

# CSI's Options Lifelong Learning Program for Adults Over 55

## Spring 2026 Semester: Session 1 Courses

**NEW**

### Music Appreciation: Western Music Through the Ages

Elona Migirov

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

**5 Sessions**  
2/23, 3/2, 3/9, 3/16, 3/23

This course offers an engaging study of the history of Western music. Together we will listen to music from different historical periods and explore how musical styles have evolved from the Medieval and Renaissance periods through the Baroque, Classical, Romantic, and Modern eras.

We will also discuss major composers and learn about key classical genres such as the symphony, sonata, concerto, tone poem, piano miniature (or character piece), and art song.

No materials are required – just bring your curiosity and a willingness to listen! Some light homework may be assigned to enrich your experience.

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**NEW**

### Shakespeare's Henry IV, Part 1

Joan Hartman

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

**7 Sessions**  
2/23, 3/2, 3/9, 3/16,  
3/23, 3/30, 4/13

In this course we'll be reading one of Shakespeare's historical plays, *Henry IV, Part 1*, in which Bolingbroke, who dethroned his cousin Richard II, tries to consolidate his power as Henry IV. His former allies turn against him. His son Prince Hal takes up with the disreputable Sir John Falstaff. We'll look at two filmed versions of Henry IV and, in our final class, Orson Welles's *Chimes at Midnight*, with Welles as Falstaff.

Please buy the Folger edition of *Henry IV, Part 1* for this course (ISBN: 9780743485043).

**NEW**

**Intro to Yoga**

Donna Scimeca

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

**5 Sessions**  
2/23, 3/2, 3/9, 3/16,  
3/23

This class is for students new to yoga, continuing beginners, and those who need a refresher of the basics of Hatha yoga. The class will be taught in the Iyengar yoga tradition, which emphasizes precise alignment. The focus will be on fundamental postures (asanas) including standing and seated poses, twists, and forward bends.

Please bring a yoga mat.

**Note: This class is open to CSI staff/faculty.**

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**Intermediate Mah Jongg**

Laurie Raps

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

**4 Sessions**  
3/10, 3/17, 3/24, 3/31

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, the instructor will bring extras to share.

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

John Rossi

Tuesdays –  
*Virtual*  
10:30am – 12:00pm

**5 Sessions**  
3/10, 3/24, 4/21, 5/5,  
5/19 (the final class will  
end at 11:30am)

Buckle up for the ultimate historical adventure! This course will take you on an electrifying journey through the epic turning points that shaped our world: from the rise of mighty empires and groundbreaking revolutions to daring discoveries and unforgettable battles that shook the globe.

With each “stamp” in your passport, you’ll leap into a different era, encounter the visionaries and rebels who changed history, and stand at the heart of events that still reverberate today. This isn’t just a class; it’s a time-travel adventure across civilizations, cultures, and centuries.

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## Biography: The Lives of Famous & Infamous People

Allan Meyers

Tuesdays –  
*Virtual*  
12:20pm – 1:20pm

**13 Sessions**  
2/10, 2/24, 3/3, 3/10,  
3/17, 3/24, 3/31, 4/14,  
4/21, 4/28, 5/5, 5/12,  
5/19

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.

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

Harold Hellman

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

**4 Sessions**  
2/24, 3/3, 3/10, 3/17

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 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.

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## **Gentle Yoga**

Debby Sachs

**Wednesdays –**  
*In-Person – Room TBD*  
10:10am – 11:25am

**6 Sessions**  
2/11, 2/18, 2/25, 3/4,  
3/11, 3/18

Gentle Yoga offers a calming, accessible practice that blends simple postures with mindful breathing. The slower pace allows participants to be more present with each posture and encourages greater ease and comfort. This class is suitable for all experience levels, including those with limited mobility. Each class includes gentle stretching, yogic breathing (linking breath and movement), and a guided relaxation to support overall well-being.

Please bring a yoga mat.

