SAMPLE Spring 2027 Proposal & Instructions

Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Northwestern University

Term: Spring 2027

Term Dates: Monday, March 1–Monday, June 7, 2027

Proposals Due: Sunday, November 29, 2026

Thank you for submitting a study group proposal! Coordinators are the heart of OLLI, and we truly appreciate the time and energy you are dedicating to enrich the learning experience for your fellow members.

Upon submission of this form, your study group is considered approved. If there are any concerns, you will be contacted by the Study Group Committee. Descriptions may be lightly edited for clarity and consistency. Schedules and final descriptions will be emailed to coordinators approximately three weeks after the proposal deadline.

Coordinator Guidelines:

- Study groups ideally have two coordinators. If a third coordinator is needed, we encourage you to invite a new coordinator to join you as a mentorship opportunity. A fourth coordinator may be added under special circumstances after discussion with the director.
- At least one coordinator must have prior experience leading a discussion-based study group at Northwestern OLLI.
- New coordinators should participate in at least two study groups at Northwestern OLLI before stepping into a coordinator role.
- First-time coordinators are asked to attend a New Coordinator Orientation, typically held 2–3 weeks before the term starts. Session information will be emailed to all new coordinators.
- Coordinators may not propose study groups using materials in which they or their family members have a financial interest. For example, a coordinator may not lead a study group using a book they or a family member wrote themselves. This is to ensure that the learning experience is free from even the perception that coordinators are offering the study group for personal gain.

Study Group Guidelines:

- **Peer-Led & Discussion-Based** — Study groups are led by OLLI members who are not necessarily content experts; most of the group meeting time should be spent in discussion.
- **The Coordinator's Role** — Your job is to guide and encourage discussion. While occasional lectures (by coordinators, participants, or guest speakers) are fine, the focus should remain on group dialogue.
- **Virtual Study Groups** — All online study groups are accessed through MyOLLINU.
- **Schedule** — Study groups follow the term calendar and meet weekly for two hours. If adjustments are needed, please discuss them with the director.
- **Choosing Materials**

ó Get creative! Consider a variety of sources, including:

- Podcasts, museum exhibits, magazines, journals, books, and more.
- Reputable external resources (e.g., Great Courses, university public forums) can be used but should always be followed by discussion.
- Click here for a list of study group resource ideas.
- Click here for a database of past study groups offered by OLLI.

Questions about your proposal: email the Study Group Committee at ollinusgc@gmail.com
Questions about this form: email OLLI staff at olli@northwestern.edu
Thank you for being part of OLLI's learning community—we're excited to support you in leading a great study group!

I acknowledge that I have read and understand the coordinator and study group guidelines. *

◯ Yes

How to Save and Share This Form for Editing

1. **Click Save** at the bottom of the page.
2. A pop-up window will appear asking you to Sign up—**do not sign up.**
3. Instead, click **"Skip Create an Account"** (this text appears in small blue letters at the bottom of the pop-up).
4. A second pop-up will appear, prompting you to email the saved, shareable link. **Enter your email address** (if it's not already filled in) and **click Send Link.**
5. **You will receive an email** from JotForm with a link to your proposal. To share the form with your co-coordinators:
   - **Forward the JotForm email** to your co-coordinators so they can view and edit the form.
   - They can make changes, and their edits will be automatically saved.
6. Once all edits are complete, you or your co-coordinators must **click Submit** to finalize your submission.

Study Group Name

Be creative — propose an eye-catching name that draws attention and interest.

Study Group Name *

To review your information prior to submitting, navigate back through the form using the 'Back' and 'Next' buttons at the bottom of each page. Do Not use the back button on your browser.

Study Group Format

Please select your choice of In-person or Virtual study group.
Note: Due to technical complications, resource constraints, and the nature of our discussion-based model, **we do not offer hybrid options** in which some members of a study group are in-person and some members are virtual.

Format: *

- ◯ In-person
- ◯ Virtual

In-person Study Group Size

Setting Your Preferred Number of Participants
When deciding on the number of participants for your study group, consider the following:

- **Engagement & Discussion** — Our peer-led model thrives on active participation. Ensure all members have opportunities for meaningful discussion.
- **Discussion Leaders** — Consider how many discussion leaders will be needed to facilitate conversations effectively.
- **Breakout Groups** — Using breakout groups creatively can make a large class feel more intimate.
- **Attendance Variability** — Some participants may be absent in any given week, so factor this into your planning.
- **Enrollment & Cancellations** — If your study group does not meet your minimum enrollment, you may need to cancel it.
- **Minimum Participants**
  - You can set the minimum as low as you'd like, but it should not exceed 12.
  - If you request a minimum of 13 or more, please discuss with the Study Group Committee why your study group's content and structure require a higher minimum.
  - If you don't reach your minimum during registration, you must consult with the OLLI office before making a final decision about cancellation. This ensures coordination across the program.
  - Keep in mind that smaller study groups often experience high levels of participation and engagement.
- **Maximum Participants**
  - Most study groups set a maximum between 25 and 35.
  - If you plan to allow more than 35 participants, you must have a clear strategy for maintaining an engaging, peer-led discussion format—such as using breakout groups.

