace Corps, Dickson taught history in New Hampshire and New Jersey public schools. He later joined the U.S. State Department, serving in Peru, South Africa, Nigeria and ultimately as Dep-

uty Chief of Mission in both Canada and Mexico. His final State Department assignment was as Director of the Office of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs for Western Hemisphere Affairs. He also has served as Acting Executive Director for the Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board.

History was Dickson's college major at Princeton University, and it has been a lifelong interest. The University Press of Kansas this year published his new work *History Shock: When History Collides with Foreign Relations*.

He has also researched, written and designed a variety of exhibits on such topics as the history of Pittsfield and its mills, as well as walking trails in the Housatonic Valley. At OLLI, Dickson has been a mentor to BCC students who participate in the OLLI mentorship program, and has become OLLI's regular instructor for the "Great Decisions" course which explores international issues.

Since moving to Pittsfield, Dickson has been an active volunteer. He is a board member and tour guide at Arrowhead, the historic home of *Moby Dick* author Herman Melville, and he chairs the Pittsfield Historical Commission and the Community Preservation Committee.

"Ever since I took my first class at OLLI, I've been impressed with the spirit of voluntarism that runs through the organization. I hope to make a contribution in that vein," he said. — **Peter Bluhm**

OLLI Fall Semester At-A-Glance: Sept 20 – Nov. 9

OLLI offers convenient, safe and secure online registration at www.BerkshireOLLI.org. You can also register by calling us at **413-236-2190** with a credit card (we accept Visa, MasterCard, American Express and Discover). If you prefer to pay by check, you may call us with your course registration and then mail your payment to: OLLI at BCC, 1350 West Street, Pittsfield MA 01201. Courses are only available to members of OLLI at Berkshire Community College—if you are not yet a member, you may join online or over the phone for \$60 for a 12-month membership in addition to the course fees. Scholarship options are also available—to apply, please contact our Executive Director, Megan Whilden, at mwhilden@berkshirecc.edu. Note that in-person classes will be moved online wherever possible if warranted by safety concerns.

MONDAYS

M101: *The French Revolution: Upheaval and a Template for the Future* | Philip Deely

9:30 – 11:00 | Online over Zoom

4 sessions: 9/27, 10/4, 10/18 & 11/1

M102: *Today's Headlines* | Steven Tobin

11:30 – 1:00 | Online over Zoom

6 sessions: 9/20, 9/27, 10/4, 10/18, 10/25 & 11/1—no class on 10/11

M103: *Latin America: Post-Covid? And Post-Trump!* | Martin Weinstein

1:30 – 3:00 | Online over Zoom (possibly Hybrid)

5 sessions: 9/20, 9/27, 10/4, 10/18 & 10/25- no class on 10/11

M104: *Scenes and Sounds of Six Great Operas* | Christine Casey

3:30 – 5:00 | Online over Zoom

6 sessions: 9/20, 9/27, 10/4, 10/11, 10/18 & 10/25



Poster for the opera Carmen

TUESDAYS

T101: *Extra Life: A Short History of Living Longer* | Gordon Josephson

10:30 – 12:00 | Online over Zoom

4 sessions: 9/21, 10/12, 10/19 & 10/26

T102: *Middlemarch* | Nancy Travis and Alice Roth

1:30 – 3:00 | In-person, Berkshire Community College, Pittsfield MA

8 sessions: 9/21, 9/28, 10/5, 10/12, 10/19, 10/26, 11/1 & 11/9

T103: *Evolution: a 21st Century Perspective* | Frank Schickor

3:30 – 5:00 | Hybrid over Zoom and at Berkshire Community College

5 sessions: 9/28, 10/5, 10/12, 10/19 & 10/26



Novelist George Eliot

WEDNESDAYS

W101: *Shakespeare and the Law: The First Thing We Do, Let's Praise All the Lawyers* | Philip McKnight

10:00- 12:00 | In-person, Williams College Faculty Club, Williamston MA

6 sessions: 9/22, 9/29, 10/6, 10/13, 10/20 & 10/27

W102: *Artistic Visionaries: Frank Gehry and Christo* | Jock Brooks and Tom Krens

