

**FIVE COLLEGE
LEARNING IN RETIREMENT**

SPRING 2010

SEMINAR CATALOG

February 8th – April 22nd

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Affiliate of the Elderhostel Institute Network

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To the Members of Five College Learning in Retirement:

The Curriculum Committee of Five College Learning in Retirement is delighted to present this catalog of seminars and workshops for the Spring 2010 term. Committee members and seminar moderators have worked together over the past several months to develop a curriculum that we believe reflects the broad range of artistic and intellectual interests of the 5CLIR membership. We hope that you agree and that you find among these offerings seminars that excite and challenge both heart and mind.

Our peer-led seminars and workshops are the center of the 5CLIR program and their success depends on the quality of participation of each member. In seminars, each participant is responsible for researching and making one report or presentation and for taking an active part in all discussions. In workshops, participants engage in active learning, usually through hands-on activities; sometimes these involve outside preparation. 5CLIR has an extensive inventory of audio/visual equipment that may be reserved by members to use in their seminar presentations. Any expenses such as texts, DVD/VCR rentals, photocopies, or artistic supplies are the responsibility of the participants.

The Committee would like to thank the members who have volunteered to moderate the (??) seminars and workshops to be offered in the spring semester. Without their creativity and dedication, we would not have the variety and quality that you find in these pages.

Members of the 2009–2010 Curriculum Committee

Term Ending 30 June 2010

Shirley Brodigan
Mary Franks
Irving Howards
Margaret Manson
Anne McIntosh

Term Ending 30 June 2011

Paul Berman
Laura Cranshaw
Peter Ferber
Carol Lee
Naomi Yanis

Term Ending 30 June 2012

Carol Jolly
Dean Poli
Eva Sartori
Jim Scott
Claire Sherr

Joan Laird and Beverley von Kries, **Co-Chairs**
Ex-Officio Sara Wright, President

Five College Learning in Retirement Seminars – Spring Semester 2010

Schedule day-by-day

Monday Mornings (10:00–12:00)

On The Road to Our Town (Thornton Wilder) – Michael Greenebaum –
AC: Room 207 & Keefe Campus Center Theater, Campus Center
A Fresh Look at Latin America – Norman Winston – *SC: Field House*
Risky Business: How Individuals and Society at Large Understand and Deal with Risk –
John Armstrong & Hy Edelstein – *SC: Dewey Hall Common Room*
Historical and Social Themes in Broadway Musicals – Hill Boss – *SC: Room 308, Lilly Hall
(Smith School for Social Work), corner of Green Street and West Street (no seminar
April 12th; snow date is April 26th)*

Monday Afternoons (1:30–3:30)

Boom and Bust: America During the 1920s & 30s – James Harvey – *SC: Room 308, Lilly Hall
(Smith School for Social Work), corner of Green Street and West Street*
Thackeray: A Great Novel by A Great Novelist – Claire Sherr & Michael Wolff – *Lilly Library,
19 Meadow Street, Florence (www.lillylibrary.org)*
The Isaiahs – Bob Grant and Dottie Rosenthal – *Mt Tom Room, Easthampton Lathrop*
All About Orchids – Janet Price & Bev von Kries – *Hitchcock Center for the Environment,
525 South Pleasant Street, Amherst (venue for February 15th tba)*
Collage and its Antecedents – Don Maiocco – *Art Studio, Meeting House, Northampton
Lathrop, 1 Shallowbrook Drive, Northampton*

Tuesday Mornings (10:00–12:00)

Century of Change in Western Massachusetts – Sheila Klem – *AC: Room 207, Campus Center*
History's Mysteries: Part II – George Snook – *SC: Field House*
Observing Nature – Ellen Peck – *Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary, 127 Combs Road,
Easthampton, telephone 584-3009*

Tuesday Afternoons (1:30–3:30)

Selected Plays of Tennessee Williams – Ed Golden – *AC: Room 201, Campus Center
(no seminar April 13th; snow date is April 27th)*
The Art of the Still Life – Cosimo Favaloro – *SC: Field House*
From Here To Timbuctu: An In-depth Look At Mali, West Africa – Joan Wofford – *Mt Tom
Room, Easthampton Lathrop*

5CLIR Spring semester continued

Wednesday Mornings (10:00–12:00)

- Berlin in the 1920s – Carol Lee & Arnold Friedmann – *Applewood at Amherst*
The Joy Of PC Through A Safe PC – Philippe Meyer – *UMass: Room 113, Continuing Education Building, Venture Way (off N. Maple Street), Hadley (no seminar on March 17th; snow date is April 28th)*
The Other 19th-Century Presidents – Larry Ambs & Dean Poli – *Newman Catholic Center at UMass, 472 North Pleasant Street, Amherst (Note: meets 9:30–11:30)*
Women Ahead of Their Time – Sofie Ellsberg & Mary Franks – *ACTV, 246 College St, Amherst (Note: seminar meets 10:30–12:30)*

Wednesday Afternoons (1:30–3:30)

- American Radical Movements, 1918–1972 – Leo Sartori – *AC: Room 207, Campus Center (Note: first meeting is February 17th; snow date is April 28th)*
Poetry in Translation – Katharine Hazen & Carol Ames – *Rockridge Retirement Community, 25 Coles Meadow Road, Northampton*

Thursday Mornings (9:30–11:30) NOTE different THURSDAY TIME!

