



SPRING 2026 CATALOG

CALENDAR

- JAN. 14** Online and Phone Registration Opens 9:30 am
- FEB. 3** Welcome Event
- FEB. 6** Program Begins

Visit cpe.vt.edu/lifelonglearning for details and updates

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Welcome to LLI of Virginia Tech

This spring, LLI presents our biggest program yet! With over 90 courses, webinars, field trips, and special events, LLI truly has a program for everyone.

Your membership in LLI allows you to register for programs that match your interests. With your membership, you will also be able to attend selected lectures and special events free of charge, along with member social and pop-up events.

We invite you to join our community, now with over 450 members!



THE LIFELONG LEARNING INSTITUTE OF VIRGINIA TECH

The Lifelong Learning Institute of Virginia Tech (LLI) is a member-driven, volunteer organization that draws on the wealth of academic and community resources in the New River Valley and beyond to provide intellectual, cultural, and social experiences for curious adults 50 and older. LLI is an official program of Virginia Tech Continuing and Professional Education (CPE).

CONTACT INFORMATION

CPE Registration: 540-231-5182

🖱 www.cpe.vt.edu/lifelonglearning

✉ lifelonglearning@vt.edu

📘 facebook.com/vtlifelonglearning

REGISTRATION OPENS WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 14 AT 9:30AM

Register online by visiting the LLI Home page at www.cpe.vt.edu/lifelonglearning and clicking REGISTER.

This is the fastest way to register. We recommend registering online whenever possible.

Register by phone by calling **540-231-5182**.

Please note that there will be no walk-in or mail-in registration for spring.

Need step-by-step instructions for registering online?

Scan this QR code or visit cpe.vt.edu/lifelonglearning/membership/instructions.html.



SCAN TO REGISTER



SCAN FOR
INSTRUCTIONS

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All program information is subject to change without notice.

LLI Spring 2026

COURSES AT A GLANCE

See the LLI website and online catalog for full course and event descriptions:
www.cpe.vt.edu/lifelonglearning

Classes generally meet once a week on the same day; but note occasional gaps in date sequences, which may be necessary to accommodate instructor and classroom availability.

MONDAY

1. Local Authors Exploring History

Suzanne Reisinger
11:00am-12:15pm
5 weeks: 2/16, 2/23, 3/2, 3/9, 3/16
CRC, Concept Room

2. In Cold Blood (Or Was It?): Critiquing a True Crime Novel

Stephen Owen, Tod Burke
1:00pm-2:30pm
4 weeks: 2/16, 2/23, 3/2, 3/9
CRC, Concept Room

3. A Brief, Backwards History of the English Language: 2026-1558

Joseph F. Eska
3:30pm-5:15pm
4 weeks: 2/16, 2/23, 3/2, 3/9
CRC, Concept Room

7. Kurt Vonnegut's Controversial Masterpiece, *Slaughterhouse Five*

Phillip Harris
9:00am-10:30am
6 weeks: 3/16, 3/23, 3/30, 4/6, 4/13, 4/20
CRC, Concept Room

8. Publication Boot Camp! Transforming Your Idea into a Published Book

Mindy Quigley
1:00pm-2:30pm
2 weeks: 3/16, 3/23
CRC, Concept Room

14. Art Sampler

Ann Shawhan
2:00pm-4:00pm
4 weeks: 2/16, 2/23, 3/2, 3/9
Blacksburg Community Center

18. Exploring Oil Painting

Lois Stephens
9:00am-11:30am
6 weeks: 2/23, 3/2, 3/9, 3/16, 3/23, 3/30
Blacksburg Community Center

22. The Art, Science, and Mystery of Leonardo da Vinci

Michelle Moseley
9:00am-10:15am
5 weeks: 3/16, 3/23, 3/30, 4/6, 4/13
Warm Hearth Village Center, Tall Oaks Room

33. Sound Effects: The Surprising Impact of Acoustic Environments

Louise Billaud
3:00pm-4:15pm
3 weeks: 3/9, 3/16, 3/23
Zoom

35. The Rise of American Plutocracy: Leaders, Strategies, Consequences

Jim Bohland
11:00am-12:00pm
5 weeks: 3/23, 3/30, 4/6, 4/13, 4/20
CRC, Concept Room

39. Dialogues Across Disciplines: "What is the Good Life and How Do I Live It?"

Paul Quigley, Samantha Harden, Gil Hersch
11:00am-12:00pm
3 weeks: 5/4, 5/6, 5/8
Warm Hearth Village Center, Tall Oaks Room

40. Appreciating Grapes of the Rhone Valley

Randall Horst
3:00pm-4:30pm
6 weeks: 2/16, 2/23, 3/2, 3/9, 3/16, 3/23
Vintage Cellar

49. Smart Cycling Behavior

Robert Ferrari
9:00am-10:15am
3 weeks: 2/23, 3/2, 3/9
VT Bike Hub

50. Home Renovation for Aging in Place – Beyond the Bathroom

Chris Moore
3:00pm-4:30pm
6 weeks: 2/23, 3/2, 3/9, 3/16, 3/23, 3/30
CRC, Concept Room

54. Composing Your Retirement

Pamela Knox, Fred Piercy
1:00pm-2:30pm
4 weeks: 3/30, 4/6, 4/13, 4/20
CRC, Concept Room

58. Painting Barn Quilts

Joe Ivers
12:00pm-1:30pm
6 weeks: 2/23, 3/2, 3/9, 3/16, 3/23, 3/30
Blacksburg Community Center

62. Recent Engineering Disasters – Could They Have Been Avoided?

Tim Pratt, Shane McLaughlin
9:00am-10:30am
4 weeks: 2/16, 2/23, 3/2, 3/9
Warm Hearth Village Center, Tall Oaks Room

63. Wired for Thought: A Journey Through the Human Brain

Kylee Smith-Russell
9:00am-10:15am
3 weeks: 2/16, 2/23, 3/2
CRC, Concept Room

TUESDAY

9. The Novella: Forgotten Middle Child of Fiction

Paul Metz
9:00am-10:00am
5 weeks: 3/17, 3/24, 3/31, 4/7, 4/14
CRC, Garvin Room

10. Ivan Turgenev: A Russian Liberal

Christine Kiebuszinska
3:00pm-4:30pm
6 weeks: 3/17, 3/24, 3/31, 4/7, 4/14, 4/21
CRC, Curiosity Room

13. Read Local: Wendy Welch's *The Little Bookstore of Big Stone Gap*

Wendy Welch, Ellen Woodall
11:00am-12:00pm
3 weeks: 3/31, 4/14, 4/28
CRC, Curiosity Room

15. Drawing 101

Bonnie Moreno
1:00pm-2:30pm
6 weeks: 2/17, 2/24, 3/3, 3/10, 3/17, 3/24
CRC, Concept Room

20. Opera for Everyone: An Opera Roanoke Presentation

Rob Chafin
1:00pm-2:00pm
1 week: 3/3
Warm Hearth Village Center, Tall Oaks Room

23. Draw Your World: Artistic Techniques and Visual Perception

Joseph Cooley
6:00pm-8:00pm
6 weeks: 3/31, 4/7, 4/14, 4/21, 4/28, 5/5
Blacksburg Community Center

25. The Future of Urban and Rural Communities

Mark Tirpak
9:00am-10:00am
5 weeks: 2/17, 2/24, 3/3, 3/10, 3/17
Zoom

36. Sampler Speaker Series

Molly McClintock
9:00am-10:15am
5 weeks: 3/24, 3/31, 4/7, 4/14, 4/21
Zoom

42. Experience Yoga!

Stephanie Buffett
9:00am-10:30am
12 weeks: 2/17, 2/19, 2/24, 2/26, 3/3, 3/5, 3/10, 3/12, 3/17, 3/19, 3/24, 3/26
CRC, In Balance Yoga

43. Introduction to Mindfulness Meditation

Jamie McReynolds
11:00am-12:30pm
6 weeks: 2/17, 2/24, 3/3, 3/10, 3/17, 3/24
CRC, Garvin Room

44. How to Talk to a Medical Provider

Laurie Nair
3:00pm-5:00pm
1 week: 2/17
CRC, Curiosity Room

45. How to Talk to a Medical Provider

Laurie Nair
3:00pm-5:00pm
1 week: 3/10
CRC, Curiosity Room

51. Cantonese Mahjong

Gordon Yee
10:30am-12:00pm
6 weeks: 3/17, 3/24, 3/31, 4/7, 4/14, 4/21
Blacksburg Community Center

59. Create a Lavender Sachet

Paula Golden
1:00pm-2:15pm
2 weeks: 2/24, 3/3
CRC, Curiosity Room

60. Create a Nine-Patch Table Runner

Paula Golden
1:00pm-2:30pm
2 weeks: 3/10, 4/14
CRC, Curiosity Room

WEDNESDAY

4. *Moby-Dick: An Appreciation*

Jeff Saperstein
9:00am-10:30am
6 weeks: 2/25, 3/4, 3/11, 3/18, 3/25, 4/1
CRC, Garvin Room

5. *The Contemporary Latin American Short Story*

Jacqueline Bixler
1:00pm-2:30pm
6 weeks: 2/25, 3/4, 3/11, 3/18, 3/25, 4/1
CRC, Concept Room

16. *Early Twentieth Century Song Hunters and Collectors*

Linda MacCleave
1:00pm-2:30pm
4 weeks: 2/18, 2/25, 3/4, 3/11
Zoom

19. *Singing for Seniors*

Patrice Yearwood
11:00am-12:00pm
6 weeks: 2/25, 3/4, 3/11, 3/18, 3/25, 4/1
St. Michael's Lutheran Church

24. *Great Scores and Soundtracks from the Movies*

Seth Davis
11:00am-12:30pm
5 weeks: 4/8, 4/15, 4/22, 4/29, 5/6
CRC, Concept Room

26. *Great Decisions*

Peggy Layne
9:30am-11:00am
8 weeks: 2/18, 2/25, 3/4, 3/11, 3/18, 3/25, 4/1, 4/8
Warm Hearth Village Center, Tall Oaks Room

30. *American History Lite: A Gallery of Odd People and Strange Facts*

Johnny Moore
3:00pm-4:30pm
6 weeks: 2/25, 3/4, 3/11, 3/18, 3/25, 4/1
CRC, Concept Room

31. *Modern Architecture: Its Promise, Power, and Flawed Legacy*

Joseph Cooley
6:00pm-7:15pm
5 weeks: 2/25, 3/4, 3/11, 3/18, 3/25
CRC, Curiosity Room

38. *Appalachian Foodways*

Jean Haskell
4:30pm-6:00pm
4 weeks: 4/1, 4/8, 4/15, 4/22
CRC, Concept Room

41. *Appreciating Grapes of the Rhone Valley*

Randall Horst
3:00pm-4:30pm
6 weeks: 2/18, 2/25, 3/4, 3/11, 3/18, 3/25
Vintage Cellar

68. *Birding Basics or What was that? Bring the Binoculars!*

Sally Pfeiffer
First Session: 1:00pm – 2:00pm
Second Session: 8:00am-10:00am
2 weeks: 4/8, 4/14 or 4/15 or 4/16 based on groups
CRC, Concept Room

69. *How to Become a Mushroom Fanatic*

Gyorgyi Voros
3:00pm-4:15pm
4 weeks: 4/8, 4/15, 4/22, TBD
CRC, Concept Room

THURSDAY

6. *The Other Agatha Christies*

Britton Gildersleeve
3:00pm-4:30pm
5 weeks: 3/12, 3/19, 3/26, 4/2, 4/9
Zoom

11. *Jane Austen Book Club: Emma and Persuasion*

Peter Graham
11:00am-12:15pm
5 weeks: 3/19, 3/26, 4/2, 4/9, 4/16
CRC, Curiosity Room

12. *Mrs. Dalloway Meets Janie Crawford: Love and Marriage in Two Modern Classics*

Ginney Fowler
1:00pm-2:15pm
6 weeks: 3/19, 3/26, 4/2, 4/9, 4/16, 4/23
CRC, Curiosity Room

21. *Aaron Copland: A Life in Music*

Christopher Campo-Bowen
3:00pm-4:00pm
2 weeks: 3/12, 3/19
CRC, Concept Room

27. *Modern Africa: Challenges of Nation-Building*

Joseph Mukuni
11:00am-12:30pm
4 weeks: 2/19, 2/26, 3/5, 3/12
CRC, Curiosity Room

28. *A History of the Railroads in Montgomery County*

Bruce B. Harper, Ray Smoot
1:00pm-2:15pm
4 weeks: 2/19, 2/26, 3/5, 3/12
Warm Hearth Village Center, Tall Oaks Room

29. *Remarkable Women*

Molly McClintock
1:00pm-2:30pm
3 weeks: 2/19, 2/26, 3/5
CRC, Concept Room

34. *Protestant Resistance in Nazi Germany: Lessons for Today*

Edd Sewell
11:00am-12:15pm
6 weeks: 3/19, 3/26, 4/2, 4/9, 4/16, 4/23
CRC, Concept Room

37. *The Supreme Court and the Fourth Amendment*

Jack Call
1:00pm-2:30pm
6 weeks: 3/26, 4/2, 4/9, 4/16, 4/23, 4/30
CRC, Concept Room

46. *Learn to Play Bid Whist*

Ginney Fowler, Kaye Graham
11:00am-12:15pm
6 weeks: 2/19, 2/26, 3/5, 3/12, 3/19, 3/26
Blacksburg Community Center

47. *Financial Strategies for Retirees*

Chris French, Michael Canestrari
11:00am-12:30pm
4 weeks: 2/19, 2/26, 3/5, 3/12
Zoom

48. *Maple Syrup: Producing Sweetness from Mother Nature*

Tom Hammett
1:00pm-3:00pm
3 weeks: 2/19, 2/26, 3/5
CRC, Garvin Room

52. *Appreciating Single Malt Scotch Whisky*

Don Creamer
3:00pm-4:30pm
1 week: 3/26
Instructor's Home

53. *Appreciating Single Malt Scotch Whisky*

Don Creamer
3:00pm-4:30pm
1 week: 4/16
Instructor's Home

55. *Not Just Names: Genealogy Gold in Census Records*

Rebecca Novy
9:00am-10:15am
2 weeks: 4/2, 4/9
CRC, Concept Room

61. *Cooking Up Art History*

Lauren DiSalvo
3:00pm-4:30pm
6 weeks: 3/19, 3/26, 4/2, 4/16, 4/23, 4/30
Blacksburg Presbyterian Church

64. *Weird Animals you Should Love or At Least Appreciate*

Anne McNabb, Don Mullins
9:00am-10:30am
6 weeks: 2/19, 2/26, 3/5, 3/12, 3/19, 3/26
CRC, Concept Room

65. *Bugs And Us: Insects And Our Culture*

Curt Laub
3:00pm-4:00pm
3 weeks: 2/19, 2/26, 3/5
CRC, Concept Room

66. *Free, Self-paced Portals for Lifelong Learning*

Marc Zaldivar, Amanda MacDonald
3:00pm-4:00pm
3 weeks: 2/26, 3/5, 3/12
CRC, Curiosity Room

67. *The Basics and Beyond: Making AI Work for YOU*

Jen Mooney
3:00pm-4:15pm
4 weeks: 3/26, 4/2, 4/9, 4/16
CRC, Curiosity Room

FRIDAY

17. *Intermediate Watercolor Class: Energizing Your Paintings*

Jesi Pace-Berkeley
10:00am-12:00pm
5 weeks: 2/20, 2/27, 3/6, 3/13, 3/20
Blacksburg Community Center

32. *The Prestons of Smithfield: Local History in the Making*

Michael Hudson, Jenny Nehrt, Kira Dietz
3:00pm-4:30pm
2 weeks: 3/6, 3/13
Smithfield and VT Library

56. *Exploring Szechuan Cooking*

Anne McNabb
Session 1 9:00am-10:30am-Session 2 9:00am-1:30pm
2 weeks: 2/20, 2/27
Instructor's Home

57. *Knit A Designer Cardigan With Us!*

Diana George, Nancy Metz
11:00am-12:30pm
6 weeks: 2/20, 2/27, 3/13, 3/20, 3/27, 4/10
Instructor's Home

LLI Information

FEES

Membership each term is required to register for courses and participate in free events. Spring term membership is \$60 and is non-refundable. Course and event fees are listed in each description. Courses must be cancelled one week prior to the first session of the class to receive a refund of the course fee.

