

**Road Scholar Institute Network**  
**Curriculum Ideas**  
**May 2015**

**FROM TACONIC LEARNING CENTER – LAKEVILLE, CONN.**

**Eugene O’Neill: His Family On and Off the Stage**

This class will explore O’Neill’s life as documented in the excellent biography *O’Neill* by Barbara and Arthur Gelb (Dell Publishing, 1962), now out of print but available used and in libraries. An expanded edition by the Gelbs, *O’Neill: Life with Monte Cristo* (Applause Books), dealing with his early years, is in print and in libraries. Three plays will comprise the syllabus: *Long Day’s Journey into Night*, *Moon for the Misbegotten*, and *Ab Wilderness!* Each of these plays is drawn from his life. The plays are readily available at bookstores, online, and at libraries. All three plays are included in the Library of America *Complete Plays of Eugene O’Neill: 1932-194*.

**Genetically Engineered Foods**

This course will provide an update on the Genetically Engineered (GE) crop and food landscape and include discussion about international experiences as well as federal administrative (DFA, USDA, EPA) and state legislative issues. We are very fortunate that the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) National Resources Council is conducting a review of genetically engineered food and crops at this time. The study is broad-ranging and covers not only science updates on food and crop safety, but also on environmental, social, economic and regulatory aspects. The material includes looking at the purported benefits and negative impacts of GE crops, crop characteristics such as yield differentials, reported health impacts associated with the genetically engineered crop system, increased use of pesticides and herbicides (including impacts such as chemical pesticide resistance from weed and bug “pests”) and toxic ecosystem impacts spilling over into the environment from the significantly increased load of pesticides being spread over the U.S. since GE crop approvals began in the mid-90s. Besides looking at independent science studies from around the globe, we will review some of the more recent national and state legislative developments. We will also entertain a conversation about legitimate science “missing in action” on this very timely subject matter, and if time, touch upon the “triple stacked traits” and some of the next generation crops, including recent crop approvals engineered to withstand 2, 4-D herbicide spraying (which has roots in Viet Nam era defoliants).

**Oil is Where You Find It**

It is *not* on Park Avenue or Rodeo Drive. It is found in places you don’t want to visit. Unless you have a thing for rough seas, barren deserts, frozen wastelands, infectious diseases, mosquitos, despotic dictators or terrorists. Prices are down by half since 2010. Experts are pontificating on their price forecasts, which range from \$20-\$120 per barrel. At least 54% of the experts will be dead wrong. Either direction will have profound economic and geopolitical consequences for producers and consumers. There will be some big winners and big losers when the dealing is done. We’ll dig deep into the economics of the energy business including renewables and no-conventional sources and new technologies. We’ll cover the whole nine yards but with particular emphasis on oil and gas. You will become experts, and the one thing we’ll know for sure is that *no* forecast is worth a damn.

## **FROM ROSE INSTITUTE FOR LIFE LONG LEARNING — BEACHWOOD, OHIO**

### **Rock Your World**

This isn't the Stone Age! So who cares about rocks these days? I mean, do we still write with rocks? Do we write on them? Do we still use them as tools? Do we eat them? Do we live on them? The answers to all of these questions is YES! We also wear rocks and wash with them and groom ourselves with them and more. There are rocks in our lives that we can't live without! So don't take them for *granite* — join our instructor to rock your world!

### **The Jewish Legacy on Broadway**

This class explores the unique role of Jewish composers and lyricists in the creation of the American musical. We will showcase the works and lives of Irving Berlin, the Gershwins, Lorenz Hart and others.

## **FROM LIFELONG LEARNING AT CLEMENT MANOR CENTER FOR ENRICHMENT**

### **From Heathen to Hero: American Indian**

Dawn Scher Thomae, Curator of Collections, Anthropology Department, Milwaukee Public Museum. Beyond the Navajo code talkers, little has been written about American Indian participation in WWII. Few authors have explored the motivation for their involvement, especially given their tenuous relationship with the U.S. government. Find out why American Indians joined this war in such great numbers and whether the stereotype of the war-like American Indian had any validity.

