



## LLI Spring 2026 Catalog

### **Class: 26SP01      Gunboats in the Caribbean (1 Session)**

Learn about the U.S. influence, involvement, and interventions in the Caribbean region's long history.

Dates/Time: Tues, Jan 13, 10:00-11:30 AM

Location: Greenspring Village, Classroom on Main Level

Class Size: Min. 10, Max. 50

Coordinator: Arline Sachs

Instructor: **CHARLES McCLELLAND** spent over 15 years as a cruise line presenter. He weaves the experiences of his many travels into his diverse and far-ranging discussions. He brings a special energy to his presentations.

### **Class: 26SP02      Return to Alcatraz - A Day in the Life of a Convict (2 Sessions) (Zoom)**

This is sequel will focus on the environment and daily activities of the inmates incarcerated on Alcatraz.

Date/Time: Wed Jan 14, 21 10:00 am - 11:30 am.

Location: ONLINE

Class Size: Min. 10, Max. 50

Coordinator: Patti Volz

Instructor: **MIKE STEWART** has led interactive classes on decision making models and practical real-life examples in several venues. He has broad facilitation experience with Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at the University of Arizona (Tucson AZ), at George Mason University (GMU) OLLI in Northern Virginia, and ENCORE Learning at GMU, as well as the Kingsport Alliance for Continuous Learning (KACL).

### **Class: 26SP03      From Story to Stage: Contemporary American Theatre, The Playwright's Perspective (1 Session)**

Going to the theatre is not just about seeing a play, it's about creating a collective moment and engaging in an experience that can never be replicated. This class will discuss the immersive and social art that is the American theatre focusing heavily on the perspective of the playwright. We will exam scenes from several contemporary plays: the experimental to the controversial.

Date/Time: Fri, Jan 16, 10:00 am – 1130 am

Location: NOVA CN Bldg, Room 105

Class Size: Min. 10, Max. 50

Coordinator: Patricia Brennan

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For directions to class locations, visit <https://www.llinova.org>.

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Instructor: **ANNE VALENTINO** has a Ph.D. in literature from Temple University. She teaches English at NOVA/Annandale. Anne is also a playwright with several productions across the U.S., Canada, and Australia. When not writing plays or teaching English, she's a theatre critic for the Maryland Theatre Guide.

**Class: 26SP04 Write Your U.S. Military Story (1 Session) (Zoom)**

Alex Sebby will share his online tool to assist U.S. Veterans to publish their memoirs using resources from the Veterans History Project at the Library of Congress.

Date/Time: Mon, Jan 19, 10:00-11:30 AM

Location: ONLINE

Class Size: Min. 10, Max. 97

Coordinator: Andy Butler

Instructor: **ALEX K. SEBBY** is a third-generation U.S. Veteran. He enlisted in the United States Marine Corps when he was 17 during which he held the Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) of 4611, Combat Illustrator. Combat Illustrators create 2D and 3D artistic and illustrative products for use in various applications.

**Class: 26SP05 The Effects of Climate Breakdown on Birds (1 Session) (Zoom)**

Examine the many ways that climate breakdown impacts bird species on nesting, wintering grounds, and migration. No previous knowledge about birds is necessary.

Dates/Time: Tues, Jan 20, 10:00-11:30 AM

Location: ONLINE

Class Size: Min. 10, Max. 97

Coordinator: Patti Volz

Instructor: **WILLIAM YOUNG** is a writer who has taught numerous courses and classes about birds, climate, and other natural history subjects. He is the author of "The Fascination of Birds: From the Albatross to the Yellowthroat". William's YouTube channel has had more than 1.25 million views.

**Class: 26SP06 The First Declaration of Independence. (1 Session) (Zoom)**

Family lore alleges that our forefathers and other good citizens of Mecklenburg, NC declared independence a year before the official Declaration. David Fleming "Who's Your Founding Father?" chronicles his quest to uncover the first, true Declaration of Independence. While not to diminish Thomas Jefferson as author of the 1776 Declaration, there were other colonists who also put into words their desire to be free of the British crown. Timely research by the award-winning Fleming lets us decide if it's fact or a good family fable?

Dates/Time: Thurs, Jan 22, 1:30-3:00 PM

Location: ONLINE

Class Size: Min. 10, Max. 97

Coordinator: Andy Butler

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**Instructor:** **BONNIE BECKER** has a lifelong passion for history and geography. She taught high school social studies and English as a second language for adults. Thirty years of travel experiences have given Bonnie inspiration for several LLI classes.

**Class: 26SP07 Act Out! Biology in Motion (1 Session)**

Many anatomy and physiology concepts are complicated and hard to understand. Being an active learner helps cement these concepts. Come do some science!

Date/Time: Mon, Jan 26, 10:00-11:30 AM

Location: NOVA CS Bldg, Room 238

Class Size: Min. 10, Max. 50

Coordinator: Debbie Cohen

**Instructors:** **GILLIAN S. BACKUS, Ph.D.**, is professor of biology at NOVA/Loudoun where she teaches anatomy & physiology and biology. She holds a B.A. from Mount Holyoke College (MA) and a Ph.D. from UNC/Chapel Hill. She has been a high school biology teacher, a Science and Technology Policy Fellow at the National Academies of Sciences, and a government scientist for the U.S. EPA. Gillian's pedagogical focus centers on improving scientific literacy through increased cross-disciplinary collaboration.

**Class: 26SP08 Those Little Green Stamps- How America Got Stuck on Trading Stamps (1 Session) (Zoom)**

Most of us remember “green stamps” given out at supermarkets in the mid 20th century. Their roots go back to the early days of the United States. We will look at the history of their creation, how they thrived in their heyday, and their demise.

