UC Berkeley OLLI

Osher Lifelong Learning Institute

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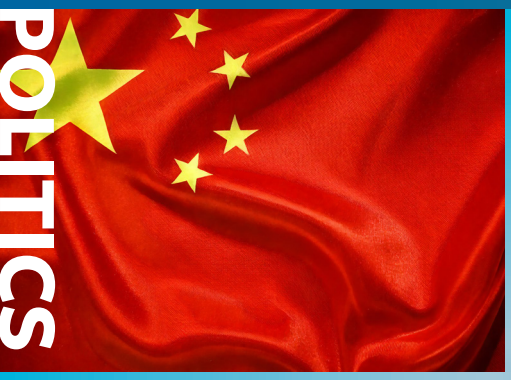

Winter 2027

Jan. 19–March 28

Registration opens
October 12, 2026

Courses
Events
Field Trips
Socials
Community

Designed for learners 50+ and open to all. Join us!

Osher Lifelong Learning Institute
University of California, Berkeley
1995 University Avenue, Suite 365
Berkeley, CA 94704-1070

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The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at UC Berkeley is a vibrant, member-driven community designed for learners 50+ — and open to all. Membership offers access to more than 100 courses per year, speaker events, field trips, socials, and more. No Cal affiliation is needed — just a love of learning (without exams or grades). Join us!

Memberships

- Single Term ($75)
- Annual ($100)
- Premium ($995)
- Best of OLLI Only ($25)

Course fees are separate and are based on membership type, delivery method, size (from large lecture to small workshop), and length. "Premium/Premium Plus" members pay ***no*** fees for lecture courses (50+ offered per year) and 50% off workshops and discussions. For only $10, Annual and Premium members can upgrade to "Plus" memberships to gain access to our "Best of OLLI" archive of popular pre-recorded courses for $75 each. (*See listing on page 5.*)

New Member Offer

Get $25 off a Single Term membership! Contact berkeley_olli@berkeley.edu for the special code.

Fee Assistance

Enjoy waived Annual Plus membership (a $110 value) and 70% off all course fees.

Learn more at olli.berkeley.edu

MONDAY, JAN. 25 – MARCH 8

NO CLASS 2/15

The Golden Age of Soul Music

Richie Unterberger
10 a.m.–noon • 6 sessions • GBC 202/204
$165 (Premium/Premium Plus members: $0)

In the 1960s and 1970s, rhythm and blues, gospel, and pop fused into soul, the most popular form of African-American music in the 20th century. Using both common and rare recordings and video clips, the course will cover performers from the birth and peak of soul, from Ray Charles and Smokey Robinson to the Supremes, Aretha Franklin, and James Brown. It will also discuss how the civil rights movement and soul influenced each other, as well as legendary soul record companies like Motown and Stax.

Richie Unterberger is an author of rock history. His new book, *Do What You Fear Most: The History of the Velvet Underground*, was recently published by Omnibus Press.

Thinking About Old Age

Bill Smoot
10 a.m.–noon • 6 sessions • GBC 365
$205 (Premium/Premium Plus members: 50% off)

For Simone de Beauvoir and the French existentialists, there are two aspects to humanity — the objective facts and the subjective freedom by which we live those facts in our chosen way. As Sartre put it, "We are always free to make something out of what has been made of us." In this course, we will reflect on the meaning of old age, the challenges it presents, and the opportunities it affords. We will discuss four films (watched out of class), a couple of works of literature, and a few poems. The ratio of facilitated discussion to lectures will be about two-to-one.

Bill Smoot is a writer of fiction and essays. He received his Ph.D. in philosophy from Northwestern University. He teaches college classes in San Quentin Rehabilitation Facility.

When you join OLLI at UC Berkeley, you become part of a 2,500-strong community of learners insatiably curious about the world. Explore alongside people who share your passion for new ideas, deeper perspectives, and meaningful connections. All are welcome!

MONDAY, JAN. 25 – MARCH 8 *continued*
NO CLASS 2/15

Adaptation: The Many Faces of *Hamlet*
Linda Haverty Rugg
1–3 p.m. • 6 sessions • GBC 202/204
$165 (Premium/Premium Plus members: $0)

In the realm of the arts, adaptation of older works is a constant form of interpretation, creation, and transformation. In this course we will look at the theory and practice of adaptation, using Shakespeare's *Hamlet* as a keystone text. We will read the Danish textual source for *Hamlet*, then Shakespeare's play, then Maggie O'Farrell's novel *Hamnet*, then we will view and discuss the film version of *Hamnet*.

