NEXT WEEK AT QUEST

February 3 - 6, 2025
This Is an A Week

There are three links for all classes for the semester: Auditorium, Classroom 15-17, and Classroom 27. Click on the appropriate link below to join a class no earlier than 15 minutes before its start.

Below are given the links (in red), meeting IDs, and passcodes for the three meeting rooms. If Zoom is installed on your computer, you can enter any hybrid class by clicking on the appropriate link:

AUDITORIUM
Meeting ID: 861 6851 3691
Passcode: 252525

ROOM 15-17
Meeting ID: 886 0175 9047
Passcode: 252525

ROOM 27
Meeting ID: 872 5172 0128
Passcode: 252525

Alternatively, you can enter a class using your browser by going to **https://zoom.us/join** and typing in the Meeting ID for the room of your class along with the passcode. Also, you can attend classes via phone by dialing 1-929-205-6099. You will be asked for the Meeting ID and possibly the passcode.

NOTE: All classes are conducted at 25 Broadway and are listed as either Hybrid or In-person only. Hybrid classes are available to members attending at 25 Broadway and to members attending from home via Zoom. In-person only classes are presented solely at 25 Broadway with no Zoom option.

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MONDAY, FEBRUARY 3 @ 10:30 AM – NOON

Course: **ACROSS THE UNIVERSE**
Subject: Black Holes
Presenter: Steve Allen
Room: 27
Format: In-Person Only
Coordinators: **Michael Hamburg,** Marion Schultheis
Tech Support: **Pete Weis,** Bob Reiss

Black holes are regions of space where gravity is so strong that no light or electromagnetic waves or matter can escape. With no light or electromagnetic waves being able to escape, it is not possible to actually see a black hole, but their presence can be inferred by the large impact their gravity has on all nearby objects. It is estimated that each galaxy in the observable universe contains on average about 100 billion black holes and these black holes play a major role in the formation of stars and the evolution of galaxies.

Black holes form when very large stars (many times the size of our sun) run out of fuel and collapse. The theoretical possibility of black holes was only realized as a consequence of Einstein's 1915 theory of gravity but even Einstein considered it a theoretical possibility that could not actually exist in the real world. It was not until 1971 that observation of an actual black hole was widely accepted. Since then, astronomers and physicists have developed a great deal of knowledge about their structure and impact.

Physicists also study black holes in order to get new insights into the origins of the universe, since it is only in black holes and the early universe that gravity can closely interact with the quantum physics of atoms. Some prominent physicists even conjecture that these insights can help explain how the structure of the universe creates the conditions in which living organisms can exist.

Course: **ROCK AND ROOTS ALBUMS**
Album: Pentangle - *Cruel Sister* (1970)
Presenter: Steve Koenig, Wayne Cotter
Room: Auditorium
Format: Hybrid
Coordinators: **Steve Koenig,** Wayne Cotter, Mary Ann Donnelly
Tech Support: **Victor Brener,** Michael Wellner

Pentangle is a British folk quintet whose stock in trade are traditional folk ballads. What could be more traditional than love, betrayal, sunken ships, sex, ghosts, and murder? The beautiful voice of Jacqui McShee is joined by the rest of Pentangle on acoustic instruments, one electric guitar, and vocals.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 3 @ 12:10 -12:50 PM

Course: **NOONTIME MEDLEY**
Subject: Art: Exhibition Snapshots
Presenters: Andrea, Sheryl
Room: 15-17
Format: In-Person only
Coordinators: **Sheryl Harawitz**, **Andrea Irvine**

Today we'll introduce you to some remarkable gallery and museum exhibitions we've recently explored. Whether you're an art enthusiast, or simply curious, together we will look and discuss this exciting art. And don't forget to bring your lunch.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 3 @ 1:00 – 2:30 PM

Course: **DOSTOEVSKY'S CRIME & PUNISHMENT**
Room: 27
Format: In-Person Only
Coordinators: **Sheryl Harawitz,** Patricia Geehr, Andrea Irvine, Ellie Schaffer
Tech Support: **Felix Pina**

We begin our journey into the world of Dostoevsky with *Crime and Punishment*, a novel written during the rise of Russia's fast-paced literary scene. Is it a psychological thriller, a philosophical treatise, or a critique of the perils of Western culture? Perhaps it's all three.