Date/Time: Tues, Jan 27, 1:30-3:00 PM

Location: ONLINE

Class Size: Min. 10, Max. 97

Coordinator: Steve Cohen

**Instructor:** **DENNIS VAN DERLASKE** is on the board of Historic Prince William and has served in the past on the Prince William County Historical Commission. As a member of University of Mary Washington ElderStudy, he has presented talks on topics of vernacular history.

**Class: 26SP09 Search for Life in the Universe (1 Session)**

Are we alone in the universe? This question has been asked throughout the ages, but only recently have we developed the capability to answer it scientifically. Within the last 30 years astronomers have discovered more than 6,000 planets orbiting other stars. Are any of them capable of supporting life? How are we searching for life in the universe? This class will summarize our current state of knowledge and discuss how we are searching for answers.

Date/Time: Tues, Feb 3, 1:30-3:00 PM

Location: NOVA CN Bldg, Room 105

Class Size: Min. 10, Max. 50

Coordinator: Richard Sigman

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For directions to class locations, visit <https://www.llinova.org>.

Instructor: **PAUL HERTZ, Ph.D.** recently retired from NASA. During his 25+ year NASA career, he managed astrophysics programs and missions, including those dedicated to the search for life in the universe. Dr. Hertz was NASA's longest tenured Director of Astrophysics and NASA's first Chief Scientist of the Science Directorate.

**Class: 26SP10 American Colonial Governors (2 Sessions) (Zoom)**

Let's examine the role of colonial governors in Massachusetts, New Jersey, Virginia, and North Carolina: who they were; how they governed; and their legacy. Although the class considers in detail the lives and work of only six governors from these four colonies, we will also draw some general conclusions about the impact on American history of the one hundred or so people who served as governors in the thirteen colonies over the century and a half before the break with Great Britain.

Date/Time: Thurs, Feb 5, 12, 10:00-11:30AM

Location: ONLINE

Class Size: Min. 10, Max. 97

Coordinator: Patti Volz

Instructor: **MICHAEL ANDERSON** is a retired State Department Foreign Service Officer with a Ph.D. in history from the University of Chicago and has taught many courses for LLI/NOVA.

**Class: 26SP11 Incorporating Native Plants in Your Garden (1 Session) (Zoom)**

The class will cover the how and why of native plants, focusing on the mid-Atlantic region. Discussion will include the role of native insects and how they interact with native plants.

Dates/Time: Fri, Feb 6, 1:30-3:00 PM

Location: ONLINE

Class Size: Min. 10, Max. 97

Coordinator: Richard Sigman

Instructors: **JENNIFER FLITTON ADAM** has been a Master Gardener since 2020, a Master Naturalist since 2023, and a Xerces Ambassador since 2024. She is passionate about native insects and native plants and their roles in our ecosystems.

**Visual & Performing Arts: Mark Morris Dance Group and Music Ensemble at GMU**

The [Mark Morris Dance Group and Music Ensemble](#) returns to the Center for the Arts with *Dances to American Music*, a vibrant celebration of the rich tapestry of American music and dance. Featuring choreography by the legendary Mark Morris, “undeviating in his devotion to music” (*New Yorker*), this program highlights music by iconic American composers in a celebration of the nation’s 250th anniversary in 2026. Set to compositions by John Luther Adams, *Northwest* is a captivating contemporary exploration of Yup’ik and Athabaskan rhythmic traditions of the southwestern Alaskan indigenous people. The dynamic *You’ve Got to Be Modernistic* revels in the music of jazz and stride piano pioneer James P. Johnson. The playfully intricate *Silhouettes*, set to five pieces for piano by Richard Cumming, blends whimsy and “luxurious resilience” (*New York Times*), while timeless songs from the 1920s and ’30s accompany the joyful *Dancing Honeymoon*, about which the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* says, “this is vintage Morris and

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For directions to class locations, visit <https://www.llinova.org>.

everybody, including the audience, has the time of their lives.”

*Dances to American Music* celebrates the diversity and vibrancy of the nation’s artistic heritage. This program fosters a deeper appreciation for the creativity that has shaped—and continues to define—American culture during this historic milestone.

Date/Time: Fri, Feb 7, 8:00 PM

Details: Details can be found on the Class and Event Calendar

Location: Center for the Arts, Concert Hall, at GMU, 4373 Mason Pond Dr., Fairfax, VA 22030

Coordinator: Anna Dixon, Chair VPA

**Class: 26SP12 “What's Next” with Former Supervisor Penny Gross (1 Session)**

This follow-up to the LLI talk "How Did We Get Here?" by former Supervisor Gross in June 2025 will address the current political climate one year into this administration and make observations based on her many years of public service.

Date/Time: Mon, Feb 9, 1:30-3:00 PM

Location: NOVA CN Bldg, Room 105

Class Size: Min. 10, Max. 50

Coordinator: Mary Alexander

Instructor: **Fairfax County Supervisor PENNY GROSS** represented Mason District for 27 years, until she retired at the end of her term in January 2024. She represented communities in Annandale, Lincolnia, Seven Corners, and Bailey’s Crossroads. She served as vice chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors. A graduate of the University of Oregon, Supervisor Gross worked over 20 years on Capitol Hill for House and Senate members from Oregon and Idaho before her election to the county Board of Supervisors.

**Class: 26SP13 The Art of Seeing: West and East (2 Sessions) (Zoom)**

Let’s appreciate artists like Blake, Picasso, Wood, Van Eyck, Cole, Millais, and Chinese artists like Gu Kaizhi, Wang Wei, Fan Kuan, Guo Xi, Xia Gui, and Zhao Mengfu.

Session 1 guides the viewer's eye to create a visual path through a painting and to keep the viewer engaged in the work. Looking at paintings from Western and Chinese art, let's see how it works and what it means.

