



Midcoast Senior College Spring Term I 2026

February 2—March 30, 2026 Registration Opens January 12, 2026

MONDAY

The Curious Listener 9:30-11:30 a.m. 8-week, 120-minute in-person course begins 2/2*

This course is an introductory “listening” overview of a thousand years of Western Art Music. It proposes to enhance the concert-going experience through critical listening and historical awareness. No experience of formal musical training is necessary as this course is not intended for the advanced connoisseur of classical music. The class aims to foster an appreciation and an understanding of classical music through the development of basic listening and analytical skills while also covering terminology, forms and genres, and stylistic developments from the Middle Ages to today. This is essentially a listening course with discussion, and optional opportunities to listen at home. If possible, the class will attend a live concert in this area. **Required Reading:** No books to purchase. Weekly handouts will provide links for optional review and preparation for each session. **Paul Mueller** is Professor Emeritus of the Music Department at Hunter College in Manhattan where he served as Director of Choral Activities and Chairman of the Music Department. An accomplished organist, he has an Artist’s Diploma at the Hochschule fur Musik in Vienna, under the auspices of a Fulbright grant. He also holds master’s and doctoral degrees in choral conducting from the Indiana University School of Music. **Class meets at University of Maine Augusta-Brunswick Center, Orion Hall, 12 Sewall St., Brunswick (Brunswick Landing), Room 101. *No class Presidents Day, 2/16**

Amy Gutmann on How our Democratic Society Should Make Decisions about Education 9:30-11:00 a.m. 8-week, 90-minute in-person course begins 2/2*

We will discuss Gutmann’s book *Democratic Education* as it addresses questions in political theory of education including how a democratic society should make decisions about education, what children should be taught, how citizens should be educated, what is appropriate response of democratic education to multiculturalism, and should schools cultivate patriotic or cosmopolitan sentiments among students. *The Journal of Ethics* called Guttman’s work, “the finest contribution to the literature on democratic education of the last seventy years.” **Required Reading:** Amy Gutmann, *Democratic Education*, second edition (1999), ISBN 978-0691009162. **Bruce Hauptli** was Emeritus Professor of Philosophy at Florida International University where he taught for 39 years. He taught this course in 2017 and 2021 and feels in the current political context, it seems apposite. **Class meets at University of Maine Augusta-Brunswick Center, Orion Hall, 12 Sewall St., Brunswick (Brunswick Landing), Room 119. *No class Presidents Day, 2/16**

Engaging with AI 1:00-2:30 p.m. 6-week, 90-minute in-person course begins 2/2*

This seminar will introduce students to various AI tools to better understand their benefits, potential risks, and implications for individuals as well as communities. Session 1 will cover AI output from prompting methods, Session 2 will survey Generative AI results such as text and images, Session 3 will introduce AI browsers and Agentic AIs, Session 4 will present AI processes—rational and empirical models, and Session 5 will compare and contrast human vs AI intelligence. In the last session we will discuss topics chosen by the group. **Required Reading:** None, however the instructor will have several books you may borrow and will post readings for each session. **Bill Davenport** experienced the impacts of formally “new” technologies during his 42-year career with one company as it adopted and exploited tools people today take for granted. **Class meets at University of Maine Augusta-Brunswick Center, Orion Hall, 12 Sewall St., Brunswick (Brunswick Landing), Room 101. *No class Presidents Day, 2/16**

Acting to Improve our World 1:00-2:30 p.m. 8-week, 90-min. in-person course begins 2/2*

Each session will include lecture and discussion on how action may improve both local and global welfare, including the following topics: philosophy and our ideal world, psychology and dealing with human nature, political sociology and choice of government, political science and ways to exert power, economics and managing money, political economy and its improvement, religion and our spirituality, and community participation and new rituals. While discussion of these topics may raise difficult issues and conflict can be upsetting, sharing and mutual support may help us to act correctly and do what we really want to do. **Readings:** Background material is available from library copies of Joseph de Rivera, *Forming a Global Community*, ISBN 978-1648895166 and Tools for Peace at www.pwpp.org. **Joseph de Rivera**, PhD Stanford, is a social psychologist who served in the Navy and taught at Dartmouth and NYU before Clark University where he formed its program in Peace and Conflict Studies. **Class meets at University of Maine Augusta-Brunswick Center, Orion Hall, 12 Sewall St., Brunswick (Brunswick Landing), Room 119. *No class Presidents Day, 2/16**



