

# LLARC FALL 2025 SCHEDULE

## MONDAYS:

- Virginia Slep, “Creative Writing”, via **ZOOM**, Mondays, 10AM-Noon, **begins on 9/22**

In this writing group, the creative talents of the participants will be encouraged by their peers. Members are invited to write in any genre: memoir, poetry, fiction, non-fiction, essay, humor or play. Handouts will be provided to stimulate writing. Participants are given time to share their writings with classmates if they choose. Sometimes in talking about someone else’s writing, we are able to clarify our own thoughts and abilities. This is a light-hearted, supportive, welcoming group whose members enjoy writing for the fun of it and is a continuation from spring 2024.

Virginia Slep holds a BA and an MA in English and taught high school English for 35 years before her retirement. She has been leading this writing study group at LLARC since 2008 and was awarded the 2023 LLARC Bernie Shuster Award for excellence in teaching. She writes a regular column for the North Reading Transcript. Virginia has a PhD in Clinical Hypnosis and has a private practice in Wayland. In this writing group, the creative talents of the participants will be encouraged by their peers. Members are invited to write in any genre: memoir, poetry, fiction, non-fiction, essay, humor or play. Handouts will be provided to stimulate writing.

- Mary Nowak, “Safe Haven”, via **ZOOM**, Mondays, 9:15-10:45AM, 5 weeks (9/15-10/20)

“I have decided today that approximately 1000 refugees should be immediately brought from Italy to this country.” With this announcement by FDR began a most amazing, but little-known story of a group of refugees brought here for many and varies reasons. An experiment, an example? This is truly an amazing story and together we are going to research and discuss all the details. Where did they come from? How did they get here? When? Who was in charge? Where did they settle? There is so much more, so many more questions. And, a truly dramatic conclusion!

Mary Nowak has a BA and MA in American history from Boston University. She taught American history and U.S. and world geography in Brookline. She has led several study groups for LLARC on women in the Suffrage Movement, the Labor Movement, the Progressive Movement, the American Civil War, and America’s Internment of Japanese-American citizens during WWII.

- Mary Nowak, “Title: The Fourteenth Amendment: The history, the content, and relevance today”, via **ZOOM**, Mondays, 9:15-10:45AM, 5 weeks (10/27-12/1)

The Fourteenth Amendment is part of a trio of amendments-13, 14, and 15-passed to ensure for all time the rights of all blacks, but especially the newly freed blacks who might be denied those

rights by the defeated South. These Amendments have come to have a very important place in all our lives today. We are going to research the background, history and some major Supreme Court rulings dealing with the Fourteenth Amendment. Some topics include: birthright citizenship, due process, equal protection of the laws as well as state obligations regarding the Bill of Rights, the meaning of and application of privileges and immunities and regulations applying to representation in the House of Representatives, who could serve and who could not. We'll look at the history of these rights and how and why controversies abound about some of these today.

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- Kara Torres-Kilgannon, "Shhh! Don't Talk About It: Controversial Topics in Holocaust and Genocide Studies", **In Person**, Mondays, 11AM-12:30PM, 10 weeks

History isn't just a collection of facts etched in stone. It's a dynamic narrative filled with turning points, triumphs, and tragedies. Even decades after a historic event, it can be the center of endless and spirited debate. Historical controversies and the questions surrounding them may never be put to rest, but that doesn't mean people will ever stop trying to find the answers. In this course, we'll discuss controversial and sometimes "historical footnotes" that are often swept under the carpet and not discussed such as the Katyn Massacre, ethical decision making of Jewish doctors and nurses in the ghettos during the Holocaust, the "good" Dutch myth, sexual violence against Jewish women in ghettos and camps during the Holocaust, the court action of Filomena Leszczyńska against historians Barbara Engelking and Jan Grabowski, the Cambodian genocide, the Rwandan genocide, the crimes of sexual violence in Bosnia and the achievements of the ICTY (International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia), and Putin's atrocity playbook in Chechnya. Also, we will discuss America's response to these controversial topics in Holocaust and Genocide Studies and what brutal lessons we have learned from them.