Dostoevsky's works aren't just great literature — they're also engaging and, dare we say, fun. His novels feature gripping plots, intense drama, and a remarkable cast of characters. Expect murders, police investigations, family intrigue, and a fascinating array of women, all set against the vivid backdrop of 19th-century St. Petersburg.

For our first session, please read Part One (75 pages). This class is a shared exploration — and bring your questions. Together, we'll uncover insights about the human mind and the world Dostoevsky paints.

Course: **ARCHITECTURE: FUNCTION, DESIGN, AND STRUCTURE**
Subject: Architecture 101
Presenter: Bob Reiss
Room: Auditorium
Format: Hybrid
Coordinators: **Sol Makon,** Victor Brenner
Tech Support: Victor Brener, Susan Diehl, Bob Reiss

Architecture is a product of culture, history, science, technology, economics, society, religion, and state. That about covers the field of human endeavor. This class, the first in *Explorations in Architecture,* sets the stage by illustrating how architecture has evolved from a vernacular practice into a distinct discipline and profession.

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TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 4 @ 10:30 AM – NOON

Course: **SCIENCE CLUBHOUSE**
Facilitator: Steve Allen (discussion leader)
Room: 27
Format: In-Person Only
Coordinators: **Steve Allen,** Jim Brook**,** Marion Schultheis
Tech Support: **Steve Chicoine,** Tamara Weinberg, Pete Weis

We'll begin the new term by looking at some of the most significant scientific discoveries that have been announced over the past several months. As always, we look forward to lively and wide-ranging discussions of this and whatever topics pop up.

Course: **SUPREME COURT**
Subject: Bush v. Gore and Trump v. U.S.
Presenter: Bob Gottfried
Room: Auditorium
Format: **Hybrid (To be Recorded)**
Coordinators: **Michael Wellner,** Bob Gottfried
Tech Support: **Victor Brener,** Michael Wellner

These two Supreme Court cases had tremendous impacts on the people of the United States: Bush v. Gore, confirmed the election of George W. Bush as President of the United States by directing that Florida cease counting ballots and awarding its electoral votes to Bush. Trump v. US. provided Donald Trump the ability to be elected President in 2024 without the threat of a criminal conviction for trying to overcome the will of the people in the election of 2020. Come to the Supreme Court class to learn more about both of these decisions**.**

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 4 @ NOON – 1:00 PM

SOCIAL COMMITTEE LUNCHEON: The Social Committee invites all Questers to lunch in the lunchroom at noon for a Welcome Back lunch. We all look forward to seeing one another and catching up on all our activities and travel.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 4 @ 1:00 – 2:30 PM

Course: **CHARLES DICKENS' GREAT EXPECTATIONS**
Room: 15-17
Format: In-Person Only
Coordinators: **Lynnel Garabedian, Sandy Kessler**
Tech Support: **Steve Chicoine**

After some brief remarks about the author and the book, we will begin discussing Chapters 1-12. *Great Expectations* is told from the viewpoint of the adult main character, Pip, as he reflects on his life, especially a traumatic meeting with an escaped convict when he was seven years old. Although tormented by guilt, how does Pip show his natural kindness during his second and third encounters with this man?

How do Pip's experiences with Miss Havisham and Estella have a major impact on his perceptions of himself, Joe, and his future? Who is Biddy and what role does she play for Pip? Note how Joe is a steady figure of compassion and integrity. Dickens has already presented important themes of class differences, moral conscience, and legal versus personal justice**.**

Course: **CREATIVE WRITING WORKSHOP**
Subject: Dialogue
Presenter: Helen Saffran
Room: 19
Format: In-Person Only **(Note: This class ends at 3:00 p.m.)**
Coordinators: **Helen Saffran**, Judy Hampson, Donna Ramer
Tech Support: None Assigned

What would a story be without conversation? Dialogue is a way to bring your characters to life. It is a great way to give insight into personality. In this class we will be exploring writing dialogue. As always, the class begins with a 10-minute writing response to a prompt, which you can choose to share or not. You may bring in writing you have done at home in any genre, poetry or prose, and the group will offer constructive responses to it. Writing that is read in class should be under 750 words, but longer pieces can be read over consecutive classes. Please bring in 15 copies of at-home writing to share with the class. At a loss for a topic? Try: Dogs or My Favorite Childhood Toy.

