



Celebrating 58 Years of
CONTINUING EDUCATION

Daytime Noncredit Courses for the Public

Sponsored by
The Alumnae of Northwestern University
Engaging Minds, Enriching Lives

Fall Quarter 2026

Tuesdays and Thursdays, September 29 - December 3

Register for Alumnae Courses online through Norris Box Office.
Check the Norris Box Office site for updated Fall 2026 online enrollment
dates and information: nbo.universitytickets.com
For additional support, email us at: alumnae@u.northwestern.edu

- A. The Alumnae Lyceum Lecture Series:**
Reflections on the Past and Present (Page 4-7)
Multi-professor Course
Tuesdays, 9:30 - 11:00 a.m.
- B. Musical Theatre History** (Page 8-10)
Masi Asare, Associate Professor, Theatre
Tuesdays, 1:00 - 2:30 p.m.
- C. The Science of the Invisible: From the**
Biological to the Cosmic (Page 11-14)
Multi-professor Course
Thursdays, 9:30 - 11:00 a.m.
- D. Democracy on the Brink** (Page 15-16)
Jordan Gans-Morse, Assoc. Professor,
Political Science
Thursdays, 1:00 - 2:30 p.m.

**Fall 2026 courses will be offered both in-person
and via Zoom Webinar.**
See enrollment details on pages 17 - 18 of this brochure.

The Alumnae of Northwestern University Continuing Education Program Fall 2026

The Alumnae of Northwestern University invites you to join us as we continue our 58th year of engaging minds and enriching lives.

Along with our traditional in-person course offerings, we are also offering the opportunity to attend our lectures via live-streaming for those times when you are unable to attend in person, or for those of you who are unable to attend the in-person sessions.

Everyone will also have access to the recordings of each week's lectures for a period of 6 days following the lecture.

You can enroll online at the Norris Box Office. See pages 17-18 for more detailed information.

Parking for In-person Attendance

Parking options are:

City of Evanston Public Parking: Public parking garage four blocks southwest of Norris Center, east of Chicago Avenue. Access garage from Clark Street or Church Street. (Church runs eastbound only.)

Sheridan Road: Metered parking on Sheridan Road, south of campus.

Segal Visitors Center: Pay-on-site parking in the Segal Visitors Center Parking Garage, located at the Campus Drive entrance on South Campus.

Accessible Parking: A limited number of accessible spaces for people with disabilities are available in the parking lot northeast of the McCormick Tribune Center. To reach this lot, enter the NU south campus on Campus Drive; go to the first stop sign and turn left into the lot. Additional accessible spaces are on the upper level, eastern end of the two-tier parking lot just north of the Segal Visitor Center. A visitor parking pass is not required to park in a parking space that is designated as accessible in this lot, provided that your vehicle has a valid government license plate or placard for people with disabilities.



The Alumnae of Northwestern University is a volunteer women's organization founded in 1916. Their philanthropic activities serve to enhance the academic resources and educational vitality of the university and broader community. Since its inception, the board has given over \$10.5 million to the university in the form of grants, scholarships, fellowships, and programming.

Here are the ways that the Alumnae of Northwestern currently supports Northwestern University's students, faculty, and departmental programs.

Alumnae Endowment for Academic Enrichment

Funds are used to bring distinguished scholars and artists to campus annually.

Alumnae of Northwestern University Centennial Endowment

Funds multiple Summer Undergraduate Research Grants for recipients selected by Northwestern University's Office of Undergraduate Research.

Alumnae of Northwestern University Graduate Fellowships

Awarded to full-time graduate students, each in a terminal Master's program, who show promise of achieving distinction in a career that will serve the public good and bring credit to Northwestern University.

Alumnae Grants Program

Annually helps University departments and faculty with important programs not included in their annual budgets. Past funding has gone to research, speakers, conferences, equipment, and study-related travel for faculty and students.

Alumnae of Northwestern STEM Scholarships

Awarded to students for their junior year who are enrolled in a STEM discipline: Science, Technology, Engineering or Mathematics.

Alumnae of Northwestern Summer Interns

Sponsors multiple summer internships through Northwestern University's Career Advancement Summer Internship Grant Program.