Kara Torres-Kilgannon is a historian specializing in Holocaust and Genocide Studies; she earned a BA in History from Sheffield Hallam University, an MA (in Law) from the University of Sheffield, and an MA from Yeshiva University. She is pursuing her Ph.D. in Holocaust & Genocide Studies at Gratz College.

- Steve Kendall, "Not Just a Pretty Face: Fashion Photography as Art", **In Person**, Mondays 1-2:45PM, 5 weeks, (9/15-10/20)

Fashion photography has existed for a century, and most of it has relied only on pretty faces to sell products. But not when it's been in the hands of Richard Avedon, Edward Steichen, Irving Penn, Annie Leibovitz, Horst P. Horst and others. They turned fashion photography into art.

Their beautiful, striking, dramatic and even daring work can be compared to history's great fine art. In this course, you'll learn how artful fashion photography began and evolved, and who made it happen. Go behind the scenes with fashion shoots and not only meet the legends who worked behind the camera but also those who posed in front of it. But mostly, see and discuss history's greatest fashion photos.

Steve Kendall has taught art history-related courses for LLARC for the past 19 terms, and is a former recipient of the LLARC Bernie Shuster Award for teaching excellence. He has been a tour guide at the deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum for 12 years, and prior to retirement was the president of an advertising and public relations agency.

- Bill Koehler, "Football Talk", via **ZOOM**, Mondays, 1-2:30PM, 10 weeks

Do you live for Sundays every fall? Do you make yourself hoarse on game days yelling at your television? So do I! We'll get together each week to discuss the most compelling games and NFL story lines each week. Fans of all teams (except the Cowboys) are welcome.

William Koehler, Dean of the Sloane School of Business and Communication at Regis College, holds a PhD in Modern European History from Brandeis University and has taught in higher education for over three decades.

## **TUESDAYS:**

- Dick Sullivan, "Beginning the Search for Your Family History", **In Person**, Tuesdays, 9:15-10:45AM, 5 weeks, (9/16-10/21)

This is a course for beginners in their genealogy quest. And for those who are curious about or contemplating starting an organized search for their ancestors, cousins and other descendants. The course will cover:

- How would I start my research? When did most immigrants arrive in the U.S.?
- What kind of records should I search for? How can I assemble an organized, accurate data base?
- Who has the records that I would need to succeed in this effort? Can my family members help?
- How would I locate records in Massachusetts and in other states/other countries?
- How could I analyze & summarize my findings? Will family trees prepared by others help me?

Dick's interest in discovering family histories comes from twenty years of research for family and friends across five states and in eight countries. Background: College of the Holy Cross: AB in Psychology; Boston College: Master's in Education; Northeastern University: Master's degree in Public Administration. Taught thirteen years at the Boston University School of Business. Department: Organizational Behavior.

- Claire Levovsky, “Books into Movies”, **In Person**, Tuesdays, 9:15-10:45AM, 10 weeks

“Books and movies are two very different mediums that provide distinct forms of entertainment, but which is better? Both forms of entertainment offer a variety of different things that people find enjoyable like their ability to take us to different worlds, imagine new realities, learn new things, and a way to de-stress. The biggest difference between the two is that movies give viewers visuals to focus on while books challenge readers to imagine and interpret the story in their own unique way. This and other differences can make one medium better at telling a story or providing a better form of entertainment.”

Readings: “Are You There God? It’s Me, Margaret” by Judy Blume  
 “Mrs. Galloway” by Virginia Wolfe  
 “The Notebook” by Nicholas Sparks  
 “It Ends with Us” by Colleen Hoover  
 “The Lost Husband” by Katherine Center  
 “The Perfect Couple” by Elin Hilderbrand

Claire earned her BA from Boston University, a Master’s in Rehabilitation Counseling from Assumption College, and a Master’s in Professional Writing from the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth.

- John Archer, “Play Reading”, **In Person**, Tuesdays, 11AM-12:30PM, 6 weeks (9/16-10/28)

In this course, we will read three plays from different eras: Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*, Lawrence & Lee’s *Auntie Mame*, and a modern play to be unveiled. The fundamental question we’ll seek to answer is: how do these plays affect us today? We’ll also explore what we can learn about fundamental truths of human nature and society. Participants should read *Macbeth* before the first class.

