



## *Renaissance Academy at Chicago NFP*

*Spring 2026*

*April 7 – May 15, 2026*

*Located at*

*Saint Xavier University*

*3700 West 103rd Street*

*We are offering classes on campus on Tuesday and Thursday.*

*We will also offer classes online on Wednesday via Zoom.*

# 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 2026 Registration**

**If you enrolled in fall, you are a CURRENT MEMBER and just need to register for classes. Registration runs from March 20-March 27, 2026 on line at:**

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

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

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

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

**The final date for registering is March 27, 2026.**



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 Marcia Levin and her helpful volunteers, and to Ana Gomez and her Country House staff for a delicious Greek dinner 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. We will have the opportunity to get excited about energy or participate in a Maeve Binchy book discussion. Thursday will provide the possibilities of hearing about the various Marian apparitions, learning about the artistic value of quilts, or talking together about good food. There will be opportunities to hear about the musical sounds of warblers or to participate in discussions of international interest in "Great Decisions." There will also be a poetry gathering and a book club with an optional fun field trip.

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 2026 Session  
April 7 – May 15  
On Campus**

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

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

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

3. **Bicycling -Jim Sim Week One**  
**Excitement with Energy**  
**Terrence Malloy**
4. ***Whitehorn Woods***  
**Maureen Connolly**

**Spring 2026 Session  
April 7 – May 15  
On Campus**

**Thursday 2:30 – 3:30**

5. **Marian Apparitions  
Brian and Erin McCann**
6. **The Art of Quiltmaking  
Betty Kort**
7. **The Book of Dan-The Ultimate Journey  
Dan Lynch**

**Thursday 3:45 – 4:45**

8. **The Wonderful World of Warblers  
Mike Hastings**
9. **Great Decisions  
Marcia Levin**
10. **Tasty Talk  
Caron Beissmann / Rita Hannon**

**Spring 2026 Session  
April 7– May 15  
Zoom**

**Wednesday**

**1:30 – 2:30**

- 11. From Archives to AI: Preserving Our Past and Powering Our Future**

**Pat Schultz**

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

### **1. News and Views**

**Kathy Austin, Matt Costello, Mary Hendry,  
Sr. Jean Mc Grath, Dan Mc Grath,  
Patrick Monahan, Nancy North, and Mike Yeager**

News & Views is a current events exercise. We dip into international and local news, as well as pop culture events. We encourage class participation and are at our best when we hear everyone's opinions.



Our day is filled with events that alter, illuminate, and often surprise us and you are there front and center!

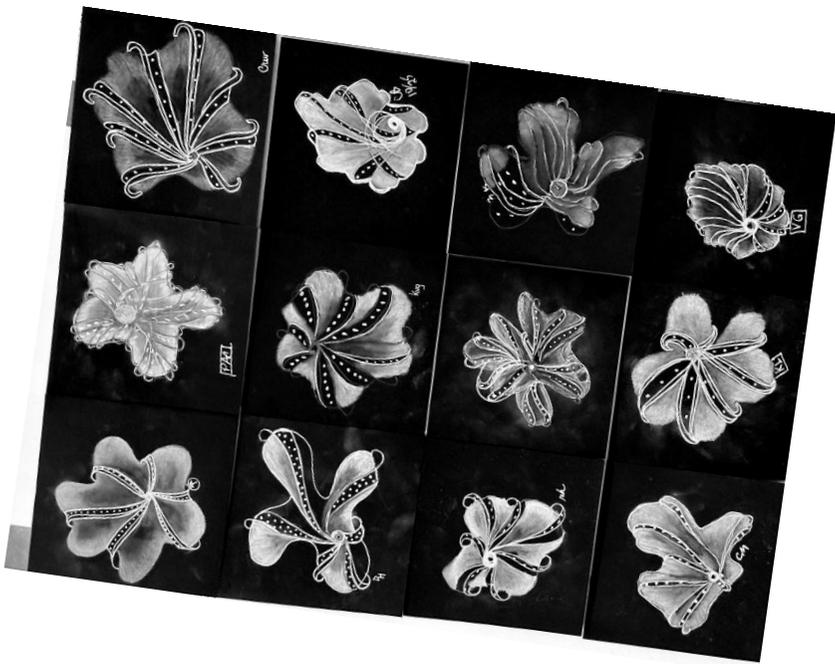
Join us as we attempt to make sense of the news of the day. Your perspective, of course, is always welcome.

