



# Midcoast Senior College FALL TERM I 2025 COURSES

Sept. 8, 2025—Oct 31, 2025

Registration begins Aug. 18, 2025

## MONDAY

### **The Nuclear Age, 1900-2025 9:30-11:00 a.m. 6-week, 90" in-person course begins 9/8 (no meeting 10/13; course concludes on 10/20)**

This course will look over selected aspects of the nuclear age. These will include: the unraveling of the atom, the reasons for the first atomic bombs, the attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the little-known bombing campaign that preceded those attacks, the social aspects of the nuclear age, and finally the hows and whys of nuclear disarmament. **Required Reading:** Mark Wolverton, *Nuclear Weapons*, ISBN 978-0262543316. **John Dunn** was an economist at the U.S. Department of Labor for five years and a programmer at IBM for twenty years. **Class meets at University of Maine Augusta-Brunswick Center, Orion Hall, 12 Sewall St., Brunswick (Brunswick Landing), Room 101.**

### **T.S. Eliot: *Four Quartets* 1:00-2:30 p.m. 6-week, 90-minute in-person course begins 9/8**

"We shall not cease from exploration . . .," T.S. Eliot. Eliot's final serious and reflective poetry is contained in a small book titled *Four Quartets*. These four extended poems, written just before and during World War II, are modeled on the forms of chamber music. They are dense, complex, beautiful lyrics that pile metaphor on metaphor, as Eliot searches for the words that can express where he finds himself and his world at a time of unparalleled danger and threat. In this course we will explore our reactions to Eliot's spiritual imagery as we follow the poems through our six weeks of reflection. **Required Reading:** T.S. Eliot, *Four Quartets*, ISBN 978-0156332255. **Alden Flanders** is an Episcopal priest and spiritual director who has been a teacher and parish pastor. He is interested in how metaphor tells us what something is by saying what it is not. **Class meets at The Highlands, 30 Governor's Way, Topsham, in the Kennebec Meeting Room.**

### **Plato's "Aristocratic and Authoritarian" Republic vs. Dewey's "Pragmatic" Democracy 1:00-2:30 p.m. 8-week, 90-minute hybrid course begins 9/8 (10/13 class meets on Zoom only)**

In his *Republic*, Plato provides the argument for both his ideal individual and ideal state. He argues that those who know what is good should rule paternalistically; yet at the same time, those lacking such knowledge have the best chance of living the good life once they surrender their freedom and accept the rule of the wise. While his account describes one of the worst forms of government imaginable, Plato does emphasize the transformative role education plays in producing good individuals and good states. In addition, Plato emphasizes the importance of acquiring knowledge of both the unchanging and objective nature of human virtue. His influence on our culture is immense. Writing roughly twenty-three centuries later, John Dewey provides both a critique of Plato's views and a defense of democracy rooted in American pragmatism. Thus, Dewey provides significant challenges to a number of Plato's deep contributions to Western culture. **Required Reading:** *Plato's Republic*, ISBN 978-0872201361; John Dewey's "The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy," available on line; and *John Dewey: The Political Writings*, ISBN 978-0872201903. **Bruce Hauptli** is Emeritus Professor of Philosophy at Florida International University in Miami, Florida, where he taught philosophy for thirty-nine years before retiring to Bath in 2015. He enjoys teaching MSC students. Having taught this course two previous times, he feels this course, in the current political context, is apposite. **Class meets at University of Maine Augusta-Brunswick Center, Orion Hall, 12 Sewall St., Brunswick (Brunswick Landing), Room 119.**

## Registration

**Registration opens August 18, 2025 at 9:00 a.m. for MSC members**

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## TUESDAY

### **Self-Guided Nature Tour of Merrymeeting Bay 9:30-11:00 a.m. 6-week, 90-minute online course begins 9/16**

An amazing water system, Merrymeeting Bay is right in our backyards, yet unfamiliar to many because of its limited access. This online class will acquaint students with the Bay in two ways: first, during six weekly online meetings the nature and ecology of the Bay will be discussed; and second, students will learn about a different nature preserve with trails to the Bay so that students may explore these trails on their own. **Readings:** Optional materials and resources will be available online. **Terry Porter** is a retired professor of business at University of Maine Orono. She has a lifelong love of natural history and over 25 years of teaching experience. **Class meets on Zoom.**

### **Andrew Jackson: The Scoundrel Who Transformed America 1:00-3:00 p.m. 8-week, 120-minute in-person course begins 9/9**

Modern American politics was born during the age of Jackson. An unrepentant slaveholder best known for the Indian removal Act and the "Trail of Tears," Jackson elevated the mob to the highest level of political power. He created the Democratic Party and the highly partisan Spoils System to benefit his supporters only. Yet, when South Carolina threatened to secede from the Union in 1832, Jackson promised military intervention. He deeply loved America, just not all the American people. Jackson expanded the scope of presidential power and tried to make the executive branch the first among equals. He failed? **Required Reading:** Jon Meacham, *Andrew Jackson in the White House*, ISBN 978-0812973464. **Niles Schore** practiced poverty law in Pennsylvania. He then was the Democratic Counsel and Executive Director for the Pennsylvania Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee. He finished his career developing, implementing, and monitoring social welfare policies at the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare. He has previously taught courses on the Supreme Court, the Constitution, Presidential Leadership, and the Cuban Missile Crisis. **Class meets at Patten Free Library, 33 Summer St., Bath, in the Community Room.**

