



Spring 2025
March 31–May 31

Registration opens
Feb. 10, 2025

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REGISTRATION OPENS FEBRUARY 10

The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at UC Berkeley is a community of insatiable learners ages 50+ with a passion for intellectual exploration, engagement, and connection.

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We offer three membership types:

- Single Term (\$75)
- Annual (\$100)
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Explore a rotating library of OLLI @Berkeley’s most popular pre-recorded courses. 10 offerings per term. \$75 each.

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See course listings on back cover.

New Member Offer

Receive \$25 off a Single Term membership! Contact berkeley_olli@berkeley.edu or (510) 642-9934 for code.

Fee Assistance

Enjoy waived membership and upgrade dues — plus 70% off course and “Best of OLLI” fees.

MONDAY, MARCH 31 – APRIL 21

Cheese: Milk’s Leap Toward Immortality

Janet Fletcher

10 a.m.–noon • 4 sessions

\$130 (Premium/Premium Plus members: \$0)

Where does cheese come from and how are its hundreds of varieties made? In this deep dive into one of the most beloved food groups, explore cheesemaking through history and learn how the major styles evolved. Examine the cheesemaking process and consider how different types emerged in different regions. Learn about curds, whey, rennet, and culture as you follow cheese from the milking parlor to the aging room. Become a smarter shopper and learn to evaluate cheese like a pro. A segment on cheese and health concludes the course.

Janet Fletcher publishes the Planet Cheese blog and is the author of *Cheese & Wine*, *Cheese & Beer*, and *Cultured: The Epic Story of Cheese* (Audible). She is a member of the *Guilde Internationale des Fromagers*.

Cryptocurrency: From a Cyberpunk Experiment to a Geopolitical Economic Force

Bebo White

1–3 p.m. • 4 sessions • GBC 365

\$165 (Premium/Premium Plus members: \$0)

This general course on cryptocurrency will explore questions such as (1) why a discussion of the technology is critical at this time, (2) what are the underlying technologies behind cryptocurrencies, (3) what are some current and future real-world applications of the technology, (4) what are the personal and social implications of cryptocurrencies, and (5) what is the expected future of the cryptocurrency eco-system. These questions (and more) plus examples and test cases will provide an informative, stimulating, and entertaining class experience.

Bebo White is retired from the SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory at Stanford University, where he worked as a computational physicist.

MONDAY, MARCH 31 – MAY 5

Close to Life: Writing Short Essays

Christine Schoefer

10 a.m.–noon • 6 sessions • GBC 365

\$245 (Premium/Premium Plus members \$80)

As we delve into the art and the craft of writing, we will learn techniques for getting into the creative

flow and working there. Participants will write short pieces (350 words max) in class and at home. They will listen to classmates’ writing and practice giving constructive feedback. Engaging with the writing of others allows us to recognize more clearly our own voice and writing style, and it hones our skill in revising our own writing.

Christine Schoefer received her Ph.D. from UC Berkeley. Her work has been featured on *NPR*, *The Nation*, *Salon*, *LA Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Berkeley Monthly*, and also in Germany.

Hands-On AI: Going Deeper

Robert Todd

10 a.m.–noon • 6 sessions • GBC 202/204

\$165 (Premium/Premium Plus members: \$0)

The only way to really understand artificial intelligence is to engage with it. In this class, we will use the capabilities we learned about in Hands-On AI to deepen our understanding of what machine intelligence is (and isn’t) capable of. You will dig into some of the newest capabilities of LLMs to accomplish something truly remarkable. **Note:** No prerequisite is required to fully experience this course.

Robert Todd is an innovator and tech executive who now writes, teaches about, and builds products and companies using technology that learns.

MONDAY, APRIL 14 – MAY 12

Diving into the Movies

Harry Chotiner

1:30–3 p.m. • 5 sessions

\$165 (Premium/Premium Plus members: \$0)

This class will foster the fun, vitality, and warmth of friends sharing a conversation about a great film they’ve just seen. Prior to each class, students will watch a film selected for its engaging themes, issues, storytelling, and acting. Class is comprised of lecture and discussion. **Note:** The film list will be provided before the start of the course.

Harry Chotiner served as an editor at *Socialist Review* magazine, a reader at Zoetrope Studios, and a story editor at CBS. He was a vice president at 20th Century Fox and Interscope Communications.