- History of Photography Pt III: 1945 to the Digital Age – Paul Berman – *AC: Room 207, Campus Center*
Drawing From a Model: Portrait and Figure Drawing – Sally Lawton – *SC: Field House*
Autobiographical Writing – Zina Tillona & Henia Lewin – *Grace Church (in the “Connector,” the new addition), by The Commons (14 Boltwood Ave), Amherst*

AC – Amherst College SC – Smith College UMass – UMass Continuing Education

tba = to be announced

While every effort is made to adhere to the schedule as published here, occasionally changes must be made at the request of a hosting institution, but you will be advised immediately of any altered arrangements.

There are no seminars on Thursday afternoons or Fridays.

Spring 2010 Seminar Catalog

Seminars begin the week of February 8th

MONDAY MORNING

On the Road to Our Town

Moderator: Michael Greenebaum

Role of participants: Read a play each week. For some weeks, prepare a part and then participate in a reading performance. Lead or co-lead a 40-minute discussion of one of the plays.

Number of participants (incl. moderator): 15

Time: Monday morning, 10:00–12:00

Place: Room 207 & Basement Theater, Amherst College Campus Center

Parking: Obtain parking permit from Campus Safety when advised by moderator

Thornton Wilder is finally coming into his own with the publication of two Library of America volumes, one devoted to his plays and the other to his early fiction. Everyone knows *Our Town*, but seen in the context of earlier plays, it becomes a richer, darker and more complex work than the folksy play we all acted in, in high school.

This will essentially be a play-reading seminar. Each week, members will be assigned roles to practice for a reading presentation the following week. We will focus on the one-act plays in *The Long Christmas Dinner and Other Plays* and end with a discussion and reading performance of *Our Town*. Each session will start with a reading performance of a play and then a discussion of the play. Seminar members will be encouraged to be discussion leaders as well as actors. These early plays are astonishing works – experimental, sometimes cynical, sometimes sentimental but with a modernist stratum just under the surface. There is much to admire, a bit to question and not a little to be bothered by. These are plays that stick with you.

Resources: *Thornton Wilder: Collected Plays & Writings on Theater* (Library of America, 2007). ISBN: 978-1-59853-004-2

The Moderator: Michael Greenebaum loves the theater, has some directing experience, and has a Thornton Wilder itch.

A Fresh Look at Latin America

Moderator: Norman Winston

Role of participants: Select a country, give a presentation, and lead discussion.

Number of participants (incl. moderator): 15

Time: Monday morning, 10:00–12:00

Place: Smith College Field House

Parking: ample, on site

It is currently assumed that in a few years the United States will be a country in which people of Latin American origin will predominate. Spanish may become a necessary second language.

Up to now the United States has devoted little attention to these neighbors, instead concentrating on Europe, the Middle East, and the Far East. No doubt most Americans could identify a high percentage of these countries on the map. The opposite would be true for Latin America. In fact in some ways the United States has treated Latin America like a colony, using “Gunboat Diplomacy.” Now we are faced with competition for Latin American trade and influence by Russia, China, and other countries.

Participants will select a country of interest and discuss its history, geography, political orientation, commercial and economic importance, problems, as well as its relationship with the United States and the rest of the world.

Resources: Internet, current books, articles, and other materials available in libraries.

The Moderator: Norman Winston, who is interested in history and geography in general, has moderated seminars on sub-Saharan Africa as well as on aspects of American history and politics.

Risky Business: How Individuals and Society at Large Understand and Deal with Risk

Moderators: John Armstrong and Hy Edelstein

Role of participants: Prepare a brief report and lead ensuing discussion

Number of participants (incl. moderators): 15

Time: Monday morning, 10:00–12:00

Place: Dewey Hall Common Room, Smith College

Parking: you will be issued a campus parking permit

There are few aspects of modern life which are not subject to risk. Accidents happen, health is uncertain, the economy is subject to ups and downs, and modern technology brings previously unknown risks along with benefits. This seminar will explore the ways in which individuals--and society at large--deal with risk. Some risks can be reasonably well understood quantitatively, whereas others can not. But even where risks can be accurately forecast, and rational

Risky Business, continued

strategies for dealing with them are known, there is no guarantee that individuals—or society at large—will behave rationally. There is a large body of psychological research documenting irrational reactions to risk.

The moderators will provide introductory material describing how risks are estimated and compared. Then the seminar will explore this topic by considering specific kinds of risk. Possible examples include vaccination, cell phone usage, cancer screening, investment strategies, various forms of electricity generation, natural disasters, and age-related driving risks. From a list provided, participants will be asked to choose a particular type of risk, describe what is really known about the occurrence of that risk, and characterize the ways in which individuals or society deal with it.

Resources: The moderators will provide a list of references and resources available in local libraries, online, or in bookstores.

The Moderators: Both John Armstrong's and Hy Edelstein's professional careers have been concerned with qualitative and quantitative issues of risk and decision-making.

Historical and Social Themes in Broadway Musicals

Moderator: Hill Boss

Role of participants: Select a musical and prepare a brief presentation.

Number of participants: 15

Time: Monday morning, 10:00–12:00

Place: Room 308, Lilly Hall, Smith Campus

Parking: you will be issued a campus parking permit

Note: No seminar April 12th; snow date is April 26th

Many of the Broadway musicals whose music is familiar to us have interesting and significant underlying historical and/or social themes. The intent of this seminar is to explore these themes in nine or ten Broadway musicals.