Alumnae of Northwestern University Teaching Professorship

This endowed professorship honors a faculty member for excellence in teaching and curriculum innovation; the selected professor serves a three-year term.

Alumnae of Northwestern University Award for Curriculum Innovation

Awarded annually, this award supports faculty work over the summer to develop innovative course materials, new courses or new modes of teaching, including online education that will benefit undergraduate students.

WCAS Teaching Awards

These awards provide financial support for the Judd A. and Marjorie Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences Awards for Outstanding Teachers.

The Alumnae of Northwestern University Scholarship Fund

This is an endowed three-year scholarship, conferred by Northwestern University.

**A. THE ALUMNAE LYCEUM LECTURE SERIES:
REFLECTIONS ON THE PAST AND PRESENT**
Multi-professor Course
Tuesdays, 9:30 - 11:00 a.m. Norris University Center

ATTN: The 9/29 class will be held in Scott Hall - SEE INSERT

Following the 19th century American tradition for public education, this course is an eclectic series that will address current and historical perspectives on the global order, specifically issues relating to war, imperialism, the rise of China, Syria after Assad, the world economy, and export control policymaking. It will also examine the importance of public history for a democratic society, as well as controversies concerning solar energy in the California desert. Finally, the series will end with a look at how Shakespeare's dramatic depictions of tyrants continue to resonate in today's world. Featured are outstanding faculty from various schools and departments within the university.

Sep. 29 War and the New Global Order
William Reno, Professor and Chair, Political Science;
Joint Appointment with the Program of African Studies

Wars both reflect shifts in the balance of power and accelerate the transformation of international systems. Now, after decades of US global supremacy, this balance of power is shifting toward a messy era of multipolar power politics. Three-quarters of great power transitions in the past 500 years involved highly destructive wars. Nuclear weapons and expanded domains of warfare—space, cyber, and cognitive—and the rapid development of powerful dual-use technologies such as AI accompany the current shift in the balance of power, with important impacts on warfare and its relationship to international order. This lecture also is about understanding the long-term implications of recent political and military choices in the US.

Oct. 6 Syria After Assad
Wendy Pearlman, Jane Long Professor of Arts and
Sciences; Professor, Political Science

In December 2024, an astonishing 11-day rebel offensive in Syria accomplished what most outside observers and stunned locals believed to be impossible: the overthrow of the authoritarian regime of Bashar al-Assad in Syria. After 54 years of brutal dictatorship and 14 years of merciless war, Syrians entered a new state of political possibility. How did Syria get here? How can we understand events and developments since Assad's fall? What challenges and opportunities lie ahead? Professor Wendy Pearlman explores these questions, pulling on interviews that she has conducted with more than 500 displaced Syrians around the world since 2012, as well as her own recent trips to Syria.

Oct. 13 China's Global Rise: Leading Through Multilateralism?
Karen Alter, *Norman Dwight Harris Professor of*
International Relations; Professor of Political Science
and Law (courtesy)

This talk will focus on China's rise as a global power. During the upheaval of General Mao, China maintained an isolationist world view. After Mao's death, modern China began to engage the world but as a developing country focused on itself. For decades, China sat on the sidelines of global debate, figuring out its leadership role. Today the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) cares most about controlling its leadership on its domestic homefront while also creating an international order safe for autocracy. Prof. Alter will explore how China, through the lens of its own history, its massive Belt and Road Initiative, and an aspiration for peaceful coexistence and multilateralism is facing its ascendant moment in global political and economic history.

Oct. 20 Flirting with Imperialism
David Zarefsky, *Owen L. Coon Professor Emeritus*
of Argumentation and Debate; Former Dean,
School of Communication

While the 19th century found many countries acquiring colonies and building empires, the United States saw territorial expansion differently: as a path to the formation of new states on terms of equality with the old. But by the 1890s, the U.S. seriously considered becoming an imperial power with regard to Hawaii, the Philippines, Puerto Rico, and Cuba, for instance. In an intense national controversy, Indiana's Albert J. Beveridge called for imperialism while William Jennings Bryan spoke out in opposition. The belief that holding colonies was both a sign and a responsibility of a great power, as well as a source of economic gain, enjoyed a brief heyday, but by the mid-20th century each of the U.S. possessions was on the path to commonwealth status, statehood, or independence. After World War II, most of the world renounced imperialism. But the rhetoric of imperialism is not quite dead; traces can be found in the 2025 Presidential Inaugural Address. The lecture will examine these trajectories and their implications.