Learn more at olli.berkeley.edu

MONDAY, APRIL 28 – MAY 19

San Francisco Opera 2025: A Preview

Kip Cranna

10:30 a.m.–noon • 4 sessions

\$130 (Premium/Premium Plus members: \$0)

This course will provide an in-depth exploration of the six operas to be presented by San Francisco Opera in the summer and fall of 2025, using video with subtitles to illustrate key moments. The repertoire includes Mozart's masterpiece "Idomeneo," Puccini's ever-popular "La Boheme," plus the world premiere of Huang Ruo and David Henry Hwang's "The Monkey King," works by Wagner and Verdi, and more. No previous opera background required.

Kip Cranna is Dramaturg Emeritus of San Francisco Opera, where he served on the staff for 40 years, earning the San Francisco Opera Medal and the Bernard Osher Cultural Award.

TUESDAY, APRIL 1 – MAY 6

Chinese Cinema

Thomas B. Gold

10 a.m.–noon • 6 sessions • GBC 202/204

\$165 (Premium/Premium Plus members: \$0)

Along with the reform and opening policy that China undertook starting in 1979, a new generation of artists began to explore previously forbidden aspects of Chinese society, with filmmakers achieving international attention and awards. This class will view and discuss six works by some of the most prominent figures. The films are: *Yellow Earth* (dir. Chen Kaige); *To Live* (dir. Zhang Yimou); *In the Heat of the Sun* (dir. Jiang Wen); *Not One Less* (dir. Zhang Yimou); *Beijing Bicycle* (dir. Wang Xiaoshuai); and *Still Life* (dir. Jia Zhangke).

Thomas B. Gold is professor emeritus of sociology at UC Berkeley. He was executive director of the Inter-University Program in Chinese Language Studies at Tsinghua University in Beijing.

Lost Icons: Forgotten Stars of Music and Tap Dancing, 1920–50

Dave Radlauer

10 a.m.–noon • 6 sessions

\$165 (Premium/Premium Plus members: \$0)

America was bursting with iconic popular entertainers early in the 20th century. Gifted bandleaders, tap dancers, and singers sustained American spirits through depression and war. Innovative performers flourished on records, radio, and film, accelerating the new mass entertainment media. In this course, we will encounter many of these "lost icons" and reconsider their contributions to the culture of the time.

Dave Radlauer has presented early jazz and swing on radio for 40 years, garnering six broadcast awards, and authored 200 articles, web posts, and columns.

Theatre's Greatest Moments: A Short History of the Stage

Peter Davis

1–3 p.m. • 6 sessions • GBC 202/204

\$165 (Premium/Premium Plus members: \$0)

Ever wonder how theatre first emerged, or when dialogue was invented, or how stories were first told on stage? Or how Marlowe reconciled the medieval world of his youth with the developing English Renaissance in just one play? Or how the Restoration writers created a middle-class theatre? Or why Realism became the dominant form on stage for an industrialized world? In this course we will explore six pivotal moments that fundamentally changed theatre and society over the last 2,500 years.

Peter Davis served as chair of theatre studies programs as well as director of graduate studies at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. He is also a professional actor, director, and author.

iPhoneography

Yoni Mayeri

1:30–3:30 p.m. • 6 sessions

(No class 4/15; final class 5/13)

\$245 (Premium/Premium Plus members: \$80)

Learn how to expertly capture images, edit, and create photographs using best practices with your iPhone. **Note:** An iPhone 11 or newer is recommended, as is iOS 18 (or above) software.

Yoni Mayeri is an award-winning photographer specializing in iPhone photography. She began her photographic career at Polaroid and Nikon.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 2 – 16

Global Hotspots: The Latest Edition

Darren Zook

10 a.m.–noon • 3 sessions • F&S

\$165 (Premium/Premium Plus members: \$0)

The world unfortunately shows no signs of settling down anytime soon, so it is time once again to take a closer look at the areas of the world that are doing the most to unsettle our sense of stability. In this three-week course we will look at three different countries/ conflicts: (1) Syria, (2) Israel/Gaza, and (3) the Korean Peninsula (South and North Korea). We will examine not only the root causes of conflict, but also the prospects and possibilities for peace in the near and distant future.

Darren Zook teaches in Global Studies and Political Science at UC Berkeley. He was named one of the "Top Ten Most Inspiring Professors at UC Berkeley" by *College Magazine*.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 2 – 23

Milano: A City Into Design

Pierluigi Serraino

10:30 a.m.–noon • 4 sessions

\$130 (Premium/Premium Plus members: \$0)

Milano is today the financial capital of Italian industry. Its stands to Italy as New York stands to the United States. In this city there is the stock exchange, the publishing industry including the press, the economic platform for international trade and deals, and the center of the fashion world. It is a crossroads for art and industry to come together in its most enlightened fusion in the 20th and 21st centuries. Since the Middle Ages, design rules in Milano. This course charts the development of the city and its architectural achievements.

