



WALL- Spring 2026 Course Descriptions

Hamlet in Performance-Dr. Stephen Wisker

Mondays, Jan. 5, 12, 26, Feb 2 1:30-2:30

Location: Taylor Amphitheatre

Hamlet in Performance will take the participant on a journey through Shakespeare's funniest tragedy! The class will consider the play on stage in the London theatre of 1600, in productions around the world and most recently here at Wesleyan College last spring. The course will build on a chapter in Dr. Wisker's book *Embracing Disruption: Clowning, Improvisation, and the Unscripted in Early Shakespearean Performance* that examines the unlikely, but pervasive, influence of clowning on Shakespeare, his play, and the performance in the leading role of Richard Burbage—the first actor to play the Danish prince. The course will also consider the play's plot, its themes and its astonishing language. Participants will have the opportunity to learn the basics of verse speaking and perform—if they so desire—in the low stress and supportive environment of the class. *Stephen is a scholar, teacher, and director of Shakespeare. He is also an actor and trained theatre clown. This training in clowning and improvisation later informed his research on Shakespeare in Performance which was recently published in his book, Embracing Disruption: Clowning, Improvisation, and the Unscripted in Early Shakespearean Performance (Routledge 2025). After completing a Master's degree in the Contemporary Practice of Shakespearean Theatre, he worked at the Actors Center in London teaching professional actors how to speak Shakespearean blank verse. Since then, he has directed and taught Shakespeare widely at leading drama schools, conservatories, and universities in Europe and North America including Mountview Academy Theatre, Birmingham School of Acting, NYU/Tisch School of the Arts, Atlantic Acting School, and SUNY Buffalo—the last being where he studied for his PhD and graduated in 2018.*

Exploring Ethics-David Swigart

Tuesdays, Jan. 6, 13, 20, 27 1:30-2:30

Location: Taylor Amphitheatre

Students will be introduced to ethics through four distinct lenses, We begin with the etymology of ethics, character, and investigate the inner nature and construction of the human being through Aristotle's virtue ethics and Confucius' Analects. Next, we will explore humans as political, forming a social body that may complete or challenge their individuality based on teachings of Plato and Chinese philosophy. In our 3rd session we turn to ethics seen through the Scientific Revolution, We end with a challenge to the primacy of rational thought in ethics, a turn to the passions.

David has a Masters in philosophy, the work for which focused on 19th century German thought. He has taught for six years, from large lecture courses to many intimate seminars in Great Books and in courses including ethics, introduction to philosophy, ancient philosophy, eastern philosophy, and 19th century thought.

Positive Psychology-Dr. Carole Seegert

Wednesdays, Jan. 7, 14, 21, 28 1:30-2:30

Location: Taylor Amphitheatre

Positive Psychology is a research-based field of study on the qualities and behaviors that promote human flourishing. This course will discuss what we have learned about becoming more resilient and increasing life satisfaction.

Carole has a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from the University of Kentucky and did my internship with the U.S. Army. Her teaching/training experience includes WALL courses, training Mental Health Staff for the Georgia Department of Corrections, teaching courses at Pembroke St. University and the Citadel graduate program, and presenting at professional conferences.

Won't You Be My Neighbor, AI? Friendly Lessons for Non-Techies-Bethany Buck

Wednesdays, Jan. 7, 14, 21 3:00-4:00 // **THREE SESSIONS**

Location: Taylor Amphitheatre

Curious about the buzz around artificial intelligence, but not sure where to start? Join us for a friendly, three-part series designed especially for lifelong learners who want to understand how AI is shaping our world—no technical background required! **Class 1: “Won't You Be My Neighbor, AI? The Story of a Helpful New Friend”**

Theme: The History and Impact of AI in Daily Life. We welcome a new neighbor—AI—to the neighborhood. Together, we take a gentle stroll down memory lane, exploring how inventions have always helped people. AI shares its own story: how it started as an idea in books and movies, and now quietly helps people every day. It is okay to feel curious or cautious about new things, and that learning together is what neighbors do best. **Class 2: “How AI Lends a Helping Hand: Everyday Support in the Neighborhood”**