Participants will have an opportunity to help select the musicals before the start of the seminar. The following are some of the possible choices: *Music Man* – early 20th-C. middle-American values; *Camelot* – idealism vs. reality; *Chicago* – the Roaring Twenties; *West Side Story* – ethnic conflict; *Purlie* – southern Black life under Jim Crow; *South Pacific* – Eastern vs. Western values; *Fiorello* – political corruption in New York City; *Fiddler on the Roof* – Russian Jews under the Czar; *Cabaret* – Germany during the Weimar Republic. Of course participants may select other musicals, providing there is a significant historical or social theme.

Broadway Musicals, continued

Resources: The moderator will supply recordings of the musical excerpts, and will make them available for discussion. Each presenter will be expected to obtain further information from the Internet, books, and/or periodicals.

The Moderator: Hill Boss combines his 35 years of teaching social studies with his love of the theater, particularly the musicals of the Golden Age of Broadway, from the 1940s to the 1960s.

MONDAY AFTERNOON

Boom and Bust – America During the 1920s and 30s

Moderator: Jim Harvey

Role of participants: Present on a topic, agreed upon with the moderator, for 30 minutes and lead the group discussion that follows. Read written materials and take an active part in raising questions and group discussion.

Number of participants (incl. moderator): 15

Time: Monday afternoon, 1:30–3:30

Place: Room 308, Lilly Hall, Smith College

Parking: you will be issued a campus parking permit

Many are comparing the boom and bust of the past decade to that of the 20s and 30s in the last century. Is that a good comparison? Or not? Are there things we can learn from that era that will help us understand the present? To find out, this seminar will look at what was going on in the Roaring 20s and the Great Depression to learn about the economic, political, social and cultural landscape of that period.

Possible topics include: Calvin Coolidge, Herbert Hoover, Franklin Roosevelt, the financial system, the New Deal, international relations, jazz, social Life, rural poverty, prohibition, sports, literature, art, photography, entertainment, fads and fashions, technology, Henry Ford and the influence of the automobile, and women's rights.

Resources: We will be reading *Daily Life in the United States, 1920–1940*, by David E. Kyvig, as well as various selections from online sources.

The Moderator: Jim Harvey enjoys reading the history of our country because sometimes looking back can help us see the present and future with more clarity.

Thackeray: A Great Novel by a Great Novelist

Moderators: Michael Wolff and Claire Sherr

Role of participants: In addition to the reading, each participant will present and lead discussion once or twice.

Number of participants (incl. moderators): 14

Time: Monday afternoon, 1:30–3:30

Place: Lilly Library, 19 Meadow Street, Florence

Parking: ample, on site

This seminar will be devoted to a close reading and discussion of *Vanity Fair* (1847–48) by William Makepeace Thackeray. This lengthy novel is, in our opinion, as impressive and important as anything by Austen, Dickens, George Eliot, or Hardy. We are confident that people will enjoy it and will also get a remarkable picture and a better understanding of the first half of 19th-century Britain.

A fine movie, based on the novel, will be shown after the reading.

Resources: We will use the Oxford World Classics edition of Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* (\$8.95). We'll also prepare bibliographies for those interested in further reading.

The Moderators: Claire Sherr has read almost all of Thackeray's work and continues to find it fascinating. Michael Wolff has studied the Victorian period for over 50 years and still finds it totally absorbing.

The Isaiahs

Moderators: Bob Grant and Dottie Rosenthal

Role of participants: Each participant will read aloud a portion of the Book of Isaiah and engage in a discussion of that portion. In addition, participants will make a presentation on a topic, selected in consultation with the moderators, related to the Book of Isaiah.

Number of participants (incl. moderators): 15

Time: Monday afternoon, 1:30–3:30

Place: Mt Tom Room, Easthampton Lathrop

Parking: ample, on site

In both the Hebrew and the Christian Scriptures, Isaiah stands out as a prophetic book of major significance. The story of its composition, given its historical context, has led scholars to identify more than one authorial voice. We shall call them "The Isaiahs". Their writings, seen in light of the historical events that produced them, can reasonably be said to be as foundational to western and middle-eastern culture as anything coming out of Athens. This seminar is not meant to be a Bible study in any conventional sense, but a study of a very human work that has had extraordinary influence, both sacred and secular, for over 25 centuries.

The Isaiahs, continued

Our seminar will be an opportunity to read and discuss this classic thoughtfully with a group of interested people. We will read extended portions of the text aloud—portions selected for their usefulness in understanding the entirety of the work. We will use *The New Oxford Annotated Bible* as our main resource. This edition employs the New Revised Standard Version translation, a form appropriate for ecumenical study, which is to say a wide range of readers.

You may never have read Isaiah, you may have read portions, or you may have read it through or heard it read many times. You may or may not have religious roots that connect you to these ancient words. You may have strong denominational ties or none. Whatever your background, our purpose will be to read this text together in such a way that we can discover its riches.

In addition to reading and reflecting on the text, each seminar participant will prepare a presentation for one of our weekly sessions. Presentation topics may be chosen from resources and suggestions prepared by the moderators, or proposed by individuals who have appropriate interests they wish to pursue.

Resources: *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, published by Oxford University Press, available in paperback.

The Moderators: Bob Grant is a retired minister who has offered a number of seminars on books of the Bible, including, Genesis, Exodus, Mark and John, The Letters of Paul. Bob and Dottie Rosenthal have co-moderated seminars on the Book of Psalms and Jeremiah.

All About Orchids

Moderators: Janet Price and Bev von Kries

Role of participants: Prepare brief report or demonstration and lead discussion.