### **The Assassin's Mace: Maritime Rivalries Along the First Island Chain**

The "First Island Chain" is the term that contemporary Chinese strategists have aptly given to the chain of islands that stretches along the eastern coast of Asia from Sakhalin and the Kuriles in the north; to Japan the Ryukus and Taiwan in the East China Sea; and down through the Philippines to Indonesia in the South China Sea. In recent years serious naval clashes, controversies and conflicts have erupted all along the chain, involving Russia, Japan, South Korea, China, the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and the United States. The potential for a major conflict in this region is all too real, and the "unthinkable" is all too possible.

## **FROM ADVENTURES IN LEARNING AT COLBY-SAWYER COLLEGE**

### **Hemingway's Greatest Short Stories**

For much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Ernest Hemingway was one of the most famous people in the world, celebrated for his service during World War I in the Red Cross Ambulance Corps, his immensely popular novels, and a stream of fascinating short stories that flowed from the leading magazines of the times. All for Hemingway's fiction is based on important events in his life, a matter that quickly will become evident to the reader of his works.

## **FROM SOCIETY FOR LIFELONG LEARNING AT WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY**

### **Plato and a Platypus Walk Into a Bar — Understanding Philosophy Through Jokes**

A round-table discussion based on the book “Plato and a Platypus Walk Into a Bar,” by Thomas Cathcart and Daniel Klein. These two Harvard graduates use the art of “philogagging” to take the reader through an entertaining understanding of some of the great philosophers.

### **The Folklore of Herbs**

Explore some of the historical uses and beliefs regarding the benefits of herbs. Learn how modern medicine is taking a closer look at these ancient remedies and finding that some of them ... actually work! Pop quizzes will keep you on your toes as you enjoy learning more about these “gifts of nature.”

### **Radiation: Sometimes It’s a Very Good Thing!**

What are the various types of radiation and where do they come from? How do we use radiation as a positive force for exploration in physics, chemistry, biology, geology, and medicine?

### **Issues in Environmental Science & Sustainability: Kentucky — From Sinkholes to Coal**

Experts in their fields will share their knowledge on an assortment of relevant environmental topics including: “Caves, Sinkholes, and Groundwater”; “Building on Sinkholes”; “Reducing Your Carbon Footprint”; and “Kentucky’s Future in Coal.”

## **FROM OSHER LIFELONG LEARNING INSTITUTE AT BERKSHIRE COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

### **At-Risk Youth: The Latest Research and a View from the Field**

How can we make our youth and our communities safer? What is the latest research on youth development? This course will examine the range of risk factors that lead youth to engage in negative behaviors, with a particular focus on the role of community and intergenerational relationships. Drawing on current findings, local efforts, and the ongoing research being conducted by the instructor, the course will serve as a microlab to examine the issue in depth.

### **Whence Our Words? An Exploration of the Sources of English**

This interactive course traces lineages of our words by their sources — Indo-European, Greek, Latin, Anglo-Saxon, names of people and places, Romance languages, languages from other cultures, sounds, and newly coined words — to discover the roots of our ever-evolving language. No homework, but active class participation is encouraged. Deepen your understanding of English and expand your vocabulary, while having fun in the process.

### **Greenwich Village, 1913: Suffrage, Labor, and the New Woman**

In this fourth of our series of “Reacting to the Past” classes, students will take on the roles of people involved in a particularly volatile period of world history and have the opportunity to change the course of events. Three major issues will be addressed as the United States faces a period of rapid industrialization: women are demanding legal rights, including suffrage; the labor force is organizing to demand changes in work conditions and to limit the power of an ever-expanding corporate capitalism; and male family. The ensuing debates converge in a small area of Greenwich Village near Washington Square where rebellious free spirits have gathered to lead a renaissance that will break down intellectual, social, literary, and artistic conventions and open up radical new possibilities for living in a modern age.

## **FROM ADVENTURES IN LIFELONG LEARNING AT THREE RIVERS COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

### **The Economics of Raising the Minimum Wage**

Phil Mayer is professor of economics and political science at TRCC. He received his bachelor's from Villanova University, his master's from Kansas State, and is currently working on his MLS through Fort Hayes State University.