John has led a rich and full life, as a businessman, musician, and civic leader. After majoring in English at Providence College, he studied piano at the Longy School of Music, and he still performs regularly. After serving in the Coast Guard, he founded Archer Insurance in Beverly, which he still manages after 52 years. Among many other endeavors, John helped to found a homeless shelter on the North Shore and currently serves as President of the Danvers Art Association.

- Jim McLaren, “23 & You: The Story of Genetics”, via **ZOOM**, Tuesdays, 11AM-12:30PM, 10 weeks, **begins 9/30**

Since the discovery of DNA by Watson and Crick in the mid-twentieth century, our understanding of our genetic makeup has progressed by leaps and bounds. In this course, we’ll

explore the nature and mechanisms of genetic inheritance and consider what our genes can, and cannot, tell us about ourselves.

Jim McLaren is a retired science teacher and Department Head at Newton South High School. In the 80's and 90's he co-authored a middle school and a high school biology text that were adopted in schools nationally. His interest in science in general and biology in particular is lifelong, as is his interest in infecting others, young and adult, with that passion.

- Jeff Epstein, “Comparing Sports Stars from Different Eras”, **In Person**, Tuesdays, 1-2:30PM, 5 weeks, (10/28-12/2)

This is an in-depth, discussion-focused course that will focus on the amazing evolution of the four major sports over the past 75? years, in concert with an analysis/debate over the dramatic changes in the incredible athletes that play the game as well as in the sports themselves.

Jeff is a true New Englander, having attended The Fessenden School and Phillip before earning a BS in Economics from McGill University and an MBA from Columbia University. During the Columbia years, he showed his true genius in the field of sports wagering while betting the unheard sum of \$500 (his entire summer earnings) on the Yankees to win the World Series, and then needed his mom to pay off his dear “bookie” friend as the mighty Yankees were swept in four straight games. After a stint in the corporate world after his MBA, he was roped into the family jewelry and diamond business for a couple of decades before personal tragedy led him to review his life priorities. He returned to his roots at Fessenden both teaching and coaching football, basketball and baseball. For the last fifty years he has bought, sold, and raced horses while managing small partnerships. Jeff is a true sports guy.

- Ronna Frick, “International Films”, via **ZOOM**, Tuesdays, 1-4PM, 10 weeks

In the ultimate course for lovers of cinema, we will explore a different classic international film each week. We will meet on Zoom on Tuesdays at 1 for a viewing of the film. The discussion will follow afterward, ending at approximately 4 P.M. For those class members who prefer to view the film independently, the length of each film will be posted on the Course Syllabus, and you may join us just for the discussion.

Ronna Frick has led literature and film related discussion groups at LLARC since 2010 and is a former recipient of the LLARC Bernie Shuster Award for teaching excellence. Prior to LLARC she taught high school English for over 40 years and served nine years as English department chair at Wellesley High School. She thoroughly enjoys teaching at LLARC and looks forward to another meaningful and fun experience with other lifelong learners.

**WEDNESDAYS:**

- John Duff, “Authoritarianism”, **In Person**, Wednesdays, 9:15-10:45AM, 10 weeks

“Authoritarian” is an antonym for Democratic. Our principal text will be *How Democracies Die* by Levitsky and Ziblatt (Crown 2018). They review its history in Europe and Latin America. Supplemental material will be supplied daily by the Courts, Media, White House, and other experts. Strong opinions welcome.

A retired tax attorney/CPA, John has led more than a dozen LLARC classes on (mostly) controversial issues over the last 20 years. He is a graduate of Notre Dame, Harvard Law and BU Law.

- Frank Villa, “Science in the News”, **In Person**, Wednesdays, 11AM-12:30PM, 5 weeks (9/17-10/15)

Current events have sown confusion about science and the role it plays in our everyday lives. In this 5 week program we will begin by exploring how science works as a discipline, as a research entity and as a business. We’ll follow with a discussion of some of the issues about which confusion reigns, including public health and vaccines, climate change and the future consequences of our current activities, an understanding about how genetic research will contribute to future therapies, and the intricacies of human sexual identity. Presentations will be based on scientific research, but, as always, open to questions and other topics of interest to the class.

