

NEXT WEEK AT QUEST

**May 4 – 7, 2026
This Is an A Week**

There are three links (given in red below) 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.

AUDITORIUM

Meeting ID: 899 9142 8608

Passcode: 252525

ROOM 15-17

Meeting ID: 890 4628 0269

Passcode: 252525

ROOM 27

Meeting ID: 874 2995 4279

Passcode: 252525

Also given are meeting IDs and passcodes for the three meeting rooms. If you don't have Zoom installed, you can still enter a class using your browser by clicking on.

<https://zoom.us/join>

and typing in the Meeting ID for the room of your class along with the passcode.

In addition, you can attend classes on your 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.

MONDAY, MAY 4 @ 10:30 AM – NOON

Course: **ACROSS THE UNIVERSE**
Subject: The Aliens of the Imagination
Presenter: Michael Hamburg
Room: 15-17
Format: In-Person Only
Coordinators: **Michael Hamburg**, Marion Schultheis
Tech Support: **Pete Weis**, Bob Reiss, Tamara Weinberg

In this presentation we will take a slight detour from the route of hard science and explore the road of the imagination. Long before we had the know-how to probe for the possibility of alien life, humanity generally assumed the Universe teemed with creatures of all descriptions. Some were benign and even more advanced than us; some were monstrous and bent on humanity's enslavement or utter destruction. Most reflected what concerned society at that time.

We will begin with a brief history of the literature of ancient cultures, move through to the Age of Enlightenment, and arrive at the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Then the real fun begins as we embrace audio and video clips from Hollywood and television. Some seem silly in today's enlightened era; others might be prophetic. We will have the opportunity to discuss why aliens so enthrall us.

Course: **IT AIN'T JUST ROCK 'N' ROLL**
Subject: The Many Sides of Joni Mitchell
Presenter: Mary Ann Donnelly
Room: Auditorium
Format: **Hybrid (To be Recorded)**
Coordinators: **Steve Koenig**, Wayne Cotter, Mary Ann Donnelly
Tech Support: **Victor Brener**, Wayne Cotter

Joni Mitchell has many sides. She is a painter, a multi-instrumentalist, a record producer, a singer and songwriter.

She started out as a folk singer but in the mid-1970s, she began working with noted jazz musicians including Jaco Pastorius, Tom Scott, Wayne Shorter, Herbie Hancock, and Pat Metheny as well as Charles Mingus, who asked her to collaborate on his final recordings. In 2025 she released a 6 CD set "Joni's Jazz" which features a career-spanning collection of 61 recordings chosen by Joni that reflect jazz's profound influence on her music.

In this presentation, we'll listen to her many sides including some of her classics but with the emphasis on her jazz influenced recordings.

MONDAY, MAY 4 @ 12:10 -12:50 PM

Course: **NOONTIME MEDLEY**
Subject: Name That Historic Site!
Presenter: Tamara Weinberg
Room: 15-17
Format: In-Person only
Coordinators: **Sheryl Harawitz, Andrea Irvine**

At Quest we are surrounded by significant sites in US history. How many are you familiar with? Test your knowledge of those within walking distance and together we'll learn and share new facts about the history of the Financial District.

... and come summer we'll follow-up with a visit to some of them.

MONDAY, MAY 4 @ 1:00 – 2:30 PM

Course: **BALZAC: PERE GORIOT**
Subject: Sarrasine
Room: 27
Format: In-Person Only
Coordinators: **Sheryl Harawitz, Tatyana Chernomaz, Andrea Irvine, Ellen Shapiro**

For our final class, please read Sarrasine (sent out via QuestBusiness).

Balzac takes us into a world of art—poetry, music, and painting—where beauty dazzles, seduces, and sometimes deceives. Along the way, the story gestures to everything from the Dance of Death to the Gothic atmosphere of Ann Radcliffe and the shifting poetry of Lord Byron.

For our last session, we'll step into that world together—with music in the background, a bit of wandering, and a few surprises along the way.

We'll be asking a simple question: when we see beauty, what exactly are we seeing?

