



Continuing
Education
Committee

Spring 2026 Short Course Listing---What You Need to Know

The Spring 2026 Short Courses program will feature 12 courses and will run from March 9 to May 16, 2026

Here's what you need to know:

- The course listing will be available on Monday, February 16, 2026 (on RiderwoodLife.com and at front desks).
- Once again, these courses are offered free of charge to Riderwood residents.
- Course sign-ups are managed on a first-come, first-served basis.
- Each course has a defined number of seats, so **sign up as early as possible. Courses fill quickly!**
- The sign-up period will run from **Monday February 23 (at 9:00 a.m.) through Monday March 2.**
- **Signing up can only be done online through RiderwoodLife.com.** If you do not have your own computer, you can use one of the computers in Riderwood building lobbies or ask a friend to help. You should also be able to sign up from a tablet or smart phone.
- **To sign up:**
 1. Use any browser and click the **CEC/Short Courses** link on the **RiderwoodLife.com** home page. If you experience any problems on the computer, try using the Chrome browser. (The course listing can also be found by choosing the Continuing Education link on the right side of the RiderwoodLife webpage and scrolling down to Short Courses.)
 2. **Scroll down** on the listing to see the course descriptions. Click the live link for the course you want to take. **(The sign-up links will not be active until February 23).**
 3. Enter the information required on the sign-up form and click **SUBMIT**. (If you do not have an email address, enter NONE in that field.)
- **On the website, you** will receive an **immediate** response to your submission:
 - **If the course is full**, the response will let you know.
 - **If the course is not full, the response will confirm that you are enrolled. Please note that this is your ONLY confirmation. NOTE: YOU WILL NOT RECEIVE A SEPARATE CONFIRMING EMAIL!! Make a note of the course you signed up for. Also, if you get the immediate confirmation response, please do not sign up again**, as you will be taking up a seat that could go to another resident.
 - Repeat the **three sign-up steps** for each course you want to take, or use the provided link to return to the short course page to make another selection from the listing.

NOTE 1: A one-page, date-order chart at the beginning of the course listing below summarizes date, time, and location of courses. Course descriptions, arranged alphabetically by course title, follow. We strongly suggest that you save the chart, noting the courses you chose, since some classes begin a month or two after sign-up.

NOTE 2: A listing of unfilled classes will be posted on RiderwoodLife.com (under the Continuing Ed page/Short Courses) **after March 2**. If interested in one of these classes, feel free to show up the first day of the class; empty slots will be filled first-come, first-served. A volunteer in each class will be keeping track of attendance.

CEC continues to try out a variety of course subjects, days, and times (including evenings and weekends). We welcome your feedback at any point in the process. You can direct questions to CEC Short Course Program co-chairs Diane Willen and Jennie Lane.

Summary Chart for Spring 2026 CEC Short Courses

Course Dates	Course Title	Course Instructor/Medium	Course Time	Course Location
Thursday, March 12, 19, 26	Art Deco: 100 Years of Architecture and Design	Ruth Manchester	1:00 - 3:00 p.m.	Via Zoom Link
Monday, March 16, 23, 30	50 Shades of Classical Music	Clint Marshall	7:30 p.m. – 8:45 p.m.	LSC Encore Theater
Tuesday, March 17, 24, 31	How Culture Influences Mathematics	Resha Putzrath	1:00 – 3:00 p.m.	LSC Card Room
Tuesday, March 24, 31, April 7, 14	Who Got the Holy Grail?	Janina Traxler	10:00 - noon	TNC Classroom
Monday, April 6, 13, 20	Nearby Native Plants	Anne DeNovo and Becky Hedin	1:00 – 2:30 p.m.	LSC Classroom
Tuesday, April 7, 14, 21	The Life Ledger: Your Life's Details at Your Fingertips (and for Your Loved Ones if You're Incapacitated)	Sharon MacInnes	7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.	VSQ Classroom
Wednesday, April 8, 15, 22, 29	Resilience in History: Two Case Studies	Elly Greene	10:00 – noon	VSQ Music Room
Tuesday, April 14, 21, May 12	Sustainability: Concepts and Practices	Jennie Lane	1:00 – 2:30 p.m.	LSC Card Room
Monday, April 27, May 4, 11, 18	Beginning Zentangle®	Melanie Rothchild	10:00 – noon	MST Craft Studio
Monday, April 27, May 4, 11, 18	A Better Human Story	Andy Schmookler	1:00 – 2:30 p.m.	MST Chesapeake Room
Tuesday, April 28, May 5, 12, 19	Ekphrastic Writing, A Response to Art	Sindy Parrott	10:00 – noon	TNC Classroom
Saturday, May 2, 9	Understanding Families Through Plays	Dr. Karen Lewis	10:00 – noon	TNC Classroom