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MONDAY (cont'd)

Baseball Essentials 1:00-2:30 p.m. 8-week, 90-minute in-person course begins 2/2

In this course we will locate and discuss the distinctive characteristics of baseball by reading and discussing essays, stories, poems, and viewing documentary and dramatic films about the game. **Required Reading:** Selections from *Baseball: A Literary Anthology*, edited by Nicholas Dawidoff, ISBN 978-1931082099; Donn Rogosin and Monte Irvin, *Invisible Men: Life in Baseball's Negro Leagues*, ISBN 978-149622339; and Gabriel Fried, *Heart of the Order: Baseball Poems*, ISBN 978-0892554355. We will also view and discuss the film, "Bang the Drum Slowly." **Bob Bunselmeyer** is an experienced college teacher who has taught often at MSC. **Class meets at Avita, 89 Admiral Fitch Ave., Brunswick Landing, in the Multipurpose Room.**

TUESDAY

Introduction to Astronomy in Maine 9:30-11:30 a.m. 8-week, 120-minute online course begins 2/3

Discover the science behind Maine's magnificent night skies in this relaxed, friendly, Zoom-based tour of the Universe. We will explore why stars shine with different colors, why the Moon changes shape, how gravity sculpts planetary orbits, and how modern astronomy reveals details of our galaxy and the Universe beyond. Easily recognizable seasonal sky features will be used as examples. The emphasis is on clear explanations, evidence-based reasoning, and building understanding of how the cosmos works. No math, special equipment, or prior astronomy background is needed. Just bring your curiosity, your questions and your sense of wonder. **Required Reading and Resources:** Dinah L. Moche, *Astronomy: A Self-Teaching Guide, 8th Edition*, ISBN 978-620459904, SkySafari 7 Pro (currently \$12.99 in the Apple App Store); **Optional:** a planisphere such as The Night Sky 40 - 50 (Large) Star Finder and binoculars. **Russ Pinizzotto** is an Astronomical League Master Observer and Master Binocular Observer. His mother says he has been looking up at the night skies and asking, "What is that?" since he was a one-year-old! He has taught introductory astronomy courses approximately 20 times. **Class meets on Zoom.**

Collective Action 1:00-2:30 p.m. 6-week, 90-minute in-person course begins 2/3

Collective Action refers to activities that require coordination of efforts by two or more individuals in order to reach a socially efficient or optimal outcome. However, individual rationality does not necessarily imply collective rationality. When choices are interdependent and individual decisions are made independently, collective failure may arise. In the process of this course we will be reviewing individual decisions that lead to collective failure—including those related to the main economic and political aspects of society—and those that lead to cooperative solutions. **Required Reading:** A non-technical economic story and other pieces will be posted online. **Maurice Schiff** is a Fellow of the following institutions: IZA Institute of Labor Economics, Global Labor Organization, and CReAM Centre for Research and Analysis of Migration. He is also a former Lead Economist at the World Bank. **Class meets at The Highlands, 30 Governors Way, Topsham, Merrymeeting Bay Room.**

WE HAVE A NEW REGISTRATION PROCESS!
SEE PAGE 5 FOR COMPLETE INSTRUCTIONS

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WEDNESDAY

The Bible as History 9:30-11:30 a.m. 6-week, 120-minute in-person course begins 2/4

This class will use the Bible text as a history book. We will look at the Bible and see how it correlates with archaeological findings as well as with other texts from the ancient world. Additionally, we will discuss the geopolitical and geographical context into which the Biblical text came into being. Issues to be discussed include who were the peoples mentioned, where did they come from, and how were they organized. **Required Reading:** A good translation of the Bible. **Recommended Readings:** Bernhard Anderson, *Understanding the Old Testament*, ISBN 978-0139359255, and/or John Bright, *A History of Israel*, ISBN 978-0664220686. **Ted Stainman** is a retired Air Force chaplain and a graduate of Hebrew Union College. He has previously taught several courses on religion in America. **Class meets at University of Maine Augusta-Brunswick Center, Orion Hall, 12 Sewall St., Brunswick (Brunswick Landing), Room 101.**

Grapes of Wrath Seminar 10:30 am-12:30 pm 6-week, 120-minute in-person course begins 2/4