Number of participants (incl. moderators): 17

Time: Monday afternoon, 1:30–3:30

Place: Hitchcock Center, 525 S. Pleasant St, Amherst

Parking: ample, on site

(venue for February 15th tba)

Orchids make up the largest family of flowering plants with 880 genera and over 22, 000 natural species. While at one time orchids were expensive and considered difficult to grow, they are now sold at many supermarkets and big box stores at very reasonable prices.

In this seminar we will investigate the many families of orchids, how to grow orchids, the orchid industries, orchid conservation, as well as the role orchids have played in art and literature. If possible we will visit a local orchid show and orchid greenhouse, and will place a joint order with some orchid growers for

Orchids, continued

those who are interested. We would like to see a mix of participants ranging from those who have never grown orchids to experts.

Resources: Ample resources are available online and in local libraries. We will recommend an inexpensive basic guide as a text and the moderators will be able to supply some resources.

The Moderators: Both Janet Price and Bev von Kries are members of the Amherst Orchid Society and have been raising orchids for over a decade.

Collage and Its Antecedents

Moderator: Donald Maiocco

Role of participants: Accomplish one collage each week, mostly in session and, in some cases, at home as well.

Number of participants (incl. moderator): 6

Time: Monday afternoon, 1:30–3:30

Place: Art Studio, Meeting House, Northampton Lathrop, Shallowbrook Dr

Parking: ample, on site

Collage gives artists the opportunity to create exciting modern art. It is accessible to beginning and accomplished artists and all those in between. The subjects and styles of this contemporary art form range widely: abstract, realistic, graphic, multimedia, humorous, shocking, textual.

In the first sessions, the moderator will discuss the artistic elements in a single historical work of art. This process will encourage the application of the elements in our studio work. As in all fine art, collage depends on the traditional elements of design such as line, shape, and color. Participants will not be encouraged to replicate, but to study and build a foundation of artistic skills to incorporate in their own work. Participants will be encouraged to make a similar presentation.

Resources: Bring a glue stick, a newspaper, and a magazine to the first session. A list of basic materials will be distributed at that time. A \$12 fee will cover additional materials such as brushes, acrylic medium, acrylic paint, and Styrofoam sheets.

The Moderator: Don Maiocco is a teacher of art history and has worked in collage since the 1970s.

TUESDAY MORNING

Century of Change in Western Massachusetts

Moderator: Sheila Klem

Role of participants: Select a topic from a suggested list, prepare a 30-minute presentation, and lead ensuing discussion.

Number of participants (incl. moderator): 15

Time: Tuesday morning, 10:00–12:00

Place: Room 207, Amherst College Campus Center

Parking: Obtain parking permit from Campus Safety when advised by moderator

Western Massachusetts, from the Quabbin to the Berkshires, has undergone significant changes in the past century-plus. Whether or not these transformations have been inevitable, or even favorable, will be the theme of this seminar. Many forces – including economic, political, cultural, ecological, and educational – have promoted change. Some have contributed to an “us—them” mindset toward Boston; others have eased such an attitude.

5CLIR members have grown up, attended college, worked, raised families, or eventually retired in this part of the state. In a sense, we are all witnesses and “experts” to aspects of the 20th-C. shaping of the area. In this seminar we will enrich memories with research, and all of us will share new learning. Where were you when the Mass. Turnpike was built? What was the Mt. Tom experience in your past? What was the Stockbridge Bowl before Tanglewood? What forces have brought change to the Connecticut River? Why is the Quabbin Reservoir more than just a pretty place? Has art replaced industry? Has UMass Amherst changed the balance of state political power? Has a fifth college made a difference? What impact have museums had on Williamstown and North Adams? How has tourism changed? Questions like these, enhanced by maps, images, literature, art, and statistics, will inspire participants to follow their individual muses.

Resources: The moderator will provide a bibliography of resources, most of which will be available at the five college or public libraries.

The Moderator: Sheila Klem is a lifelong “Western Mass. aficionado,” as well as a veteran participant/moderator of LIR seminars containing germs from which this proposal has evolved.

History's Mysteries: Part II

Moderator: George Snook

Role of participants: 1) present the mystery, 2) review the known facts, 3) present the member's own conclusions about the mystery and, 4) lead a discussion.

Number of participants (incl. moderator): 15

Time: Tuesday morning, 10:00–12:00

Place: Smith College Field House

Parking: ample, on site

This seminar is similar to the one presented in the fall semester of 2008. We will consider mysteries of the world's history that have either never been explained or at least have some aspects of the mystery that are inadequately explained. Finally there are mysteries for which explanations have been offered and are accepted by some but not by others. Examples of historical mysteries that might be explored include King Arthur, the fate of Amelia Earhart, UFOs, and the fate of the Minoan Civilization. The moderator will provide a list of possible subjects but choices are not limited to the list. There will be a supplementary list of those presented in the earlier seminar and unless there is new information they will not be included.

Resources: Materials may be searched online, in libraries, or in local bookstores.

Moderator: George Snook is very interested in history and particularly in history's unresolved mysteries.

Observing Nature

Moderator: Ellen Peck

Role of participants: Present the work of a nature writer or artist and lead a discussion.