Frank Villa has a lifelong interest in the natural sciences. He finds great joy in explaining complex principles and processes and bringing the latest quests and discoveries of science to a general audience. He has developed curricula and taught science courses in many settings on a variety of topics.

- Jack Miller, “Recurring Crises of American Democracy”, **In Person**, Wednesdays, 11AM-12:30PM, 5 weeks (10/22-11/19)

We will discuss four previous threats to our US democracy from the 1790’s to the 1970’s and look at possible current threats. The previous four threats to our democracy, are political polarization, racism and nativism (native born vs. immigrants), economic inequality and excessive executive power. Convergence of these four threats may lead us to a grave moment for our US democracy. We will review how earlier generations faced these threats and repaired our civic fabric and renewed our democracy.

Jack is a retired engineer with teaching experience in engineering, mathematics, business, and LLARC. His lifelong interest in history focuses this class on how the US has managed to navigate past democratic crises, with possible clues to avoid current and future threats.

- Dorothy Miller, “*Life of Pi*”, **In Person**, Wednesdays, 11AM-12:30PM, 10 weeks

A novel by definition is a work of fiction. However, Charles Dickens, one of the greatest novelists of all time, said a novel should have verisimilitude.

It should seem like it is true, that it could actually happen. As we read “Life of Pi” we will ask ourselves if the events could possibly be true as they are told to us. At the end of the book we will decide if we believe Pi’s story.

Dorothy Miller taught in the English Department at Boston College for forty years specializing in multicultural literature. This will be her fourth year teaching various works of literature at Regis.

- Joe Tennyson, “Embodied Artificial Intelligence, Part 2”, via **ZOOM**, Wednesdays, 1-2:30PM, 10 weeks

In this class, we focus on EAI, Embodied Artificial Intelligence, the embedding of Artificial Intelligence into physical entities enhancing their social, cognitive, and physical capabilities, enabling EAI’s to perceive, learn from, and interact with their physical environment potentially as well as, or better than, their human counterparts. With an emphasis on interactions in the physical world, EAI integrates developments in multiple fields, including computer vision, natural language processing, environmental modeling, reinforcement learning, physics-based simulation, robotics, bio-computing, and evolutionary computing. We explore contributions from each domain as we unravel the history and current status of EAI.

Joe Tennyson worked in the Information Technology field as a software developer, network engineer, and senior manager for forty years before retiring in 2020. He developed an on-going interest in Artificial Intelligence in the early 1980s and has followed developments in the field as they unfolded since that time. Joe holds a BA in Communication Theory and Methodology from Emerson College and an MBA from Boston College with a concentration in Operations Research.

- Steve Kendall, “Not Just a Pretty Face: Fashion Photography as Art”, **In Person**, Wednesdays, 1-2:45PM, 5 weeks, (9/17-10/15)

Fashion photography has existed for a century, and most of it has relied only on pretty faces to sell products. But not when it’s been in the hands of Richard Avedon, Edward Steichen, Irving Penn, Annie Leibovitz, Horst P. Horst and others. They turned fashion photography into art. Their beautiful, striking, dramatic and even daring work can be compared to history’s great fine art. In this course, you’ll learn how artful fashion photography began and evolved, and who made it happen. Go behind the scenes with fashion shoots, and not only meet the legends who worked behind the camera but also those who posed in front of it. But mostly, see and discuss history’s greatest fashion photos.

Steve Kendall has taught art history-related courses for LLARC for the past 22 terms and is a former recipient of LLARC's Bernie Shuster Award for teaching excellence. He has been a tour guide at the deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum for 12 years, and prior to retirement was the president of an advertising and public relations agency.

#### **THURSDAYS:**

- Bernie Shuster, "We Have Not a Government: How the thirteen colonies became the USA", **In Person**, Thursdays, 9:45-11:15AM, 10 weeks

In this course, we'll explore the early, uncertain days of the thirteen original colonies as they made their way, haltingly, toward the establishment of the United States. We'll explore the debates, missteps, and compromises that characterized the late 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Bernard Shuster earned a BA in History at UMASS Amherst and an LLD at Boston University School of Law. He practiced law for several years as a partner in a Boston Law firm. He founded and served as COO at a financial services firm. Bernie has led over 50 courses at LLARC and HILR.

