

Lifelong Learners GTX Fall 2025 Course Catalogue / September 29 – November 6, 2025

Mondays, 9:00 – 10:00, Sun City Ballroom, Information and Disinformation, Fred Stein, (In-Person/On-Demand)

We live in the Information Age which requires new skills to determine what is false, what is misleading and what is truthful. How do we tell the differences and make informed decisions? This course will discuss the history of frauds and scams from 1600 till today and offer actions and methods to identify them. It is completely new from the course offered before.

COL (ret) Fred Stein served 27 years active-duty Army and commanded at all levels from company through brigade. He served in multiple staff positions including Senior Communications staff, J6, for Operation Support Hope in Rwanda and Operation Enduring Freedom in Bosnia. He has presented lectures to the Swedish and Japanese parliaments on the Information Age, co-authored *Network Centric Warfare* and has taught LLGTX courses on military topics.

Mondays, 10:15 – 11:15, Sun City Ballroom, The Bill of Rights: What It Means and What It Doesn't Mean, Dr. John Ray, (In-Person/On-Demand)

The Bill of Rights was the first articulation in the Constitution of the rights we enjoy as US citizens. It recognizes and protects those rights, but how many of us actually know where they came from and what they are? This course will review their history, compare them to other rights documents in history, explore why they were added, and look at each of the Amendments with particular attention to the First Amendment.

Dr. John Ray taught courses in political science and philosophy at Montana Technological University in Butte for 48 years, retiring as a professor emeritus in May 2023. He received his PhD in political science from the University of Wisconsin. In addition to teaching, he gave numerous community presentations and taught free classes on politics, political theory and philosophy.

Mondays, 1:00 – 2:00, Georgetown Public Library – Hewlett Room, Musicals with a Message, Vic Figurelli, (In-Person Only)

The majority of 1930's – 1950's musicals were light-hearted song and dance affairs, sometimes with minimal plots to tie the songs and dances together. But in the late 50s, musicals covering serious subjects emerged, delivering their messages with memorable music. This course will present excerpts from six award-winning musicals whose treatment of serious themes is amplified by their powerful music. Although the emphasis of the class will be on the music, there will be opportunity to discuss the messages these musicals conveyed.

Vic has been a member of Lifelong Learners GTX since 1998. He served on the first operating Board as vice-president and facilities coordinator. He served a total of five years as president in three separate terms. He has presented numerous times for LLGTX, mostly recently "The Golden Age of Hollywood Musicals" and "Beyond the Golden Age of Hollywood Musicals".

Mondays, 2:15 – 3:15, Georgetown Public Library – Hewlett Room, Going to the Dogs, Dr. Laura Hobgood & Dr. Jimmy Smith, (In-Person Only)

A recent National Geographic article suggests that "Dogs are not just our proverbial best friends in the animal world... they evolved from wolves long ago, found a home alongside humans before history makes a record, and never left." Indeed, the 2010 census was the first to show more U.S. households include dogs than children. This course, co-taught by a historian and an exercise physiologist, looks through historical, scientific, and cultural lenses to understand the complicated, incredibly impactful, and fun human-dog relationship over the centuries.

-Dr. Laura Hobgood (Ph.D. St. Louis Univ.), Religion/Environmental Studies, Faculty, Southwestern Univ.
Specialties: Religion/Animals, Religion/Nature, Christian Traditions, History of Dogs

-Dr. Jimmy Smith (Ph.D. Univ. of North Texas), Kinesiology, Emeritus Faculty, Southwestern Univ.
Specialties: Cardio-Respiratory Responses to Exercise, Comparative Mammalian Physiology
-These lecturers co-taught a class on dogs at SU for 20 years and have worked in dog rescue efforts for 30 years.

Tuesdays, 9:00 – 10:00, First Baptist Church of Georgetown – Room E-103, Mean Streets and Cozy Villages, History of Mystery, Dr. Jeffrey Mahan, (In-Person/On-Demand)

The class explores the mystery genre, looking at where mystery stories came from, why they are popular, and how they are shaped by literary conventions. We will start with Edgar Allen Poe's "The Murders at the Rue Morgue". From there we will examine the moral fantasies that inform: the "who done it," hard-boiled detectives, cop tales, caper films, and detectives from minority communities. There will be optional suggested novels or films for those who are interested.

