



# *Renaissance Academy at Chicago NFP*

*Spring 2025*

*April 8 – May 15, 2025*

*Located at*

*Saint Xavier University*

*3700 West 103rd Street*

## **What is the Renaissance Academy?**

The Renaissance Academy is an association of retired and semi-retired men and women who get together to experience intellectual growth in an environment that is open to all who believe in pursuing the Academy's lifelong learning opportunities.

Members are encouraged to volunteer their energy and skills to make the program successful. Please consider how you might contribute your time and talent to our organization.

## **Renaissance Academy Information**

Email: [renaissancechgo@gmail.com](mailto:renaissancechgo@gmail.com)

Phone: 773-298-3149. **This is an answering machine only. Please leave a message.**

The Newsletter can be accessed on the Renaissance Academy website:

<https://www.renaissancechgo.org>.

## **Spring 2025 Registration**

If you enrolled in fall, you are a **CURRENT MEMBER** and just need to register for classes. Registration runs from March 21 – March 28 on line at: <https://www.renaissancechgo.org>

**Go to the Course Registration page and fill out the Course Registration Form**

**If you are not currently a member** and wish to join Renaissance Academy, please go to <https://www.renaissancechgo.org>, select “Membership” and fill out the enrollment form. The membership enrollment fee for the entire year is \$180 and instructions for payment are on the site.

**Every member must have access to email. No information or materials will be mailed.**

The fee includes: classes for all three terms, Christmas and Spring luncheons, use of the Shannon Center track on Tuesdays and Thursdays, Renaissance Forum (formerly Farrell Forum), and the opportunity to audit an SXU class with consent of professor.

**While participating in our various programs, you may be included in photos and/or videos. These photographs and videos are used in a variety of publications and advertising materials. By registering for our programs, participants consent to the use of these photos and videos.**

Requests for assistance can be emailed to  
[renaissancechgo@gmail.com](mailto:renaissancechgo@gmail.com).

**The final date for registering is March 28, 2025.**



Time continues to fly! The Winter Term seemed to go very fast! I really enjoyed every class I took. I have come to enjoy the sense of community I feel in Zoom classes. And, of course, it is really good to connect in person in regular classes and at our social events!

During the last week of our Winter Term classes, we had another fun TGITT in SXU's Butler Room. Thank you to Sandra Diaz, our St. Xavier liaison, for helping us set this up, to Sandy Stephens and her helpful volunteers, and to Ana Gomez and her Country House staff for delicious food and excellent service.

Once again, we have a variety of Spring Term classes from which you can choose. On Tuesdays, you can debate the "News and Views" of the day, or take a class on Zentangles, an artistic meditative approach on how to deal with the stress of the news and/or other life issues. You can discuss George Orwell's *1984* fiction or explore human behavior. Thursday will provide the possibilities of learning about history (Irish) or thinking about the future (A.I.) And finally, there will be opportunities to hear about the musical sounds of birds (warblers) or people (musical productions.) There will also be a poetry gathering and several book clubs. All of these offerings sound good to me. It's always hard to make choices!

I hope to see you all soon!  
Jean Day, President

**Spring 2025 Session  
April 8 – May 15  
On Campus**

**Tuesday 2:30-3:30**

- 1. Zentangle: Meditative Drawing for Stress Relief  
Mary Ellen Ziegler**
- 2. News and Views  
Mike Yeager and team**

**Tuesday 3:45- 4:45**

- 3. George Orwell : Part II  
Mike Young / Mike Yeager**
- 4. The Mysteries of Human Behavior  
Maureen Connolly**

**Spring 2025 Session  
April 8 – May 15  
On Campus**

**Thursday 2:30 – 3:30**

5. **AI and You: A Practical Guide**  
**Pat Schultz**
  
6. **The Irish Identity, Independence, History and Literature**  
**Sharon Coghlan Gerc - Madonna Murphy**

**Thursday 3:45 – 4:45**

7. **Anatomy of a Song**  
**Betty Kort**
  
8. **Wonderful World of Warblers**  
**Mike Hastings**

**Monday**  
**Zoom – 11:00 AM**

- 9.    *A Sunny Morning* / A Playwriting Workshop  
Betty Kort**

**Tuesday 2:30 - 3:30**  
**On Campus**

**1. Zentangle: Meditative Drawing for Stress Relief**  
**Mary Ellen Ziegler**

Had enough?