Number of participants (incl. moderator): 16

Time: Tuesday morning, 10:00–12:00

Place: Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary, 127 Combs Rd, Easthampton

Parking: ample, on site

Close observation of nature can lead to new knowledge and to many kinds of artistic response. This seminar will examine the work of a wide range of observers who gave the world new ideas and new forms of inspiration. Each participant will report on one observer--how the person observed nature, what ideas developed from these observations, and how the observations were transformed into writing or various forms of visual art. Presenters may choose to power point, pictures from books, samples of writing, etc.

This seminar may include a wide range of subjects, depending on the interests of the group. For example, we may cover scientists like Charles Darwin, Stephen

Observing Nature, continued

Jay Gould, and Rachel Carson; inspirational writers like Annie Dillard, John Muir, Aldo Leopold, or poet Mary Oliver; painters like the members of the Hudson River School, Audubon, local landscape painters; photographers like Ansel Adams or Paul Strand; even musicians like Paul Winter who has incorporated wolf calls and whale songs in his *Missa Gaia*. The main requirement is that the person reported on be a careful observer of nature, not just someone who was vaguely inspired by the landscape. I will send out a long list of possibilities during the January break.

Depending on participant interest, the seminar may include a trip to a local museum; to Mountain House on Skinner Mountain (the site of one of the greatest landscape paintings of the 19th century); or to the Amherst Science Museum to examine dinosaur tracks.

Resources: Recommended is an anthology, *American Earth: Environmental Writing Since Thoreau*. Other resources can be found online or in local libraries.

The Moderator: Ellen Peck, a former English teacher, is interested in landscape painting, and concerned about how we can use our various communication resources to increase sensitivity to the plight of the natural world.

TUESDAY AFTERNOON

Selected Plays of Tennessee Williams

Moderator: Ed Golden

Role of participants: Read selected scenes in seminar, lead a discussion of at least an act of one of the pieces (development of the author's ideas, plot, characters, language, structure etc.).

Number of participants (incl. moderator): 15

Time: Tuesday afternoon, 1:30–3:30

Place: Room 201, Amherst College Campus Center

Parking: obtain permit from Campus Safety when advised by moderator

(Note: no meeting April 13th; snow date is April 27th)

Although acclaimed with Eugene O'Neill and Arthur Miller for creating an American theater of depth and substance in the 20th century, it is Williams who is repeatedly singled out as the outstanding poet of the American stage. His pitch-perfect sensitivity to the hearts and souls of his characters, his richly poetic yet thoroughly credible dialogue, and his superbly imaginative exploitation of the design elements, have earned him this accolade with critics and audiences alike. As we dig into Williams' work in our reading and discussions, I would like in particular to explore and savor these poetic dimensions.

Tennessee Williams, continued

We will read several full-length plays – *Summer and Smoke*, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, *Night of the Iguana*, *The Rose Tattoo*, and *Camino Real* – as well as several one-act plays, *Portrait of a Madonna*, *The Lady of Larkspur Lotion*, *Something Unspoken*, and *Auto de Fe*. (I will provide copies of these somewhat hard-to-come-by plays.) Since most people will be reasonably familiar with *A Streetcar Named Desire* and *The Glass Menagerie*, I have not included them on the schedule. However, they will be essential references, and brushing up on or reading them will be advisable. Leaving them out allows us to concentrate on other full-length plays that are vital to coming away with a more solid appreciation of the breadth and depth of Williams. We will also have time to get to some of his excellent early one-acts that are well worth reading not only for their own merits but also as fascinating sketches for some of the major works.

In addition to a close reading of the plays, emphasis will be on discussion with some thought to how these plays might be realized today onstage, in film, or on TV. A set of questions to serve as a guide for focusing discussion will be provided.

Resources: Any edition of the plays. Related biographical and/or background information as appropriate.

The Moderator: In addition to his 30-plus years as a professor of theater, Ed Golden has spent a lifetime as a director and actor (including several productions in both capacities in Williams plays).

The Art of the Still Life

Moderator: Cosimo Favaloro

Role of participants: Drawing and painting in the seminar and at home

Number of participants (incl. moderator): 11

Time: Tuesday afternoon, 1:30–3:30

Place: Smith College Field House

Parking: ample, on site

In the history of art, the “still life” (a depiction of a collection of artifacts) has been used to memorialize an event or a place, to depict material wealth, to tell about your station in life or, of course, to create an aesthetically pleasing image.

This seminar is intended to lay a foundation for completion of a still life of your own personal artifacts. We will start by drawing simple geometric shapes. Then we introduce a group of simple objects and set up several still lifes to draw and paint. And lastly this experience is used to create a painting or finished drawing. During the seminar we will discuss and learn in some detail about line, value, composition, color, and perspective. Since painting is involved, there will be

Still Life, continued

instruction and help in executing the painting in watercolor, pastel, or oils. Participants are expected to continue working on their projects at home.

Resources: The moderator will distribute handouts with technical information and selected projects, and some references will be suggested. Participants will need to secure the necessary materials with which to draw and paint.

The Moderator: Cosimo Favaloro has audited classes in fine arts and has successfully moderated two seminars on the Foundation of Portrait Drawing.

From Here To Timbuctu: An In-depth Look At Mali, West Africa

Moderator: Joan Wofford

Role of participants: Prepare a brief report and lead ensuing discussion.

Number of participants (incl. moderator): 15

Time: Tuesday afternoon, 1:30–3:30

Place: Mt Tom Room, Easthampton Lathrop

Parking: ample, on site

Salt comes from the north, gold from the south, and silver from the country of the white men, but the word of God and the treasures of wisdom are only to be found in Timbuktu (West African proverb)

Mali is the jewel in West Africa's crown. It lies in the heart of land that once supported Africa's three greatest medieval empires. It is home to the legendary city of Timbuktu, once an Arabic intellectual center renowned for its scholarship and still in possession of thousands of ancient manuscripts.

