



Renaissance Academy at Chicago NFP

Fall 2023

October 10 -November 16

Located at

Saint Xavier University

3700 West 103rd Street

We are back on the SXU campus for Fall!

We will also offer a selection of classes

online via Zoom.

What is the Renaissance Academy?

The Renaissance Academy is a collegial association of retired and semi-retired men and women who meet to continue to experience intellectual growth in an environment that is open to all who believe in the importance of pursuing the Academy's lifelong learning opportunities and who are willing to contribute to the common goals through active participation in the programs offered.

Renaissance Academy Information

Email: 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>.

Fall 2023 Registration

We are back on the SXU campus for Fall!

We will also offer a selection of classes online via Zoom.

Annual membership enrollment and registration for on-campus and online classes will be available September 8 – 15 online at:

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

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

The membership enrollment fee for the entire year is \$180.

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.

This year members have a choice of paying by credit card or check. Information is on the registration form.

Checks should be made out to The Renaissance Academy at Chicago NFP. Mail to:

Renaissance Academy at Chicago
Saint Xavier University
3700 West 103rd St.
Chicago, IL 60655

Requests for assistance can be emailed to
renaissancechgo@gmail.com.

**The final date for enrollment is
September 15, 2023.**



Welcome Back!

Don't you love the promise of a fresh start in a new school year that September brings? Surely, it's one of our earliest memories, a joyful one for those of us who have become **lifelong learners**. How lucky we are to once again have a variety of courses to choose from.

Thanks to the facilitators, some favorite classes will continue. Those who have been involved will recommend that you join them to begin learning about Birds, read *To Kill A Mockingbird*, discuss some of the World's Best Short Stories, join in the always lively discussions in News & Views.

We will be enlightened about Artificial Intelligence, Solutions for Our 21st Century Problems, and Happiness. Several classes will introduce us to people, athletes, and historical figures of continuing importance today.

Please plan to attend our Reception in the Butler Room on Saturday, September 30, at 1 p.m. This will be an opportunity to welcome new members as well as get reacquainted with friends from previous classes!

I'm looking forward to taking part in a very fascinating Fall Term.

See you in class!

Maureen O'Connor, President

**Fall 2023 Session
Oct. 10 – Nov. 16
On Campus**

Tuesday 2:30-3:30

1. People of Interest

Mimi Burke

2. Let's Talk Happiness

Kathy Austin, Mary Hendry, Kerrie Stone

Joan Weithman, O.P.

Tuesday 3:45- 4:45

3. News and Views

Mike Yeager and team

4. Birds: From Distinction to Extinction

Mike Hastings

**Fall 2023 Session
Oct. 10 – Nov. 16
Zoom**

Wednesday

12:00 -1:00

5. **The Novels You Weren't Ready for in High School**
To Kill a Mockingbird
Carol Conway

1:15 – 2:15

6. **Short Stories**
Maureen Connolly

**Fall 2023 Session
Oct. 10 – Nov. 16
On Campus**

Thursday 2:30 – 3:30

- 7. **Women Athletes**
Karen Fitzgerald, Betty Kort

- 8. **Saul Alinsky**
Mike Yeager

Thursday 3:45 – 4:45

- 9. **Artificial Intelligence**
Pat Schultz

- 10. **Solutions to Our 21st Century Problems**
Fran Sowa

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

1. People of Interest

Mimi Burke

In this class we will be viewing short films about people of interest from the 20th and 21st centuries. During our first session we'll see films about George W. Bush, Andrew Hill Card, Mark Tillman, and Danny Rodriguez. During the next five classes we will look at more interesting people. People such as Kobe Bryant, John Williams, Hans Zimmer, Aled Jones, David Chang, etc. Come and enjoy.



2. Let's Talk Happiness!

**Kathy Austin, Mary Hendry, Kerrie Stone,
Joan Weithman, O.P.**

Remember the old Ray Conniff Orchestra tune *Happiness Is?* The refrain was *Different things to different people!*

We hope to have lively discussions about what happiness means to the class participants. Experts on the subject agree that happiness is influenced by many factors including positive emotions, engagement, relationships and achievements.

Let's see what you think. Can we decide to be happy and succeed, or do factors beyond our control determine our levels of happiness?

Join us to determine how happy we are!



Tuesday 3:45 - 4:45

SXU on campus

3. News and Views

**Pat Clair, Jim Condon, John Garstka,
Sr. Jean McGrath, Mike Yeager, Mike
Young**

Today's 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.



4. Birds: From Distinction to Extinction

Mike Hastings

“Bird Brain!” is a common slur, meant to show a lack of respect for the intended person and also the bird! Well, hold on. Recent studies indicate that our low regard for birds is largely misguided. Science is now reporting that birds are very bright, and actually display a wide range of intelligences.



