

# COLLEGIUM

## FALL 2023 CLASS SCHEDULE

WEDNESDAYS OCT 11, 18, 25, NOV 1, 8, 15

9:15 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. IN PERSON

### ***Global Warming: Dangers and Solutions Going Forward***

**Leader: Peter Spitz**, MIT graduate who spent his career in the energy and chemical industries, author of three books and numerous articles, MIT lecturer; blogger on new developments in energy and chemical technologies

The earth's climate has been changing, a fact that has been attributed to the rapid rise in the emission of carbon dioxide from the combustion of fossil fuels. United Nations climate scientists warned of dire consequences if dramatic actions were not taken to limit the rise of atmospheric temperature to a target level. We now know that this target will not be met. This course will (a) cover all the actions being taken globally to deal with the carbon problem, (b) predict scenarios of global warming effects going forward, and (c) examine optimistic views of how the world's population can take steps to abate the problems associated with our changing climate. \$85.00

9:15 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. HYFLEX

### ***Religion and the Supreme Court in the 21st Century***

**Leader: James Rose**, JD, former chief of Appeals Section, Westchester District Attorney's Office; former president of The Legal Aid Society, Westchester County

This course will survey the recent cases involving religion and the Supreme Court, touching briefly on the history of the Free Exercise and Establishment Clauses. Topics will include: school prayer, invocations at public meetings and prayer in public places, crèches and religious symbols on public property, the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, taxpayer money and private schools, employment and benefits after Hobby Lobby and Masterpiece Cake, and the anticipated decision in 303 Creative LLC dealing with the conflict between religious beliefs and anti-discrimination laws. Students who are interested in a more detailed list of the cases we will touch on are invited to visit the class blog, [falsenoose.blogspot.com](https://falsenoose.blogspot.com) for a preliminary syllabus. \$85.00

10:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

**Coffee, Cookies, and Conversation**

11:00 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. HYFLEX

### ***Women in the Hebrew Bible: Is There a Feminine Perspective?***

**Leader: Michael Malina**, LLB, retired attorney, author of a commentary on the book of Genesis, student of theological texts

The Hebrew Bible (Christian Old Testament) has been described as written by men, about men, and for men. While this description holds more than a little truth, the Bible is full of interesting, noteworthy women. Could there be a feminine perspective in their stories that adds depth to the Bible's message? We'll focus on Eve, the mother of humanity; Sarah, the first Israelite matriarch; Rebecca, perhaps the Bible's strongest woman; Rachel and Leah, the paradigmatic sibling rivals; Tziporah,

Moses' Midianite wife who saved his life; Deborah, the poetic judge; Ruth, the Moabite ancestor of King David; and Esther, the queen who successfully confronted a genocidal effort to destroy the Israelite people. Our study will reveal these women's essential roles in the arc of the Biblical story. Any version of the Bible can be used.     \$85.00

11:00 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. **HYFLEX**

### ***What Is Consciousness?***

**Leader: Dwight Goodyear, PhD, SUNY Westchester Community College professor of philosophy, SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching, WCC Foundation Award for Scholarship**

One of the ongoing puzzles for humanity is, paradoxically, something that accompanies us all our waking lives: consciousness. We will explore two general approaches to this subject in Western philosophy. The first is dualism (Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, and Foster), which maintains that consciousness, although intimately related to a material brain and body, is itself not made of matter (the mind is akin to what has traditionally been called the soul). The second is materialism (Hobbes, Marx, Dennett, Churchland), a popular current approach in the sciences among those who deny the existence of immaterial and supernatural things. This view maintains that consciousness consists of nothing but certain material functions of the brain. Thinking about consciousness will also allow us to consider fascinating topics including the nature of perception, selfhood, knowledge, mental images, personhood, and immortality.     \$85.00

12:15 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.