Need to take a break from “stuff?”

Join us once a week for drawing exercises that combine repetitive motions and meditation techniques to engage us completely. Design activities like Zentangle demand rapid shifting in the brain between right and left that promotes concentration and creativity. Unlike doodling, your movement is not random so that, hopefully, you're involved enough to experience “flow.”



The designs are “non-objective,” i.e., we won't try to draw realistic subject matter. That eliminates the stress of being correct! Instead, you will follow step-by-step instructions that require concentration and calm. The exercises

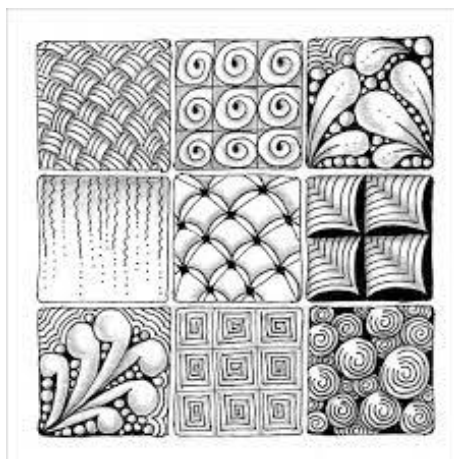


use repetition, symmetry and organization to design the space. Our brains like this, so you won't worry about results as you engage in the process. As time allows, we can play with color too.

Drexel University study found "that for the majority of people, making art for as little as 45 minutes a day reduces the stress hormone cortisol, no matter your skill level or experience" - *Your Brain On Art* by Susan Magsamen & Ivy Ross.

Your Facilitator Mary Ellen Ziegler became a certified Zentangle instructor in 2019.

Please bring a black micron pen size 01 or another fine point permanent pen to the first class. They are sold at Michaels.



## 2. News and Views

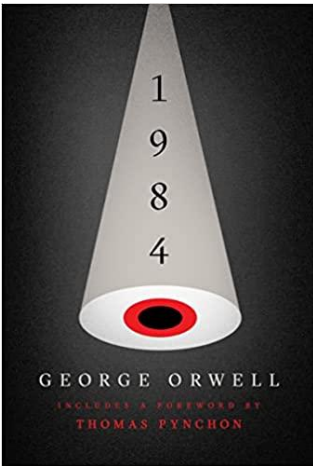
**Jim Condon, Mary Hendry, Nancy North,  
Mike Yeager, Mike Young**

Our day is filled with events that alter, illuminate, and often surprise us and you are there front and center! Join us as we attempt to make sense of the news of the day. Your perspective, of course, is always welcome.



**Tuesday 3:45 - 4:45**  
**SXU on campus**

### **3. George Orwell: Part II** **Mike Yeager – Mike Young**



This is Part II of the Great Courses series on **George Orwell** led by Professor Michael Shelden, PhD, from Indiana State University.

The purpose of this course is to understand how George Orwell rose from provincial obscurity to become the most influential British author of the last 100 years. With uncanny foresight Orwell warned against so many of the ills plaguing modern life, especially the rise of the surveillance state, tyranny of group-think, the clever lies of propaganda, and the pursuit of power for its own sake.

Class members may want to read Orwell's novel **1984**, the source of the term, *Orwellian*. It will be the focus of spring quarter. And, if you want to catch up, **Animal Farm** was discussed in Winter term.