**NEW**

**Legal Topics &  
Civics for Your Life**

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

**Glenn Meyers &  
Allan Meyers**

**10 Sessions**  
2/11, 2/18, 2/25, 3/4,  
3/11, 3/18, 3/25, 4/15,  
4/22, 4/29

This course will explore the fundamentals of various relevant legal topics and leave you with 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. New this semester, we are excited to add a civics component to our curriculum. This will give us the opportunity to discuss how government works and how its decisions affect us as seniors and as citizens of New York City, New York State, and the United States.

Some of the questions we may discuss are:

- How does our local government work, and what does it mean to me?
- How does the federal government work, and what does it mean to me?
- 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?

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

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**NEW**

**Conversational Italian**

**Blerina Likollari**

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

**6 Sessions**  
2/19, 2/26, 3/5, 3/12, 3/19,  
3/26

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

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

Dianne Frankel

**5 Sessions**  
2/19, 2/26, 3/5, 3/12,  
3/19

Whether you are a total beginner or a long-time knitter who needs a refresher, this is the class for you. Learn basic instructions like cast on, knit, purl, and cast off, to advance techniques like yarn over, increase, and decrease. Read patterns and knit symbols. Or bring one of your works-in-progress and meet fellow crafters. Beginner knitting patterns and supply list will be emailed before the start of the class.

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## **Astronomy 102: Contemporary Theories of the Universe**

Kevin Lane

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

**11 Sessions**  
2/19, 2/26, 3/5, 3/12,  
3/19, 3/26, 4/16, 4/23,  
4/30, 5/7, 5/14

A presentation of the galaxy, atomic structure, star populations, nuclear energy, stellar evolution, galactic structure, and the universe. **\*Note:** This is an undergraduate course that Options students are invited to. Options students who register for this course are not charged a tuition fee. Instead, registrants have the option of making a donation to the program by visiting our webpage: [csi.cuny.edu/options](http://csi.cuny.edu/options)

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## **Better Balance & Fewer Falls**

Stephanie Parello

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

**6 Sessions**  
2/13, 2/20, 2/27, 3/6,  
3/13, 3/27

While human balance often begins to falter as we get older, this need not be the case: regain trust in your body! Drawing from multiple disciplines, including neuroscience, body mechanics, (next page)

## Better Balance & Fewer Falls (continued)

strength and conditioning, tai chi, and mindfulness, you will learn the key elements of the complex human balance system, along with simple tools to train your mind and body for better balance and fewer falls.

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### NEW

### Introduction to Reiki for Self-Healing “The Mystic Art to Invite Happiness” Jan Koehler

**Fridays –**  
***In-Person – Room TBD***  
**2:30pm – 4:00pm**

**5 Sessions**  
2/20, 2/27, 3/6, 3/13,  
3/27 (the final class will end at 3:30pm)

Reiki is a Japanese energy healing technique that promotes deep relaxation, reduces stress, and supports the body's natural healing. Many find it helps with pain, anxiety, sleep, and overall vitality.

In this course you will learn:

- The history of Reiki
- Your Reiki lineage – noting the teachers that came before
- Breathing and meditation techniques to open your Reiki channel
- How to practice on yourself, including hand positions to treat your entire body
- “Place your hands, Surrender, and Smile”

Each student will participate in two attunements to increase their Reiki ability. This course will also include an introduction to working on others.

No prior Reiki experience necessary: all are welcome! Those who complete both Reiki courses in Session 1 and Session 2 will have successfully completed Reiki level 1, Shoden.

Please note that Reiki is a complementary practice that promotes relaxation and well-being. It is not a substitute for medical treatment or professional healthcare. If you have ongoing symptoms or health concerns, please see your doctor or healthcare professional.

## Spring 2026 Semester: Session 2 Courses

### NEW

#### **As Good as or Better: Women of the Renaissance**

Peter Whitehouse

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

**5 Sessions**  
4/13, 4/20, 4/27, 5/4, 5/11

Women of the Renaissance often lived as second-class citizens, excluded from many of the celebrated achievements of the age. In fact, their social and economic standing may have even declined, along with their freedom of expression. Yet history reveals remarkable exceptions: women of the 15th and 16th centuries who, in certain fields, proved themselves “as good as or better” than their male contemporaries.

This course explores their stories, examining how opinion and fact intertwine. While opinion alone is not history, it is history’s handmaiden and can illuminate the past when grounded in evidence. Through these lectures, we will uncover the facts that demonstrate the extraordinary contributions of Renaissance women and their place in the cultural legacy of the era.