Course: **PROFILES IN COURAGE**
Subject: Fearless Speech - Speaking Truth to Power
Presenter: Tracey Lee
Room: Auditorium
Format: **Hybrid (To be Recorded)**
Coordinators: **Wayne Cotter**, Tracey Lee, Ken Sasmor
Tech Support: **Victor Brener**, Wayne Cotter

This presentation will explore the philosophy and purpose of courageous speech which many philosophers now call "Fearless Speech."

In the first two semesters of our Profiles in Courage course, we have focused on individuals who have shown exceptional courage by speaking truth to power. This final session of the semester will define fearless speech, explore its origins and essential elements, and demonstrate how such courage is relevant to today's political environment

This exploration will cover profiles of philosophers from antiquity, historians and philosophers from the mid-20th century and whistleblowers and other courageous speakers of our own generation. We will investigate the philosophy of speaking truth to power and examine the purpose of courageous speech and how we can each strive to be courageous speakers today.

TUESDAY, MAY 5 @ 10:30 AM – NOON

Course: **SCIENCE CLUBHOUSE**
Subject: *The Language Puzzle: Piecing Together the Six-Million-Year Story of How Words Evolved* by Steven Mithen
Presenter: Steve Allen
Room: 27
Format: In-Person Only
Coordinators: **Steve Allen**, Jim Brook, Gil Santiago, Marion Schultheis
Tech Support: **Steve Chicoine**, Pete Weis

Human language is certainly one of the most important innovations that has shaped the evolution of our species. But understanding the path by which this evolution occurred is extremely difficult – unlike the evolution of body parts, the evolution of language (the cognitive capacity for syntax, grammar, and symbolic communication) leaves no fossils. There are even wide differences of expert opinion as to how long-ago human language evolved and the degree to which it was a gradual process or a relatively sudden process. Steven Mithan, a prominent archeologist and professor of early human prehistory, has

endeavored to sum up the latest scientific findings and theories on this subject in this 2024 book.

No advanced reading is needed, but for those who are interested, some material will be distributed through QuestBusiness.

Course: SUPREME COURT
Subject: Federalism of All Sorts
Presenter: Sandra Abramson
Room: 15-17
Format: Hybrid (To be Recorded)
Coordinators: Michael Wellner, Sandra Abramson, Babette Ceccotti
Tech Support: Michael Wellner

From the beginning of the Republic, the concept of Federalism has played a major role in the relationship between the states and the central government. Over the past nearly 250 years, this relationship has changed as the definition of Federalism has changed. Presidential policies and programs differ depending on an administration's views of the relationship. Sometimes policies give the Federal government more power over the states. At other times, states' rights are ascendant. What is the relationship between different administrations' policies and programs and Supreme Court's decisions? Is there a relationship? Is there a balance of power between the states and the Federal government?

Course: THEATERWORKS
Subject: Dress Rehearsal
Room: Auditorium
Format: In-Person Only
Coordinators: Art Spar, Mary Ann Donnelly, Arlynn Greenbaum, Ruth Ward,
Tech Support: Tamara Weinberg, Wayne Cotter

We will have a dress rehearsal for all scenes prior to our end-of-semester performance on May 13th. The rehearsal order will be as follows:

Troupe leaders and scenes:

1. Yona Rogosin/The Accused
2. Lisa Bu/Plunger
3. Mary Beth Yakoubian/Mary Stuart
4. Donna Ramer/The Writer's Room
5. Ruth Ward/The Phantom

It is requested that class members arrive on-time and be prepared to begin at 10:30 AM sharp. All members of Quest are welcome to attend the dress rehearsal.

TUESDAY, MAY 5 @ 12:10 – 12:50 PM

Course: DÉJEUNER FRANÇAIS
Subject: Louis Vuitton
Presenter: Paul Adler
Room: 19
Format: In-Person Only
Coordinators: Ruth Ward, Donna Basile

Louis Vuitton

Tout le monde connaît le nom Louis Vuitton, mais peu connaissent son histoire et début — cette marque mythique est devenue une des premières maisons de luxe et couture mondial — nous découvrirons ses origines à Paris au 19e siècle jusqu'à aujourd'hui.