1:30 – 3:00 | In-person at The Clark Art Institute, Williamstown MA

5 sessions: 9/22, 10/6, 10/13, 10/20 & 10/27

W103: *Hot Topics* | Will Singleton

3:30 – 5:00 | Online over Zoom

6 sessions: 9/22, 9/29, 10/6, 10/13, 10/20 & 10/27



Building by Architect Frank Gehry

THURSDAYS

R101 & R102: Christopher Marlow's Edward II | Ann Berman

Two Sessions:

R101: 9:30 – 11:00; In-person at Berkshire Community College, Pittsfield MA

R102: 11:30 – 1:00; Online over Zoom

6 sessions: 9/23, 9/30, 10/7, 10/14, 10/21 & 10/28

R103: Making the Social Internet User Friendly for All | Fan Yang

11:30 – 1:00 | In-person, Berkshire Community College, Pittsfield MA

5 sessions: 9/23, 9/30, 10/7, 10/14, 10/21 & 10/28

Limited Registration: 20

R104: Creating a Photo Essay | Doug Robbins

11:30 am – 1:00 pm | In-person at South County Location TBA

5 sessions: 9/30, 10/7, 10/14, 10/21 & 10/28

Limited Registration: 12

R105: Writing Your Story: An Introduction to Memoir | Vivian Dorsel

1:30 – 3:00 | In-person, South County Location TBA

6 sessions: 9/23, 9/30, 10/7, 10/14, 10/21 & 10/28

Limited Registration: 18

R106: Inside the District Attorney's Office | Multiple Speakers

2:00 - 3:30 | In-person, Berkshire Community College, Pittsfield, MA

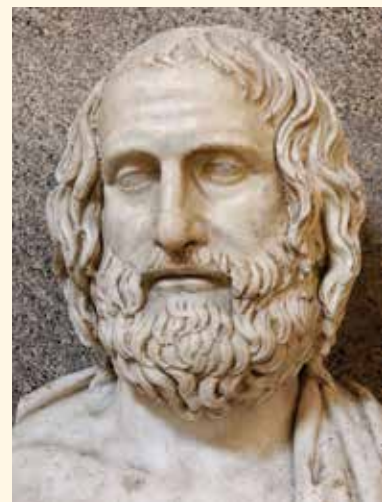
6 sessions: 9/23, 9/30, 10/7, 10/14, 10/21 & 10/28

R107: Euripides, 2.0 | Steven Somkin

3:30 – 5:00 | In-person, South County Location TBA

5 sessions: 9/23, 9/30, 10/7, 10/14 & 10/21

Limited Registration: 20



Marble bust of Euripides

FRIDAYS

F101: COVID Freight Frenzy: How Goods Movement Changes Now Taking Place Will Rock the post-COVID World | Robert James

10:30 – 12:00 | In-person, The Berkshire Museum, Pittsfield MA

6 sessions: 9/24, 10/1, 10/8, 10/15, 10/22 & 10/29

F102: Beyond the Three Bs (Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms) | Kenneth Stark

1:00-2:30 | In-person, The Berkshire Museum, Pittsfield MA

6 sessions: 9/24, 10/1, 10/8, 10/15, 10/22 & 10/29

F103: Science Conversations | Hank Gold

3:00 – 4:30 | Online over Zoom

6 sessions: 9/24, 10/1, 10/8, 10/15, 10/22 & 10/29



Fall Semester Of Classes

MONDAYS

M101: The French Revolution: Upheaval and a Template for the Future

with Philip Deely

9:30 - 11:00 am, 9/27, 10/4, 10/18 & 11/1

Online over Zoom



Modern societies are often forged by revolutions. France's bloody upheaval of 1789 provides a framework for our understanding of social dislocations in history right through our modern era. 18th Century France faced a gathering storm of popular unrest relieved by utopian dreams of a new society. The Terror left society in ruins and paved the way for the unexpected—an imperial state led by an emperor, Napoleon Bonaparte. In addition to contemporary accounts, we will look at how the French Revolution was understood from the perspective of historians, social scientists, and political activists in the 19th and 20th Centuries.

M102: Today's Headlines

with Steven Tobin

11:30 am - 1:00 pm, 9/20, 9/27, 10/4, 10/18, 10/25 & 11/1

(no class on 10/11)

Online over Zoom

Today's Headlines is a moderated discussion course that provides an opportunity to thoughtfully voice your opinions on national and international issues. Serving as a guide and provocateur, the moderator will explore selected

topics drawn from a variety of newspapers and the Internet. Lively discussion of the latest news is the centerpiece of this course.