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Course: **HISTORY OF NEW YORK CITY**
Subject: Alexander Hamilton
Presenter: Sandra Abramson
Room: 27
Format: **Hybrid (To be Recorded)**
Coordinators: **Ilene Winkler,** Susannah Falk-Lewis, Penelope Pi-Sunyer, Michael Wellner
Tech Support: **Tamara Weinberg,** Michael Wellner, Ilene Winkler

Who was Alexander Hamilton and why is he so revered as one of the Founding Fathers of the United States? Born to an unwed mother on the island of Nevis in the British West Indies, he came to New York in the American Colonies in 1772 at the age of 15. His impact on the birth and growth of the United States is profound. From his service in the Revolutionary Army to his role in the writing of the Constitution to his founding of the Bank of New York and his service as the first Secretary of the Treasury of the United States, his influence is still felt in the country to the present time. No wonder he was the subject of the great play/show by Lin Manuel Miranda!

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 5 @ 10:30 AM – NOON

Course: **POWER: THE GLORY OF IT**
Subject: Elephants - Power Changers
Presenter: Marion Schultheis
Room: Room 15-17
Format: In-Person Only
Coordinators: **Andrea Irvine,** David Bartash, Marion Schultheis
Tech Support: **Tamara Weinberg**

The world's strongest animal might surprise you – spends most of its day munching on tree bark, leaves, fruits, grasses, and roots but it actually has the power to change its environment. Please join us as Marion explains why elephants are so special in terms of evolution, their anatomy, their senses, and their intelligence.

Course: **SHAKESPEARE: CORIOLANUS**
Presenter: Roy Clary
Room: 27
Format: Hybrid
Coordinators: **Roy Clary**, Jim Brook, Ellie Schaffer
Tech Support: **Ellie Schaffer**, Bob Reiss

Coriolanus offers an experience different from the other tragedies. The hero lacks the mental complexities of Hamlet and Macbeth. A direct and uncomplicated man living in a relatively primitive Rome, his tragic flaw (pride) leads to his tragic fall. The play has a history of provoking intense disagreement about the portrayal of its classes (aristocrats vs. plebeians).

Roy Clary's presentation will explore the play's political environment, as well as the powerful influence of the hero's mother. He will also note the basic structure of a Shakespeare play with an emphasis on the Inciting Moment. A timeline of the period will be discussed.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 5 @ 12:10 – 12:55 PM

Course: **BOOK CLUB**
Book: Orbital
Author: Samantha Harvey
Presenter: Linda Downs
Room: 27
Format: In-Person Only
Coordinators: **Jan Goldstein,** Susannah Falk Lewis, Joan Vreeland

This slim novel has an unlikely setting -- the International Space Station. Exquisitely written, the Booker Prize winner covers 24 hours in the lives of the six people aboard the orbiting spacecraft as they observe the Earth beneath them, in all its beauty and vulnerability.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 5 @ 1:00 – 2:30 PM

Course: **CINEMA QUEST: CURRENT & CLASSIC**
Films :
1. The Birdcage (Marian Friedmann)
2. Anora (Bob Reiss)
3. A Real Pain (Howard Salik)

Room: Auditorium
Format: **Hybrid (To be Recorded)**
Coordinators: **Howard Salik**, Marian Friedmann, Vince Grosso
Tech Support: **Michael Wellner**, Bob Reiss

All right, film fanatics, settle in and welcome back to Cinema Quest, where we dissect cinematic gems with the precision of a brain surgeon … this semester, we'll feature the best in current films and one classic comedy at each session.

Today, we're not just exploring comedy; we're launching our annual "**Oscar Contest."** That's right, folks, predict the winners, and you could be swimming in a pool of ... well, not actual Oscars, but prizes. Think of it as your cinematic lottery ticket, but instead of picking numbers, you're picking movies, performers, directors, and cinematographers.

First stop, South Beach (SOBE). We're hitting up **The Birdcage** with Marian Friedmann … who will take us to a drag haven where feathers fly, and the margaritas are always flowing with a side of Nathan Lane and Robin Williams's comedic genius.

