Fall 2026 OLLI Talk Presentations

12:00 – 1:00 p.m. (unless otherwise noted)

Instructions. This document contains the list of OLLI Talk presentations scheduled for the Fall 2026 semester. If you are not registering for OLLI Talks using **OLLI's online registration system**, please email (ollireg@gmail.com) or call (617.287.7312) the OLLI office with your OLLI Talk choices. When emailing or leaving a voicemail, please include the title of the OLLI Talk, its date, and if applicable, the location where you will be viewing the presentation.

Please note that folks are encouraged to bring their lunch to these programs, if they care to!

OLLI Talks At-a-Glance (please note the location after each title)

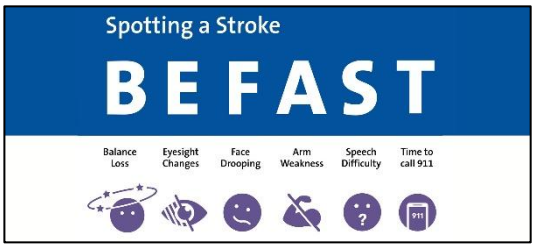
Tuesday, September 22 - Is This a Stroke!? Learn to BE FAST. *(Braintree)*
Thursday, September 24 –The Nervous System Under the Microscope *(UMass Boston)*
Monday, September 28 – Building Fort Monroe *(Zoom; available to watch at UMass Boston)*
Wednesday, September 30 – The Six Pillars of Brain Health *(Zoom)*
Monday, October 5 – Plastic, Climate Change, and Human Health *(Zoom; available to watch at UMass)*
Thursday, October 8 – Anatomy of a Smishing Attack *(All locations; speaker at UMass Boston)*
Thursday, October 15 – Japan's Incredibly Rapid Modernization *(Zoom; watch at UMass Boston also)*
Wednesday, October 21 – The Secret Life of Jokes *(Zoom; 4–5:30 p.m.)*
Friday, October 23 – Scary Art *(Zoom; 1–2:00 p.m.)*
Monday, October 26 – Gerontology Research Poster Session *(UMass Boston; 11:30 a.m.–12:45 p.m.)*
Tuesday, October 27 – Poe's Life, Literature, and Legacy *(Zoom; 4–5:00 p.m.)*
Thursday, October 29 – At-Home Habits for Your Best Health *(Braintree)*
Thursday, November 5 – The U.S. Army and the Trail of Tears *(Zoom; available to watch at UMass/Braintree)*
Monday, November 9 – TechPals: A UMass Boston IT Capstone Project Presentation *(Zoom; 5–6:00 p.m.)*
Tuesday, November 10 – Posture & Healthy Aging: Standing Tall for Better Health *(Zoom; watch at UMass)*
Thursday, November 12 – Mental Health in Older Adults: Mind & Body Connection *(Zoom at all locations)*
Friday, November 13 – The Orkney Islands: The People and Culture of Scotland's North *(Zoom)*
Tuesday, November 17 – Menopause & Hormone Replacement Therapy *(Zoom; watch at UMass also)*
Thursday, November 19 – Brain Health & Wellness: Understanding Dementia *(Zoom at all locations)*
Tuesday, November 24 – NOAA Ocean Exploration *(Zoom; available to watch at UMass as well)*
Tuesday, December 1 – The Ancient Silk Road *(Braintree; 12:30–1:30 p.m.)*
Monday, December 7 – The Flying Santa of the Lighthouses, 1929-2025 *(Zoom; available to watch at UMass)*

In-Person Viewing of Zoom OLLI Talks. When possible, online OLLI Talks can be watched at the UMass Boston campus and/or Thayer Public Library in Braintree. In the descriptions that follow, it will be noted if a specific Zoom OLLI Talk will be available to watch in-person. No registration is necessary for these in-person viewing of online OLLI Talks.

Is This a Stroke!? Learn to BE FAST.