M103: Latin America: Post-Covid? And Post-Trump!

with Martin Weinstein

1:30 - 3:00 pm, 9/20, 9/27, 10/4, 10/18 & 10/25 (no class on 10/11)

Hybrid: In-person at Berkshire Community College, Pittsfield, MA and Online over Zoom

Latin America continues to struggle with the COVID pandemic even as it now partners with a very different leadership in Washington. This course will assess the effects of the pandemic on the politics and economics of the region with emphasis on Cuba, Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, Chile and Uruguay. It will also analyze the challenges and opportunities afforded by the Biden Administration's policy toward Latin America.

M104: Scenes and Sounds of Six Great Operas

with Christine Casey

3:30 - 5:00 pm, 9/20, 9/27, 10/4, 10/11, 10/18 & 10/25

Online over Zoom



Christine Casey will lead students in an in-depth exploration of six of the great operas. Each of the six class sessions will delve into one of the great operas, complete with a brief biography of the composer and librettist, and will feature a slideshow highlighting significant scenes, as well as audio excerpts of the

significant and memorable arias, taken from recordings. The operas will be *Carmen*, *La Boheme*, *Marriage of Figaro*, *La Traviata*, *The Merry Widow* and *Faust*.

TUESDAYS

T101: Extra Life: A Short History of Living Longer

with Gordon Josephson, MD, MPH

10:30 am - 12:00 pm, 9/21, 10/12, 10/19 & 10/26

Online over Zoom

Based on the recent PBS documentary series of the same name that explores the dramatic increase in lifespan over the past one hundred years, this course will examine the factors undergirding this reality in greater depth, further advancing our understanding of what's truly behind this phenomena. We'll discover the little-known story of the innovations in science and medicine that doubled the human lifespan in less than a century, and celebrate the unsung heroes of public health who believed change was possible and acted on it.

T102: Middlemarch

with BCC Professor Emerita Nancy Travis and Alice Roth

1:30 - 3:00 pm, 9/21, 9/28, 10/5, 10/12, 10/19, 10/26, 11/2 & 11/9

In-person at Berkshire Community College, Pittsfield MA

George Eliot has been called "the great English novelist of ideas." Set in the early 1800s, *Middlemarch* is a psychologically incisive narrative that examines English provincial life through the interrelationships of a varied cast of characters, focusing on issues such as individual aspiration and ambition, the possibilities and limits in women's lives, and social roles and relationships among classes in a time of political change. Eliot was also an influential intellectual, essayist, and translator of the works of the philosophers Spinoza and Feuerbach. Discussion will include the ways in which her philosophic views on freedom and

moral responsibility are woven into her narrative.

T103: Evolution: A 21st Century Perspective

with BCC Professor Frank Schickor

3:30 – 5:00 pm, 9/28, 10/5, 10/12, 10/19 & 10/26

Zoom and in-person at Berkshire Community College, Pittsfield MA



Evolutionary concepts help us understand the world. In turn, new insights continuously change our views on evolution. Focusing on developments over the past 20 years, this five-session course explores the interrelationships and sometimes surprising connections between evolution and scientific discovery. A brief overview of classical evolution and a summary of last century's major contributions will set the stage for a discussion of 21st century evolutionary advances. The course will examine contemporary answers to old evolutionary questions; look at novel approaches in such fields as genetics, microbiology, ethology, ecology, or medicine; and explore emerging evolutionary trends in philosophy and in the social sciences.

WEDNESDAYS

W101: Shakespeare and the Law

with Philip McKnight, JD,

10:00 am – 12:00 pm, 9/22, 9/29, 10/6, 10/13, 10/20 & 10/27

In-person at Williams College Faculty Club, Williamstown MA

This course begins with an analysis of the social, political and, most importantly, religious framework of the Elizabethan world into which Shakespeare was born in 1564. We will examine the development of the English common law from its earliest origins in medieval times through Shakespeare's day, and

then analyze the relationship of a number of his early history plays to the Elizabethan concept of law and social order. Finally, we will consider several plays, including but not limited to, *The Merchant of Venice*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Julius Caesar*, *Hamlet*, and *Measure for Measure*, to see how Shakespeare used the law and legal principles in those works.

