

SESSION 1 COURSES:

FREE

The Basics of Taking Pictures

Tom Wortmann

Monday –
In-Person - Room TBD
1:30pm – 3:00pm

1 Session
9/29/25

Unleash your inner photographer in this free, one-day workshop!

Learn the art of composing a photograph with simple, effective techniques that will elevate your photos. Create lasting memories and take pride in sharing your beautiful photos with family and friends!

Biography: The Lives of Famous & Infamous People

Allan Meyers

Tuesdays –
Virtual
12:20pm – 1:20pm

13 Sessions
9/9, 9/16, 9/30, 10/7, 10/14,
10/21, 10/28, 11/4, 11/11,
11/18, 11/25, 12/2, 12/9

Were people really **afraid** of Virginia Woolf?

Did Shirley go to **Temple**?

Was Edgar Allen Poe **raven** mad?

Did Jimmy **Doolittle**?

Learn about the lives, inner thinking, and psychology of the rich, the poor, the famous, and of course, the infamous! Each class will be examining a different life story, and no topics will be repeated from previous semesters.

NEW

**Near Death Experiences &
Exploring the Concept of
the Afterlife**

Harold Hellman

**Tuesdays –
In-Person - Room TBD
1:25pm – 2:55pm**

3 Sessions
9/30, 10/7, 10/21

Do we have a soul? If so, can it separate from the body, and return? Is there life after death? Is there any proof of this?

A number of science-oriented, non-believing physicians have risked their reputations by researching this topic for decades. Near Death Experiences (NDEs) are vivid, lucid, heavenly experiences that thousands if not millions of people have had. From the work of the researchers, the amazing truth behind Near Death Experiences has begun to emerge. Come join me as we go down the NDE rabbit hole.

NEW

**Passports Through the
Past: A Journey Across
History's Greatest
Moments**

John Rossi

**Wednesdays –
*Virtual***

10:30am – 12:00pm
(first four classes – 90
minutes)

11:00am – 12:00pm
(last class – 1 hour)

5 Sessions
9/17, 10/8, 10/15, 10/22,
10/29

Buckle up for the ultimate historical adventure! This course will take you on a thrilling expedition through the turning points that shaped our world; from the rise of empires and revolutionary breakthroughs to daring discoveries and unforgettable conflicts. With each “stamp” in your passport, you’ll step into a different era, learn about the people who changed history, and witness the events that still echo today. This is not just a lesson; it's a time-travel experience across civilizations, cultures, and centuries.

Topics will include: The Evolution of Egyptian Greatness, Spain’s Underwater Bank, A Wild Ride through Florida’s Past, The World’s Most Mysterious Destinations, & The Epic Story of Canada’s Rise.

Legal Topics for Your Life

Glenn & Allan Meyers

**Wednesdays –
Virtual
12:20pm – 1:30pm**

10 Sessions
9/10, 9/17, 10/8, 10/15,
10/22, 10/29, 11/5,
11/12, 11/19, 11/26

This course will explore the fundamentals of various relevant legal topics and leave you with a greater understanding. We will look at your rights under New York Law as a spouse, parent, heir, caregiver, homeowner, car owner, creditor, debtor and more. Every week we will analyze a new topic, the caselaw surrounding it, hold Q&A sessions, and offer guest speakers, like judges and other experts. Some of the questions that we will discuss are:

- Does everyone need a Will?
- What is a Trust and what can it do?
- How can I protect my assets from lawsuits?
- What happens if someone trips and falls in front of my house?
- My doctor prescribed the wrong medication, and it made me sick. What can I do?
- The credit card company keeps calling my house. How can I get them to stop?

These topics, your questions, and much more will be examined in depth each week. This course is designed to support the understanding of relevant legal topics. It is not legal advice from the College of Staten Island/CUNY, nor solicitation from a legal firm.

NEW

Conversational Italian

Blerina Likollari

**Thursdays –
In-Person – Room TBD
10:10am – 11:00am**

6 Sessions
9/11, 9/18, 9/25, 10/9,
10/16, 10/23

This Italian course is for both beginners as well as those who have some knowledge of basic vocabulary and grammar structures.

The course will focus on practical conversations, cultural insights including Italian cuisine, and interactive exercises to enhance language proficiency.