### **Causes & Consequences of Gender Inequalities in Developing Countries**

The presentation will compare the inequalities between developed & developing countries and discuss some of the causes. Steve has a bachelor's and master's, and a Ph.D. in sociology. He started at TRCC in the fall of 2004 and is currently associate professor of Sociology and International Studies.

### **Going Green**

Using bio-retention to improve water quality in two coastal watersheds is a power point presentation. ECCD has recently installed tree filters in two coastal watersheds in Southeastern Connecticut to treat polluted runoff and improve the water quality of Long Island Sound. Judy has a master's degree in resource management from UConn and specializes in the identification and management of nonpoint source pollution on the watershed scale.

## **FROM OSHER LIFELONG LEARNING INSTITUTE AT NC STATE UNIVERSITY**

### **Outrageous Masterpieces: the Amazing World of Pedro Almodóvar**

This four-week class will focus on films from Spain's best-known director, Pedro Almodóvar. We will see a quartet of award-winners, starting with his break-through comedy, *Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown* (1988), a farcical tale of a woman's search for identity. In *Talk to Her* (1999), we'll explore social commentary, and in *All About My Mother* (2002), we'll witness the force of maternal love. The course will conclude with a showing of Academy-Award nominee *Broken Embraces* (2009), a tribute to the power of secrets and desire. Each film will be shown in its entirety and will be followed by analysis and class discussion.

### **Prisoners, Partisans, Pacifists and Patriots: When Is a War Film Not About Killing?**

It's easy to see why filmmakers have been attracted to war — it's dramatic, there are tons of great stories and, let's face it, many of us just like to see things blow up. But there's a lot more to war than conflict and killing, as the films in this course will show. Featuring movies from five countries covering four wars — from World War I to the Bosnian conflict — these works include an American classic about a miscarriage of military justice; a Japanese pacifist manifesto; an Italian work about the Resistance during World War II; a film about a prison camp for recalcitrant British soldiers; a Korean War flick about the psychological horrors of combat; and an Oscar-winning black comedy set during the Serb-Bosnian war.

### **Gerrymandering in North Carolina: A Fact of Life or Possible to Change?**

Gerrymandering has been used for years by both the Republican and Democratic parties for political gain. Former Raleigh Mayor Charles Meeker (Democrat) and former Charlotte Mayor Richard Vinroot (Republican) have formed a bipartisan group to work towards nonpartisan political redistricting for North Carolina. Given their long involvement in the political process, Meeker and Vinroot believe that the partisan way of redistricting is not in the best interests of North Carolinians.

They are working to draft legislation creating a nonpartisan commission which would redistrict the state following each national census.

### **Cyborg Insect Swarms for Search and Research**

Search and rescue operations for emergency response, such as looking for survivors in a collapsed building, can be extremely dangerous. For these applications, it is essential to create a map of the environment and identify the location of anyone who may need assistance. In order to avoid people risking their lives, these tasks could also be performed by robotic autonomous systems. In this lecture, we will discuss the development of a cyborg0insect swarm platform for such applications. A January *News & Observer* story gave an overview of this fascinating research, <http://bit.ly/1IM08fk>.

## **FROM SHEPHERD UNIVERSITY LIFELONG LEARNING PROGRAM**

### **Being Mortal: What and How Do We Tell the Children**

Aging and death. Many of us do not want to talk about our fears and hopes as we age. When we do, many of our adult children don't want to listen. In this class, we will explore together, through readings, discussion, and interactive exercises, what is important to us as we age, our hopes and fears, and what changes we want to make going forward. We will read Atul Gawande's book, *Being Mortal*, as well as on-line resources from the West Virginia Center for End of Life Care, and other readings to stimulate our thinking. We will have courageous conversations together, learn new ways of approaching these difficult topics, and strategize ways to have these conversations with our loved ones.

### **The Evolution of the United States Government's Counterterrorism Policies from the 1980s**

This seminar will explore the history of the United States Government's Counterterrorism policy and actions since 1975, with special emphasis on the Middle East. The U.S. government's policies and actions post 9/11 will be reviewed and discussions will take place regarding their effectiveness and long-term viability.

