



Midcoast Senior College FALL TERM II 2023 COURSES

November 6—December 15, 2023

Registration begins October 16, 2023

MONDAY

Why Bad Things Happen to Good People: A Study of *The Book of Job* 9:30-11:00 a.m. 6-week, 90-minute in-person course begins 11/6

Why isn't life fair? What do we mean by justice? Do we have free will? How do we explain misfortune that seems to be no one's fault? You don't have to be religious or part of an Abrahamic faith tradition for those issues to gnaw at you. No biblical book—and perhaps no book of any kind—so focuses on these questions as *The Book of Job*. As we explore both *Job* and Archibald MacLeish's modernized version of *Job*, the play *J.B.*, we'll help one another to wrestle with Job's questions, which, after all, are our questions, too. **Reading:** The *Bible*, preferably though not required, *The New Oxford Annotated Bible with Apocrypha: New Revised Standard Version*, ISBN 978-0190276089 (softcover) or ISBN 978-0190276089 (hardcover); Archibald MacLeish, *J. B.*, ISBN 978-0395083536. **Frank Strasburger** has been an Episcopal priest for nearly 45 years, spending much of his vocation in campus ministry. A Jew by birth who became a Christian as an adult, he continues to wrestle with the questions *Job* raises, which faith traditions, including his own, too often answer too easily. **Class meets at UMA Brunswick Center, Orion Hall, 12 Sewall St. (Brunswick Landing), Brunswick—Room 101**

Landmarks of the American Musical, 1866-1967 9:30-11:30 a.m. 4-week, 120-minute in-person course begins 11/6

This course will cover important developments in the evolution of the American musical from the Civil War to 1967, including how and why the theatrical genre originally came about. From *The Black Crook* (1866) to *Hair* (1967), the course will feature numerous audio and video examples by the leading composers and writers during this especially fruitful century. Also, we will try to determine why a particular show deserves "landmark" status. **Morton Achter** taught university courses on the history of American musical theater during his 40-year teaching career and has offered classes about Gilbert and Sullivan, the symphony, and opera at Midcoast Senior College. He has directed over 70 musicals, operas, and plays at the professional, college, and community levels. **Class meets in the Morrell Meeting Room at Curtis Memorial Library, Brunswick**

***Moby-Dick*: A "Deep Dive" 1:00-2:30 p.m. 6-week, 90-minute in-person course begins 11/6**

This is a discussion-based course for those already familiar with the novel and interested in a thematic "deep dive" into some of the ways this remarkable book works. It is not designed for first-time readers, as our approach will require the ability to jump around all 135 chapters and the Epilogue. We will focus on close readings of selected passages and look for connections. If you have always been intrigued by this work and are looking for an in-depth conversation about it, please join us. **Required reading:** Herman Melville, *Moby-Dick: A Norton Critical Edition*, ISBN 978-0393285000. **John Haile** studied *Moby-Dick* under some master teachers in college and at Bread Loaf School of English. The novel became the centerpiece of a course he taught to high schoolers for many years. It remains the most intriguing piece of American literature he has ever encountered. **Course meets at UMA Brunswick Center, Orion Hall, 12 Sewall St. (Brunswick Landing), Brunswick—Room 119**

Introduction to Big History, Part II 1:00-3:00 p.m. 6-week, 120-minute in-person course begins 11/6

Continuing our exploration of the rise of complexity in the Universe, from the Big Bang to the evolution of humans, this term we will trace the emergence of *Homo sapiens* as other hominins become extinct, the transition of human populations from foraging to farming and pastoralism, the development of towns and cities and then states and empires, the increasing global networks of the modern world, the costs and benefits of the Anthropocene, and the futures awaiting humanity, the Earth, and the Universe. **Reading:** David Christian, *Origin Story: A Big History of Everything*, ISBN 978-0316392006. **Bill Hammond** has taught Big History at the high school level and trained with and helped develop Bill Gates and David Christian's Big History Project. **Class meets at UMA Brunswick Center, Orion Hall, 12 Sewall St. (Brunswick Landing), Brunswick—Room 101**



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TUESDAY

William Faulkner's *Go Down, Moses*: The Destructive Power of Possession

9:30-11:30 a.m. 6-week, 120-minute in-person course begins 11/7

This novel explores Faulkner's response to possession—of people and of the land—through the lens of one family and its black and white descendants. The seven short stories that comprise the novel are set between 1859 and 1941, each contributing to Faulkner's unraveling of the myths of the American wilderness as a New Eden, of the Southern states' "Lost Cause," and of the possibility of redemption after slavery. **Required reading:** William Faulkner, *Go Down Moses*, ISBN 978-0679732174. **Michele Lettiere** holds a MA from the Bread Loaf School of English. She taught English and Theater for 40 years at the secondary level and is a passionate reader of Faulkner's work. **Class meets at Westrum House, 22 Union Park Rd, Topsham—Community Room**

The Journey from Climate Doom to Active Hope 9:30-11:30 a.m. 6-week, 120-minute in-person course begins 11/7