## 2. Zentangle: Meditative Drawing for Stress Relief

**Carmen Reyes / Mary Ellen Ziegler**

“Anyone can draw one line at a time, no mistakes, no experience needed, just amazement, peaceful, supportive, companionship & gratitude.” The simple act of creating these patterns and processes leads many to find a deeper focus and inner quiet - like some of the best sound and walking meditations.

Please bring a micron black pen - 02, 03 or 05 and a white gel pen ( or gold or silver) and another color - any number ( I liked green and/or red)



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

### **3. Exciting Energy** **Terrence Malloy**



We hear the word ENERGY used a lot, almost every day. But did you know that there are many different KINDS of energy? The energy we need to walk up the stairs, the energy we use to power a bike, and the chemical energy we pump into our car's gas tank. Then there are the nuclear and electrical energies that power our homes and businesses. We will delve into all of these, including renewables like wind and solar.

On Tuesday, April 7, guest facilitator Jim Sim will talk about bikes, the most efficient means of transportation there is. After a short description of the physics of bicycles, he will highlight a few of the local bike paths, where they are located, and how many miles long each path is.

Cook County and Will County are fortunate to have many bike paths, allowing cyclists to ride safely, away from automobile traffic.

Bicycling related questions are welcome. Everyone is welcome!

Starting on April 14, and continuing until May 12, Terry Malloy will introduce us to many other forms of energy. And, most importantly, he will tell us how we can use all of this energy in the most economical way.



## 4. *Whitethorn Woods* by Maeve Binchy

### Maureen Connolly

*Whitethorn Woods* by Maeve Binchy is a heartwarming, character-driven novel (structured as interconnected stories) centered on the small Irish town of Rossmore. The community is deeply divided over a proposed highway bypass that threatens to destroy St. Ann's Well, a beloved local shrine known for its spiritual, healing reputation. The key aspects of the story are:



- The Conflict: the town is split between embracing modern progress (the highway) and preserving tradition (the well).
- Core Setting: the narrative focuses on the lives, secrets and hopes of residents and visitors, all linked to the well and its significance to the town.
- The Characters: the story is told through the perspectives of various locals, including the concerned Father Flynn who listens to the stories of the community.
- Themes: the book explores themes of love, faith, superstition, and the changing nature of rural Ireland
- Style: is described as a collection of linked short stories rather than a single novel. The story concludes with the resolution of the proposal, but the focus remains on the personal journeys of the characters.

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

**5. Marian Apparitions**  
**Brian and Erin Mc Cann**

In this class we are going to take a look at some of the twenty-six Church approved Marian apparitions in order to discover the definition, approval process and the understanding of reasons as to why these apparitions occurred and the subsequent effects they had on the faithful. In order to enhance our knowledge of these appearances, we will seek the experiences of class members who may have visited the sites of Marian Shrines.

Also, in a nod to Archbishop Fulton Sheen's upcoming beatification, we will look at the miracle surrounding his elevation to the status of Blessed and explore other supernatural events such as the incorruptible bodies of saints.



## 6. The Art of Quilt Making and How It Intersects with History

### Betty Kort

Some folks in Renaissance Academy may remember the quilting class I facilitated on zoom during the pandemic. In researching the history of quilt making, I came across some fascinating stories. I decided to revisit the subject. There is much more that I have discovered since 2022 as pertains to the historical significance of quilt making.



What role did quilt making have in original 13 colonies? What stories are told of quilts made during the Civil War?

Did you know that Canadian women made 400,000 quilts for the bombed-out families of the United Kingdom and Europe during WWII? We will hear the story of this remarkable feat.



Did you know Ken Burns has a quilt collection? Join me as we discover what this famous documentarian has to say about quilts.

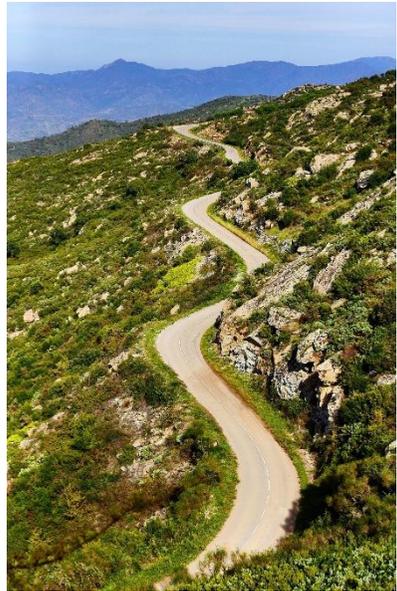
Additional poignant quilt stories we will explore are The Names Project of 1987 and the collection of quilts known as Desconodidos.

We will also explore the work of fabric artists like Bisa Butler, Vera Hall and Faith Ringgold.