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#### **Mah Jongg for Beginners**

Laurie Raps

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

**4 Sessions**  
4/28, 5/5, 5/12, 5/19

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 2026 Mah Jongg card (\$15) from [www.NationalMahJonggLeague.org](http://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  
4/14, 4/28, 5/5, 5/12, 5/19

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”.

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**NEW**

## Remembering Abraham Lincoln

Len Warner

Wednesday/Thursday –  
*Virtual*  
9:30am – 12:30pm

4 Sessions  
Wednesday 5/6, 5/13,  
5/20  
Thursday 5/21

This course offers an in-depth exploration of the extraordinary life and legacy of Abraham Lincoln. From his humble beginnings on the Kentucky and Indiana frontier, to his rise as the 16th President of the United States, we will trace Lincoln’s remarkable journey from poverty to the pinnacle of leadership.

Together, we will examine his eloquent speeches, including the Gettysburg Address and the Second Inaugural Address, that continue to inspire generations. We will study how Lincoln steered the nation through the Civil War, and reflect on his enduring achievements, most notably the Emancipation Proclamation and his tireless pursuit of the 13th Amendment, which abolished slavery. Through this course, participants will gain a deeper appreciation of Lincoln’s vision, resilience, and the profound impact he had on American history.

**NEW**

**Birding Basics: Discover Staten Island's Birds**

Seth Wollney

**Wednesdays –  
In-Person – Room TBD**

**10:10am – 11:05am**

(first class – 1 hour)

**10:10am – 11:40am**

(last 4 classes – 90 min)

**5 Sessions**

4/15, 4/22 - On campus

4/29, 5/6, 5/13 - Field trips

This course will cover basic bird identification skills through a blend of classroom learning and guided field trips to Staten Island's bird-watching spots.

In two classroom sessions, participants will learn about bird behavior, habitat selection, plumage, and the effective use of binoculars, along with digital apps such as eBird and Merlin.

Three guided trips to local parks will give participants the chance to apply these skills by spotting and enjoying birds around Staten Island. Trip locations will be selected based on current bird activity and weather conditions. Students will meet the instructor at the designated location.

Binoculars are recommended but not necessary. Birders of all experience levels are welcome!

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**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**

4/15, 4/22, 4/29, 5/6, 5/13

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! (next page)

## **Beaded Creations: Jewelry Making (continued)**

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.

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### **Intermediate Italian**

Blerina Likollari

**Thursdays –**  
***In-Person – Room TBD***

**10:10am – 11:05am**  
(first 3 classes – 1 hour)

**9:30am – 11:00am**  
(last 2 classes - 90 minutes)

**5 Sessions**  
4/16, 4/23, 4/30, 5/7, 5/14

This Italian course is for those who have some knowledge of basic vocabulary and grammar structures and can communicate in everyday situations. We will focus on practical conversations, cultural insights including Italian cuisine, and interactive exercises to enhance language proficiency. With a supportive and relaxed learning environment, Intermediate Italian empowers learners to develop their language skills at their own pace.

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### **Crochet & Knitting Discussion Group**

Meaghan Hilton

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

**6 Sessions**  
3/26, 4/16, 4/23, 4/30,  
5/7, 5/14

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.

## Movements for Life

Stephanie Parello

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

**6 Sessions**

4/10, 4/17, 4/24, 5/1, 5/8,  
5/15

Train your mind and body to stay vibrant and active with gentle strength and stretching exercises, targeted body mechanics, elements of Qigong, mindful breathing, balance work, and inclusive movements.

All the exercises are adjustable and tailored to your abilities.

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## Art of Drawing & Painting

Lou Russo

**Fridays – *Virtual***  
**10:35am – 11:30am**

**6 Sessions**

4/10, 4/17, 4/24, 5/1, 5/8,  
5/15

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 classes.

