

ONLINE COURSE



FIGHTING SLAVERY IN EARLY AMERICA

Richard Bell

Sessions I and II, 6-week Course

Fridays, 9:30 a.m. (March 7–April 18)

No class on March 21

Fee: \$70

How do you slay a many-headed monster? How do you destroy an entrenched special interest that profits from treating people like property? In the decades between 1619, when the first enslaved Africans arrived, and 1787, when delegates in Philadelphia drafted the new Constitution, men and women who were committed to opposing the spread of slavery in North America grappled with difficult questions. This six-week course offers you the opportunity to meet a large and often unfamiliar cast of characters—both Black and white, enslaved and free—who developed a range of tools and tactics, means and methods to escape slavery or try to resist it.

Richard Bell is professor of history at the University of Maryland and author of the book “Stolen: Five Free Boys Kidnapped into Slavery and their Astonishing Odyssey Home” which was a finalist for the George Washington Prize and the Harriet Tubman Prize. He has held major research fellowships at Yale, Cambridge, and the Library of Congress and received the National Endowment of the Humanities Public Scholar award and the 2021 Andrew Carnegie Fellowship. He serves as a trustee of the Maryland Center for History and Culture and as a fellow of the Royal Historical Society.



HEROES OF NONVIOLENCE

Bob Baer

Sessions I and II

Tuesdays, 11:00 a.m. (begins March 4)

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

Throughout history, people have sacrificed their freedom to nonviolently protest against laws they felt were unjust. This class will explore the lives of individuals who practiced civil disobedience to challenge such issues as civil rights, voting restrictions, economic exploitation, militarism, environmental degradation, and self-determination. Activists profiled will include Martin Luther King, Jr., Mahatma Gandhi, Susan B. Anthony, Cesar Chavez, Henry David Thoreau, Nelson Mandela, Alice Paul, Daniel Berrigan, Greta Thunberg, and others who sought peaceful means to promote societal change.

Bob Baer is a college administrator with over forty years of experience in higher education. He has bachelor’s and master’s degrees in history, and a doctorate in higher education. Bob is a history instructor at Community College of Baltimore County, Johns Hopkins University, and Towson University Osher programs, York College–CUNY and Norwalk Community College.



BALTIMORE LABOR HISTORY

Bill Barry



BALTIMORE SCANDALS

Jennifer Liles

Sessions I and II

Wednesdays, 11:00 a.m. (begins March 5)

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

The Baltimore area has a long and exciting labor history, with a diversity of industries—including slavery—and organizations. This course will present the diverse periods of this history, starting with colonial Baltimore and continuing through to this year. Each class will include a discussion of current events and their historical background. We will evaluate the different areas and the culture, with some guest speakers on special topics. Students will also be able to participate in the new MD250 Labor History Project, a statewide program for 2026.

Bill Barry is the retired director of labor studies, at CCBC-Dundalk, with histories of the 1877 railroad strike and of the Sparrows Point steel mill. He is the head of the MD250 Labor History Project.

Session I

Thursdays, 11:00 a.m. (begins March 6)

Fee: \$70

Explore scandals that shocked Baltimore and the rest of the nation, but that are now largely forgotten. In this course, you will hear stories of love affairs, labor, interesting Baltimore characters, and more. From the notorious Baltimore Block to the outskirts of the city, come explore Baltimore's people and what makes Baltimore "Mobtown."

Jennifer Liles is a public historian with a degree in public history from Stevenson University. She researches and works on projects related to the history of Baltimore and its people as well as industry, places, and events that make Baltimore unique.

BIG THANKS

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BALTIMORE AND ITS RIVER

Jack Burkert



THE HISTORY OF AMERICAN WOMEN'S FASHIONS: From Underwear to Outerwear

Barbara Blumberg Ressin

Session II

Tuesdays, 1:00 p.m. (begins April 8)

Fee: \$70

The story of Baltimore was written first on its waterfront. A port city, commercial center, shipbuilding hub, reliant from its earliest years on the Patapsco River for its settlement and sustainability. This is the story of those critical parts of the city's history. We begin with the history of the river, from its source to the tidal estuary that comprises its harbor. We will discuss the essentials of the Patapsco's commercial and industrial history. Hear the story of the port, from the earliest days to the vital pieces that make it prosperous today. Learn about the gateway to Baltimore, the C&D Canal, an important link to the north and east that opened a critical "back door" to the harbor. The story of Baltimore and its river is not complete without a history of shipbuilding on the Patapsco, three hundred years of men, material, and creativity.