(This lecture was originally scheduled for the Fall 2025 Lyceum course).

Oct. 27 Who Controls the Past? Museum Exhibitions and the Battle Over History

Daniel Greene, *Adjunct Professor, History*

Museums, monuments, and historic sites present opportunities for the public to learn about the past. But they also sometimes become locations of political conflict, as tensions about the ways that Americans choose to commemorate historic events amplify partisan tensions. This class session will recount multiple recent controversies over how history is presented in public spaces in the United States. We'll ask questions including: *Who gets to decide how to present the past in public? Why do debates about remembering the past lead to such heated political disagreement?*

Nov. 3 What is Going on in the World Economy?

Sergio Rebelo, *MUFG Bank Distinguished Professor of International Finance, Faculty Director, EMBA Program, Kellogg School of Management*

In this lecture, Professor Rebelo will discuss the rise of Artificial Intelligence and its impact on productivity and the labor market, the trend towards deglobalization, the defense build-up, the state of bond and equity markets, and the prospect for a space economy.

Nov. 10 Export Controls and Economic Security: What is Going On?

Karen Alter, *Norman Dwight Harris Professor of International Relations; Professor of Political Science and Law (courtesy)*

Professor Alter's current book project based on her past work with the Bureau of International Security (BIS) provides an intensive review and study of U.S. export control policy. The world of export controls is extremely complicated and opaque, existing within a range of multilateral strategies. In this class, she will explore the effectiveness of export controls, historically and currently, as well as how U.S. politics is influenced by a unique security subculture. She will also develop a policy recommendation for how to update the U.S. export control system for the set of challenges the U.S. and the world face today.

Nov. 17 The View from Nowhere: What Changing Uses of the California Desert Can Tell Us About the Recent Past
Keith Woodhouse, *Associate Professor, History*

This talk will describe shifting uses and perceptions of the California desert, a place Euro-American settlers long considered empty and unproductive. It will touch on mining, military installations, rights-of-way for railroads and transmission lines, and a variety of recreational activities, and end with the desert as a bonanza of solar energy. It will discuss how different uses and claims to the desert have increasingly collided in the hottest and driest place in the nation.

Nov. 24 Light is the Head that Wears the Crown: Shakespeare's Tyrants, Then and Now

Glenn Sucich, *Associate Professor of Instruction, English*

Shakespeare's plays provide us with some of the richest villains in English literature, many of whom were kings. For these nefarious rulers, the desire for power and personal gain led to oppressive practices that transformed each of them from a king into, as a character in MacBeth says, a "tyrant, whose sole name blisters our tongues." This talk will explore the political and personal dimensions of Shakespeare's tyrants. What character traits and behaviors distinguished a benevolent monarch from a tyrant? What motivated and enabled tyrants to emerge? Finally, what might Shakespeare's depiction of despotic leaders teach us about our own political discourse?

NOTE: *The professor advises that Shakespeare is best enjoyed and understood by viewing performances of his plays. A supplement of suggested film versions of the dramas being discussed will be available on the course website. Previewing is optional, but doing so will enhance your lecture experience.*

To access the material, go to our website: **NUalumnaecourses.org**

- Under Course A, click on the Learn More button.
- Then click on the Course Materials button, which will take you to a list of the suggested films.

B. MUSICAL THEATRE HISTORY

Masi Asare, Associate Professor, Theatre

Tuesdays, 1:00 - 2:30 p.m. Norris University Center

ATTN: The 9/29 class will be held in Scott Hall - SEE INSERT

Flowing from 19th century roots in vaudeville, burlesque, and minstrelsy, in dialogue with jazz, operetta, music hall shows and more, the musical has taken a variety of shapes over the past 130 years. As follies, revues, “integrated” musicals, dance-driven musicals, rock musicals, concept musicals, megamusicals, jukebox musicals, and more, the landscape of US musical theatre has undergone vast shifts over time. Yet each wave of new approaches also restages musical theatre conventions from the past. As we work to gain a deeper grasp of the shows, people, stories, and sounds that have come to define the form, we will also consider the ways that musicals themselves tell musical theatre history. Across each era, what do musicals and musical theatre artists have to say (or sing!) about their times, beliefs, and social contexts?

