

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS SPRING 2026

April 14 – May 19, 2026

BRITISH CORONATIONS – PAST & PRESENT / Julie Koenig, BA

This course will explore the evolution of British coronations from Queen Victoria to the present day, examining how each ceremony reflected the political, cultural, and religious priorities of its era. Beginning with Victoria’s coronation in 1838—a spectacle that helped define the modern constitutional monarchy—the course will trace how coronations have served not only as sacred rites but also as carefully choreographed public performances of national identity, imperial power, and continuity.

CARAVAGGIO AND HIS ART / Charlene R. Miletì, BFA, MA, JD

Michelangelo Merisi, famously known as Caravaggio, is also regarded as the father of modern art. However, his personal life has often overshadowed his artistic legacy. More than a difficult personality, he was known for brawls, a violent temper and was eventually charged with murder. This course examines the man and the genius behind the paintings.

CURRENT EVENTS / Avery Fromet, JD

It has been a few tumultuous years. Such topics as Executive Privilege, the War Powers Act, Birthright Citizenship, and the War on Terror are just some of the national issues raised. On the local level, Gerrymandering is still being debated. In this 6-week session we will discuss these topics and encourage discussions among participants.

GOD AND YOUR BRAIN / Ted Smith, BS

Is God just in your head? The amazing answer might be ‘yes,’ but not how an atheist might believe. Neurological evidence suggests our brains have evolved a neuro-physical ability to perceive beyond our sense of self to a greater Presence. An encounter with God is a “neurologically real” experience. Let’s explore how the brain perceives God and how the mind interprets the encounter.

HISTORY OF THE US CONSTITUTION / Avery Fromet, JD

The US Constitution is the oldest living governmental document in the world. It was so well written it has only been amended 27 times in the nearly 250 years of its existence. We will discuss the history of the document and the reasons behind its various provisions. We will also examine the historical significance of its various amendments. From its inception, The U. S. Supreme Court has changed the political, social and economic structure of the United States. This series will discuss some of those cases and their impact.

MOMENTS IN MUSIC / Ed Wiles, MA Music Education, MA Church Music

MOVIES UNDER THE RADAR / Richard Burgess, MA

The following movies will be shown and then discussed related to the circumstances surrounding their production:

- *After The Fox*, a Peter Sellers comic masterpiece
- *Shack Out On 101*, a pro McCarthy era anti commie farce
- *Eternal Sunshine Of the Spotless Mind*, a sci-fi mind twister with Jim Carey, Kate Winslet and Elijah Wood

ORIGINS OF AMERICAN POPULAR MUSIC GENRES / Marty Cohen, PhD

African-Americans in collaboration with Jewish immigrants and their children developed several new genres of distinctively American popular music in the first half of the 20th century. We will explore the genesis of jazz, swing, big band, rhythm & blues, and rock & roll, highlighting numerous performers, song writers, promoters, and pioneers. Dozens of musical selections will be played.

READING AND REFLECTION / Neelam Bhatia, MEd

A lively discussion group as participants share their opinions and experiences related to the selected books.

1. *TBA*

RELIGIONS IN THE ANTHROPOCENE / Hugh Burtner, PhD

We are living in what the scholars are calling the Anthropocene Era. That title refers to how humans are shaping the planet in unprecedented ways. In this course, we focus on what roles religions are now playing and may play in the future. We will use the recent work of 3 scholars of religions to help us discuss these matters (Timothy Beal, Daniel Maguine and Robert Unger). Join me in this effort to understand the current and possible future roles of Religions in these changing times.

STORYTELLING / Carole Rice

Everyone has a story, but not everyone loves to write stories. This session focuses on telling stories, writing stories, and creativity. We will also explore how to strengthen your story and create a story to be shared with your family and loved ones.

SERVING IN THE PEACE CORPS AT AGE 60 / Inge Orendt

Inge Orendt and her husband, Joe, quit their corporate jobs at age 60 and joined the Peace Corps. They served in Indonesia for over 2 years from 2013 to 2015 and taught high school English. Inge would like to share her experiences—and photos, including being a Peace Corps volunteer, living in a Muslim country, how Indonesian's education system compares to ours, and adapting to a culture that is very different from the USA's.

THE DIVERSE PATHS OF LOVE / Charlene R. Mileti, BFA, MA, JD

The word "Love" is probably the most ambiguous word in any language. And, it is likely the most overused and misunderstood. Other than classic literature and other forms of art, few Western scholars have deeply investigated and written about the subject. But those few have been historically influential. This course will examine their ideas on the question of love.

THE HEART OF THE UNIVERSE / Ted Smith, BS

Music, mathematics, philosophy, physics, and theology all converge to guide the willing to a greater understanding of healing, relationships, and a radical approach to living in the Heart of the Universe.

WORLD WAR II IN THE PACIFIC: PEARL HARBOR / Steven Schecter, MA

On December 7, 1941, the United States suffered one of the worst defeats in its history when Japan launched a surprise attack on Pearl Harbor. In less than two hours, American ships and aircraft were destroyed, and more than 2,000 lives were lost. Why was the United States so unprepared for such an attack? The decision-making of both nations was deeply flawed and influenced by cultural stereotypes, arrogance, and misjudgments of one another. The class will examine failures and assumptions that led to the attack, experiences of those who lived through the battle, and the immediate consequences that followed. Did the US learn from this experience?

ZOOS, WHAT ARE THEY GOOD FOR? / Cindi Gonzalez, BA, Montessori Teaching Degree, Certificate in Native American Studies

Why are zoos important? Where do the animals come from? These are just a few questions Cindi will address in this unique and informative class. Cindi works as an Education Specialist at a local zoo and will share her in-depth knowledge of why zoos are important, how the animals are cared for, what goes into the design of animal habitats, share behind the scenes information regarding animal health and well-being as well as share stories of some of the zoo residents.