Date: Tuesday, September 22

Location: Logan Auditorium, Thayer Public Library in Braintree



Strokes are a leading cause of disability and death in the United States and affect people of all ages. This talk will explore the definition and presentation of strokes, a brief overview of the brain, risk factors for having a stroke and learning the actions to take if you or someone you know are showing symptoms of a stroke. **Presenter: Marguerite Magri** is a retired Occupational Therapist and Certified Hand Therapist who practiced for 44 years. Marguerite has presented several OLLI Talks on human anatomy. Most recently, she shared information on her Total Knee Replacement journey.

The Beautiful Brain: The Nervous System Under the Microscope

Date: Thursday, September 24

Location: Room 612, 3rd Floor, McCormack Hall, UMass Boston Campus

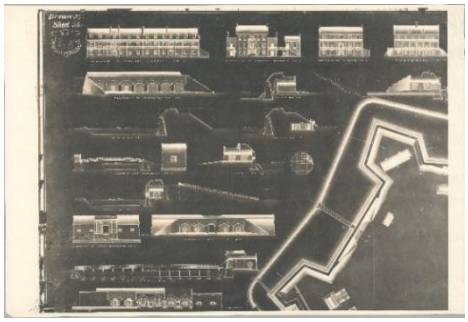


Looking at brain tissue through a microscope can be as fascinating as swimming in a coral reef. Using silver, chemical, fluorescent, and antibody stains brings out the incredible beauty of the nerve cells that populate our nervous system. In this presentation, we will look at a wide variety of neurons: their shapes, sizes, how they communicate with each other, and the function of the structures within which they reside. We will explore the cerebral cortex, the memory-producing hippocampus, the habit-producing striatum, the coordination-producing cerebellum, and the cells that synthesize the chemical transmitters that allow our minds to function. **Presenter: Tim Wheelock** is the retired Assistant Director of Neuropathology at McLean Hospital's Harvard Brain Tissue Resource Center (Brain Bank). He was also an instructor in Neuroanatomy and Neuropathology and managed the Department's Microscopic Image Archive.

Building Fort Monroe

Date: Monday, September 28

Location: Online via Zoom (also available at UMass Boston)



The United States Army Corps of Engineers, led by Simon Bernard, designed the largest masonry fort in the United States after the War of 1812. The actual labor source of predominately enslaved individuals used to build the fort had been largely left out the narrative when looking at this national monument. In this program, OLLI students will be presented with primary and secondary sources in order to understand and interpret historical context and

narrative. Participants will also gain an understanding of engineering design from the 19th century by discovering the architectural features that help the fort remain standing after 200 years. **Presenter:** Museum educator through the Fort Monroe Authority. Fort Monroe, overlooking the Chesapeake Bay, has witnessed some of the nation's most diverse and intricate historic events spanning the American story. The history of Fort Monroe holds stunning achievements and tremendous costs in the continuing struggle of Americans to achieve, define, and maintain the ideals of freedom.



The Six Pillars of Brain Health: Maintaining and Improving It as We Age

Date: Wednesday, September 30

Location: Online via Zoom

Maintaining and improving brain health is important because it affects our cognitive health, motor and sensory skills, and emotional well being. A lifestyle that supports brain health can make a difference to your well-being throughout your life. This session provides an informative overview of the six major pillars of brain health, including actionable steps you can take along with resources to learn more. **Presenter: Jeff Zornitsky**, is a semi-retired organizational leader with significant accomplishments in the commercial, not-for-profit, and government sectors as an executive and manager of large-scale performance improvement assignments. He is currently an MA AARP volunteer and certified Speakers Bureau presenter, focusing in maintaining and improving brain health as we age.

P-SNAP
PHYSICIAN AND SCIENTIST NETWORK ADDRESSING PLASTICS AND HEALTH

Plastic, Climate Change, and Human Health: What we need to know and what we can do about it

Date: Monday, October 5

Location: Online via Zoom (also available at UMass Boston)

This talk will look at what our over production and consumption of plastic is doing to our health and the health of our planet. It will cover the overlap of plastic and climate change, the increasing scientific knowledge about the toxicity of plastic, why plastic is an environmental justice issue at all stages of its life, and what can we do as a community to address it this growing crisis. **Presenter: Bridget Lee** is an ER physician working with P-SNAP.org, a non-profit teaching the world about microplastics and harms to human health, our planet, and what we can do about it. Bridget presented last fall for OLLI on the effects of microplastics on the human body.



