

NEXT WEEK AT QUEST

May 11 – 14, 2026
This Is a B 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 11 @ 10:30 AM – NOON

Course: **GIVE MY REGARDS TO BROADWAY**
Subject: Ragtime
Presenter: Estelle Selzer
Room: Auditorium
Format: **Hybrid (To be Recorded)**
Coordinators: Peter Dichter, Arlynn Greenbaum
Tech Support: Victor Brener, Wayne Cotter

Ragtime is a 1996 musical based on the book by E.L. Doctorow. The original production made its Broadway premiere in 1998 with a star-studded cast including the power duo of Brian Stokes Mitchell and Audra McDonald. It was nominated for 13 Tony Awards and won four. The current cast at Lincoln Center Theater stars an equally powerful cast. Set against real historical events and figures, the musical explores themes of racism, immigration, justice, and the pursuit of the American Dream. These themes are still relevant today. *Ragtime* highlights hope for the American Dream and the stories are intimate, personal and emotional.

Course: **WONDERFUL BOOKS OUT LOUD**
Subject: *Slouching Towards Bethlehem* by Joan Didion (Farrar, Straus and Giroux edition)
This session we will read:
Rock of Ages-p.205; *The Seacoast of Despair*-p.209
Guaymas, Sonora-p.214;
Los Angeles Notebook-p.217
Facilitator: Harriet Finkelstein
Room: 27
Format: In-Person Only
Coordinators: Harriet Finkelstein, Larry Shapiro, Ruth Ward
Tech Support: Ruth Ward, Larry Shapiro

NO ADVANCE READING REQUIRED

Rock of Ages is a postcard style reflection on visiting the abandoned Alcatraz prison. *The Seacoast of Despair* portrays Newport, Rhode Island's grand mansions. *Guaymas, Sonora* recounts a trip to the Mexican port town to escape a rainy, chaotic life in Los Angeles - it highlights themes of alienation and escapism. *Los Angeles Notebook* describes the ominous atmosphere and psychological effects of the Southern California Santa Ana winds. *Goodbye to All That* chronicles Didion's love for and eventual departure from New York City.

MONDAY, MAY 11 @ 12:10 -12:50 PM

Course: NOONTIME MEDLEY
Subject: Celebrating
Room: 15-17
Format: In-Person Only
Coordinators: Sheryl Harawitz, Andrea Irvine

For our final Noontime Medley of the semester, we're keeping things simple — and meaningful. A celebration of the big and the small: big moments, small victories, quiet satisfactions. Not the formal, once-in-a-lifetime kind, but the kind that slips into our lives and often goes unnoticed.

Did you celebrate a special birthday? Move to a new apartment? Finally clean out that closet? Let go of a book you didn't want to finish? Do something you've been meaning to do for years?

Send your contributions to Sheryl (sherylnyc@gmail.com) by Saturday night and she will create a PowerPoint.

We'll share the contributions you sent, eat our lunch, celebrate AND let the joy flow.

MONDAY, MAY 11 @ 1:00 – 2:30 PM

Course: GREAT PLAYS
Play: *Anna Christie* by Eugene O'Neill
Presenter: Ruth Ward
Cast: John Davis, Peter Dichter, Mary Ann Donnelly, Frank Montaturo, Ruth Ward
Room: Auditorium
Format: In-Person Only
Coordinators: Roy Clary, Wayne Cotter, Frieda Lipp
Tech Support: Wayne Cotter

Anna Christie is a four-act drama by the American playwright Eugene O'Neill that won him his second Pulitzer Prize for Drama in 1922. It premiered on Broadway at the Vanderbilt Theatre on November of 1921 and ran for 177 performances before closing in April of 1923. Through the years it has been revived, most recently this year at the Off-Broadway theater at St. Ann's Warehouse in Brooklyn. With characters drawn from society's margins, the story explores themes of identity, self-determination, and redemption through one woman's struggle against the expectations of society and the men in her life.