Linda Haverty Rugg retired from her faculty and administrative positions at UC Berkeley in 2024. She has published and lectured on Mark Twain's autobiography and his writings on race and antisemitism.

Cold War Skeptics
Mick Chantler
1–3 p.m. • 6 sessions • GBC 365
$165 (Premium/Premium Plus members: $0)

Most American congressmen, pundits, and radio/television news commentators (not to mention ALL of the presidents of the era) were full-throated backers of the standard Cold War ideology which dominated the national discourse from 1947 to the Eighties. It was a simple outlook: "The Russians are coming, and we better be ready!" But there were some doubters, and many were highly respected figures. In this course, we will analyze the work of some key "establishment" naysayers who warned of the dangers of our increasingly militarized foreign policy.

Mick Chantler has taught for OLLI @Berkeley for more than a decade. His main academic interests include early America, the Civil War era, the Cold War, and the history of baseball.

TUESDAY, JAN. 19 – FEB. 16

The Real Revolution: America, 1776-1783
Richard Bell
1:30–3 p.m. • 5 sessions
$150 (Premium/Premium Plus members: $0)

The real story of the American Revolution is far more than a catalog of deeds done by a handful of famous men. Declaring independence on a piece of parchment on a summer's day in Philadelphia in 1776 would have meant nothing had not tens of thousands of ordinary Americans been willing to support that cause. In this course, we will explore the tumultuous eight years of war between 1775 and 1783, examining five of the extraordinary groups of people who played central roles in the war for independence: patriot soldiers, non-combatants on the home front, Native Americans, Black Americans, and white loyalists.

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*.

TUESDAY, JAN. 19 – FEB. 23

The Short Story of Families in Love and Trouble
Jacqueline Berger
10 a.m.–noon • 6 sessions
$205 (Premium/Premium Plus members: 50% off)

Novelist and short story writer Lauren Groff has said that writers compose the score and readers make the music. In this discussion-focused course, we will delve into over a dozen mostly contemporary short stories of familial and marital relationships. Intimacy — sought, avoided, achieved, lost — is arguably the core work of human life, so, naturally, the central subject of great literature. The family is relational ground zero, and the short story — the novel distilled to its essence — is the ideal form for our engaged exploration.

Jacqueline Berger is professor emerita of English at Notre Dame de Namur University and is the author of five books of poetry. Winner of the Bay Area Book Award, her work has appeared in American Poetry Review and numerous other journals.

Astounding Women of Jazz, Blues, and Swing 1920-1960
Dave Radlauer
10:30 a.m.–noon • 6 sessions
$165 (Premium/Premium Plus members: $0)

In the first half of the 20th century professional female musicians transformed modern American popular entertainment on multiple vectors of jazz, blues, and swing. In this course, we will celebrate the independent creativity of blues musicians like Ma Rainey and Bessie Smith, and savvy innovators like composer, arranger, and pianist Mary Lou Williams. We will encounter the all-female wartime orchestras entertaining servicemen at home and abroad, as well as singers Ella Fitzgerald and Billie Holiday, virtuoso bandleaders, and performers, among others.

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

TUESDAY, JAN. 19 – FEB. 23 *continued*

Finding the LGBTQ+ Past in Present Places

Gerard Koskovich
1–3 p.m. • 6 sessions • GBC 365
$205 (Premium/Premium Plus members: 50% off)

Combining lecture, workshop participation, and group projects, this interactive course offers an introduction to place-based LGBTQ+ history and cultural heritage of the Bay Area. Participants will investigate how built and natural environments embody stories of the LGBTQ+ past; learn about the movement to identify and interpret such places; consider the processes of making and sharing place-based narratives; and acquire resources and skills for finding, documenting, and interpreting queer and trans-historic sites.