Pierluigi Serraino is a practicing architect and educator. He is the author of many books on architecture, including TASCHEN's *Modernism Rediscovered*.

MONDAYS

3/31-4/21

CHEESE: MILK'S LEAP TOWARD IMMORTALITY (4)

JANET FLETCHER
10 A.M.-NOON

CRYPTOCURRENCY (4)

BEBO WHITE
1-3 P.M. • GBC 365

3/31-5/5

CLOSE TO LIFE: WRITING SHORT ESSAYS (6)

CHRISTINE SCHOEFER
10 A.M.-NOON • GBC 365

HANDS-ON AI: GOING DEEPER (6)

ROBERT TODD
10 A.M.-NOON • GBC 202/204

4/14-5/12

DIVING INTO THE MOVIES (5)

HARRY CHOTINER
1:30-3 P.M.

4/28-5/19

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA 2025: A PREVIEW (4)

KIP CRANNA
10:30 A.M.-NOON

TUESDAYS

4/1-5/6

CHINESE CINEMA (6)
THOMAS B. GOLD
10 A.M.-NOON • GBC 202/204

LOST ICONS: FORGOTTEN STARS OF MUSIC AND TAP DANCING, 1920-50 (6)

DAVE RADLAUER
10 A.M.-NOON

THEATRE'S GREATEST MOMENTS: A SHORT HISTORY OF THE STAGE (6)

PETER DAVIS
1-3 P.M. • GBC 202/204

IPHONEOGRAPHY (6)

YONI MAYERI
1:30-3:30 P.M.
(NO CLASS 4/15; FINAL CLASS 5/13)

WEDNESDAYS

4/2-4/16

GLOBAL HOTSPOTS: THE LATEST EDITION (3)

DARREN ZOOK
10 A.M.-NOON • F&S

4/2-4/23

MILANO: A CITY INTO DESIGN (4)

PIERLUIGI SERRAINO
10:30 A.M.-NOON

WHAT DO MUSEUMS DO? (4)

THOMAS LAQUEUR
1-3 P.M. • GBC 365

POSTPONED

WEDNESDAYS, CONT.

4/2-5/7

TURN, TURN, TURN: A ROCK 'N' ROLL ROAD TRIP, PART 2 (6)

PETE ELMAN
1-3 P.M. • F&S

4/23-5/7

LEFT BEHIND: UNDERSTANDING THE RIGHTWARD DRIFT IN GLOBAL POLITICS (3)

DARREN ZOOK
10 A.M.-NOON • F&S

4/30-5/21

FIRENZE: FROM PRE-RENAISSANCE TO CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTURE (4)

PIERLUIGI SERRAINO
10:30 A.M.-NOON

MUSEUM TREASURES OF BERKELEY (4)

THOMAS LAQUEUR
1-3 P.M. • GBC 365

THURSDAYS

4/3-4/24

WOMEN WRITING AGE IN FICTION (4)

CAROL CHRIST, SUSAN VAN DYNE
10 A.M.-NOON • GBC 365

THE CONDUCTOR'S ART (4)

BEN SIMON
10 A.M.-NOON • GBC 202/204

THURSDAYS, CONT.

4/3-5/8

WRITING FICTION FOR CHILDREN (6)

MINA WITTEMAN
10 A.M.-NOON • GBC 300

NEURODIVERSITY: SCHOLARSHIP, POLITICS, AND CULTURE (6)

LAURA STERPONI
1-3 P.M. • GBC 365

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON AND THE BIRDS OF AMERICA (6)

ERIC J. SIMON
1-3 P.M.
(NO CLASS 5/8; FINAL CLASS 5/15)

OUT OF MANY: A PEOPLE'S HISTORY OF AMERICA TO 1783 (6)

RICHARD BELL
1:30-3 P.M.
(NO CLASS 4/17; FINAL CLASS 5/15)



In-person venues

F&S: Freight & Salvage
2020 Addison Street
Berkeley, CA

GBC: Golden Bear Center
1995 University Avenue
Berkeley, CA

Many courses offer a fully hybrid experience. The choice of how and when to participate is up to you! Enjoy videos any time through May 31.

- In-person** courses are held in downtown Berkeley
- Livestreamed** courses stream live on the scheduled day and time
- Recorded** courses are video recorded to view later at your convenience

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 2 – 23

What Do Museums Do?