Your Minimum size for this in-person study group (choose 12 or fewer): *

[ ]

Your Maximum size for this in-person study group: *

[ ]

Optional Room/Equipment Requests

If you have a specific classroom request please enter the room number below. Otherwise, you may leave this section blank. Note: room requests are not guaranteed and subject to availability.

Optional room number request:

Select room configuration request:

- ◯ Rectangle (conference) seating arrangement.
- ◯ Rows (presentation) seating arrangement.

Select room set-up requests. Select all that apply. Note: due to space and equipment limitations, not all requests can be accommodated.

Room set-up requests:

- ☐ Tabletop microphones
- ☐ Laser pointer
- ☐ Remote slide advancer

Virtual Study Group Size

Setting Your Preferred Number of Participants

When deciding on the number of participants for your study group, consider the following:

- **Engagement & Discussion** — Our peer-led model thrives on active participation. Ensure all members have opportunities for meaningful discussion.
- **Discussion Leaders** — Consider how many discussion leaders will be needed to facilitate conversations effectively.
- **Breakout Rooms** — Using breakout rooms creatively can make a large class feel more intimate.
- **Attendance Variability** — Some participants may be absent in any given week, so factor this into your planning.
- **Enrollment & Cancellations** — If your study group does not meet your minimum enrollment, you may need to cancel it.
- **Minimum Participants**
    - You can set the minimum as low as you'd like, but it should not exceed 12.
    - If you request a minimum of 13 or more, please discuss with the Study Group Committee why your study group's content and structure require a higher minimum.

If you don't reach your minimum during registration, you must consult with the OLLI office before making a final decision about cancellation. This ensures coordination across the program.
    - Keep in mind that smaller study groups often experience high levels of participation and engagement.
- **Maximum Participants**
    - Most study groups set a maximum between 25 and 35.
    - If you plan to allow more than 35 participants, you must have a clear strategy for maintaining an engaging, peer-led discussion format—such as using breakout rooms.

Your Minimum size for this Virtual study group (choose 12 or fewer): *

Your Maximum size for this Virtual study group: *

Study groups ideally have two coordinators. If a third coordinator is needed, we encourage you to invite a new coordinator to join you as a mentorship opportunity. A fourth coordinator may be added under special circumstances after discussion with the director.

Coordinator Information

Coordinator One NetID *

Is Coordinator One a new coordinator? *

- Yes
- No

Coordinator One *

First Name Last Name

Coordinator One Phone Number *

Area Code Phone Number

Coordinator One Email *

example@example.com. *Note the email you enter here is used for all coordinator communication from OLLI; please double check for accuracy.

Need a co-coordinator? Try reaching out to members with similar interests, making an announcement in your current study group(s), or cultivating someone who has never been a coordinator.

Coordinator Two

First Name Last Name

Coordinator Two NetID (if known)

Is Coordinator Two a new coordinator?

- Yes
- No

Coordinator Two Phone Number

Area Code Phone Number

Coordinator Two Email

example@example.com. *Note the email you enter here is used for all coordinator communication from OLLI; please double check for accuracy.

If you are proposing more than two coordinators, please explain below.

0/100

Coordinator Three (optional)

Last Name

First Name

Coordinator Three NetID (if known)

Is Coordinator Three a new coordinator?

- Yes
- No

Coordinator Three Phone Number

Area Code | Phone Number

Coordinator Three Email

example@example.com. *Note the email you enter here is used for all coordinator communication from OLLI; please double check for accuracy.

Coordinator Four (optional)

First Name | Last Name

Coordinator Four NetID (if known)

Is Coordinator Four a new coordinator?

- Yes
- No

Coordinator Four Phone Number

Area Code | Phone Number

Coordinator Four Email

example@example.com. *Note the email you enter here is used for all coordinator communication from OLLI; please double check for accuracy.

Study Group Description

200 words maximum

Your study group description will appear in the catalog, so make it compelling! It should:

- **Grab the reader's attention** — Spark curiosity and make them want to join.
- **Clearly explain the study group's purpose** — Outline what participants will do, learn, and discuss. Don't just summarize the source material.
- **Be original** — Do not copy and paste descriptions from Amazon, book jackets, or other sources.
- **Be honest and engaging** — Your description should excite potential participants but never mislead them.
- **Use inclusive language** — Ensure your description is welcoming to all, avoiding assumptions about background, experience, or identity.