Session 2 focuses on Iconography. These two art traditions are symbols and visual elements that convey more subtle cultural and historical meanings in the paintings. Find out the artist's "secret messages" to the viewer.

Date/Time: Wed, Feb 11, 18, 10:00-11:30 AM

Location: ONLINE

Class Size: Min. 10, Max. 97

Coordinator: Phyllis Liner

Instructors: **BARBARA STIFFLER** owes her passion for art largely to her mother who was a painter. She has studied art appreciation from grade school through college.

**DAWN H. LI, Ph.D.**, a native Chinese speaker with a doctorate in language and literature, has taught Chinese culture at George Washington University and English at Peking University.

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For directions to class locations, visit <https://www.llinova.org>.

**Visual & Performing Arts: Virginia Opera - Intelligence at GMU**

Based upon historical facts pertaining to the underground Civil War spy network of Mary Jane Bowser and Elizabeth Van Lew

This opera was commissioned by the Houston Grand Opera

Virginia Opera presents the state premiere of *Intelligence*, an operatic drama that tells a gripping true story of espionage, sacrifice, and the fight for freedom. Based in Richmond, Virginia, in the shadows of the Civil War, Mary Jane Bowser, an enslaved woman turned operative, joins a Union spy ring, unveiling secrets about the Confederacy and her own identity. Packed with riveting drama, powerful music, and dynamic dance, *Intelligence* will keep you on the edge of your seat. Sung in English with English surtitles.

This performance is recommended for ages 13 and older.

Date/Time: Sun, Feb 15, 2:00 PM

Details: Details can be found on the Class and Event Calendar

Location: Center for the Arts, Concert Hall, at GMU, 4373 Mason Pond Dr., Fairfax, VA 22030

Coordinator: Anna Dixon, Chair VPA

**Class: 26SP14 The Messianic Expectation in Judaism and Christianity (3 Sessions)**

What does the bible tell us about a messianic age?

Date/Time: Tues, Feb 17, 24; March 3, 10:00-11:30 AM

Location: Greenspring Village, Village Square Theater

Class Size: Min. 10, Max. 50

Coordinator: Arline Sachs

Instructor: **JOHN RYBICKI** lectures for many organizations including LLI, sharing his expertise in comparing religions and their philosophers, and the resulting beliefs today.

**Visual & Performing Arts: Les Ballets Africains at GMU**

**The National Dance Company of the Republic of Guinea  
A Performance for the World**

[Les Ballets Africains](#) brings Africa's rich tradition of music and dance to the Center for the Arts. Founded in 1952 to serve as cultural ambassador for the Republic of Guinea, the company has toured the world—including a run on Broadway—and become known for “dazzling, high-speed footwork” (*LA Times*) as well as “sheer physical energy and beauty” (*New York Times*). Now for the first time in its history, the ensemble presents a program featuring works by its first-ever female artistic director, Mañana Cisse. Through extraordinary demonstrations of Guinean instruments, acrobatics, and colorful costumes, Les Ballets Africains thrills audiences, combining “high-gloss finish” and “spontaneous excitement” (*Independent*).

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For directions to class locations, visit <https://www.llinova.org>.

This performance is appropriate for all ages.

Date/Time: Fri, Feb 20, 8:00 PM

Details: Details can be found on the Class and Event Calendar

Location: Center for the Arts, Concert Hall, at GMU, 4373 Mason Pond Dr., Fairfax, VA 22030

Coordinator: Anna Dixon, Chair VPA

**Class: 26SP15 Inviting Nature In: Creating Outdoor Spaces that Support Wildlife (1 Session)**

No matter the size of the yard, create an inviting space that supports wildlife year-round. Everyone can play an important role in supporting native plants and animals in the face of challenges like habitat loss, declining biodiversity, and climate change. Discuss how to incorporate the basic needs for wildlife into outdoor space. Learn how choosing a few strategic plants can attract a host of birds, butterflies, and mammals. Be surprised at the biodiversity supported by planting native plants and creating a four-season habitat.

Date/Time: Mon, Feb 23, 1:30-3:00 PM

Location: NOVA CN Bldg, Room 105

Class Size: Min. 10, Max. 50

Coordinator: Patti Volz

Instructor: **AMY BOLTON** is a certified master naturalist and science educator with over 20 years' experience in science education and has been transforming her yard into a haven for local wildlife.

**Visual & Performing Arts: Mnozil Brass 360 Allstars at GMU**

For over 30 years, Austrian brass septet Mnozil Brass—the Monty Python of the music world—has effortlessly waltzed between sublime classical repertoire and playful pop, gliding from Schubert to Sinatra, Shostakovich to Prince. Mnozil Brass now ties it all together with this tribute to the forefather of nonchalant flirting between genres: “King of the Waltz” Johann Strauss. Composing hit after hit, he revolutionized music distribution, becoming a mass phenomenon—admired by Brahms, Wagner, Verdi, Gershwin, and just about everyone else—while raking in the cash. This “seriously funny” and “whimsically brazen” (*San Antonio Report*) ensemble lays it all bare, revealing everything about *Strau\$\$* until nothing remains but the naked truth.

This performance is appropriate for all ages.

Date/Time: Sun, Mar 1, 4:00 PM

Details: Details can be found on the Class and Event Calendar

Location: Center for the Arts, Concert Hall, at GMU, 4373 Mason Pond Dr., Fairfax, VA 22030

Coordinator: Anna Dixon, Chair VPA

**Class: 26SP16 Daylight Savings Time (DST) - Wow! (1 Session) (Zoom)**

DST affects most of us twice a year. Spring Forward! Fall Back! Explore how the antecedent systems developed. We will discuss the wide range of stakeholders and their interests, impacts on various parts of the country and world, and interesting nuances of this fascinating approach to synchronizing activity across the nation and the globe.

