

## Course Descriptions, Winter Term 2025

### ==== Monday: 10:00 AM – Noon: William Faulkner’s *The Unvanquished*

Faulkner’s *The Unvanquished* is a set of seven stories that are Bayard Sartoris’s reminiscences during the civil war and reconstruction in a small community in Mississippi. His story starts when he and his companion Ringo are 14 and ends when he is 24, a young lawyer coping the effects of war and dissolution of a deep-seated southern culture. The two grow up with repeated exposures to loss, suffering, greed. Through Bayard’s account, we see for ourselves the folly of war, the fragmentation of community, the falling apart of civil order. But there are saving graces aplenty: ample family love and pride, loyalty, a persistent moral code. These stories raise issues of gender, race, community that very much concern us today.

Initially published as a novel, Faulkner came to see the power of story sequences and so published a revised version as 7 linked stories. In each of our 7 TLC sessions our discussion will focus on one of the stories, but we will also consider how each contributes to the whole—the themes and issues that tie the stories together.

Participants need to buy or have access to William Faulkner, *The Unvanquished: The Corrected Text*. Available from Vintage Books (and elsewhere). Enrollment is limited to 18 participants so that group discussion is possible.

**Instructor: Joanne Carlisle, seven sessions, January 20– March 3 at Geer**

### ==== Monday: 1:00 – 3:00 PM: An Introduction to Buddhism

More and more Americans call themselves Buddhists, but what is it they believe and practice? Who was The Buddha? What were his basic teachings? And what does it mean to follow the teachings and practices of Buddhism? This class will cover the fundamentals of Buddhism by addressing the following questions from a Buddhist perspective:

What is the human condition?

Given the human condition, how should we respond?

What is the nature of reality?

How do we access the truth?

What should guide our actions?

I will approach these questions not as a scholar or an anointed teacher but as a lay practitioner. I have practiced Zen Buddhism for over 20 years in two Zen Buddhist training centers and can share the understanding I have gained from my experience.

**Instructor: Lyn Mattoon, five sessions, January 20 – February 17 at Noble Horizons**

==== **Tuesday: 10:00 AM – Noon: “Well, it seemed like a good idea at the time: Part II”**

Sessions one and two: *Lord Cornwallis’ Southern Campaign in the American Revolutionary War*  
With a stalemate in the northern colonies, Gen. Clinton and Gen. Cornwallis thought that the southern colonies, with British military support, would stay loyal to Great Britain. After an extensive campaign in South Carolina, with multiple battles (most of which the British won), Cornwallis’ army ended up at Yorktown, Virginia, under siege by American and French forces. British support by sea was denied by a superior French fleet. Thus the surrender of Cornwallis’ army.

Session three: *Great Britain’s Gallipoli Campaign in WW I*

To try to relieve the terrible slaughter on the Western Front, Churchill thought an assault against Turkey would keep the Turks out of the war and open a new front against Germany. Due to mistakes, lack of perseverance, and Turkish determination, the British were forced to withdraw from the peninsula after many casualties. The withdrawal was very successful, but retreats don’t win wars.

Sessions four and five: *Fall of French Third Republic and establishment of the Vichy Government*

After six weeks of the German invasion of France in WWII, the French government could either surrender or continue the fight from their colonies in North Africa. The government chose surrender, and Hitler allowed the establishment of a new French government in unoccupied France, based in Vichy. The Vichy government was recognized by the US but soon became more Nazi than the Germans in its repression of the Jewish population.

Session six: *Engineering and operator errors that caused the collapse of the KC Missouri Hyatt-Regency walkway, killing 114 and injuring 200, in 1989 and the partial meltdown of Three Mile Island unit II in 1978*

Both the Hyatt engineering and Three Mile Island operator errors were based upon faulty information and decision making.

**Instructor: Tom Key, six sessions, January 21 – February 25 at Geer**

==== **Wednesday: 10:00 AM – Noon: Conversation Class**

This will be a discussion group designed to share thoughts on current issues – political, economic, social, and other. I will email to members material for discussion prior to each class. As always, but this year in particular, there is much to discuss! Included among our topics will be:

- The 2024 election
- Paths forward
- Persons who have influenced you
- The Trolley Question
- Your Favorite Children’s Books (you as child *and* parent)

**Instructor: Larry Rand, eight sessions, January 22 – March 12 at Geer**

### ====Wednesday, 1:00 – 3:00 PM: A Fresh Look at the Bible

Interested in learning about the Bible---but not sure how to start? The Bible remains a centerpiece of western civilization and the foundation of faith for many. And yet to many it is perplexing and mysterious. This 8-week class will give a broad overview of the major themes of the Bible by focusing on 8 fascinating and distinct biblical personalities, as they interact with the Bible's main character – God!

