



Midcoast Senior College FALL TERM I 2024 COURSES

September 9, 2024—November 1, 2024

Registration begins August 12, 2024

MONDAY

In the Beginning: Selections from Genesis and Exodus 9:30-11:00 a.m. 7-week, 90-minute in-person course begins 9/9 (no class 10/14)

Genesis and Exodus together comprise the foundational mythology and legend of Western culture. Our seven sessions together will focus on five stories from those two Biblical books that help establish the themes of birth, death, and rebirth reprised again and again throughout the Old and New Testaments and, indeed, in virtually all religions and cultures. The course is meant for the religious and non-religious alike, as the essential question raised is universal: is death the end, or does it lead to new life?

Reading: Any edition of the Bible. The instructor will be using the *New Revised Standard Edition*. **Frank Strasburger**, a retired Episcopal priest, spent much of his active vocational life in campus ministry. As a Jew by birth, he is acutely aware of the religious and cultural pluralism in which we live and enjoys being in conversation with those of many faiths as well as those of none. **Class meets at UMA Brunswick Center, Orion Hall, 23 Sewall St., Brunswick (Brunswick Landing), Room 101**

So You Wanna Be A Composer 9:30-11:00 a.m. 4-week, 90-minute in-person workshop begins 9/9

Here's an opportunity to create your own original song! You will learn the basics of music notation and thematic development, select a text, and then compose a melody to fit your words. (An appropriate piano accompaniment will be provided by the instructor, if necessary, to enhance the composition.) Class size will be small, to insure maximum individual attention to each participant. Prior ability to read, write, or perform music is a plus, but NOT a necessity. Staff paper will be provided by the instructor. **Mort Achter**, a retired professor, has successfully used this teaching technique in many music appreciation courses with undergraduates who were not music majors, consequently possessing little or no acquaintance with the art of music. He has also taught composition to music majors, and in the past has offered MSC classes about opera, the symphony, Gilbert and Sullivan, and American musical theater. **Class meets at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 23 Pleasant Street, Brunswick, Choir Room**

Dante's *Divine Comedy: Inferno* 1:00-2:30 p.m. 6-week, 90-minute in-person course begins 9/9 (no class 10/14)

Composed in the early 1300s, Dante's *Divine Comedy* has, through eight hundred years of changing world views and aesthetic tastes, been considered as great a work as any ever written in a European language. For this course we'll read and discuss, canto by canto, *Inferno*, the first book in the trilogy, with glances back to Dante's earlier poem, *The New Life*, and forward to the trilogy's other two parts, *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso*. For class discussion we'll add pertinent works created over the centuries by major artists and illustrators. **Reading:** Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy* (transl. John Ciardi), ISBN 978-0451208637 or any other translation. **George Young**, with degrees from Duke and Yale and teaching experience at Grinnell, Dartmouth, and UNE, has for several years offered courses on Russian and world literature at OLLI and MSC. **Class meets at UMA Brunswick Center, Orion Hall, 23 Sewall St., Brunswick (Brunswick Landing), Room 101**

The Electoral College: Creation, Evolution, Controversy 1:00-2:30 p.m. 6-week, 90-minute in-person course begins 9/16 (no class 10/14)

The 2024 election looms. Up for grabs are the House of Representatives, one-third of the Senate, and most importantly, the Presidency. The presidential election immediately leads to questions about the uniquely American method of electing our chief executive. Is the Electoral College a good fit for 21st century America or a relic of the past? This course explores the creation of the Electoral College and its evolution over nearly two-and-a-half centuries. As the course proceeds, we'll look at closely contested presidential elections (e.g. 1800, 1876, 1960, 2000) to examine the relationship between the popular vote and actual electoral results. **Readings:** Suggested readings and course-related materials will be provided during the course. **Jim Bunting** is a retired lawyer and American history instructor. He holds a BA from Rutgers University, a JD from the University of Michigan, and a MALS degree specializing in American history from Duke University. **Class meets at UMA Brunswick Center, Orion Hall, 23 Sewall St., Brunswick (Brunswick Landing), Room 119**



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TUESDAY

ASL Handshapes & Simple Sentences 9:30-11:00 a.m. 4-week, 90-minute in-person workshop begins 9/17

This workshop is a relaxed demonstration of the 36 basic A-B-C / 1-2-3 handshapes used to fingerspell everyday English words and serve as the shapes of basic ASL signs used to communicate with friends, family, and coworkers. Previous students can pick up where they left off in a prior class. **Readings:** All handouts will be provided. **Martin Samelson** has taught ASL to college students, private lessons to individuals and family groups, corporate teams, and job development programs for Deaf clients. **Class meets at Coastal Landing, 142 Neptune Dr., Brunswick (Brunswick Landing), Activities Room**