Next, we're venturing to Brighton Beach, where Bob Reiss introduces us to a struggling, sex-working young woman just trying to make ends meet in **Anora**. Don't worry, folks; it's not all doom and gloom.

And we'll land in Warsaw, Poland, with **A Real Pain** led by Howard Salik. Two cousins, a heritage quest, and a whole lot of awkward encounters**.**

So, buckle up, butter your popcorn, and prepare for a cinematic rollercoaster!

Course: **TIMELESS WRITINGS: THE ILIAD**
Subject: Book One
Room: 27
Format: In-Person Only
Coordinators: **Sheryl Harawitz,** Mary Ann Donnelly, Judy Hampson, Andrea Irvine
Tech Support: **Felix Pina**

Welcome to our journey through ***The Iliad***. For our first session, we'll begin with Book 1 (23 pages) of Emily Wilson's vivid translation. The epic opens with a fiery dispute between Agamemnon, the Greek king, and Achilles, the great warrior and prince, over two women—a conflict that sets the tone for the entire tale.

But before this story begins, there's a backstory every Greek knew: The *Judgment of Paris*. In this myth, Paris (Alexandros) is tasked with deciding who is the fairest goddess, awarding a golden apple and igniting events that lead to the Trojan War.

Join us as we explore the drama, the characters, and the timeless world of Homer's epic. This is a study group, so bring your curiosity, questions, and insights.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 5 @ 2:45 PM

Course: **SOLE MATES**
Format: In-Person Only
Room: Gather by elevator 7th Floor at 2:45 PM
Coordinators: Marian Friedmann, Andrea Irvine

And you'll notice that this semester we will walk on Wednesday of A-week -- a chance for all those who were unable to join us on B-Thursdays.

Marian and Andrea will lead us along the Hudson River ending at a "rest' spot for refreshments, food, socialization. Up to you how far you walk, and they'll help with transportation options. No signups, no commitments -- fresh air and community.

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THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 6 @ 10:30 AM – NOON

Course: **CONTEMPORARY POETRY**
Subject: Beat Poets
Room: 27
Format: Hybrid
Coordinators: **Ellen Rittberg,** Mary Ann Donnelly, Karen Millard, Frieda Lipp
Tech Support: **Felix Pina**

We will be covering the Beat Poets. Anyone who attended a performance of the first generation beat poets is welcome to share their recollections and a portion of a poem they loved. Toward the end of every session, attendees may share short poems or portions of longer published poems (though not their own) that were especially resonant to them.

Course: **QUESTER'S CHOICE**
Subject: Genealogy: Researching Our Roots and Discovering Surprises
Presenter: Debbi Honorof
Guest Presenter Ellen Gottfried (via Zoom)
Room: Auditorium
Format: Hybrid
Coordinators: **Bob Gottfried,** Vince Grosso, Hedy Shulman, Mary Beth Yakoubian
Tech Support: **Steve Chicoine,** Tamara Weinberg

The explosion in recent years of home DNA testing has sparked a rapidly growing trend of personal genealogy research. Millions of individuals have been exploring their roots and learning new information about their ancestors and discovering surprises along the way. Digitization of records and an ever-expanding list of online resources has made it much easier to do the research, but they have also led to many concerns, including privacy, ethics, and family discord upon the discovery of long-held secrets.

In addition to discussing current trends in DNA testing and genealogy, the presenters will each discuss their own personal genealogy journey, including research methods, what they learned, and how it brought them into contact with newly discovered relatives.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 6 @ 1:00 – 2:30 PM

Course: **CONTEMPORARY SHORT STORIES**
Stories: 1. Pnin Gives a Party (Frieda Lipp)
2. The Catbird Cage (Rica Fujihira)
Room: 15-17
Format: Hybrid
Coordinators: **Nancy Richardson**, Mary Buchwald, Frieda Lipp
Tech Support: **Felix Pina**

Stories to read:

1. Pnin Gives a Party by Vladimir Nabokov. Presented by Frieda Lipp
Author Nabokov takes us to a fictitious world of academe where our simple protagonist Pin navigates dangerous waters. This stand-alone story is a chapter in Nabokov's novel "*Pnina",* published in 1957, two years after *Lolita*, whose international success enabled Nabokov to devote his entire efforts to writing. Vladimir Nabokov, trilingual, speaking and writing in Russian, English and French, was a prolific novelist, poet, translator, entomologist, and professor.