Thomas Laqueur

1–3 p.m. • 4 sessions • GBC 365

\$165 (Premium/Premium Plus members: \$0)

From their beginnings in the wonder cabinets of learned men and rich patrons through the creation of national museums to the present when museums are playing a major role in the cultural and political life of the global community, this course offers a survey of this history. It will engage with current debates about why the museum is at stake in how a nation is presented? Who owns the artifacts on display? What stories do they tell or not tell? Who gets to tell the story? Each session will consist of a lecture followed by an interview discussion with a scholar or museum professional.

Thomas Laqueur is the Helen Fawcett Distinguished Professor of History Emeritus at UC Berkeley. He writes about the cultural history of modern Europe and the history of sexuality and the body among other topics.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 2 – MAY 7

Turn, Turn, Turn:

A Rock 'n' Roll Road Trip, Part 2

Pete Elman

1–3 p.m. • 6 sessions • F&S

\$175 (Premium/Premium Plus members: \$0)

This course covers the golden age of American rock 'n' roll, 1965–75, and is taught chronologically and geographically across regions where key movements sprung up. The six classes will be presented as a journey through those regions that were at the forefront of rock 'n' roll. We will encounter LA: ground zero for surf, folk, pop, psychedelic, and country-rock; the SF sound 1965–71; the singer-songwriters of Laurel Canyon; NY, NY: the sounds of 1–95, 1965–75; instrumentals, one-hit wonders and great garage bands of the '60s. The course ends with a tribute to Leon Russell, the master of space and time. **Note:** No prerequisite is required to fully experience this course.

Pete Elman has been a musician since 1963; a performer, composer, studio musician, and producer of 30 albums. He has created 14 different classes on popular music for OLLI.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23 – MAY 7

Left Behind: Understanding the Rightward Drift in Global Politics

Darren Zook

10 a.m.–noon • 3 sessions • F&S

\$165 (Premium/Premium Plus members: \$0)

One of the more surprising results of the November 2024 election in the United States was a noticeable drift to the political right in demographic groups that traditionally have moved to the left (younger voters, for example). Is this a one-off result, or part of a permanent trend? With stronger showings for conservative, right-wing parties in elections all around the world, it is worth examining the causal factors behind this perceptible rightward drift and questioning whether it is a momentary glitch or more permanent shift. [See Darren Zook bio on page 3.](#)

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 30 – MAY 21

Firenze: From Pre-Renaissance to Contemporary Architecture

Pierluigi Serraino

10:30 a.m.–noon • 4 sessions

\$130 (Premium/Premium Plus members: \$0)

The historic center of Florence is a UNESCO Heritage site. Founded in 59 BC, its ascent in the world scene is connected to the painting revolution that Giotto headed and the literary achievements that Dante Alighieri created in the late Medieval period. From that time, Florence offered unique conditions for the rebirth of the classical heritage largely founded on a nascent economy of a then modern banking systems. This class will cover the triangulation between its history, economy, and urban form from its origins to today, touching on the milestones in architecture and the arts.

[See Pierluigi Serraino bio on page 3.](#)

Museum Treasures of Berkeley

Thomas Laqueur

1–3 p.m. • 4 sessions • GBC 365

\$245 (Premium/Premium Plus members: \$80)

After a short introduction to the history of museums and a museum-building activity, this course offers backstage tours to three UC Berkeley museums or archives. The main goal of the course is to come to understand what curators do: how they think about organizing and presenting their materials, what stories they hope to tell, how their work and collections are part of the research mission of the university, and what they do specifically to care for their holdings. Possible excursions include visits to the historical instrument collections including demonstrations on early pianos, to the Bancroft rare book collection, archive and hand-press print shop, and to the Berkeley Art Museum.

[See Thomas Laqueur bio on left.](#)

THURSDAY, APRIL 3 – 24

Women Writing Age in Fiction

Carol Christ, Susan Van Dyne

10 a.m.–noon • 4 sessions • GBC 365

\$205 (Premium/Premium Plus members: \$40)

How do you narrate the story of women's old age? So many events that shape fiction — courtship, marriage, coming of age — happen to young people. How do you write a novel — or a short story — about the later part of life? We encounter failures of mind and body, grief and loss, death. Yet these novels also reveal resilience, humor, and gestures of reparation. In this course, we will study works by four prize-winning contemporary women writers that portray women in old age.

Carol Christ retired as chancellor of UC Berkeley in June of 2024; she has also served as president of Smith College. She taught in the English Department at Berkeley for many decades.

Susan Van Dyne earned her Ph.D. from Harvard and taught at Smith College for four decades. She's written about Sylvia Plath's poetry and Alison Bechdel's queer graphic memoir *Fun Home*.