Course: **POWER OF PLAY**
Subject: Play...Just for Fun!
Presenters: Candy Johnson and Carole Blane
Room: 22
Format: In-Person Only
Coordinators: **Carole Blane**, Candy Johnson, Joe Aboulafia
Tech Support: **Felix Pina**

Join us in our last session to learn more about the history of some familiar games before creating our own to play and share with others.

We will also reflect on our relationship to play; how we define it, how it has expanded over the course of the program and how we will create our own play going forward.

We will end with a guided meditation.

TUESDAY, MAY 12 @ 10:30 AM – NOON

Course: **ARTISTS AND THEIR WORK**
Subject: Raphael: Sublime Poetry
Presenter: Ellen Shapiro
Room: Auditorium
Format: **Hybrid (To be Recorded)**
Coordinators: **Linda Downs**, Lynnel Garabedian, Bob Reiss, Ellen Shapiro
Tech Support: **Victor Brener**, Ellen Shapiro

Come see some of the richness of Raphael's full oeuvre, a bit of which now comprises an exhibition in our Metropolitan Museum of Art. In two short decades, for he died at age 37, his versatility reminds us of that of Picasso. The beauty and perfection of his paintings led some 20th century viewers to think in cliches, but each task which Raphael was given stimulated his powers of invention; Bible figures, gods and goddesses, philosophers, popes, his contemporaries; in frescoes, paintings, drawings, tapestries, architecture — amazing!

Course: **NEW & CLASSIC ESSAYS**
Room: 27
Format: In-Person Only
Coordinators: **Steve Allen**, Bob Belfort, Nina Sanders, Larry Shapiro

Topics:

1. "Is the Dictionary Done For?" by Louis Menard from *The New Yorker* December 22, 2025,
2. "It's Time to Translate Shakespeare — Into Contemporary English" by John McWhorter from *American Theatre* magazine January 2010

TUESDAY MAY 12 @ 1:00 – 2:30 PM

Course: **FILM FOR THOUGHT**
Room: Auditorium
Format: In-Person Only
Coordinators: **Steve Allen**, Lois Klein, Marsha Porcell, Ellen Waldman
Tech Support: **Michael Wellner**, Pete Weis

We continue with the best of contemporary short documentaries, dramas, and comedies selected for their artistic merit and the probability of producing a lively discussion.

Course: **QUESTER'S CHOICE II**
Subject: Achieving Global Sustainability in the Anthropocene
Presenter: Martin Green
Room: 15-17
Format: **Hybrid (To be Recorded)**
Coordinators: **Mary Beth Yakoubian**, Anne Moses, Karen Cullen
Tech Support: **Steve Chicoine**

Civilization on our planet took a sharp turn about 250 years ago, at the beginning of the industrial revolution. A new geological epoch, the Anthropocene, has been proposed to acknowledge how profoundly humans have altered Earth's systems. Human activity is now a powerful force shaping the planet, on par with natural forces like volcanic eruptions or asteroid impacts.

The philosophy of sustainability, and the practice of sustainable development, arose to mitigate the negative effects of the industrial revolution. Sustainable development meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The most important key to mitigating the Earth's current problems is that every human endeavor should be informed by sustainable development, because none of our material resources are infinite and only a few sources of energy are sustainable.

NOTE: This is the last class of the **Earth: History** course. Owing to the holiday schedule this semester, the seventh **Earth: History** class was moved to this **Quarter's Choice II** slot.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 13 @ 10:30 AM – NOON

Course: **AMERICAN UPHEAVALS**
Subject: DOJ – Nixon to Trump and Everything in Between
Presenter: Sandra Abramson
Room: 5-17
Format: **Hybrid (To be Recorded)**
Coordinator: **Michael Wellner**
Tech Support: **Michael Wellner**

The Department of Justice (DOJ) is in turmoil. It has been since the first Trump administration but this time it threatens to sink the DOJ. However, this isn't the first time DOJ has had difficulties. During the Nixon Administration the relationship between the President and DOJ was toxic. We all remember the Saturday Night Massacre (don't we?) and how the President was telling the Attorney General (AG) what to do. Eventually his AG, John Mitchell, was tried and convicted for his role in the Watergate Scandal. What has happened at DOJ between then and now? What is happening now? How did the Jack Smith investigation get derailed and what was Merrick Garland's role? Is your head spinning yet?