FEE WAIVERS

The Lifelong Learning Institute is committed to accessible and affordable educational opportunities for NRV residents. Requests for fee waivers should be addressed to the LLI Program Coordinator, phone 540-231-1725. All requests are confidential.

COURSE WAITLISTS

Is your desired class full? After registering for your other classes, look for a wait-list link on your transaction receipt. We'll contact you if an opening occurs.

ACCOMMODATIONS

To request accommodation for a disability, contact the LLI Program Coordinator at lifelonglearning@vt.edu or 540-231-1725. Please contact us at least 14 days in advance of the start of class or the event.

For a full list of LLI Policies, visit our website at: <https://cpe.vt.edu/lifelonglearning/membership/policies.html>

VOLUNTEER

The Lifelong Learning Institute at Virginia Tech thrives on the contributions of its volunteers. Learn more about how you can volunteer by visiting our website at cpe.vt.edu/lifelonglearning/volunteer.html, or email lifelonglearning@vt.edu.

Volunteers are needed as:

- Instructors - lead a course in an area of your own expertise or passion.
- Class Assistants – assist the instructor with managing the class.
- Committee Members – serve on one of our four LLI committees: Program, Instructional Support, Membership, or Fundraising
- Occasional Assistance – volunteers are needed for a variety of short-term tasks. Newcomers welcome!

DONATE

LLI has become an important part of the quality of life for retirees in the New River Valley and an effective outreach program for Virginia Tech. Your support will allow the LLI at Virginia Tech to grow this important community resource.

The Lifelong Learning Institute is a self-supporting entity of Continuing and Professional Education at Virginia Tech. All gifts to LLI (excluding membership and course/event-related fees) are fully tax deductible to the extent allowable by law. Designated gifts are received and managed by the Virginia Tech Foundation for the purpose of growing and sustaining the Lifelong Learning Institute.

Visit cpe.vt.edu/lifelonglearning/support/donations.html to learn the many ways that you can provide a donation to support the work of the Lifelong Learning Institute.

All program information is subject to change without notice.

MEMBER BENEFITS

- ✓ The opportunity to register for LLI courses and field trips at an additional charge.
- ✓ Register free for selected lectures and webinars (see pages 29–30).
- ✓ Attend Member social events such as happy hours and coffee chats.
- ✓ Receive invitations to special pop-up events.
- ✓ Connect with other members, both online and in person, in discussion on topics of interest to you.
- ✓ Receive email updates throughout the term.
- ✓ Receive notice of LLI travel opportunities.
- ✓ Participate in special Summer on-demand programs.
- ✓ And more!

NEW: Advance Membership Purchase for Spring Term!

See page 16

1. Local Authors Exploring History

Coordinator: Suzanne Reisinger | Monday, 11:00am-12:15pm
5 weeks: 2/16, 2/23, 3/2, 3/9, 3/16
CRC, Concept Room | Limit: 36 | Fee: \$35

Writing the past poses special challenges for authors, whether they are composing explicitly historical accounts, historical fiction, biography, or creative non-fiction. The facts must be selected, contextualized, and sometimes woven into a larger narrative thread. In this five-part course, local authors representing different genres will share a work of their own that addresses historical people, settings, or events. There is no required text; authors will share brief readings or read aloud excerpts.

FEB. 16. AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Matthew Vollmer, *NeVer ForgeT* (a reflection on the aftermath of the Virginia Tech shootings)

FEB. 23. HISTORY

Sarah Plummer, *Raising the Shade: 70 Civil War Black Soldiers from Franklin County, VA*, part of the Monuments Across Appalachian Virginia project

MAR. 2. HISTORICAL FICTION

Larry Bechtel, *The Life of Isaac Granger, A Slave of Thomas Jefferson*

MAR. 9. HISTORY

Marian Mollin, *Ita Ford, the Maryknoll Sisters, and the Hidden History of the Global 1960s*: how Catholic Sisters linked nonviolent social movements in the US and Latin America during the long 1960s

MAR. 16. BIOGRAPHY

Simone Poirier-Bures, *Threads in the Acadian Fabric: The Author's Family Story and the History of the Acadian People*

2. In Cold Blood (Or Was It?): Critiquing a True Crime Novel

Stephen Owen, Tod Burke | Monday, 1:00pm-2:30pm
4 weeks: 2/16, 2/23, 3/2, 3/9
CRC, Concept Room | Limit: 36 | Fee: \$35

Truman Capote's 1966 novel, *In Cold Blood*, was almost instantly hailed as a modern masterpiece. The book tells the story of the murder of four members of the Clutter family in rural Holcomb, Kansas. This course will critique the book as a true crime "nonfiction novel." We will also examine the way it illustrates three concepts in criminal justice: the causes of crime, the principles of criminal investigation, and the philosophical question of why we should punish the guilty. We will use examples from the book to illustrate each of these topics in this discussion-focused course.

REQUIRED TEXT

Capote, *In Cold Blood*, any edition or format.

INSTRUCTORS

Stephen Owen is a professor of criminal justice at Radford University, where he

has been recognized with the university's Donald N. Dedmon Distinguished Teaching Professor Award. Dr. Owen's teaching and research interests include institutional corrections, crime analysis, security and crime prevention, and criminal justice education.

Tod Burke, a retired professor of criminal justice and a former police officer, has received awards recognizing his teaching, research, and service. His teaching and research interests include policing, criminal investigation, victimology, and forensics. He also provides expert commentary for the media relating to criminal justice issues.

3. A Brief, Backwards History of the English Language: 2026-1558

Joseph F. Eska | Monday, 3:30pm-5:15pm
4 weeks: 2/16, 2/23, 3/2, 3/9
CRC, Concept Room | Limit: 36 | Fee: \$35

This course will focus on the role of historical and social events in the evolution of the English language. We'll begin with how English is spoken today and then look at the development of American English out of British English, the 'Proper English' movement of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and English in the time of Shakespeare. We'll view and discuss documentaries that highlight defining events in this process. Some attention will be paid to how English is changing in the present. Students will be asked to collect data in the course of their daily lives to perform experiments.

INSTRUCTOR

Joseph F. Eska is a professor of language sciences in the Department of English at Virginia Tech. He specializes in the many ways that language changes over time.

4. Moby-Dick: An Appreciation

Jeff Saperstein | Wednesday, 9:00am-10:30am
6 weeks: 2/25, 3/4, 3/11, 3/18, 3/25, 4/1
CRC, Garvin Room | Limit: 15 | Fee: \$35

A novel of infinite variety, *Moby-Dick* is a strange compound of sea yarn, revenge tragedy, marine biology, mysticism, social commentary, and epic poem. Perhaps the best way to approach and appreciate this unconventional novel is to consider it a 600-page prose poem. Accordingly, we will focus often on Melville’s shifty language, tone, voice, metaphor, and word play. We will regularly read passages aloud to help us “hear” Melville’s/Ishmael’s voice. First-time readers are especially welcome.

REQUIRED TEXT
Melville, *Moby-Dick*, any unabridged edition; Penguin Classics recommended.

INSTRUCTOR
A Melville aficionado, **Jeff Saperstein** is a professor emeritus from Radford University. He has taught the works of Herman Melville many times; in 2013 he participated in the *Moby-Dick* Marathon in the New Bedford Whaling Museum.

5. The Contemporary Latin American Short Story

Jacqueline Bixler | Wednesday, 1:00pm-2:30pm
6 weeks: 2/25, 3/4, 3/11, 3/18, 3/25, 4/1
CRC, Concept Room | Limit: 15 | Fee: \$35

In this course we will read representative short stories written by the best contemporary writers of Latin America, including Gabriel García Márquez, Jorge Luis Borges, Isabel Allende, Juan Rulfo, Julio Cortázar, and Luisa Valenzuela. We’ll reflect on what makes a short story great and debate the specific meaning of each story as conveyed by its language. We’ll consider the role of the short story as a vehicle for political critique and speculate on the challenges that confront those who adapt these stories to other media forms. Participants will read two or three stories per week.

INSTRUCTOR
Jackie Bixler was a professor of Spanish at Virginia Tech for 43 years; she was a specialist in Latin American literature and culture and a recipient of several teaching awards.

6. The Other Agatha Christies

Britton Gildersleeve | Thursday, 3:00pm-4:30pm
5 weeks: 3/12, 3/19, 3/26, 4/2, 4/9
Zoom | Limit: 25 | Fee: \$35

You don’t have to be an Agatha Christie fan or even a mystery buff to be acquainted with Miss Marple and Hercule Poirot; television and film adaptations continue to bring them into our living rooms. But Christie created other sleuths forgotten today who deserve a second look. This five-week course will introduce you to Tommy and Tuppence, Harley Quin, Colonel Race, and Inspector Battle. In the lesser-known short stories and novels featuring these detectives, you’ll encounter psychologically complex character studies, intricate plot twists, and exotic locations. You’ll discover a depth and range to “the other Agatha Christies” that might surprise you!

REQUIRED TEXTS
Christie, *Partners in Crime*.
Christie, *The Man in the Brown Suit*.
Christie, *Harlequin’s Lane*. (Included in paperback editions as part of the collection *The Mysterious Mr. Quin*)
Christie, *The Secret of Chimneys*.

INSTRUCTOR
Britton Gildersleeve, a retired faculty member and administrator from Oklahoma State University, has been a mystery reader since childhood, graduating from her father’s Sherlock Holmes to Nancy Drew, then on to Agatha Christie in her teens. She somehow managed to work long enough at Oklahoma State to retire ... and read more mysteries!

7. Kurt Vonnegut's Controversial Masterpiece, *Slaughterhouse Five*

Phillip Harris | Monday, 9:00am-10:30am
6 weeks: 3/16, 3/23, 3/30, 4/6, 4/13, 4/20
CRC, Concept Room | Limit: 36 | Fee: \$35

In the 1950s, Kurt Vonnegut Jr. was working in public relations for the General Electric Company. With six children to support, he wrote magazine articles and short stories simply to earn money. Then in 1952 his first novel, *Player Piano*, was published. This six-week course will consider Vonnegut in the context of his later career, with a special focus on his most famous novel, *Slaughterhouse-Five or The Children's Crusade*. The book won numerous accolades and awards; it was also vilified, banned and burned. *Slaughterhouse-Five* later became an award-winning movie that will also be viewed and discussed in this course.

REQUIRED TEXT

Kurt Vonnegut Jr., *Slaughterhouse-Five or The Children's Crusade*

INSTRUCTOR

During the 1960s and 70s, retired attorney **Phillip Harris** read anything and everything written by fellow Hoosier, Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. Phil now pretends to be an expert because, as Kurt Vonnegut famously said, "We are what we pretend to be." (*Mother Night*, 1961).

8. Publication Boot Camp! Transforming Your Idea into a Published Book

Mindy Quigley | Monday, 1:00pm-2:30pm
2 weeks: 3/16, 3/23
CRC, Concept Room | Limit: 36 | Fee: \$25

Are you interested in publishing your own book but not sure where to begin? If so, this class is for you! Two panels of published authors will offer their insights on creativity, establishing a writing routine, the business of books, and so much more. There will be plenty of time for audience Q&A, so bring your questions about plotting, editing, self-publishing vs. traditional publishing, and marketing.

INSTRUCTOR

Mindy Quigley is the author of two lighthearted mystery series. Her latest, *The Deep Dish Mysteries*, was a *Woman's World* book club pick and has been featured in *Parade* and *The Seattle Times*. Mindy's non-writing career took her from the U.S. to the U.K., where she worked as the personal assistant to the scientist who cloned Dolly the sheep and as project manager for a research clinic founded by the author J.K. Rowling.

9. The Novella: Forgotten Middle Child of Fiction

Paul Metz | Tuesday, 9:00am-10:00am
5 weeks: 3/17, 3/24, 3/31, 4/7, 4/14
CRC, Garvin Room | Limit: 15 | Fee: \$35

Many of the world's greatest authors have written wonderful novellas that are too often ignored simply because they are neither fish nor fowl. We will read Conrad's *Youth*, Annie Proulx's *Brokeback Mountain*, and Norman Maclean's *A River Runs Through It*, as well as two selections the class will choose from an inviting list of classic titles that are widely available online or in print. We will also watch excerpts from films made of some of these titles. The class is intended for general readers who like to discuss good books.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Conrad, *Youth*, any edition
Proulx, *Brokeback Mountain*, any edition
Maclean, *A River Runs Through It*, any edition

INSTRUCTOR

Paul Metz retired in 2012 after a long career at the University Libraries. He has taught two previous LLI courses.

10. Ivan Turgenev: A Russian Liberal

Christine Kiebuszinska | Tuesday, 3:00pm-4:30pm
6 weeks: 3/17, 3/24, 3/31, 4/7, 4/14, 4/21
CRC, Curiosity Room | Limit: 22 | Fee: \$35

Ivan Turgenev (1818 -1883) lived most of his life abroad. He developed a style of objective realism, much admired by Anton Chekhov, Gustave Flaubert, Henry James, George Eliot, and recent writers like William Trevor. We'll read three short books. His first publication, *Sketches From A Hunter's Album* (1852), was said to have influenced Tsar Alexander II to emancipate Russian serfs. His first novel *Rudin* (1856) explores the problem of "the superfluous man," a character type that resembles the Byronic hero. His best-known novel *Fathers and Sons* (1862) explores tradition versus progress between generations of two fathers and their sons.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Turgenev, *Sketches from a Hunter's Album* (Penguin ed.)
Turgenev, *Rudin* (Penguin ed.)
Turgenev, *Fathers and Sons* (Penguin ed.)

INSTRUCTOR

Christine Kiebuszinska is a retired Virginia Tech English professor with a specialty in comparative literature. She has previously taught a course on contemporary Ukrainian Literature for LLI.

11. Jane Austen Book Club: *Emma* and *Persuasion*

Peter Graham | Thursday, 11:00am-12:15pm
5 weeks: 3/19, 3/26, 4/2, 4/9, 4/16
CRC, Curiosity Room | Limit: 22 | Fee: \$35

Our spring 2026 Jane Austen course will focus on the last two books the author completed before dying in 1817. *Emma* centers on a “handsome, clever, and rich” young woman Austen called “a heroine whom no one but myself will much like.” *Persuasion*, published posthumously, features her most mature heroine and her only naval hero in a story that suggests the new direction her fiction might have followed. LLI’s year-long series honoring Austen’s 250th concludes with a slightly belated birthday bash, date and time TBA.

As before, the course will take a casual book-group discussion approach. No previous experience of reading Austen is necessary, and newcomers are welcome.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Austen, *Emma*, any edition
Austen, *Persuasion*, any edition

INSTRUCTOR

Peter Graham, professor emeritus of English at Virginia Tech, has been a confirmed Janeite for 50 years and more. He’s a Life Member of the Jane Austen Society of North America and has lectured and written widely on Austen and her works.