# 7. The Book of Dan- The Ultimate Journey

## Dan Lynch

This course is a review of several courses I have facilitated over several years, beginning with *Successful Aging, Good Nutrition, and How to tell a Joke, The Journey through the Health Care System, The Last Ten Years, The Ultimate Journey*, and others.



The goal of the course is to have an open discussion about what might happen to each of us as we age and move through life. if we plan for our later years just as we plan for other aspects of life, ie birth, marriage, children, career and retirement, chances are we will meet an outcome that is better than if we just let things happen.

Since each life journey is a mystery and yet the end result inevitable, I believe that a sense of humor is an essential component of our experience in this class and I encourage each person to bring a joke to our gatherings as we discuss thoughts and feelings and confront our ultimate journey.

We likely will use some video and perhaps have a guest speaker, but the heart of this experience is discussion and a respectful exchange of ideas. In order for this to work, it is essential that we have a large enough number of participants.

We will only meet if a minimum of 15 sign up.

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

## **8. The Wonderful World of Warblers** **Mike Hastings**

56 species of wood warblers are found in the United States and Canada with 19 breeding in Illinois. Each spring, the Mississippi flyway funnels millions of these birds toward their breeding grounds in the boreal forests of the Great North.

The Chicago area is a major stop-over, where warblers rest and refuel. During migration their numbers are great and yet many people have never seen a warbler! This course will explore the world of wood warblers. You will be introduced to long distance migrants which leave the jungles of the Amazon then fly over the Atlantic to



arrive in Canada. You learn how they survive on their wintering grounds.

We will focus on 12 warblers. We will examine their migration routes, their unusual habitats and how to spot and identify these colorful birds in your own backyard.

## 9. Great Decisions

### Marcia Levin

Twenty years ago, the Chicago Council on Global Affairs published a report on public opinion of foreign policy. This report identified a redefined role for the U.S. with a responsibility in world order but a narrower definition of self-interest and involvement in the affairs of other countries. How can we prepare for a rapidly changing world in international foreign policy without a better understanding of the current pressures and opportunities?

This course will help us better understand what is happening globally and how it may impact us here in this country and abroad in the future. We will be examining Trump's role in current foreign issues, tariffs and the future economy. We will improve our understanding of ruptured alliances and the potential for nuclear proliferation, The situation in Ukraine will be discussed as well as third world development in African nations.



# 10. Tasty Talk

## Caron Beissmann / Rita Hannon

Welcome to Renaissance Academy's version of that popular WTTW show critiquing restaurants.

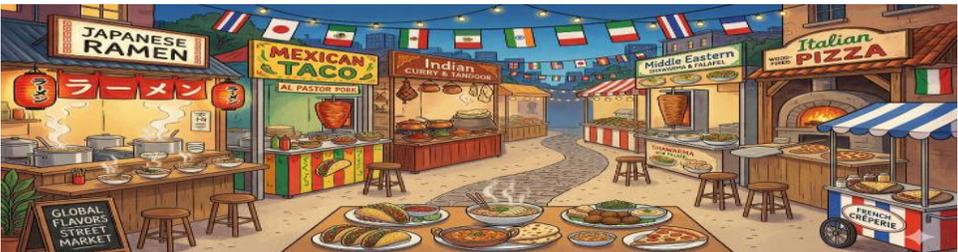
Our Spring classes will include cuisines from around the world. You may choose to visit for Lunch, Happy Hour (where available) or Dinner.

These are meals YOU don't have to cook but they will surely include great conversation with family or friends. Perhaps a good excuse to invite someone you've met at class and would like to know better or form a "Team" with classmates you already know.

So that you'll have plenty of time to schedule your meals, information for the first week will be sent as soon as we receive the mailing list. Some of the restaurants will be familiar and some new to you.

Try one, two or three. Consider it an adventure in eating!

We will also provide some non-food questions to help judge the whole restaurant experience.



*Renaissance Academy will not be covering costs for your meals or providing transportation.*

*Non-Renaissance Member dining companions will not be allowed to join the class because of space accommodations and SXU Rules.*

## Wednesday Zoom

**1:30 PM – 2:30 PM Zoom**

### **11. From Archives to AI: Preserving Our Past and Powering Our Future**

**Pat Schultz**

Join us for a dynamic two-part class designed to celebrate where we've been and explore where we're going. Whether you are a Renaissance Academy historian or a curious tech explorer, this class offers something for everyone.

#### Part 1: Unlocking Our Digital Vault

Take a guided tour of the Renaissance Academy's Flickr archive. This is more than just a collection of photos; it's our shared history. I'll show you exactly how to navigate the archive, find your favorite memories from past events, and download high-quality copies to keep or share.