Descriptions may be lightly edited to ensure consistency of format and voice across the catalog. About three weeks before the catalog is released, coordinators will have a chance to review and finalize their descriptions.

Please list books and movie titles in the following format:
Title in Italics, Author/Editor/Director Name (Publisher Name, Published Year)

(Example)
An Immense World: How Animal Senses Reveal the Hidden Realms Around Us

Have you ever wondered how you would experience the world if you were an animal? Every animal, including humans, is enclosed within its own unique sensory bubble, perceiving only a slight sliver of an immense world…a world teeming with sights and textures, sounds and vibrations, smells and tastes, and electric and magnetic fields. Using Pulitzer Prize-winning science journalist Ed Yong's book, *An Immense World: How Animal Senses Reveal the Hidden Realms Around Us* (Random House, 2022), our study group will discover through thoughtful discussion the world as it is truly perceived by other animals. In doing so, we will gain new perspectives by tapping into these alien worldviews. We will go beyond the limitations of our senses and encounter animals that track the Earth's magnetic fields, fill rivers with electrical messages, wield sonar and much more. We will supplement Yong's engaging and accessible book with articles, videos, presentations by guest speakers and even animal encounters that allow us to see the world through their eyes. Join us as together we discuss and discover new ways of seeing and experiencing our immense world.

Additional examples may be found in past catalogs available on the OLLI website — here.

Your study group description (limit 200 words). *

This study group is a: *

- ◯ New study group
- ◯ New topic within a series
- ◯ Continuing or repeat offering

Study Group Details

Select the subject area that best describes this study group.

Subject Area: *

- ◯ Contemporary and Social Issues
- ◯ Creative Arts (Performing, Visual, and Literary Arts)
- ◯ History & Government
- ◯ Literature
- ◯ Social Sciences (Philosophy, Sociology, Anthropology, Economics)
- ◯ Science, Technology, Medicine & Health

Select all of the descriptors below that explain what will be expected from study group members.

Discussion Level: *

- ◯ Low level of discussion
- ◯ Medium level of discussion
- ◯ High level of discussion

Participation Expectations: *

- ◯ According to Comfort Level
- ◯ Encouraged
- ◯ Strongly Encouraged

Preparation Time: *

- ○ No preparation needed
- ○ Less than 1 hour per week
- ○ Roughly 1-2 hours per week
- ○ More than 2 hours per week

Optional (select all that apply):

- ☐ Movies/documentaries will be shown in the classroom
- ☐ Digital SLR camera required
- ☐ Digital camera or Smartphone required
- ☐ Access to Netflix or other streaming service
- ☐ Kindle edition of text available

Materials Required and Cost Estimate

Materials and cost that study group members will need, including: books, magazine subscriptions, tickets, streaming services, and photographic or other equipment.

List each of your source materials and its cost: *

(Type N/A if you do not have source materials.)

Schedule Request

- Please include at least *three* scheduling options, but four options are preferred.
- No study group is guaranteed a time slot. Please be as flexible as possible.
- The complicated scheduling process takes into account coordinator preferences and conflicts, a balance of days/times, a balance of subject areas by day/time, availability of classroom space, etc.
- Preference will be given to repeat study groups.
- Approximately 3 weeks prior to the catalog release, coordinators will be notified of their study group day and time.

Please rank your top four schedule choices from first to fourth. (Scroll all the way down the pull-down for BONUS GROUP days and times.)

Schedule choices:

	Day / Time
First	
Second	
Third	
Fourth	



If this is a repeat study group, is choice #1 the day/time it has been previously offered? (There is no guarantee that a study group will be assigned a requested time.)

Is this a 7 week study group? *

- ○ No
- ○ Yes, first half of the semester
- ○ Yes, second half of the semester

Repeat study group day/time:

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

Please note if your group requires extra time for extenuating circumstances. (For example: early start time for photography study group or late finish for a film study group.)

Extra time required:

Once you click submit, you will not be able to make any changes to your proposal. Your submission will be sent directly to the Study Group Committee for review.

Upon submitting the form, you and your co-coordinator/s will receive an automated email confirmation with the submitted information from OLLI Northwestern with the email address noreply@jotform.com.

OLLI will email the final study group catalog description and schedule to coordinators (to the email address provided on this form) prior to final production. Coordinators will have an opportunity to review and approve their catalog listing. If we do not hear back from you by the approval deadline we will move forward with the listing as is.

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Submit