Gerard Koskovich has presented and published widely on LGBTQ+ history. He has served as a consultant on LGBTQ+ historic sites and cultural heritage for the U.S. National Park Service and the San Francisco Planning Department.

iPhoneography

Yoni Mayeri
1–3 p.m. • 6 sessions
$245 (Premium/Premium Plus members: 50% off)

Learn how to capture stunning images, edit like a pro, and make the most of your iPhone's powerful camera and editing tools. By the end, you'll know how to create extraordinary photos — all from your pocket. **Note:** An iPhone 11s or newer is recommended.

Yoni Mayeri is an award-winning professional photographer and an early adopter of the iPhone. Yoni teaches at UC Berkeley, Stanford, Stanford Research Park, Rancho La Puerta/Mexico, The Garden Club of America, Clos Mirabel/France, and more.

Yosemite: A Nexus of Wilderness, Art, Science, and Politics

Eric Simon
1:30–3 p.m. • 6 sessions
No class 2/16; final class 3/2
$165 (Premium/Premium Plus members: $0)

Explore Yosemite as both a spectacular natural landscape and a place that has shaped American ideas about wilderness, art, science, and conservation. We'll examine Yosemite's natural history and scenery, then trace the influence of artists such as Bierstadt, Watkins, and Adams; naturalists such as John Muir; political figures including Lincoln and Roosevelt; and cultural voices such as Emerson. Together, their stories reveal how Yosemite became not just a tourist destination, but part of the American imagination.

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

WEDNESDAY, JAN. 20 – FEB. 10

Athens: The Urban Heart of the Greek World and Beyond

Pierluigi Serraino
10:30 a.m.–noon • 4 sessions
$150(Premium/Premium Plus members: $0)

Few cities had a lasting impact on the formation of Western civilization as Athens did. The very idea of town with the agora as the center of public life and the organization of this urban came from Athens during the 5th century BC evolved over the course of history, its urban form morphed to take on the dominant powers of the following centuries. The 20th century was generative of a streak of highly praised designs leading to a contemporary generation of inspired architects. This class surveys the fascinating evolution of a city at the center of Western consciousness.

Pierluigi Serraino, Ph.D., FAIA is the author of *Modernism Rediscovered*. His latest book is *The Modern Garden: The Outdoor Architecture of Mid-century America*.

WEDNESDAY, JAN. 20 – FEB. 17

Your Brain on Joy: Ancient Wisdom and New Science for Vibrant Aging

Amelia Barili
1–3 p.m. • 5 sessions
$205 (Premium/Premium Plus members: 50% off)

What if aging isn't something happening to you, but something you're shaping, moment by moment? Even in the hardest soil, something can still grow — that's not a metaphor, it's what your cells are doing right now. Guided by ancient wisdom traditions and new science — telomere research, neuroscience, and Amelia's own decades training with advanced yoga and qigong masters in India and China — this course shows how joy grows alongside life's real difficulties, not after them. No experience needed. Just curiosity about what your body, mind, and spirit can still do — whatever this year brings.

Amelia Barili teaches an innovative pedagogy that integrates neuroscience, meditation, and service learning. She received the Chancellor's Award for Public Service.

WEDNESDAY, JAN. 20 – FEB. 24

Memory into Memoir

Lindsey Crittenden
10 a.m.–noon • 6 sessions • GBC 300
$245 (Premium/Premium Plus members: 50% off)

What life stories sustain and shape and (perhaps) haunt you? How can you turn them into effective memoir? In this class, we'll explore scene and summary, narrative distance, imagery, narrative arc, and the handling of time, using writing prompts and short readings to mine the material only you can tell. Class participants will be invited to hand in pages for feedback from the instructor and will have the option to share their writing in a supportive, inclusive environment. Instructor will give written feedback on up to 300 words every two weeks, sent as a Word document.

Lindsey Crittenden has taught memoir writing at UC Berkeley Extension and at The Writers Grotto. She is the author of *The Water Will Hold You* and numerous short memoir pieces in Best American Spiritual Writing, the New York TImes, and elsewhere.

Modernity: A Disaster Story Set in California

Kathleen Moran
1–3 p.m. • 6 sessions • GBC 365
$205 (Premium/Premium Plus members: 50% off)

California's identities as both the landscape of the New American Dream and an Apocalypse Theme Park were born together and have defined the state from its founding. From the beginning, our state embodied both the wonders and the terrors of modernity. In this course, we will explore some pivotal moments in California history through this tension, focusing on the ways anxieties and fears about modernity have been played out in Hollywood "Disaster" films set in California.