Theme: AI in Medical Appointments, Budgeting, Safety, and Planning

We invite AI to show how it helps neighbors with everyday tasks. AI gently demonstrates how it can help during a doctor's appointment, protect your banking account, keep the neighborhood safe with smart locks, and even help plan a family trip. We ask thoughtful questions, making sure AI explains things simply and kindly, so everyone feels included and empowered—not overwhelmed. **Class 3: “Creating, Connecting, and Caring: AI's Creative Side.D”**

Theme: AI for Art, Connection, and Lifelong Learning. We collaborate with AI to explore the creative and connective possibilities of technology. AI helps a neighbor make a personalized birthday card, shows how it can translate a letter from a friend who speaks another language, and helps neighbors of all ages share stories and memories. We highlight how AI can help keep our minds active, encourage creativity, and bring people together—reminding everyone that learning and connecting never go out of style.

Bethany Buck is a proud Wesleyan College alumna where she earned her Bachelor's degree in Advertising, Marketing and Communication along with a double minor in Business and Finance. She continued her studies receiving a Master of Science in Management and Leadership from Western Governors University and is currently completing her Doctorate at Valdosta State University. With a creative background as a storyteller, playwright, and graphic artist, Bethany excels at making even the most complex technology topics clear and approachable. She believes learning should be welcoming and enjoyable for everyone regardless of age or experience. Bethany is excited to share practical tips, spark creativity, and help you discover how AI can enrich your daily life. Whether you are curious or cautious, she looks forward to exploring the world of AI with you in a friendly, supportive environment.

Forensic Anthropology Solves Human Mysteries-Dr. JoAnna Watson

Tuesdays, February 3, 10, 17, 24 11:00-12:00

Location: Taylor Amphitheatre

Ever wonder what really happened to historical persons, cultures, and events? Join JoAnna as we look at topics that will include: how did King Tut really die, the collapse of the mighty Mississippian culture, the Tikal (Mayan) population explosion, why was the “Iceman (Utzy)” traveling in winter, did humans arrive in the New World earlier than thought, and the disappearance of Neanderthals among others.

Dr. Watson is a Professor Emerita at Mercer University. She has a D.Sc (doctorate of science) from Edinburgh University and has taught anthropology/archaeology and fieldwork in Greece, Malta, Israel and Mexico (Maya). Her previously taught WALL classes have been very well received.

The Arts as Hammer and Mirror: Reflection and Transformation in Culture-Sydney and John Chalfa

Tuesdays Feb. 3, 10, 17, 24 March 3 1:30-2:30 // FIVE SESSIONS

Location: Taylor Amphitheatre

The Arts can be seen as both a hammer and a mirror; they reflect society while also shaping it by conveying ideas and influencing perceptions. This duality allows the arts to serve as a tool for both reflection and transformation in the cultural landscape. This course is designed to be interactive, blending lectures, discussions, and hands-on analysis. By the end of the course, participants will be able to: Understand the metaphor of the arts as a mirror and a hammer, analyze how different art forms reflect and shape societal values, critically evaluate examples of art as tools for social change, and explore their own creative expression or consumption as reflective or transformative.

Sydney Chalfa has an MFA in Acting/Directing from the University of Georgia. She retired after 27 years as director of theatre at Middle Georgia State University where she taught a variety of courses in the arts. John Chalfa is a retired Mercer media professor. He has his PhD from Southern Illinois University. He thrives on hearing live music, enjoys watching movies, and looks forward to briefly returning to the classroom to teach this WALL class with his wife Sydney

Color ABC- Yvonne Gabriel

Wednesdays, February 4, 11, 18, 25 11:00-12:00

Location: Murphey Art Building, Room 104. This class is limited to 20 members.

Color can be confusing. Often, when we start using color, the options are too many and we get discouraged. In this course, we will systematically take the steps needed to develop a basic understanding of color. We will begin with a dark and light, exploring the fundamental importance of value. Stepwise, we will add color one at a time!

Week One invites us into the foundational world of values, where we will work in black and white to explore light, shadow, and composition through small-scale exercises.

Week Two introduces the color wheel—its structure, purpose, and expressive potential. We will apply this knowledge through simple shapes rendered in traditional primary and secondary colors,

Week Three expands our palette to include tertiary colors, with a focus on common missteps and how to avoid them. Through small works that combine primary, secondary, and tertiary hues, we will increase our understanding of unity in color.

