

ARTS, CULTURE & HUMANITIES



THIS ENGLAND—THE LAND WITHOUT MUSIC

Jonathan Palevsky



CLARINETISTS OF THE SWING ERA

Seth Kibel

Sessions I and II

Tuesdays, 9:30 a.m. (begins March 4)

Fee: \$140 (\$70 for each session)

Centuries ago, Germans referred to England as “*das land ohne music*,” the country without music. This was because England failed to produce a homegrown composer of note from the death of Henry Purcell until the emergence of Sir Edward Egar—a period of 205 years. Nevertheless, during these years England imported some of the best musicians like Handel, Haydn and Mendelssohn who were happy to make ‘this sceptered isle’ their adopted home. Finally, in the 20th century a rebirth of English concert music occurred. Explore the English musical muse from the Renaissance to the 20th century.

Jonathan Palevsky, B.M., M.M., is program director for WBJC. His undergraduate studies focused on musicology and his graduate work at Baltimore’s Peabody Institute focused on instrumental training in classical guitar performance. Jonathan can be heard as host of Face the Music, Past Masters, WBJC Opera Fest and regular afternoon classical programming on WBJC. He also hosts Cinema Sundays at the Charles Theater. Jonathan has been a regular of the Osher faculty since the former Auburn Society’s first semester in spring 1999.

Session II

Wednesdays, 9:30 a.m. (begins April 9)

Fee: \$70

Once upon a time, the clarinet occupied a central role in jazz music, especially during that brief period known as the “Swing Era,” roughly late 1935 until the end of World War II, when jazz and popular music were one and the same. We will explore the lives, careers, and personalities of such notable clarinetists as Benny Goodman, Artie Shaw, Woody Herman, and their lasting impact on jazz history. In doing so, we will examine a multitude of issues in the history of American music during the 20th century. Recordings, videos, and live performances from the instructor will keep this class as lively and engaging as the music itself.

Seth Kibel is one of the Mid-Atlantic’s premier woodwind specialists, working with some of the best bands in klezmer, jazz, swing, and more. Wowing audiences on clarinet, flute, and saxophone, Seth has made a name for himself in the Baltimore-Washington region, and beyond. He is the featured performer with The Klezmet, Bay Jazz Project, Music Pilgrim Trio, The Natty Beaux, and more. Winner of 28 Washington Area Music Awards (Wammies), including “Best World Music Instrumentalist” and “Best Jazz Instrumentalist.”

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ONLINE COURSE**THE AMAZING SOUND AND LEGACY OF THE BRILL BUILDING**

Emanuel Abramovits

Session I**Mondays, 2:30 p.m. (begins March 3)****Fee: \$70**

Located on a stretch of Broadway in midtown Manhattan, the Brill Building became an epicenter for music producers and songwriters in the mid-20th century. In this course, students will learn about the cosmopolitan musical textures that defined the best songs of an unforgettable period, when gifted young songwriters huddled in midtown Manhattan, creating enduring entries in the Great American Songbook. Stories, anecdotes, and audiovisuals will illustrate this golden era of the 1950s and 1960s that integrated audiences, produced eclectic multicultural sounds, and brought social consciousness to pop music. Learn about Neil Sedaka, Carole King, Neil Diamond, Phil Spector, Don Kirshner, Burt Bacharach, and many more denizens of music's iconic Brill Building.

Emanuel Abramovits is a mechanical engineer with an MBA and has been a concert promoter since 2000, directly involved in many events by international artists. He designed and staged many original orchestral events, including an "Event of the Year" winner and several world premieres. He served as the cultural director at Union Israelita de Caracas from 2008 to 2019, releasing books, organizing film cycles, concerts, and art exhibits. He has been consistently teaching online and in presence across the U.S. since 2020.

ONLINE COURSE**THE ART OF PAUL GAUGUIN**

Joseph Cassar

Sessions I and II**Mondays, 11:15 a.m. (begins March 3)****Fee: \$140 (\$70 for each session)*****NOTE:** This course will not be recorded

This course focuses on the art of one of the most complex and important Post-Impressionist artists, Paul Gauguin. We will learn about his early days in Peru, his life with the French merchant navy and his steady job experience as a stockbroker. We will explore how Gauguin embarked on his vocation as an artist and the sacrifices made along the way, including abandoning his family to paint in Tahiti. Through image-rich presentations, see the work of Gauguin as ceramic artist, painter, sculptor, printer, and writer.