John Steinbeck's novel *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939) is set during the humanitarian crisis of the Dust Bowl, a manmade environmental disaster that uprooted 400,000 people from small farms in the American Southwest, sending them on a cross-country journey towards the "promised land" of California. It focuses on a single family of migrants, the Joads, and their dignity and resilience in the face of joblessness, homelessness, hunger, and violent oppression of the poor and dispossessed. A transcendent novel about social justice, the novel has much to teach us about an American Dream gone badly wrong and about our collective responsibility not just for ourselves and families, but for humankind. In addition to discussions of the text, this seminar will include a background lecture and screenings of Pare Lorentz's documentary, "The Plow that Broke the Plains" (1936) as well as John Ford's film of *The Grapes of Wrath*. **Required Reading:** *The Grapes of Wrath: Text and Criticism*, edited by Peter Lisca, ISBN 978-0140247756. Class will also use supplemental materials from this edition. **Susan Beegel** holds a PhD in English from Yale University and is Editor Emerita of *The Hemingway Review*. Her Steinbeck credentials include co-editing an anthology of criticism on Steinbeck and the Environment; introducing the author's first novel, *Cup of Gold*, for Viking Press; writing for *The John Steinbeck Encyclopedia*; speaking at the National Steinbeck Center in Salinas; teaching high school teachers in an NEH summer institute on Steinbeck and the Art of Social Engagement; and co-directing an NEA Big Read of *The Grapes of Wrath* for Brunswick-area libraries. **Class meets at Patten Free Library, 33 Summer St., Bath, in the Community Room.**

Homer's Odyssey 1:00-3:00 p.m. 8-week, 120-minute in-person course begins 2/4

This course will take a deep dive into *The Odyssey*, exploring fresh perspectives of culture, poetics, and philosophy that should fascinate even those who are already familiar with Homer. Our course will also include a long-needed look into the pivotal roles of Penelope and Telemachus who are essential to understanding aspects of the true structure of *The Odyssey*, a structure that has been problematic for many centuries. *The Odyssey* is much more than the mere island-hopping adventures of Odysseus. **Readings:** *The Odyssey: A Norton Critical Edition*, translated by Emily Wilson, ISBN 13-978-0393356250 and Richard Heitman, *Taking Her Seriously: Penelope and the Plot of Homer's Odyssey*, ISBN 978-0472033171. **Richard Heitman** has studied and taught *The Odyssey* in both English and Ancient Greek. His book investigates the structure of the epic and reveals the long, misunderstood importance of Penelope for its meaning. **Class meets at University of Maine Augusta-Brunswick Center, Orion Hall, 12 Sewall St., Brunswick (Brunswick Landing), Room 101.**

Sons and Daughters 1:00-2:30 p.m. 8-week, 90-minute in-person course begins 2/4

Chaim Grade's, Yiddish novel *Sons and Daughters* depicts the power of religious tradition and cultural identity faced by the allure of the modern world in 1930s Poland. Grade's characters show, with humor and heartbreak, the struggle of each generation to define its chosen path and the conflicts that ensue. As parents uphold their beliefs and lifestyles, transmitting the gift of stable, enduring values, how will their offspring adapt to the liberating challenges of societal change? **Required Reading:** Chaim Grade, *Sons and Daughters*, ISBN 978-0394536460. **Ann Kimmage** has taught numerous courses with a focus on international literature. She looks forward to class discussions of this literary gem written by the Tolstoy of Yiddish literature, and now finally translated into English. **Class meets at University of Maine Augusta-Brunswick Center, Orion Hall, 12 Sewall St., Brunswick (Brunswick Landing), Room 119.**



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THURSDAY

Learning from Sustainable Cities in Europe 9:30-11:00 a.m. 8-week, 90-minute online course begins 2/5

European cities are celebrated for their livability with features such as a blend of new and historic architecture working comfortably beside each other; walkable and green areas in city centers supported by modern transit and bicycle paths rather than exclusive reliance on cars; preservation and recycling that reduces waste; and finally, innovative ways to meet energy needs on a scale rarely found in US cities. A wide range of cities will be highlighted in this course. **Recommended Reading:** *Green Cities of Europe: Global Lessons on Green Urbanism*, edited by Timothy Beatley, ISBN 978-1610911757. **Christopher Silver** is Professor Emeritus, Department of Urban and Regional Planning, University of Florida, and a Fellow of the American Institute of Certified Planners. He has a PhD in Urban History from University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and a Master's degree in Urban and Regional Planning from Virginia Commonwealth University. **Class meets on Zoom.**