Kathleen Moran is a founder of UC Berkeley's American Studies Program and a recipient of UC Berkeley's Distinguished Teaching Award.

WEDNESDAY, JAN. 20 – MARCH 3

Diving into the Movies

Harry Chotiner
10 a.m.–noon • 6 sessions • The Freight
No class 2/17
$185 (Premium/Premium Plus members: $0)

In these times when every form of creative artistic expression is under seige, it might be salutary to immerse ourselves in some exquisite filmmaking. 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. Now is a good time to gather, celebrate, and dive deeply into what humane sensibilities can create through film. Live at the Freight for the first time!

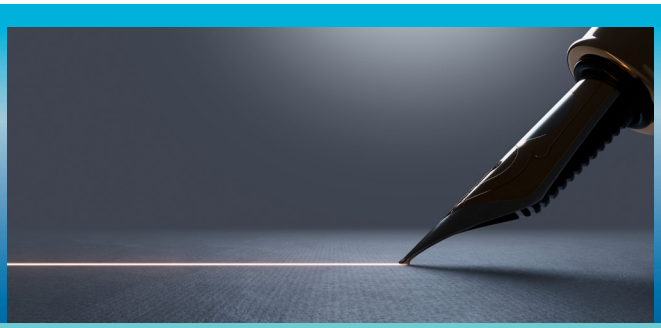
Harry Chotiner served as an editor at *Socialist Review* magazine, a reader at Zoetrope Studios, and a story editor at CBS. He was a vice-president at 20th Century Fox and Interscope Communications.

Country Music Road Trip 1950-1980

Pete Elman
1–3 p.m. • 6 sessions • The Freight
No class 2/17
$185 (Premium/Premium Plus members: $0)

Explore key movements that contributed to the explosive growth of country music as an industry and art form. Focusing on Nashville, California, and Texas, this course will take us on a regional, chronological, and musical journey through the eras and places that have made country music a huge part of 20th-century American culture. The final class will feature an overview of the country song and an in-depth musical analysis of why country music is so emotional.

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



WEDNESDAY, FEB 17 – MARCH 10

Cairo: From Pharaonic Times to the Present

Pierluigi Serraino
10:30 a.m.–noon • 4 sessions
$150 (Premium/Premium Plus members: $0)

Although Cairo was formally founded in 969 AD, its territories were occupied with settlements as ancient as 6,000 years BC. The fundamentals of the architectural language of the Western world were cast here, and many buildings types became adopted for millennia. With the fall of the Egyptian civilization, its fate was colonial for centuries thereafter while retaining an enormous influence on architecture. Today, Cairo is a megalopolis with notable architectural contributions of international renown. This class will survey the evolution of the most revered cities in history. ***See Serraino bio on page 2.***

THURSDAY, JAN. 21 – FEB. 11

Guided Autobiography, II

Sara Orem
9:30 a.m.–noon • 4 sessions • GBC 300
$245 (Premium/Premium Plus members: 50% off)

Guided Autobiography is a certified process of writing about your life. It is topic based rather than chronology based. The process emphasizes two significant things: storytelling and community building. There will be four sessions the topics of which are The First Time, Risks I Have Taken, Cultural Heritage, and Food and Drink. **Note:** This course offers different topics than Guided Autobiography from fall 2026. It is not necessary to have taken that course to fully experience this one.

Sara Orem has taught for OLLI @Berkeley for 10 years. Her background and academic study is in positive psychology, and the many ways we can enhance positive emotions to live a more satisfying and fulfilling life.

THURSDAY, JAN. 21 – FEB. 11 *continued*

China in the World: The Rise of a Global Superpower

Darren Zook
10 a.m.–noon • 4 sessions • GBC 202/204
$165 (Premium/Premium Plus members: $0)

This course will offer a fresh look at China, including everything from changing cultural trends to evolving security perspectives. The first part of the course will focus on the rise of China in the 20th and 21st centuries, and then we will turn our attention to the ways that China has engaged with global institutions and how it has tried to reshape them to support its own vision and grand strategy on the world stage. We will also explore the economics involved with the rise of China, from the Belt and Road Initiative to its efforts to build an alternative financial order.

