



2026 Fall Study Group Leaders

Nancy Abbey

F26-23 Contemporary Literature Book Discussion

Nancy Abbey recently retired after 16 years as the Assistant Director of Milford Public Library. She facilitated a popular Classic Book Group for 14 of those 16 years, and continues in this role.

Don Barkin

F26-01 Nature Poetry

Don Barkin received his BA from Harvard College and his MA. in English literature from Cambridge U. He has taught undergraduate seminars in poetry and prose writing at Yale for several years, and at Wesleyan's Graduate Liberal Studies Program. He has published three books of poems that have also appeared in national magazines, and is a former schoolteacher and newspaper reporter.

Phillip Beard

F26-18 Causes of the Great War, 1871-1914

Phillip L Beard has an M.A. from the University of Virginia and a Ph.D. from the University of Maryland and has taught at Auburn University, and in its abroad program in Vienna, Austria. He has also taught American Literature as a Fulbright Scholar at Friedrich Alexander University in Erlangen, Germany. He has published articles on American literature and philosophy and is a senior editor of the George Santayana Society.

Gabriella Brand

F26-22 A Short History of Swear Words

Gabriella Brand is a bilingual educator, writer, and public speaker. She has over

thirty years' experience as a teacher of French language and literature. In addition, she has served as an intern at the United Nations during her university years. She was a program director at an Alliance Francaise. She holds a diploma from the Universite de Neuchatel, Switzerland and an MA in French pedagogy from Middlebury College, Vermont.

Leo Cristofar

F26-09 Short Hikes in The Greater New Haven Area

Leo Cristofar has led hikes in and around Connecticut for more than twenty-five years.

Jerry Dunklee

F26-32 The First Amendment and You

Jerry Dunklee is a journalism professor emeritus at Southern Connecticut State University where he taught Media Law and Ethics for 35 years. He was a member of the Society of Professional Journalists national ethics committee for 12 years and helped write the 1996 edition of the Code of Ethics. He is a co-author of *The Power of Free Expression in America*, a textbook, and worked as a reporter and talk show host for 20 years prior to teaching. He graduated from Michigan State and holds a master's degree from Emerson College. Jerry was inducted into the CT Journalism Hall of Fame in 2010.

Eric Dunsker

F26-14 The Genius of "Weird" Al Yankovic

Eric is no musicologist, but he has been a fan of "Weird" Al Yankovic since he first heard "My Bologna" and "Another One Rides the Bus" back in the early '80s. His



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interest has risen and fallen with newer releases over the decades, but his amusement and respect for "Weird" Al's craft have never waned.

Susan Emerman

F26-19 Mah Jongg for Beginners

I have played Mah Jongg since 1967. It's a fun game. I recently taught it at a local library and now have time to teach it at ILR.

Joel Feimer

F26-24 The Golden Bough: The Talisman for Understanding Myth

F26-28 From Literary Criticism to Visionary Poetry: Jessie Weston's "From Ritual to Romance" and T. S. Eliot's "The Wasteland."

Joel N. Feimer PhD taught undergraduate and graduate level English Literature and Composition at Mercy College in New York from 1967 to 2010. He earned a PhD in Comparative Literature from the City University of New York in 1983. He has published several essays on topics in Medieval and Modern Literature and co-edited a text for composition with his former colleague at Mercy College, Howard Canaan. He began teaching for ILR in the spring of 2015 and has served as President on its Board of Directors.

Annis Fusaris

F26-11 Recipes and Reminiscences

Annis Fusaris is a retired registered nurse who was dubbed the "milk and cookie nurse" by her coworkers at a psychiatric facility. She understood that even something as simple as hunger, or being "hangry," could become a source of psychological stress, and she made sure

comfort and care were always part of her approach.

Fran Grodzinsky

F26-13 Living with AI (Artificial Intelligence)

Frances S. Grodzinsky PhD is Professor Emerita Computer Science and Information Technology at Sacred Heart University in Fairfield and Past Co-Director of the Hersher Institute of Ethics.

Harvey Heyman

F26-06 Analysis of the 2026 Midterms

Harvey Heyman retired in 2022 from a career in the business side of healthcare. He received a BA from Brown University and an MBA from the Harvard Business School. He is a passionate consumer of news of political, social and cultural events.

Marisa Horowitz-Jaffe

F26-20 Virtual Tour Down the Nile River

Marisa Horowitz-Jaffe is a seasoned expert in ancient history and art education with over 25 years experience. Holding dual degrees in Egyptology and Roman Archaeology from the University of Michigan and a Master's from Harvard University in Art and Museum Education, she spent two decades working at NYC's top art museums. Marisa now offers exclusive private tours at The Metropolitan Museum of Art and dynamic enrichment programs to schools and community centers.

Marcia Jamron

F26-27 "You want to know about an axe?? Collinsville, CT has the answer!"