Dr. Jeffrey Mahan is a returning LLGTX presenter. An author and retired professor, he has interests in popular culture, media studies, and religion. His dissertation, "A Long Way from Solving That One," was a study of the mystery novel as moral fantasy. He is co-editor of "Religion and Popular Culture in America."

Tuesdays AND Thursdays, 9:00 – 10:30, First Baptist Church of Georgetown – Room E-205, Introduction to the Italian Language, Mike D'Amelio, (In-Person Only)

This course is for beginners, people with some prior exposure, or people who have been away from the Italian language for a long time and want to pick it up again. The class will start with the basics and expand from there. Come learn one of the most beautiful languages in the world and prepare for more enhanced and intimate interactions during travels to Italy!! The class will meet on **both** Tues and Thurs from 9:00 - 10:30 AM, and enrollment is limited to 20 participants.

Mike D'Amelio grew up with significant Italian language exposure, then supplemented that with formal training over the years in both the US and in Italy. These days, he goes to Italy every year for about 6 weeks.

Tuesdays 10:30 – 11:30, First Baptist Church of Georgetown – Room E-103, The peopling of America and the Gault Site, Dr. Clark Wernecke, (In-Person Only)

Since the early 1900's the scientific consensus was that the first people in the Americas got here around 13,500 years ago. Though some believed otherwise, the technological ability to retrieve evidence of earlier inhabitants was lacking. Now, since the 1970's, rapid advances in the technology used by archaeologists have pushed that date back to at least 30,000 years ago. This course will explore those changes and, particularly, how the nearby Gault Archaeological Site fits in that story. The 6th class will be a tour of the Gault site (with a \$10/person charge by the GSAR).

Clark Wernecke had a successful career in business before returning to school for archaeology. With an MBA as well as a PhD in Anthropology, Dr. Wernecke has specialized in organizing and administering large projects. He retired in 2022 as Director of the Prehistory Research Project at The University of Texas at Austin and as Executive Director for the Gault School of Archaeological Research. He has worked on projects throughout the United States, Mesoamerica and the Middle East.

Tuesdays, 10:30 – 11:30, First Baptist Church of Georgetown – Room E-108, Eastern Traditions, Dr. Herman Matthews, (In-Person Only)

In these sessions, we will have an ongoing exploration of Eastern Traditions from a personal perspective. Topics: Theories of existence; The Vedas and creation stories; The Upanishads and Vedanta; Practices of Meditation; Buddhism and the Four Noble Truths; Hinduism and the Hindu Gods and Deities. We will relate these explorations

to our own self-explorations. So before the first session, think about what you want to explore. This is a participatory, interactive experience and the enrollment is limited to 15 participants.

Herman Matthews has a PhD in Physics and was on the faculty at four major Universities in the US. He then resigned from academia and was self-employed for 35 years. He was a consultant, produced video and designed and facilitated several hundred workshops and seminars using experiential and non-traditional learning. Herman has worked with many diverse corporations, organizations, cultures, traditions and individuals both in the US and India.

Wednesdays, 9:00 – 10:00, The Oscar at Georgetown – Theater, Worldwide Travel, (In-Person/On-Demand)

October 1: A Novice Traveler's Trip to Ireland – Linda Baker

Linda experienced the history and culture of Ireland, exploring its highlights and learning an important lesson for all travelers In Dublin Castle.

October 8: Memories of Past Travels--Where Am I? – Babs Cape

Having been a travel advisor since 1988 and having traveled extensively, Babs asks you to play this game with her: "Where am I?" You identify the destination as she takes you with her.

October 15: THE USA – Cruising the US Cotton Land – Terri & Dennis Borocz

Join Terri & Dennis on their road trip through the South exploring classic landmarks, natural wonders, the antebellum South and many gems along the way.

October 22: Southwestern Colorado & Handies Peak – Mark Nissen

Exploring SW Colorado, photographers Mark and Nicida rode the Durango-Silverton train, toured the San Juan Mountains, and climbed a 14'er, Handies Peak. But did they summit?

October 29: Both Sides of the Himalayas: Nepal and Tibet – John Dallen

Nepal and Tibet are diverse nations with scores of tribes, clans, languages and cultures. John and Frances explored spectacular temples, palaces and scenic wonders in two small countries.