## Part 2: The Next Frontier with Google NotebookLM

By popular demand, we're revisiting the cutting edge of Artificial Intelligence. See how Google's NotebookLM has evolved since our last session. I'll demonstrate how to instantly transform documents and audio files into professional infographics, slide decks, and even video summaries. It's magic made simple!

Shape Our Future: Beyond the tech, this is your chance to lead. We will spend time brainstorming how the Renaissance Academy can use these tools to share our mission with the world. Your ideas will help us define how we preserve our legacy and stay connected in a digital age.

Note: One or more sessions will be recorded. The video will serve as a vital resource for future members and a formal report to the Board on our efforts to archive the rich history of the Renaissance Academy.



**Evergreen Park Library**

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# **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 21 at 11:00 A.M.**

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

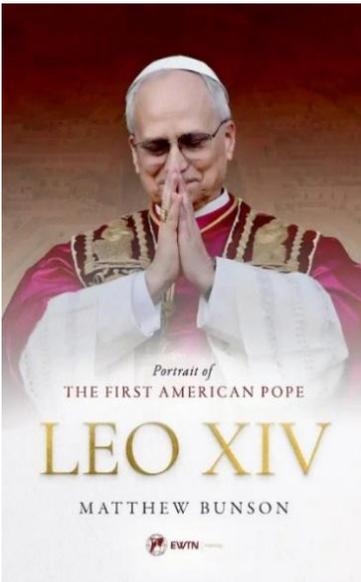


## Book Club

### *Portrait of the First American Pope: Leo XIV* By Matthew Bunson Madonna Murphy – Facilitator

**Evergreen Park Library April 15 -10:30 AM**

**Zoom April 22 Noon (for those unable to attend on April 15)**



*Portrait of the First American Pope: Leo XIV* by Mathew Bunson, published by EWTN available on Amazon for \$14.22.

Optional Fieldtrip to go see the Pope's boyhood home and school/parish in Dolton followed by lunch at Aurelio's Pizza in Homewood on Wednesday, April 29<sup>th</sup>.

Meet a SXU at 11:00 am to car pool or at the Pope's house at 212 East 141<sup>st</sup> Place, Dolton, Il at 11:30 am

## **Spring 2026**

### **Dates to Remember**

<b>March 20</b>	<b>On line registration begins</b>
<b>March 24</b>	<b>Spring Course Registration Help Desk S 101 2:30-3:30</b>
<b>March 27</b>	<b>Spring Course Registration Ends</b>
<b>April 7</b>	<b>First day of Spring term</b>
<b>April 15</b> <b>10:30 AM</b>	<b>Evergreen Park Library -Book Club <i>Portrait of the First American Pope: Leo XIV</i></b>
<b>April 16</b>	<b>TGITT Butler Room 5 PM-7 PM</b>
<b>April 21</b>	<b>Evergreen Park Library 11:00AM Poetry</b>
<b>April 22</b>	<b><i>Portrait of the First American Pope: Leo XIV</i> Zoom</b>
<b>May 14</b>	<b>Last Day of Spring Term</b>
<b>May 19</b> <b>12:00</b>	<b>Spring Luncheon Orland Chateau</b>



# OFFICERS, COMMITTEE & BOARD MEMBERS

## 2025-2026

<b>President:</b>	Jean Day
<b>Secretary:</b>	Kate Walsh
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Mike Greene
<b>Information Systems:</b>	Jim Condon
<b>Consultant/Past President:</b>	Maureen O'Connor
<b>SXU Liaison:</b>	Linda Moreno/ Sandra Diaz

### STANDING COMMITTEES (\*Committee Chairperson)

<b>Care:</b>	Melaine Herbert
<b>Curriculum:</b>	Nancy North* / Madonna Murphy / Mike Yeager
<b>Historian:</b>	Pat Schultz* / Peggy Devlin Casey
<b>Information Systems Support:</b>	Jim Condon* /Vanessa Glover Mary Johnson /Paula O'Brien / Jim Sim
<b>Membership:</b>	Betty Kort* /Maggie Bertling/ Chris Bibro Maureen Jucas / Paula O'Brien Peg Schneider / Jim Sim
<b>Newsletter:</b>	Peggy Dosch* / Mary Healy Maureen O'Connor
<b>Office Managers:</b>	Nancy Ficaro*
<b>Publicity:</b>	Mary Gallagher
<b>Renaissance Booklet:</b>	Mary Johnson* / Grace Ann Kartheiser
<b>Special Events:</b>	Marcia Levin* / Sharon Powers*/ Pat Clair