Course: **SCIENCE & SCIENTISTS**
Subject: The Making of American Medical Science
Presenter: David Grossman
Room: Auditorium
Format: **Hybrid (To be Recorded)**
Coordinators: **Jim Brook, Steve Allen, Judy Weis**
Tech Support: **Pete Weis, Konstantin Dolgitsier**

Though many deplore the American health system, (indeed, some detest it) there is no denying that we are the beneficiaries of America medical science and public health. We take for granted the institutional structures in which the scientific enterprise takes place and that there has always been a steady stream of researchers ready to launch the next inquiry. Yet, this was not always the case. The development of the infrastructure for science and for the preparation of medical scientists required the conscious efforts of private individuals, men and women passionately committed to making the United States the leader in all forms of scientific inquiry. Starting with the reform of American medical education, then building a cadre of physician-scientists who were interested in pursuing inquiry simultaneously with medical practice, these men and (a few) women built a juggernaut that propelled American medicine to world leadership.

We will look at some of the actors who shaped American medicine — some physicians, some not — and explore their accomplishments and failures.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 13 @ 12:10 – 12:50 PM

Course: **BOOK CLUB: CREATIVE NONFICTION**
Book: *In Cold Blood*
Author: Truman Capote
Presenter: Carole Blane
Room: 27
Format: In-Person Only
Coordinators: **Debbi Honorof, Carole Blane**

One of the earliest and most influential works of creative nonfiction, *In Cold Blood* is Truman Capote's 1966 "nonfiction novel" about the 1959 murders of the Clutter family in Holcomb, Kansas, committed by two drifters, Richard Hickock and Perry Smith. Widely regarded as a foundational work of New Journalism, the book meticulously reconstructs the crime, the investigation, and the lives of the killers, exploring themes of violence, evil, and the American psyche with both suspense and empathy.

If you get the chance to watch the film *Capote* prior to book club, it is quite interesting.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 13 @ 1:00 – 2:30 PM

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

Description: Come one, come all to the year-end performance of TheaterWorks. The writers, directors, and actors have prepared an afternoon to remember. There will be five troupes presenting 15-minute scenes for your pleasure.

The playbill is as follows:

1. "The Accused" directed by Yona Rogosin
2. "Plunger" a new play written by Lisa Bu
3. "Mary Stuart" directed by Mary Beth Yakoubian
4. "The Writer's Room" a new play written by Donna Ramer
5. "The Phantom" a new play written by Ruth Ward

A wine and pastry reception across from the auditorium will follow for the audience and the TheaterWorks team to celebrate together. Please join us for both.

THURSDAY, MAY 14 @ 10:30 AM – NOON

Course: **EARTH: HISTORY**
Topic: The Development of Agriculture
Presenter: Steve Allen
Room: 15-17
Format: **Hybrid (To Be Recorded)**
Coordinators: **Judy Weis, Pete Weis**
Tech Support: **Pete Weis, Bob Reiss**

The portion of human history since the development of agriculture (roughly 10 thousand years) represents a minute fraction of the 7 million years since the human lineage split off from the lineage of the other apes. But compressed into that sliver of history are virtually all of the components that led to human domination of life on earth: advanced science and technology, written language, global communications, the ability to manipulate the genetics of other species, and the explosive rise in human population (a thousand-fold increase in 10 thousand years).