November 5: Living the Dream: Sailing in French Polynesia – Glenn Dimit

Skipper Glenn and Cathy, the photojournalist, rent catamarans as their bases for exploring new cultures, meeting the locals, sampling the cuisine, and swimming or snorkeling. Crazy cool.

Wednesdays, 10:30 – 11:30, The Oscar at Georgetown – Theater, Great Conductors of the 20th Century, Dr. Barry Williamson, (In-Person/On-Demand)

Join Dr. Barry Scott Williamson, Founder and Artistic Director of the Texas Bach Festival, in exploring the lives, training, and work of several great 20th-century orchestral conductors. This class covers figures like Wilhelm Furtwängler, Arturo Toscanini, Herbert von Karajan, Seiji Ozawa, Leonard Bernstein, Georg Solti, Riccardo Muti, and Helmuth Rilling. Dr. Williamson's lectures will include viewing and analyzing YouTube performances of iconic symphonies, opera excerpts, and mass/oratorio works from a conductor's perspective.

Dr. Barry Scott Williamson has enjoyed a distinguished international career in conducting and teaching. He made his conducting debut at the European Music Festival in Stuttgart, where he was one of three finalists out of 63 conductors. Dr. Williamson has led five international performance tours and made his Carnegie Hall conducting debut in 2018. Since 2017, he has been the driving force behind the annual Texas Bach Festival.

Wednesdays, 1:00 – 2:00, The Oscar at Georgetown – Theater, Fascinating Potpourri I with Various Presenters

October 1: Solving Cold Cases with DNA and Genealogy – Rhonda Kevorkian

Uncover how DNA and genealogical research are bringing closure to long-standing cold cases. At the DNA Doe Project, we focus on the humanitarian mission of identifying previously unknown human remains. Learn how our dedicated work provides resolution to families, transforming fragmented clues into definitive answers. We give a voice back to those silenced, diligently piecing together their stories to restore names to the forgotten. Discover how we connect the unidentified with their loved ones, bringing peace through identification.

Rhonda Kevorkian brings over five years of direct experience with the DNA Doe Project, a leader in identifying unknown human remains. As an Investigative Genetic Genealogist and Team Leader, she actively resolves complex cases. Rhonda holds a certificate in American Genealogical Studies from the National Genealogical Society, underpinning her expertise in the genealogical methods vital to this work. Her practical experience and specialized education make her uniquely qualified.

October 8: Let's Talk Tissue – S. Lemuel Bradshaw

Tissue donation suffers from an identity crisis. How else can it be explained that an action positively affecting 2.7 million people annually remains a mystery to so many, including tissue recipients themselves? In this class, we will focus on how patients are chosen for tissue donation, the differences in evaluating potential tissue, organ, and eye donations, and how tissue is prepared for transplant. We will conclude the class with a call to action for attendees.

Lemuel Bradshaw is a two-time heart transplant recipient whose career in donation began as a volunteer for Donate Life Texas. The decision of a family of heroes allowed Lemuel to raise three daughters, attend the University of Texas, and welcome ten grandchildren. Now, as the Director of Communications for United Tissue Resources, Lemuel works to give others the second chance that he was given.

October 15: Medieval Irish Iconography – Dr. Jennifer Cochran Anderson

In 1538, Protestant reformers burned a miraculous wooden Madonna, only to witness their commander's death that night, believed to be divine retribution. This is one of many stories about Ireland's wooden devotional sculptures—humble carvings that became highly sought-after. Targeted during the Reformation, these "idols" were hidden in bogs, granaries, and under floorboards. Each attempt to destroy them only increased their power, leading to elaborate local mythologies. This talk traces the journey of these sacred objects from medieval devotion through iconoclastic fury to their modern revival, revealing how they became symbols of Irish cultural memory and spiritual resistance.

Dr. Jennifer Cochran Anderson is an art historian specializing in late medieval Ireland. She is the first woman in Texas to earn national certification as an Artist-Blacksmith. Dr. Anderson is the author and editor of several publications on medieval Ireland and medieval and early modern Europe.

October 22: How to Develop a Mural from Paper to Wall – Cindy Martin

Learn how to develop a mural by gathering information from the client. We will demonstrate how to use a grid pattern to transfer your mural from paper to the wall and discuss the types of paints used. A slideshow of murals will illustrate the techniques and final products.