With a supportive and relaxed learning environment, this course empowers learners to develop their language skills at their own pace.

Knitting for Fun & Relaxation

Dianne Frankel

**Thursdays –
In-Person – Room TBD
10:30am – 12:00pm**

5 Sessions
9/18, 9/25, 10/9, 10/16,
10/23

Whether you're a total beginner or a long-time knitter who needs a refresher, this is the class for you! Learn basic instructions (cast on, knit, purl, and cast off) to advance techniques (yarn over, increase, and decrease) in addition to reading patterns and knit symbols. Or bring one of your works-in-progress and meet fellow crafters.

Beginner knitting patterns and a supply list will be emailed before the start of the class.

NEW

Astronomy 100: Contemporary Theories of the Solar System

Kevin Lane

**Thursdays –
In-Person – Room TBD
12:20pm – 2:15pm**

12 Sessions
9/11, 9/18, 9/25, 10/9,
10/16, 10/23, 10/30,
11/6, 11/13, 11/20, 12/4,
12/11

Learn about the nature of the sun, moon, planets, comets, meteors, and meteorites; early and modern history of the Earth; the origin of the solar system; and the evolution of life on Earth and in the cosmos.

This is an undergraduate course that Options students are permitted to audit for their own personal enrichment. Options students who register for this course are not charged a tuition fee. Instead, we kindly ask that students consider donating. Donations to Options can be made through our webpage: [**csi.cuny.edu/options**](http://csi.cuny.edu/options).

NEW

Treasured Memories: Junk Journaling for Beginners

Laura Belisle

**Thursdays –
In-Person – Room TBD**

3:00pm – 4:00pm
(first class – 1 hour)

2:30pm – 4:00pm
(remaining 4 classes – 90 minutes)

5 Sessions
9/11, 9/18, 9/25, 10/9,
10/16

Capture the moments that matter in this engaging, hands-on junk journaling course. Learn how to repurpose everyday items into a personalized journal through junk journaling. This class offers a unique opportunity to transform these materials into beautiful, meaningful memory journals.

Have you ever looked at old papers, fabric scraps, buttons, mail, forgotten photos, or even product packaging and wondered, “What if?” In this course we’ll learn to see the artistic potential in everyday items. Junk journaling is more than just scrapbooking; it’s a mindful and sustainable art form that encourages creativity and the preservation of your unique story.

We’ll explore themes such as childhood memories, favorite recipes, traditions, travel, and more, as you’re guided through reflective writing prompts and hands-on techniques. No prior art experience is necessary – just a willingness to explore, experiment, and have fun! Come prepared to rediscover forgotten treasures and create a personal keepsake for you to pass down or simply cherish.

A list of supplies will be provided before the first class. We’ll be crafting with a combination of new, recycled and found materials.

NEW

Functional Movements for Daily Living

Stephanie Parello

**Fridays –
In-Person – Room TBD**
9:05am – 10:00am

6 Sessions
9/12, 9/19, 9/26, 10/3,
10/10, 10/17

Don’t let minor aches and stiffness turn into debilitating dysfunction. Regain confidence and ease in your daily movements by learning to improve everyday activities such as standing comfortably while cooking, running errands with less fatigue, enjoying walks with the dog, playing with grandkids, changing sheets and doing laundry, climbing stairs confidently, getting in and out of the car and much

more! Gain newfound freedom while practicing and enhancing how you reach, grasp, lift, carry, twist, bend, pull & push.

This course includes a combination of instruction/discussion, and hands-on demonstrations & experience. Handouts will be provided.

NEW

Intermediate Mah Jongg

Laurie Raps

**Fridays –
In-Person – Room TBD
10:10am – 11:55am**

4 Sessions
9/12, 9/19, 9/26, 10/3

If you already know the basic rules of Mah Jongg and want to increase your enjoyment of the game, then this is the course for you! In this course, we will learn strategies and tricks to make your game more interesting and fun. We will also learn how to play with five players (hint: the fifth player will be the bettor).

Required: Please bring your 2025 Mah Jongg card. If you don't have one, please order it from www.NationalMahJonggLeague.org. The cost is \$15.00 for the large print card.