NOTE: Supplementary course material will be available. Previewing is optional, but doing so will enhance your lecture experience. To access the material, go to NUalumnaecourses.org. Under Course B, click on the Learn More button. Then click on the Course Materials button, which will take you to a Google Drive folder.

Sep. 29 How A Musical Tells History

From *Show Boat* (1927) to *Pacific Overtures* (1976) to *Ragtime* (1998) and beyond, musicals often take historical stories and figures as their subject matter. At the same time, as we’ll examine, they also restage musical and theatrical forms from days gone by for contemporary audiences—whether reimagining 19th century “floating theatres” on the Mississippi River, melodrama of the same period, classical Kabuki performance practices from 17th-century Japan, or turn-of-the-20th-century US popular song. This session includes an overview of the approach to the study of musical theatre history in this course and the lectures to come.

Oct. 6 How A Musical Originates

Despite its reputation as a sparkly, wholesome, and pleasantly all-American entertainment, the US musical theatre sustains delightfully motley origins in lowbrow 19th century popular forms such as bizarrely comic blackface minstrelsy, the risqué stylings of burlesque, and vaudeville shows innovated by recent immigrants. When combined with more highbrow forms such as European operetta as well as European music hall, the turn of the 20th century brought American stages new amalgams of music and theatre including the famed Ziegfeld Follies.

Oct. 13 How A Musical Does Jazz

Ragtime music had already invested popular songs with the syncopations of vernacular speech, and in the 1920s and 30s, the sound of hot dance bands and the sight of long-legged chorus girls came to define the musical in fast-paced revues and zippy musical comedies. With shows like the hit, all-black musical *Shuffle Along* (1921) and *Anything Goes* (1934), the rhythms of tap dance also made an indelible mark on the art form. The cosmopolitan content and modern styles of these musical comedies coexisted and contrasted with the epic tales of royals in exotic locales set to soaring classical melodies in the American operettas of the period.

Oct. 20 How A Musical Integrates

In the 1940s, the celebrated musical theatre authors and businessmen Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II famously described their approach to making musicals as one defined by the seamless integration of song, story, and dance. Despite some scholars' subsequent critiques of this framing, there was no doubt that a new and wildly successful kind of musical storytelling was launched with shows like Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Oklahoma!* (1943) and Lerner and Loewe's *My Fair Lady* (1956). This kind of show is typical of the era known (not without controversy) as the "Golden Age" of the Broadway musical.

Oct. 27 How A Musical Dances

For energetic tap routines and the ballet in Agnes De Mille's choreography for *Oklahoma!*, Broadway had long cast dancers as well as singers. But *West Side Story* (1957) broke new ground with performers who did it all—what we would now call "triple threats." Nearly two decades later, *A Chorus Line* (1975) forever reshaped the musical's definition of an ensemble and humanized the labor and lives of Broadway dancers. It also ushered in a new kind of musical built not around dramatic narrative but an overarching theme: the concept musical, presaged in years prior by *Cabaret* (1966).

Nov. 3 How A Musical Rocks

From the mid-1960s on, the sound of Broadway musicals generally departed from the chart-topping pop tunes of their times, with a few notable exceptions. *Hair* (1968) is the first musical with a rock score to make a genuine impact on the trajectory of the genre, preparing the way for shows such as *Jesus Christ Superstar* (1975), *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* (1998) and *Passing Strange* (2008). As microphones improved from the 1970s into the 1980s, expectations for theatre singers also shifted. Further, both *Hair* and *A Chorus Line* were developed in a model that was new for their time if taken for granted now—the off-Broadway workshop.