Anatomy of a Smishing Attack: Real World Examples and Takeaways

Date: Thursday, October 8

Location: Room 612, 3rd Floor, McCormack Hall, UMass Boston Campus

**Note* - This OLLI Talk will be available to watch online via Zoom as well as at Thayer Public Library in Braintree.*

Attackers are always trying to stay one step ahead so they can continue to get their hands on your information and/or money. Text/SMS-based attacks, aka Smishing attacks, are on the rise, especially as people use more protections on their accounts and computers while phone text messages are often overlooked. We will walk through real-life examples of Smishing attacks, from first contact to siphoning off your retirement savings, and talk about all the ways to intervene before the damage is done. **Presenter: Alison Murray** is the Principal/Owner of AEM Technologies, LLC and holds an MS in Security Studies: Cybersecurity Concentration & professional certifications for CISSP, CCSP, and Security +. Alison is passionate about demystifying Cybersecurity and technology so that everyone can better protect themselves. Alison is also the Senior Information Security Specialist for the Information Security Office at UMass Boston.

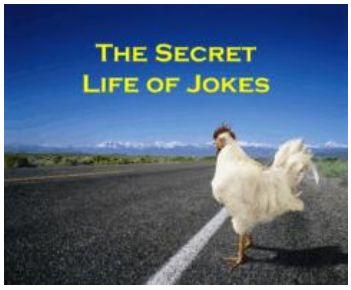
Japan's Incredibly Rapid Modernization: The Story of Meiji Restoration

Date: Thursday, October 15

Location: Online via Zoom (also available at UMass Boston)



For 250 years, the Tokugawa shogunate sealed off Japan from the outside world, except for a tiny Dutch trading outpost at the Dejima island. The shoguns did not want Christianity and other contaminating cultural influences entering Japan, and they wanted to ward off the aggressive European imperialist moves. When the U.S. became a rising industrial and naval power, it launched two naval missions (from Newport, RI), in 1853 and 1854, led by Commodore Matthew Calbraith Perry, to force Japan to open up. As Perry's ships entered the waters near Tokyo (then called Edo), the formidable steamships equipped with fearsome cannons caused consternation in the populace. This led to the overthrow of the Tokugawa shogunate and the installation of Emperor Meiji to the throne in what is now called Tokyo. This Meiji Restoration period led to an incredibly fast industrialization and modernization of Japan. In a little over 30 years, Japan transformed from a feudal society into a modern industrial and military power. **Presenter: Nik ("Nikhilesh") Dholakia** is Professor Emeritus of International Business, University of Rhode Island (URI). After 7 years of teaching elsewhere, Nik spent 1981 to 2015 as a faculty member at URI. After retirement from URI, and staying active in research publishing and professional blogging, Nik lives in Providence, RI. He divides his time between attending OLLI programs, mostly as a participant and occasionally as a speaker; and traveling, including some selected professional speaking appearances.



The Secret Life of Jokes

Date: Wednesday, October 21

Time: 4–5:30 p.m.

Location: Online via Zoom

From Henny Youngman's silly one-liners to the epically filthy "The Aristocrats," every joke ever told shows how comedy works. For jokes, the big difference is they're small, so it's easier to see what makes them tick and how they make us laugh. Topics covered in this multimedia presentation include: the Rule of 3 (Why are things funnier in threes? Really, why? I mean, why?); is humor inherently hostile?; how jokes are related to Japanese haiku poetry; why jokes make you smarter; dirty jokes that aren't dirty; and the Official Funniest Joke In The World. (Caution: Contains some mature content.) **Presenter: David Misch** is a former stand-up comic, screenwriter (*Mork and Mindy*, *Saturday Night Live*, *The Muppets Take Manhattan*), author (*Funny: The Book*), teacher (USC and UCLA) and lecturer at Yale, Columbia, Oxford, the Smithsonian, 92Y (NYC), Austin Film Festival, and more than 30 lifelong learning programs around the country. More at www.davidmisch.com.