When you think about climate change and the destruction of ecosystems, do you experience feelings of despair or helplessness? Do you want to leave these negative thoughts and feelings behind and take a thought-provoking journey to "active hope"? In this discussion-oriented class, you will explore the ideas of scientists, social scientists, and philosophers who have shown us how we could create a more hopeful story for ourselves. You will consider this question: How can I become more active—and hopeful—in protecting the Earth and ensuring the well-being of future generations? **Reading:** Short articles and/or videos will be assigned before each class. Links to these will be provided. **Thomas G. White** has a PhD in developmental psychology. He has taught at Gettysburg College and Osher Institutes of Lifelong Learning at the University of Southern Maine and the College of William and Mary in Virginia. **Class meets at UMA Brunswick Center, Orion Hall, 12 Sewall St. (Brunswick Landing), Brunswick—Room 119**

The Life and Legacy of Frances Perkins 1:00-3:00 p.m. 5-week, 120-minute online course begins 11/7

Secretary of Labor under Franklin D. Roosevelt from 1933 to 1945, Frances Perkins is widely recognized as a driving force behind the New Deal, most notably for the policies that created Social Security, the forty-hour work week, overtime pay, unemployment insurance, workplace safety standards, and a ban on child labor. This course explores her life and work in five classes. Each class will feature a different speaker. **Recommended reading:** Kirsten Downey, *The Woman Behind the New Deal*, ISBN 978-1400078561. Moderator **Emma Wegner** joined the Frances Perkins Center as Program and Education Director in 2022. She is a graduate of Bryn Mawr College and holds a master's degree from the Bard Graduate Center in New York. Before moving to Maine, she worked in Public Programs in the Education Department of the Metropolitan Museum of Art and in the Education Office of The Cloisters, the Met's branch museum dedicated to medieval art. **Class meets on Zoom.**

MSC Singers: Folk Song Choral Arrangements for Christmas 3:00-5:00 p.m. 8-week, 120-minute in-person course begins 11/7 (includes a special practice on 12/14 and participation in Christmas Sing at Chocolate Church on 12/18)

This fall we will explore and learn four folksong choral arrangements that celebrate the Christmas holiday. These choral arrangements include such pieces as "I Saw Three Ships," "I Wonder as I Wander," and other famous songs of seasonal celebration. Our plans also include presenting these pieces at the Chocolate Church's "Sing! It's Christmas" festival on December 18th. **Prerequisites:** Participants will be asked to commit to most of these dates culminating in this event at the Chocolate Church. If you have choral singing experience, consider joining us. **Reading:** Reading music is an asset but not a requirement. Sheet music is provided. **Stuart Gillespie** retired in 2004 as Director of Choral Ensembles and Fine Arts Department Chair at Naugatuck Valley Community College in Connecticut. He served as Choral Master of the Manchester Symphony Chorale from 1973--1984. He is a published composer and has written many choral arrangements for the MSC Singers. **Class meets at Saint Paul's Episcopal Church, Brunswick**



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WEDNESDAY

Homo Sapiens: Who Are We? What Are We? 9:30-11:00 a.m. 6-week, 90-minute online course begins 11/8

Our past, the history of our species and its evolution from non-human species, has configured our present. James C. Scott has fleshed out in disciplined fashion the continuities, discontinuities, and transitions of that vast subject with a wealth of case material drawn from human evolution, human prehistory, and our more recent history, including what we are pleased, in the spirit of self-congratulation, to call “civilization” and “progress.” It has been quite a ride. And our future? **Recommended Reading:** James C. Scott, *Against the Grain: A Deep History of the Earliest States*, ISBN 978-0300182910. **Steve Piker**, an anthropologist with a career-long interest in human evolution and social history, did field work in Thailand and the U.S. He spent 44 years at Swarthmore College and has offered courses at four of Maine’s senior colleges. **Class meets on Zoom**

NATO-Russia War in Ukraine Was Predictable, Predicted—and Avoidable 9:30-11:30 a.m. 6-week, 120-minute online course begins 11/8

The U.S. foreign policy elite and mainstream media have supported a narrative and policies that dismiss over 30 years of evidence and expert warnings that NATO violation of Russia’s “Monroe Doctrine” in Ukraine would lead to war. Washington has poured billions of dollars in addition to “boots on the ground” military and intelligence personnel into a war which is not in America’s vital national interest and carries the risk of nuclear confrontation. Topics will include unkept promises, Russia’s “reddest of red lines,” a decade of civil war in Ukraine, and our political echo chamber. The world has changed. What comes next? **Reading:** Benjamin Abelow, *How the West Brought War to Ukraine*, ISBN 978-0991076703. **Susan Welsh** is a Russian-English translator, editor, and former journalist. Her Russian studies include literature, psychology, World War II on the Eastern Front, and the post-Soviet era. She graduated from Swarthmore College with a major in Russian and Psychology. **Class meets on Zoom**

Venice: Literature, Art, Architecture 1:00-2:30 p.m. 6-week, 90-minute online course begins 11/8

