

## **COURSE DESCRIPTIONS FALL 2025      October 7 – November 18, 2025**

### **ALTERNATIVE RELIGIONS IN AMERICA / Hugh Burtner, PhD**

In this course we will look at several religious groups that are not as familiar to most Americans as Catholic, Protestant, or Judaic groups. We will highlight the following groups: Shakers, Amish, Christian Science, Swedenborgians, Universal Universalists, and the Theosophical Society.

### **ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE: Where We've Been, Where We Are, Where We're Headed / Mike Jundi, MSIS MLIS**

Three AI seminar sessions, geared toward an informed but non-technical audience. Each session includes historical context (past, present, future), examples of current developments, and future possibilities. Material is contextualized by asking questions of ourselves and the systems of the digital age that advanced us to the rise of AI deep learning systems. Different media (books and AI systems) will be showcased during presentations. There will be time for Q&A near the end of each session. Emphasis will be on reducing jargon, but reinforcing how AI operates through analogies and comparisons, what its potential is, along with critical concerns about its influence and effect on society.

### **EINSTEIN AND THE HISTORIC DEBATE NO ONE REMEMBERS / Charlene R. Milet, BFA, MA, JD**

In 1922, Paris, Albert Einstein, and then world-famous philosopher, Henri Bergson, debated the true nature of "time." Einstein maintained that "time" is a physical experience that is measurable and quantifiable. In contrast, Bergson argued that though "time" can be measured that fact ignores what the experience of time actually is. Real time for Bergson is the "lived" experience of all life on earth; a perpetual psychological experience. Bergson's ideas influenced Theodore Roosevelt, T.S. Eliot, Virginia Woolf, William Faulkner and others. The debate rages on today. Both men's views have influenced global politics, religion, art, the understanding of history, economics and ideas about war and peace.

### **EMBRACE COMMUNITY, DEFEAT LONELINESS / Mary Ruth Kolk**

Loneliness can make you sick! Loneliness can lead to diabetes, stroke, dementia and heart attacks. It is as dangerous as smoking fifteen cigarettes a day and can create more health issues than obesity. Dr. Vivek Murthy, Surgeon General of the United States made combating loneliness the Number One priority of his time in office. England's Parliament instituted a Minister of Loneliness. In this course, we will examine the damaging effects of the loneliness epidemic, how being lonely impacts not only our emotional health but is deleterious to our physical health as well. We will learn how and why loneliness sets off the same pain centers in the brain as physical pain and define the difference between loneliness and solitude.

### **EXPLORING NEAR DEATH EXPERIENCES: UNDERSTANDING OUR SPIRITUAL JOURNEY / Margo Kernen**

Discover the profound and transformative world of Near Death Experiences (NDEs) in this engaging and thought-provoking course. Through a combination of personal accounts, discussion and reflection, participants will explore the impact NDEs can have on our spiritual

understanding and personal growth, fostering a deeper understanding of life's purpose and the mysteries of consciousness.

### **FALL PREVENTION / Gary A. Harris, BSEE, Certified Member of American Tai Chi Qigong Assoc.**

Unfortunately, as we get older the chances of us falling and injuring ourselves increases. This class is designed to help you recognize the many factors that contribute to us falling and seeing what actions we can take to minimize our risk of falling, or in some cases handling a fall. The class has two parts. The first part of each class we will be doing balancing and strengthening exercises. During the second half of each class, we will be talking about specific factors that can potentially cause us to fall and the steps we can take to prevent that from happening.

### **HEROES AND SPIES / Julie Koenig, BA**

We kick off this program discussing heroes in history starting with the brave ladies in the UK and USA and their battle for women's reform. We follow up with more heroes and discuss Land Girls in WWII and the Code Breakers from the USA and Europe. Finally, we explore the contribution to the war efforts as part of the resistance movement in WWII known as the SOE, a British organization formed to conduct espionage, sabotage and reconnaissance in occupied Europe. Learn about the women who faced risks for significant good.