Joseph Cassar, Ph.D., is an artist, art historian, curator, and educator. He studied at the Accademia di Belle Arti, Pietro Vannucci, Perugia, Italy, the School of Art in Malta (Europe) and at Charles Sturt University in NSW, Australia. He is the author of several books and monographs on the pioneers of modern art of the Mediterranean island of Malta, two of which have been awarded best prize for research in the Book Festival, Europe. He served as a free-lance art critic for "The Daily News" (1978-1981) and "The Times of Malta" (1997-2000). He has lectured at various educational institutions in Europe and the United States. He lectures at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., The Renaissance Institute, Notre Dame University, Towson University, York College of Pennsylvania, Johns Hopkins University, and Community College of Baltimore County among others. He currently designs online art courses for the New York Times Knowledge Network and for the University of Maryland University College. As an artist he has had two residencies: at Luther College, Decorah Iowa (2002) and at the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts (2003). He was curator for the international Art Center: St James Cavalier Center for Creativity (1999-2003). Cassar exhibits his work regularly in the Baltimore-Washington area.

ONLINE COURSE**SURREALISM: ONE HUNDRED YEARS**

Michael Salcman

Session I**Mondays, 9:30 a.m. (begins March 3)****Fee: \$70**

The art movement known as Surrealism celebrated its one hundredth birthday in 2024. In this course, we will explore the precursors to Surrealism along with the important artists of this movement including Ernst, Miro, Magritte, and Dali, among others. Unlike most art movements, Surrealism still influences the contemporary art world. The appearance of Andre Breton's Surrealist Manifesto in 1924 was preceded by the Symbolist movement in the late 19th century, the metaphysical paintings of de Chirico, and the literary contributions of Isidore Ducasse, Freud, Marx, and Nietzsche, as well as the Dada movement. Surrealism was an international movement from the start and influential artists helped carry the movement past the Second World War. Major figures like Picasso, Arp, and Giacometti dipped their toes in Surrealism. Movements like Pop Art and contemporary artists such as Sarah Lucas, Subodh Gupta, Julie Curtiss, Glenn Brown, and Inka Essenhigh have kept aspects of Surrealism alive.

Michael Salcman, former chairman of neurosurgery at the University of Maryland, and widely published poet, art critic, and collector, has spent 40 years giving lectures about modern and contemporary art history at medical schools, Towson University, the National Academy of Sciences, and the Maryland Institute College of Art. He has written many cover essays for journals and many ekphrastic poems about art and artists for prize-winning books like *The Clock Made of Confetti*, *Shades & Graces*, *A Prague Spring*, *Necessary Speech: New & Selected Poems*, and *Crossing the Tape* (2024).

**CENTERS OF GLASS ART EXCELLENCE: MURANO, PRAGUE, AND SEATTLE**

Howard Cohen

Session II**Thursdays, 1:00 p.m. (begins April 10)****Fee: \$70**

Since the mid-1950s, three cities have become prominent in the history of glass art—Murano, Prague, and Seattle. Discover the pioneering artists and institutions associated with each of these cities and their contributions to glass art. For centuries, the small island of Murano, off the coast of Venice, had the largest concentration of glass artists and artisans from the Renaissance until the 21st century. By the middle of the 20th century, however, the finest glass artists in the world were from Czechoslovakia, where Prague has historically been at the center of Czech glass art. Another center for glass art emerged in Seattle, the home of artist Dale Chihuly and the Pilchuck Glass School that Chihuly started in 1971. Although Pilchuck began rather modestly, by 1979, artists from around the world came there to teach and collaborate with their peers. This course will illuminate the contributions that Murano, Prague, and Seattle have made to glass art.

Howard Cohen has taught courses on glass art for Osher at Towson University, Johns Hopkins University Osher, CCBC, and other lifelong learning programs. He has led trips to glass artists' studios, the National Liberty Museum in Philadelphia, and the Corning Museum of Glass. He has also interviewed many artists. He is on the Board of the Art Alliance for Contemporary Glass and is the co-chair of its Education Committee. In 2022 and 2024, Howard curated exhibitions of glass art. Apart from his interests in glass art, Howard is a fellow of the Casualty Actuarial Society and has B.A. and M.A. degrees in mathematics from Johns Hopkins University.



EIGHT PLAYS EVERYONE SHOULD KNOW, SPRING 2025 EDITION

Greg Jones

Sessions I and II

Wednesdays, 1:00 p.m. (begins March 5)

Fee: \$140 (\$70 for each session)

The latest installment of this long-running course will take an in-depth look at a major dramatic work each week. A mix of live performances, video clips, lecture, and lively discussion highlights the course. No previous enrollment in the course is necessary and students are given an advance list of the play scripts and online performances to sample if they wish, but pre-class preparation is not required. This semester will feature the following plays: Edward Albee's "Three Tall Women" and "A Delicate Balance," Mart Crowley's "The Boys in the Band," William Inge's "The Dark at the Top of the Stairs," Anton Chekhov's "Uncle Vanya," Ossie Davis's "Purlie Victorious," Moliere's "The Miser" and J.M. Synge's "Riders to the Sea."