SESSION 2 COURSES:

Gentle Yoga

Clarissa Alliano

Mondays –
In-Person – Room TBD
10:10am – 11:40am

4 Sessions
11/17, 11/24, 12/1, 12/8

This class will take you through Gentle Yoga stretches and Yoga Nidra, breathing techniques for stress management and guided relaxation.

It will be easygoing and suitable for all, including beginners and those with limited mobility.

FREE

How Scammers Exploit Seniors & How to Stop Them

John Rossi

Monday –
Virtual
10:00am – 12:00pm

1 Session
11/10/25

Every year, scammers target seniors to get access to their personal information and money. Seniors in the U.S. lose \$28.3 billion annually, according to a 2023 report by AARP. Many elderly victims do not report fraud out of fear of embarrassment. The growing incidence of senior fraud is putting many older adults in harm's way, threatening to strip them of their assets, independence, and trust.

This free, one-day workshop will teach you how to identify scams and offer real-world advice on how to prevent and report them. Together we'll examine the ins & outs of senior scams and explain the most common types of scams targeted at older adults (e.g., grandparent scams, IRS scams, phishing & computer scams, and many more).

NEW

Revisiting Western Myth

Peter Whitehouse

**Mondays –
In-Person – Room TBD
12:20pm – 1:10pm**

5 Sessions
11/3, 11/10, 11/17,
11/24, 12/1

In a world of rapid change and overwhelming information, myth endures, not just as ancient stories, but as living frameworks for understanding ourselves and our society. Inspired by the classic conversations between Joseph Campbell and Bill Moyers in *The Power of Myth*, this lecture series invites learners to reflect on centuries of Western myths, probing their nature and allure. Interestingly, Campbell and Moyers concluded more than 35 years ago that America didn't have a national myth, and we were poorer for it.

Do we have one today? In fact, might we have too many?

Topics covered will include: Myth & Religion, Alchemy & Chemistry, Astrology & Astronomy, Myth & the Hierarchy of Human Needs, as well as Myth & A.I.

NEW

Shakespeare's Much Ado About Nothing

Joan Hartman

**Mondays –
In-Person – Room TBD
1:25pm – 3:20pm**

6 Sessions
11/3, 11/10, 11/17,
11/24, 12/1, 12/8

Much Ado About Nothing is the first of Shakespeare's three best-known romantic comedies of the 1590s; it precedes *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night*. Like them, it has a double plot: a potentially tragic plot involving Hero and Claudio and a comic plot involving the witty Beatrice and Benedick. We'll look at its plotting, its language, its staging, and two film versions.

Please buy the Folger edition of *Much Ado About Nothing* for this course (ISBN: 9781501146305).

Chair Yoga

Donna Scimeca

**Mondays –
In-Person – Room TBD
5:00pm – 6:30pm**

5 Sessions
11/3, 11/10, 11/17,
11/24, 12/1

This course is designed for those who cannot stand for long periods, or who cannot work on a floor mat. Chair yoga allows you to improve your flexibility, balance, and overall wellbeing with the support of a chair. Participants will learn chair-based yoga postures (both seated and standing) as well as breathing techniques focusing on relaxation and stress reduction.

No prior yoga experience is necessary. Join us for an empowering and rejuvenating experience.

NEW

The Battle of Gettysburg

Len Warner

**Tuesdays –
Virtual
9:30am – 12:30pm**

4 Sessions
11/25, 12/2, 12/9, 12/16

Join us for a four-lesson marathon study of the most famous and horrific battle of the Civil War. This three-day battle took place near the sleepy town of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, which many historians say was the turning point of the Civil War.

Emboldened by a string of spectacular victories in Virginia, Robert E. Lee led an 85,000-fighting man Confederate army in an invasion of the North, hoping to confront and defeat what remained of the Union army on their own soil, and win the war.

With the use of PowerPoint presentations, educational programs, class discussions, and TV film clips, we will follow the events of each of the three days of this desperate battle which cost 51,000 casualties. The instructor will point out acts of extreme heroism and analyze why the North was able to turn the rebels back across the Potomac River, ending the Confederate army's winning streak.