Week Four culminates in a final project: a larger-format piece that synthesizes everything we have learned, allowing students to express their unique voice through color.

Yvonne was born and raised in the Netherlands where she studied nursing, but came to the United States and followed her passion for art. Yvonne obtained a Bachelor's degree in writing and art from Mercer University and her Master's Degree in Painting from Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD) and has been an adjunct art teacher at Mercer

University since 2019. She has earned awards for her portraits and was commissioned to paint Mercer's Chancellor Dr. Godsey's wife, illustrated books, and has been praised for her ability to "change the world one brush stroke at a time." (Dr. Eskew)

Tristan und Isolde-Mary Keating, Ed.L.D.

Fridays, Feb. 27, March 6, 13, 20 1:30-3:00

Location: Taylor Hall, Room 127

Optional: Metropolitan Opera will broadcast live Tristan und Isolde at the Douglass Theatre, March 21 at 12:30 p.m. Admission is \$20/seniors

Before there was *Romeo and Juliet*, before Guinevere and Lancelot, and long before *Camelot*, there was *Tristan und Isolde*, a story of overwhelming passion and eroticism at war with duty and loyalty. Come experience why Wagner's immortal opera, *Tristan und Isolde*, is considered the singular masterpiece of music drama that propelled music into the modern age. During four class sessions, you will learn the history of *Tristan und Isolde* and will listen to recordings of excerpts from the opera by great singers past and present. On March 21, having been thoroughly immersed and introduced, we will hear the opera together at the Douglass Theatre in downtown Macon. Operas at the Douglass are broadcast "Live in HD" from the Metropolitan Opera in New York City. (Admission to the opera broadcast is \$20 for seniors.) This is the perfect first Wagner opera.

Mary Keating holds degrees in music from Indiana University and the University of Florida. She was a professional opera singer for 15 years before entering the teaching profession. She currently teaches Music Appreciation at Georgia Military College in Dublin and gives frequent informational talks before opera performances at the Douglass Theatre

Mysteries of the Night Sky-Mallory Stone, Raegan Drick, Xandrya Edwards

Tuesdays, March 3, 10, 17, 24 3:00-4:00

Location: Museum of Arts and Sciences

This course will take place at the Museum of Arts and Sciences and explore the mysteries of the night sky from the earth, moon, and sun system to constellations to art depicting celestial bodies throughout history. The first session will be taught by Mallory Stone and occur in the Science on a Sphere exhibit where we will discover how the earth, moon, and sun system works and discuss topics such as moon phases and seasonal changes. The second and third sessions will be led by Raegan Drick and held in the Mark Smith Planetarium where we will take a journey through the legends of the night sky. The final session will be facilitated by Xandrya Edwards who will utilize our recently explored science content to investigate Baroque techniques and create your own piece of astronomy art.

Mallory Stone is the Curator of Earth Sciences and Education Lead at the Museum of Arts and Sciences. She has been at the Museum for over 3 years and is passionate about science education. Her background includes both formal and informal science teaching, and she holds an Environmental Science degree from Berry College. **Xandrya Edwards** is the STEAM Curator at the MAS and focuses on the intersection of art and science. She has a Master's Degree in Music from the University of Georgia. Xandrya also teaches Voice at Wesleyan College. She is enthusiastic about using her expertise in music to connect with other aspects of art and incorporate the science behind those subjects.

Raegan Drick is the Earth and Space Science Curator at the MAS and spends her time in the Planetarium as well as our Sweet Gum Trail and sometimes even our Science on a Sphere. She enjoys connecting the space sciences with the natural sciences, and plays an integral role in teaching science content to guests of all ages. Raegan has a degree in Environmental Science from Kennesaw State University.

Great Decisions-Vince Coughlin

@ Wesleyan: Wednesdays March 4, 11, 18, 25 April 1, 8, 15, 22 1:30-3:00 in Taylor Rm. 221. Limit 25 members.

@ Carlyle: Thursdays Mar 5, 12, 19, 26 Apr 2, 9, 16, 23 3:00-4:30 in Activity Room A. Limit 20 members.