Scary Art

Date: Friday, October 23

Time: 1–2:00 p.m.

Location: Online via Zoom

The Cleveland Museum of Art has created a special program featuring goblins, witches and dastardly doings! Explore otherwordly paintings and prints by Francisco Goya, Salvator Rosa and Albert Pinkham Ryder for an art journey to the other side. **Presenter: Arielle Levine** of the Cleveland Museum of Art teaches students all around the world during video conferences in the museum's Distance Learning Program. She has a degree in art history from Case Western Reserve University and has been with the museum's education department for over 15 years.



Gerontology Research Poster Practice Session

Date: Monday, October 26

Time: 11:30 a.m.–12:45 p.m.

Location: Gerontology Hallway, 3rd Floor, Wheatley Peters Hall

OLLI at UMass Boston has the distinction of being part of the university's Gerontology Program. Each year, faculty and students attend the annual Gerontological Society of America (GSA) conference. GSA is the oldest and largest interdisciplinary organization devoted to research, education, and practice in the field of aging. This program will feature Gerontology PhD students hosting a practice Poster Session which showcases the research they are conducting on aging and older adults. OLLI members are invited to participate and ask the

students to explain their research and answer questions you may. Your perspectives and questions can help students prepare for the conference.

Poe's Life, Literature, and Legacy

Date: Tuesday, October 27

Time: 4–5:00 p.m.

Location: Online via Zoom webinar

Meet the "Master of the Macabre" Edgar Allan Poe! This presentation will explore the vast collection of Poe primary sources through an engaging tour of the Poe Museum. Participants will leave with an understanding of Edgar Allan Poe's life, literary works, and legacy. **Presenter:** A represenative from Poe Museum will lead this webinar. Founded in 1922, the Poe Museum houses the largest collection of Edgar Allan Poe artifacts, memorabilia, and manuscripts in the world. The Poe Museum celebrates the legacy of Poe, dubbed “the master of the macabre,” and his enduring impact on the cultural landscape of today. The Poe Museum is a 501(c)3 nonprofit institution located in Richmond, VA.

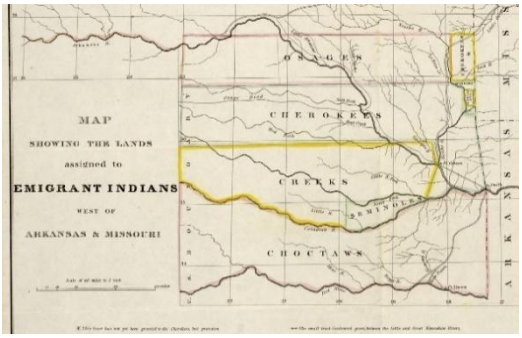


At-Home Habits for Your Best Health

Date: Thursday, October 29

Location: Logan Auditorium, Thayer Public Library in Braintree

Dr. DelVal’s journey to her best health started at age 50 and continues today as she is 80 years old. The presentation will include at least 50 at-home specific habits which have contributed to her progress and that can apply to anyone in any age range. The goal of the session is for each participant to discover a few habits or ideas that can be steps forward to “best health”. **Presenter: Patricia DelVal, PhD** is a retired teacher, counselor, school principal, and special education director who works as an educational consultant. Her graduate work is in education from Boston University. Her personal interests include habits of healthy living and organization of home and stuff. Dr. DelVal works as a life coach and motivational speaker.



