

AU OLLI Shares

Local Naturalists

A team of local naturalists will guide this multi-disciplinary course, exploring topics such as botany, ichthyology, ornithology, geology, and ecology. Each instructor will share their unique expertise and observations, offering insights into our region's remarkable natural diversity. This course provides a deep dive into the natural world through the eyes of those who have spent years studying and appreciating the environment around us.

Coordinator: Gary Wagoner

Mondays, 9/14 - 11/2 | 2:00–3:30 PM | Zoom Only

Russia-Ukraine: Forward to the Past

Examine the historical and geopolitical roots of the Russia-Ukraine conflict and how past events continue to shape today's headlines. Through discussions of political developments, historical narratives, and international responses, participants will gain a deeper understanding of the complex relationship between Russia and Ukraine. Topics include key moments in Russian and Ukrainian history, the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the broader global implications of the ongoing conflict.

Instructor: Jay West

Tuesdays, 9/15 - 11/3 | 9:00–10:30 AM | Zoom Only

Whatever Happened to Folk Music?

Discover the origins and evolution of American folk and roots music, with special attention to African-American folk traditions and their commercial separation from Anglo-American folk music. This course also explores the folk music of Alabama, the structure and composition of traditional folk, roots, and blues music, as well as the lasting cultural impact of influential musicians.

Instructor: Mike Reinke

Tuesdays, 9/15 - 11/3 | 2:30–4:00 PM | Zoom Only

European History Between the World Wars, Part 1: After the Great War

The First World War ended the fighting, but it did not secure the peace. This three-term series examines the challenges Europe faced in the years following the Great War as nations sought to rebuild, resolve political disputes, and prevent another devastating conflict. Part 1 focuses on the settlement created by the Treaty of Versailles and the efforts to establish a stable international order. Topics include the Paris Peace Conference, the redrawing of national boundaries, reparations, the creation of the League of Nations, and other diplomatic initiatives intended to foster cooperation and preserve peace. Participants will consider how these efforts shaped relations among European nations and influenced the course of twentieth-century history. By examining both the promise and the shortcomings of postwar diplomacy, the course provides a foundation for understanding the turbulent decades that followed.

Instructor: Joseph Kicklighter

Tuesdays, 9/15 - 11/3 | 2:30–4:00 PM | Zoom Only

75 Years of U.S. Intervention in the Middle East and North Africa: It's Déjà Vu All Over Again

For more than 75 years, the United States has used military force, covert operations, diplomacy, and other forms of intervention throughout the Middle East and North Africa. From early Cold War involvement to more recent conflicts in Iraq, Iran, and the broader region, these actions have produced consequences that continue to shape U.S. foreign policy and regional attitudes toward the United States. Drawing on historical events and the instructor's military experience, this course considers the objectives behind major U.S. interventions, their intended and unintended consequences, and recurring patterns in American decision-making. Participants will consider the human, financial, political, and strategic costs of intervention and discuss what decades of U.S. involvement in the region can teach us about current and future foreign policy.

Instructor: Michael Baker

Thursdays, 9/17 - 10/8 | 2:30–4:00 PM | Zoom Only