Date/Time: Wed, Mar 4, 1:30-3:00 PM

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Location: ONLINE  
Class Size: Min. 10, Max. 50  
Coordinator: Patti Volz

Instructor: **MIKE STEWART** has led interactive classes on decision making models and practical real-life examples in several venues. He has broad facilitation experience with Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at the University of Arizona (Tucson AZ), at George Mason University (GMU) OLLI in Northern Virginia, and ENCORE Learning at GMU, as well as the Kingsport Alliance for Continuous Learning (KACL).

**Class: 26SP17            How Did I Get to be Old? (1 Session)**

Barbara Osgood is a 91-year-old who has had many different experiences in her long life. She looks forward to having a discussion with class members about how life experiences shape us all and what it is like to discover you are old!

Date/Time: Thurs, Mar 5, 1:30-3:00 PM

Location: NOVA CN Bldg, Room 105

Class Size: Min. 10, Max. 50

Coordinator: Ellen Wallace

Instructor: **DR. BARBARA OSGOOD** is an environmental sociologist with a doctorate in human ecology from Cornell University and was a faculty member at Lehman College, City University of New York, and Cornell University. For 21 years, Dr. Osgood was a scientist with the Natural Resources Conservation Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture where she was the first woman to hold several management positions. She retired as a senior executive. In her retirement, Dr. Osgood has published two books, as well as numerous essays and opinion pieces.

**Class: 26SP18            Mosquito and Tick Season: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly (1 Session) (Zoom)**

Participants will learn the benefits of mosquitoes and ticks, how to protect pollinators and other beneficial critters, and ways to reduce mosquito populations without chemicals. Discussions will include tick spread diseases.

Dates/Time: Mon, Mar 9, 1:30-3:00 PM

Location: ONLINE

Class Size: Min. 10, Max. 97

Coordinator: Mary Alexander

Instructor: **KASHA HELGET** is a master naturalist and board member of the Arlington Regional Master Naturalists (ARMN). She researched and assisted in developing outreach materials involving mosquitoes and ticks with the Virginia Cooperative Extension Service, members of the Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia, and ARMN.

**Class: 26SP19            Christopher Columbus (1 Session)**

Learn about the complicated life and legacy of Christopher Columbus, his four voyages to the Caribbean, and the controversy concerning his role in history.

Dates/Time: Tues, Mar 10, 10:00-11:30 AM

Location: Greenspring Village, Village Square Theater

Class Size: Min. 10, Max. 50

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Coordinator: Arline Sachs

Instructor: **CHARLES McCLELLAND** spent over 15 years as a cruise line presenter. He weaves the experiences of his many travels into his diverse and far-ranging discussions. He brings a special energy to his presentations.

**Class: 26SP20 Enemies Among Us: WWII Internment of German, Italian, and Japanese Americans (1 Session)**

This class, particularly timely given today's politics, provides a comparative analysis of the causes, conditions, and consequences of America's relocation, internment, and repatriation of German, Italian, and Japanese Americans during WWII. The federal government's perception of domestic and hemispheric threats coupled with military fears and economic concerns, heavily influenced dual-coast relocation policies; while political, social, and diplomatic considerations guided the selective, nationwide internment of enemy aliens and citizens.

Date/Time: Wed, Mar 11, 1:30-3:00 PM

Location: NOVA CN Bldg, Room 105

Class Size: Min. 10, Max. 50

Coordinator: Debbie Cohen

Instructor: **JOHN E. SCHMITZ**, professor and author, is the son of WWII internee John A. Schmitz, and grandson of German American internees Adolf Max and Margaret Schmitz, who were interned from mid-1943 to mid-1946 in the INS camp at Crystal City, TX. His curiosity about internment, civil, and other human rights issues stems partly from family history. John received a B.A. at UNC-Chapel Hill, an M.A. at American University, and a second master's in divinity from Virginia Theological Seminary. He taught high school, was an adjunct professor at American and George Washington Universities, and has been a professor of history at NVCC since 2010.

**Class: 26SP21 Civil War Northern Virginia 1861 (1 Session)**

In the mid-nineteenth century, Arlington was an eleven-hundred-acre estate managed by U.S. Colonel and Mrs. Robert E. Lee. Fairfax, Prince William, and Loudoun Counties consisted of rolling farmland and tiny villages. This peaceful region was thrown into chaos as South Carolina seceded from the Union in December 1860 and other slave states followed until Virginia finally joined the Confederacy in April and May 1861. The expansion of Northern Virginia on May 24, 1861 created a no-man's land between Yankee and Rebel armies. Some citizens joined Confederate forces, while others stayed to face uncertainty.

Date/Time: Thurs, Mar 12, 10:00-11:30 AM

Location: NOVA CN Bldg, Room 105

Class Size: Min. 10, Max. 50

Coordinator: Phyllis Liner

Instructor: **WILLIAM S. CONNERY** has a degree in history from the University of Maryland/College Park. In 2012 he was awarded the Jefferson Davis Historical Gold Medal. Mr. Connery is a member of the Company of Military Historians and the Stuart-Mosby Historical Society.

**Class: 26SP22 Honeybees and Pollinators (1 Session)**

This class will provide an overview of the importance of pollinators with focus on honeybees, their unique characteristics, and the general functioning of a beehive. We will discuss opportunities to support healthy pollinator populations and activities to prevent or minimize inadvertent harm.

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For directions to class locations, visit <https://www.llinova.org>.