W102: Artistic Visionaries: Frank Gehry and Christo

with Jock Brooks and Tom Krens

1:30 – 3:00 pm, 9/22, 10/6, 10/13, 10/20 & 10/27 (no class 9/29)

In-person at the Clark Art Institute in Williamstown, MA

Two of today's art and architecture innovators have challenged us to understand and appreciate their special, and very personal, visions. Both Gehry and Christo have transformed the very definitions of their art forms, architecture for Gehry and sculpture for Christo. We will review their lives, works, and perhaps recount a few personal stories.

W103: Hot Topics

with Will Singleton, Ed.D.

3:30 – 5:00 pm, 9/22, 9/29, 10/6, 10/13, 10/20 & 10/27

Online over Zoom

Six different 'hot topics' will be addressed by presenters with expert knowledge about these issues. A lively Q & A and spirited exploration of these topics will ensue. The topics explored include the U.S. census; public health and behavioral change; the press; what is patriotism; the effectiveness of protests; and voter suppression.

THURSDAYS

R101 & R102: Christopher Marlow's Edward II

with Ann Berman

R101: 9:30 – 11:00 am, 9/23, 9/30, 10/7, 10/14, 10/21 & 10/28

In-person at Berkshire Community College, Pittsfield MA

R102: 11:30 am – 1:00 pm, 9/23, 9/30, 10/7, 10/14, 10/21 & 10/28

Online over Zoom

Marlowe's play, which prefigures Shakespeare's *Richard II*, is a great example of what was then a new genre—the early modern history play. An explosive combination of the personal and the political is brought to life in this fascinating but little seen play. Edward's elevation of his lowborn favorite threatens the nobles who surround him. Shifting alliances lead to the downfall of this 14th century king, murdered by confederates of his queen and her lover, and ends with their subsequent reckoning with Edward III, his heir. A staged reading of the play by OLLI members will be held during the last session of the course.

R103: Making the Social Internet User Friendly for All

with UAlbany Professor Fan Yang

11:30 am – 1:00 pm, 9/23, 9/30, 10/7, 10/14, 10/21 & 10/28

In-person at Berkshire Community College, Pittsfield MA



This course is designed to encourage conversations with members of OLLI about the role of communicative technologies (e.g., social media, the Internet, artificial intelligence) in their everyday lives. In a series of 6 sessions, the class will collectively discuss: 1) the evolution of communicative technologies, 2) the fundamental impact of communicative technologies on how we perceive, think, feel, interact with each other and the outside world, 3) the role of users in shaping the media landscape, and, in particular, fears and expectations of interacting with these technologies, and

4) build self-efficacy in efficiently and effectively living with communicative technologies.

LIMITED REGISTRATION: 20

R104: Creating a Photo Essay
with Doug Robbins

**11:30 am – 1:00 pm, 9/30, 10/7,
10/14, 10/21 & 10/28**

In-person at South County Location TBA

Learn how to tell a story with visual images. This course is for any level photographer. Each student will choose a subject and explore a visual journey. We will discuss both composition and technique.

LIMITED REGISTRATION: 12

R105: Writing Your Story: An Introduction to Memoir
with Vivian Dorsel

**1:30 – 3:30 pm, 9/23, 9/30, 10/7,
10/14, 10/21 & 10/28**

In-person at South County location TBA



This is a workshop on writing the personal memoir, for writers of all levels, conducted in six weekly 90-minute sessions. Participants will read and discuss examples of short memoir pieces, and then work on memoir-writing exercises in response to the instructor's prompts. Those who enroll may bring journals, letters, photographs, or other mementos that will stimulate memories of the people, places, and events that have been important in their lives. Participants should expect to spend some time on writing assignments between class meetings.

LIMITED REGISTRATION: 18

R106: Inside the District Attorney's Office
with various speakers

**2:00-3:30 pm, 9/23, 9/30, 10/7, 10/14,
10/21 & 10/28**

In-Person at Berkshire Community College, Pittsfield MA

District attorneys serve as the people's prosecutor and their offices and approach to criminal justice have a profound effect on communities. Get the inside scoop on the inner workings of the Berkshire County District Attorney's Office in this course, as each week a different speaker addresses one of the many ways the office impact our lives, from the Domestic and Sexual Violence Taskforce to the recent Plea Tracker study.