The Pursuit of Equality 9:30-11:30 a.m. 8-week, 120-minute online course begins 9/10

"All men are created equal," it says in the Declaration of Independence, and it says this is a "truth" that is "self-evident." Really? Ever since, we've been arguing about the meaning and promise of this recognition of equality. Eighty-seven years after 1776, on a blood-soaked battlefield, Lincoln proclaimed us a nation "dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal." What do we mean by this today, after the passage of another 161 years? What is the equality we are affirming and pursuing? We'll look at some texts and some numbers and talk among ourselves. **Reading:** All materials will be available via the internet and listed on a course website. **Doug Bennett**, who holds a BA from Haverford and a PhD from Yale, is President Emeritus of Earlham College. At several U.S. colleges and universities, he has taught courses in public policy and political philosophy. **On Zoom**

Reading Gide in French 1:00-2:30 p.m. 8-week, 60-minute in-person course begins 9/10

This French-language course will focus on André Gide's classic novella *La Symphonie pastorale*. The story relates a first-person account by a Protestant pastor who takes a young, innocent, blind woman named Gertrude under his wing. After taking a brief look at the life of the book's Nobel prize-winning author, we will discuss the work divided into segments not to exceed more than twenty pages per week. **Reading:** André Gide, *La Symphonie pastorale*, ISBN 2070360180. (The Gallimard edition is available in many second hand bookstores.) **Jayne Boisvert** holds an MA from Boston College and a PhD in French language and literature from the University at Albany, NY. At Russell Sage College in Troy, NY she developed and taught various French language, literature, history, and film courses. **Class meets at UMA Brunswick Center, Orion Hall, 23 Sewall St., Brunswick (Brunswick Landing), Room 119**

Psychological Experience 1:00-2:30 p.m. 8-week, 90-minute in-person course begins 9/10

This seminar examines eight interrelated psychological questions, one each week: 1) What is happening when we feel an emotion rather than think a thought or have an intuition? 2) To what extent is our behavior determined by choice rather than our situation? 3) What is the nature of suffering and how does it relate to our beliefs about what is real? 4) What is the nature of hypnosis, trance and spell states? 5) What creates hate? 6) How do our actions and emotions transform time and personal relations? 7) How could we create a sort of psychological mathematics--theorems that would help us understand the consequences of different emotional choices? 8) How could we become more loving? **Required readings:** A packet of eight xeroxed articles can be purchased at cost at the MSC office. **Joseph de Rivera**, who holds a PhD in psychology from Stanford University, is intrigued by all sorts of psychological experiences. He has served in the Navy and taught at Dartmouth, NYU, and Clark University. **Class meets at The Highlands, 30 Governors Way, Topsham, Kennebec Meeting Room**



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WEDNESDAY

Paying Attention to *Attention* 9:30-11:00 a.m. 6-week, 90-minute in-person course begins 9/11

It's time to pay attention to *attention*. Or as Simone Weil defined it: "attention, taken to its highest degree, is the same thing as prayer." She also added: "attention is the purest form of generosity." While philosophy has focused mainly on mind, it has tended to dismiss *attention* as too allied with the body. However, Aristotle, attending to both mind and body, said: "man is the most intelligent of the animals because he has hands." Just try to imagine a fully human life devoid the inability to feel or touch others. Class sessions will involve discussions based on the assignments. **Readings:** Matthew B. Crawford, *Shop Class as Soulcraft*, ISBN 978-1594202230; Neil Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, ISBN 978-0143036531. **Raymond Boisvert** grew up in Lewiston and taught college philosophy for 30 years. **Class meets at UMA Brunswick Center, Orion Hall, 12 Sewell St., Brunswick (Brunswick Landing), Room 101**

A Self-Guided Tour of Merrymeeting Bay 9:30-11:00 a.m. 6-week, 90-minute online course begins 9/11

Merrymeeting Bay is an amazing inland estuary right in our backyards, but one with surprisingly little access. There are no roads to it and land access is very limited. This course presents a series of self-guided nature walks for five publicly accessible preserves that touch on the Bay. Each site guide provides directions, trail details, and natural history information on the ecology of the Bay. **Terry Porter** is a Maine Master Naturalist and Professor Emerita at the University of Maine Business School. She is a lifelong naturalist and enjoys sharing her interest with others. **On Zoom**

Classical Architecture 1:00-2:30 p.m. 6-week, 90-minute online course begins 9/11

