The Georgetown University Learning Community
Fall 2012 Program.

Most classes were held in the Murray Room, fifth floor, Lauinger library.

The Roaring and Relevant 1920s. Dorothy M. Brown, Professor of History, Emerita. Tuesdays, October 9, 16, 23. 10:00-11:30 a.m.
Woody Allen’s Midnight in Paris offers enduring images of the cultural challenges of the roaring 20s – jazz, the flapper, the lost generation. Yet the decade’s relevance also endures – business dominance, tax cuts, public sector unions, immigration, racism, stock market boom and bust – leading one historian to conclude that “the Twenties were really the formative years of modern American society.” This mini-course will explore the social/cultural dualities of this important decade. Dorothy M. Brown is the author of two books on issues of the 1920s in America.

Impact of Climate Change on Ecologic Systems. Philip Sze, Associate Professor of Biology, Emeritus. Tues., Oct, 9, 16, 23. 1:00-2:30 p.m.
Is climate change affecting natural ecosystems? We will start with a short introduction to climate change, before considering how ecologic populations (species) are expected to respond by changing where they are found and when their seasonal activities occur. Then we will consider what determines whether entire ecosystems are carbon sources or carbon sinks, and how climate change may be impacting specific ecosystems (coral reefs, tundra etc.). Recommended background reading: The Weather Makers by Tim Flannery. Philip Sze’s teaching and research interests include ecology and marine biology.

Sounds of Languages. Rev. Solomon I. Sara, S.J., Associate Professor of Linguistics, Emeritus. Thursdays, Oct. 11, 18, 25. 10:00-11:30 a.m.
Linguists tell us that there are between 6,000-8,000 languages. Despite this large number of languages, the number of sounds used in human communication are not comparably numerous. Linguists take, not a particular view, but a general view of human sound production by relating the sounds of all languages to the same anatomico-physiological mechanism of sound production. This brief course will attempt to relate the sounds of all languages to the same sound producing mechanism, called organs of speech. Sound production, however, is only one aspect of this process. It needs to be complemented by sound transmission and reception mechanisms to round off the complete cycle of communication by using speech. In brief, the course will touch on the consonantal, vocalic and prosodic components of sound production.

Dr. Comunale invites you to explore THE SAFEHAVEN CHRONICLES, a trilogy of brief, easily accessible, and engaging novels: Requiem for the Bone Man, The Legend of Safehaven, and Clover. Come meet the author and discover who – and what – motivated him to write three novels and two short-story collections, all medically flavored and all centered on the character of his alter ego, Robert (aka Berto) Galen, who “was eight years old when the dead lady found him,” as the first novel begins. What has a lifetime taught him about the human condition? We will discuss the characters, plots, imagery, and themes of the three novels and the impact of these on us. The author will also discuss the writing process plus the strange and mysterious world of becoming a published author: the queries, the non-responses, the outright rejections, the joyous epiphany of acceptance by a publisher – and the painful adjustment to the realities of editing and marketing.R.A. Comunale’s works of fiction, including his short stories—Berto’s World and Doctor Galen’s Little Black Bag—are available on Amazon in quality paperback, from all major retailers as e-books, and from Audible.com as audio books, beautifully narrated by Ron David. (Registrants should read Requiem for the Bone Man before the first class.) R.A. Comunale, a semi-retired family physician living and working in McLean, Virginia, enjoys writing, gardening, electronics, pounding on a piano and yelling at his dim-witted cat. The cat claims authorship.

The Medici, the Montefeltro, and the Virtue of Magnificencia. Deborah Ross Warin, Tuesdays, Oct. 30, Nov. 6 & 13. 10:00-11:30 a.m.
- “The most valuable work of art is that which is great and beautiful, for the contemplation of such a work inspires admiration, and so does magnificence … therefore it is characteristic of the magnificent man, whatever kind of result he is producing, to produce it magnificently (for such a result is not easily surpassed) and to make it worthy of the expenditure.” Aristotle
- “It is possible to achieve fame and power by using wealth with generosity and magnificencia for important and noble purposes.” Leon Battista Alberti, 1452.

In 15th-Century Italy, the revitalization of the virtue magnificencia led to feverish patronage of the arts by aristocratic humanists such as the Medici of Florence and the Montefeltro of Urbino, two of the most powerful (and wealthy) families of the period. In this class we will examine the idea of magnificencia in the humanist revival and its influence on the culture of patronage that fueled the creation of the diverse masterpieces of art and architecture that we now associate with the Italian Renaissance.
Deborah Ross Warin is co-founder and co-director of The Renaissance Company. She served for ten years as Director of Georgetown’s continuing-education program and later was Director of the college-credit evaluation program at the American Council on Education, and Assistant Vice-President at Trinity University. For two years she was Expert Adviser (her favorite title to date) to the European Council’s Higher Education and Civil Responsibility Committee in Strasbourg, France. She is an instructor and lecturer in Georgetown’s SCS, and has lectured at the Smithsonian Institute, the Italian Cultural Institute, and other venues in the US and Italy. Her current book project is Battista Sforza and the Court of Urbino.

Historical Overview of the Heart of the Middle East: Syria, Iraq, & Iran. John Ruedy, Prof. of History, Emeritus, Tues, Nov. 6 &13, 1:30-3:00 p.m.
Classes begin with a brief overview of the struggle between Ottomans and Persians for control of the region that to westerners came early in the twentieth century to be known as “The Middle East.” Next, they will explore the emergence of the three large nation-states of Iran, Iraq, and (greater) Syria, seeking to understand the historical background of the alliances and conflicts that have characterized the region since