R107: Euripides, 2.0

with Steven Somkin

**3:30 – 5:00 pm, 9/23, 9/30, 10/7,
10/14 & 10/21**

In-person at South County location TBA

Euripides was one of the great tragedians of the classical Greek theatre, sharing the honorific with Aeschylus and Sophocles. But his plays are closer to the contemporary social and political idiom than theirs, and they abound with astute observations of human psychological complexity and divine irony. As in our previous excursions into Greek drama, we will review the origins and conventions of Ancient Greek theatre, discuss the myths and stories that permeated the culture, and read aloud portions of four of the seventeen plays of Euripides that have come down to us: *Helen*, *Iphigenia in Aulis*, *Iphigenia in Taurus*, and his masterpiece *The Bacchae*.

LIMITED REGISTRATION: 20

FRIDAYS

F101: COVID Freight Frenzy: How Goods Movement Changes Now Taking Place Will Rock the Post-COVID World
with Robert James

**10:30 am – 12:00 pm, 9/24, 10/1,
10/8, 10/15, 10/22 & 10/29**

The Berkshire Museum in Pittsfield, MA

Vanished paper products, delayed commercial deliveries and sky-rocketing materials costs, among others, are results

of COVID's disruptive impact on freight supply chains. Why did they occur? How long will they persist? In what ways will commerce be forever changed? These are some of the questions we will explore, after a discussion of supply chain basics—including the role that trucks, trains and planes and warehouses play in providing freight services. New technologies and management techniques will help businesses meet present and future challenges—and they too will be included in our discussion of post-COVID distribution.

F102: Beyond the Three Bs (Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms)

with Kenneth Stark

**1:00 – 2:30 pm, 9/24, 10/1, 10/8,
10/15, 10/22 & 10/29**

The Berkshire Museum in Pittsfield, MA

Bach, Beethoven and Brahms were incredible geniuses. Their works bring joy and inspire us. But wait...there's more. There are numerous contemporaries of those three, whose compositions are so amazing that you want...no should, hear some of them. We will explore those often neglected, or underplayed composers and listen to many of their works. You may be surprised when experiencing these astonishing masterpieces.

F103: Science Conversations

with Hank Gold, MD

**3:00 – 4:30 pm, 9/24, 10/1, 10/8,
10/15, 10/22 & 10/29**

Online over Zoom

Join us for a lively moderated discussion of the latest in science news and research, as appears in the Tuesday "Science Times" section of *The New York Times*, plus other magazines and journals. The moderator will encourage a vigorous give-and-take. Student suggestions for discussion topics and additional readings are welcomed.

OLLI Mentoring Enhances the Academic Journey of a BCC Nursing Student

Though limited to virtual contact because of the Year of Covid, an OLLI mentor and BCC nursing student became friends despite never having met in person until recently. And their relationship is helping launch a new, fulfilling career.

Diane Whitehead, a nursing professional with a wide range of medical-field experience, is the mentor. Theresa DeSantis, a BCC student who pivoted from several years in commercial aviation jobs to a quest for a career in nursing, is the mentee. They were introduced last fall by Erin McNamara, a member of the OLLI-BCC Mentoring Steering Committee.

With a long and stellar career in nursing that comprises four college degrees, including doctorates in education and nursing practice, plus years of administrative experience and decades of teaching online, Whitehead is committed to enhancing the nursing field. Whitehead's accomplishments include publishing textbooks and in professional journals, including articles on mentoring nurses.

But DeSantis is benefitting from another of Whitehead's gifts: a warm friendly attitude supported by graciousness and empathy for others—hallmarks of the best in nursing.

Ultimately, what led Whitehead to become an OLLI-BCC mentor was her appreciation of the important role a community college played in her own career and the careers of others, enabling people in all stages of life to continue their education and build skills that would

enhance the quality of their lives and improve their means of supporting their families.

DeSantis' path to the OLLI-BCC mentoring program and connection with Whitehead began with her search for a more satisfactory career. DeSantis said that after completing a bachelor degree in flight management she spent sev-



Diane Whitehead and Theresa DeSantis

eral years working at the Portsmouth, New Hampshire airport and, later, at her hometown airport in Pittsfield. When she realized she had little opportunity for advancement in her aviation-based position, DeSantis began exploring other career options.

From talking with many friends who were nurses, DeSantis began considering career options in the health care field. Of special interest to DeSantis were becoming a traveling nurse or a cosmetic nurse. In nursing, she also saw an opportunity to employ her empathetic understanding of others. She especially values empathy.