**Lunch: Bring your own or purchase at the Student Center**

1:00 p.m. – 2:15 p.m. **HYFLEX**

### ***Short Story***

**Leader: Christine Bobkoff, Collegium member, SUNY Westchester Community College senior adjunct professor of English, recipient of Adjunct Excellence in Teaching award, and Chappaqua Library book-group leader**

I have a friend who leaves short story collections in her guest room, reasoning that a story is just long enough to entertain but not so long that anyone will overstay their welcome. Because short stories can usually be read in one sitting, they are easy to share and discuss and provide a great way to discover new authors. We'll visit the stories in *The O'Henry Prize Stories 2019* edited by Lynn Freed, Elizabeth Strout, and Lara Vapnyar. For some of us, it's a return to a familiar anthology; for others it will be a fresh experience. Hopefully, you will agree with author George Saunders (*Lincoln in the Bardo*) that "when you read a short story, you come out a little more aware and a little more in love with the world around you."     \$85.00

1:00 p.m. – 2:15 p.m. **HYFLEX**

### ***Thomas Paine and Rights of Man***

**Leader: Gary Berton, founder and retired coordinator of the Institute for Thomas Paine Studies at Iona University, president of the Thomas Paine National Historical Association**

Thomas Paine is the most important political philosopher in modern history and the last of the great Enlightenment thinkers. This course will begin with an updated biographical sketch including newly researched findings and then lead into how *Rights of Man* formed the manifesto of the age of democratic revolutions, an age we are still living in. Along the way, we will correct the misinformation

that plagues Paine's life and works and explore how his works, including a greatly expanded corpus, still shed light on the obstacles to democratic implementation. \$85.00

## FRIDAYS OCT 13, 20, 27, NOV 3, 10, 17

9:15 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. HYFLEX

### ***The ABCs of LGBTQIA+***

**Dana Hirsch (she/they)**, *coordinator of LGBTQIA+ and International Student Programs for the Department of Student Involvement at SUNY Westchester Community College, has offered LGBTQIA+ education to students across Westchester County since 2017; author, editor, and journalist*

Expand your LGBTQIA+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, and All Others) literacy skills! This interactive course will help you build a foundation of knowledge by providing hands-on learning of inclusive language around the LGBTQIA+ community. We will become familiar with queer identity development research by Arlene Istar Lev, Anthony D'Augelli, and others. Through facts and fun, we will dive into some of the history of this community, learn about challenges queer people are facing today, and engage in judgment-free conversations to help you better support people in your life who identify as LGBTQIA+. \$85.00

9:15 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. IN PERSON

### ***The Angelic Music of Mozart***

**Leader: Paul Yeon Lee**, *PhD in classical music composition and ethnomusicology; former composer-in-residence, Korean Symphony Orchestra*

A child prodigy, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was only five years old when he could read and write music and only six when he wrote his first composition. A prolific composer, by his early death at age 35 he had written more than 600 works in every genre of classical music. Albert Einstein once profoundly stated, "Mozart's music is so pure and beautiful that I see it as a reflection of the inner beauty of the universe." His music was also widely admired by many eminent composers such as Haydn, Beethoven, and Chopin. Together we will look for the inner beauty of the universe as we listen to and discuss the pure and beautiful musical creations of Mozart: his symphonies, piano concertos, piano sonatas, chamber music composed for a small group of instruments, and more. \$85.00

10:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

### **Coffee, Cookies, and Conversation**

11:00 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. IN PERSON

### ***A la Carte***

**Leaders: Sue Brownie**, *Collegium member, retired medical physicist in radiation oncology, and volunteer with Neighbors for Refugees, the Bronxville Giving Garden, and the Native Plant Center;* and **Jim Burnett, JD, LL.M.**, *retired FBI Agent, criminal justice professor, and Collegium board member*

We are pleased to offer another roster of presenters, some new to Collegium, some veterans, but all with unique topics to share. Our semester will open on October 13 with Rick Leibert, a retired

businessman, marketing professor, and avid historian, who will share a historical look at **secrets and scandals surrounding British royal marriages**. On October 20, Fozia Khan, president of American Muslim Women's Association in Briarcliff, will present a view of **a Muslim woman's practice of her religion within the framework of women's rights**. On October 27, Serdar Arat, artist, gallery director, and curator will explain what the "white marble lie" is, **presenting recent research showing that ancient Greek and Roman sculptures were actually painted with bright colors and dizzying patterns**. On November 3, Jane Roos, professor emerita in art history, will walk us through **the Manet/Degas relationship as seen in the exhibition that runs from this October until early January 2024 at the Metropolitan Museum of Art**. On November 10, Michael Shamosh, amateur blues musician and historian of American popular music, will regale us with **"Before There Was Elvis," an exploration of the musical styles that helped create the musical legend**. We'll close the semester on November 17 with Derek W. Wright, retired Detective First Grade at the NYPD, who will explain **what constitutes a police traffic stop and how we should appropriately respond to a police officer in this situation**. \$85.00