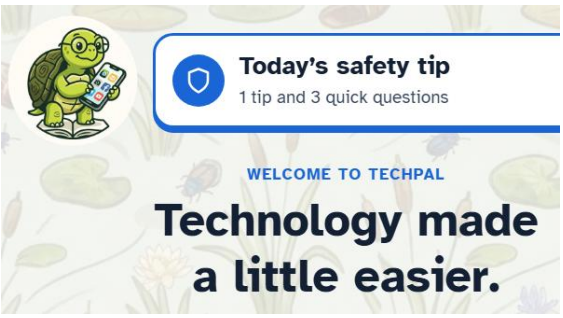
The Long Painful Journey: The U.S. Army and the Trail of Tears

Date: Thursday, November 5

Location: Online via Zoom (also available at UMass Boston and Braintree)

In May 1838, the U.S. Army deployed to enforce the Treaty of New Echota. General Winfield Scott, along with fellow U.S. Army Soldiers, were dispatched to Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, and Tennessee. Their mission was to relocate the Cherokee to embarkation centers and oversee the journey to Oklahoma. The

forced removal of the Cherokee was one of many conducted by the U.S. Army and was a consequence of the Indian Removal Act. This presentation will look at how the soldiers fulfilled their obligation to carry out the terms of the Treaty of New Echota; how the implementation of the Indian Removal Act impacted both soldiers and Native tribes; and better understand how the effects of this policy can still be felt today. **Presenter:** Museum educator from the National Museum of the United States Army. The museum provides the only comprehensive portrayal of Army history and traditions through the eyes of the American Soldier. Through preserving, interpreting, and exhibiting invaluable artifacts, the National Army Museum creates learning opportunities for all visitors and bonds the American people to their oldest military service.



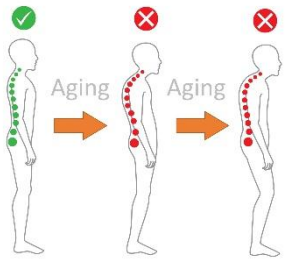
TechPals: A UMass Boston IT Capstone Project Presentation

Date: Monday, November 9

Time: 5–6:00 p.m.

Location: Online via Zoom

OLLI members are invited to learn more about a computer science capstone project that has resulted in a website aimed to help older adults with certain technology questions. UMass Boston undergraduate students surveyed older adults about challenges they encounter when using technology. Based on that data, the students created a self-help website. This website represents the final project (capstone) for these students who are in their last year of study at UMass Boston and majoring in computer science. The IT capstone presentation will include OLLI members taking a virtual tour of the website and then providing feedback to the students. View the TechPals website. **Presenters: UMass Boston computer science majors.**



Posture & Healthy Aging: Standing Tall for Better Health

Date: Tuesday, November 10

Location: Online via Zoom (also available at UMass Boston)

Good posture is about more than looking straight or sitting up tall. The way we sit, stand, walk, and move can affect balance, muscle strength, joint health, breathing, comfort, and confidence. Understanding healthy body alignment and movement can help older adults maintain mobility and independence. The goal of this program is to help older adults understand how posture and body alignment affect mobility, comfort, balance, and independence, while providing simple strategies they can incorporate into everyday activities to move more safely and confidently. **Presenters: UMass Boston third-year undergraduate nursing students.**

Mental Health in Older Adults: Mind & Body Connection

Date: Thursday, November 12

Location: Online via Zoom (also available at UMass Boston and Braintree)



Mental health remains an important part of healthy aging. Depression, anxiety, loneliness, grief, sleep problems, and other mental health concerns can affect physical health, mobility, memory, and quality of life. Recognizing these concerns early can help older adults receive appropriate support. The goals of this program are to promote mental health awareness, help older adults recognize when they or someone they love may need support, and demonstrate how caring for emotional health can improve physical health and quality of life.

Presenters: UMass Boston third-year undergraduate nursing students.

The Orkney Islands: The People and Culture of Scotland's North

Date: Friday, November 13

Location: Online via Zoom



The Orkney Islands are a spectacular combination of dramatic rocky landscapes, human settlements dating back five thousand years, an array of bird and animal life, and a Scottish population with a distinctive dialect and way of life. Barry Pell traveled to a dozen of the twenty inhabited islands (some with a population of less than seventy inhabitants), hiking to remote lighthouses and bird reserves, and speaking with local people in villages and towns. In this program, accompanied by his photography, he shares with you the history, culture and his impressions of this remote and timeless land. **Presenter: Barry Pell** is a world traveler and photojournalist. He has traveled widely over five decades, visiting and documenting landscapes and cultures in 170 countries on all continents. Mr. Pell has also lived and traveled in China, eastern Europe, North Arica, and South America. He currently lectures on international cultures at schools, universities, libraries and community groups in the Boston area. *Photo credit: Barry Pell.*