This course will end with a study of Abraham Lincoln's most famous and inspiring speech, "The Gettysburg Address." Learn why this Civil War battle and Lincoln's address is at the center of the history of our country, and why they will never be forgotten.

Mah Jongg for Beginners

Laurie Raps

Tuesdays –
In-Person – Room TBD
10:10am – 11:55am

4 Sessions
10/28, 11/4, 11/11, 11/18

Learn how to play a fun, but challenging game that has been a favorite for generations. Mah Jongg is a great way to sharpen your mind and make close friends. Join this course to journey into Mah Jongg with the Options community!

Required: Please order the 2025 Mah Jongg card (\$15) from www.NationalMahJonggLeague.org prior to the start of this course to participate.

The Pursuit of Happiness

Harold Hellman

Tuesdays –
In-Person – Room TBD
1:25pm – 2:55pm

5 Sessions
11/4, 11/11, 11/18, 11/25,
12/2

Happiness is our birthright. Observe young children and see how easily joy comes to them. They approach life with an open heart, free to love without placing conditions on the object of their love.

The Pursuit of Happiness is more than just a class; it is a journey back to ourselves. You will see how things like judgementalism and perfectionism interfere with our happiness, and how choice, unconditional love, gratitude and compassion put us on the road back to happiness. This course includes guided meditations and other experiential elements in which the participants will develop “happiness skills”.

NEW

Memory Lane: A Nostalgic Show & Tell

Renee & Tony Giordano

**Wednesdays –
In-Person – Room TBD
10:10am – 11:00am**

6 Sessions
10/29, 11/5, 11/12, 11/19,
11/26, 12/3

Do you remember "Show & Tell" from elementary school? That's what we will be doing in this class. However, there's one difference: we will be showing things we've saved from the "good old days". Maybe a household item from the 1960s, a souvenir from vacation, a news article, a magazine, or a comic book that reminds you of a time long ago. You don't have to bring a keepsake to participate; you can just enjoy what others bring and perhaps share a childhood memory that it stirs.

This course isn't just about objects. It's about storytelling, memories, and community. As each of us shares, a collective sense of time and experience will begin to form, revealing the unique paths we have all taken and the universal feelings that bind us. Our class will be a space for laughter, surprises, sometimes tears, and often unexpected connections between people who may have thought they had nothing in common, until someone else's memory feels a bit like their own.

Beaded Creations: Jewelry Making

Chandra Valle

**Wednesdays –
In-Person – Room TBD**

2:15pm – 3:45pm
(first 4 classes - 90 minutes)

2:15pm – 3:15pm
(last class - 1 hour)

5 Sessions
10/29, 11/5, 11/12, 11/19,
11/26

Unlock your creativity and discover the joy of jewelry making in this engaging, hands-on course designed specifically for older adults. Whether you are new to crafting or looking to hone your skills, this class is perfect for beginners eager to learn the art of bead stringing, memory wire techniques, bracelet and necklace design, and earring design (both pierced and non-pierced styles). With instructor guidance, students will learn in a fun and supportive environment. You'll leave each class with beautiful, handmade jewelry and a sense of accomplishment. Connect with fellow enthusiasts while expressing your creativity through the timeless art of beadwork!

Supplies for the first class will be provided by the instructor. A supply list for the remaining classes and jewelry projects will be provided to students at the first class.

Intermediate Italian

Blerina Likollari

**Thursdays –
In-Person – Room TBD
10:10am – 11:00am**

6 Sessions
10/30, 11/6, 11/13, 11/20,
12/4, 12/11

This Italian course is for those who have some knowledge of basic vocabulary and grammar structures and can communicate in everyday situations.

The course will focus on practical conversations, cultural insights including Italian cuisine, and interactive exercises to enhance language proficiency.

With a supportive and relaxed learning environment, this course empowers learners to develop their language skills at their own pace.

Crochet & Knitting Discussion Group

Meaghan Hilton

**Thursdays –
In-Person – Room TBD
11:15am – 12:05pm**

6 Sessions
10/30, 11/6, 11/13, 11/20,
12/4, 12/11

Join us to chat, connect, knit, and/or crochet as we create together and have fun! Feel free to bring anything you're currently working on, and we will share patterns as well as tips and ideas.