Nov. 10 How a Musical Goes Mega

In the 1980s and 90s Broadway was flooded with grand pop operas imported from London, beginning with *Les Miserables* (1987) and continuing with many works by composer/lyricist Andrew Lloyd Webber, most famously *The Phantom of the Opera* (1988). With large casts, spectacular scenery and special effects, plus consistent staging and branding worldwide, these shows were known as “megamusicals.” Extending this trend, Disney began bringing its successful film musicals to the stage with the global hit *The Lion King* (1997). We can also profitably consider the impact of *Hamilton* (2015) through the lens of the global megamusical.

Nov. 17 How Sondheim Does a Musical

Perhaps no single artist contributed more to late 20th-century musical theatre than composer/lyricist Stephen Sondheim. Writing at a time when fewer new musicals were being produced, and with an artisanal approach that contrasted with Broadway’s increasing commercialization, Sondheim’s luminous artistry can be felt in shows like *Company* (1970), *Sweeney Todd* (1979), and the Pulitzer-winning *Sunday in the Park with George* (1984). Beyond his intricate rhyme schemes and evocative musical landscapes ranging from the minimalist to the cinematic, Sondheim is beloved by performers for his songs that are supremely “actable” – rich in nuance, musically specific and yet generously open to the performer’s interpretation.

Nov. 24 How a Musical Does a Jukebox

Beginning with *Mamma Mia* (2001) and *Jersey Boys* (2005), a new kind of musical has sprung up that stages the hit works of famed recording artists. Whether inserted into a new storyline or propelling an autobiographical narrative, well-known songs animate this fast-proliferating form: the jukebox musical. Shows like *Beautiful* (2014), *& Juliet* (2022), and *MJ* (2022) allow artists (or their estate managers) to solidify their legacy and enable audiences to feel new forms of nostalgia. Every season, musicals continue to tell – and sing and dance! – their own versions of musical theatre history on Broadway and beyond. We’ll close by considering some current Broadway musicals in this light, such as *Cats: The Jellicle Ball* (2025) and *Schmigadoon* (2026).

C. THE SCIENCE OF THE INVISIBLE: FROM THE BIOLOGICAL TO THE COSMIC

Multi-professor Course

Thursdays, 9:30 - 11:00 a.m. Norris University Center

How can science reveal invisible worlds beyond direct human perception? This lecture series brings together professors who are leaders in their fields of astronomy, chemistry, robotics, nanotechnology, physics, and biological engineering to unveil previously invisible new phenomena. What do these discoveries mean for humanity?

Oct. 1 **Simulating Black Hole Feasts and Burps**

Sasha Tchekhovskoy, *Associate Professor, Physics and Astronomy*

We think of black holes as voracious, invisible beasts that consume everything around them. However, it turns out that they are extremely picky eaters! I will discuss how the diet of black holes affects their ability to eat and burp away the surrounding gas and how cutting-edge numerical simulations on the largest supercomputers help us to figure this out. I will finish by discussing the future prospects of studying black holes using supercomputers, in particular how generative artificial intelligence can help us to achieve the breakthrough in the realism of our simulations.

Oct. 8 **Evolutionary Robotics**

Sam Kriegman, *Assistant Professor of Computer Science, Mechanical Engineering, and Chemical and Biological Engineering*

In this talk I will describe how robots can broaden our parochial understanding of life and its rules. “Endless forms most beautiful” await our discovery, along with the ever deeper, more wonderful mysteries they reveal. For centuries we have imagined the social utility of understanding life well enough to create technologies that are indistinguishable from it. But the most important uses of this knowledge remain as unrecognizable to us now as the strange and bizarre forms life may adopt, and has already adopted, elsewhere in the universe.

Oct. 15 Real Images of Other Worlds

Jason Wang, *Assistant Professor, Physics and Astronomy*

We have discovered over 6000 planets orbiting other stars. Most of these exoplanets are detected indirectly by measuring the effect each has on its star, so their true nature is invisible to us. Imaging exoplanets is difficult because the bright diffracted glare of the star hides the faint light of the planet. I will discuss how we have been able to take images of some of these worlds by using the largest telescopes in the world combined with specialized optics and signal-processing techniques. I will show the dozen or so planets we have imaged, including a new planet orbiting a binary star system that we discovered last year. I will discuss what we learn from studying these planets directly and the prospects of imaging an Earth-like planet around another star.