Date/Time: Tues, Mar 17, 10:00-11:30 AM

Location: NOVA CS Bldg, Room 238

Class Size: Min. 10, Max. 50

Coordinator: Mary Alexander

Instructor: **JOHN RHODES** is an amateur beekeeper with four hives in Fairfax County. He is the outreach coordinator for the Northern Virginia Beekeepers Association (NVBA), a non-profit organization that provides education and ongoing development of amateur beekeepers in Northern Virginia. The NVBA also helps educate the public about pollinators and their importance.

**Class: 26SP23            What's That Mushroom? Secrets of Fungi and Forests (1 Session)**

Dr. Penny Firth will provide introduction to the Kingdom Fungi. The talk will cover what you see and what you don't see when you look at a mushroom, the various roles of fungi in a forest, and tips on what to watch for (and watch out for) when exploring and identifying mushrooms.

Date/Time: Wed, Mar 18, 10:00-11:30 AM

Location: NOVA CN Bldg, Room 104

Class Size: Min. 10, Max. 50

Coordinator: Mary Alexander

Instructor: **PENNY FIRTH** has served as a Virginia Master Naturalist since 2014. She is currently with the Central Rappahannock Chapter where she enjoys bioblitzes, monitoring bird and wildlife trails, and introducing others to the fascinating fungi of our yards and nearby woodlands. Her mushroom photos have appeared in "Fungi" magazine, "Mushrooms of North America" (Audubon Society), and elsewhere.

**Class: 26SP24            Agriculture Meets Art (1 Session) (Zoom)**

From the nation's earliest days, agriculture has been the foundation of American life, and artists have captured the beauty of rural landscapes and those who worked the land. Let's journey through time with works from the Smithsonian American Art Museum's collection and explore how artists from various eras have depicted agricultural scenes. We'll also dive into works currently on view in the State Fairs exhibit at the Renwick. It's all about landscapes and dedicated farmers.

Date/Time: Thurs, Mar 26, 1:30-3:00 PM

Location: ONLINE

Class Size: Min. 10, Max. 97

Coordinator: Debbie Cohen

Instructor: **SARA SHOOB** is a graduate of Boston University. She has a background in teaching and educational administration, focusing on history, social studies, and the arts. Currently, she enjoys working as a docent at the Smithsonian American Art Museum and Renwick Gallery. Sara has taught several courses for LLI and loves sharing her passion for art.

**Class: 26SP25            Droughts and Downpours - What's a Gardener to Do? Sustainable Gardening Tips to Navigate Climate Impact. (1 Session)**

This class will look at strategies for growing, adapting, and thriving during climate impact.

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For directions to class locations, visit <https://www.llinova.org>.

Date/Time: Fri, Mar 27, 1:30-3:00 PM  
Location: NOVA CN Bldg, Room 105  
Class Size: Min. 10, Max. 50  
Coordinator: Ellen Wallace

Instructor: **JOANNE ROYALTEY** earned an A.S. at Lord Fairfax Community College and a bachelors and M.B.A. at Shenandoah University. She is a ‘community change agent’ and spent years developing expertise in the healthcare and educational arena. Joanne became an Extension Master Gardener in 2020 as a member of the Northern Shenandoah Valley Master Gardener Association.

**Class: 26SP26 Everything You Wanted to Know About Cults (1 Session)**

Discuss cults as a part of the church/sect/cult cycle and focus on the formation of these non-mainstream organizations, focusing on the way that cults either adapt to the larger society or implode because of the tensions they experience with the larger society. Some well-known cults will be discussed, and participants are encouraged to come ready to ask questions.

Date/Time: Thurs, Apr 2, 1:30-3:00 PM  
Location: NOVA CN Bldg, Room 105  
Class Size: Min. 10, Max. 50  
Coordinator: Patricia Brennan

Instructor: **DR. TIFFANY M. BLACKMON** is a sociology and anthropology professor at NOVA/Loudoun, specializing in eastern religions and religious cults.

**Class: 26SP28 Women and Incarceration: The Hidden Impact and Pathways to Justice (1 Session)**

Natasha White, Director of Community Engagement at Interfaith Action for Human Rights and Founder of Broken Crayons Can Still Color Inc., will explore the intersection of gender, trauma, and incarceration. Participants will examine how systemic inequities, criminalization of poverty, and lack of access to mental health care uniquely affect women in the justice system. Drawing from lived experience and professional advocacy, Natasha provides an in-depth look at the challenges women face before, during, and after incarceration — from separation from children and inadequate healthcare to the barriers of reentry. The class highlights trauma-informed and community-based approaches to justice reform, offering strategies for advocacy, policy change, and reentry support that promote healing and empowerment for directly impacted women.

Date/Time: Mon, Apr 6, 10:00-11:30 AM  
Location: NOVA CS Bldg, Room 238  
Class Size: Min. 10, Max. 50  
Coordinator: Patti Volz

Instructor: **NATASHA WHITE** is a formerly incarcerated survivor of solitary confinement who served fifteen years in the New York prison system. Upon release, she became a campaign leader in the Close Rikers Movement and played key roles in major decarcerating efforts, including bail reform, fair and timely parole, and the Less is More Campaign. During the pandemic, Natasha joined the HALT SOLITARY campaign, helping secure a historic legislative win in New York in March 2021. Seeking a fresh start, Natasha relocated to Virginia, where—just 30 days in—she

became coordinator for the Virginia Coalition on Solitary Confinement. Since June 2021, she has led the Solitary No More VA campaign, engaging directly with legislators, community members, universities, and impacted families to raise awareness and drive policy change. Her leadership has expanded the Coalition's reach, especially among students and those directly affected by solitary confinement. In 2022, Natasha received the Citizen of the Year Award from the National Association of Social Workers, joined the board of OAR, and became Director of Community Engagement at Interfaith Action for Human Rights. She currently serves as the Unlock the Box state representative for both Virginia and Maryland. Natasha is also the CEO and Founder of Broken Crayons Can Still Color, a nonprofit supporting women during and after incarceration. In 2023, Natasha graduated from Columbia University's Center for Justice Women Transcending Leadership Institute, further strengthening her leadership in justice reform.