Week 1 The Suffragettes USA

Week 2 Churchill's Fav. Spy & Cook Sisters

Week 3 Pippa Latour, Charity Adams, Virginia Hall

Week 4 Violette Szabo, Nancy Wake, Vera Atkins

Week 5 The Suffragettes UK

Week 6 The Code Breakers

Week 7 Land Girls

### **INVENTIONS THAT CHANGED THE WORLD / Avery Fromet, JD**

From the discovery of fire to the invention of the wheel, from the development of the vacuum tube to the integrated circuit, the world has changed through innovation. During this series we will explore the inventions and new technologies that enriched the human race throughout the ages.

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

### **NATIVE AMERICAN PEOPLES, CUSTOMS AND WAYS / Cindi Gonzalez, BA, Montessori Teaching Degree, Certificate in Native American Studies**

This course provides a glimpse into our Country's first People. The course will introduce students to the history, culture, beliefs, and contemporary issues facing Native Americans today. Local Native history will also be discussed. Topics will include cultural and spiritual traditions, hear mythical stories pertaining to the natural world, and examining our own relationship to Mother Earth as well as examine how Native Americans use Art as an expression of History and Vision and appropriately address stereotypes and inaccuracies concerning Native People.

### **NOTABLE WOMEN IN FRENCH HISTORY / Susan Marks**

- 1) Marie Antoinette – the real story, including her and Louis XVI's ill-fated attempt to escape Paris and the guillotine.
- 2) Camille Claudel – mistress and muse of renowned sculptor Auguste Rodin, she died in obscurity but later gained recognition as a talented sculptress in her own right.

- 3) Simone Veil – Holocaust survivor who became France’s Minister of Health and the first female President of the European Parliament. She also helped push through legislation guaranteeing the right to an abortion in France.

### **OPTIMAL NUTRITION FOR A HEALTHY GUT / Moshe Torem, MD**

These presentations will review the definition and functions of a healthy gut. In addition, participants will learn the principles of optimal nutrition to achieve and maintain the desired functions of a healthy gut.

### **READING AND REFLECTION / Neelam Bhatia, MEd**

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

1. *Foreign Fruit* – Katie Goh
2. *Stone Yard Devotional* – Charlotte Wood

### **THE COST OF RESISTANCE / Ted Smith, BS**

A brilliant 20<sup>th</sup> century German theologian enters into a conspiracy to assassinate Hitler. He didn’t come to this conclusion lightly, rather through diligent consultation with Biblical principles. His writings on Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount bring him to an inescapable conclusion. Are there any applications to us in the 21st century?

### **THE GARDEN OF EDEN / Ted Smith, BS**

An account so old some relegate it to myth. Others insist it is history. Modern classics such as Steinbeck’s *East of Eden* borrow freely from its compelling themes of depravity, self-destruction, guilt, and the price of freedom. Augustine of Hippo used the cautionary tale to formulate Original Sin. We will explore the text for its hidden meanings; was expulsion from the Garden necessary for Free Will? Is humanity inherently sinful? Were Adam and Eve really the first humans? Was the serpent really the devil, or God’s agent?

### **THE ENLIGHTENMENT: THE LEGACY WE LIVE, PART II / Charlene R. Milet, BFA, MA, JD**

The Enlightenment of the 17th and 18th centuries is proof that ideas can change the world. Our current global environment is the direct beneficiary of the new worldview imagined and made real by the Enlightenment. Every area of human knowledge was influenced during this period. The ideas of secular democracy, constitutional monarchy, science, industrialization and civil rights were born in this era. This course explores the positive and negative consequences of the Enlightenment to our current global reality.

### **WORLD MYSTERIES / Avery Fromet, JD**

What really happened to Amelia Earhardt? Is the Bermuda Triangle really a place of mysterious disappearances? What happened to the Ark of the Covenant? These and other world mysteries will be discussed during this series.