- Brooks Goddard, "History & Literature of Ghana", **In Person**, Thursdays, 9:30-11:00AM, 10 weeks (LLAIC course)

Ghana is a country rich in history, stories, and traditions. My 20-day visit there back in the day was very powerful. In 2016 I was one of 15 people at the Harvard Bookstore listening to Yaa Gyasi talk about her novel *Homegoing*. She signed my book "Hope you enjoy the novel." I loved it. It is the story of the descendants of two sisters from early 19th century Gold Coast. The trans-Atlantic slave trade and its consequences are part of the story. Let us discuss this novel along with history from Zeinab Zawawi (originally from Sudan). That is, an African view of Ghana. The last session will be devoted to an understanding of slavery as seen by the Montgomery, AL, museums of Equal Justice Initiative and the Ghanaian sculptor who has created many pieces for Montgomery museums and for his own museum in Ghana. For the first class please read *Homegoing* through the end of the chapter, "Quey."

I am a lifetime teacher beginning in 1963. Most of my career was at the high school level; I retired from 31 years at Wellesley High School as English Department Head. I lived in Kenya where I taught in the US-AID program Teachers for East Africa. I have visited many African countries including Ghana and consider myself an amateur Africanist.

- Rachel Alpert, "*Ulysses*", **In Person**, Thursdays, 12:30-2PM, 10 weeks (LLAIC course)

James Joyce's *Ulysses* is widely celebrated as one of the great masterpieces of twentieth century literature. Its indelible characters, epic themes, intimate realism, imaginative style, poetic prose,

and unparalleled literary connections present a unique reading experience. The book, at 730 pages, is, however, a daunting read, unguided. Though the entire novel covers one day—June 16, 1904—in the Dublin life of its three protagonists, we will take a leisurely guided tour in two semesters through the emotional, cultural, spiritual and psychological struggles of Leopold and Molly Bloom and Stephen Dedalus on the most “ordinariniest” of days. The class will be primarily a guided discussion of each chapter, one per class.

- Participants can anticipate approximately 2-3 hours of reading (or listening to the audio version) weekly.
- This course is Part 1, covering the first half of this complex book. Part 2 will be offered in the spring and will complete our tour.
- Please note that this class will meet at the Fine Arts Center at Regis College, 235 Wellesley Street, Weston.
- ***Books and Other Resources:***
- The Hans Walter Gabler edition of *Ulysses* is highly recommended as it has line numbers for easy reference. In addition, I will provide explanatory materials for each class.

I taught high school English and then as a lawyer taught at Suffolk Law School. I have led lifelong learning courses on “Freedom of Speech,” “The Rise of Religion in the Supreme Court,” “The Regulation of Food in the U.S.” and James Joyce’s *Ulysses*. I am an avid fan of great literature, including *Ulysses*, which I have taught before both at LLAIC and at LLARC.

- **Rachel Alpert**, “Transgender Rights—and Wrongs”, **In Person**, Thursdays, 2:15-3:45PM, 5 weeks, 10/30-12/4 (LLAIC course)

Transgenderism is the hot spot in the American culture wars. Candidate Trump and affiliated PACs spent over \$200M on ads during the 2024 Presidential campaign attacking Kamala Harris on transgender rights. (“Kamala is for they/them. President Trump is for you.”) On his first days in office in 2025 President Trump issued six executive orders circumscribing transgender activities. State legislatures have considered 701 bills in 2024 alone on the subject, with over 50 enacted. (In just the first quarter of 2025, 854 state bills were introduced.) The US Supreme Court issued four rulings on transgender rights, including one in June 2025 upholding a Tennessee law banning medical care for trans minors. Next Term the Court will hear cases on conversion therapy and transgender athletes in sports. This interactive course will parse through the rhetoric to consider the science, the law, and the history to discuss what rights transgender adults and minors should have, especially when in potential conflict with others (parents, teachers, women). The format will be primarily discussion based on the assigned readings.