The architecture of ancient Greece and Rome is one of humanity's greatest achievements; it stands at the very origins of western civilization. An essential question in this course will be how and why these forms have endured as ideals of beauty for 2,500 years. The course is divided into three two-week segments devoted respectively to Greece (including Paestum and the Acropolis of Athens), ancient Rome (including the Roman Forum and Pompeii), and neo-classical architecture from the Renaissance to the present (including Palladio, Burlington, Jefferson, and modern classical revivals). **Recommended Readings:** Selections from literature from a variety of ancient and modern sources will be made available electronically. **David Spurr** is Professor Emeritus of English and Comparative Literature at the University of Geneva. Many of his publications explore the relations between architecture and literature. With this interdisciplinary approach in mind he has taught architectural history at Geneva, as well as in visiting appointments at the universities of Innsbruck and Iceland. **On Zoom**

Divided America, 1600-1945 3:00-4:30 p.m. 6-week, 90-minute in-person course begins 9/11

Our historical divisions are often seen in simplistic terms: north/south, for instance. While true to a degree, the reality is far more complex. Many things—the origins of the original colonies, differing notions of liberty, the economics of enslavement, our vast cultural differences, even the structure of the Constitution—have all divided us as Americans. When pushed by outside threats, we tend to unify as Americans, but more frequently, we tend to fight and argue and contend among ourselves. This course will examine the history of some of these historical divisions. **Suggested Reading:** Colin Woodard, *American Nations: A History of the Eleven Rival Regional Cultures of North America*, ISBN 978-0143122029. **Scott Andrews** was the founding Director of the Maine Coast Semester, a school for juniors run by the Chewonki Foundation. He ran the school for 17 years and, after stepping down from the leadership position, continued to teach its Advanced Placement American history course until retiring after almost 40 years, all told, of teaching. His interest in this particular topic germinated in part because of the questions his students were asking and has deepened over the years. **Class meets at Thornton Oaks, 25 Thornton Way, Brunswick, Merrymeeting Room**



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THURSDAY

The U.S. Supreme Court and the October 2023-June 2024 Term 9:30-11:00 a.m. 8-week, 90-minute online course begins 9/12; no class 10/3—final class 11/7

This course will examine the cases decided by the Supreme Court in its most recent term. Students will be encouraged to not only understand the reasoning the Court explicitly employs in deciding the case, but to also consider extra-legal reasons for decisions and the implications of those decisions. **Readings:** Links to the cases will be provided on the Justia Law site or on other sites as appropriate. For students not familiar with how the Court functions and how to read a case, there will be supplemental materials provided prior to the first class. In addition, a small amount of time will be set aside at the end of the first few classes to answer questions on the Supreme Court. **Kevin Hart** has been a long-time student and observer of the Supreme Court, beginning as an undergraduate Political Science major at Allegheny College. As a newsletter journalist in Washington, D.C. he covered the Supreme Court for a number of years, both attending oral arguments and writing reports of the cases when they were decided. He taught Health Law for five years in the MPH program at the University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry. He has a law degree from Syracuse University College of Law, and is a lawyer (retired) admitted to the bars in Pennsylvania and New York, as well as the U.S. Supreme Court bar. **On Zoom**

Impeachment: Constitutional History and Issues 1:00-2:30 p.m. 8-week, 90-minute in-person course begins 9/12

Impeachment has become a fixture of the American political landscape. If recent events are any indication, that trend will continue. This course will describe the historical antecedents of constitutional impeachment beginning with English parliamentary impeachments, colonial and revolutionary impeachments, and the debates on this topic during the Federal Constitutional Convention. After considering the evolution of impeachment during the early Republic, the course will focus on the presidential impeachments of Andrew Johnson, Richard Nixon, Bill Clinton, and Donald Trump. Final considerations will discuss what the Framers had in mind about impeachment and whether impeachment itself serves its intended purpose. **Readings:** Suggested readings will be available online. **H. Lowell Brown** is a practicing lawyer. He has taught courses on white collar crime, international law and procedure, and jurisprudence at the Maine School of Law and American University. He has also given lectures at the University of Southern California and the Georgetown University Law Center. Among his published works are *The Meaning of High Crimes and Misdemeanors in Presidential Impeachment* and *Prosecution of the President of the United States*. **Class meets at Patten Free Library, 33 Summer St., Bath, Community Room**

CLASS MEETING LOCATIONS

Consult the course description for the location of your class

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

Coastal Landing, 142 Neptune Dr., Brunswick —Activities Room

Patten Free Library, 33 Summer St., Bath—Community Room

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

St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 27 Pleasant St., Brunswick—Choir Room

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

Thornton Oaks, 25 Thornton Way, Brunswick—Merrymeeting Room

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 August 12, 2024 at 9:00 a.m. for MSC members.
- Membership is required to register for a course. Annual membership fee is \$40 per year, from July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025. 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 August 12 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, two persons in a household sharing one Zoom screen receive 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](https://midcoastseniorcollege.org). 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 Fee is \$40 per year, from July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025

Membership is required to register for a course

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