It is also home to the cliff dwelling Dogon people and their fascinating cosmology; extraordinary adobe architecture; gorgeous textiles; world famous modern music; a rich cultural mix of peoples from the nomadic Tuareg to the fishing societies of the Bozo, as well as the Bambara and Fulani people. The lucrative trade routes of the Sahara with their caravans of gold, salt, and slaves once made the region among the world's richest.

Participants will have wide latitude in choosing topics of interest to them. Some presentation topics might include: the role of the Niger River; societal implications of the changes in the Sahara over time; how do you account for the rise of three different medieval cultures in the same location; why are the extraordinary architectural creations of these empires unknown to us; the role of the Tuareg people in creating and harassing Timbuktu; compare and contrast the norms of the three most prevalent tribes in the region; what did early explorers like Ibu Buttuta find; what does a novel like *Segu* tell us of the impacts of Arabization in the area; what similarities do you find in the folk tales of West Africa and those from Europe; how do you account for the modern popularity of the music of Mali?

Mali, continued

Resources: I will furnish a reading list that will include adventure writings of medieval writers, epic tales, folk tales, explorations of art and culture, introductions to unique cosmologies, examination of architecture, etc. participants are free to explore other sources online, in libraries, and in bookstores.

The Moderator: Joan Wofford, has been to Africa a dozen times and is currently leading a seminar on Africa. As this seminar begins, Joan will just have returned from a trip to Mali, bringing photos and videos of her visit.

WEDNESDAY MORNING

Berlin in the 1920s

Moderators: Carol Lee and Arnold Friedmann

Role of participants: Prepare a brief report and lead discussion. Other options possible.

Number of participants (incl. moderators): 15

Time: Wednesday morning, 10:00–12:00

Place: Room 207, Amherst College Campus Center

Parking: obtain a permit from Campus Safety when advised by moderator

In this seminar, we will explore the economic, artistic, musical, literary and political conditions, as well as its leading figures, in the Berlin of the 1920s. This period was called the “Golden 20s” by the Berliners of the time. Today we see that Berlin as an almost mythical city, a paradise of artistic endeavor. For many who lived or moved there, it was exhilarating, intellectual, and creative. It was *Cabaret* in all its decadence and extravagance, even with the tragic specter of Hitler’s 1933 election.

Germany, after losing the war in 1918, was burdened with heavy reparations which brought on a devastating inflation. Many traditional values died in the face of joblessness and starvation. Strikes and riots became normal. A colony of more than 50,000 Russian refugees settled in the city bringing with them Communist and Socialist activists to compete with the power of the nascent Nazi party.

Mark Twain once called Berlin “the German Chicago.” He saw a new city, reminding us of Germany’s great past. At the end of the First World War, Berlin was visually an imperial city of great architectural monuments. After World War II, the city was in ruins. What happened in the 1920s that can help us understand Berlin and its people?

Berlin, continued

Resources: We will all read *Before the Deluge: A Portrait of Berlin in the 1920s* by Otto Friedrich.

The Moderators: Carol Lee has a background in art history and city planning, while Arnold Friedmann grew up in Nuremberg, visited Berlin several times, and is familiar with the history and culture of the era.

The Joy Of PC Through A Safe PC

Moderator: Philippe A. Meyer

Role of participants: One hour formal presentation by the presenter(s) with their PC connected to the projector, one hour hands-on experience for all. In some cases we will all be on a common wireless network.

Number of participants (incl. moderator): 11

Time: Wednesday morning, 10:00–12:00

Place: Room 113, UMass Continuing Ed Bldg, Venture Way, Hadley

Parking: ample, on site

(No seminar March 17th; snow date is April 28th)

Do you know that your PC is a Telephone, a Telegraph, a Movie Theater, a Record Player and that Magic Black Box all you kids dreamed of? This seminar will introduce you in some depth to the needs and means to keep your PC current and safe. “A scan a day keeps the technician away!” Then we will embark on a Disney-like travel through the capacities of the PC:

- Communicating (voice, video and images) with your grandkids, or anybody else
- Using your PC as a movie theater and even linking it to your TV
- Using your PC to record, play and curate your music library.
- And, if you really need to be serious from time to time, office-like functions, calendars and meetings.
- Did we mention researching the presentations for your seminars through the Web, libraries, images and unlimited sources?
- And preparing said presentations with Picasa 3, Adobe and PowerPoint without forgetting “You Tube” clips!
- And, if you survive, your reward will be to discover how easy it is to create a website and, like Alice in Wonderland, get through the mirror to the Wonders of Web2.0land!

Participants will come to the seminar with their PC (sorry no MACs this time) wireless-equipped laptop. They must be experienced (at least intermediate experience in PC), and adventurous, enough to install and test new software on their machines. They will research, present and demonstrate a “theme” like “music and videos” or “safety.”

Joy of PC, continued

Resources: Everything is to be found on the Web. In some cases one might supplement one's theoretical knowledge with a "for dummy" book or other materials.

The Moderator: Philippe Meyer says that he is like a "kid in a candy store" when he meets technology.

The Other 19th-Century U.S. Presidents

Moderators: Dean Poli and Larry Ambts

Role of participants: Investigate a past 19th-century President selected from a list provided by the moderators. Each participant will prepare a 30-minute presentation and lead a discussion.