Oct. 22 The Invisible Foundations of the Universe

Alexander Edison, *Research Assistant Professor,
Physics and Astronomy*

For more than a hundred years, particle physicists have been smashing things together in an attempt to understand the smallest bits of nature. We'll explore the discoveries that led from an invisible "particle zoo" to the modern Standard Model of particles. We'll discuss how this theory explains almost everything, and how thoroughly it has been tested. However, it has a few holes, both blatant and subtle, which modern physicists are attempting to understand.

Oct. 29 Listening In On the Poetry of the Brain

Indira M. Raman, *Bill and Gayle Cook Professor of
Biological Sciences, Chair, Neurobiology*

Many people are aware that the brain uses electricity. But how did scientists figure out that neural information is transmitted electrically - and how neuronal electric signals are altered by medicinal, recreational, and illicit chemicals - when brain electricity is not only literally invisible to the eye but also figuratively invisible to all other human senses? Here we will discuss the remarkable story of how, over two centuries, scientists crept up on an understanding of "bioelectricity" and developed techniques to eavesdrop on neuronal signals, start deciphering the brain's elegant electrophysiological languages, and ultimately translate ongoing neuronal communication into the visible domain.

Nov. 5 Engineering the Invisible: How Nanomaterials Are Transforming Modern Life
Sarah H. Petrosko, *Research Professor, Chemistry (Mirkin Group); Associate Director, International Institute for Nanotechnology*

Over time, humans have progressed from using simple to more advanced materials that improve our safety and health. Today, nanotechnology allows us to prepare and study materials far too small to see with the naked eye. Using powerful methods and tools, scientists can design and synthesize tiny structures with unique properties that are driving innovation in medicine, energy, and manufacturing. By uncovering the invisible world at the nanoscale, we are accelerating scientific discovery and transforming modern life.

Nov. 12 The Supermassive Black Hole and Magnetic Filaments at the Center of the Milky Way Galaxy
Farhad Zadeh, *Professor, Physics and Astronomy*

The center of our Milky Way Galaxy hosts many fascinating objects, one of which is the supermassive black hole Sagittarius A* with a mass more than four million times than the mass of the Sun. The other is a population of filaments distributed throughout the inner few hundred light years of the Galaxy. There are a number of puzzles related to the origins of daily flaring activity of the black hole - and how nature produces the shape of the remarkable magnetized filaments in space, invisible up until now. I will present highlights of the results of our recent measurements taken with two major observatories using the James Webb Space Telescope (JWST) and the MeerKAT radio telescope in South Africa.

Nov. 19 Engineered Biotechnologies Are Already Transforming Society
Julius B. Lucks, *Margery Claire Carlson Professor of Chemical and Biological Engineering, Co-Director, Center for Synthetic Biology*

If you take a close look at the natural world, you will appreciate that biology can do things that no other human-made technology can. Plants can not only grow into beautiful structures, but can provide us materials to build with, fibers to weave with and food that we eat, all from a single seed. Similarly, microbes, invisible to our eyes but more numerous than the cells in our bodies, are able to synthesize compounds ranging from fuels to pharmaceuticals all from the same simple building blocks. Imagine if we could harness biology as a technology and use it to solve our greatest societal challenges? In this talk I will explain how we are already partnering with biology to create engineered biological technologies. I will explain the basic principles behind this new science of synthetic biology, and forecast how engineered biotechnologies will soon transform society.

Nov. 26 **THANKSGIVING – NO CLASS**

Dec. 3 **Invisible Light**

Ryan Bethel, *Associate Professor of Instruction, Chemistry*

Visible light is a form of electromagnetic radiation, but it makes up a tiny band of the full electromagnetic spectrum. Spectroscopy is the field of science that studies how matter interacts with electromagnetic radiation from the weakest radio waves to the strongest X-rays. But how did scientists first discover these invisible rays of light? How do we utilize this ephemeral energy to discover, identify, and characterize new chemistry? And how can spectroscopy drive further advances in science and medicine?