11:00 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. **IN PERSON**

### ***Three Plays by Sean O'Casey***

**Leader: Elizabeth Gaffney, PhD, SUNY Distinguished Teaching Professor of English at Westchester Community College**

This course will focus on three Sean O'Casey plays that depict the effects of nationalism and war on ordinary people in Ireland during the early decades of the 20th century. O'Casey wrote the plays during the years leading up to the 1917 Easter Rising. They portray the threat of conscription into the British Army during World War I, the rhetoric of nationalism, the destruction of the Irish war for independence in the early 1920s, and the Irish civil war. We will explore the playwright's appealing combination of comedy mixed with tragedy. As one reader comments, "O'Casey doesn't try to glorify the Irish struggle. Portrayed here are the lives of 'common' people...O'Casey's language has salt." Participants should obtain a copy of O'Casey's *Three Dublin Plays: The Shadow of a Gunman, Juno and the Paycock, The Plough and the Stars*. Introduction by Christopher Murray. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2000. \$85.00

12:15 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.

**Lunch: Bring your own or purchase at the Student Center**

1:00 p.m. – 2:15 p.m. **HYFLEX**

### ***Very Heaven: The Romantic Movement, Part One Blake, Wordsworth, and Coleridge***

**Leader: Joseph Sgammato, Collegium board member; senior adjunct faculty, English and Film, SUNY Westchester Community College**

"Romantic" may be the most misleading word in the language, at least as it applies to the historical era that turned politics, philosophy, and the arts on their respective ears and paved the way for the world as we know it today. Most commonly used in its softer sense as a descriptor of *amour*, Romantic with a capital "R" evokes revolution, bloodshed, and ruthless rejection of previous aesthetic comforts. This course will focus on Romanticism in English literature, especially the first generation of poets: the wild and mystical William Blake, the breathtakingly gifted William Wordsworth, and the troubled, drug-addled Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Close readings of the canonical masterpieces of these poets will bring to exciting life Wordsworth's famous paean to his age: "Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive/ But to be young was very heaven!" \$85.00

1:00 p.m. – 2:15 p.m. **ZOOM ONLY**

***Faith on Film, Part 2 (on Zoom, 3 sessions only: Oct. 13, 20, 27)***

**Leader:** Will Costanzo, *SUNY Distinguished Teaching Professor of English and Film*

Many of our views and values were forged in the traditions of the world's great faiths. We will continue to explore three major religions, Catholicism, Islam, and Hinduism, through the lens of cinema. Interactive discussions will be held via Zoom in each of the three weeks after participants have viewed films on their own before the class. Program notes will be provided for each session.

***The Wonder*** (Ireland, 2022, 108 minutes). Set in Ireland after the Great Famine, Sebastián Lelio's adaptation of a novel by Emma Donoghue follows an English nurse hired to observe a pious young girl who seems to be living for months without food. Should the child be canonized as a saint or denounced as a fraud? Available on Netflix. (If you do not subscribe to the service, there is a rental fee.)

***My Son the Fanatic*** (England, 1997, 87 minutes). Based on a short story by Hanif Kureishi, this film focuses on a hard-working Pakistani-born taxi driver (Om Puri) who has made a comfortable life for his family as a secular Muslim in England. That life, and much else, is upturned when his son converts to fundamentalist Islam. Available on Amazon Prime; DVD available through the Westchester Library System (WLS).

***Sita Sings the Blues*** (US, 2008, 82 minutes). The *Ramayana*, one of India's two foundational texts, is a timeless repository of Hindu values and ideals. Nina Paley's animated film takes a slice of the 24,000-couplet epic poem about the god Rama and his wife, Sita, and presents it as a kind of musical romantic comedy, reimagining the characters as shadow puppets and reinterpreting the narrative from a modern woman's point of view. DVD available at the WLS, or streaming on YouTube, or on the Kanopy application through the WLS. One can sign up online for Kanopy with a WLS library card; it is a free on-demand streaming video platform for public and academic libraries. \$55.00