DeSantis said her decision to enroll at BCC and work toward earning a bachelor

degree in nursing has been supported by the bond she developed with Whitehead. Since beginning the mentoring program, DeSantis says she believes she has become more confident and dedicated to this career direction.

Like nursing, successful mentoring relies on empathy. Since both women value this trait, they became close working together. And DeSantis' gratitude was apparent in a note she sent mentoring committee members this spring:

"You could not have paired me with a more wonderful, friendly and knowledgeable person. Diane (Whitehead) is such a blessing ... easy to talk to ... and ... a wealth of knowledge and advice. She makes me excited for my future!

So again, thank you... I just wanted to make sure whoever put this program into play gets a HUGE pat on the back because it has really enhanced my overall experience in my academic journey."

McNamara said her committee and the entire OLLI community can take special pride that BCC students who have participated in the mentorship program graduate at a higher rate than BCC students overall. Members of OLLI's program currently comprise 15 mentor-mentee pairs. Another nine mentors are waiting to be paired with potential mentees, McNamara said.

To learn more about becoming an OLLI mentor, visit www.BerkshireOLLI.org and click the "Get Involved" button then select "Mentoring for Success Program" from the drop-down menu.

— **Leyn Burrows and Chris Guidette**

OLLI Showcases Creativity Of Its Members Online

For the past decade, OLLI volunteers have organized an annual art show featuring the varied artwork of its members—from paintings and photography to fiber arts, sculpture and more. Traditionally the exhibition has been held at the Lenox Library, but last year, because of the pandemic, the OLLI Art Show Committee organized a very successful virtual show instead, with almost 50 OLLI member artists participating and more than 100 works on display.

OLLI Executive Director Megan Whilden praised the OLLI artists who participated and the OLLI Art Show Committee, led by Chelly Sterman and Maxine Bookless. Whilden also gave special thanks to Nan Bookless ensuring each artist's images were a delight to behold.

Participating artists included Alan Metzger, Alan Rubin, Amelia Berg, Art Alpert, Austin Porter, Carol Fryd, Charles Hochbaum, Claudia Shuster, David Hagerty, Elna Nugent, Erika Crofut, Helga Orthofer, Howard Shapiro, Jane McWhorter, Jane Salata, Joan Flesch, Joan Gluck, Joan L. Davidson, Judith Fox-Goldstein, Judy Seaman, Karen Erickson, Larry Frankel, Lee Easter, Leslie Feldman, Linda Hertz, Lucia Sullivan, Marsha Markle, Mary Anne Carley, Maxine Bookless, Michael Lebowitz, Mike Laurin, Mike Zdeb, Nan Bookless, Nancy Turner Fagelman, Neil Koreman, Polly Kurasch, Richard Lasner, Ron Garfunkel, Stephen Sariago, Steve Rubin, Sue Arkans, Susan Geller, Terry Sherman, Valerie Bassett, Valerie Takvorian, and Varoujan Froudjian.

Enjoy a sample of the 2021 OLLI Virtual Art Show works on display in this edition of *OLLI Update*. To see the whole exhibition, visit berkshireolli.org/artshow

The 2022 OLLI Art Show is scheduled for June at the Lichtenstein Center for the Arts in Pittsfield's Upstreet Cultural District. Watch your email for the call for art in a few months.

Clockwise from top right: Sue Arkans, watercolor; Terry Sherman, mixed media collage; Nan Bookless, photograph; Leslie Feldman, acrylic; Charles Hochbaum, photograph; Amelia Berg, paper collage; Lucia Sullivan, oil; Valerie Bassett, oil



We're Enjoying Special Events Again

OLLI's first post-pandemic special events were a hit with some 60 members who enjoyed delicious lunches, matinee performances of Eleanor Burgess's *The Niceties* and exclusive talkbacks over two separate gatherings July 14-15. The events took place at Hancock Shaker Village where the Chester Theatre is in residence for the summer. The theatre events were organized by Arline Breskin and OLLI's Special Events Committee. Future OLLI special events are listed on BerkshireOLLI.org. — Ellen Croibier



Invest in OLLI's Future Through Planned Giving

OLLI has allowed each of us to remain intellectually stimulated and socially connected during these challenging times. We have come to appreciate its importance in our lives more than ever before. One way we can ensure that OLLI will be there for us and others in the future is to participate in its Planned Giving Society.