This course will examine these discoveries as written about in Jennifer Ackerman’s *Genius of Birds* (2016). “Some bird species are capable of mental feats comparable to those found in primates.” – J. Ackerman. From tool making by the New

Caledonian Crow, mimicking sounds by the Mocking bird to the amazing navigation skills of the White Crowned sparrow all display a genius never before considered. So, why is it that such brilliant creatures falter, fail to mate and vanish from Earth?

This course will also look at the path three North American birds took toward extinction. These three species no longer had the energy and the resources to reproduce. Extinction is rather common. More than 90% of all organisms that ever lived on Earth are not alive today. Relatively, it is recent that we have witnessed the passing of the Carolina Parakeet, the Passenger pigeon, and the Ivory-billed woodpecker (Some argue that it is still around.). Extinction is a natural process. Yet, in 2018 the National Audubon Society alerted us that 3 billion birds had been lost in a short 50 years! We will try to understand how it is that birds with so much intelligence remain vulnerable to extinction.



The course is inspired by Jennifer Ackerman's *The Genius of Birds* and Christopher Cokinos' *Hope is the Thing with Feathers*.



Wednesday Zoom

12:00 – 1:00

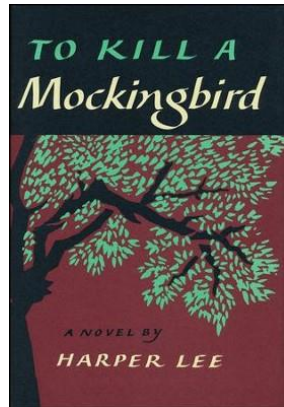
5. The Novels You Weren't Ready for in High School

To Kill a Mockingbird

Carol Conway

The Novels You Weren't Ready
for in High School: *To Kill a
Mockingbird* by Harper Lee.

Join us for a Zoom discussion of
the plot, characters, imagery, and
themes of this modern classic that
won the Pulitzer Prize in 1961. I will
be using the version pictured here.



Please read Chapters 1-6 for the first class.

1:15 – 2:15

6. Short Stories

Maureen Connolly

Book: *100 Great Short Stories*

Dover Thrift Editions Edited by James Daley

The book that we have chosen for our class is a treasury of one hundred tales, and it offers readers of short fiction a splendid selection of stories by masters of the form. Contributors from around the world include Edgar Allen Poe, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Charles Dickens, Mark Twain, Anton Chekov, Kate Chopin and others. With one hundred stories spanning more than two centuries, this comprehensive collection provides a vision of the world, over time, that one could never find in a history book. From these stories one can experience such a diversity of perspectives as well as deepening and expanding one's own view of the world – both as it has been and as it is today.

The first two stories we will read for the fall session will be: *The Cottagette (1910)* by Charlotte Perkins Gilman pg. 541 and *Germans at Meat (1911)* by Katherine Mansfield pg. 550.

Story guide questions will be sent to you before each class.

100 Great Short Stories can be purchased on Amazon or Bookies@
10324 S. Western 773-239-1110



Thursday 2:30 – 3:30

SXU on campus

7. Women Athletes

Karen Fitzgerald, Betty Kort

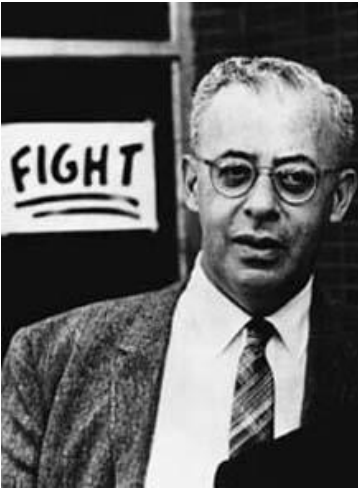
On June 23, 1972, the passing of Title IX finally gave girls and women an opportunity for higher education, professions they could strive for and playing sports. Discover female athletes who have become legends as inspirational role models for people around the world! Do you know the name of the first woman to swim the English Channel? Did you know women were banned from running in an organized Marathon? We will meet one who tried to run the Boston Marathon and was physically stopped before she could finish the race. Are any of these names familiar? Babe Didrikson Zaharias, Bobbi Gibb, Wilma Rudolph, or Billie Jean King? We will discover their stories and many more.



8. Saul Alinsky

Mike Yeager

We will be exploring the life of controversial community organizer/trouble-maker, and Chicago native, Saul Alinsky. He was mentored by an Al Capone lieutenant, Frank Nitti, and was an influence on Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton. This University of Chicago alumni went toe to toe with noted conservative, William F. Buckley, on his television program *Firing Line*.