Marcia Jamron has been fascinated by travel since early childhood. College, followed by



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family duties, have not dulled the anticipation of a new place to see and learn all about. She applies this urge to look for new and different places to the ILR bus and zoom trips she plans and conducts.

Ira Kleinfeld

F26-16 The Jewish Experience in Turkey

Ira Kleinfeld earned his BS, MS and Eng. Sc.D. from Columbia University. He served as a professor of industrial engineering and associate provost for graduate studies research and faculty development at the University of New Haven where he initiated UNH's annual Holocaust Remembrance event. He continues to chair the planning committee as professor emeritus. He is still active at UNH, teaching courses, and being engaged in a variety of projects.

Hedda Kopf

F26-26 Looking Back/Looking Forward-Recent Literary Fiction

Hedda Kopf taught literature and gender studies at Quinnipiac University for more than three decades. She continues to develop and lead book discussions at ILR as well as at several public libraries and other institutions in Connecticut. Hedda volunteers as a reading mentor in a New Haven public school and is the author of *Understanding Anne Frank's The Diary of a Young Girl: A Student Casebook to Issues, Sources and Historical Documents*.

Sharif Kronemer

F26-37 Illusions, hallucinations, and afterimages: How the brain fools itself

Sharif I. Kronemer, PhD is a Research Fellow at the National Institutes of Health studying the brain mechanisms of conscious

perception in health and impairment. Sharif was a former graduate student in the Interdepartmental Neuroscience Program at Yale University.

Nick Maiorino

F26-31 The Science of Dreams

Nick Maiorino, a member of ILR for 9 years, is a life-long learner with more than 60 years of teaching experience. He holds a BS degree in Education; MS degree in Statistics, Measurement and Evaluation; 6th Year Certificate in Administration and Supervision; and advanced degrees in the sciences. While his main focus is science, he has offered courses in his many other interests such as history, music, and current events. He currently serves on the ILR Board of Governors and the Curriculum Committee.

Mithat "Mito" Mardin

F26-03 China & Japan: Historical Context with regard to the Current Relations between two East Asian Powerhouses ***F26-08 Current US and International Events***

F26-36 German Conversation

Mithat "Mito" Mardin PhD was born in Istanbul, Turkey and is a graduate of the German High School there. He received a PhD in Organic Chemistry, Physics and Microbiology from the University of Göttingen. He worked at Bayer Pharmaceuticals for 33 years in various positions starting as laboratory head and retiring as VP. He has worked on three continents: Europe, Japan/ Asia Pacific, and the US. He has served as president of the Japan Society of Fairfield County from 2012 to 2020 and as ILR president for three terms



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and he has followed his passion for political science. He enjoys being a study group leader and sharing his knowledge of the European Union, US economy, Islam, and current world affairs in general.

Harold Miller

F26-04 Bridge for Advanced Beginners

Harold Miller, Bridge Life Master, is a retired CPA and native of New Haven and teaches the basics of bridge for beginners.

Marie Musco

F26-10 Canasta review with advanced play

Marie Musco is a retired nurse and has been a resident of Orange for 45 years. She enjoys teaching the game to friends and family.

Byron Nakamura

F26-29 The Many Faces of Alexander the Great

Byron Nakamura, PhD is a professor of History at Southern Connecticut State University, where he has taught courses on ancient Greece and Rome since 2004. He has written on subjects such as Roman imperialism, ancient religion, military history, and has a keen interest in Roman numismatics (coinage).

Patricia O'Leary

F26-34 The Art & Craft of Memory in Classical & Medieval European Cultures

Trish O'Leary, a longtime ILR member and former president, received her M.A. from the University of Chicago and completed PhD. coursework in medieval literature at the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana in 1972. Though she never completed a dissertation, she never lost

interest in medieval culture. Her fascination with remembrance was rekindled when she and the late Mary Weigand co-led ILR courses on the art and science of memory. Trish leads a memoir-writing group at the Orange Community Center.

David Pettigrew

F26-02 Connecticut Holocaust Rescuers

David Pettigrew, Ph.D., is a CSU Professor and Chair, Philosophy Department, Southern Connecticut State University. Pettigrew has taught at SCSU since 1987 and he created a Holocaust and Genocide Studies course in 2013. In 2019, he was appointed to the Connecticut Holocaust and Genocide Education Advisory Committee.

Nils Pilotte

F26-25 Vaccines, Unraveling Fact from Fiction

Nils Pilotte, is an Assistant Professor of Biology at Quinnipiac University in Hamden, CT. Dr. Pilotte is a molecular biologist who studies the genetics and DNA structure of disease causing parasites. He is interested in understanding the mechanisms of inheritance in parasitic organisms and how these inheritance patterns contribute to pathogenicity.