### **Jack London's Wolves, Dogs, and Humans 3:00-4:30 p.m. 6-week, 90-minute in-person course begins 9/23**

This course uses an interdisciplinary approach to examine Jack London's representations of animal evolution, heredity, and behavior in his famous Klondike novels, *The Call of the Wild* (1903) and *White Fang* (1906). A colorful adventurer himself, London wrote best-selling adventure stories; he was also a student of evolutionary theory and its many variants in 19th century European/American scientific, political, and social thought. In these two wolf/dog novels he illustrated vividly his ideas about evolution while exploring human tensions and pathways between the wild and the tame, the natural and the social, the primordial and the modern. **Recommended Reading:** Jack London, *The Call of the Wild, White Fang, and other Stories* (Penguin Classics), ISBN 978-0140186514. Both novels are in the public domain; any edition is suitable for the course. Other short readings, including basic readings in evolution and animal behavior and some of London's non-fiction writing, will be posted on the course website. **Cheryl Swift** is Professor Emerita of Biology and Environmental Science at Whittier College; **John Swift** is Professor Emeritus of English at Occidental College. They have collaborated for many years on projects at the intersections of biology and literary studies. **Cheryl Swift** is also an amateur dog breeder and trainer, and an AKC-certified judge for hunt tests. **Class meets at Thornton Oaks, 25 Thornton Way, Brunswick, in the Merrymeeting Room.**

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## WEDNESDAY

### **Understanding the Immigration “Crisis” 9:30-11:30 a.m. 6-week, 120-minute in-person course begins 9/10**

Thinking about immigration in the past as well as in the present reminds us that immigration has shaped the character of the United States. It has also been implicated in much of the partisan divide we face today. Issues of economic growth and fiscal health, crime, climate, culture change, racial, religious, and even national identity are all connected to immigration. Positions around immigration defy easy labelling of “liberal” or “conservative.” However, this course will try to help its students find their bearings in the immigration debate. **Required Reading:** Ian Goldin, *The Shortest History of Migration*, ISBN 979-8893030600. **Douglas Bennett** has taught political philosophy and public policy at Temple University, Reed College, and Earlham College. He has a BA from Haverford College and a PhD from Yale University. **Class meets at Martin’s Point, 114 Bath Rd, Brunswick, in the Community Center.**

### **Six Modern Architects 10:00-11:30 a.m. 6-week, 90-minute in-person course begins 9/24**

Architects of the twentieth century faced the challenge of designing new forms for new functions, new materials, and new cultural conditions. They found very different ways of meeting this challenge, while also re-creating architecture into a wholly modern art form. This course examines the work of six great architects: Louis Sullivan (“form follows function”), Frank Lloyd Wright (“organic architecture”), Le Corbusier (“machine for living”), Mies van der Rohe (“less is more”), Louis Kahn (“silence and light”), and Aldo Rossi (“memory theatre”). The female architects who worked with them are also part of the story. We will meet in person to encourage class discussion. **Required Reading:** Readings will be provided online, on the course website. **David Spurr**, Emeritus Professor at the University of Geneva, has published numerous works on the relations between architecture and literature. In addition to teaching literature, he has taught architectural history at Geneva, at the University of Innsbruck, and at the University of Iceland, Reykjavik. **Class meets at University of Maine Augusta-Brunswick Center, Orion Hall, 12 Sewall St., Brunswick (Brunswick Landing), Room 101.**

### **Plato on Love 1:00-2:30 p.m. 6-week, 90-minute in-person course begins 9/10**

What is love? While poets, novelists, and songwriters have attempted to characterize it, one foundational answer comes from Plato, the founder of Western philosophy. This course will examine his dialogue on love, *Symposium*, and each class will focus on one or two of the Symposium’s participants such as Socrates or Aristophanes. **Required Reading:** *Symposium*, translated by Alexander Nehamas and Paul Woodruff, ISBN 978-0872200760. Born in Lewiston, **Raymond Boisvert** has taught philosophy for over thirty years. **Class meets at University of Maine Augusta-Brunswick Center, Orion Hall, 12 Sewall St., Brunswick (Brunswick Landing), Room 101.**