Louis Vuitton

Everyone knows the name Louis Vuitton - but few know its history and origin — this mythical brand has become one of the leading houses of luxury and fashion worldwide — we'll discover its beginnings in Paris in the 19th century up to today.

TUESDAY, MAY 5@ 1:00 – 2:30 PM

Course: CREATIVE WRITING WORKSHOP
Subject: Freewriting
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

In our last class of the semester, we'll explore freewriting, a form of prewriting. The instructions for freewriting are simple: just keep writing; don't stop to think about changing or correcting anything. Write blah blah or anything else but keep writing for three minutes without a break and see what emerges. Use a prompt word or no prompt at all.

As always, the class begins with a 10-minute writing response to a prompt which you can choose to read aloud or not. You may bring in writing you have done at home in any prose genre, poetry, essay or short play and the group will offer constructive responses. Writing that is read in class should be under 750 words, but longer pieces can be serialized and 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: A New Beginning.

Course: **HISTORY OF NEW YORK CITY**
Subject: New Yorkers Fighting Fascism at Home and Abroad
Presenter: Ilene Winkler
Room: Auditorium
Format: **Hybrid (To be Recorded)**
Coordinators: **Ilene Winkler**, Sandra Abramson, Michael Wellner
Tech Support: **Tamara Weinberg**, Pete Weis, Michael Wellner

As fascist regimes gained power in Italy, Germany, and Spain in the 1920s and 1930s, many New Yorkers became deeply involved with events overseas. They aided Jewish and Spanish refugees, volunteered to fight for the Spanish Republic, and raised funds to assist Ethiopia and China after those countries were invaded. At the same time, pro-fascist movements such as the German American Bund and Charles Coughlin's Christian Front found followers at home, and we will try to understand their appeal and lessons for today. This presentation also traces the sharp divisions within the city between anti-war activists and efforts to build U.S. support for Britain as New Yorkers grappled with the global crisis that led to our involvement in World War II.

Course: **TWO NOVELS BY VIRGINIA WOOLF**
Subject: *The Hours* by Michael Cunningham
Room: 15-17
Format: In-Person Only
Coordinators: **Lynnel Garabedian, Sandy Kessler**
Tech Support: **Bob Reiss**

We will finish our discussion of *The Hours* and how it relates to *Mrs. Dalloway*.

Louis, a friend from Clarissa's past unexpectedly visits her. What do we learn about him? What do you think her cake represents for Laura Brown? Why does she go to a hotel just for a couple hours, and what does she think about there as she reads *Mrs. Dalloway*? What crucial decision for her book does Virginia Woolf make regarding Clarissa? Virginia has many conflicting thoughts and feelings as she goes for a walk and impulsively decides to go to London, but Leonard comes to find her before she acts. Do we understand why Richard takes his own life? The book ends when Laura Brown, now an old woman, comes to New York for the funeral of her son. How do we feel about what she has done with her life?

WEDNESDAY, MAY 6 @ 10:30 AM – NOON

Course: **SHAKESPEARE: HAMLET**
Subject: Act V
Presenter: Jim Brook
Room: 27
Format: Hybrid
Coordinators: Jim Brook, Ellie Schaffer
Tech Support: **Ellie Schaffer**, Joan Lambe, Bob Reiss

As we end the course, we end the play. We will read Act V carefully. We should then be able to see a video of at least a portion of Act V.

We then take time to consider what we have learned about Hamlet during this term. How do we think others should react upon seeing or reading the play?

Course: **TIME: THE WONDER OF IT**
Subject: Authoritarian Government in America. Is it Inevitable?
Presenter: Mark Cardillo
Room: Room 15-17
Format: In-Person Only
Coordinators: **Andrea Irvine**, David Bartash, Marion Schultheis
Tech Support: **Tamara Weinberg**

The Founders of this country were well-versed in history and literature. The American Constitution was written so as to avoid problems of previous empires and in addition were motivated by ideas of the Enlightenment political thought. Yet, after adoption, existential problems soon ensued. Perhaps fortunately, great leaders arose during these crises and helped lead us forward.