D. Democracy on the Brink

Jordan Gans-Morse, Associate Professor, Political Science

Thursdays, 1:00 – 2:30 p.m. Norris University Center

Since the mid-2000s, democracy has been under siege. In countries such as Russia, Turkey, and Venezuela, democracy has collapsed entirely. In longstanding democracies including the United States, democratic institutions have faced historically unprecedented strain from populist movements. Looking to the future, democracies likely will encounter novel challenges resulting from phenomena such as artificial intelligence and climate change. This course will survey recent trends in democratic backsliding, drawing on both classic studies of why democracies collapse and emerging research about uniquely 21st century threats to democracy. We will also consider potential political strategies and reforms for promoting the resilience of democracies.

Oct. 1 Defining Democracy

An introduction to competing definitions of democracy, the distinction between electoral and liberal democracy, and debates over democracy's normative strengths and limits.

Oct. 8 Democratic Backsliding and Breakdown

An overview of contemporary democratic backsliding and breakdown, including how today's patterns compare to earlier episodes of democratic regression.

Oct. 15 Political Polarization

A discussion of how political polarization is measured, how the United States compares with other democracies, and why polarization can threaten democratic norms and accountability.

Oct. 22 Economic Inequality

An analysis of the relationship between economic inequality and democracy, with attention to rising inequality, unequal political influence, and the puzzle of limited redistribution.

Oct. 29 Populism

An examination of populism's defining features, its potential threats to democracy, and the economic and cultural roots of the recent populist wave.

Nov. 5 Illiberalism

A discussion of classical liberalism and contemporary illiberal challenges from both the Left and the Right, including disputes over free speech, pluralism, and tolerance.

**Nov. 12 21st Century Challenges: Disinformation, AI,
and Climate Change**

An overview of how disinformation, artificial intelligence, and climate change may create new pressures on democracy and intensify polarization, inequality, and populism.

Nov. 19 The United States in Comparative Perspective

An assessment of democratic backsliding in the United States in historical and comparative perspective, drawing lessons from other countries and earlier American crises.

Nov. 26 THANKSGIVING – NO CLASS

Dec. 3 What Can Be Done?

A concluding discussion of political strategies, institutional reforms, and policy responses that may strengthen democratic resilience.

ENROLLMENT DETAILS

FALL 2026

Enrollment for all courses is accepted each quarter after the NBO enrollment portal is activated and the brochure has been posted on the website **NUalumnaecourses.org**. The opening date for enrollment will be posted on both sites.

Pricing

- EACH 90 minute, 9-week course is \$250.00. The fee covers in-person attendance, access to each live-stream, as well as the weekly recording which is available for 6 days following the lecture.
- **If you plan to attend class in person at any time during the quarter, check “yes” in the column that asks if you want a course card.**
- Course attendance cards will be available for pick up at The Alumnae proctors’ table when you come to campus.
- Course cards are no longer mailed.
- Late enrollment requires full payment; course fees are not prorated. Late enrollees cannot access recordings from prior weeks if the links have expired.
- There is no multi-course discounting.
- **In-person per diems are available:** \$30 per session by cash or check made payable to Northwestern University. Per diem students will not have access to lecture recordings. There are no online per diems.

How to Enroll

In-person: Enroll at the Norris Box Office located at the Information Desk across from McCormick Auditorium in Norris Center.

Check northwestern.edu/norris/services/center-desk.html for Norris's hours of operation. Campus parking is free after 4 p.m. and on weekends.

Online: Enroll at nbo.universitytickets.com

Log In as GENERAL PUBLIC.

In the left Category section, click on Alumnae Continuing Education and follow the steps to enroll.

If this is your first Alumnae course, click on the “Register” tab to create an account.

- Carefully follow the instructions and click the purple button at the bottom of the window.
- To enroll, return to log-in page and sign in as GENERAL PUBLIC.
- If the system does not accept your email address, you may already have an NBO account. For assistance with issues creating an NBO account, contact the Norris Box Office.
- ***Do not create another account.***

Returning and New Students

- A payment confirmation email from noreply@audienceview.com will be sent to the email you provided in your NBO account.
- If you do not receive a payment confirmation email, first check **all** of your email accounts. If you still don't see it, then contact the Norris Box office to verify your enrollment.
- **No new enrollments will be accepted after 11:59 p.m. on October 15, 2026.**

All enrolled students will automatically receive access to the livestream and the recordings.