****NOTE: Great Decisions 2026 Briefing Book required for registering members is \$35.00 and can be purchased through the Foreign Policy Association website at:**

<https://fpa.org/product/great-decisions-2026-pre-order/>

Great Decisions is a product of the Foreign Policy Association. Topics are:

America & The World, Trump 2.0, Foreign Policy & Tariffs, The Future of the World Economy
U.S.-China relations, Ruptured Alliances & the Risk of Nuclear Proliferation, Ukraine & the Future of European Security Multilateral Institutions in a Changing World Order, U.S. Engagement of Africa, The Future of Democracy & Human Rights in a Divided World.

Vince Coughlin, founder of the WALL program, received a B.S. (Physics) from Bucknell University, an M.S. (Physics) from Franklin & Marshall College, a J.D. from the University of Toledo, and an LL.M. from Pennsylvania State University's Dickinson School of Law. He retired from General Electric as a Senior Patent Counsel to GE and RCA Licensing Operation. He has taught law-related courses at Harrisburg (PA) Area Community College, the University of South Carolina Aiken's Academy for Lifelong Learning, and WALL where he has served as the facilitator for Great Decisions since 2012. His interests include Constitutional Law and Lifelong Learning.

Just Stop Talking: What to say to People in Emotional Distress-Donna Green

Wednesdays, March 4, 11, 18, 25 11:00-12:00

Location: Taylor Amphitheatre

When you encounter someone who is hurting, what should you say to express your concern? What should you not say--or when is it time to "just stop talking"? From a layman's point of view, this class will cover Donna's Twenty Dos and Don'ts to use in situations of everyday hurt like job loss, illness, loss of a pet, empty nest, divorce, and even the loss of a loved one. Come to learn, discuss and explore what we can glean from personal experiences.

Through a life filled with multiple hardships, disappointing illnesses and heartbreaks comes many hurts and helps from friends, family and even strangers. Along the way, Donna began to compile a list of which words would sting, or which would comfort. These are her personal experiences, supplemented with my study of both professional counselors and other laymen. Donna has taught this class to multiple groups over the last 25 years.

A Survey of Protest in Popular Music-Rose Thornburg

Tuesdays, April 7, 14, 21, 28 3:00-4:00

Location: Taylor Amphitheatre

Since ancient times, people have voiced unhappiness with their situations in music. Before the American colonies became the United States, the revolutionaries put taunts to music in order to goad their British counterparts. And across the ages since, people have used songs to make their feelings known on subjects such as race, war, gender, violence and aggression. Not all songs we consider "protest music" are heard strictly at marches. In fact, most are heard on mainstream media, and some appear in our local church hymnals. This course will look at a selection of those songs from the 20th and 21st Centuries which carry a strong social message and the artists who wrote and/or performed them.

Rose Thornburg holds a BA degree in Social Studies Education and an MA in Mental Health Counseling from Marshall University. She is currently retired, but helping babysit a one-year-old.

Tour of Historic Macon-Jim Barfield

Friday, April 10 1:30-4:00

Location: Areas around Macon, GA. Bus will leave from Wesleyan College at 1:30pm on April 10th.

Please note that the Wesleyan Bus is not handicap accessible. This class is limited to 28 members.

Join us for a rolling tour of Historic Macon leaving Wesleyan by bus to sites significant in history with stops at Ocmulgee Mounds National Historic Park, the Cannonball House, and St. Joseph's Catholic Church. Please bring \$5 with you for the entrance fee into the Cannonball House.

Jim Barfield is a Macon native, career educator, and published author. Mr. Barfield is an exhaustive and enthusiastic expert on the history of Macon, Georgia. He has been active in historic preservation for more than 30 years and is a leading advocate for Macon's historic and architectural heritage. He is committed to educating and inspiring appreciation for our unique city.

Refounding Macon-Rev. Sara Pugh Montgomery

Thursdays, April 16, 23 11:00-12:00

Location: Taylor Amphitheatre

Last year, Reverend Montgomery presented "Refounding Macon," a docuseries that tells the story of Macon's racial history — from slavery to desegregation. Since then, the final episode has been released. She will review previous videos and show the new episode, which will be sure to spark meaningful discussion.

Rev. Sara Pugh Montgomery is the senior pastor at Centenary UMC and originally hails from North Carolina. In the spring of 2024, she led her congregation in these video series and conversations as they looked at what they are being called to do as a faith community. Rev. Pugh Montgomery meets with many other clergy leaders in town as we strive to build the beloved community in Macon.