12. Mrs. Dalloway Meets Janie Crawford: Love and Marriage in Two Modern Classics

Ginney Fowler | Thursday, 1:00pm-2:15pm
6 weeks: 3/19, 3/26, 4/2, 4/9, 4/16, 4/23
CRC, Curiosity Room | Limit: 22 | Fee: \$35

What could a plotless novel about an aging socialite planning a London dinner party have to do with the saga of a fiercely independent black woman in rural Florida? Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway* and Zora Neale Hurston’s *Their Eyes Were Watching God* both center on female characters who seek love and identity in marriage. The identities they construct, however, are profoundly shaped by their respective class, race, and – surprisingly – nationality. Participants in this seminar-style class will have the delightful opportunity of meeting, thinking about, and discussing Clarissa Dalloway and Janie Crawford, two of literature’s most memorable characters.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*, any edition
Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, any edition

INSTRUCTOR

Ginney Fowler is a professor emerita of English from Virginia Tech. She taught and researched widely in American, African American, and Victorian literatures.

13. Read Local: Wendy Welch’s *The Little Bookstore of Big Stone Gap: A Memoir of Friendship, Community, and the Uncommon Pleasure of a Good Book*

Wendy Welch, Ellen Woodall | Tuesday, 11:00am-12:00pm
3 weeks: 3/31, 4/14, 4/28
CRC, Curiosity Room | Limit: 22 | Fee: \$35



LLI’s Read Local series focuses on a single book written by a local or regional author. Readers engage with the author face-to-face in stimulating conversation during the first and last meetings. The spring selection is Wendy Welch’s *The Little Bookstore of Big Stone Gap*. It’s the story of the little bookstore that could: how two people, two cats, two dogs, and thirty-eight thousand books helped a small town find its heart. It is an inspiring tale of people and books, and how together they create community. Meet the author, read the book, and come together for a great conversation!

REQUIRED TEXT

Welch, *The Little Bookstore of Big Stone Gap*
Available at Blacksburg Books by January 1. Participants may also purchase the book in class on the first day. There is no reading assignment for the first meeting.

INSTRUCTOR

Wendy Welch is the author or editor of eight books set in Appalachia. She runs a healthcare nonprofit and lives in Wytheville, Virginia.

Ellen Woodall is the manager of Blacksburg Books.

Visual & Performance Arts

14. Art Sampler

Ann Shawhan | Monday, 2:00pm-4:00pm
4 weeks: 2/16, 2/23, 3/2, 3/9
Blacksburg Community Center | Limit: 15 | Fee: \$35 | Materials Fee: \$75

In this four-week Art Sampler class, each two-hour class will introduce a different art form. The first week will be devoted to acrylic painting - figurative or abstract - on a small canvas. Next, participants will make a bas relief sculpture on ceramic tiles using polymer clay - a project that combines painting and sculpture. The third week's challenge will be a paper mosaic pieced together with paper-like tiles. During the final class, participants may complete an unfinished work or start a new one. The materials fee covers the cost of everything required to make these projects. Nothing needs to be purchased in advance.

INSTRUCTOR
Ann Shawhan has a BFA degree from Florida State University, but she believes it is the doing of art, the constant experimenting, that makes one an artist. She has designed this Art Sampler course to welcome both beginner and experienced artists.

15. Drawing 101

Bonnie Moreno | Tuesday, 1:00pm-2:30pm
6 weeks: 2/17, 2/24, 3/3, 3/10, 3/17, 3/24
CRC, Concept Room | Limit: 20 | Fee: \$35

Bonnie Moreno, a trained art teacher and lifelong artist, firmly believes that anyone can draw. Look at cartoons, for example; the drawings are simple and drawn with the artist's own particular hand. The qualities of hand-eye coordination are already inherent in your hand as well. Bonnie will teach you how to pick up a pencil and draw with relative confidence what you could not explain or express with words or gestures. You will add drawing to your communication toolbox.

INSTRUCTOR
Bonnie Moreno holds an MFA in painting and is certified to teach art in public schools. She is also a Master Gardener and flower arranging blue ribbon winner.

16. Early Twentieth-Century Song Hunters and Collectors

Linda MacCleave | Wednesday, 1:00pm-2:30pm
4 weeks: 2/18, 2/25, 3/4, 3/11
Zoom | Limit: 50 | Fee: \$35

Early 20th-century song hunters and collectors contributed to the rich cultural heritage of American music, including folk, gospel, country, and blues. Their work ensured that traditional songs were preserved and reached new generations. In this four-week class, we will explore the songs found by A. P. Carter and Alan Lomax that directly led to the folk revival of the mid 20th century. We'll feature Harry Smith, a collector of American folk music from the 1920s to 1940s. Recording artists will include the Carter Family, Lead Belly, Woody Guthrie, Pete Seeger, Bob Dylan, the Kingston Trio, Joan Baez, Odetta, and many more.

INSTRUCTOR
Linda MacCleave retired from teaching English and now teaches duplicate bridge in Richmond, as well as song history and interpretation for several LLI programs. She enjoys sharing her appreciation for the cultural history and inspirational poetry of folk and country music.

17. Intermediate Watercolor Class: Energizing Your Paintings

Jesi Pace-Berkeley | Friday, 10:00am-12:00pm
5 weeks: 2/20, 2/27, 3/6, 3/13, 3/20
Blacksburg Community Center | Limit: 15 | Fee: \$35 | Materials Fee: \$45

If you are interested in bringing more light and energy into your paintings, please join us for an intermediate watercolor class that will focus on one of the most influential artists of all time. The English painter J.M.W. Turner (1775-1851) began his career early in life as an architectural draftsman and sketch artist. Turner's interest quickly turned to landscape painting and to an imaginative style characterized by expressive color and turbulent scenes depicting water, fire, cityscapes, and mountains; he produced over 2,000 of these paintings. Come and see how integrating elements from Turner's approach can energize your own work.

INSTRUCTOR
Jesi Pace-Berkeley is a professional fellow of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts and Artist in Residence at the Don and Catherine Bryant Cultural Series, Outer Banks.

18. Exploring Oil Painting

Lois Stephens | Monday, 9:00am-11:30am
6 weeks: 2/23, 3/2, 3/9, 3/16, 3/23, 3/30
Blacksburg Community Center | Limit: 12 | Fee: \$35 | Materials Fee: \$20

With a no-fear approach, students will be encouraged to explore the many forgiving qualities of oil paints. Various materials and tools will be reviewed, and students will work with both brushes and palette knives. The class is geared for beginning as well as intermediate painters. Participants are responsible for purchasing supplies; a list will be provided prior to the first class.

INSTRUCTOR
Lois Stephens has a passion for painting in oils and enjoys helping others explore this rich medium. She currently maintains a studio in the Newport Community Center; her work can be viewed online at www.LoisStephens.com.

19. Singing for Seniors

Patrice Yearwood | Wednesday, 11:00am-12:00pm
6 weeks: 2/25, 3/4, 3/11, 3/18, 3/25, 4/1
St. Michael's Lutheran Church | Limit: 25 | Fee: \$35

In this class designed for the mature voice, we will learn tips, tricks, and techniques to enhance vocal health and make us better singers. Each class will involve warm-ups, vocal exercises, and training – all taking place within a positive and supportive environment. The individual qualities and strengths of each voice will be emphasized. But NO solos. Singing is good for breathing, stamina, mental health, and wellbeing. We can improve our vocal quality regardless of age.

INSTRUCTOR
Patrice Yearwood is a singer, pianist, choral director, and music educator. The founder and former artistic director of the Blacksburg Children's Chorale, she currently directs the music program at St. Michael's Lutheran Church and provides instruction in voice and piano to students of various ages in her music studio.

20. Opera for Everyone

An Opera Roanoke Presentation
Rob Chafin | Tuesday, 1:00pm-2:00pm
1 week: 3/3
Warm Hearth Village Center, Tall Oaks Room | Limit: 50 | Fee: \$15

Discover the magic of opera in a captivating one-hour class led by Opera Roanoke's Director of Education and Young Artists. Whether you're a seasoned fan or new to the art form, this engaging session will explore the history, music, and drama of opera – its famous composers, iconic arias, and powerful storytelling.

Of course, it's impossible to appreciate opera fully without experiencing staged productions. We're grateful to Opera Roanoke for making deeply discounted tickets to Engelbert Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel* available to course participants. The opera will be performed at the Jefferson Center during the weekend of March 27-29 – a perfect capstone experience.

INSTRUCTOR
Rob Chafin is the director of education and community engagement at Opera Roanoke, where he directs the opera's Young Artist program. His career on the opera stage spans decades and continents. His love for and commitment to the art form is infectious.

21. Aaron Copland: A Life in Music

Christopher Campo-Bowen | Thursday, 3:00pm-4:00pm
2 weeks: 3/12, 3/19
CRC, Concept Room | Limit: 36 | Fee: \$25

LLI's Lives in Music series explores the work of a single composer in its historical context and in relation to significant developments in musical genres, ideas, and techniques.

Aaron Copland (1900-1990), child of Jewish immigrants from Lithuania, became one of the twentieth century's most accomplished and influential American composers. By incorporating jazz, folk, and other indigenous forms into his music, he brought a wider and more diverse audience to classical music, freed it from European influence, and gave it a place on the world stage. In the first class of this two-part course, we'll explore Copland's life and work and listen closely to his masterpiece, *Appalachian Spring*. The second class will focus on Copland's friendship with Mexican composer Carlos Chávez, and its impact on his music.

INSTRUCTOR
Christopher Campo-Bowen is an assistant professor of musicology in the School of Performing Arts at Virginia Tech. He completed his Ph.D in musicology at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

22. The Art, Science, and Mystery of Leonardo da Vinci

Michelle Moseley | Monday, 9:00am-10:15am
5 weeks: 3/16, 3/23, 3/30, 4/6, 4/13
Warm Hearth Village Center, Tall Oaks Room | Limit: 50+ | Fee: \$35

Leonardo da Vinci produced relatively few finished works; yet his surviving paintings continue to captivate viewers today. This course explores the range of Leonardo’s corpus, from his workshop practice in Florence, to his court positions in Milan and France. We will focus on lesser-known projects and the recent, controversial issues of the *Salvator Mundi*, the most expensive painting ever sold. Leonardo’s drawings, letters, and documents show the intersections between art, science, and engineering that preoccupied his work. Our study probes the artist’s hyper-celebrity and how it affects our reception of him and his work.

INSTRUCTOR
Michelle Moseley is an associate professor of art history, with a research area in Renaissance and Baroque art (c. 1400-1700). She regularly teaches Renaissance art and currently co-directs the MA program in Material Culture and Public Humanities.

23. Draw Your World: Artistic Techniques and Visual Perception

Joseph Cooley | Tuesday, 6:00pm-8:00pm
6 weeks: 3/31, 4/7, 4/14, 4/21, 4/28, 5/5
Blacksburg Community Center | Limit: 20 | Fee: \$35

Deepen your drawing skills and expand your perception of the world in a drawing class that blends fundamental principles with advanced techniques. You’ll start with the basics of geometry, then explore key concepts like perspective and shading. The course encourages creative exploration and the development of a personal style. Through structured exercises, live drawing sessions, individual projects, and personalized feedback, you can start at your own skill level and progress at your own pace, refining your drawing technique and developing a new way of seeing and interacting with our beautiful world. Students may repeat the course to continue the journey.

Those who register for the course will receive a list of required and recommended tools.

INSTRUCTOR
With a foundation in commercial architecture, **Joseph Cooley** brings a unique perspective to their art classes, emphasizing the essentials of line drawing and the power of visualization. At the heart of their teaching lies a commitment to helping students gain skills to see and capture the world with newfound clarity and creativity.

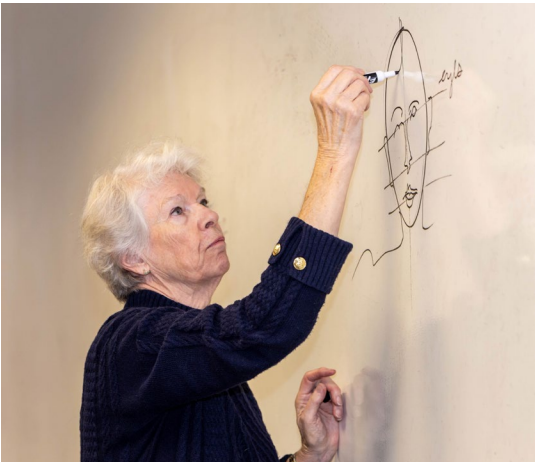
24. Great Scores and Soundtracks from the Movies

Seth Davis | Wednesday, 11:00am-12:30pm
5 weeks: 4/8, 4/15, 4/22, 4/29, 5/6
CRC, Concept Room | Limit: 36 | Fee: \$35



For almost 100 years, music has played a pivotal role in movies. In this course, we’ll explore some of the greatest scores and soundtracks in cinema history, discover the role of composers and music supervisors, and learn how music is used to further storytelling in film. We’ll study scores by John Williams, Max Steiner, and Rachel Portman, discuss groundbreaking musicals like *Singin’ in the Rain*, *The Wizard of Oz*, and *Moulin Rouge*, and listen to iconic soundtrack albums like *Purple Rain*, *Dirty Dancing*, and *The Bodyguard*. The course will enhance your appreciation for the art and power of cinematic music.

INSTRUCTOR
Seth Davis is the executive director of The Lyric Theatre in downtown Blacksburg. He is also a musician, teacher, avid book reader, and movie buff!



History, Culture, & Current Affairs

25. The Future of Urban and Rural Communities

Mark Tirpak | Tuesday, 9:00am-10:00am
5 weeks: 2/17, 2/24, 3/3, 3/10, 3/17
Zoom | Limit: 15 | Fee: \$35

What’s possible for cities and other communities in the next twenty years? What’s preferable or even outrageous to imagine? This discussion-based Zoom class encourages students to consider social, technological, economic, ecological, and other dimensions of change that they’ve experienced in their lifetimes, as part of considering what might happen in the mid-term future. Students will become more conversant with the concept of “futures literacy,” as well as some of the work of past and current futurists and foresight practitioners. Students will be challenged to apply ideas from the class to their current communities.

INSTRUCTOR

Mark Tirpak is an urban planner, consultant, and adjunct/affiliate faculty member for Virginia Tech’s School of Public and International Affairs. He enjoys developing and facilitating innovative classes, seminars, and affordable travel-based experiential learning programs that explore aspects of urban sustainability.

26. Great Decisions

Coordinator: Peggy Layne | Wednesday, 9:30am-11:00am
8 weeks: 2/18, 2/25, 3/4, 3/11, 3/18, 3/25, 4/1, 4/8
Warm Hearth Village Center, Tall Oaks Room | Limit: 50 | Fee: \$35

Great Decisions is a community discussion program on world affairs. The Foreign Policy Association (FPA) provides text and videos for discussion groups across the country. The meeting begins with a 30-minute presentation from the FPA summarizing the topic, followed by commentary from a local expert who facilitates a Q&A with the audience. This class will be held in-person at Warm Hearth. Each week’s topic and speaker will be sent to registrants via email. Topics will include:

- America and the World: Trump 2.0 Foreign Policy
- U.S.-China Relations
- Trump Tariffs and the Future of the World Economy
- Ruptured Alliances and the Risk of Nuclear Proliferation

- Ukraine and the Future of European Security
- Multilateral Institutions in a Changing World Order
- U.S. Engagement of Africa
- The Future of Human Rights and International Law

RECOMMENDED TEXT

The *Great Decisions 2026 Briefing Book* can be purchased from the Foreign Policy Association bookstore in January at fpa.org.

27. Modern Africa: Challenges of Nation-Building

Joseph Mukuni | Thursday, 11:00am-12:30pm
4 weeks: 2/19, 2/26, 3/5, 3/12
CRC, Curiosity Room | Limit: 22 | Fee: \$35

This four-session class will survey the history of Africa from pre-colonial times to post-independence. It will outline the challenges to unity and nationhood created by the diverse cultures and religions of pre-colonial Africa, the impact of the transatlantic slave trade, and the legacy of late-nineteenth century European colonialism. Special attention will be paid to the African quest for independence, especially after World War II. The course will examine the concept of African Unity advocated by Kwame Nkrumah under the auspices of the OAU (Organization of African Unity) in the mid-twentieth century and more recent attempts to promote regional integration.