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## NEW

### Reiki for Self and Caregiving “The Mystic Art to Invite Happiness”

Jan Koehler

**Fridays –**  
***In-Person – Room TBD***  
**2:30pm – 4:00pm**

**5 Sessions**

4/10, 4/17, 4/24, 5/1,  
5/8 (the final class will end at 3:30pm)

This course is designed for those who have previous Reiki training, and/or who have taken *Options: Introduction to Reiki for Self-Healing*. If you haven’t taken the Options Introduction course but have previously taken Reiki level 1 in another tradition, please provide your lineage to the instructor. In this course we will cover: **(next page)**

## Reiki for Self and Caregiving (continued)

- A brief review of what was learned in session 1
- Ethics in Reiki practice
- 2 Attunements for each student
- Breathing and meditation practice to increase our Reiki ability
- Focus on practicing Reiki with a partner

Those who complete both Reiki courses in Session 1 and Session 2 will have successfully completed Reiki level 1, Shoden.

Please note that Reiki is a complementary practice that promotes relaxation and well-being. It is not a substitute for medical treatment or professional healthcare. If you have ongoing symptoms or health concerns, please see your doctor or healthcare professional.

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## Upcoming Session 2 Courses

### Introduction to Piano

Elona Migiroy

**Day & Time TBD**  
***In-Person – Room TBD***

This is a piano introductory course for people who are new to piano, as well as those who have had some previous piano playing experience and would like to refresh their knowledge and improve their skills. We will learn the rudiments of music notation, rhythm, basic scales, chord reading, proper hand position, and sitting posture. We will also discuss the types of pianos, and the pros & cons of acoustic and digital pianos.

In class, we will be using the book *Alfred's Basic Adult Piano Course: Lesson Book, Level One*, which can be purchased online or in local music stores for approximately \$10.

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**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:** 2/13, 2/20, 2/27, 3/6, 3/13, 3/27, 4/10, 4/17, 4/24, 5/1, 5/8, 5/15

## Instructor Bios

**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's Yarn Council Knitting Instructor Class. She has taught adults and Girl Scout groups how to knit.

**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's 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. She enrolled in knitting classes with her mother years ago but always wanted to learn crochet. During the pandemic, she finally picked up a hook, taught herself 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.

**Jan Koehler** has been teaching Reiki since 2008 and brings decades of experience in holistic healing. A NYS licensed massage therapist, Jan has taught for Swedish Institute's College of Health Sciences and has specialized in shiatsu as both a practitioner and instructor. In 2018, Jan retired from Integrative Medicine Service at Memorial Sloan Kettering, where she supported cancer patients through Reiki, massage, shiatsu, reflexology, and medical qigong. Today, she continues to lead weekly Reiki shares, teaches qigong online, and, as a proud CSI alumna, brings enthusiasm and a deep commitment to sharing her knowledge with others.

**Blerina Likollari** earned her master's degree in *TESOL* at Hunter College/CUNY 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 teaching Italian as 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 the 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, Betty, 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.

**Elona Migirov** holds an MA in Music from Aaron Copland School of Music, Queens College/CUNY and a BA in Music from CSI. At CSI, she has taught classes in Group Piano, Keyboard Musicianship, Music History, and Music Theory. In addition, she has served as an accompanist for the Music Program. Currently, she teaches piano and gives lectures for groups of older adults on various subjects, including Music Appreciation, History of Symphony, Opera, Ballet, Art Song, History of Piano, and Piano Literature. She is eager to bring members of the local community to CSI's Options program to experience the joy of music and piano.

**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 is a voracious reader and 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 playing 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 Staten Island Snugs. He creates a fun, easygoing environment in which learning and creativity can thrive.

**Debby Sachs** has practiced yoga for 25 years. Following a 30-year career as a teacher and administrator for the NYC DOE, she earned her certification as a yoga instructor at Kripalu Center for Yoga and Health, with a focus on yoga therapy. Her gentle yoga classes are designed to be accessible and supportive for participants of all experience levels, including those with limited mobility, fostering relaxation, and a sense of well-being.

**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.

**Seth Wollney** is a lifelong Staten Islander and dedicated naturalist who has led birding and nature walks for numerous organizations, including the Staten Island Museum. Currently an adjunct professor at the College of Staten Island, he brings both scientific expertise and a deep passion for the natural world to his teaching, inspiring learners to explore and appreciate the biodiversity around them.