You do not have to register separately on Zoom.

•IMPORTANT•

Unsubscribing from Zoom Webinars and Events will cause you to lose access to the recordings.

- Links will be sent to the email you used to enroll through Norris Box Office.
- Reminder emails will be sent from Zoom Webinars and Events both 24 hours and also one hour before each session.
- If you do not see the email with the attendee link, **check all** of your email accounts, spam, junk, trash, archives, and deleted messages folders.
- Plan on “arriving” at the session at least 10 minutes before the session begins.
- Your link is specific to your email and may not be shared. Sharing your links may void your registration without refund.

Access to Recordings

- The recording link **will be sent from Norris Virtual within 24 hours after the live session concludes.** If you maintain multiple email accounts, be sure to check **all** of them.
- The recording will be available for six days following that week's session.
- Sharing your links may void your registration without refund.

QUESTIONS?

**For quickest access to answers, go to
NUalumnaecourses.org
Scroll down to find answers in the FAQs.**

**Please do not email professors regarding
technical support.**

WAYS TO STAY IN CONTACT

Our Website: NUalumnaecourses.org

**Email us with questions at:
alumnae@u.northwestern.edu**

As volunteers, we will do our best to respond within 48 hours.

To receive our Continuing Education brochure:

**Go to NUalumnaecourses.org
Click on "Join Mailing List"**

**Learn more about the The Alumnae of Northwestern University
organization and the ways we give back to NU students,
professors, and programs at
nualumnae.org**

POLICIES

UNIVERSITY POLICY: In order to respect copyrights, rights of publicity, and other intellectual property rights, we forbid the taking of photographs or the making of video or audio recordings of lectures and class materials.

COURSE REFUNDS

If one withdraws from class **prior to the first class/webinar**,

- a \$10 cancellation fee must be purchased online and a full refund will be given to the credit card used for the initial purchase.

If one withdraws from class **after the first class/webinar**,

- a \$10 cancellation fee must be purchased online.
- \$30 must be purchased online in addition to the cancellation processing fee if withdrawing after the first class.
- \$60 must be purchased online in addition to the cancellation processing fee if withdrawing after the second class.
- **Thereafter, no refunds are given.**
- Credits are not given for future classes.
- A transfer, at no cost, to another class offered during the same quarter is an option. To request a transfer, contact the Norris Box Office, either in person or at 847-491-2305.
- Access to the live stream session and recording will depend on when the transfer is processed.

Winter 2027 Preview

- A. A Global History of Prisons and Camps**
Benjamin Frommer, Professor, History
- B. A Meaningful Life**
Sanford Goldberg, Professor, Philosophy
- C. Styles, Form, Techniques, and Revolution:
A Theatre Survey Course**
Larry Grimm, Adjunct Professor, Theatre
- D. Wealth Inequality, Politics, and Society**
Multi-professor Course

Explore our
Continuing Education Website
NUalumnaecourses.org



NOTES

NOTES



The Alumnae of
Northwestern University
P.O. Box 2789
Glenview, IL 60025-6789

First Class
Pre-Sort
U.S. Postage
PAID
Northwestern
University

The Continuing Education Program of the Alumnae of Northwestern University is staffed by volunteer members as an educational project. All profits go to provide scholarships, fellowships, gifts and grants to the University.



Attention!

First Tuesday classes
on September 29, 2026
will be held in a new
location.

See details inside.

Exciting News!

McCormick Auditorium is being refurbished!
Work was begun in June, but the work will not
be completed until early
October.

The first Tuesday classes on September 29,
2026 will be held on the **first floor**
of **Scott Hall in the Guild Lounge**.

Scott Hall is located at 601 University Place,
directly across from the Weber Arch.

A **ramp for handicap access** is directly west
of the University Place entrance. The ramp
leads to the ground level where the elevator to
the first floor is located.

In-person classes after September 29, 2026
will be held in Norris Center.

Signage will direct you to the correct location
in Norris Center.