INSTRUCTOR

Joseph Mukuni is a collegiate associate professor in the School of Education at Virginia Tech. Before he came to the United States, he served as director of the agency responsible for technical and vocational education and training in Zambia.

28. A History of the Railroads in Montgomery County

Bruce B. Harper, Ray Smoot | Thursday, 1:00pm-2:15pm
4 weeks: 2/19, 2/26, 3/5, 3/12
Warm Hearth Village Center, Tall Oaks Room | Limit: 50 | Fee: \$35

Railroads wind in and out of Montgomery County’s history in fascinating ways. During the Civil War, railways expedited the movement of troops and supplies. Coal from the Merrimac mines traveled by rail to the Cambria depot, and when passenger service arrived at the turn of the century, the railway connected remote communities to Virginia Tech and brought cadets to campus. This four-part course explores the colorful details and far-reaching impact of railway development in the New River Valley, concluding with a discussion of the successful thirteen-year plan to bring passenger rail service back to our community.

INSTRUCTOR
Bruce Harper retired from Virginia Tech after serving for 37 years in several departments. He was the Virginia Tech webmaster until he retired. He is a local historian and author, with articles published in *Virginia Tech Magazine* and *The Arrow*, the publication of the Norfolk & Western Historical Society.
Ray Smoot retired as CEO of the Virginia Tech Foundation, Inc. He is vice chair of the Commonwealth Transportation Board.

29. Remarkable Women

Coordinator: Molly McClintock | Thursday, 1:00pm-2:30pm
3 weeks: 2/19, 2/26, 3/5
CRC, Concept Room | Limit: 36 | Fee: \$35

This third installment of our Remarkable Women series will be presented by nine local women. Each will introduce us to a woman from history, one you’ve likely never heard of. Learn about their unusual lives, extraordinary accomplishments, and deserved place in our history. Come be inspired and enjoy the company of a room full of remarkable women.

PRESENTERS
Jill Kiecolt, Deb Call, Victoria Cochran, Rosemary Blieszner, Patsy Lavender, Maureen Perry, Lynn Brammer, Kaye Graham, and Molly McClintock.

30. American History Lite: A Gallery of Odd People and Strange Facts

Johnny Moore | Wednesday, 3:00pm-4:30pm
6 weeks: 2/25, 3/4, 3/11, 3/18, 3/25, 4/1
CRC, Concept Room | Limit: 36 | Fee: \$35

At the beginning of his Radford University history classes, Johnny Moore used to warm up the class with a little feature he called “History Lite,” a weird detail or event from the past that was “one-third less serious” than textbook history. Students got the point that laughter could lead to learning. In this whimsical LLI class, Johnny shares from his rich store of the strange-but-true to teach us about obscure but important Americans, influential people who never lived, and the origins of common gestures and expressions.

INSTRUCTOR
Johnny Moore is a professor emeritus of history at Radford University who specialized in social, cultural, and medical history. He is also a stand-up comedian.

31. Modern Architecture: Its Promise, Power, and Flawed Legacy

Joseph Cooley | Wednesday, 6:00pm-7:15pm
5 weeks: 2/25, 3/4, 3/11, 3/18, 3/25
CRC, Curiosity Room | Limit: 22 | Fee: \$35

This five-week course examines the rise of modern architecture from the nineteenth century through the late twentieth. It begins with the innovations and optimism that inspired modernism: new materials and industrial processes, light, structure, and social progress. The course also examines how racism, ableism, and other biases were built into the design of modernist buildings. We’ll study significant buildings and the design approaches of historic architects in order to explore how architecture can express beauty, power, and resistance. Prior architectural knowledge is not required. Bring curiosity and a willingness to engage critically with the history of the built environment.

INSTRUCTOR
Joseph Cooley is a licensed architect with a career in architecture, design, and the arts. Joseph works at Virginia Tech as an architect in the Office for Civil Rights Compliance, where he focuses on ensuring that the built environment meets accessibility standards.

32. The Prestons of Smithfield: Local History in the Making

Michael Hudson, Jenny Nehrt, Kira Dietz | Friday, 3:00pm-4:30pm
2 weeks: 3/6, 3/13 | Smithfield and VT Library | Limit: 15 | Fee: \$25

This two-part course will explore the history of Smithfield and the Preston families through visits to Historic Smithfield and Special Collections/University Archives (SCUA) at Virginia Tech. At Smithfield, participants will learn from museum staff about the Preston family and the history of the home they built. At SCUA, they will engage with original documents related to the Prestons and Smithfield. The course will encourage participants to think about how place, time, artifacts, and documents are interpreted and re-interpreted to tell the stories of Smithfield and other historic sites.



INSTRUCTORS

Mike Hudson has worked in interpretation and management of historic sites for 25 years. He is presently executive director of Historic Smithfield.

Jenny Nehrt is the visitor experience coordinator at Historic Smithfield, bringing over a decade of experience in public history, interpretation, and archival work, including Chritiansburg Institute.

Kira Dietz is the assistant director of Special Collections and University Archives at Virginia Tech, with special expertise in literature, library science, and food history.

33. Sound Effects: The Surprising Impact of Acoustic Environments

Louise Billaud | Monday, 3:00pm-4:15pm
3 weeks: 3/9, 3/16, 3/23 | Zoom | Limit: 25 | Fee: \$35

The waves of sound that constantly wash over us impact human life in ways not fully recognized. This three-week course begins with the Greeks, whose fascination with the “music of the spheres” inspired the development of recent technologies that make the sounds of the earth and universe audible. Drawing examples from medieval monks and modern medicine, we’ll explore the role of music in healing the body and the mind. We’ll discuss the soundscapes that surround each of us. How do we find beauty and equilibrium, music and harmony, within the noise and dissonance of our media-driven contemporary lives?

INSTRUCTOR

Pianist **Louise Billaud** is a professor of music at New River Community College. Recognized at the state, national, and international levels for her teaching and lecture-recitals, she enjoys sharing with others her love of music and fascination with the world of sound.

34. Protestant Resistance in Nazi Germany: Lessons for Today

Edd Sewell | Thursday, 11:00am-12:15pm
6 weeks: 3/19, 3/26, 4/2, 4/9, 4/16, 4/23 | CRC, Concept Room | Limit: 36 | Fee: \$35

The focus of this course is on the Confessing Church in Nazi Germany, a movement that arose in the 1930s in opposition to government efforts to unify Protestant churches into a single pro-Nazi German Evangelical Church. This conflict, with its blending of religious and political ideologies, has relevance for us today, resembling the current opposition between Christian nationalism and several mainline Protestant denominations. We will explore the impact of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Karl Barth, Martin Niemöller, and other lesser-known pastors and lay people whose sermons and actions inspired a dynamic resistance movement. Handouts will provide all necessary materials.

INSTRUCTOR

Since first reading Dietrich Bonhoeffer as an undergraduate and then completing an M.A. thesis on him in 1967, **Edd Sewell** has continued to read and follow the scholarship on leaders in the Confessing Church struggle in Nazi Germany.

35. The Rise of American Plutocracy: Leaders, Strategies, Consequences

Jim Bohland | Monday, 11:00am-12:00pm
5 weeks: 3/23, 3/30, 4/6, 4/13, 4/20 | CRC, Concept Room | Limit: 36 | Fee: \$35

Most pundits have described the 2016 and 2024 elections as populist victories. However, while populism is a component of the Trump movement, its policy directions have been guided by a cadre of neoliberal plutocrats. Efforts to change our liberal democracy to an authoritarian plutocracy began in the 1940s; since then, neoliberals have quietly gained control of the major levers of power in many states and at the federal level. In this course, we will examine the history of this movement, its leaders, strategies, and consequences for our democratic system of governance.

INSTRUCTOR

Jim Bohland retired from the School of Public and International Affairs at Virginia Tech. He has taught several previous LLI courses.

36. Sampler Speaker Series

Coordinator: Molly McClintock | Tuesday, 9:00am-10:15am
5 weeks: 3/24, 3/31, 4/7, 4/14, 4/21
Zoom | Limit: unlimited | Fee: \$35

This engaging sampler course treats participants to a wide range of speakers and topics – something different each week.

MARCH 24. SURGEON, SOLDIER, PATRIOT: THE LIFE OF WILLIAM FLEMING

Lesser known than many of his Revolutionary era contemporaries, William Fleming led a remarkable life in the frontier that was then Western Virginia. He served in many capacities including, briefly, as governor.

Garrett Channel is the executive director of the Salem Museum. A graduate of Roanoke College, Channel is pursuing his M.A. in museum studies at Harvard University.

MARCH 31. USAID IN ACTION OR VIRGINIA TECH IN AFRICA

USAID funding was cut by 83% in 2025. Hear from two LLI members about their

experiences in a USAID-funded project in Mali, West Africa that supported small farmers growing a cash crop for export. Anecdotes, photos, and impressions of life in Mali (2008-2012) will be shared as well.

Pat Hipkins is a former extension specialist and assistant coordinator of Virginia Tech Pesticide Programs; **Don Mullins** is a professor emeritus from the Department of Entomology.

APRIL 7. TRACKING MEGAFAUNA IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

Francesco Ferretti leads a team of scientists tracking and tagging the elusive Mediterranean white shark. The challenge is finding them! He'll share what he learned

about these rare creatures during the White Shark Chase he conducted in the Mediterranean.

Francesco Ferretti, is an assistant professor in Virginia Tech's College of Natural Resources and Environment. He is interested in how humans impact oceans and alter marine ecosystems.

APRIL 21. THE TURING BOMBE AND ITS ROLE IN BREAKING ENIGMA

The work of the Bletchley Park codebreakers in breaking the German Enigma cipher during World War II was extraordinary. This presentation will describe the difficulties encountered with Enigma and how an electromechanical machine known as the bombe was used in the process.

Neil Sigmon is a professor of mathematics and has worked in the department of mathematics and statistics at Radford University since 2000. His interests include applied algebra and cryptography.

37. The Supreme Court and the Fourth Amendment

Jack Call | Thursday, 1:00pm-2:30pm
6 weeks: 3/26, 4/2, 4/9, 4/16, 4/23, 4/30
CRC, Concept Room | Limit: 36 | Fee: \$35

This course will cover the history of the U.S. Constitution's Fourth Amendment and its current interpretation by the Supreme Court. The amendment prohibits unreasonable searches and seizures and requires any warrant to be judicially authorized and supported by probable cause. In addition to defining the amendment's key terms, we will wrestle with questions about its interpretation. Whose actions are regulated by the Fourth Amendment? When is a warrant required to make a seizure or to conduct a search? Who may raise legal objections to the way a search was conducted? What is the remedy when the Fourth Amendment is violated?

INSTRUCTOR

A professor emeritus of criminal justice at Radford University, **Jack Call** earned a J.D. degree from the College of William and Mary and a Ph.D. in political science from the University of Georgia.

38. Appalachian Foodways

Jean Haskell | Wednesday, 4:30pm-6:00pm
4 weeks: 4/1, 4/8, 4/15, 4/22
CRC, Concept Room | Limit: 36 | Fee: \$35

Food culture in Appalachia ranges from good home cooking with traditional recipes to haute cuisine based on the rich flora and fauna of the region. We will explore the history of mountain cooking, its impact on other cultural traditions of the region (especially music), and new culinary practices created by changing demographics. We'll learn how the region's talented native chefs are reinterpreting the traditional Appalachian cooking they enjoyed at home as children.

INSTRUCTOR

Jean Haskell is a retired professor of Appalachian Studies (Virginia Tech and East Tennessee State University) and co-editor of the *Encyclopedia of Appalachia*. She serves on the advisory board of Montgomery Junior Appalachian Musicians and as immediate past president of the board of the Montgomery Museum of Art & History.

39. Dialogues Across Disciplines: “What is the Good Life and How Do I Live It?”

Paul Quigley, Samantha Harden, Gil Hersch | Monday, Wednesday, Friday, 11:00am-12:00pm
3 sessions: 5/4, 5/6, 5/8
Warm Hearth Village Center, Tall Oaks Room | Limit: 50 | Fee: \$35

The series, Dialogues Across Disciplines, organized by Virginia Tech’s Center for Humanities, brings together two experts to investigate a compelling topic from different viewpoints. This spring we consider the fundamental questions, “What is the good life? And how do I live it?”

APRIL 27. WELL-BEING: OURS AND OTHERS (GIL HERSCH)

What do we value with respect to our well-being? What do we consider important for the well-being of others? Gil Hersch will provide philosophical tools for reflecting on these questions and for acting on the resulting insights.

APRIL 29. THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS AND THE ONLY TWO TOOLS YOU NEED (SAMANTHA HARDEN)

Samantha Harden aims to debunk myths about what creates happiness and share tangible, evidence-based strategies anchored

in positive psychology, like the concept of “flourishing,” and the power of community and connection.

MAY 1. DISCOVERIES, DIFFERENCES, AND CONNECTIONS

In the final class our two experts engage in a conversation moderated by Paul Quigley and informed by audience members’ questions. We may not end up with a definitive guide on how to live a good life, but we will provide insights into how different academic traditions tackle one of humanity’s most compelling questions.

INSTRUCTOR

Paul Quigley is a Civil War historian and the director of the Center for Humanities

Samantha Harden is a behavioral psychologist and an associate professor in Virginia Tech’s department of Human Nutrition, Foods, and Exercise.

Gil Hersch is an associate professor in Virginia Tech’s philosophy department and a core faculty member in the David H. Kellogg Center for Philosophy, Politics, and Economics.

NEW THIS SPRING

Advance Membership Purchase
for Spring Term!

Get a jump on registration day by purchasing your term membership early. Your early membership purchase will ensure your credentials are in order when registration opens for courses and field trips.

Advance membership purchase is open from December 1, 2025 – January 9, 2026 and can be purchased online at cpe.vt.edu/lifelonglearning, or by phone during business hours at 540-231-5182.

Spring term membership is \$60 and is non-refundable.

Those who purchased an annual membership in fall do not need to purchase a spring membership.



Living Well

40. & 41. Appreciating Grapes of the Rhone Valley

SELECT ONE SESSION DATE

40. Session 1 | Randall Horst | Monday, 3:00pm-5:00pm

6 weeks: 2/16, 2/23, 3/2, 3/9, 3/16, 3/23

Vintage Cellar | Limit: 40 | Fee: \$35 | Wine Fee: \$150. Pay the wine fee directly to Vintage Cellar by check or credit card. Look for instructions after enrollment.

41. Session 2 | Randall Horst | Wednesday, 3:00pm-5:00pm

6 weeks: 2/18, 2/25, 3/4, 3/11, 3/18, 3/25

Vintage Cellar | Limit: 40 | Fee: \$35 | Wine Fee: \$150. Pay the wine fee directly to Vintage Cellar by check or credit card. Look for instructions after enrollment.

The Rhone Valley, located in Southeastern France, produces 37 varieties of grapes and influences wine production around the world. In the north, Syrah reigns over reds while Viognier and Marsanne dominate whites. In the south, Grenache is one of several dominant wines and is often blended with other varieties, such as in Chateauf-neuf-du-Pape. These grape varieties are also grown around the world; for example, Syrah grows in the Rhone Valley, California, Texas, Columbia Valley, Spain, Australia (Barossa Valley, Hunter Valley, McLaren Vale), and New Zealand.

INSTRUCTOR

Randall Horst is a wine enthusiast, buyer for Vintage Cellar in Blacksburg, and veteran instructor for LLI. He has taught wine appreciation every term since 2015.