Greg Jones is an actor, playwright, and teacher. He has appeared in more than 60 productions throughout the country and his plays have won awards and received readings and productions in New York City at the Kennedy Center, and resident theater companies in Washington and Virginia. He has a Bachelor of Arts degree in drama from Catholic University and an M.A. in English literature from Salisbury University. For nearly 20 years, he was an adjunct professor of English and film at colleges in Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia.

ONLINE COURSE



A BUMPY SPRING WITH BETTE DAVIS

Arnold Blumberg

Session I

Fridays, 1:00 p.m. (begins March 7)

Fee: \$70

Bette Davis remains one of the towering icons of Hollywood, with powerful performances spanning decades and a multitude of genres. Romantic dramas "Dangerous" (1935) and "Jezebel" (1938) earned Davis her only two Academy Award wins, while "Dark Victory" (1939) featured what she later called her favorite role of her career—a carefree socialite who faces her own mortality with horrific immediacy. Further triumphs in films like "Now, Voyager" (1942) and "All About Eve" (1950) helped to define her as a dramatic presence with no equal, and later roles in movies like "Whatever Happened to Baby Jane?" (1962) and "Burnt Offerings" (1976) gave Davis the chance to explore her darker side. From romance to wry comedy to horror, Davis was a star every time.

Arnold T. Blumberg is a pop culture historian and professor of multiple courses in media literacy and other cultural topics. He has taught at UMBC, the University of Baltimore, CCBC, and Osher at Towson University. He spent 15 years in the comic book industry as writer and editor of "The Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide," curated a pop culture museum for five years, and currently runs his own publishing company, ATB Publishing.

ONLINE COURSE**JOAN CRAWFORD: A TARNISHED STAR SHINES THROUGH**

Arnold Blumberg

Session II**Fridays, 1:00 p.m. (begins April 11)****Fee: \$70**

Born Lucille Fay LeSueur, Joan Crawford began her career as a dancer and “flapper.” Her star-making appearances in Depression-era rags-to-riches tales would already have cemented her place in cinema history, but a comeback in the 1940s also led to an Academy Award win. Her later years and more sporadic film and television appearances were marred by revelations about her private life and an alleged feud with Bette Davis. Decades of caricature-like depictions of the woman that once captivated movie audiences with her drive and determination may have turned Crawford into a cartoon for some, but when revisiting her cinematic triumphs, there’s no denying the star power on screen in every frame of films like “Grand Hotel” (1932), “The Women” (1939), and “Mildred Pierce” (1945), as well as in the TV-movie pilot for the series, “Night Gallery” (1969).

Arnold T. Blumberg is a pop culture historian and professor of multiple courses in media literacy and other cultural topics. He has taught at UMBC, the University of Baltimore, CCBC, and Osher at Towson University. He spent 15 years in the comic book industry as writer and editor of “The Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide,” curated a pop culture museum for five years, and currently runs his own publishing company, ATB Publishing.

ONLINE COURSE**MOVIE MAGIC AND MONSTERS: The Cinematic Wizardry of Ray Harryhausen**

Arnold Blumberg

Session II**Mondays, 1:00 p.m. (begins April 7)****Fee: \$70**

Inspired by seeing “King Kong” in 1933 with best friend and future science fiction author Ray Bradbury, Ray Harryhausen would one day find himself working alongside Kong’s creator, Willis O’Brien, in 1949’s “Mighty Joe Young.” Learning from a master, Harryhausen would himself become one of the most accomplished stop-motion animators in the history of cinema, leaving behind a legacy of magical movies filled with extraordinary creatures, amazing adventures, and some of the most memorable moments emblazoned into the hearts and minds of generations of fantasy filmgoers. Often working alone, painstakingly moving models fractions of an inch and capturing just seconds of film at a time, Harryhausen transformed rubber and metal into living icons of pop culture, from the giant monster and alien invasions of the 1950s to the sorcerous exploits of Sinbad the Sailor and the beasts of classical mythology.



FOUR CLASSIC BILLY WILDER FILMS

William Florman

Session I

Thursdays, 1:00–4:00 p.m. (begins March 6)

Fee: \$70

Born in Austria and emigrating to the United States in the early 1920s, Billy Wilder became the quintessential American filmmaker. Both as a writer and director, he mastered a variety of genres from film noir to comedy. We will examine four of his greatest films: “Double Indemnity,” “Sunset Boulevard,” “Some Like it Hot,” and “The Apartment.” We will view the films during class and discuss breakthroughs that each film represents, as well as the influence each has had on later films.