Venice has long held a special place in the western cultural imagination. The dreamlike city on the water was a republic for more than a thousand years. It was a great empire in the Middle Ages. It has been the home of some of the world’s finest artists and architects, and the inspiration of authors from Shakespeare to the present. The study of Venice is the study of European culture as it intersects with the rich influences of the East. Following a brief historical sketch, we will read the Venetian impressions of two great writers, John Ruskin and Henry James. From there we will view the artistic treasures of Bellini, Titian, Giorgione, Veronese, Carpaccio, Tintoretto, Canaletto, Turner, and the Impressionists. Finally, we will explore the city’s magnificent works of architecture from the Byzantine, Gothic, and Renaissance periods. **Reading:** Readings by Ruskin, James, and a variety of experts on Venetian art and architecture will be made available electronically on the course website. **David Spurr**, Professor Emeritus of Letters at the University of Geneva, has long been obsessed with Venice. His publications include a number of essays on this “impossible city.” **Class meets on Zoom**

Homer's *Iliad* 1:00-3:00 p.m. 6-week, 120-minute in-person course begins 11/8

We will read and interpret Homer’s poem *The Iliad* in the translation by Robert Fitzgerald. The course will begin with a consideration of the historic and mythic background to the poem. There is archaeological evidence that a war against the city of Troy occurred in approximately 1200 B.C. That war became the subject of stories recited orally by Greek bardic poets for centuries until they were somehow composed and recorded by a person we call “Homer.” By that time, the story of the war had been completely integrated with the legends of the Olympian gods. Our reading will take into account the oral composition of the poem and the role that the gods played in explaining and motivating the action of the poem. **Required Reading:** Homer, *The Iliad*, trans. Emily Wilson, ISBN 978-1324001805. **David Tarbet** taught English literature at the University of Buffalo for fourteen years and team-taught the Homeric poems there with a classicist. He left the academic world to become a lawyer in Boston and retired from the law in 2006. Last year, he renewed his connection with Homer by teaching a course on Homer’s *Odyssey* at MSC. **Class meets at The Highlands, 20 Governors Way, Topsham—Merrymeeting Bay Room in the Main Lodge**



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THURSDAY

There are no classes offered on Thursday.

FRIDAY

Essential Opera: Mozart Masterpieces (**COURSE HAS BEEN CANCELLED**)

CLASS MEETING LOCATIONS

Consult the course description for the location of your class. All locations are accessible by elevator or are on the main floor.

Curtis Memorial Library, 22 Pleasant St., Brunswick—Morrell Meeting Room

Online, Zoom (a link to the class meeting will be emailed before the start of class)

St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 27 Pleasant St., Brunswick

The Highlands, 20 Governors Way, Topsham—Merrymeeting Bay Room, Main Lodge

UMA Brunswick Center, Orion Hall, 12 Sewall St., Brunswick (Brunswick Landing)—Room 101 and Room 119

Westrum House, 22 Union Park Rd., Topsham—Community Room



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Website: midcoastseniorcollege.org

Email: mscoffice@midcoastseniorcollege.org

Please read the following important information:

HOW TO REGISTER

- Registration for courses is online; phone assistance is available at 207-725-4900.
- Registration opens October 16, 2023 at 9:00 a.m. for MSC members. Midcoast Senior College's current membership period is July 1, 2023-June 30, 2024.
- To pay your membership fee, go to <https://midcoastseniorcollege.org/membership-form/>
Not sure if you're a member? Email us at mscoffice@midcoastseniorcollege.org
- A link to the registration page (with full instructions) will be emailed to current members in advance. On October 18 the registration page will be public on our website.
- Space is limited; if a course is full, please notify us of your interest at mscoffice@midcoastseniorcollege.org.
- For Zoom-Only Classes (not in-person or hybrid) - Two persons in a household sharing one Zoom screen are granted discounted tuition:

SINGLE PERSON REGISTRATION

Tuition is \$60 per course

TWO-PERSON REGISTRATION

Tuition is \$50 per course, each person

ONLINE COURSE

Classes use Zoom. Information on Zoom will be provided upon registration. More information is on our [website](#). Please note that the following permission is granted by those registering for an online Zoom course/lecture: "I grant permission for a recording or online streaming of this course that may include my image or voice and give permission for the use of such recording or streaming by MSC in furtherance of its educational activities."

IN-PERSON COURSES & CANCELLATION POLICY

Consult the course description for the location of class meetings. If inclement weather or illness requires the cancellation of an MSC in-person class meeting, the class will shift to Zoom or will be rescheduled. If the class cannot be rescheduled, it will be cancelled. The host venue sets the policy for weather cancellations; consult the host venue website or follow announcements on the radio/tv. If illness should require a teacher to cancel a class meeting, we will notify you by email/phone and determine a time/method to make up the class.

BOOKS & READINGS

Course descriptions include information regarding course books and readings. It is the student's responsibility to acquire books.

CONTACT US

Email at mscoffice@midcoastseniorcollege.org or call 207-725-4900. Please visit our website for more information at: midcoastseniorcollege.org.



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Registration

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Visit www.midcoastseniorcollege.org for more information

or call (207) 725-4900

Pay Membership Fee

MSC Membership period is July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024

Membership is required to take a course

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