42. Experience Yoga!

Stephanie Buffett | Tuesday, Thursday, 9:00am-10:30am

12 weeks, twice per week: 2/17, 2/19, 2/24, 2/26, 3/3, 3/5, 3/10, 3/12, 3/17, 3/19, 3/24, 3/26

CRC, In Balance Yoga | Limit: 25 | Fee: \$50

Learn to connect movement with the breath and explore ways to improve circulation, flexibility, and balance. Slow and intentional movement through various postures (asanas) will be combined with Vinyasa Yoga, where poses are linked together, moving from one pose to the next connected by the breath. The course is appropriate for all levels including those with mobility and joint issues and will include chair yoga modifications.



INSTRUCTOR

Stephanie Buffett is a retired United States Air Force nurse and has practiced yoga for over 15 years. She is a certified Hatha Yoga instructor and has completed Vipassana and Presence Meditation training.

43. Introduction to Mindfulness Meditation

Jamie McReynolds | Tuesday, 11:00am-12:30pm

6 weeks: 2/17, 2/24, 3/3, 3/10, 3/17, 3/24

CRC, Garvin Room | Limit: 15 | Fee: \$35

Mindfulness, also known as insight meditation, is present-moment, nonjudgmental awareness cultivated by paying attention in a sustained and specific way. It is one of many forms of meditation. Mindfulness needs to be practiced and experienced to really understand it. This course will cover the attitudinal foundations of mindfulness, including acceptance, nonjudging, nonstriving, letting go/letting be, patience, trust, beginner's mind, gratitude, generosity, curiosity, kindness, and humor. We will also cover the four foundations of mindfulness: body, feeling tones, mind, and mental operations.

INSTRUCTOR

Jamie McReynolds is a retired Unitarian Universalist community minister and mindfulness meditation teacher. He has been practicing meditation for 40 years.

44. & 45. How to Talk to a Medical Provider

SELECT ONE SESSION DATE
44. Session 1 | Laurie Nair | Tuesday, 3:00pm-5:00pm
1 week: 2/17
CRC, Curiosity Room | Limit: 15 | Fee: \$25
45. Session 2 | Laurie Nair | Tuesday, 3:00pm-5:00pm
1 week: 3/10
CRC, Curiosity Room | Limit: 15 | Fee: \$25

In this one-session course, we will discuss some of the myriad factors, both positive and negative, that impact the patient-doctor relationship. What forces in the two-way communication between patient and medical provider lead to gaps in, or at times epic failures of our engagement with the health care system? We will discuss how insights into these dynamics can contribute to more meaningful interactions with primary care providers and equip us to better advocate for ourselves or loved ones.

INSTRUCTOR
Laurie Nair is a retired family medicine physician who graduated with her husband from the University of Connecticut Medical School in 1992. For nearly 30 years they saw patients, taught medical students, and served the community in Huntington, West Virginia – that is, until they burned out, retired early, and came to the beautiful New River Valley to heal in November 2021!

46. Learn to Play Bid Whist

Ginney Fowler, Kaye Graham | Thursday, 11:00am-12:15pm
6 weeks: 2/19, 2/26, 3/5, 3/12, 3/19, 3/26
Blacksburg Community Center | Limit: 15 | Fee: \$35

Before there was bridge, there was the game from which it derived, called *wist* or *whist*. This game, like most, went through various permutations, but the most significant change came in the early twentieth century, when it became known as bid whist. It is a quick and lively game, traditionally played with lots of “trash talk.” Participants in the class will learn the game by playing it, with plenty of help from the instructors. Once you learn the game, you’ll want to play it all the time!

INSTRUCTOR
Ginney Fowler and **Kaye Graham** retired from the Virginia Tech English department after many years of teaching. Longtime members of a bid whist club, they consider the game the “pinnacle of card-playing fun.”

47. Financial Strategies for Retirees

Chris French, Michael Canestrari | Thursday, 11:00am-12:30pm
4 weeks: 2/19, 2/26, 3/5, 3/12
Zoom | Limit: 25 | Fee: \$35

Investing seems to conjure images of fast, algorithm-driven trading - a world where individual investors are hopelessly out of depth. In this four-week LLI class, we focus on explaining the principles of long-term financial planning, wealth accumulation, management, preservation, and estate planning. We will give participants the concepts and tools to enable them to take control of their financial futures.

INSTRUCTOR
Chris French worked in banking investments in New York before joining and assuming the helm at Plott & French Financial Advisors in 2014. **Michael Canestrari** is a financial advisor with Plott & French.

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FINANCIAL ADVISORS

48. Maple Syrup: Producing Sweetness from Mother Nature

Tom Hammett | Thursday, 1:00pm-3:00pm
3 weeks: 2/19, 2/26, 3/5
CRC, Garvin Room | Limit: 18 | Fee: \$35

This hands-on course offers participants a unique opportunity to experience firsthand a sweet Virginia tradition - the sustainable tapping of maple and other trees to produce delicious syrup. The course will incorporate a variety of learning experiences: brief lectures on the history of and equipment used in production, a field experience demonstrating tapping techniques, independent return trips to collect and store sap, and a final session devoted to making and tasting maple syrup.

INSTRUCTOR
Tom Hammett is a professor in the Sustainable Biomaterials department at Virginia Tech. He teaches and conducts outreach in a variety of sustainable, nature-based enterprises. He seeks to raise awareness of the heritage of maple syrup production in this region and has introduced a range of tree syrups to Virginia landowners.

49. Smart Cycling Behavior

Robert Ferrari | Monday, 9:00am-10:15am
3 weeks: 2/23, 3/2, 3/9
VT Bike Hub | Limit: 15 | Fee: \$35

Do you enjoy bicycling but lack skills and confidence in bad weather or heavy traffic? Join Robert Ferrari as he leads you through the League of American Bicyclists “Smart Cycling” program, designed to improve skills, build confidence, and ensure safety on the road. The course will cover a wide range of topics, including choosing the right bicycle, understanding bicycle parts and equipment, and employing safe riding techniques in various conditions.

REQUIRED TEXT
League of American Bicyclists, *Smart Cycling Manual*
Available at <https://shop.bikeleague.org/products/smart-cycling-manual>.

INSTRUCTOR
Robert Ferrari is a lifelong bicyclist who recently became a League of American Bicyclists Cycling instructor. Taking the League course himself gave him life-saving skills that he looks forward to sharing with you.

50. Home Renovation for Aging in Place – Beyond the Bathroom

Chris Moore | Monday, 3:00pm-4:30pm
6 weeks: 2/23, 3/2, 3/9, 3/16, 3/23, 3/30
CRC, Concept Room | Limit: 36 | Fee: \$35

Grab bars, walk-in showers, raised toilets, non-slip floors. Recommendations for Aging in Place often focus exclusively on injury prevention and worst-case scenarios. In this class, we will address accommodations for changing mobility needs, but we’ll start from the premise that our homes should be backdrops for purposeful and fulfilling lives. Together we’ll explore possibilities for remodeling that will make the rest of our lives the best of our lives!

INSTRUCTOR
Chris Moore is a licensed contractor with 40 years of experience specializing in Aging in Place. In addition to his contracting work, he teaches the Certified Aging in Place Specialist (CAPS) course and is the author of the forthcoming book, *Age Out Loud! – Because Life Doesn’t Come with a Mute Button!*

51. Cantonese Mahjong

Gordon Yee | Tuesday, 10:30am-12:00pm
6 weeks: 3/17, 3/24, 3/31, 4/7, 4/14, 4/21
Blacksburg Community Center | Limit: 15 | Fee: \$35

Mahjong is a popular tile-based gambling game that originated in China. It is basically a rummy game, but with interesting twists that make the goal more than just getting rid of your cards first. If you have played the American version of the game, you will find Cantonese Mahjong quite different! This class will be taught in English, but we will use traditional Cantonese words for tiles, sequences, and other elements of the game.

INSTRUCTOR
Gordon Yee learned to play mahjong from his Cantonese grandmother and father and has been playing for about 50 years.

52. & 53. Appreciating Single Malt Scotch Whisky

SELECT ONE SESSION DATE
52. Session 1 | Don Creamer | Thursday, 3:00pm-4:30pm
1 week: 3/26
Instructor’s Home | Limit: 10 | Fee: \$25
53. Session 2 | Don Creamer | Thursday, 3:00pm-4:30pm
1 week: 4/16
Instructor’s Home | Limit: 10 | Fee: \$25

Single malt whisky is made from only three ingredients: water, barley, and yeast - yet it yields an unlimited variety of tastes. In this one-session class, we will learn what qualifies as a single malt scotch, how and where it is produced, and how best to discern its complex and distinctive flavors. Five single malts will be tasted, each with a distinctive flavor profile and each representing different distilling regions of Scotland. The course welcomes those with little (or no) experience with single malt Scotch whisky and those with expansive experience. Expect lively discussion during and between the tastings.

INSTRUCTOR
Don Creamer is associated with ScotchHunter.com, a partnership of three scotch-loving friends. Over the past 30 years, the partners have tasted and rated about 650 different single malt Scotch expressions.

54. Composing Your Retirement

Pamela Knox , Fred Piercy | Monday, 1:00pm-2:30pm
4 weeks: 3/30, 4/6, 4/13, 4/20
CRC, Concept Room | Limit: 16 | Fee: \$35

Retirement is a blank sheet of paper. What will we write on it? Most of us invest heavily in our professional lives, but before we know it that time is gone. POOF! We are retired, and now what? Joy, confusion, angst, or loss? Perhaps a great future for the next 20-30 years ... or maybe not. This four-week course will focus on the emotional and practical process of creating a retirement that fits who we are, who we want to be, and what gives us joy. The class will include mini-lectures, readings, prompts, case examples, interactive activities, and guided group discussions.

INSTRUCTOR

Pamela Knox was a tenured professor of counseling psychology at two Tennessee public universities. She has broad experience in higher education systems management as well as in organizational consultation.

Fred Piercy was a tenured professor of marriage and family therapy at three universities, including Virginia Tech, where he served as department head and associate dean.

55. Not Just Names: Genealogy Gold in Census Records

Rebecca Novy | Thursday, 9:00am-10:15am
2 weeks: 4/2, 4/9
CRC, Concept Room | Limit: 36 | Fee: \$25

The U.S. Census is more than just a headcount - it's a treasure trove for genealogists. In this two-part class, we'll uncover the fascinating history of the census and learn how to mine each decade's population schedule for valuable family clues. Then we'll go beyond the basics as we explore lesser-known records like the Agriculture, Industry, Mortality, Social Statistics, Veteran, and Slave Schedules of the U.S. census. These hidden gems offer rich insights into our ancestors' lives and the world they lived in.

INSTRUCTOR

Rebecca Novy, owner of Novy Genealogy, has been a passionate genealogist for nearly 30 years and a professional since 2018. She combines her deep experience in genealogy research with a love of teaching, helping others uncover their family histories through dynamic and informative genealogy classes.



Cooking & Crafts

56. Exploring Szechuan Cooking

Anne McNabb | Class 1 meets Friday, 2/20 via Zoom, 9:00am-10:30am; Class 2 meets in person, Friday, 2/27, 9:00am-1:30pm at the instructor's home
2 weeks: 2/20, 2/27
Limit: 12 | Fee: \$35

In this two-session course, we'll cook classic dishes of "the heavenly country," Szechuan, in the west central region of China. This cuisine features seven basic flavors: sour, pungent, hot, sweet, bitter, aromatic, and salty. Classic dishes often feature complex spicing with intense flavors presumed necessary to counteract the hot, humid climate of the region. Featured ingredients include Szechuan peppercorns, Szechuan fermented bean paste (Douban), garlic, spices like cumin and star anise, chili pepper, and ginger- as well as foods introduced from elsewhere: sesame and walnuts from the Middle East, chili peppers from Mexico, potatoes and corn from the New World.

INSTRUCTOR
Anne McNabb has been cooking Chinese banquets since graduate school. She has more than 90 Chinese cookbooks and has used them all to learn about making authentic foods from the many regions of China.

57. Knit A Designer Cardigan With Us!

Diana George, Nancy Metz | Friday, 11:00am-12:30pm
6 weeks: 2/20, 2/27, 3/13, 3/20, 3/27, 4/10
Instructor's home | Limit: 12 | Fee: \$35

LLI's Knit-Along welcomes old friends and newcomers to make a beautiful designer cardigan together. Isabell Kraemer's *don't ask* pattern is a simple, versatile sweater, worked seamlessly from the top down in worsted wool. It's tailored and classic, without cables, lace, or colorwork. Kraemer's *don't ask again* pattern is an alternative choice. It's the same basic design but knit with fingering yarn for a softer drape. This version of the original pattern offers instructions for optional stripes. Join our congenial group! We laugh, learn from each other, and celebrate with a potluck at the end - whether you have finished the sweater or not!
For pattern links or questions, contact nancy.metz@vt.edu.

INSTRUCTOR
Diana George and **Nancy Metz** learn something new with each pattern and from every one of the participants in LLI's Knit-Alongs.



58. Painting Barn Quilts

Joe Ivers | Monday, 12:00pm-1:30pm
6 weeks: 2/23, 3/2, 3/9, 3/16, 3/23, 3/30
Blacksburg Community Center | Limit: 14 | Fee: \$35 | Materials Fee: \$30

Long ago European immigrants identified their barns with painted quilt squares. The contemporary version of this traditional craft is still alive; quilt patterns painted on plywood or aluminum boards continue to decorate barns, homes, and other buildings, each pattern meaningful in some way. In this five-week class, we will learn about the barn quilt tradition, explore color theory, and acquire basic skills in painting and geometric-measuring. Participants will prepare their 2 X 2 feet barn quilts in the Indian Star pattern. Then they will select colors and measure, draw, and paint the design on an aluminum board.

INSTRUCTOR
Joe Ivers is a lifelong educator and loves teaching. He has taught the popular barn quilt painting course for LLI many times.

59. Create a Lavender Sachet

Paula Golden | Tuesday, 1:00pm-2:15pm
2 weeks: 2/24, 3/3
CRC, Curiosity Room | Limit: 16 | Fee: \$25

In this class, you will learn to design and sew a simple 9-patch bag (or two!). The sachet can be hung in a closet or nestled in a drawer to deter moths and impart a soothing fragrance. Traditional quilt piecing with templates will be taught. A materials list will be distributed before class begins.

INSTRUCTOR
Paula Golden is a nationally renowned quilter and teacher. She has taught multiple classes for LLI.

60. Create a Nine-Patch Table Runner

Paula Golden | Tuesday, 1:00pm-2:30pm
2 weeks: 3/10, 4/14
CRC, Curiosity Room | Limit: 16 | Fee: \$25

Bring your sewing machine and create a unique table runner for your home. You'll use a time-tested pattern to create a quilted runner, together with its with batting and backing. Advanced sewing skills are not required, but participants should be able to sew a straight stitch on a sewing machine with consistency and confidence. A materials list will be distributed before class begins.

INSTRUCTOR
Paula Golden is a nationally renowned quilter and teacher. She has taught multiple classes for LLI.

61. Cooking Up Art History

Lauren DiSalvo | Thursday, 3:00pm-4:30pm
6 weeks: 3/19, 3/26, 4/2, 4/16, 4/23, 4/30
Blacksburg Presbyterian Church | Limit: 14 | Fee: \$35 | Materials Fee: \$20

Food has long been a favorite subject for artists, but it would be a mistake to consider it just another form of "still life." Consider, for example, Judy Chicago's feminist art installation *The Dinner Party*, with its 39 settings for important women in history. In the first meetings of this six-week class, we'll learn about four different styles of modern art. Then we'll each work in teams and prepare recipes that embody that style of art. Presentation matters! What would a "feminist" or "futurist" dish look like and how would it speak to viewers? Join the hands-on fun as we "cook up art history." No prior cooking or art history knowledge necessary!