Students are encouraged to bring their own materials, but extra knitting needles, crochet hooks, and some yarn will be available in class if needed.

Self-Massage & Other Ways to Be Nice to Yourself

Stephanie Parello

Fridays –
In-Person – Room TBD
9:05am – 10:00am

6 Sessions
10/31, 11/7, 11/14, 11/21,
12/5, 12/12

We've all got some aches and pains. While there's nothing like a great massage by a skilled therapist, there's a whole lot you can do for yourself instead, or between appointments. Expand your definition of massage through hands-on experience led by a New York State Licensed Massage Therapist, who will also provide you with easy and practical suggestions to do at home.

This course will include a combination of instruction, discussion, and hands-on demonstrations, and you'll walk away with several tools for your pain-relief toolbox, as well as understanding and empathy for the wear-and-tear of time. Achieve the art of being nice to yourself!

Bring a thick yoga mat, and a clean (new) sock. Handouts will be provided in class.

Art of Drawing & Painting

Lou Russo

Fridays –
Virtual
10:35am – 11:30am

6 Sessions
10/31, 11/7, 11/14, 11/21,
12/5, 12/12

This course explores drawing and painting techniques and mediums, examines the styles of different artists, historical schools of art, and defining exactly what "art" is.

A supply list will be emailed to students before the start of class.

FREE
Student
Club

THE GROUP

COME JOIN THE FUN

Every Friday
Virtual
12:00pm – 2:00pm

Students come together to meet and socialize with one another. The Group will host conversations on current events: locally, nationally and globally.

Friday Dates: 9/12, 9/19, 9/26, 10/3, 10/10, 10/17, 10/24, 10/31, 11/7, 11/14, 11/21, 12/5, 12/12

Instructor Bios

Clarissa Alliano is the NY Metro Area Manager for Veterans Yoga Project. She has been instructing Yoga, Meditation, and Yoga Nidra in NY, NJ, and CA for 25 years since her Integral Yoga Institute certification in 1998.

Laura Belisle is administrative lead for CSI's Creative Exchange Program. Creative Exchange is a lifelong learning program that serves adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). A proud alumna of the College of Staten Island, Laura brings years of artistic training and practice in photography, mixed media, and sculpture. Laura is also an avid crafter who believes in the power of hands-on expression to build confidence and connection. Her background reflects a deep commitment to lifelong learning, artistic development, and community engagement.

Dianne Frankel was taught how to knit fifty-plus years ago by her great aunt, and ever since then she has loved the craft. After retiring from the NYC Department of Education, she enrolled at the Fashion Institute of Technology, Yarn Council, Knitting Instructor Class. She has taught adults and Girl Scout groups how to knit.

Renee and Tony Giordano are curators of an 1855 One Room Schoolhouse listed on the National Register of Historic Sites. Tony was a NYC teacher for 34 years. His college years began at the old Staten Island Community College on Bay Street. He earned his master's degree in Adult and Community Education at City College. Renee worked for the NYC Department of Health after college, before becoming a stay-at-home mother to their five children. She later returned to work on behalf of a coalition of 500+ small retail businesses, helping them connect with the community and cut through governmental red tape. Their hobbies include tie dyeing, diamond art, gardening, and exploring the beaches, parks and historic sites of Staten Island.

Dr. Joan Hartman is a retired faculty member of CSI's Department of English. Her specialty is in British literature of the Early Modern Period, also referred to as the Renaissance. She has been teaching one Shakespearean play a semester in Options each year over the last decade.

Harold Hellman has a master's degree in Social Work, and has worked in mental health and long-term care for 30 years. Through years of meditation and spiritual practice, he had found that happiness is the key to a peaceful and fulfilling life. Happiness takes work, but what glorious work it is.

Meaghan Hilton is a proud CSI alumna who has always loved crafting. Years back, she took knitting classes with her mother but always wanted to learn crochet. During the pandemic, she finally picked up a hook, taught herself the art, and hasn't looked back since. Today, she loves sharing crochet ideas and finds joy in the creativity and sense of community it inspires.