## 4. The Mysteries of Human Behavior

### Maureen Connolly

The DVD program chosen for the spring session is a continuation of the presentation from the Great Courses Program *UNDERSTANDING THE MYSTERIES OF HUMAN BEHAVIOR*. We will continue to listen to and examine some of the particularly puzzling aspects of human nature---features of people's thoughts, emotions and behaviors that have intrigued scientists and laypeople alike. Relying on the latest theories and research from psychology, neuroscience, and other behavioral sciences, each lecture, in this course, addresses a provocative question about human behavior. The six lectures we will discuss during the winter session are:



- *Why Don't Adolescents Behave Like Adults?*
- *How Much Do Men and Women Really Differ?*
- *Why Are Prejudice and Conflict So Common?*
- *Why Do People Fall in and Out of Love?*
- *What Makes Relationships Succeed or Fail?*
- *A Few Mysteries We Can't Explain Yet.*

Professor Mark Leary, a Family Professor of Psychology and Neuroscience at Duke University, will present this series of lectures. Professor Leary is the author of a dozen books on social motivation, emotion and ego. He is among the world's top social and personality psychologists.

Prior attendance from previous terms is not required because each Video is complete on its own.

**Thursday 2:30 – 3:30**  
**SXU on campus**

## **5. AI and You: A Practical Guide**

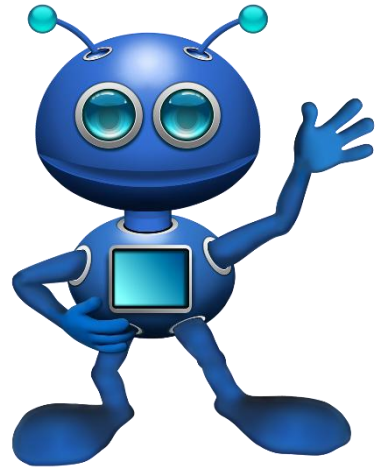
### **Pat Schultz**

Are you worried about what AI can do or will do? Or are the stories boring to you? Do you assume that you won't use it? Did you know that you're already using it? Are you curious enough to try to get a handle on it?

In our spring course, we'll look into how Artificial Intelligence is already integrated with our devices—our phones, tablets, iPads. How can we make use of it to save time and money? How can we use it to get information and organize our days, improve our financial planning and trip itineraries? What are some of the exciting uses in business, medicine and education right now?

We'll learn what a chatbot is and what it can do. The course will also introduce some useful tools like *Google's NotebookLM*, *Illuminate* and *Napkin*.

And, although the landscape of A.I. is evolving rapidly, our objective is to become well-informed and take steps toward understanding, enjoying and using this technology wisely.



## 6. The Irish Identity, Independence, History and Literature

Sharon Coghlan Gerc – Madonna Murphy

We complete the Ireland series this term with the final stops in our journey to Ireland. Dr. Marc Conner, narrator from The Great Courses, will focus on the final destinations in our course, *Irish Identity Independence, History, and Literature* during the spring term. In this final course, we



will examine Irish history starting with the Dublin Lockout and World War I in Week 1. We will move on to Michael Collins and the War of Independence and The Irish Civil War in Week 2 followed by a look at *Ulysses: A Greek Epic* in an Irish World and Sean O'Casey's *Dublin Trilogy* in Week 3. As we move on into Week 4, we will learn about the Blasket Island Storytellers and *Finnegans Wake*: Joyce's Final Epic. The final two weeks will cover Patrick Kavanagh: After the Renaissance and Modern Ireland in Paint and Glass. The final week we go to De Valera's Ireland in the 1930's with the final lesson being from Seamus Heaney's Poetry of Remembrance.

Each 30-minute tour includes beautiful scenery and historical information about the Irish identity and the impact on its independence, role in history, literature and art. Those who have traveled to Ireland are encouraged to share their experiences as we watch and learn about Ireland together.