Visual & Performing Arts: **Circa Humans 2.0 at GMU**

**Circa**

**Humans 2.0**

**Created by Yaron Lifschitz and the Circa Ensemble**

“Arguably the world’s most daring circus company” (*Guardian*), Australian company Circa presents “jaw-dropping, seat-clawing” (*ArtsHub*) next level circus. In a symphony of acrobatics, sound, and light, Circa’s internationally acclaimed *Humans 2.0* is a tightly woven choreography of bodies, pulsing with music by composer Ori Lichtik and revealed in Paul Jackson’s dramatic lighting. Created by circus visionary Yaron Lifschitz, *Humans 2.0* is intimate, primal, and deeply engaged with the challenge of being human. This is “circus that sets your pulse racing and your soul stirring” (*The Scotsman*) and “pushes the boundaries of what circus and acrobatics can be” (*Time Out*).

Recommended for ages 8 and older.

Date/Time: Sun, Apr 12, 7:00 PM

Details: Details can be found on the Class and Event Calendar

Location: Center for the Arts, Concert Hall, at GMU, 4373 Mason Pond Dr., Fairfax, VA 22030

Coordinator: Anna Dixon, Chair VPA

**Class: 26SP29 Introduction to Estate Planning (4 Sessions)**

Session 1 will cover an overview of estate planning examining taxes, laws, and issues that surrounding estates and how the documents help to prepare for incapacity and death.

Session 2 will look at what trusts are and their role before and after death.

Session 3 examines funding living trust and the process for transferring assets into a trust.

Session 4 examines medical decision making and advance health care directives for a time when we are unable to make our own medical decisions.

Date/Time: Mon, Apr 13, 20, 27; May 4, 10:00-11:30 AM

Location: NOVA CS Bldg, Room 238

Class Size: Min. 10, Max. 50

Coordinator: Ellen Wallace

Instructors: **DINA SHAAR**, a graduate of George Mason University, earned an undergraduate degree in criminology,

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For directions to class locations, visit <https://www.llinova.org>.

law, and society in 2021, and a J.D. from George Mason Law School in 2024.

**SARAH PARKS** is an attorney who limits her practice to estate planning. She has operated her firm, Custom Estate Planning, since 1995. She earned a J.D. from the George Mason School of Law and an LL.M. from the Georgetown University Law Center.

**Class: 26SP30            The Story of H. H. Leonards, Founder of the O Street Mansion & Museum (1 Session)**

H. H. Leonards will speak about her life as founder of the Mansion on O Street and its O Street Museum, rated "the coolest place in D.C." by Booking.com and rated by the Smithsonian in the top five historic venues to explore. She shared her home with Rosa Parks who lived at the Mansion for the last decade of Ms. Park's life.

Date/Time:    Tues, Apr 14, 10:00-11:30 AM

Location:     NOVA CS Bldg, Room 238

Class Size:    Min. 10, Max. 50

Coordinator:   Ellen Wallace

Instructor:    **H.H. LEONARDS** is the founder of the Mansion on O Street and its O Street Museum in Washington, D.C., a historic 20th-century Civil Rights Site. She developed the hotel and museum with a unique philosophy of giving back and enabling anyone to achieve their vision regardless of background. A prolific author, speaker, and social justice advocate, she authored the book "Rosa Parks Beyond the Bus". Leonards also co-founded 51StepsToFreedom.org.

**Class: 26SP31            What's All the Buzz About Native Plants? (1 Session)**

Native plants are an increasingly popular option for landscaping in Northern Virginia. Native plants look amazing and support native wildlife. They attract a wide range of native birds, bees, butterflies, and other pollinators. Native species depend on native plants for food and habitat. Native plants thrive without fertilizers, pesticides, or extensive watering.

Date/Time:    Wed, Apr 15, 10:00-11:30 AM

Location:     NOVA CN Bldg, Room 105

Class Size:    Min. 10, Max. 50

Coordinator:   Mary Alexander

Instructor:    **JOSEFINA DOUMBIA** is a Fairfax Master Naturalist, a Wildlife Sanctuary Program Ambassador, and an active volunteer at Hidden Oaks Nature Center and Plant NOVA Trees. She is a board member of the Northern Virginia Bird Alliance, Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions, and Nature Forward.

**Class: 26SP32            Communicating with Confidence: Presenting, Connecting, and Thinking on Your Feet (1 Session)**

This interactive workshop explores the art and science of communication and presentation for experienced professionals who still enjoy learning something new (and having a few laughs along the way). We'll blend practical techniques, real-world examples, and light improvisational activities to explore how to structure a message, engage an audience, and respond confidently when things don't go as planned.

Date/Time:    Wed, Apr 15, 1:30-3:00 PM

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For directions to class locations, visit <https://www.lilnova.org>.

Location: NOVA CA Bldg, Room 302

Class Size: Min. 10, Max. 50

Coordinator: Patricia Brennan

Instructor: **LAWRENCE SHERMAN** FACEHP, FRSM, CHCP is president, Meducate Global, LLC. He is a visiting professor of medical education at the First Affiliated Hospital of Sun Yat Sen University in Guangzhou, China. Lawrence also holds an International Development position with the AMEE – The International Association for Health Professions Education.