Jack Burkert is a Baltimore native and a 1969 graduate of the University of Maryland, graduating with honors with a degree in history and education. His working life, some 40+ years, was spent in various educator roles, beginning in the Baltimore City Public School System, then as a staff member at the Pennsylvania State University, through private employers and then until his retirement in his own consulting firm.

Session II

Tuesdays, 2:30 p.m. (begins April 8)

Fee: \$70

This course traces the history of the fashions that women wore through the centuries, starting with the Puritans. As the title suggests, we will explore all manner of clothing and learn what outside forces influenced the fashions of the day. How did a government decision during WWI affect the corset industry? What style blouse led to fire regulations? From just the Victorian era to the Edwardian period, and the flapper era, women's clothing ran the gamut of fashion. At what point did women take charge of what they put on their bodies? Explore the oft-times funny, amazing, and daunting journey of American women's fashions.

Barbara Blumberg Ressin is a graduate of Towson University with a B.S. in education. She taught for three years in the Baltimore City Public School System, 25 years at the Beth Tfiloh Day School in the secular division, and as adjunct faculty member of Community College of Baltimore County at both the Owings Mills and Hunt Valley campuses, adjunct faculty member of Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Towson University, adjunct faculty member of the Renaissance Academy for the Florida Gulf State University, member of Oasis faculty in Montgomery County under auspices of Johns Hopkins University, taught at Food For Thought Lectures, Kaleidoscope at Roland Park School, lectured for The Lecture Group, Western Howard County Senior Center, Friends of the Pikesville Library, North Oaks Retirement Community and various religious and philanthropic groups around the state.



HOW FOOD AND CULTURE CREATE SOCIETY

Meg Algren



WHY ARE WE MISSING THE DISINFORMATION SOLUTION?

Joyce Garczynski

Session I

Thursdays, 9:30 a.m. (begins March 6)

Fee: \$70

This course will examine the impacts of food on lifestyle, health, attitudes, and status in the United States. From mid-18th century France onward, the food industry has helped bring about major upheavals in society around the world. It continues to help shape how Americans behave, think, and interact. We'll examine some uniquely American food rituals, traditions, and myths in what is both a serious and whimsical look at the intersection of food and culture. This is not a course on nutrition but instead focuses on the evolution of the food industry and American's attitudes toward food. We will examine how the automobile and food forever changed the face of America. We will see how food is impacted by economic booms and busts, farming disasters and comebacks, and times of conflict. Post-war booms in industry, housing, lifestyle, fashion, and birthrates coincided with the introduction of fast food into a fast-changing society. This course will provide an examination of some of the myths, traditions, and rituals that make eating in America such an experience.

Meg Algren holds a Ph.D. in communication. She is professor emerita at Towson University where she taught public relations and advertising for 15 years in the Department of Mass Communication. She has taught several Osher courses including "How Does Your Garden Grow?" and "Investigating Happiness." Meg loves to cook and garden so it is natural that she loves to explore these topics from a variety of angles.

Session II

Thursdays, 9:30 a.m. (begins April 10)

Fee: \$70

Since fake news reemerged into the American lexicon in 2016, the U.S. has been grappling with how to reduce the spread of mis- and disinformation across the country. We've explored technological, political, journalistic, and educational solutions, but the problem just seems to be getting more and more difficult to solve. So where do we go from here? In this discussion-based course, communication librarian Joyce Garczynski will dive into how technology companies, politicians, journalists, and educators have attempted to address the mis- and disinformation problem. Then attendees will discuss why these efforts seem to fall short and what should be done next to help everyone better separate fact from fiction.

Joyce Garczynski is the assistant university librarian for communication and digital scholarship at Towson University's Albert S. Cook Library. In this role she manages the Communication, Outreach, & Digital Scholarship department, teaches communication students about the research process, and manages her library's marketing. She obtained her master's degree in library science from the University of Maryland, College Park and has a master's in communication from the Annenberg School at the University of Pennsylvania. She also received the 2019 Distinguished Education and Behavioral Sciences Librarian Award from the Association of College and Research Libraries for her excellence in teaching and service to the profession.