Alinsky's most famous book is *Rules for Radicals*. *The Prince* was written by Machiavelli for the haves on how to hold power. *Rules for Radicals* is written for the have-nots on how to take it away.

We will have six sessions; maybe we can figure this guy out.

Thursday 3:45 - 4:45

SXU on campus

9. Artificial Intelligence in Action

Pat Schultz

AI in Action: How AI is Transforming Our Lives

Artificial intelligence is not a new concept, but it has become more accessible and exciting than ever with the launch of ChatGPT, a



public platform that lets anyone chat with advanced AI agents. In this course, we will explore the amazing world of AI and how it is transforming various fields and domains.

We will look at some of the media coverage and debates around AI, its benefits and risks, and its ethical and social implications. We will also zoom in on some of the specific applications of AI in genealogy, education, and medicine, and how they are changing the way we learn, research, and heal. And of course, we will have some fun with some of the free chatbots that are available online, such as Bing Chat, Google Bard, and Claude. We will see how they can help us with tasks like planning a trip, buying a product, or creating a presentation or a course outline. We will also compare their strengths and weaknesses and see how they can improve over time. If you are curious about AI and want to learn more about it, join us for this exciting and interactive course!

10. Solutions to Our 21st Century Problems

Fran Sowa

Many predictions were made early in the 1900's regarding what humans could expect in the 21st century. For one, that flying taxis would be available to routinely fly us to the moon for a visit. Well, those taxis are not available (yet) in this 21st century, but many amazing things are going on. They are mostly based on age-old concepts which have been re-examined using current scientific knowledge, e.g., taking a new look at therapeutic psychedelics, and the healing power of oxygen. Farmers are learning to farm with tried and proven methods once again, to regenerate the soil and have a better opportunity to earn a living.

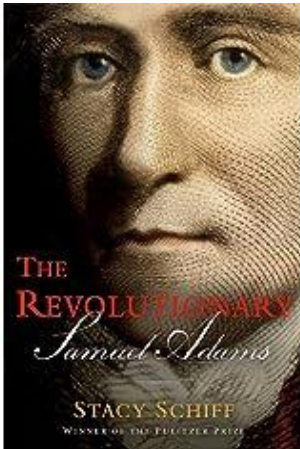
At the same time, Skyscrapers made of wood (not steel) are going up all over the world while solar and wind power are becoming more competitive with fossil fuels. Would you believe that a family lived comfortably through several New England winters in a home which was completely solar heated – more than fifty years ago?



Unfortunately, progress is slowed too often when innovation must compete with interests which are vested in the status quo. We'll discuss all of this and more while viewing related videos, hearing from a guest speaker from the medical world and our own members who keep abreast of the latest news.

**Book Club – Oak Lawn Library
October 19, 2023 Meeting Room A
12:00 – 1:00**

***The Revolutionary: Samuel Adams*
By Stacy Schiff
Mike Hastings – Facilitator**



In *The Revolutionary: Samuel Adams*, Pulitzer Prize winner, Stacy Schiff, depicts Adams's improbable life, illuminating his transformation from aimless son of a well-off family to tireless radical who mobilized the colonies!

He was the backbone behind the Boston Tea Party and responsible for rallying the colonies behind him to create a new country!

For his efforts he became the most wanted man in America. When Paul Revere rode to Lexington in 1775, it was to warn Samuel Adams that he was about to be arrested for treason!

RENAISSANCE FORUM

Haunted History presented by historian Terry Lynch

Tuesday, October 17, 2023, 11:30 A.M.
Campus of Saint Xavier University
Butler Room



Join other Renaissance Academy members as we welcome Terry Lynch to speak on a topic appropriate for the Halloween season: historical hauntings of the Midwest. Featured tales will include the S.S. Eastland, Brookfield Zoo, the Fort Dearborn Massacre, and John Dillinger, to name a few. Mr. Lynch is a nationally known actor who has specialized in bringing history to life for more than a decade. He reminds audiences that “history happens when you least expect it.”

Light refreshments will be served.

The forum is free of charge for Renaissance Academy members. Guests are welcome for a suggested \$5 **cash** donation.

ALL attendees (members and guests) must register by sending an email to renaissancechgo@gmail.com

Fall 2023

Dates to Remember

Sept. 8 – Sept. 15	On line registration
Sept. 30 1:00-3:00	Fall Welcome Back Reception Butler Room all are welcome
October 10	First day of Fall term
October 17 11:30AM	Renaissance Forum Butler Room
October 19 12:00 – 1:00	Book Club Oak Lawn Library Mtg. Rm. A
November 16	Last day of Fall term
December 5	Christmas Luncheon Orland Chateau



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