What do we have now? Do we have an existential crisis? Are we beginning an age of autocracy in this country? In some sense we have something that was noticeable with Goldwater (a seemingly nice fellow), followed by Gingrich (not so nice), even talk radio, and has been very much surpassed by Trump and his allies. Trump is not just autocratic, but personally embarrassing. He seems to have figured out how to get around our constitution- or has he?

There are hopeful signs.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 6 @ 12:10 – 12:50 PM

Course: **BOOK CLUB: FICTION**
Book: A Little Luck
Author: Claudia Pineiro
Presenter: Shirley Ranz
Room: 27
Format: In-Person Only
Coordinators: **Jan Goldstein**, Susannah Falk Lewis, Joan Vreeland

We'll be discussing *A Little Luck* by Claudia Pineiro, a prize-winning Argentinian writer who is one of the most widely translated contemporary Spanish-language authors. In this novel, a woman returns to Buenos Aires twenty years after a shocking accident caused her to flee to the United States. Both she and Buenos Aires are somehow the same and yet different, touched by the effects that can ripple out from a single decisive event. Long avoided memories surface, with the courage to face the past offering the only hope of a chance at redemption.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 6 @ 1:00 – 2:30 PM

Course: **CINEMA QUEST: CURRENT & CLASSIC**
Films:
1. *Something's Gotta Give* (Karen Levin)
2. *Rental Family* (Marian Friedmann)
3. *If I Had Legs, I Would Kick You* (Vince Grosso)
Room: Auditorium
Format: **Hybrid (To be Recorded)**
Coordinators: **Howard Salik**, Marian Friedmann, Vince Grosso
Tech Support: **Wayne Cotter**, Bob Reiss, Michael Wellner

Remembering Diane Keaton

Something's Gotta Give Presented by Karen Levin (Streaming on Hulu & Prime/Rotten Tomatoes: 80). Aging womanizer Harry (Jack Nicholson) visits the Hamptons with his young girlfriend Marin (Amanda Peet), only to run into her mother Erica (Diane Keaton). After Harry suffers a heart attack and must recover at Erica's house, an unexpected romance develops between the two.

Rental Family Presented by Marian Friedmann (Streaming on Hulu & Prime/Rotten Tomatoes: 88/96). Set in modern Tokyo, the film follows an American actor (Brendan Fraser) who finds new purpose working for a Japanese agency that hires him to play family roles for strangers. As he steps into his clients' lives, genuine bonds form and the line between acting and reality blurs, leading him to rediscover meaning and belonging.

If I Had Legs, I'd Kick You Presented by Vince Grosso (Streaming on Prime & Apple/ Rotten Tomatoes: 88). With her life crashing down around her, Linda (Rose Byrne) attempts to navigate her child's mysterious illness, her absent husband, a missing person, and an increasingly hostile relationship with her therapist.

Course: **TIMELESS WRITINGS: THE CANTERBURY TALES**
Room: 27
Format: In-Person Only
Coordinators: **Sheryl Harawitz**, Mary Ann Donnelly, Judy Hampson, Andrea Irvine

For our final class, please read three contrasting tales: the Summoner's Tale, the Franklin's Tale, and the Manciple's Tale.

As a counterpoint, we will turn to a "real pilgrim," Margery Kempe, a contemporary of Chaucer who undertook several pilgrimages of her own. Her account offers a strikingly different vision of pilgrimage, shaped by her experience as a woman pursuing an intensely spiritual life in a world structured by male authority.

Selections from *The Book of Margery Kempe* were sent via QuestBusiness: Chapter 13 (her time in Canterbury) and Chapters 26–29 (her journey toward Jerusalem). Together, they invite us to rethink what pilgrimage might mean.