Number of participants (incl. moderators): 16

Time: Wednesday morning, 9:30–11:30

Place: Newman Catholic Center at UMass, 472 N. Pleasant St, Amherst

Parking: on site (plenty at back of building)

(Note different seminar meeting time!)

The President of the United States is the head of state, head of government, and is the highest political official in the U.S. While most in LIR are familiar with presidents such as Washington, Lincoln, Roosevelt, Truman, Kennedy and, of course, the two presidents Bush, the purpose of this seminar is to discuss the achievements, accomplishments, and failures of those lesser known presidents who served during the 19th century.

There are various ways in which presidents can be listed. One obvious way is to simply list them in straight chronological order starting with George Washington (1789–1797) and ending with Barack Obama (2009–). Alternatively one could list them chronologically by the era in which they served. For example, The History Channel likes to divide the presidential eras as follows:

The era of the founding fathers 1789–1825 (Washington to Monroe)

The era of the founding sons 1825–1849 (John Q. Adams to James K. Polk)

Civil War era 1849–1865 (Zachary Taylor to Abraham Lincoln)

Reconstruction presidents 1865–1885 (Andrew Johnson to Chester Arthur)

The Gilded Age presidents 1885–1913 (Grover Cleveland to William Howard Taft), etc.

A more subjective approach is, perhaps, that followed in the book *The Complete Idiot's Guide to the American Presidents*. In this book the author groups the presidents into five categories such as: Undisputed Champions; Heavy Weights; etc. The purpose of this seminar is to study those "other" Presidents who served during the 19th century. Two or three presidents from each of the various eras will

19th-century Presidents, continued

be selected for study. The objective will be to discuss how effective each president was and to talk about their triumphs and failures.

Resources: There are numerous books, documentaries and web materials available. Particularly good is the History Channel's 3 part series dealing with U. S. presidents.

The Moderators: After eight years of George Bush, we will look at how his presidency compares with other lesser known presidents. The results of our study may not come as a surprise.

Women Ahead of Their Time:

Moderators: Sofie Ellsberg and Mary Franks

Role of participants: Choose and research a favorite woman, then present and lead a discussion

Number of participants (incl. moderators): 16

Time: Wednesday morning, 10:30–12:30

Place: ACTV, 246 College St, Amherst

Parking: ample, on site

(Note different seminar meeting time!)

The role of women in virtually every society has for millennia been circumscribed by the function of childbirth and the rearing of children. It has been the rare and courageous woman who has dared to break down societal norms and establish her own identity. Such a woman, even in our own time, is a woman ahead of her time. The woman who rises to become a head of state, the Muslim woman who defies the mullahs' dress code, the woman executive who cracks the glass ceiling in a male-dominated corporation are examples of such women.

We have all read or heard of a particular woman whose biography has filled us with awe and pride. Perhaps she was a powerful historical figure, a scientist, an explorer, an educator, an artist, a social worker, a women's rights activist. Perhaps she lived centuries ago, or just yesterday. We invite you to research and report on such a person. Some examples include: Queen Boadicea, Eleanor of Aquitaine, Cleopatra, Catherine the Great, Juana Ines de la Cruz, Marie Curie, Sojourner Truth, Susan B. Anthony, Madam C. J. Walker, Josephine Baker, Eleanor Roosevelt, Frances Perkins, Margaret Thatcher, Hillary Clinton or someone else.

Each participant will research a woman, present his or her findings in a 30-minute presentation, then lead a discussion. In your research you will consider when and where she lived, her family circumstances, her education, her desires, her determination, her mentors, her successes, failures and her impact on society.

Women Ahead, continued

Resources: There is no textbook. Participants will do their own research.

The Moderators: Sofie Ellsberg is a retired opera singer and Mary Franks is a retired museum educator. Both admire strong women.

WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON

American Radical Movements, 1918–1972

Moderator: Leo Sartori

Role of participants: Make a presentation and lead the discussion on one of the topics in the syllabus.

Number of participants (incl. moderator): 15

Time: Wednesday afternoon, 1:30–3:30 (first meeting is Feb 17th)

Place: Room 207, Amherst College Campus Center

*Parking: obtain permit from Campus Safety when advised by moderator
(Note: first meeting is February 17th; snow date is April 28th)*

In this seminar, the focus will be on radicalism in America during the tumultuous half-century that began with the Wobblies and anarchists of the 1920s and ended with the Weathermen and Black Panthers of the Vietnam era. We will discuss the role of radicals in the labor movement, in the Civil Rights movement, in the arts and academia, and in the religious community. We shall also study the role of professional anti-communists during the post-WWII period, including the rise and fall of Joe McCarthy. Among the questions to be addressed are: Did the reaction to radicalism violate America's commitment to civil liberties? Did the radicals help end the Vietnam War, or were their efforts counterproductive?

Resources: Resources are available in libraries and online, and the moderator will provide a bibliography.

The Moderator: The moderator is a retired professor of physics and political science. He does not consider himself a radical. He does, however, admit to having almost joined American Youth for Democracy as a teenager, and to having supported Henry Wallace for President in 1948.