### **Journey to Mysticism: Dynamics of Spiritual Development**

With mysticism now being referenced as a universal call, we may ask: what is it and how do I get there? This course will explore these issues including: the spiritual terrain, the role of daily spiritual practice, how to view cultural conditioning, the role of self-image and God-image or lack thereof, silence, science, Spirit, claiming ones' inner authority, cutting loose, what is a mystic and what is mystical experience, what do the world religions contribute, what is the place of the most ancient spiritual practice: shamanism; what is the role of a spiritual director or mentor. Each class will draw on the mystical wisdom of the ages and include a spiritual exercise to address the issues being discussed. The course will begin with, and revisit at the conclusion, a look at contemporary mysticism in light of 21<sup>st</sup> century awareness.

### **Readings from the Private Journal of a Public Historian**

Go behind the scenes of government with Dr. Ray Smock, director of the Robert C. Byrd Center for Legislative Studies at Shepherd University, and the former historian of the U.S. House of Representatives, who will read stories from his extensive private journal about his experiences as an eyewitness to national events during the Reagan, Bush, and Clinton presidencies when he worked for three successive House speakers, Tip O'Neill, Jim Wright and Tom Foley. Ray was the first official historian of the House and the chief planner for the House for the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversaries of Congress and the U.S. Constitution. He also served as the Speaker's representative to a Pentagon

advisory committee on the commemoration of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of World War II. The readings will be followed by a general discussion of the topics covered.

### **FROM DAVIDSON LEARNS**

#### **A History of Davidson Basketball: The McKillop Years**

Davidson is unique in that it has competed — at times at the very highest level — in Division 1 basketball while simultaneously maintaining its standards as a top ten liberal arts college. Eddie Nicholson will be drawing on his extensive Davidson Basketball archive, including interviews and video clips, to cover a quarter century of the McKillop era.

### **FROM MARIST CENTER FOR LIFETIME STUDY**

#### **Crime and Punishment: A Panel Discussion on New York State Criminal Law and Prosecution**

On March 30<sup>th</sup> Marist Center for Lifetime Study kicked off the 2015 spring semester with a unique event. A panel of distinguished attorneys discussed the history and current workings of the New York State Criminal Justice System in the context of New York insanity laws, and how they pertain to criminal prosecution today. Led by a retired New York State Assistant Attorney General, the panel included prosecutors from several New York State counties as well as a retired Deputy Director of New York State Office of Mental Health, Bureau of Forensic Services.

A comprehensive discussion covered a broad range of topics and brought the law to life through in depth details and facts about real criminal cases that have been tried in New York State. The panel explored the processes used to determine an accused individual's competency to stand trial and how it is determined whether or not an individual should receive criminal punishment. The audience was given an inside view of the New York State psychiatric system which houses the criminally insane, and had a rare opportunity to interact with prosecutors who are charged with upholding the integrity of the law in the State of New York.

### **FROM OSHER LIFELONG LEARNING INSTITUTE AT AQUINAS COLLEGE**

#### **Mythology and Super Heroes**

Ian Borton, a popular professor of communication at AQ as he talks about the connection between mythology and the super heroes of today. Our super heroes today are nothing compared to the days of the Greeks and Romans!

### **FROM OSHER LIFELONG LEARNING INSTITUTE AT BERKELEY**

#### **Dixie Voices: The World of the Antebellum South**

Americans are alternately fascinated and repelled by our collective national memory of the Old South. We either righteously condemn Southerners for their brutality, boorishness, and backwards social system — or romanticize the “land of cotton” as a bastion of gracious country living, and courteous behavior. (In fact, the song “Dixie” was written by a Northerner.) Which, then, is the “real” South? Or is the very term “Dixie” nothing more than a hazy fantasy of contradictory images, the product of the fevered imaginations of novelists and filmmakers eager to cash in on an old American archetype? In this course, we will delve into the many puzzling paradoxes embedded in our half-conscious understanding of “the old times there not forgotten.”