Menopause & Hormone Replacement Therapy

Date: Tuesday, November 17

Location: Online via Zoom (also available at UMass Boston)

Menopause is a natural stage of aging that can affect many aspects of a woman's physical and emotional health. Understanding common symptoms, available treatments, and the benefits and risks of hormone replacement therapy (HRT) can help women make informed decisions with their healthcare providers. The goals of this program are to increase understanding of menopause and its impact on overall health, reduce misinformation and stigma, and empower women to have informed

conversations with healthcare providers about treatment options. **Presenters: UMass Boston third-year undergraduate nursing students.**

Brain Health & Wellness: Understanding Dementia

Date: Thursday, November 19

Location: Online via Zoom (also available at UMass Boston and Braintree)

Brain health is an important part of healthy aging. While some changes in memory are common with aging, dementia is not a normal part of getting older. Understanding the difference between normal aging and concerning changes can help individuals seek evaluation and support earlier. The goals of the program are to ncrease understanding of brain health and dementia, reduce fear and misinformation, encourage early evaluation of concerning changes, and provide practical strategies for maintaining cognitive wellness. **Presenters: UMass Boston third-year undergraduate nursing students.**

NOAA Ocean Exploration

Date: Tuesday, November 24

Location: Online via Zoom (also available at UMass Boston)

This presentation will showcase recent findings by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) via their Ocean Exploration program. This is the only federal program dedicated to exploring the deepest depths of Earth's oceans not yet visited, unlocking its potential through scientific discovery, technological advancements, partnerships, data delivery, and education. **Presenter: Stephen Devaney** is a retired vice president/quantitative analyst (30+ years) in the financial management industry. He obtained valuable research and analysis skills along the way and loves to keep researching: a topic, an issue, an event, a trend, or a predictive analytic item. Stephen has taught and presented both multi-week courses and single session presentations for OLLI. He is also an at-large delegate to the White House Conference on Aging.



The Ancient Silk Road: Journey Across Central Asia

Date: Tuesday, December 1

Time: 12:30–1:30 p.m.

Location: Logan Auditorium, Thayer Public Library in Braintree

In this talk, we explore the historic cities of the Silk Road - including Samarqand, Bukhara and Kashgar - places that flourished for over 1,000 years along the trading routes that connected across 5,000 miles between central China and Istanbul at the doorstep of Europe. The presentation will focus on the legacies of the Silk Road trade on these places, including architecture, religion, language, ceremonies and food. Photography will highlight the travels of the lecturer as he followed the caravan routes of the Silk Road traders threaded over high passes through rugged, snowy mountain ranges and across large and forbidding deserts.

Presenter: Barry Pell is a world traveler and photojournalist. He has traveled widely over five decades, visiting and documenting landscapes and cultures in 170 countries on all continents. Mr. Pell has also lived and traveled in China, eastern Europe, North Arica, and South America. He currently lectures on international cultures at schools, universities, libraries and community groups in the Boston area. *Photo credit: Barry Pell.*



The Flying Santa of the Lighthouses, 1929-2025

Date: Monday, December 7

Location: Online via Zoom (also available at UMass Boston)

The aerial visits of the Flying Santa to lighthouses and lifesaving stations have been a New England tradition since 1929. The program was inaugurated by Bill Wincapaw, a pioneering Maine pilot. Edward Rowe Snow, the popular New England historian and storyteller, became involved in the 1930s and kept the flights going through 1980. Today, the nonprofit organization Friends of Flying Santa works to continue the flights via helicopter from Maine to New York as a gesture of gratitude to the men, women, and families of the Coast Guard. **Presenter: Jeremy D'Entremont** is the author of more than 20 books and hundreds of articles on lighthouses and maritime history. He is the historian for the U.S. Lighthouse Society and host of the Society's podcast, "Light Hearted." He is also a longtime board member of Friends of Flying Santa.