Poetry in Translation

Moderators: Katharine Hazen and Carol Ames

Role of participants: Choose a poet (or maybe two), select ten poems, bring copies for all the participants

Number of participants (incl. moderators): 15

Time: Wednesday afternoon, 1:30–3:30

Place: Rockridge Retirement Community, 25 Coles Meadow Rd, Northampton

Parking: ample, on site

Most of us have read the Bible in translation – as well as Homer, Plato and other classics – but probably not in original Hebrew or Greek. Perhaps something was lost in translation, but so much was saved. This is true when a fine poet translates another poet.

Come join a small group to enjoy/discover (in translation) the poetry of Anna Akmatova (Russia), Wislawa Szymborska (Poland), Tomas Tranströmer (Sweden), Tu Fu (China), Pablo Neruda (Chile) and other Spanish, German and French poets of the 20th century. Their poems have been translated into English by such major American poets as W. S. Merwin, Robert Bly, Robert Hass, and Heather McHugh.

There is no need for you to know any language but English to participate fully in this seminar. We will focus on the poems: Two or three people in turn will read a poem aloud; we will take a brief look at the life and circumstances of the poet, and follow the reading with some discussion.

Resources: Anthologies are available in local libraries, bookstores, and online.

The Moderators: Kathy Hazen is fond of poetry, reads a lot, writes some, and has led previous poetry seminars. Carol Ames is a retired minister who has been a poetry lover since college.

THURSDAY MORNING (note different time: 9:30–11:30)

History of Photography: Part III – 1945 to the Digital Age

Moderator: Paul Berman

Role of participants: Give a 45-minute presentation, followed by discussion

Number of participants (incl. moderator): 10

Time: Thursday morning, 9:30–11:30

Place: Room 207, Amherst College Campus Center

Parking: obtain permit from Campus Safety when advised by moderator

This seminar will cover the history of photography in the period between 1945 and the digital age. As in the two preceding seminars, participants will choose a subject – either a particular photographer or technique – and give a 45-minute presentation, followed by discussion. The topics I suggest to be covered are:

Photography, continued

photojournalism; the Family of Man exhibition of 1955; photography in art; surrealism; women in photography and the development of digital photography. I would hope to hear about individual photographers and their contribution to the art such as Lee Friedlander, Richard Avedon, Eliot Porter, Sally Mann, Paul Caponigro, Jerry Uelsman, and Diane Arbus, to mention but a few.

We will plan to visit the Mead or Smith Photo Center during one of our sessions and will also visit one of the Smith College galleries if there is a show in progress.

Resources: Book sources include Mary Warner Marien's *Photography: A Cultural History*, J.Szarkowski's *Looking at Photographs*, Naomi Rosenblum's *A World History of Photography* and Beaumont Newhall's *The History of Photography*. All the libraries have extensive collections as well.

Moderator: Paul Berman is a retired physician who does landscape and abstraction photography. He has had a number of shows locally and his work is on permanent display in the radiology unit and 3 North at Cooley Dickinson Hospital.

NOTE: Participants do not need to have taken the first two seminars in this series.

Drawing From a Model: Portrait and Figure Drawing

Moderator: Sally Lawton

Role of participants: Create a drawing or painting of the model provided.

Number of participants (incl. moderator): 15

Time: Thursday morning, 9:30–11:30

Place: Smith College Field House

Parking: ample, on site

The emphasis of the class will be on fostering individual development, whether you are a beginner or more – or quite experienced. Participants will spend most of the time drawing or painting, since two hours is not much time. Various topics will be treated in the course of our work, especially at the end of each session.

Topics will include the effective use of the whole page, the use of contrast, the relationship between different areas, creating depth, perspective, likeness to the model vs interpretations of the model, etc. It is always fascinating and instructive to see the variety in different drawings of the same subject.

Individual help will be given as necessary or requested. At the end of each session there is a comment period of ten+ minutes, mostly by me. You will learn

Drawing from a Model, continued

about the good qualities not always seen by critical beginners. Specific problems that everyone needs to be aware of will be addressed.

Materials: pencil, charcoal, crayon or craypas, ink (possibly), watercolor paint. You may decide to work either in black and white or, if wanted, in color. Our work will be on paper.

The Moderator: Sally Lawton is an accomplished artist and has taught – and exhibited – art for many years.

Autobiographical Writing

Moderators: Zina Tillona and Henia Lewin

Role of participants: Writing down their life experiences at home and reading excerpts to the seminar.

Number of participants (incl. moderators): 12

Time: Thursday morning, 9:30–11:30

*Place: “The Connector,” Grace Church, 14 Boltwood Ave, Amherst
(opposite AJ Hastings, across The Common)*

Parking: On The Common; behind Town Hall; parking garage

Long one of the most popular LIR seminars, Autobiographical Writing offers its members the opportunity to get to know themselves and each other a little better. It is a chance to share your life experiences with fellow LIR members and, at the same time, record them for yourselves and your family.

Many participants have taken advantage of this seminar to write their family story for their children and grandchildren. The writing takes all forms, from rough drafts to polished pieces, and all are welcome. The writer gets feedback and, if desired, the group will offer suggestions for revisions and/or possible additions, as well as clarification. This is not a course in how to write, but rather to stimulate you to continue writing your own story. Your writing can center on the events of family life, career experiences, or anything else you would like to tell about yourself.

Each participant has two opportunities to read aloud from his or her prepared texts during the semester. Sometimes these texts are distributed in advance (often via e-mail), allowing more time for discussion. The atmosphere is relaxed but the serious efforts of all concerned help to make this a rewarding experience for everyone.

The Moderators: Zina Tillona and Henia Lewin moderated a very successful Autobiographical Writing seminar last semester.