INSTRUCTOR
A classical archaeologist turned art historian, **Lauren DiSalvo** also greatly enjoys cooking and baking, so the relationship between food and art history has always been a side interest of hers.



62. Recent Engineering Disasters – Could They Have Been Avoided?

Tim Pratt, Shane McLaughlin | Monday, 9:00am-10:30am

4 weeks: 2/16, 2/23, 3/2, 3/9

Warm Hearth Village Center, Tall Oaks Room | Limit: 50 | Fee: \$35

The course will review recent disasters, their causes and consequences. Examples include the collision of an army helicopter and a passenger aircraft in Washington, D.C., the collapse of the Champlain Towers in Florida, and the destruction of the Francis Key Bridge in Baltimore.

Human factors are fundamental in preventing accidents. The chain of events leading to a disaster frequently begins long before an accident occurs. Safe working practices and regulation can break the chain before it starts, but the current administration wants to cancel thousands of regulations. How might this affect the safety of United States citizens?

INSTRUCTOR

Tim Pratt is a retired professor of engineering from Virginia Tech and a private pilot with a strong interest in the safety of flight.

Shane McLaughlin is the senior director of safety data analysis at Torc Robotics Inc. in Blacksburg. Formerly, he worked with the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute helping to develop driverless vehicles.

63. Wired for Thought: A Journey Through the Human Brain

Kylee Smith-Russell | Monday, 9:00am-10:15am

3 weeks: 2/16, 2/23, 3/2

CRC, Concept Room | Limit: 36 | Fee: \$35

The class offers a series of lectures on the basics of neuroscience, neurodegenerative disease, and healthy brain functioning. The neuroscience lecture will review the science of brain communication and anatomy, motor and sensory systems, and the characteristics of a healthy, aging brain. The second lecture focuses on neurodegenerative diseases (like Alzheimer's, dementia, and Parkinsons), and traumatic brain injury. The third lecture explores healthy brain hacks like physical activity, diet, and sleep.

INSTRUCTOR

Kylee Smith-Russell is a postdoctoral fellow at Virginia Tech specializing in research on traumatic brain injuries. She earned her doctorate in behavioral neuroscience from the University of Texas and focuses on identifying blood biomarkers to predict outcomes after TBIs in children and adults.

64. Weird Animals You Should Love or at Least Appreciate

Coordinators: Anne McNabb, Don Mullins | Thursday, 9:00am-10:30am

6 weeks: 2/19, 2/26, 3/5, 3/12, 3/19, 3/26

CRC, Concept Room | Limit: 36 | Fee: \$35

We may think of pets as family members and admire wild creatures for their beauty, courage, or humble usefulness, but let's face it, some animals are hard to love. The cockroaches that scuttle across our kitchen floors and the snakes that surprise us in the yard provoke fear and disgust. And let's not even think about the dietary habits of vultures! In this class, six experts will introduce us to little known facts about the animals we love to hate, including surprising scientific uses and significant value to the ecosystem.

- Feb 19. Kate Langwig, Joe Hoyt, Life in the Dark: Bats and Other Cave Dwellers
- Feb 26. Brent Opell, Spiders: Versatile but Underappreciated Predators
- Mar 5. Bob Sheehy, Vultures, the Sexy Lives of Nature's Flying Janitors
- Mar 12. Don Mullins, Cockroaches: Creepy, but Cryptic Survivors
- Mar 19. Jake Socha, How Snakes Move: From Slithering to Gliding
- Mar 26. Eric Hallerman, Horseshoe Crabs: From Awe to Science to Management

65. Bugs and Us: Insects and Our Culture

Curt Laub | Thursday, 3:00pm-4:00pm

3 weeks: 2/19, 2/26, 3/5

CRC, Concept Room | Limit: 24 | Fee: \$35

We will examine features that make insects the most successful group of animals on the planet, and we'll journey through time looking at the influence of insects on literature, art, music, commerce, technology, and religion. We will see why the lowly dung beetle was revered as a god in ancient Egypt, how the British got their red coats so red, how the Beatles came up with their name, why a town in Alabama has a monument to an insect, and much more. Expect insect-related cameos by Shakespeare, Beyonce, Groucho Marx, Marge Simpson, Bob Dylan, and others!

INSTRUCTOR

Curt Laub is a steel drum player and dahlia grower who retired from the Virginia Tech Department of Entomology in 2020. His research and extension work focused on insects attacking fruit and field crops.

66. Free, Self-paced Portals for Lifelong Learning

Marc Zaldivar, Amanda MacDonald | Thursday, 3:00pm-4:00pm
3 weeks: 2/26, 3/5, 3/12
CRC, Curiosity Room | Limit: 15 | Fee: \$35

Using digital badging technologies, many organizations are offering free, self-paced learning open to all and encompassing a huge range of skills, subjects, and services. Enrollment in such programs saw a 43% increase among seniors last year, with a remarkable 82% rate of program completion among older participants. Digital learning credentials offer seniors motivation, social connections, access to essential services, and empowerment through age-friendly platforms and resources. In this three-session course, we will discuss some of the many options available to learners, such as Smithsonian Learning Lab, IBM’s SkillBuild, and Open University’s OpenLearn.

INSTRUCTOR
Marc Zaldivar is an instructional designer and a long-time writing instructor at Virginia Tech. He specializes in the development of teaching technologies, especially those focused on learners telling their learning story.
Amanda MacDonald is a librarian and the faculty lead for digital credentialing of non-credit experiences at Virginia Tech. Her work focuses on the intersection of formal undergraduate research and student success outside of traditional classroom learning.

67. The Basics and Beyond: Making AI Work for YOU

Jen Mooney | Thursday, 3:00pm-4:15pm
4 weeks: 3/26, 4/2, 4/9, 4/16
CRC, Curiosity Room | Limit: 22 | Fee: \$35

Ready to make AI truly work for you? This four-week course builds on basic AI knowledge through hands-on practice and real-world applications. Week one reviews essential foundations, safety, and common pitfalls. Week two focuses on mastering the art of prompting, the skill that transforms basic AI interactions into powerful, personalized assistance. Week three explores practical uses: improving your writing, organizing tasks, planning projects, and researching topics of interest. The final week unleashes AI’s creative potential for hobbies and personal projects while teaching you to tackle complex, multi-step challenges. Each 75-minute session combines instruction with engaging activities. No AI experience required.

INSTRUCTOR
As the director of the Technical and Scientific Communication program in Virginia Tech’s English Department, **Jen Mooney** has taught technical writing courses that incorporate AI, and she routinely uses AI as an everyday writing companion. She has participated in numerous TLOS workshops on the subject and has presented at several campus events.

68. Birding Basics or What was that? Bring the binoculars!

Sally Pfeiffer | Class 1 meets Wednesday, 4/8, 1:00pm-2:00pm at CRC, Concept Room; Class 2 meets 4/14, 4/15, or 4/16, 8:00am-10:00am at Pandapas pond
2 weeks | Limit: 25 | Fee: \$25

In the first class of this two-part course, the whole group will meet together to learn about the methods and tools of birding and the kinds of birds commonly found in this area. Bring binoculars; time will be allotted to practice with them before taking them out into the field. Participants will then be assigned to small groups for separate birding adventures. Each group will meet at Pandapas pond on a designated date for an early morning stroll. With a little luck and the instructor’s guidance, groups will find and identify residents and migrant birds.
Binoculars can be checked out through Montgomery Floyd Regional Library; request an “I love Virginia” backpack ahead of time. There is a limited supply.

INSTRUCTOR
Sally Pfeiffer is a long-time member of the New River Valley Bird Club and editor of the newsletter. She is also a 40+ year member of the Virginia Society of Ornithology.

69. How to Become a Mushroom Fanatic

Gyorgyi Voros | Wednesday, 3:00pm-4:15pm
4 weeks: 4/8, 4/15, 4/22, TBD
CRC, Concept Room | Limit: 25 | Fee: \$35

Haven’t you heard? The future is fungi! Those odd, beautiful organisms perform invaluable ecological services for the planet and are big fun to forage for both science and gastronomy. This class introduces students to the basics of what a mushroom is and what it does; how to identify species; and how to avoid being poisoned by one. We’ll learn several “safe” edibles that are difficult to confuse with toxic species. Other topics: the role of community science; the importance of fungal conservation; best practices for foraging ethically. The course will be followed by a foraging experience.

INSTRUCTOR
Gyorgyi Voros taught in the Virginia Tech English Department for thirty years. Now retired, she indulges her passion for amateur mycology by participating in several local mushroom clubs, and reading and by foraging. She is on the board of the New River Valley Mushroom Club and on serves on several committees of the North American Mycological Association.

Field Trips

70. Backstage Pass: Tour of the Center for the Arts *In partnership with the Center for the Arts.*

Ben Jewell-Plocher | Thursday, Feb 12, 10:00am-11:15am
Center for the Arts, Virginia Tech | Limit: 40 | Fee: \$15

Go behind the scenes at the Center for the Arts at Virginia Tech. This exclusive tour offers a rare glimpse into the performance hall and backstage spaces. Discover the magic that brings world-class performances to life, from dressing rooms to technical marvels. Perfect for arts enthusiasts and curious minds alike.



GUIDE

Ben Jewell-Plocher is the associate director of engagement at the Center for the Arts at Virginia Tech

71. & 72. The Alexander Black House: From Family Home to Community Museum *In partnership with the Blacksburg Museum & Cultural Foundation.*

SELECT ONE SESSION DATE

71. Session 1 | Tuesday, Mar 3, 10:30am-12:00pm
Alexander Black House, 204 Draper Road NW, Blacksburg | Limit: 20 | Fee: \$15

72. Session 2 | Tuesday, Mar 10, 10:30am-12:00pm
Alexander Black House, 204 Draper Road NW, Blacksburg | Limit: 20 | Fee: \$15

Once the grand residence of Alexander Black, a founder of modern Blacksburg, this stately Queen Anne home has served as both a family dwelling and a funeral parlor. Today, the beautifully restored Alexander Black House welcomes visitors to explore the town's history through exhibitions, programs, and events. Learn about the Black family's legacy and how this landmark continues to be a vibrant centerpiece of community life.

GUIDE

Diana Francis is executive director of the Blacksburg Museum & Cultural Foundation.



73. From Earth to the Universe – Visit to the Radford University Planetarium

Rhett Herman | Friday, Mar 20, 2:00pm-4:00pm
Radford University Planetarium, Physics Dept, 925 East Main Street Center for the Sciences | Limit: 50 | Fee: \$15

The Radford University Planetarium is a special treasure for the New River Valley. Our host, Rhett Herman, will help us explore the universe using a state-of-the-art Digistar 7 system located in a 10-meter-diameter dome. We'll survey the night sky, fly through our solar system, experience the full-dome show *From Earth to Universe*, and then learn about the research that Professor Herman and his students conduct in northernmost Alaska. Enjoy this two-hour stellar adventure!

GUIDE

Rhett Herman is professor of physics at Radford University. In addition to overseeing the planetarium, he leads the biennial Arctic Geophysics Research Experience for undergraduates. This two-course experience culminates in a two-week deployment of their self-built environmental/geophysical sensors in Utqiagvik, Alaska, where the temperature can be 40 degrees below zero.



74. & 75. Take Flight: Hands-On Drone Experience

SELECT ONE SESSION DATE

74. Session 1 | Wednesday, Apr 15, 1:30pm-3:30pm
Virginia Tech Drone Park, 2143 Oak Park, Blacksburg (near Duck Pond) | Limit: 20 | Fee: \$15

75. Session 2 | Wednesday, Apr 22, 1:30pm-3:30pm
Virginia Tech Drone Park, 2143 Oak Park, Blacksburg (near Duck Pond) | Limit: 20 | Fee: \$15

Learn the basics of drone operation in this introductory session at the Virginia Tech Drone Park. After a short classroom overview and safety briefing, participants will move to the outdoor netted flight cage to try their hand at flying a drone, weather permitting. With guidance from our host and trained interns, everyone will enjoy about five minutes of personal flight time and the thrill of piloting their own drone in a safe, supportive environment.

GUIDE

Veronica Spradlin is the operations and training manager of the Virginia Tech Drone Park.



76. Roanoke Art + Architecture Walking Tour

Mac McIntyre | Thursday, Apr 16, 10:00am-11:00am | Rain date: Thursday, Apr 23
Taubman Museum of Art, 110 Salem Ave SE, Roanoke | Limit: 20 | Fee: \$25 includes guided tour

Discover downtown Roanoke's hidden treasures on this engaging one-mile walking tour led by a Taubman Museum staff member. Explore more than a dozen architectural gems - from Classical to Art Deco to Ultra-Modern - while hearing fascinating stories and trivia along the way. Whether you're new to Roanoke or a lifelong resident, you'll gain a fresh appreciation for the city's artistic and architectural landscape. The tour begins and ends at the Taubman Museum, with optional museum admission afterward.

This tour requires walking up to a mile and standing.



77. Spikenard Farm Honeybee Sanctuary in Floyd

Alex Tuchman | Tuesday, Apr 21, 10:00am-12:00pm
Spikenard Farm Honeybee Sanctuary, 401 Hideaway Lane SE, Floyd | Limit: 50 | Fee: \$15; \$5 donation requested at the door

Who are the honeybees? What do they need? How can we serve them? These are the central questions that guide the work at Spikenard Farm Honeybee Sanctuary, a biodynamic farm and education center located in Floyd, Virginia. Join Alex Tuchman for an engaging tour and presentation of the art and science of beekeeping. The Honeybee Sanctuary is a special place where we can learn about helping the honeybees and native pollinators to thrive in harmony with human beings.

Do not attend this program if you have a bee allergy.

GUIDE

Alex Tuchman is a beekeeper, educator, farmer, and author. As director of Spikenard Farm Honeybee Sanctuary, Alex oversees work with the bees, farm, education programs, and administration. His book, *A Lively Hive*, introduces the biodynamic beekeeping methods practiced at Spikenard Farm.

78. How Robotic-Assisted Surgery is Changing Hip Replacement *Healthy Dialogues with LewisGale Hospital Montgomery*

Bruce Byrd | Thursday, Apr 23, 5:00pm-6:30pm
LewisGale Hospital Montgomery, 3700 S. Main Street Blacksburg | Limit: 40 | Fee: \$15

Learn how robotic-assisted technology is transforming hip replacement surgery. This presentation will explain how surgeons use advanced robotic systems to plan and perform procedures with greater precision and control. You'll discover how this technology improves alignment, speeds recovery, and enhances patient outcomes. Whether you're curious about how it works or considering hip replacement yourself, this session will offer insights into the future of joint surgery and give you an opportunity to ask questions.

GUIDE

Bruce Byrd is an experienced surgeon who performs robotic-assisted procedures for a wide range of conditions. In this presentation, he will discuss how this advanced technology is used in hip replacement surgery and introduce the newest robotic system now available at LewisGale Hospital Montgomery.



79. From Source to Tap: Inside the NRV Water Treatment Plant

Caleb Taylor | Tuesday, Apr 28, 1:30pm-2:30pm

NRV Regional Water Authority, 155 Walton Rd, Radford | Limit: 20 | Fee: \$15

Join us for a behind-the-scenes tour of the New River Valley Regional Water Authority's treatment plant to discover how clean, safe drinking water is produced for our community. Learn about each step of the treatment process - from raw water intake to final quality testing - and meet the skilled operators who ensure that every drop meets rigorous safety standards. The Authority supplies water daily to Blacksburg, Christiansburg, Virginia Tech, and surrounding areas in Montgomery County. This tour includes some stairs.

GUIDE

Caleb Taylor is executive director of the NRV Regional Water Authority.