Week 1: Adam (and Eve) –The Creation, monotheism; Stewardship of environment, the “the fall” and the origins of good and evil; the presence of God

Week 2: Abraham – The Covenant, and the creation of the people of Israel, the promise of the land, the saga of the patriarchs. Worship/prayer

Week 3: Moses -Exodus and deliverance, the Promised Land, the 10 Commandments, and people of the law

Week 4: David –The formation of an imperfect saint; God's warnings about kings; the rise of the monarchy; what constitutes a good leader/king

Week 5: Isaiah – Israel's failings and the prophetic witness. Justice as mark of authentic religion, the exile and the demise of Israel, Messianic hopes; the Suffering Messiah

Week 6 – Job -The Wisdom literature, a new approach to understanding God, when the old norms don't work

Week 7: Jesus – The incarnate God, fully human/ fully divine Savior/ redeemer, who changes all; creator of a new covenant; transformer of OT law, opponent of evil; Jesus as preacher, teacher, healer, kingdom initiator.

Week 8: Paul – Focus on Crucifixion, Resurrection; missionary expansion, the creation of the “church” and churches; the theologian who develops the crucial themes—grace, reconciliation, justification, sanctification, work of Spirit, the body of Christ.

Bring a Bible to class. We'll be using the New Revised Standard version, but any version is fine.

**Instructor: Rich Reifsnnyder and Leo Gafney, eight sessions, January 22- March 12 at Geer**

### ====Thursday, 10:00 AM – Noon: Exploring Irish Short Stories

Over many centuries, telling and retelling, adapting, enjoying stories has been a traditional part of family and social life in Ireland. Once stories appeared in written form, they too became a popular and valued part of Irish life. Over time, Irish writers have played a major role in turning the short story into a popular genre, not only in Ireland but around the world. Today's story writers continue to adapt the form, leading to enormous variety in the award-winning stories we read in various publications. This TLC study group offers the opportunity to read and share views of recently written Irish short stories, drawn from Anne Enright's book, *The Granta Book of the Irish Short Story*. Each of the 6 group meetings will focus on 3 stories, 18 in all--that is, one story from each of 18 authors. Our discussions will focus on the form and content of individual stories; across stories, we'll consider how authors make their stories engaging, lively, imaginative, thought-provoking reading experiences.

Participants will need to purchase or have access to a copy of Enright's book; enrollment is limited to 18 participants, to make shared discussion possible.

**Instructor: Joanne Carlisle, six sessions, January 23 – February 27 at Geer**

**==== Thursday: 1:00 – 3:00 PM: Great Trials in American History**

From Lizzie Borden’s to O.J. Simpson’s, Courts in the United States have a long history of controversial trials. In this course we will use documentary films to examine these trials and the effects they have had then and now.

**Instructor: Larry Rand, eight sessions, January 23-March 13 at Geer**

**====Friday, 10:00 AM – Noon: Crime Plays**

In the classic detective novel, a crime disrupts our tranquility, the detective interviews witnesses, uncovers facts, identifies the culprit, remands him/her to custody, and then everything returns to normal as justice is served. Well, this idyllic vision of crime and retribution is no longer an accurate characterization, if it ever was. Join me in this seminar to explore how the postmodern turn in literature transformed the classic detective novel by questioning all of these assumptions, creating what has been termed the “metaphysical detective novel.” We’ll read and discuss four novels in this tradition that play off this original fiction of certainty in order to raise questions about what we know and who we are (i.e., the metaphysical part).

We’ll begin our discussions with Dashiell Hammett’s *The Maltese Falcon* (1929)—a classic for sure, but one that bridged the traditional and the new, and which provided a hint of the changes to come. Then, in Friedrich Dürrenmatt’s two *Inspector Barlach Mysteries* (1950), we’ll find haunting questions of guilt and innocence as a detective takes justice into his own hands. Finally, in Paul Auster’s *City of Glass* (first novel in Auster’s *The New York Trilogy*, 1985), we’ll find ourselves wondering which events are real and which aren’t, who is the detective and who the author, and who is controlling whom. As a group, the authors of these novels play with the conventions of the detective genre in order to ask philosophical questions with both satirical glee and genuine angst, and we’ll look at how they do it.

**A tentative schedule:**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Readings</b>
1		<i>Maltese Falcon</i> , Chaps. 1-10 (pp. 3-100)
2		<i>Maltese Falcon</i> , chaps. 11-20 (pp. 101-217)
3		<i>The Judge &amp; His Hangman</i> (pp. 3-93)
4		<i>Suspicion</i> (pp. 99-209)
5		<i>City of Glass</i> (Chaps. 1-8, pp. 1-71)
6		<i>City of Glass</i> (Chaps. 9-13, pp. 72-130)

**Important note about the class format**

This class will consist primarily of group discussion, and therefore enrollment will be limited to 15 people who are committed to engaging in on-going discussions of the novels. I will not be lecturing; instead, I will assume that everyone has read each week’s assignment and is eager to dive into issues sparked by the material. Please contact me if you have questions about this plan before enrolling (Email: [addisons@umich.edu](mailto:addisons@umich.edu); Phone: 734-355-4091)

**Instructor: Addison Stone, six sessions, January 24 – February 28 at Geer**