Cindy Martin holds a degree in drafting and worked in the engineering field for 17 years before starting her mural business in 1991. She began with residential murals and expanded to commercial projects. After 18 successful years, Cindy retired from her mural business in 2009.

October 29: Practicing Medicine in Williamson County in the 1950's – Dr. Stephen Benold

This course will explore the state of medical technology, medical practice, and economics in the 1950s, using Georgetown, Texas (population 5,000) as a case study. We will focus on the work of the town's only physicians, general practitioners. While much has changed since then, mostly for the better, we will also consider some of the losses that have occurred over time.

Dr. Stephen Benold has been teaching economics and various other courses at Senior University for 18 years. He earned his undergraduate degree in economics from Rice University, where he was honored as the Hayden Honor Scholar in Economics. As the Medical Director of Williamson County EMS, he significantly improved emergency medical services in the region. Currently, he maintains a private financial practice. Dr. Benold is passionate about teaching and enjoys sharing his knowledge and experience with his students, fostering a dynamic and engaging learning environment.

November 5: TBA

Wednesdays, 2:15 – 3:15, The Oscar at Georgetown – Theater, Fascinating Potpourri II with Various Presenters

October 1: The Hidden History of the Texas Dust Bowl – Jann Alexander

The commonly known Dust Bowl history often focuses on the Okies who went to California, thanks to Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath*. However, the hidden history of the double whammy that hit the Texas Panhandle, with raging dust storms and the Great Depression making millions destitute, is less told. In research uncovered while writing the historical novel *Unspoken*, the story of those who stayed or coped was found to be less known and more compelling. The novel spans Texas from the Panhandle to Wichita Falls to Waco, presenting the impacts on families driven apart by disaster. Books will be available for purchase, if allowed.

Jann Alexander is the author of the historical novel *Unspoken*, set in the Texas Panhandle during the Dust Bowl and Great Depression eras, and the first book in The Dust Series. Jann writes on all things creative in the blog *Pairings*. A 20-year resident of central Texas, Jann is also the creator of the *Vanishing Austin* photography series. Jann's lifelong storytelling habit and zeal for Texas history merged to become the historical Dust Series. Jann always brakes for historical markers. <https://www.jannalexander.com/>

October 8: TBA

October 15: Jolly Tales of the History of Christmas – Dr. Jeffrey Mahan

Christmas began in the 3rd century as a minor Christian holiday. It rolled across Europe like a snowball, picking up yule logs and Christmas trees, paused in Queen Victoria's England to become a celebration of family with commercial trappings, and arrives in your stocking as a messy collection of hopes and desires. Jeffrey Mahan unwraps the holiday and invites participants to try it on.

Jeffrey H. Mahan writes and speaks about religion, media, and popular culture. He is the Peck Professor Emeritus of Religion and Communication at Iliff School of Theology in Denver, CO, and a fan of Christmas in all its complexities. His books include *Religion and Popular Culture in America* and *Media, Religion and Culture: An Introduction*.

October 22: Understanding a Virus Hiding in Plain Site (Flu) – Dr. David Niesel

Influenza is a major source of disease in the US, with yearly epidemics resulting in over 36,000 deaths and more than 200,000 hospitalizations. Effective vaccines are available to protect vulnerable populations, including children, people over 65 years old, and those with underlying medical conditions. There is a

reasonable chance that the next pandemic could involve the flu virus. While some dispute the use of vaccines, they remain the most effective medical intervention known to prevent disease. A Q&A session will be offered.

David W. Niesel, Ph.D., joined the UTMB faculty in the Department of Microbiology and Immunology in 1983. He was appointed chairman in 2000. Dr. Niesel received his Ph.D. in 1980 from North Carolina State University. In 1997, he was named Vice Dean for the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, becoming Dean in 2013 and the UTMB Chief Research Officer in 2015. He retired in 2021 and remains an Adjunct Professor. Dr. Niesel lives in Georgetown, TX.