OLLI's Planned Giving Society was established to secure its future. A planned gift is a long-term investment in the important work that OLLI does. It can take the form of a simple bequest, of appreciated securities or a percentage of your assets, or of creating a charitable remainder or annuity trust with OLLI as one of the beneficiaries.



An IRA Qualified Charitable Distribution Rollover is a simple way to support the OLLI at BCC. If you are 70½ years old or older, you may rollover any amount, up to \$100,000, from your annual IRA Required Minimum Distribution to OLLI without paying any income tax on the amount of the distribution that is your gift.

The benefit of an annual gift of appreciated securities is that you will receive

a tax deduction for the value received by OLLI on the date of the transfer. There will be no capital gains tax on this contribution.

Your gift must be completed by December 31, 2021 to be counted for this year.

What's more, making a simple bequest is a way to minimize the taxes your heirs may have to pay as part of your estate. Your donation may be a dollar amount that you indicate in your will or a percentage of the total. In either case you will help ensure OLLI's important work continues into the future.

Ask your attorney or financial advisor to help you decide the best approach or call BCC's Development Office at 413-236-2185 for assistance.

— Sandi Rubin

Life Is A Cabaret For OLLI Members

OLLI at BCC was one of only 14 programs nationwide to be accepted into a creative program, funded by Aroha Philanthropies, that focused on expanding access to arts education for older adults. OLLI's pilot project, in partnership with Berkshire Music School, was an online cabaret singing and performance class, taught by singer and educator Sherri Buxton, and accompanied by pianist Bob Shepherd. The initial course concluded with an online concert featuring self-recorded performance videos from the participants, which can be seen on OLLI's YouTube channel.

The course was so successful that OLLI added a second, in-person cabaret intensive workshop a few weeks later,

culminating in an in-person performance at Berkshire Music School. The video of that performance is also available on OLLI's YouTube channel.

By all accounts the cabaret course was a huge success. Participant Bruce Reid noted, "It was such a profound experience for me on so many levels that I've yet to fully fathom. It is a stellar group we had and I'll be ever grateful for the *esprit de corps*, the kind encouragement and much appreciated support."

Instructor Buxton praised the students' performances, "Beautiful, meaningful singing, wonderful stage presence and great delivery. Your hard work and willingness to improvise and think outside of the box was equal to your

kindness and support of each other. I really appreciate each and every one of you and your perseverance on this journey." Another student, Louise Pillai, added, "I love that Sherri and Bob encouraged our individuality and unique expression, valuing that, and not comparing ourselves to others."

OLLI looks forward to continuing to partner with Berkshire Music School to offer hands-on music classes, and expanding to offer arts education courses with other cultural partners as well.

— Megan Whilden



Left: OLLI students with instructor Sherri Buxton and accompanist Bob Shepherd after final performance.



Above: OLLI students practicing at the Berkshire Music School.

Left: OLLI student Carolyn Bell singing at the student cabaret performance, with Bob Shepherd on piano.

Thank You To Our Extraordinary Faculty

As many know, almost all of OLLI's incredible instructors and speakers are volunteers, generously sharing their insight and knowledge with our members and the greater community. We are especially grateful to them for adapting to the challenges of the pandemic over the past year, and helping OLLI at BCC ensure our learning community continues to stay connected and engaged during these challenging times. We look forward to celebrating our faculty with an in-person celebration again in 2022!