Course: **YOU CAN DO POWERPOINT**
Room: Computer Lab
Format: In-Person only
Coordinators: **Tamara Weinberg**, Tracey Lee
Tech Support: **Tamara Weinberg**, Joan Lambe, Ruth Ward

Want to share your passion but don't know how to create a presentation? Drop in to our workshop and learn basic PowerPoint — all skill levels welcome! Each session will begin with a short overview of how to create a basic slideshow and add images, text, and videos. Then you can work on your presentation with individual assistance — it's a PowerPoint study hall! Bring your own laptop with PowerPoint installed or use a computer in the lab and bring a USB-A thumb drive to save your work. Experienced PowerPoint users are encouraged to join in to share their skills and learn more advanced techniques as time permits.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 6 @ 2:45 PM

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

Step out with fellow Questers for a relaxing walk by the Hudson. It's a time to stretch our legs, share stories, and enjoy the City's quiet side. The walks are informal and flexible — come if you can and go as far as you wish.

All welcome — no signups, no commitments — fresh air and community.

THURSDAY, MAY 7 @ 10:30 AM – NOON

Course: **BEETHOVEN: THE LATE YEARS 1815-1827**
Subject: Late Beethoven
Presenter: Jim Hopkins
Room: Auditorium
Format: In-Person Only
Coordinators: **Arlene Hajinlian**, Jim Hopkins, Larry Shapiro
Tech Support: **Steve Chicoine**, Joan Lambe, Tamara Weinberg

This week we'll explore the final two "Late" quartets that Beethoven wrote without payment, apparently just because he had more to say. He gives us another great (but not Grosse) fugue in his astonishing seven-movement quartet in C# minor, Op.131, that is to be played in its entirety without pause (don't worry, we'll pause plenty). His final quartet, Op. 135 in F Major, is a four-movement, jewel-like, classically inspired work in which we discover Beethoven having some fun! Please join us for our closing session of this astounding and wonderful music.

Course: CONTEMPORARY POETRY
Subject: Billy Collin's Life and Works
Presenter: Linda Schwartz
Room: 27
Format: Hybrid
Coordinators: Ellen Rittberg, Frieda Lipp, Karen Millard, Linda Schwartz
Tech Support: Felix Pina

Bruce Weber of The New York Times declared that Billy Collins is the most popular poet in America. Collins served as Poet Laureate of the United States and New York State's Poet Laureate and has taught poetry at several universities. He is best known for his accessible, conversational style, often hooking his readers with humor while deftly shifting to tender observations of everyday life. Let's read a selection of his poems together and share our thoughts regarding his work.

THURSDAY, MAY 7 @ 1:00 – 2:30 PM

Course: CONTEMPORARY SHORT STORIES
Stories: 1. The Sins of Others (Ken Sasmor)
2. Letter from Gaza (Mary Buchwald)
Room: 15-17
Format: Hybrid
Coordinators: Nancy Richardson, Mary Buchwald, Frieda Lipp
Tech Support: Felix Pina

1. The Sins of Others by Hector Tobar. Presented by Ken Sasmor
Hector Tobar, a journalist and fiction writer, presents what purports to be a story of a stereotypical encounter with ICE, but that turns out to be anything but such an encounter. Stay tuned for an interesting twist in this story which challenges our assumptions.

2. Letter from Gaza by Ghassan Kanafani. Presented by Mary Buchwald
Ghassan Kanafani, (1936-1972), was a notable Palestinian author and journalist. He coined the term "resistance literature" to describe his works portraying the Palestinian struggle, exile and national identity. *Letter from Gaza* was written in 1956, before the 1967 Six-Day War when Israel occupied Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Reading it today, the story seems like a prophetic forecast of what lay ahead, a metaphor for the Palestinian struggle for their homeland against displacement.

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 Quest Office.

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

Course: **QUESTER'S CHOICE I**
Subject: Possibilities & Problems — How a Party Out of Power Regains Majority
Presenter: Anne Moses
Room: 27
Format: **Hybrid (To be Recorded)**
Coordinators: **Mary Beth Yakoubian**, Vince Grosso
Tech Support: **Steve Chicoine**

Many Americans are frustrated with the current administration but distrust the Democratic Party. What, if anything, can be done to gain trust and move the government in a better direction? We will explore various options and problems that stand in the way. Discussion is welcome!