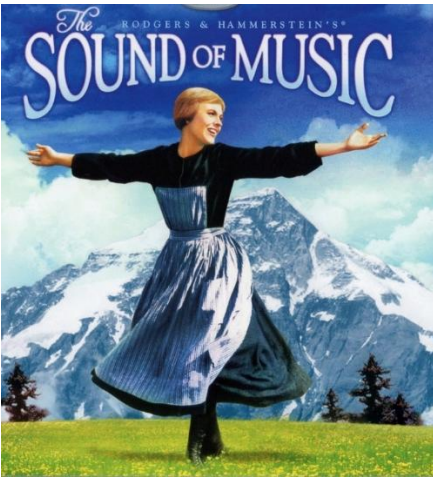


**Prior attendance from previous terms is not required because each video is complete on its own.**

**Thursday 3:45 - 4:45**  
**SXU on campus**

## **7. Musicals and the Stories behind Them**

### **Betty Kort**



The musical has enthralled, enchanted, and enraptured audiences for more than 100 years. We will discover together what is the quintessential American art form: **the Musical**. Using the many reference books that are dedicated to the art form, I will profile some of the best, biggest, most influential, and

most fascinating musicals ever produced. The men and women who shaped musical history - such as Stephen Sondheim, Andrew Lloyd Weber, Richard Rodgers, Oscar Hammerstein II. All are celebrated for their groundbreaking work.

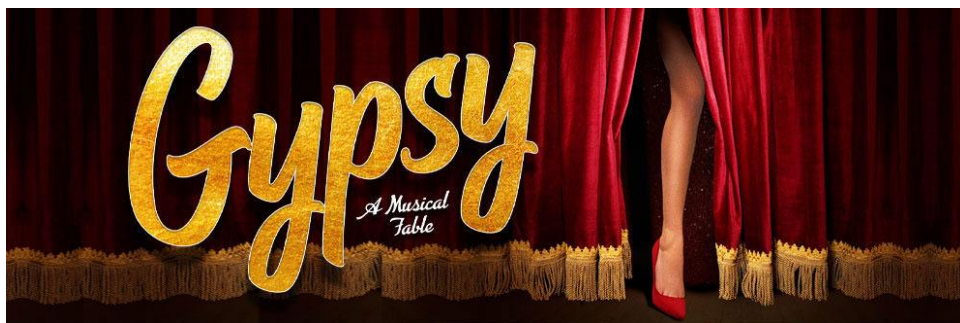
The beauty of technology will allow me to share clips and photographs that illustrate the stunning designs of the shows profiled. Reference materials available from the library will be the ultimate guide to Broadway shows, filled with insider knowledge.



Theater fans will appreciate the fantastic Broadway trivia shared as well as the palpable sense of history of some America's most beloved pastimes. A handful of the shows will be featured in the Spring

Session. One of special interest is **Gypsy!** The Beverly Theatre Guild is presenting this timeless classic the first weekend in May and

there will be at least one class that will include talent involved in this production. The list of musicals is extensive. Which one is your favorite: *Annie, Bye Bye Birdie, Fiddler on the Roof, Grease, Guys and Dolls, Hello Dolly, Kiss Me Kate, Les Miserables, The Music Man, My Fair Lady, West Side Story, The Phantom of the Opera, Rent?* We will start with ***The Sound of Music!***



## 8. Wonderful World of Warblers

### Mike Hastings

There are 115 species of wood warblers living between North, Central and South America and the Caribbean - 56 species are found in the United States and Canada with 19 breeding in Illinois.



In the spring, the Mississippi flyway funnels millions of these birds toward their breeding grounds in Canada and Alaska. Chicagoland is a major stop-over, where warblers rest and refuel. They arrive at night preparing to stir the tree-tops on a dawn in May with hundreds of flashes of yellow, orange and green. Such a spectacle is not commonly seen.



This course will help make warblers more accessible. We will examine their migration routes- some warblers endure a 1700 mile non-stop over the ocean from South America to New England. Also, we will consider some of their odd behaviors - one warbler survives winter by eating poison berries!

As well we will look at their unusual habitats - a Michigan bird only eats the seeds of young growth Jackpines. Finally, we will learn how to spot and identify warblers in your own backyard!