**Class: 26SP27 Understanding Without Words: The Hidden Language of Culture (1 Session) (Zoom)**

Discover how nonverbal communication—from gestures and eye contact to personal space and timing—shapes every interaction. Foreign Service experience across multiple continents reveals why a thumbs-up can be an insult, how a handshake communicates power, and what culture teaches about silence, touch, and time. Learn to decode the unspoken messages that can make or break cross-cultural connections and understand why "the body doesn't lie." Perfect for travelers, professionals working in diverse environments, or anyone curious about the fascinating ways we communicate beyond words.

Date/Time: Fri, Apr 17, 10:00-11:30 AM

Location: ONLINE

Class Size: Min. 10, Max. 97

Coordinator: Debbie Cohen

Instructor: **CAROL QUADE** holds a doctorate in communication and media studies and is an adjunct faculty member in the Communication Studies and Theater Department on the NOVA/Annandale.

**Class: 26SP33 Avian Tool Use and Construction (1 Session)**

There is more to avian construction than building a nest to lay eggs and raise young. One group of birds makes huge mounds to allow the sun to do the incubation of the eggs. Some male birds build elaborate structures and decorate them to attract females. Some aquatic species build feeding platforms, and others use bait to fish. A New Caledonia crow uses a stick tool with a formed hook to extract insects from tree bark. This lecture will investigate these and other ways that birds engage in construction activities and use tools as part of their lives.

Date/Time: Wed, Apr 22, 10:00-11:30 AM

Location: NOVA CN Bldg, Room 105

Class Size: Min. 10, Max. 50

Coordinator: Richard Sigman

Instructor: **LARRY CARTWRIGHT** has been a nature lover most of his life, with a special interest in birds and bats. He engages in breeding bird surveys for the National Park Service, monitors bluebird boxes for the Fairfax County Park authority, and is the compiler of the District of Columbia Christmas Bird Count. He travels extensively to watch birds, most recently to western Australia.

**Class: 26SP34 Hear Today, Gone Tomorrow? Understanding Your Ears and Auditory Health (1 Session) (Zoom)**

Ever wonder how your ears turn sound waves into music, laughter, and the voices you love—or why for most of us this ability decreases as we age? We'll explore the fascinating world of the human ear, from a warped funnel of cartilage to the tiniest bones in your body, to the electric snail that lives inside the skull. We'll look at how hearing works, what can

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go wrong (and why), and how age changes the way we experience sound.

Date/Time: Fri, Apr 24, 1:30-3:00 PM

Location: ONLINE

Class Size: Min. 10, Max. 97

Coordinator: Debbie Cohen

Instructor: **JOE BEAN, M.D.**, is a Northern Virginia native who currently teaches anatomy and physiology at NOVA. He has been teaching for 17 years, 12 of them at a community college in Salem, Oregon.

**Class: 26SP35 Jane Austen's Novel Emma (1 Session)**

In 1814, just after Jane Austen had begun writing "Emma", she famously described her heroine Emma Woodhouse in a letter to her niece, Anna Lefroy. Austen said: "I am going to take a heroine whom no one but myself will much like." "Emma" was not beloved at first but is now considered one of Austen's most fascinating and enduring heroines. Since its publication in 1815, it has been printed and reprinted continuously and has been adapted into at least eight screen and television versions. This class will focus on Austen's "Emma", both the main character, the supporting characters, plot, and themes.

Date/Time: Tues, Apr 28, 9:30-11:00 AM (Note Time)

Location: NOVA CS Bldg, Room 238

Class Size: Min. 10, Max. 50

Coordinator: Patricia Brennan

Instructor: **BRANDI McKENZIE** earned a bachelor's degree in English at Winthrop University (South Carolina), a secondary teaching degree at the University of Texas (San Antonio), and a master's in English at Angelo State University, where her research highlighted the novels of Jane Austen. She is currently an adjunct professor at NOVA/Annandale.

**Class: 26SP36 State Fairs and Art (1 Session) - Field Trip**

Remember the movie State Fair with music by Rodgers and Hammerstein? Maybe or maybe not! But the Smithsonian's Renwick Gallery is hosting its own State Fair exhibit, so you can engage differently. Started to celebrate agriculture and "household manufactures", state fairs have been popular since the first one in 1841. Fairs also provided a rare public forum for women to share their achievements. The Renwick exhibit includes over one hundred objects, including needlework examples, a corn chapel, examples of canned goods, crop art portraits, American Indian princess regalia, pottery, and....a butter cow! It's a blue-ribbon show that you won't want to miss. Join presenter and docent, Sara Shoob, to explore the exhibit in person.

Date/Time: Tues, Apr 28, 1:00-2:30 PM (Note Time) (DATE is TBD; Waiting on Confirmation from the Renwick)

Location: Renwick Gallery at 1661 Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington, DC 200006

Class Size: Min. 10, Max. 30

Coordinator: Debbie Cohen

Instructor: **SARA SHOOB** is a graduate of Boston University. She has a background in teaching and educational administration, focusing on history, social studies, and the arts. Currently, she enjoys working as a docent at the Smithsonian American Art Museum and Renwick Gallery. Sara has taught numerous courses for the LLI and loves sharing her passion for art.

**Class: 26SP37      The Art of Neuroanatomy: The Marriage of Art, Science, and the Brain (1 Session) (Zoom)**

Moderator Joanne Cohen and her colleagues, Dr. Maureen Stabio and Katie Caron will converse about how art, science, and the brain are connected. The class will begin with a video of the Neuron Forest Installation created by Katie (in collaboration with Dr. Stabio). Katie will also share how she uses art therapy to overcome trauma and discusses art for life-long learning. Dr. Stabio will explain how Parkinson's, Multiple Sclerosis, brain injury, Alzheimer's Disease, impact the brain and will show plastinated (preserved) brains from the organ library at CU.