Darren Zook teaches global studies and political science at UC Berkeley. His areas of interest include comparative politics, human rights, international law, cybersecurity, and the politics of art.

Unfinished Journey: The Life and Music of Franz Schubert

Ben Simon
10 a.m.–noon • 4 sessions • GBC 365
$165 (Premium/Premium Plus members: $0)

The brief, unhappy life of Franz Schubert reads like a cautionary tale: ignored by the musical establishment, all but unpublished in his lifetime, Schubert lived in poverty and died of syphilis at the age of 31. End of story? No. One of the incandescent geniuses of classical music, Schubert left behind a body of work of staggering beauty and emotional depth. We'll move through his musical world — from the intimate songs that made him the toast of Viennese drawing rooms to his towering late symphonies and chamber works. No musical training required — just curious ears and an open heart.

Ben Simon has performed internationally with the New York and Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestras. He has served as music director of the San Francisco Chamber Orchestra for 21 years.

Upcoming Events

Be sure to check out our ever-growing calendar of upcoming events, including our Friday speaker series, Town Halls, and other special goings-on.

olli.berkeley.edu/programs/events

THURSDAY, JAN. 21 – FEB. 11 *continued*

Entering (Demystifying) the Art Matrix

Glen Helfand

1–3 p.m. • 4 sessions • BAMPFA

$205 (Premium/Premium Plus members: 50% off)

The realm of contemporary art is vibrant and inspiring, but often equally as opaque and confounding. this four-week course will offer art historical, social and biographical entry points to demystify contemporary art, providing different ways of reading, seeing, and talking about contemporary art. Along with slide lecture and classroom discussion, the course offers firsthand engagement with BAMPFA's MATRIX 50 exhibition — which surveys a decades of new art — including works that represent major art trends, strategic approaches, aesthetic pleasures, and thorny dialogues.

Glen Helfand is an Oakland-based writer, critic, and independent curator. His writing has been published in art and general interest publications. He is a professor in the Graduate Fine Arts program at California College of the Arts.

THURSDAY, JAN. 21 – FEB. 25

Toni Morrison's Masterworks

Stephanie Wells

1–3 p.m. • 6 sessions • GBC 202/204

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

Toni Morrison is one of the world's greatest novelists and prose stylists. Her treatments of race, gender, history, and above all, humanity and love in America are matched only by her ability to craft a sentence stunning enough to knock you to the ground. This course will focus on a small selection of Morrison's most important novels, from the beginning of her career to the present, as well as some of her critical writings. Please have each selection read before our class discussion of it, if possible.

Stephanie Wells is a literature professor at College of Marin with a focus on modernism and postmodernism in American and British novels and poetry. She is the recipient of the 2025 OLLI @Berkeley Excellence in Teaching and Learning Award.

THURSDAY, FEB. 18 – MARCH 11

China, the U.S., and Global Politics: Emerging Threats, New Opportunities

Darren Zook

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

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

Prevailing political theory tells us that democracies thrive in cooperative environments. In short, democracies work best when they play well together. Yet over the past decade or so, many democratic partnerships and alliances have grown apart and atrophied, thereby weakening the "brand" of democracy on the global stage. Is this slow decay irreversible? Or is there a possibility for the rebuilding of democratic partnerships and alliances on the global stage in a way that ensures the vibrancy and longevity of global democracy? This course argues strongly in the affirmative. ***See Zook bio on page 4.***

Art, Architecture, and Design: Four Great Courses, Four Great Cities

Barcelona • Berlin • Lisbon • Paris

Pierluigi Serraino

$150

This special Best of OLLI offering brings together four courses from architectural historian and writer Pierluigi Serraino, a longtime OLLI instructor and this year's recipient of the OLLI Excellence in Teaching and Learning Award. Explore Barcelona, Berlin, Lisbon, and Paris through his expert eye.

AVAILABLE TO Annual PLUS, Premium PLUS, and BOO subscribers.

BEST OF OLLI, WINTER 2027

Access some of our most popular pre-recorded courses ($75 each).

