



Course Descriptions, Fall Term 2024

Monday, 10:00 – Noon: Robert Frost's *North of Boston*

Without question, Robert Frost (1874-1963) is one of the most celebrated poets in America. He wrote extensively about New England at the turn of the century, making the rural countryside come alive through his poetic craft. As a young writer, his fame and notable success came initially through publication of narrative poems in a collection entitled *North of Boston*. First published in 1914 in London, *North of Boston* attracted the attention of poets and scholars, quickly became popular worldwide, and has remained so to this day.

In each of the four group meetings, we will discuss four of the poems in this collection. We will explore the power of Frost's poetry and his way of drawing us into people's lives. These poems draw us into the lives of people through narratives—the stories of everyday people, told through their manner of speaking, and revealing the dilemmas and crises of their lives (e.g., *The Mending Wall*). We will share readings of sections of the poems and listen to audio recordings of Frost's reading.

Note: There will be no class held on Oct 7th.

Instructor: Joanne Carlisle: September 16 – October 14 at Geer (4 sessions)

Monday: 1:00 – 3 PM: Roger Hurlburt on Art

Ever present is his mantra that art simply is "life enhancing" and best discussed within both humanistic terms and the notion that visual tastes indeed are individual - and one need only to look. Three sessions:

ONE ... ART TAKING SHAPE

This is an informal, anecdotal inquiry into the work of artists you know, do not know and perhaps think you know. How artists began their visual pursuits and where they ventured is often surprising, successful or even disastrous. I offer thumbnail sketches of some celebrated artists and a few less so, noting how visual philosophies began and often dramatically changed. As Picasso once observed, "Viable artworks start with destruction and only later construction." I believe he was right.

TWO ...FACE TO FACE WITH THE FAMILIAR AND UNFAMILIAR

Museum goes invariably gravitate toward portraits. Faces can say so much or so little. What was the artist's motive. Who were the sitters? And what is it that fascinates the viewer? From Mona Lisa to Wyeth, this discussion considers portraits from several epochs and offers insights and surprises through a visual tour of countenances that have stood the test of time to delight and enlighten.

THREE ... CONFESSIONS OF A FILM REVIEWER

I have never liked the reference "Film Critic" - as though to write about movies puts one on a higher plane than an audience. I spent more than two decades in the dark watching just about everything, then I had to write about the movie using a value system not based on my likes or dislikes, but rather was it successful or not. And a special perk of my job was interviewing a wide range motion picture makers, as well as a parade of people in the entertainment industry, from film stars to standup comedians. I have chosen many of the best encounters to relate, entertain and perhaps evoke a laugh.

Instructor: Roger Hurlburt: September 16 – September 30 at Noble (3 sessions)

Tuesday: 10:00 AM – Noon: The Adventures of Clara and Robert Schumann

Between Tchaikovsky and Stravinsky a lot of great music was created outside Russia. Saxon-German "musicers" Clara and Robert Schumann, who fall into that gap are, sadly, not much noted nor heard today. With the assistance and humor of Dr. Robert Greenberg and his Great Courses video lectures we will investigate this "dynamic duo" in depth musically and personally. And, of course, listen to some great recordings of their (capital "R") Romantic and deeply intellectual musical compositions. German Romanticism contained much depth of thought, and perhaps even more so, emotion. This course will increase our awareness and appreciation of this extraordinary couple and their world – please join us for this personal, as well as intellectual Romance and romance.

Instructor: John Robinson: September 17 – November 5 at Geer (8 sessions)

Tuesday: 1:00 – 3:00 PM: Documentary Films on Spies and More Spies

Spies have been pivotal in war strategy, information gathering, policy development and execution for centuries. In this course we will focus on spies who played critical roles in World War II, the Cold War, and beyond. Some of these spies you will already know, others you will get to know. Hop aboard the spy train!

Instructor: Larry Rand: September 17 – November 5 at Noble Horizons (8 sessions)

Wednesday: 10:00 AM – Noon: Exploring Alice Munro's Stories

Canadian author Alice Munro passed away this spring at age 92, leaving a rich legacy of stories that come from a long and productive career. She began writing stories as she was raising her children, when she could not imagine having the sustained time that is needed to write novels.

Lucky for us, when raising her children took up less of her time, she stuck to story writing. Over the years, she explored new ways of telling stories—with marked contributions to this literary genre. Stories writers don't often receive much recognition for their literary talent and contributions, but this is not the case for Alice Munro. Over the many years in which she published story after story, literary critics and fellow writers attested to her gift as a story writer. Formal recognition of her literary contributions came through prestigious awards (e.g., Man Booker, 2009), and most notably the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2013.

This TLC class is designed to facilitate close reading and group discussion of stories that Alice Munro published in the last part of her career. The stories we will focus on are published in *Family Furnishings*. Published in 2014, this book is a collection of previously published stories, representing the period 1995-2014. Each of our eight sessions will be devoted to discussion of one or two stories that cover this period. We will examine the purpose and meaning of Munro's often complex stories as well as her writing techniques. Several interviews or articles about Munro will add to our understanding of her own writing (e.g., her Nobel prize "acceptance speech"). (Copies will be available.) We will also listen to excerpts of recorded readings of some of the stories we will talk about.

Members will need to have access to a copy of *Family Furnishing*; I will provide a list of references to articles and books for those who wish to learn more about Munro's writing and career.

Note: There will be no class held on Oct 9th

Instructor: Joanne Carlisle: September 18 – October 30 at Noble Horizons (6 sessions)

Thursday: 10:00 AM – Noon: Industrial History of the Northwest Corner

The state of Connecticut has a rich industrial history. This small state has produced products as varied as clocks, elevators, bells and submarines. The northwest corner of the state is no exception. Industrial activity in our area started before the country was born and continues in modest form into the 21st century. This course covers the industries that emerged in Norfolk, Canaan, Sharon and Salisbury and the wide range of products they produced.

Instructor: Dick Paddock: September 19 – October 24 at Noble Horizons (6 sessions)

Thursday: 1:00 – 3:00 PM: The Roberts Court 2023-2024: From Clean Air to Immunity

It is an understatement to say that the past term of the United States Supreme Court was controversial. In several cases the Court upended established precedent, in others it charted new territory. Together with scandals involving several justices and concern over the discrepancy between the code of conduct that is mandatory for all federal courts *except* the Supreme Court and the code the Supreme Court has written for itself, the legitimacy of and public respect for the Court have come under increased question. We will examine these issues and the key decisions of the Court in its past term.

Instructor: Larry Rand: September 19 – November 7 at Nobel Horizons (8 sessions)