Date/Time: Fri, May 1, 1:30-3:00 PM

Location: ONLINE

Class Size: Min. 10, Max. 97

Coordinator: Debbie Cohen

Instructors: **JOANNE E. COHEN, M.A.**, Certified Brain Injury Specialist (CBIS), is vice president of the Brain Injury Hope Foundation in Littleton, CO. She is a thriver who has survived four brain injuries and authored "Getting Hit, Getting Up, Moving Beyond: My Journey Through Brain Injury," a story of her challenges facing sequential "hits" and how she handled adversity with resilience time after time. Joanne depicts the path to "moving beyond," and creating a full life that includes tools to do so. **JOANNE E. COHEN, M.A.**, Certified Brain Injury Specialist (CBIS), is vice president of the Brain Injury Hope Foundation in Littleton, CO. She is a thriver who has survived four brain injuries and authored "Getting Hit, Getting Up, Moving Beyond: My Journey Through Brain Injury," a story of her challenges facing sequential "hits" and how she handled adversity with resilience time after time. Joanne depicts the path to "moving beyond," and creating a full life that includes tools to do so.

**MAUREEN ESTEVEZ STABIO, Ph.D.**, is associate professor and executive director of The Modern Human Anatomy (MHA) Program at the University of Colorado (CU) School of Medicine. Maureen earned a doctorate from the Department of Anatomy & Neurobiology at Boston University School of Medicine where she researched photoreceptor adaptation in the visual system. Other credentials include a teaching certificate in medical education, and a fellowship in visual neuroscience. For the last decade Maureen has directed the neuroscience curriculum. She founded the CU Plastinated Organ Library in 2016.

**KATIE CARON, M.F.A.** in ceramics from the Cranbook Academy of Art in Michigan, is director/department chair for the Art & Design Center at Arapahoe Community College, Littleton, CO. In 2011 Katie created Apoptosis in collaboration with Martha Russo for the Denver Art Museum's exhibition "Overthrown: Clay Without Limits". She exhibits nationally, completing site-specific installations for projects around the United States. Katie was reviewed in the September 2023 issue of Daria Magazine for her solo exhibition "Neuron Forest at the Dairy Art Center."

**Class: 26SP38      How Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven were Influenced by Turkish Military Music (1 Session)**

This class will trace the influence of Turkish military bands on western classical music from the steps of Mongolia to the gates of Vienna and from European royal courts to famed opera houses. Learn about the instrumentation of the Janissary bands (mehter) and how western classical music composers such as Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven were inspired to introduce some of these sounds in their most famous works.

Date/Time: Wed, May 6, 1:30-3:00 PM

Location: NOVA CN Bldg, Room 105

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Class Size: Min. 10, Max. 50

Coordinator: Steve Cohen

Instructor: **WILLIAM PARMENTIER** studied in Istanbul, Turkey, receiving a Master of Arts in European studies from Bogazici (Bosphorus) University. He has presented on this subject for the Don Juan Archiv of Vienna and is published in "Ottoman Empire and European Theatre", Vol. I: The Age of Mozart and Selim III (1756-1808).

**Class: 26SP39 Itineraries to Interactions: Making Meaningful Connections on the Road (1 Session)**

Travel brings novel experiences and close contact with places, cultures, and people. This interactive workshop explores interpersonal dimensions of travel, offering communication strategies for group dynamics, cultural sensitivity, and solo exploration. Participants will gain insight into how connection deepens lived experience and will practice skills and strategies to make the most of the human element of travel.

Date/Time: Tues, May 12, 10:00-11:30 AM

Location: NOVA CS Bldg, Room 238

Class Size: Min. 10, Max. 20

Coordinator: Anna Dixon

Instructors: **BRANDON BASTIAN** is the executive director of Piedmont Peace Center, which provides conflict services across much of the northern part of Virginia. He holds degrees in psychology and law and is passionate about building conflict resolution and resiliency skills wherever possible—through mediation, restorative work with juveniles and others, and professional learning for mediators, educators, businesses, community organizations, etc.

**CAROLYN LAMM** is Learning Programs coordinator for Piedmont Peace Center. Before working for Piedmont Peace Center, she worked for over 30 years in public education developing and coordinating programs and systems for meeting students' behavioral and emotional needs.

**Class: 26SP40 Hyperlocal Peacebuilding (1 Session)**

"Peace is not something you wish for; it's something you make, something you do, something you are, and something you give away." Robert Fulghum

Peace is more than a feeling or a vibe and simply wishing for peace will not build a peace that lasts. Peacebuilding requires action--and often doesn't require that much! In this interactive class, expect to discuss how to successfully navigate conflict, some paradigms for peace, and immediately actionable ways to build peace around you with family, friends, colleagues, or strangers.

Date/Time: Mon, May 18, 10:00-11:30 AM

Location: NOVA CN Bldg, Room 105

Class Size: Min. 10, Max. 20

Coordinator: Anna Dixon

Instructors: **BRANDON BASTIAN** is the executive director of Piedmont Peace Center, which provides conflict services across much of the northern part of Virginia. He holds degrees in psychology and law and is passionate about building conflict resolution and resiliency skills wherever possible—through mediation, restorative work with juveniles and others, and professional learning for mediators, educators, businesses, community organizations, etc.

**CAROLYN LAMM** is Learning Programs coordinator for Piedmont Peace Center. Before working for Piedmont Peace Center, she worked for over 30 years in public education developing and coordinating programs and systems for meeting students' behavioral and emotional needs.

**Class: 26SP41 National Park Grab Bag (1 Session)**

NPS Grab Bag - Description Pending

Date/Time: Wed, May 20, 1:30-3:00 PM

Location: Mason District Governmental Center

Class Size: Min. 10, Max. 50

Coordinator: Debi Hunsberger

Instructor: **NPS Presenter, Bio Pending**