80. Old Salem Museums and Gardens in Winston Salem, NC

Offered by Blacksburg Parks and Recreation

Joy Herbert, Trip Coordinator | Thursday, Apr 30, 9:00am-6:30pm

Blacksburg Community Center | Limit: 18 | Fee: \$52/person payable to Blacksburg Parks and Recreation. Fees include transportation and entrance fees. Lunch on your own at Muddy Creek Cafe.



Enjoy the day at one of America's most comprehensive history attractions telling the stories of people, including Moravian, Black, and indigenous peoples. Enjoy a self-guided tour of the attractions and museums including the Historic Town of Salem, the galleries at Frank L. Horton Museum Center, the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts (MESDA), and the Gardens at Old Salem.

Bus transportation and trip coordination are provided by Blacksburg Parks and Recreation. If your registration is confirmed with LLI, you will be sent payment instructions. Your seat is not guaranteed unless and until you make payment to the trip coordinator. Tour minimum is 15; maximum is 18.



81. Behind the Fences: Virginia Tech's Livestock Research Centers

Dave Linker | Monday, May 4, 10:00am-11:30am

Etgen Large Animal Learning Center, 400 Plantation Road, Blacksburg | Limit: 20 | Fee: \$15

Did you know Virginia Tech maintains cattle, sheep, and horse centers within Blacksburg's town limits? Join Dave Linker for a behind-the-scenes tour of these Plantation Road facilities and learn about the care, management, and research that support the university's animal science programs. With more than 25 years of experience, Dave shares engaging stories and practical insights - and you might even catch a glimpse of newborn calves or lambs during this fascinating visit.

GUIDE

Dave Linker is a retired farm manager who oversaw agricultural operations and livestock management at the Plantation Road facilities. His work included managing the sheep center, cattle facilities, and equestrian center, as well as providing expertise on artificial insemination and other animal husbandry practices.

82. New River Raft Trip

Offered by Blacksburg Parks and Recreation

Madeline Showalter | Wednesday, May 6, 12:00pm-7:00pm

Rain date: Wednesday, May 13

Departs from and returns to Blacksburg Community Center | Limit: 12

Fee: \$40 payable to Blacksburg Parks & Recreation



Join LLI friends for a 2 to 3-hour gentle float along the beautiful New River in Giles County with our raft guides doing all the work. Afterwards, the group will travel to the Palisades Restaurant for a delicious group dinner (choose off the menu and pay for your own meal). Trip not suitable for mobility impaired.

Trip coordination is provided by Blacksburg Parks and Recreation. If your registration is confirmed with LLI, you will be sent payment instructions. Your participation is not guaranteed unless and until you make payment to the trip coordinator and sign a waiver form.

GUIDE

Madeline Showalter is the outdoor programs director at Blacksburg Parks and Recreation.

83. Exploring Virginia’s Natural Bridge: A Guided Hike Through History and Nature

Kenny Horowitz | Tuesday, May 12, 10:30am-12:30pm
Rain date: Wednesday, May 13
Natural Bridge State Park, 6477 South Lee Highway, Natural Bridge, VA
Limit: 25 | Fee: \$26 includes park entry and shuttle

Take a guided walk to the breathtaking Natural Bridge, once owned by Thomas Jefferson and now listed on the National Register of Historic Places. A shuttle will bypass the 137 steps and take us down to the paved trail (and back up). Walk along the scenic Cedar Creek trail to the 215-foot limestone arch, continue to Lace Falls, and visit the cave and Lost River opening. This 1.5-mile round-trip walk takes about 1 to 1 ½ hours. Pack your lunch and enjoy a picnic along the creek before returning to the Visitors Center.



GUIDE
Kenny Horowitz is a Natural Bridge Park ranger and head of the Education Department.

84. Steam, Sound, and Story: Exploring the O. Winston Link Museum

Kelly Robertson | Thursday, May 14, 10:30am-12:00pm, optional lunch at 12:15pm
O. Winston Link Museum, 101 Shenandoah Avenue, Roanoke | Limit: 25
Fee: \$20 includes museum entry fee; lunch not included

Join us for a day trip to Roanoke to explore the O. Winston Link Museum, showcasing the striking photographic and audio works created by Link from 1955 to 1960. The visit begins with a brief introduction to the museum’s history, followed by a film and a self-guided tour through its fascinating exhibits, including steam trains and so much more. Browse other exhibits at the museum before an optional lunch at Billy’s Ritz about 12:15 pm (meal cost not included).



These free programs are offered as a member benefit; register for as many as you plan to attend.

Free Lectures & Special Events

FREE LECTURES AT WARM HEARTH

LLI Sustaining Partner: Warm Hearth Village

Warm Hearth Village has been a Sustaining Partner of the Lifelong Learning Institute since our inception. Warm Hearth, with its convenient location for our members, generously offers us space for programs. In turn, LLI invites Warm Hearth residents to attend free lectures each term, even if they are not LLI members. Our valued partnership has contributed to LLI's success, and is one that we look forward to continuing in the coming year.

Non-member Warm Hearth residents are invited to attend the following talks held at Warm Hearth; registration is not required.



85. How Barn Quilts Lit Up the Landscape

Martha Dillard | Wednesday, Feb 11, 11:00am-12:00pm
Warm Hearth Village Center, Tall Oaks Room | Limit: 75 | Fee: \$0

Barn quilts are a vibrant expression of American folk art, inspired by the painted signs that once decorated rural barns. The modern barn quilt movement began in Ohio in 2001 and has since spread to every state. Since 2014, Martha Dillard has created more than 300 colorful quilt squares - ranging from two to eight feet - now displayed on buildings across Craig County, Virginia, and beyond. In this presentation, she shares how to design and paint barn quilts, while showcasing many of her beautiful works during her presentation.

PRESENTER
Martha Dillard is a local artist who has specialized in acrylic, abstract, and landscape paintings for decades. She began painting barn quilts in 2014 and has painted over 300, creating a trail in Craig County, Virginia.

86. Making Sports Safer: From Research to Real-World Impact

Steve Rowson | Friday, Mar 27, 10:00am-11:00 am
Warm Hearth Village Center, Tall Oaks Room | Limit: 75 | Fee: \$0

What began as research on football-related brain injuries has expanded into a program that improves safety for athletes, cyclists, and everyday consumers. Professor Rowson will share how his early helmet sensor studies led to the Virginia Tech Helmet Ratings, now a trusted guide for selecting safer gear. Through stories and examples from football to cycling, skiing, and even drones, he reveals how innovative research drives real-world advances in injury prevention.

PRESENTER
Steve Rowson, VT Helmet Lab Director, is a professor in the Department of Biomedical Engineering and Mechanics. He has been collecting head acceleration data from athletes for two decades and used these data to make sports safer through rule changes and improved protective equipment.

87. Time for Hospital Discharge, Now What?

Healthy Dialogues with LewisGale Hospital Montgomery
Missy Perkins, Beth Scott | Tuesday, Mar 24, 1:30pm-2:30pm
Warm Hearth Village Center, Tall Oaks Room | Limit: 75 | Fee: \$0

If you are hospitalized and require additional therapies, nursing care, or general assistance, what are your options? We will discuss requirements for insurance authorizations for each level of care as well as what post hospital care can look like. Bring your questions. The LGHM team is happy to provide answers or resources that may be helpful.

PRESENTERS
Missy Perkins is a speech-language pathologist with expertise in communication, cognitive, and swallowing disorders. She provides care across acute, outpatient, and skilled nursing settings and leads a multidisciplinary team of physical,

occupational, and speech therapists dedicated to high-quality, patient-centered rehabilitation.
Beth Scott is the director of case management at LewisGale Montgomery and LewisGale Pulaski. She started her career as a social worker in hospital case management, has decades of experience, and now directs a team of RN case managers, social workers, and a palliative care nurse.

88. Recognizing and Avoiding AI Scams

Shawn Smith | Friday, Apr 10, 11:00am-12:00pm
Warm Hearth Village Center, Tall Oaks Room | Limit: 75 | Fee: \$0

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is becoming a mainstay in our society. As technology advances, so does the work of scammers in using that technology to steal our information and money. This presentation is designed to educate seniors about some of the ways scammers can use AI to rob us of our resources. We'll cover phone scams, voice-cloning scams, and deep fake video scans, discussing ways to prevent, detect, and report each.

PRESENTER
Shawn Smith is the state director for the Virginia Senior Medicare Patrol program. He leads a statewide team in educating and assisting seniors in preventing and reporting healthcare errors, fraud, and abuse.

89. Against All Odds: The Journey of Women at Virginia Tech

Patricia Hyer | Wednesday, Apr 15, 10:30am-11:30am
Warm Hearth Village Center, Tall Oaks Room | Limit: 75 | Fee: \$0

Founded as an all-male, all-white, all-military institution, Virginia Tech remained that way until the mid-to-late 1960s, when women were finally admitted as full-time students in significant numbers. This program highlights the courageous women who challenged exclusion and opened doors for future generations to fully participate as faculty, staff, and students. We'll recall pivotal moments of change and invite participants to share their own journeys as employees or students at Virginia Tech.



PRESENTER
Patricia Hyer was associate provost for academic administration for more than 25 years at Virginia Tech. She helped launch the Women's Center in 1994, led a \$3.5M 7-year NSF grant on institutional transformation for faculty women in STEM fields, and helped implement a set of family-friendly policies for faculty members.

FREE WEBINARS

90. Titanic Unearthed: Stories Told Through Artifacts

Alexandra Klingelhofer | Friday, Feb 6, 1:30pm-3:00pm
Zoom | Limit: unlimited | Fee: \$0

The 1912 sinking of the RMS Titanic remains one of history's most compelling tragedies, bridging cultural, scientific, and social worlds. Yet it is the recovered artifacts that offer the most powerful connection to the ship, her passengers, and crew. This presentation explores the discovery, recovery, conservation, and exhibition of Titanic artifacts, revealing how each piece - from personal belongings to ship fittings - continues to illuminate new insights into the ship's story and the people who sailed aboard her.



PRESENTER
Alexandra Klingelhofer is an objects conservator specializing in archaeological artifacts from terrestrial and marine environments. She is the former executive director of collections in charge of the preservation and exhibition of recovered artifacts from the 1912 wreck of RMS Titanic.

91. The Moton School Story: Local Voices in a National Struggle

Leah Brown | Tuesday, Apr 7, 1:30pm-3:00pm
Zoom | Limit: unlimited | Fee: \$0

Explore how a small Virginia school helped spark a national movement for equality in education. This program connects the story of Moton High School in Farmville, Virginia, to landmark Supreme Court desegregation cases, including Plessy v. Ferguson and Brown v. Board of Education. Through the lens of Moton's student-led protests, discover how ordinary citizens shaped the Court's interpretation of the 14th Amendment and transformed the landscape of American public education.



PRESENTER
Leah Brown is associate director for education and collections at the Robert Russa Moton Museum. She creates onsite and digital outreach programming, coordinates educational tours, and manages the museum's collection.

LLI Spring 2026 REGISTRATION WORKSHEET

Please use this worksheet to collect your choices and to facilitate on-line or phone registration beginning at 9:30 am, January 14, 2026; credit cards only. Walk-in and mail-in registration are not available.