October 29: TBA

November 5: TBA

Thursdays, 9:00 – 10:00, The Oscar at Georgetown – Theater, Translating the Bible in the Jungle, Ron Snell, (In-Person/On-Demand)

It's an ambitious goal, and it took my parents 25 years to translate the New Testament for the Matsigenkas. How were tribes contacted? How was it possible to learn their languages from scratch and design orthographies for them? How did they translate a completely foreign culture into Matsigenka culture? What did it mean to become a part of their "family." What was the response? What are the hard questions?

Ron Snell was born and raised in the Amazon jungle where his parents translated the New Testament into the Matsigenka language. With degrees in anthropology and linguistics, he served with Wycliffe Bible Translators in various countries and capacities for 25 years.

Thursdays, 9:00 – 10:00, The Oscar at Georgetown – Upstairs Room, Genealogy including DNA and AI, Alan Rabe, (In-Person/On-Demand)

We will start at the novice level of doing genealogy and increase the complexity, showing how to find and document your ancestors. Personal recommendations will be given based on your own genealogy. We will end with talking about DNA and using Artificial Intelligence. If you wish to take a DNA test, Ancestry or MyHeritage are good choices. They cost around \$33 to \$49 on sale. It may take about 8 weeks to get results, so do so before the class starts.

Alan Rabe started doing genealogy 55 years ago and has the Rabe line back to 1638 in Germany. He is past president of the Williamson County Genealogical Society and teaches their monthly DNA Special Interest Group. He is also Director of the FamilySearch Center in Georgetown. He is familiar with all genealogy websites and DNA companies.

Thursdays, 10:30 – 12:00 (90 minutes), The Oscar at Georgetown – Theater, Geological Feast: A Sampler, Dr. Dave Weinberg, (In-Person Only)

This great planet we think of as "terra firma" is anything but. It is in constant flux due to geological forces we scarcely understand until they surprise us. This course will address various geology topics including plate tectonics, earthquakes, volcanoes, rare earth minerals, subsidence, methane hydrates, and fossils to give a broader understanding of our earthly home.

Dave Weinberg earned his PhD in geology at Texas A&M University and has worked for several major oil companies. In 1995, he did research on various petroleum industry-related projects at DOE's Idaho National Laboratory. Starting in 2002, Dave spent 14 years in the Department of Homeland Security consulting on issues of energy and infrastructure security. He has taught adult education classes since 2009.

Thursdays, 10:30 – 11:30, The Oscar at Georgetown – Upstairs Room, American Sign Language, David Haus, (In-Person Only)

This course will literally be a hands-on experience. We will briefly learn about the history of American Sign Language. We will then begin learning how to communicate with Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals or with young grandchildren who are learning sign language (you want water or milk, more?). For spouses losing their hearing, we can learn some signs that can help them communicate better. It is time to let your fingers do the talking!

David Haus graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point with a degree in Deaf Education. He went on to teach, coach, and serve as an administrator for over 33 years at the Missouri School for the Deaf. Today he lives in Sun City and has developed the ASL program for the International Learning Language Club. He has been teaching about ASL for the past five years. Classes taught include basic ASL, Intermediate ASL and Advanced ASL.

Thursdays, 1:00 – 2:30, The Oscar at Georgetown, Fascinating Potpourri III with Various Presenters

October 2: Current Scams Targeting Seniors – Tom Adkins (90 Minutes)

This presentation will describe common scams that have cost seniors in Georgetown thousands of dollars. Learn how to recognize and avoid these scams and discover ways to reduce your own scam risks.

Tom has served as Chair of the Sun City Texas Anti-Fraud Group for the last 3-4 years. The group's mission is to educate residents and show them how to reduce their risk of losing money to scammers. Tom has conducted several dozen scam presentations and published 60-70 short articles about scams.

October 9: Entrepreneurship and Wealth in America Part I – Dr. Craig West (90 Minutes)

From 1870 to 1910, the U.S. experienced tremendous economic growth, becoming the world's dominant economic power. This period saw the rise of wealthy Americans like Vanderbilt, Morgan, and Carnegie. This two-session course explores the relationships between their wealth, the expansion of the American economy, and the impact on society. We will examine how these "Robber Barons" or "The Vital Few" influenced economic growth and society and what lessons can be drawn from the experience.

Craig holds a Ph.D. in economics from Northwestern University. He has taught economics at The University of Maryland and Drake University. With 25 years of experience at the Federal Reserve Banks of Kansas City and Chicago, Craig has also worked as a consultant for the IMF and taught classes in bank supervision to numerous foreign central banks.