**Monday - ZOOM**  
**11:00 AM**

**9. *A Sunny Morning* / A Playwriting Workshop**  
**Betty Kort**

The play *A Sunny Morning* was written in the early 1900's. It is a very sweet and funny one act play, set in a park in Madrid. Since the play is in the public domain, we can make changes without violating copyright laws. This class will be a collaboration of all our ideas. The object of the class: adapt the play, change the setting and characters to tell the story from an Irish perspective.

Here are some of the ways we will adapt this play to have an Irish theme: Setting and Atmosphere, Dialogue and Language, and the easiest will be to change the names of the characters. We will also find ways to insert Cultural References and identify appropriate props and costumes to reflect Irish culture. Once we are happy with our finished product, we will find some actors to present it. I have the perfect venue for this production: Irish Fest at Gaelic Park in late August, 2025. Each year the theater group Gaelic Park Players sponsors the Performing Arts Stage at Irish Fest. We will all be named co-producers! My friend Phyllis Bierdz has experience writing plays (she is a published author) and she has agreed to help us in this creative writing process.

This class will be held on Zoom, Mondays at 11:00AM, starting on Monday, April 14. Once I get the names of the people interested in this project and enrolled in the class, I will send you a copy of the original play.



# **APRIL IS NATIONAL POETRY MONTH!**

**Let's celebrate by getting together and sharing our favorite poems!**

**Jean Day - facilitator**

**Choose a poem from your childhood, your high school or college days, or a verse that has pulled at your heart for some reason or another. It could be funny, touching, and/or thought-provoking. It could be beautifully phrased or discordant. It could be a song, a rap, or a psalm.**

**You may want to share why this poem is meaningful to you. You may want to read it, sing it, or recite it from memory. Anything goes!**

**Please join us on April 17 at 11:00 A.M.**

**Location:  
Evergreen Park Library  
9400 S. Troy Avenue  
Evergreen Park, IL**



**Book Club**  
***My Life in France***  
**by Julia Child and Alex Prud'homme**  
**Mike Hastings – Facilitator**  
**May 6 - Oak Lawn Library - Noon**

**"...learn from your mistakes, be fearless and above all, have fun."**



While Julia Child's advice is intended for cooking, it also pertains to how she lived her life outside of the kitchen. *My Life in France*, begins with Julia arriving in France in 1948 (at age 32) charging ahead to win Cordon Bleu certification, joining Simone Beck and Louisette Bertholle in their struggle to complete *Master the Art of French Cooking* and propelled by a new media, television, to star in "the French Chef".

This memoir shows how an enthusiastic young woman grew into an American icon. A read that will both wet your appetite, for a slice of a Charolette Russe, and a sip of champagne and will satisfy the soul for being in touch with a life well lived.

## For Your Information

Some have inquired about auditing a class at Saint Xavier University as this is one of the benefits of Renaissance membership.

Saint Xavier University's next term (Spring Term) begins on January 13 and ends on May 10, 2025.

You may find a course catalog on the website:

<https://www.sxu.edu/catalog/resources/documents/undergraduate-catalog-2024-25.pdf>

To request to audit a class, complete the audit form and have it signed by the instructor. The processing fee is \$25 for SXU Alums and Renaissance Academy members.

The audit form can be found at,

<https://www.sxu.edu/academics/guidance/records/forms.aspx>,

or the PDF form,

<https://www.sxu.edu/academics/guidance/records/docs/audit-form.pdf>.

Return the completed, form to the records office along with the processing fee to audit the class.

# Spring 2025

## Dates to Remember

<b>March 21-28</b>	<b>On line registration</b>
<b>April 8</b>	<b>First day of Spring term</b>
<b>May 6</b> <b>Oak Lawn Library</b> <b>12:00 PM</b>	<i><b>My Life in France</b></i> <b>Mike Hastings</b>
<b>May 15</b>	<b>Last Day of Spring Term</b>
<b>May 20</b> <b>12:00 PM</b>	<b>Spring Luncheon</b> <b>Orland Chateau</b>



# OFFICERS, COMMITTEE & BOARD MEMBERS

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<b>Historian:</b>	Pat Schultz* / Peggy Devlin Casey
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