### **Mariama Bâ’s *Une Si Longue Lettre* 1:00-2:00 p.m. 8-week, 60-minute in-person course begins 9/10**

This advanced French language class will read and discuss a short novel by the celebrated pioneer of Senegalese feminism, Mariama Bâ. Her novel, which premiered as both a critical and popular success from the time of its publication in 1979, has since been translated into more than a dozen languages worldwide. In the novel, Ramatoulaye, a recent widow writes a letter touching on the major events over the course of her life. She explores themes such as family, friendship, education, local customs, religion, and the condition of women in late twentieth-century West African society. **Required Reading:** Mariama Bâ, *Une Si Longue Lettre*, Edition CTAD, ISBN 979-8436907673. **Jayne Boisvert** has two advanced degrees in French—an MA from Boston College and a PhD from the University at Albany, New York. She has taught courses in French language, literature, history, and film throughout her career, most recently at Russell Sage College in Troy, New York. **Class meets at University of Maine Augusta-Brunswick Center, Orion Hall, 12 Sewall St., Brunswick (Brunswick Landing), Room 119.**



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## THURSDAY

### **The U.S. Supreme Court: The Least Known Branch 9:30-11:00 a.m. 6-week, 90-minute online course begins 9/11**

The U.S. Supreme Court is currently making headlines, but unlike the other branches of government (the executive and legislative), it is arguably the least known branch of government. Given its current and likely future prominence in influencing policy, informed citizens should understand how the Court works, what its powers are, and how these are derived from the Constitution, federal statutes, and custom. The goal of this course is to better inform citizens about the Court's power and its restraints on the exercise of that power. This course will examine, among several topics, how the court came to have its power of judicial review as well as the extent and limit of that power, how its members are selected, how justices decide which cases to hear, and how the justices reach their conclusions. **Required Reading:** Linda Greenhouse, *The U.S. Supreme Court: A Very Short Introduction* (3rd Ed.), ISBN 978-0197689462. **Suggested Reading:** David O'Brien, *Storm Center: The U.S. Supreme Court in American Politics*, ISBN 978-0393696738. **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, attending oral arguments as well as writing reports of cases when they had been decided. He has also taught Health Law for five years in the MPH program at the University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry. With a law degree from Syracuse University, he is now a retired lawyer, having been admitted to the bars in Pennsylvania, New York, and the U.S. Supreme Court Bar. **Class meets on Zoom.**

## FRIDAY

### **Engaging with AI 9:30-11:00 a.m. 5-week, 90-minute in-person course begins 9/12 (Class will not meet 9/26; course concludes on 10/17)**

This seminar will encourage you to engage with AI tools now to understand what they can do, spot risks, and explore how this rapidly evolving technology will impact you, your community, and the wider world. We'll kick things off by breaking down the basics—things like algorithms, AI, AGI, bias, alignment, hallucinations, hacks, guardrails, training sets, prompts, neural networks, machine learning, and deepfakes. Then we will use several AI tools to explore their utilities and limitations. **Reading:** No required reading. A list of suggested further reading will be provided. Participants should bring an internet-access device such as a tablet, iPad, smart phone, or laptop to class. **Bill Davenport** spent 42 years with The Travelers. During that time, he experienced how new technologies—calculators, mainframe computers, PCs, e-Mail, VoiceMail, and the Internet reshaped the company and his own skills. He is now trying to understand how AI is transforming everything. **Class meets at University of Maine Augusta-Brunswick Center, Orion Hall, 12 Sewall St., Brunswick (Brunswick Landing), Room 101.**

### **Thucydides' History of the Peloponnesian War 1:00-3:00 p.m. 8-week, 120-minute in-person course begins 9/12**

Thucydides wrote his *History* as "a possession for all time" in the belief that the fundamental causes, strategies, hopes, excuses, blunders, abuses, and challenges of the war between Athens and Sparta would be repeated again and again throughout time. And so that belief has been proved. Particularly important for American readers is the vivid portrait of Athens as a brilliant democracy but troubled empire. Each week's class will read one of the eight major divisions of the work where group discussion is paramount and lecturing is minimal. **Required Reading:** *The Landmark Thucydides: A Comprehensive Guide to the Peloponnesian War*, ISBN 978-0684827902. **Richard Heitman** reads Ancient Greek and has studied Thucydides in college, graduate school, NEH seminars, in addition to preparation for an unfinished book. A former playwright and then philosophy professor, he concentrates on Thucydides' sense of nuance, drama, and oration, as well as political commentary. **Class meets at University of Maine Augusta-Brunswick Center, Orion Hall, 12 Sewall St., Brunswick (Brunswick Landing), Room 101.**



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Email: [mscoffice@midcoastseniorcollege.org](mailto: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 18 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, 2025 through June 30, 2026. 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](mailto:mscoffice@midcoastseniorcollege.org).
- A link to the registration page (with full instructions) will be emailed to current members in advance. On August 20, 2025 the registration page will be published on our website.
- Space is limited; if a course is full, please notify us of your interest at [mscoffice@midcoastseniorcollege.org](mailto:mscoffice@midcoastseniorcollege.org).

## **ONLINE COURSES**

Classes meet on Zoom. Information on Zoom will be provided upon registration. 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 otherwise may 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](mailto:mscoffice@midcoastseniorcollege.org) or call 207-725-4900. Please visit our website for more information at: [midcoastseniorcollege.org](https://midcoastseniorcollege.org).





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