William Abranowicz	Liv Cummins	Anthony Haynes	Robert Miller	Leonard Sigal
James Acker	Laura Dankner	Adam Hinds	Douglas Mishkin	Eugenie Sills
Jim Acosta	Philip Deely	Tom Hodgson	Kevin Moran	Jen Silverman
Karen Allen	Hilary Deely	Carl Hoffman	Gina Morrison	Will Singleton
Albert Anderson	Stephane Deneve	Carrie Holland	Jeff Morse	Maria Sirois
Leslie Appleget	Tyler DeWitt	Colleen Holmes	Haig Nalbantian	Elaine Sohn
Michael Arden	John Dickson	Marilou Hyson	Shirin Nash	Steven Somkin
Howard Arkans	Laszlo Dienes	Natalia Ireland	Linda Neville	Kate Sontag
Louise Aronson	Bess Dillman	Henric Johnson	Virginia O'Leary	Ben Sosne
Jennifer Ashton	Joe Diver	Markes Johnson	Pedro Ortiz	John Sowle
Emanuel Ax	Angie Doll Dowrin	Frances Jones-Sneed	Norton Owen	Naomi Spatz
Fleur Barron	Stephen Donaldson	Gordon Josephson	Carole Owens	Christopher Sprowl
Ashley Bathgate	Peter Dugan	Richard Katsee	Jay Pasachoff	Ilan Stavans
David Baum	Matthew Dunne	Jamie Keller	Steven Patterson	Ilana Steinhauer
Brian Bell	Loren Dus	Ellen Kennedy	Diane Pearlman	Kurt Stuke
Samantha Bennett	Susan Dworkin	Katherine Kidd	Stephen Pearlman	Barbara Sullivan
Barbara Berenson	Daniel Dwyer	Phyllis Kornfeld	Ralph Pearson	Robert Surbrug
Jim Beresford	Jake Eberwein	James Kraft	Gerol Petruzella	Lisa Swigart
Peter Bergman	Stewart Edelstein	Daniel Kramer	Mark Pettus	Leonard Tabs
Ann Berman	Rebecca Edwards	Ben Lamb	Smitty Pignatelli	Pamela Tatge
Eric Berryman	Auric Enchill	Edward Lane	Jane Ralph	Edward Tivnan
Lynda Bianchi	Jonathan Epstein	Chris Laney	Alex Reczkowski	Steven Tobin
Peter Bluhm	Deborah Fallows	Craig Langlois	Gerald Reid	Liana Toscanini
Barbara Bonner	Jim Fallows	Patrick Larkin	Elizabeth Reynolds	John Trainor
Jeff Borak	Tricia Farley-Bouvier	Geoffrey Larson	Doug Robbins	Al Treidel
Leon Botstein	Diane Firtell	Ben Latini	Maya Rockeymoore	Kristen Van Ginhoven
Julianne Boyd	Beth Galton	James Laughman	Cummings	Gwendolyn VanSant
Stephen Boyd	Barry Gan	Jeff Leppo	Mary Rogers	Farhad Vashengoo
Laura Brennan	Brian Garman	Eric Lesser	Abigail Rollins	Barbara Waldinger
Arline Breskin	Patsy Gay	Macy Levin	Robert Ronnow	Jesse Waldinger
Nicole Brown	Tom Gerety	Benjamin Liptzin	Robyn Rosen	Nancy Walters
Jesse Bruchac	Anna Gershenson	Michelle Lopez	Renee Rotta	Iain Webb
Heather Bruegel	Joan Gluck	Jim Lovejoy	Alan Rubin	Walter Weber
Lawrence Burns	Paul Gluck	Yo-Yo Ma	Steven Rubin	Martin Weinstein
Allyn Burrows	Hank Gold	David Macaulay	Lauren Santangelo	Diane Whitehead
Jonathan Butler	Larry Goldberg	Kate Maguire	Cheryl Savageau	Alexis Wichowski
Sherri James Buxton	Danielle Gonzalez	Lena Makaroun	Laura Savia	Michael Wilcox
Cathleen Cahill	Carl Goodman	Logan Malik	Brianna Schaeffer	Walton Wilson
Nicholas Carr	Fred Gray	Maud Mandel	Eve Schatz	June Wolf
Nathan Carterette	Barbara Greenbaum	Jeffrey Mann	Anthony Segal	William Wootters
Roselle Chartock	Jean Guerrero	Ken David Masur	Bud Selig	Susan Wozniak
Brian Cina	Brian Hailes	Richard Matturro	Howard Shapiro	Michael Wynn
John Clarke	Linda Halpern	Justin McKinnon	Bob Shepherd	Hyeon Yeo
Alisa Costa	Phil Halpern	Philip McKnight	Jay Sherwin	William Young
Joe Coughlin	Michael Harney	Carla Meskill	Jeff Shesol	Jeremy Yudkin
Doug Crane	Bonney Hartlet	Gloria Miller	Carl Shuster	Miaoli Zhang
Carol Crossed	Rob Hartmann	Michael Miller	Greig Siedor	Ethan Zuckerman



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OLLI FALL OPEN HOUSE

Live on Zoom
RSVP at berkshireolli.org

Thursday, September 2, at 3:30pm Eastern Daylight Time

Enjoy sneak peeks at our fall classes, both online and in-person,
and hear from our terrific instructors.

Free and Open to All!

Support lifelong learning in the Berkshires!
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