Lois Procopion

F26-35 Tease the Palate

Lois Procopion was born in New Britain, Connecticut. She received her BS Degree from CCSU. She retired as a Project Manager at Aetna Healthcare in 2014. For the past 48 years, Lois has been an active Justice of the Peace. She has been a gourmet cook for over 50 years and has won first prize in various local baking competitions.



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Rachel Ranis

F26-05 Christian Nationalism

Rachel Ranis has sociology degrees from Brandeis and Yale universities. Her research on social welfare issues, aging and vocational education has taken her to Pakistan, Mexico, Columbia, Germany, and the United Kingdom. She taught at the University of Bridgeport, the University of Maryland, Howard University and is retired from Quinnipiac University.

James Rhodes

F26-17 James Joyce's Ulysses

Jim Rhodes PhD graduated from Holy Cross College as a philosophy major and earned his PhD from Fordham University specializing in Medieval Literature and the works of James Joyce. He taught for many years in the English Department at Southern Connecticut State University and is the author of the book *Poetry Does Theology: Chaucer, Grosseteste, and the Pearl Poet*.

James Romano

F26-15 Antigone

Jim Romano earned a PhD in Classical Studies from the University of Michigan. He taught Classics for several years at Michigan and at Lehman College (CUNY). He subsequently entered the nonprofit world as an executive in two major health-related foundations. In retirement, he has gone back to his educational roots and lectures on Homer, classical poetry and drama.

Joyce Saltman

F26-07 Jewish Women Who Changed the World

Joyce M. Saltman, Ed.D. has been given the title *Guru Of Laughter* by one of America's

foremost Insurance Companies. She is a Professor Emeritus of Special Education at Southern Connecticut State University where she taught graduate courses on Special Education since 1975, and *The Enhancement of Learning through Humor*, as well as directed a summer Institute on *Healing, Education, Laughter and Play (H.E.L.P.)* for 29 summers. She lectures all over the country plus in Japan, Norway, Australia, England, Italy and Belgium, on *Laughter, Rx for Survival, Dealing with Difficult People, Sex and Aging, and Learning Styles*. She has shared her insights into laughter with hospitals, corporations, school systems, and other organizations throughout the world. She has spoken extensively on such topics as *Learning Styles for At-Risk Students and Counseling Skills for Special Educators* throughout the country, most notably for the US Department of Education in Washington, DC. In addition, two of her books - *Sing A Celebration* and *I'm Changing the Locks and Cementing the Windows –What To Do When Your Kid Leaves Home* have been published.

John Thomas

F26-12 A Homesteader's Lament: Making Financial and Artistic Reparations to the Descendants of the Original Occupants of the Land Where I Grew UP

John Thomas LLB is a freelance writer, professor at the Quinnipiac University School of Law in Hamden, Connecticut, and performing guitarist. John teaches international law and health law. John's 200+ publications address topics from gun violence to health policy, politics, autism, juvenile justice, and music and musical



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instruments and have appeared in law reviews, medical journals, major newspapers, a wide range of music magazines, and the Oxford Dictionary of Music.

Alvin Wainhaus, Rabbi Emeritus
F26-21 The Third Pillar: The Bible's Impact on Western Civilization

Rabbi Alvin Wainhaus, son of Holocaust survivors, was raised in an Orthodox environment in Brooklyn. A graduate of Brooklyn College with a degree in philosophy, he was ordained in Israel in 1972 and earned a Master of Education degree from NYU. He served congregations in Yarmouth, Nova Scotia and in Manhattan prior to becoming the Rabbi of Congregation Or Shalom in Orange, CT. After his retirement in 2025, he assumed the title of Rabbi Emeritus. Rabbi Wainhaus is highly regarded as a spiritual leader and lecturer on a wide range of subjects.

Kate Walton
F26-30 Nature: Evolution and Regeneration

Kate Johns Walton majored in Anthropology and obtained teaching certification while attending Goddard College. She obtained her Master's Degree in Museum Education from George Washington University with field work done at the Smithsonian. As a graduate intern she was appointed Museum Teacher by the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at Museum of Comparative Zoology and the Peabody Museum of Archeology and Ethnology at Harvard University. She later developed and managed "You and Your World" Summer Program at Peabody Museum of Natural

History at Yale and worked full time as a professional docent in the School Services Division there. Kate has lived and worked extensively in Africa in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and teaching high school biology and English in Kenya while working with Richard Leakey to create school museums that helped local populations collect and preserve important natural materials from their own ancestral environments.

Jonathan White
F26-33 Navigating Common Orthopaedic Injuries: Maintaining Bone and Muscle Health for a Healthy Life

This course will feature speakers who are medical students at the Yale School of Medicine with clinical interests in orthopedic surgery and physical medicine and rehabilitation. They have diverse research interests that have mostly focused on orthopedic surgery outcomes based on varied preoperative conditions.