Behind the Scenes for History Lovers
Adam Hochschild

War, Race, and the Constitution: Lessons from the WWII Japanese American Incarceration
Susan Kamei

Not Exactly Crime Fiction
Linda Haverty Rugg

Lenny: Portrait of an American Maestro
Ben Simon

Tracking the Progress of A.I.
Robert Todd

What Is Economic Justice? The American Edition
Darren Zook

Calendar

IN-PERSON LIVESTREAMED RECORDED *(4,5,6) INDICATES # OF SESSIONS*

MONDAYS
1/25–3/8
(NO CLASS 2/15)

THE GOLDEN AGE OF SOUL MUSIC (6)
RICHIE UNTERBERGER
10 A.M.–NOON • GBC 202/204

THINKING ABOUT OLD AGE (6)
BILL SMOOT
10 A.M.–NOON • GBC 365

ADAPTATION: THE MANY FACES OF HAMLET (6)
LINDA HAVERTY RUGG
1–3 P.M. • GBC 202/204

COLD WAR SKEPTICS (6)
MICK CHANTLER
1–3 P.M. • GBC 365

TUESDAYS
1/19–2/16

THE REAL REVOLUTION: AMERICA, 1776-1783 (5)
RICHARD BELL
1:30–3 P.M.

1/19–2/23

THE SHORT STORY OF FAMILIES IN LOVE AND TROUBLE (6)
JACQUELINE BERGER
10 A.M.–NOON

ASTOUNDING WOMEN OF JAZZ, BLUES, AND SWING 1920-1960 (6)
DAVE RADLAUER
10:30 A.M.–NOON

FINDING THE LGBTQ+ PAST IN PRESENT PLACES (6)
GERARD KOSKOVICH
1–3 P.M. • GBC 365

IPHONEOGRAPHY (6)
YONI MAYERI
1–3 P.M.

YOSEMITE: A NEXUS OF WILDERNESS, ART, SCIENCE, AND POLITICS (6)
ERIC SIMON
1:30–3 P.M.
NO CLASS 2/16; FINAL CLASS 3/2

In-person Venues

The Freight
2020 Addison St., Berkeley, CA

GBC: Golden Bear Center
1995 University Ave., Berkeley, CA

BAMPFA
2155 Center Street Berkeley, CA

WEDNESDAYS
1/20–2/10

ATHENS (4)
PIERLUIGI SERRAINO
10:30 A.M.–NOON

1/20–2/17

YOUR BRAIN ON JOY: ANCIENT WISDOM AND NEW SCIENCE FOR VIBRANT AGING (5)
AMELIA BARILI
1–3 P.M.

1/20–2/24

MEMORY INTO MEMOIR (6)
LINDSEY CRITTENDEN
10 A.M.–NOON • GBC 300

MODERNITY: A DISASTER STORY SET IN CALIFORNIA (6)
KATHLEEN MORAN
1–3 P.M. • GBC 365

1/20–3/3

DIVING INTO THE MOVIES (6)
HARRY CHOTINER
10 A.M.–NOON • THE FREIGHT
NO CLASS 2/17

COUNTRY MUSIC ROAD TRIP 1950-1980 (6)
PETE ELMAN
1–3 P.M. • THE FREIGHT
NO CLASS 2/17

2/17–3/10

CAIRO (4)
PIERLUIGI SERRAINO
10:30 A.M.–NOON

THURSDAYS
1/21–2/11

GUIDED AUTOBIOGRAPHY, II (4)
SARA OREM
9:30 A.M.–NOON • GBC 300

CHINA IN THE WORLD: THE RISE OF A GLOBAL SUPERPOWER (4)
DARREN ZOOK
10 A.M.–NOON • GBC 202/204

UNFINISHED JOURNEY: THE LIFE AND MUSIC OF FRANZ SCHUBERT (4)
BEN SIMON
10 A.M.–NOON • GBC 365

ENTERING (DEMYSTIFYING) THE ART MATRIX (4)
GLEN HELFAND
1–3 P.M. • BAMPFA

1/21–2/25

TONI MORRISON'S MASTERWORKS (6)
STEPHANIE WELLS
1–3 P.M. • GBC 202/204

2/18–3/11

CHINA, THE U.S., AND GLOBAL POLITICS: EMERGING THREATS, NEW OPPORTUNITIES (4)
DARREN ZOOK
10 A.M.–NOON • GBC 202/204

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

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