Blerina Likollari earned her master's degree in *TESOL* at Hunter College and has enjoyed teaching adult learners for more than 15 years. Before her current role as CSI's Associate Director of the Literacy and Language Programs, she was a faculty member in the college's World Languages and Literature Department. During her 13 years with the department, she taught beginner to advanced Italian language courses, which included teaching the fundamentals of expression and communication to students who had little to no prior knowledge of language.

Allan Meyers is a Korean War Veteran. After the war he became a lawyer and started his own family practice. In retirement he enrolled in Options as a student. It was at that time that the Options Program Coordinator, the late great Mrs. Betty Bonczek, asked him to teach a class about the Brooklyn Dodgers. He has been teaching two courses each semester since then.

Glenn Meyers is an attorney in private practice in Manhattan. Glenn has been practicing for 27 years, handling all types of litigation including Trusts and Estates, Personal Injury, Contracts, Bankruptcy and Matrimonial. He is a graduate of SUNY Binghamton, holds a master's degree in Criminal Justice from John Jay College and a J.D. from Quinnipiac College School of Law. He is a third-generation attorney and is the son of Allan S. Meyers, who you all know and love from the Options Program. Teaching is Glenn's passion, and he looks forward to hearing from you each week.

Stephanie Parello began an obsessive study of Chen-style Tai Chi, Kung Fu, and fitness in general, as well as therapeutic massage, when she turned her life upside-down by relocating to Sydney, Australia. She has worked in world-class science museums as an educator since 1993, both here and in Australia. She's instructed Tai Chi for 17 years and has been a therapeutic massage therapist for 15 years. She is a voracious reader and a lifelong student of many aspects of health and well-being. Her most prominent superpower is being a natural-born teacher with decades of experience, across many subjects, and an almost magical ability to meet people exactly where they are, allowing them to feel safe in their learning experience.

Laurie Raps started playing Mah Jongg as a child while watching her mother and her friends play every week. She joined a game as a young adult and has been playing it ever since. Besides loving the game, she especially loves the friendships she has made.

John Rossi is a retired professor of over 30 years from New York University and is an aficionado of world history. Professor Rossi's interest was ignited on his first cruise to Alaska. Since then, he has delivered enriching lectures about the history and events of many countries around the world. He has been invited by numerous cruise lines including Celebrity, Royal Caribbean and Princess to entertain and educate passengers on more than 120 cruises. In addition to Options, he currently conducts lectures at the Somerset Library, Westfield Historic Society, Department of the Aging, MS Society, and the UFT.

Lou Russo is an experienced designer, illustrator, and fine artist with a long career servicing top clients and corporations in NYC. He is also a professional guitarist and is the lead singer and songwriter for the S.I. Snugs. He creates a fun, easygoing environment in which learning and creativity can thrive.

Donna Scimeca is a full-time administrator in the Office of the Dean of Humanities & Social Sciences. She is also an adjunct lecturer, and Coordinator of Core 100, a US civics course at the College. She began developing her Iyengar yoga (Hatha) practice in 2000 and has been teaching yoga since 2007. She teaches classes in person at the College, and virtually via Zoom.

Chandra Valle dedicated 33 years to Bellevue Hospital before retiring to pursue her passion for crafting and décor. As a retiree, she continues to channel her passion for creativity into her own jewelry business, “Valle Girls.” Chandra’s warm and friendly demeanor, coupled with her innate creativity, has made her a respected figure in both the healthcare and artisan communities, where she continues to inspire and mentor others with her expertise and genuine love for her craft.

Leonard Warner grew up with a love of nature and evolution. As an educator and Biology major, he taught in the sciences and humanities at John Dewey High School for over 30 years. After retirement in 2000, he taught at the UFT SI Beagle Learning Center, Blue Heron Park Nature Center, and CSI Options. His cumulative teaching experience spans over 57 years. In his retirement, he has focused on American History, including the lives of the founding fathers, early presidents, and the Civil War. He loves to teach, learn, interact with people, and share his knowledge with anyone who enjoys learning.

Peter Whitehouse has taught in the Options program for over a decade. Before that he was the Advanced Placement European History instructor at Tottenville High School. His previous subject course areas for Options have ranged from European philosophy, art, architecture, religion, and literature, with emphasis on the Medieval and Renaissance periods. He has also conducted several museum art tours for students at the NYC Met and the Cloisters, as well as educational trips abroad.