- Participants can anticipate approximately 1-2 hours of reading weekly.

***Books and Other Resources:***

I will provide links to various internet materials in advance for each class.

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“The Regulation of Food in the U.S.” and on James Joyce’s *Ulysses*. I am an avid fan of great literature, including *Ulysses*, which I have taught before both at LLAIC and at LLARC.

- Barbara John & Paul Sears, “A Journey to Latino America”, **In Person**, Thursdays, 1-2:30PM, 5 weeks, 10/30-12/4

Barbara and Paul will share videos from their amazing travels over 5 weeks.

**Day 1: Ecuador: Land of Many Faces**

This video explores the three regions of Ecuador: the Galapagos Islands, the Altoplano, and the jungle

**Day 2: Mexico City: City of the Aztecs**

This video explores the history of Mexico City and its current relationship to the Aztec Culture.

**Day 3: Patagonia: Then and Now**

This video explores the history of Patagonia and its current amazing natural environment.

**Day 4: Peru: In the Shadow of the Incas**

This video explores Peru, its environment, its history, and its ties to the Inca culture.

**Day 5: Cuba on the Edge**

This video explores the natural environment of Cuba.

Barbara John taught for thirty years in the Boston Public Schools while Paul Sears was an administrator at Beth Israel hospital. When they retired, they began serious travel. After a few trips, they decided to use their video skills to document the countries that they explored. These are a few of them.

**FRIDAYS:**

- Bill Koehler, “The French Revolution”, via **ZOOM**, Fridays, 9:15-10:45AM, 5 weeks (10/24-11/21)

The French Revolution is arguably the most significant such event in recorded human history, in both its initial impacts and long-term effects. We’ll explore what happened during the tumultuous years from 1789-1815, **why** it happened, and why we should care.

William Koehler, Dean of the Sloane School of Business and Communication at Regis College, holds a PhD in Modern European History from Brandeis University and has taught in higher education for over three decades.

- Karen Mallozzi, “Another Round of Mystery”, **In Person**, Fridays, 11AM-12:30PM, 10 weeks

The class will read and discuss regular length and short stories in the mystery genre. We will look at character, setting, plot, and format. Participants may get the assigned books from a library, used or new booksellers, or listen on audio. Note taking is recommended. \*\*Short stories are provided by the leader. Each week a list of possible discussion questions is emailed ahead of the class so that we have a frame for our discussions. The format is discussion based so reading is done before arriving in class. The works for this round include:

*The Museum Detective* by Maha Khan Phillips  
*Passenger to Frankfurt* by Agatha Christie  
*Murder by Memory* by Olivia White  
*A Trick of the Light* by Louise Penny  
*Orchid Beach* by Stuart Woods

Karen has led 10+ sessions of the Mystery discussions as well as a two-week summer Intersession on the book *North Woods* by Daniel Mason. She graduated from URI in 1981 with a BA in history with minors in English and Political Science. In 2012 she completed her MA in religious studies from Andover-Newton Theological School. In her free time, she gardens, bakes, and volunteers, and reads, reads, reads!

- JA Zimmer, “Elementary Arithmetic from an Adult Viewpoint”, **In Person**, Fridays, 1PM-2:30PM, 8 weeks (9/19-11/7)

This course is aimed at people with an unsatisfied interest in math, who for some regretted reason never got around to taking any more math than is necessary for a liberal arts major. Together, we’ll refresh your math memory and delve into areas of math you may never have studied (or learned well the first time...). I’ll use diagrams and descriptive algebra to explain such things as long division, adding fractions, binary numbers, and how the Romans managed to multiply whole numbers with their unhelpful way of writing numbers down. Diagrams will include some geometry. We’ll proceed at a pace that works for everyone, with an emphasis on practical application of the beautiful world of math.

J Adrian Zimmer audited his first anthropology course when he was 13. Later he minored in sociology and went on through a postdoc in math. Then he taught and wrote about computer science. Upon retiring he switched gears again and has led several film courses for Regis, Tufts, and H.I.L.R.