William Florman, M.A., J.D., has taught courses in literature and writing at Boston College, Salem State College, and American University. Later, upon graduation from Georgetown Law School, he practiced labor law in Washington, D.C. and then engaged in various entrepreneurial ventures. For the last eight years, Mr. Florman has enjoyed his return to his first love, which is teaching.

ONLINE COURSE



LADY LAZARUS: THE LIFE AND WORK OF SYLVIA PLATH

Robert Jacobs

Sessions I and II

Fridays, 11:00 a.m. (begins March 7)

Fee: \$140 (\$70 for each session)

Sylvia Plath is widely considered to be one of the greatest American poets and writers of the 20th century. A brilliant and ambitious student, Plath won a Fulbright Scholarship to study at Cambridge University, where she began a star-crossed relationship with the poet Ted Hughes. Plath’s dazzling poetry and tragic suicide sealed her fate as a legendary figure in American letters. In this course we will read and discuss Plath’s novel, “The Bell Jar,” as well as several of the most important poems from her posthumous collection, “Ariel.” We will also learn about Plath’s life and her troubled marriage to British poet Ted Hughes.

Robert Jacobs is a Towson University graduate with a B.A. in English. He traveled to the United Kingdom where he attained an M.A. in comparative literature from the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. He spent several years in London working as a freelance writer and has contributed to a variety of publications such as “Time Out London,” The Baltimore Sun’s Metromix, and “The Examiner.” He is an adjunct instructor at Community College of Baltimore County, Johns Hopkins University, and Montgomery College.



SURVEY OF THE BIBLE

Father Robert Albright



DESCARTES' DILEMMA

Ed Fotheringill

Sessions I and II

Wednesdays, 2:30 p.m. (begins March 5)

Fee: \$140 (\$70 for each session)

The first half of this course will cover the Old Testament of the Bible or Before the Common Era (BCE): The Torah, the Prophets, and the Writings or Wisdom Books. The second half of the course will cover the New Testament of the Bible or the Common Era (CE): The story, letters, and person of St. Paul, the Synoptic Gospels, the Johannine Tradition and other New Testament works. We will examine each of the segments of the Bible from a scholarly point of view.

Rev. Robert E. Albright is a retired Catholic priest of the Archdiocese of Baltimore. He served as the Catholic Campus Minister at Towson University for the 26 years before his retirement in July 2006. Through teaching a scholarly approach to the Bible over the past 50 years, Father Bob has explored greater interfaith issues at the Institute for Islamic, Christian, and Jewish Studies of Baltimore. He has studied twice in Israel at the International Center for Holocaust Studies and has been to Israel over 18 times leading study tours and retreats and doing private research in Biblical sites and studying the Palestinian/Israeli situation. Father Bob is engaged in numerous Catholic/Jewish endeavors including a funded program to educate Jewish and Catholic high school students in each other's tradition.

Session I

Wednesdays, 9:30 a.m. (begins March 5)

Fee: \$70

The 17th century French philosopher Rene Descartes is considered the father of modern philosophy, for good reason. He sought to devise a method of philosophical investigation that would guarantee the apprehension of truth with absolute certainty. This dilemma was compounded when Descartes felt pressured by the Catholic Church to invoke God into his philosophical equation. We will trace the development of Descartes' dilemma and consider the intellectual fallout in the thought of Blaise Pascal, Edmund Husserl, and Ludwig Wittgenstein.

Edward Fotheringill has been teaching philosophy at the college level for 45 years. For many years, he held the position of senior lecturer of philosophy at Towson University and Goucher College, and for the last ten years of his career was adjunct professor of philosophy and intellectual history at the Maryland Institute College of Art.



GREEK GODDESSES

Ellen O'Brien

Session II

Thursdays, 11:00 a.m. (begins April 10)

Fee: \$70

Generations came and went before the ancient Greeks had writers to record the stories of their immortal goddesses. But nothing we have learned about these women is alien to us. The ancient Greeks created their gods and goddesses in image of themselves complete with reasoning and emotions. The goddesses represented all facets of our lives: love and laughter, life and loss, and sorrow and jealousy. Learn the stories of Athena, who is a fierce and ruthless battle-goddess; Hecate, goddess of the dark side of the moon; and Bia, goddess of power and might as well as the mortal women in Greek mythology such as Pandora, Medea, Helen of Troy, and Medusa.

Ellen O'Brien holds a B.A. from St. Catherine's University in St. Paul, Minnesota, an M.L.A. from Johns Hopkins University, a J.D. from the University of Maryland School of Law, and an M.A. from St. Mary's University and Seminary, Ecumenical Institute. She practiced law for thirty years while also continuing her theological studies. Ellen has taught several courses for Osher at Towson University.