FRIDAY

The Romantic Era: Literature, the Arts, Revolution 9:30-11:00 a.m. 4-week*, 90-minute in-person course begins 3/6

The movement known as Romanticism swept Europe and America in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. It brought revolutionary ideas in politics, literature, art, and music, as well as in the nature of the human imagination. This course presents a series of classes and lectures by several instructors on many of the defining artistic works of that era in their social and philosophical contexts. The influence of Romanticism still leaves its mark on the literature and art of the present day. Included in this course are classes on English Romantic poetry, American Transcendentalism, orchestral music, painting, Victor Hugo's "ideology of disorder," the fiction of Jane Austen, and the Shelley-Byron circle in Geneva from which *Frankenstein* was born. Instructors are **Morton Achter**, **John Haile**, **Michele Lettiere**, **David Spurr**, **Laurie Spurr**, and **William VanderWolk**. *The course will span the last four weeks of Spring term I and the first four weeks of Spring term II. Tuition fees will be charged for one term only. **Morton Achter** is Professor Emeritus of Music at Otterbein University, Ohio. **John Haile** has taught English at Avon Old Farms School in Connecticut, Western Reserve Academy in Ohio, and Brooks School in Massachusetts. **Michele Lettiere** is a former English teacher at St Paul's School in Concord, NH, and at the Waynflete School, Portland. **David Spurr** is Professor Emeritus of English and Comparative Literature at the University of Geneva, Switzerland. **Laurie Spurr** is former Head of English at the Collège du Léman, Switzerland. **William VanderWolk** is Professor Emeritus of French at Bowdoin College. **Class meets at University of Maine Augusta-Brunswick Center, Orion Hall, 12 Sewall St., Brunswick (Brunswick Landing), Room 101.**

Love Matters in Literature and Life 9:30-11:30 a.m. 6-week, 120-minute in-person course begins 2/6

The goal of this course is to examine how our experiences have shaped and re-shaped our understanding of love over time. We will explore ancient and modern literary selections that reveal love as a common theme. Attendees will read short stories and poems as well as the novel *Love in the Time of Cholera* by Gabriel Garcia Marquez. Interactive discussion and close readings will focus on six areas: 1) definitions of love, 2) history of love in the literature, 3) love and obsession, 4) love, marriage, family, 5) love, aging and loss, and 6) personal philosophy of love. Historical, sociological, psychological and cultural perspectives of love will be considered in context with personal experiences. **Required Reading:** Gabriel Garcia Marquez, *Love in the Time of Cholera*, ISBN 978-0307389732. Links to poems and short stories will be provided prior to the first class. **Ellen Whiting**, Professor Emeritus, Northeastern Ohio Medical University, served as Director of Faculty Development and as an instructor for the Department of Human Values in Medicine. She relished teaching an annual senior elective in literature and medicine. One of those electives was "Love Matters in Medicine." That course led to her desire to present a similar course to learn about the perspectives of love in older learners. **Class meets at University of Maine Augusta-Brunswick Center, Orion Hall, 12 Sewall St., Brunswick (Brunswick Landing), Room 119.**

WE HAVE A NEW REGISTRATION PROCESS!

- 1. On or after January 12, go to our website and follow prompts to Spring Term I 2026**
- 2. Select the course by clicking on the title or picture**
- 3. Click “Register Button”**
- 4. Add attendee name and email; Add second attendee if desired**
- 5. To continue shopping, click “Home” in header**
- 6. Click “Checkout” to pay**
- 7. Note that you can pay using a credit card, google pay, amazon pay or direct from your bank**

Note: It is not necessary to create a profile. You may register as a guest. Ignore “Coupon” and “Add comments” during checkout stage

Please read the following important information:

- Registration for courses is online; phone assistance is available at 207-725-4900.
- Membership is required to register for a course. Annual membership fee is \$40 per year, from July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026. Space is limited; if a course is full, please notify us of your interest at 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 or call 207-725-4900 or visit www.midcoastseniorcollege.org.



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