The Conductor's Art

Ben Simon

10 a.m.–noon • 4 sessions • GBC 202/204

\$165 (Premium/Premium Plus members: \$0)

The power, the fame, the glory! But what does a conductor really do up there? This course invites you backstage to discover the secrets of that most mysterious musician onstage, the one without an instrument. We'll explore the evolving role of the conductor from historical, musical, sociological, and organizational perspectives. Who are our great conductors, past, and present? What does the future hold for classical music, symphony orchestras, and their maestri? We'll also learn basic conducting techniques to deepen your appreciation of this complex art.

Violist and conductor **Ben Simon** has performed internationally with the New York and Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestras. Music Director of the SF Chamber Orchestra for 21 years, he has taught at Harvard, Stanford, and UC Berkeley.

THURSDAY, APRIL 3 – MAY 8

Writing Fiction for Children

Mina Witteman

10 a.m.–noon • 6 sessions • GBC 300

\$245 (Premium/Premium Plus members: \$80)

This is a course for both beginning and advanced writers. We'll analyze picture books and middle-grade novels, and pair that with many writing exercises. With or without your own manuscript at hand, we will explore techniques to develop story structure, plot, narrative voice, and engaging characters. We will dive into world building in children's stories and the function of the illustrator in picture books. At the end of this course, students will have a deeper understanding of what it takes to write prose for children, and they will have tested their own writing.

Mina Witteman writes in English and Dutch. Witteman is a longtime teacher of creative writing, trained and certified by the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences.

Visit oli.berkeley.edu for up-to-the-minute information about speaker events and special goings on.

Neurodiversity: Scholarship, Politics, and Culture

Laura Sterponi

1–3 p.m. • 6 sessions • GBC 365

\$205 (Premium/Premium Plus members: \$40)

Over the past 25 years, advocacy, activism, and scholarship have elevated neurological variability as an important dimension of human diversity. This course provides an in-depth exploration of neurodiversity and neurodivergence, examining how these concepts challenge traditional medical and psychological frameworks by promoting a more inclusive understanding of neurological, cognitive, and sensorial differences.

Laura Sterponi is Professor of Language and Literacy at the Berkeley School of Education. Trained as a developmental psychologist and interactional linguist, her research advances neurodiversity as an academic field.

John James Audubon and *The Birds of America*

Eric J. Simon

1–3 p.m. • 6 sessions

(No class 5/8; final class 5/15)

\$165 (Premium/Premium Plus members: \$0)

JJ Audubon was a French-American artist and naturalist who, starting in the 1820s, set out to document every bird in the U.S. The result was his masterwork *The Birds of America*, a collection of 435 hand-painted bird prints, considered by many to be the finest book ever published. In this course, you'll learn about Audubon's early life and his artistic methods. We'll also take a deep dive into the prints themselves. We will end by considering Audubon's legacy.

Eric J. Simon, Ph.D. has been a professor of biology for over 25 years. Professor Simon is also the author of a widely used series of college biology textbooks used by students in over 40 countries.

Out of Many: A People's History of America to 1783

Richard Bell

1:30–3 p.m. • 6 sessions

(No class 4/17; final class 5/15)

\$165 (Premium/Premium Plus members: \$0)

Who made America? This course examines how three peoples—Europeans, Natives, and Africans—encountered each other in North America. The course begins with first contact and then moves through the colonial period, culminating in the American Revolution. Lessons tackle topics including witch-hunting, the origins of slavery, the great awakening, Native America, slave revolts, immigration, inequality, sex and marriage, imperial conflicts, and the war for independence. Most importantly, the course places front and center the ordinary people whose lives and struggles made America.

Richard Bell is Professor of History at the University of Maryland and author of the book *Stolen: Five Free Boys Kidnapped into Slavery and Their Astonishing Odyssey Home*.

Best of OLLI, Spring 2025

Fighting Slavery in Early America

Richard Bell

Pioneering Women of Abstract Expressionism

Drucie Saal Belman

Democracy in Peril: England Between the Wars

Mick Chantler

Innovation Policy in Healthcare

James Robinson

Copenhagen: Bridge Between Mainland Europe and the Nordic Countries

Pierluigi Serraino

Lenny: Portrait of an American Maestro

Ben Simon

In Darwin's Footsteps: A Journey to the Galapagos

Eric J. Simon

The Roberts Court: From Bad to Worse

Bill Sokol

Civility in America: What It Is, How We Lost It, and Why We Need to Get It Back

Darren Zook

The Nordic Countries

Darren Zook