October 16: Entrepreneurship and Wealth in America Part II – Dr. Craig West (90 Minutes)

From 1870 to 1910, the U.S. experienced tremendous economic growth, becoming the world's dominant economic power. This period saw the rise of wealthy Americans like Vanderbilt, Morgan, and Carnegie. This two-session course explores the relationships between their wealth, the expansion of the American economy, and the impact on society. We will examine how these "Robber Barons" or "The Vital Few" influenced economic growth and society and what lessons can be drawn from the experience.

Craig holds a Ph.D. in economics from Northwestern University. He has taught economics at The University of Maryland and Drake University. With 25 years of experience at the Federal Reserve Banks of Kansas City and Chicago, Craig has also worked as a consultant for the IMF and taught classes in bank supervision to numerous foreign central banks.

October 23: Somalia: Black Hawk Down – Edward Johns (90 Minutes)

The results of ungoverned territory are exemplified by Operation Restore Hope, the US humanitarian intervention into the Somalia conflict. This presentation will cover the background and lead-up to the conflict, the US/UN love-hate peacekeeping partnership, the coalition intervention, what went wrong and what went

right, and the aftermath. We will explore the progression from simple "crimes at sea" to the development of the piracy crisis in the Horn of Africa and the ultimate ties to global terrorism.

Edward Johns has extensive experience in maritime and military operations. As a Merchant Marine, he served as a Vessel Master, Pilot, Docking Master, and Port Captain. In the US Army, he held roles as Vessel Master/Pilot (Master Mariner) and Harbor Master in Dammam, Saudi Arabia during Desert Storm (the First Gulf War), as well as Harbormaster of Mogadishu during Operation Restore Hope. His work with the United Nations included positions as Seaport Manager in Mogadishu, Program Manager for the Somali Seaport Rehabilitation, and involvement in the Coastal Protection Project in the Horn of Africa. Additionally, he has worked as a contractor for the Department of Defense and the US State Department, focusing on Security Sector Reform and Counterterrorism.

October 30: Understanding Municipal Bonds – Bill McMillan (90 Minutes)

Municipal Bonds 101 (City of Georgetown) and Municipal Bonds 102 (Georgetown Independent School District) are two presentations that explain how municipalities fund major projects and how these bonds impact the general community and senior citizens. The majority of the information in these presentations comes directly from the Texas Comptroller's website, annual reports from the municipalities, and municipal press releases.

Bill McMillan was born and raised in Memphis, Tennessee. He graduated from the University of Memphis with a degree in civil engineering. Bill retired from Saudi Aramco in Saudi Arabia as a project engineer and business manager. He served as the business manager on major BP projects, including the Marlin project (\$500 million) and the Holstein project (\$1.2 billion) in the Gulf of Mexico. Now retired and living in Sun City, Bill became interested in municipal bonds after observing discrepancies between municipal statements and actions.

November 6: How our Eyes Work and How to Protect Them – Dr. Jake Reynolds (60 Minutes)

Ever wonder how your eyes turn light into vision? This lecture dives into the fascinating anatomy and physiology of the visual system, revealing how the eye works with the brain to create vision. We'll explore common eye conditions like cataracts, glaucoma, macular degeneration, and diabetic retinopathy—how they develop, what they do to your sight, and the latest treatments to manage or prevent them. Whether you're curious about the science of eyesight or eager to protect your vision, this session will leave you seeing the eye in a whole new way.

Dr. Reynolds is a board-certified ophthalmologist and cataract/refractive eye surgeon, born and raised in Austin. He attended Anderson High School, where he graduated as valedictorian, and went on to obtain his bachelor's degree from Trinity University in San Antonio, where he competed as a collegiate swimmer. Dr. Reynolds completed medical school at McGovern Medical School in Houston and received his ophthalmology training at Texas Tech Health Sciences Center, where he served as chief resident.

Locations:

Sun City Texas Ballroom
2 Texas Drive
Georgetown, TX 78633

First Baptist Church of Georgetown
1333 W. University Ave.
Georgetown, TX 78628

The Georgetown Public Library
Hewlett Room
402 West 8th Street
Georgetown, TX 78626

The Oscar at Georgetown
3810 Williams Drive
Georgetown, TX 78628