MEMBERSHIP FEE, SPRING TERM (REQUIRED) \$60

COURSES

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| <p><input type="checkbox"/> 1. Local Authors Exploring History, Monday, 2/16, 2/23, 3/2, 3/9, 3/16, 11:00am-12:15pm, in person, \$35</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 2. In Cold Blood (Or Was It?): Critiquing a True Crime Novel, Monday, 2/16, 2/23, 3/2, 3/9, 1:00pm-2:30pm, in person, \$35</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 3. A Brief, Backwards History of the English Language: 2026-1558, Monday, 2/16, 2/23, 3/2, 3/9, 3:30pm-5:15pm, in person, \$35</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 4. <i>Moby-Dick</i>: An Appreciation, Wednesday, 2/25, 3/4, 3/11, 3/18, 3/25, 4/1, 9:00am-10:30am, in person, \$35</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 5. The Contemporary Latin American Short Story, Wednesday, 2/25, 3/4, 3/11, 3/18, 3/25, 4/1, 1:00pm-2:30pm, in person, \$35</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 6. The Other Agatha Christies, Thursday, 3/12, 3/19, 3/26, 4/2, 4/9, 3:00pm-4:30pm, zoom, \$35</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 7. Kurt Vonnegut's Controversial Masterpiece, <i>Slaughterhouse Five</i>, Monday, 3/16, 3/23, 3/30, 4/6, 4/13, 4/20, 9:00am-10:30am, in person, \$35</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 8. Publication Boot Camp! Transforming Your Idea into a Published Book, Monday, 3/16, 3/23, 1:00pm-2:30pm, in person, \$25</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 9. The Novella: Forgotten Middle Child of Fiction, Tuesday, 3/17, 3/24, 3/31, 4/7, 4/14, 9:00am-10:00am, in person, \$35</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 10. Ivan Turgenev: A Russian Liberal, Tuesday, 3/17, 3/24, 3/31, 4/7, 4/14, 4/21, 3:00pm-4:30pm, in person, \$35</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 11. Jane Austen Book Club: <i>Emma</i> and <i>Persuasion</i>, Thursday, 3/19, 3/26, 4/2, 4/9, 4/16, 11:00am-12:15pm, in person, \$35</p> | <p><input type="checkbox"/> 12. Mrs. Dalloway Meets Janie Crawford: Love and Marriage in Two Modern Classics, Thursday, 3/19, 3/26, 4/2, 4/9, 4/16, 4/23, 1:00pm-2:15pm, in person, \$35</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 13. Read Local: Wendy Welch's <i>The Little Bookstore of Big Stone Gap</i>, Tuesday, 3/31, 4/14, 4/28, 11:00am-12:00pm, in person, \$35</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 14. Art Sampler, Monday, 2/16, 2/23, 3/2, 3/9, 2:00pm-4:00pm, in person, \$35 + \$75 Materials Fee</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 15. Drawing 101, Tuesday, 2/17, 2/24, 3/3, 3/10, 3/17, 3/24, 1:00pm-2:30pm, in person, \$35</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 16. Early Twentieth Century Song Hunters and Collectors, Wednesday, 2/18, 2/25, 3/4, 3/11, 1:00pm-2:30pm, zoom, \$35</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 17. Intermediate Watercolor Class: Energizing Your Paintings, Friday, 2/20, 2/27, 3/6, 3/13, 3/20, 10:00am-12:00pm, in person, \$35 + \$45 Materials Fee</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 18. Exploring Oil Painting, Monday, 2/23, 3/2, 3/9, 3/16, 3/23, 3/30, 9:00am-11:30am, in person, \$35 + \$20 Materials Fee</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 19. Singing for Seniors, Wednesday, 2/25, 3/4, 3/11, 3/18, 3/25, 4/1, 11:00am-12:00pm, in person, \$35</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 20. Opera for Everyone: An Opera Roanoke Presentation, Tuesday, 3/3, 1:00pm-2:00pm, in person, \$15</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 21. Aaron Copland: A Life in Music, Thursday, 3/12, 3/19, 3:00pm-4:00pm, in person, \$25</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 22. The Art, Science, and Mystery of Leonardo da Vinci, Monday, 3/16, 3/23, 3/30, 4/6, 4/13, 9:00am-10:15am, in person, \$35</p> | <p><input type="checkbox"/> 23. Draw Your World: Artistic Techniques and Visual Perception, Tuesday, 3/31, 4/7, 4/14, 4/21, 4/28, 5/5, 6:00pm-8:00pm, in person, \$35</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 24. Great Scores and Soundtracks from the Movies, Wednesday, 4/8, 4/15, 4/22, 4/29, 5/6, 11:00am-12:30pm, in person, \$35</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 25. The Future of Urban and Rural Communities, Tuesday, 2/17, 2/24, 3/3, 3/10, 3/17, 9:00am-10:00am, zoom, \$35</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 26. Great Decisions, Wednesday, 2/18, 2/25, 3/4, 3/11, 3/18, 3/25, 4/1, 4/8, 9:30am-11:00am, in person, \$35</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 27. Modern Africa: Challenges of Nation-Building, Thursday, 2/19, 2/26, 3/5, 3/12, 11:00am-12:30pm, in person, \$35</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 28. A History of the Railroads in Montgomery County, Thursday, 2/19, 2/26, 3/5, 3/12, 1:00pm-2:15pm, in person, \$35</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 29. Remarkable Women, Thursday, 2/19, 2/26, 3/5, 1:00pm-2:30pm, in person, \$35</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 30. American History Lite: A Gallery of Odd People and Strange Facts, Wednesday, 2/25, 3/4, 3/11, 3/18, 3/25, 4/1, 3:00pm-4:30pm, in person, \$35</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 31. Modern Architecture: Its Promise, Power, and Flawed Legacy, Wednesday, 2/25, 3/4, 3/11, 3/18, 3/25, 6:00pm-7:15pm, in person, \$35</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 32. The Prestons of Smithfield: Local History in the Making, Friday, 3/6, 3/13, 3:00pm-4:30pm, in person, \$25</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 33. Sound Effects: The Surprising Impact of Acoustic Environments, Monday, 3/9, 3/16, 3/23, 3:00pm-4:15pm, zoom, \$35</p> | <p><input type="checkbox"/> 34. Protestant Resistance in Nazi Germany: Lessons for Today, Thursday, 3/19, 3/26, 4/2, 4/9, 4/16, 4/23, 11:00am-12:15pm, in person, \$35</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 35. The Rise of American Plutocracy: Leaders, Strategies, Consequences, Monday, 3/23, 3/30, 4/6, 4/13, 4/20, 11:00am-12:00pm, in person, \$35</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 36. Sampler Speaker Series, Tuesday, 3/24, 3/31, 4/7, 4/14, 4/21, 9:00am-10:15am, zoom, \$35</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 37. The Supreme Court and the Fourth Amendment, Thursday, 3/26, 4/2, 4/9, 4/16, 4/23, 4/30, 1:00pm-2:30pm, in person, \$35</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 38. Appalachian Foodways, Wednesday, 4/1, 4/8, 4/15, 4/22, 4:30pm-6:00pm, in person, \$35</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 39. Dialogues Across Disciplines: "What is the Good Life and How Do I Live It?", Monday, Wednesday, Friday, 5/4, 5/6, 5/8, 11:00am-12:00pm, in person, \$35</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 40. Appreciating Grapes of the Rhone Valley, Monday, 2/16, 2/23, 3/2, 3/9, 3/16, 3/23, 3:00pm-4:30pm, in person, \$35 + \$150 Wine Fee</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 41. Appreciating Grapes of the Rhone Valley, Wednesday, 2/18, 2/25, 3/4, 3/11, 3/18, 3/25, 3:00pm-4:30pm, in person, \$35 + \$150 Wine Fee</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 42. Experience Yoga!, Tuesday, Thursday, 2/17, 2/19, 2/24, 2/26, 3/3, 3/5, 3/10, 3/12, 3/17, 3/19, 3/24, 3/26, 9:00am-10:30am, in person, \$50</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 43. Introduction to Mindfulness Meditation, Tuesday, 2/17, 2/24, 3/3, 3/10, 3/17, 3/24, 11:00am-12:30pm, in person, \$35</p> |
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- ❑ 44. How to Talk to a Medical Provider, Tuesday, 2/17, 3:00pm-5:00pm, in person, \$25
- ❑ 45. How to Talk to a Medical Provider, Tuesday, 3/10, 3:00pm-5:00pm, in person, \$25
- ❑ 46. Learn to Play Bid Whist, Thursday, 2/19, 2/26, 3/5, 3/12, 3/19, 3/26, 11:00am-12:15pm, in person, \$35
- ❑ 47. Financial Strategies for Retirees, Thursday, 2/19, 2/26, 3/5, 3/12, 11:00am-12:30pm, Zoom, \$35
- ❑ 48. Maple Syrup: Producing Sweetness from Mother Nature, Thursday, 2/19, 2/26, 3/5, 1:00pm-3:00pm, in person, \$35
- ❑ 49. Smart Cycling Behavior, Monday, 2/23, 3/2, 3/9, 9:00am-10:15am, in person, \$35
- ❑ 50. Home Renovation for Aging in Place – Beyond the Bathroom, Monday, 2/23, 3/2, 3/9, 3/16, 3/23, 3/30, 3:00pm-4:30pm, in person, \$35
- ❑ 51. Cantonese Mahjong, Tuesday, 3/17, 3/24, 3/31, 4/7, 4/14, 4/21, 10:30am-12:00pm, in person, \$35
- ❑ 52. Appreciating Single Malt Scotch Whisky, Thursday, 3/26, 3:00pm-4:30pm, in person, \$25
- ❑ 53. Appreciating Single Malt Scotch Whisky, Thursday, 4/16, 3:00pm-4:30pm, in person, \$25
- ❑ 54. Composing Your Retirement, Monday, 3/30, 4/6, 4/13, 4/20, 1:00pm-2:30pm, in person, \$35
- ❑ 55. Not Just Names: Genealogy Gold in Census Records, Thursday, 4/2, 4/9, 9:00am-10:15am, in person, \$25
- ❑ 56. Exploring Szechuan Cooking, Friday, 2/20, 2/27, Session 1 9:00am-10:30am-Session 2 9:00am-1:30pm, Zoom, in person, \$35
- ❑ 57. Knit A Designer Cardigan With Us!, Friday, 2/20, 2/27, 3/13, 3/20, 3/27, 4/10, 11:00am-12:30pm, in person, \$35
- ❑ 58. Painting Barn Quilts, Monday, 2/23, 3/2, 3/9, 3/16, 3/23, 3/30, 12:00pm-1:30pm, in person, \$35 + \$30 Materials Fee
- ❑ 59. Create a Lavender Sachet, Tuesday, 2/24, 3/3, 1:00pm-2:15pm, in person, \$25
- ❑ 60. Create a Nine-Patch Table Runner, Tuesday, 3/10, 4/14, 1:00pm-2:30pm, in person, \$25
- ❑ 61. Cooking Up Art History, Thursday, 3/19, 3/26, 4/2, 4/16, 4/23, 4/30, 3:00pm-4:30pm, in person, \$35 + \$20 Materials Fee
- ❑ 62. Recent Engineering Disasters – Could They Have Been Avoided?, Monday, 2/16, 2/23, 3/2, 3/9, 9:00am-10:30am, in person, \$35
- ❑ 63. Wired for Thought: A Journey Through the Human Brain, Monday, 2/16, 2/23, 3/2, 9:00am-10:15am, in person, \$35
- ❑ 64. Weird Animals you Should Love Or At Least Appreciate, Thursday, 2/19, 2/26, 3/5, 3/12, 3/19, 3/26, 9:00am-10:30am, in person, \$35
- ❑ 65. Bugs And Us: Insects And Our Culture, Thursday, 2/19, 2/26, 3/5, 3:00pm-4:00pm, in person, \$35
- ❑ 66. Free, Self-paced Portals for Lifelong Learning, Thursday, 2/26, 3/5, 3/12, 3:00pm-4:00pm, in person, \$35
- ❑ 67. The Basics and Beyond: Making AI Work for YOU, Thursday, 3/26, 4/2, 4/9, 4/16, 3:00pm-4:15pm, in person, \$35
- ❑ 68. Birding Basics or What was that?, Wednesday, 4/8, 4/14 or 4/15 or 4/16 based on groups, First Session: 1:00pm – 2:00pm Second Session: 8:00am-10:00am, in person, \$25
- ❑ 69. How to Become a Mushroom Fanatic, Wednesday, 4/8, 4/15, 4/22, TBD, 3:00pm-4:15pm, in person, \$35

OUT AND ABOUT FIELD TRIPS

- ❑ 70. Backstage Pass: Tour of the Center for the Arts, Thursday, 2/12, 10:00am-11:15am, \$15
- ❑ 71. The Alexander Black House: From Family Home to Community Museum, Tuesday, 3/3, 10:30am-12:00pm, \$15
- ❑ 72. The Alexander Black House: From Family Home to Community Museum, Tuesday, 3/10, 10:30am-12:00pm, \$15
- ❑ 73. From Earth to the Universe – Visit to the Radford University Planetarium, Friday, 3/20, 2:00pm-4:00pm, \$15
- ❑ 74. Take Flight: Hands-On Drone Experience, Wednesday, 4/15, 1:30pm-3:30pm, \$15
- ❑ 75. Take Flight: Hands-On Drone Experience, Wednesday, 4/22, 1:30pm-3:30pm, \$15
- ❑ 76. Roanoke Art + Architecture Walking Tour, Thursday, 4/16, 10:00am-11:00am, \$25
- ❑ 77. Spikenard Farm Honeybee Sanctuary in Floyd, Tuesday, 4/21, 10:00am-12:00pm, \$15
- ❑ 78. How Robotic-Assisted Surgery is Changing Hip Replacement, Thursday, 4/23, 5:00pm-6:30pm, \$15
- ❑ 79. From Source to Tap: Inside the NRV Water Treatment Plant, Tuesday, 4/28, 1:30pm-2:30pm, \$15
- ❑ 80. Old Salem Museums and Gardens in Winston Salem, NC, Thursday, 4/30, 9:00am-6:30pm, \$52
- ❑ 81. Behind the Fences: Virginia Tech's Livestock Research Centers, Monday, 5/4, 10:00am-11:30am, \$15
- ❑ 82. New River Raft Trip, Wednesday, 5/6, 12:00pm-7:00pm, \$40
- ❑ 83. Exploring Virginia's Natural Bridge: A Guided Hike Through History and Nature, Tuesday, 5/12, 10:30am-12:30pm, \$26
- ❑ 84. Steam, Sound, and Story: Exploring the O. Winston Link Museum, Thursday, 5/14, 10:30am-12:00pm, \$20

FREE SPECIAL EVENTS

- ❑ 85. How Barn Quilts Lit Up the Landscape, Wednesday, 2/11, 11:00am-12:00pm
- ❑ 86. Making Sports Safer: From Research to Real-World Impact, Friday, 3/27, 10:00-11:00am
- ❑ 87. Time for Hospital Discharge, Now What?, Tuesday, 3/24, 1:30pm-2:30pm
- ❑ 88. Recognizing and Avoiding AI Scams, Friday, 4/10, 11:00am-12:00pm
- ❑ 89. Against All Odds: The Journey of Women at Virginia Tech, Wednesday, 4/15, 10:30am-11:30am
- ❑ 90. Titanic Unearthed: Stories Told Through Artifacts, Friday, 2/6, 1:30pm-3:00pm, Zoom
- ❑ 91. The Moton School Story: Local Voices in a National Struggle, Tuesday, 4/7, 1:30pm-3:00pm, Zoom

REGISTRATION OPENS WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 14 AT 9:30AM

Corporate Research Center Locations

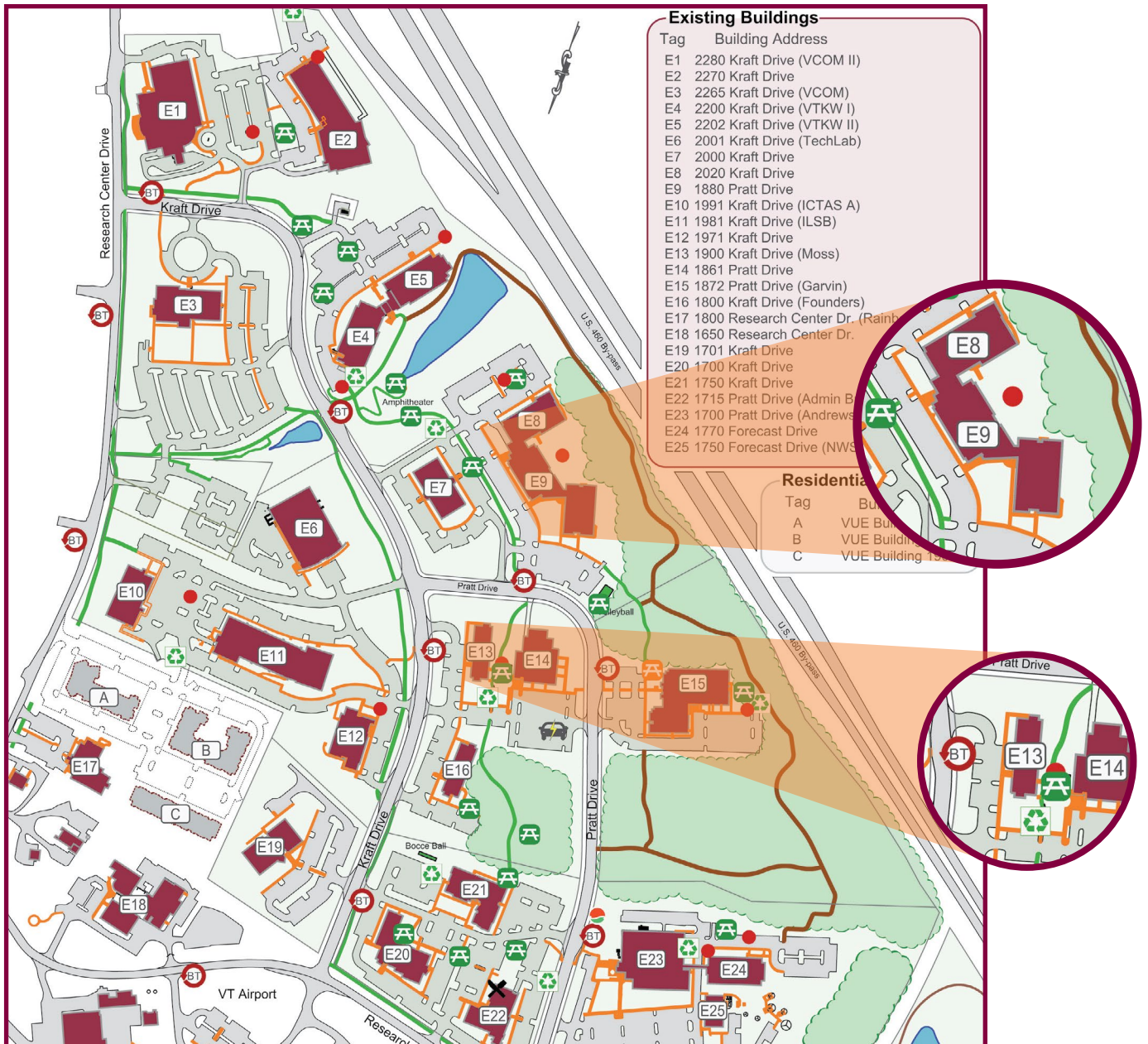
E7: 2000 Kraft Dr.
Crescent Room
Suite 2100

In Balance Yoga
Suite 1204

E9: 1880 Pratt Dr.
Concept Room
Suite 2018

E13: 1900 Kraft Dr.
Curiosity Room
Suite 1000

E15: 1872 Pratt Dr.
Garvin Room
Suite 1050



Easy parking at CRC – no fees, no permit needed, no hassle finding a space.



Lifelong Learning Institute of Virginia Tech®
Continuing and Professional Education
1900 Kraft Drive, Suite 1100
Blacksburg, VA 24061

**SPRING
2026**

REGISTRATION OPENS WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 14 AT 9:30AM

SCAN TO REGISTER



Register online by visiting the LLI Home page at
www.cpe.vt.edu/lifelonglearning and clicking REGISTER.

This is the fastest way to register. We recommend registering online whenever possible.

Register by phone by calling **540-231-5182**.

Please note that there will be no walk-in or mail-in registration.