2. *The Catbird Seat* by James Thurber. Presented by Rica Fujihira
Author James Thurber (1894 - 1961) is best known for his short stories and cartoons, published mainly in *The New Yorker* which he joined as a staff writer in 1927. Thurber was one of the most popular humorists of his time and celebrated the comic frustrations and eccentricities of ordinary people. His works have been adapted into films, including *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty* (1947 and 2013), and *The Battle of the Sexes"* (the 1959 adaptation of *The Catbird Seat.)*. In this story, we meet steady and efficient company man Erwin Martin whose predictable office routine is suddenly upended by a new nemesis and dynamic agent of change, Miss Ulgine Barrows.

Links for the two stories have been sent separately to all Questers via QuestBusiness email. A few printed copies of the stories will be available in the A-week box in the lunchroom,

Any questions, please email Nancy at **nancyrye9@gmail.com**

Course: **POETS' WORKSHOP**
Room: 19
Format: In-Person Only

Coordinators: **Judith Winn,** Judy Hampson, Helen Saffran
Tech Support: None

Write a poem using the cue word “shoe” or a word of the poet’s choice. Authors will read their poems and bring copies of each poem to the class for a second reading by a classmate. A discussion of the poem will follow.

Course: **WORLD OF RELIGIONS**
Subject: The Gnostic Bibles
Presenter: Judy Hampson
Room: 27
Format: Hybrid
Coordinators: **Ruth Ward**, Bob Gottfried
Tech Support: **Ruth Ward**

In the twentieth century hidden gospels about Christianity were discovered in Egypt, nearly 2,000 years after they were originally written. These were rejected by the Orthodox Christian church and considered by the church hierarchy at the time to be heretical.

Why were they hidden for so long, and what was in them that upset second century Christian bishops so much that they tried to destroy them? Be prepared to discover a very different view of Jesus and his ministry, his purpose, and where he came from.

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CULTUREQUEST

Museum of the Moving Image in Astoria
In-Person Tour Led by a Museum Educator

Friday, February 14 at 2 PM
(optional lunch prior to tour)

MOMI opened in 1988 and occupies one of the thirteen buildings in the Kaufman-Astoria studio complex. The tour is a one-of-a-kind experience that immerses visitors in the creative and technical process of making, promoting, and presenting films, television shows, and other forms of digital entertainment. The Museum maintains the nation’s largest and most comprehensive collection of artifacts relating to the art, history, and technology of the moving image—one of the most important collections of its kind in the world. The collection comprises more than 130,000 artifacts from every stage of

producing, promoting, and exhibiting motion pictures, television, and digital media, from pre-cinema optical toys to 21st-century digital technology**.**

- **When:** Friday, February 14, 2025. The tour will begin promptly at 2 pm, when the Museum opens. Please arrive at least 10 minutes early. Let the security guard know you are with Quest, and they will let you in. After the tour, Quest members are free to explore the museum on their own. The Museum will be open until 8 pm.

- **Where:** Museum of the Moving Image, 36-01 35 Ave, Astoria

- **Cost:** $12 – Limited to 20 participants. Please leave a check made out to Quest Lifelong Learning in our CultureQuest mailbox in the Office by Thursday, February 6.

- **To Reserve:** Send an email ASAP to Debbi Honorof at **dhonorof@gmail.com** Please put MOMI Tour in the subject line of your email. Your email will be acknowledged within a few days. MTA directions will be sent with notification of your tour acceptance. We will have a waitlist.

Important Note: Please sign up only if you intend to come. Anyone who doesn't show or cancels will be placed on 'future waitlist only' when they sign up to attend future CultureQuest events. Thank you for your understanding.

Pre-Museum Lunch (optional): We will meet at **Psari Greek Restaurant** at 12 Noon and walk to MOMI after lunch. Psari is located at 32-10 36 Avenue in Astoria. It is a 10-minute walk from there to the Museum. Psari offers a reasonably-priced lunch menu with many choices, including many fish and seafood options. When you RSVP, please let us know if you plan to join us for lunch.