This talk will examine two fundamental questions: (1) in what ways did the wide-spread adoption of agriculture lead to these other major developments? and (2) what were the primary causes of such a rapid transformation from a universal hunter-gatherer lifestyle to dominantly agricultural societies?

Course: **ORAL INTERPRETATION OF POETRY**
Subject: *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*
Class Leaders: **Joyce Hinote, Peter Dichter**
Room: 19
Format: In-Person Only
Coordinators: **Joyce Hinote, Peter Dichter**

For the very last class of Oral Interpretation of Poetry, we are reprising our class on Oscar Wilde's masterpiece "*The Ballad of Reading Gaol*". It was written after he was released from spending two years in prison in 1897 and living in poverty in Paris. This is a protest poem in the serious meaning of the word. He found the conditions in Reading Gaol horrifying for adults and children. After each of us reads and discusses this great poem, we have a surprise – Wilde has agreed to return from wherever he has been for the past

126 years and honor us for a short interview. This may be the last time he does this, so we urge you to hear him at this exciting time.

THURSDAY, MAY 14 @ 1:00 – 2:30 PM

Course: ERAS IN AMERICAN HISTORY
Subject: Filipinos and other Asians
Presenter: Laura Lopez
Room: Auditorium
Format: Hybrid (To be Recorded)
Coordinators: Joy Sabella, Bob Gottfried
Tech Support: Konstantin Dolgitser, Pete Weis

Since the 1960's the United States has seen more immigration from Asian countries like the Philippines and India, due to landmark legislation passed by President Lyndon Johnson. The Hart-Cellar Act that he signed abolished the discriminatory National Origins Formula that had governed U.S. immigration since the 1920s, replacing it with a system based on family reunification, skilled labor and greater diversity in the U.S. population.

Course: EXPLORATIONS IN PHILOSOPHY & LITERATURE
Subject: The Philosophy of Punishment
Facilitators: Steve Allen, Bob Belfort, Nina Sanders
Room: 27
Format: In-Person Only
Coordinators: Larry Shapiro, Steve Allen, Bob Belfort
Tech Support: Steve Chicoine, Larry Shapiro

We are all familiar with the many ways in which the US criminal justice system in practice falls far short of the standards that our society agrees on in principle – for example, standards regarding equal justice, fair trials, the impact of bail, and prison conditions. These shortcomings have been well documented by journalists, mental health professionals, sociologists, historians, and citizen activists.

In addition, there are the questions as to whether our society's standards are the proper ones. On these questions, the groups who document the gap between theory and practice have much to say, but philosophers also have a contribution to make. Questions such as what are the legitimate reasons for government to impose punishment, what role should assessment of an offender's mental capacity and life circumstances play in determining sentences, and how much weight should be given to the intent of an offender to do harm as opposed to just the actual harm done.

Our discussion will draw on important philosophical writings on this subject and we will also offer some concrete examples that test the ideas that philosophers have offered. We

will circulate some advance readings through QuestBusiness. We encourage reading at least some of this advance material in order to have a richer class discussion.

Course: **POETRY WORKSHOP**
Subject: Creating a Poem from a Story
Presenter: Judy Hampson
Room: 19
Format: In-Person Only (**Note:** This class ends at 3:00 PM)
Coordinators: **Judy Hampson**, Helen Saffran, Linda Schwartz

Sometimes it can be hard to come up with an idea for writing a poem. Using a familiar story can be a trigger for inspiration.

There will be a writing prompt related to the poem, and an opportunity to share.
Suggested prompt for this week: *Think about one of your favorite stories, maybe something you enjoyed having read to you when younger. Choose one of the characters and perhaps an event and use it to begin a narrative poem.*

Members who choose to bring in poems written at home will read them to the class and get feedback. The word from last week was TRAVEL.

FRIDAY, MAY 15 @ NOON

QUEST END-OF-SEMESTER LUNCHEON

Nino's Ristorante Italiano
405 East 52nd Street
New York NY 10022

Just East of First Avenue
212-988-0002

SOLD OUT