COURSE TITLE: Art Deco: 100 Years of Architecture and Design

Description: When you were in New York City, you probably gazed up at the Chrysler or the Empire State Buildings. Have you wondered where the style of these buildings – commonly known as “Art Deco” – came from? How does one characterize the style? We will examine how Art Deco emerged as a style of architecture in the 1920s and 1930s-taking cues from a 1925 Paris show entitled *Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels*. In addition to architecture, we will analyze how Art Deco lent its forward-looking or streamline style to furniture, decorative arts, apparel, and jewelry. Help celebrate the 100th anniversary of this "quirky" but enduring style of architecture and design.

Course Format: Zoom, course capacity of 50 students.

Dates and Time: Thursdays, March 12, 19 and 26, 1:00-3:00 p.m.

Location: Zoom

Course Sign-up Link: Coming: February 23, 2026, at 9 a.m.

Instructor: Ruth Manchester, resident

Bio: Ruth Manchester was an instructor in the Department of Art History at Montgomery College, Rockville, MD for 32 years, teaching the two-semester History of Architecture course for many of those years. Currently, she is an instructor in the college’s Life Long Learning program, teaching architectural history both in person at the Rockville campus and on line. Her interest in architecture goes back to student days at the University of Minnesota where she pursued her degree in nursing and simultaneously took courses in the history of architecture. She received an MA in art history from the University of Maryland.

COURSE TITLE: Beginning Zentangle®

Description: An art course for everyone. Called “Yoga for the Brain,” Zentangle® is as relaxing as it is fun. If you can make a line /, a circle o, a dot ., and an arc), you can be successful in this class. In this fun, no pressure, class, we will make small pieces of art using repeated patterns. Once you have the basic 4-week class, you can use your new skill in many types of art. Zentangle® is also meditative and helps with anxiety.

Course Format: In person, course capacity of 12 students.

Dates and Time: Monday, April 27, May 4, 11, and 18, 10 a.m.-noon

Location: MST Crafts Studio

Course Sign-up Link: Coming: February 23, 2026, at 9 a.m.

Instructor: Melanie Rothchild, resident

Bio: As a retired community college teacher, and lifelong doodler, Melanie Rothchild has been teaching the basics of this art form for over ten years. She has been a Certified Zentangle® instructor since 2014 and delights in sharing her love of Zentangle® with others!

COURSE TITLE: A Better Human Story

Description: Why has human history been so painful? And how can we heal its brokenness? This course will address four aspects of the issue.

1. Why the ugliness in human history does not reflect human nature: why a species that extricates itself from the biological niche is inevitably condemned to its “civilization” developing in directions it never would have chosen.
2. The discernible reality of a force of evil: how “evil” — defined as “a coherent force working to make the human world more broken” — arises inevitably from the breakthrough to “civilization.”
3. How evolution has made the moral and spiritual dimensions emergent realities: how “moral” and “spiritual” dimensions — illuminated by an evolutionary perspective — are not merely subjective but real, important, and life-serving.
4. Will human civilization get its act together or self-destruct: why any civilization-creating species must put its civilization in order — soon enough — to avoid self-destruction.

Course Format: In person, course capacity of 50 students.

Dates and Time: Mondays, April 27, May 4, 11, and 18, 1:00-2:30 p.m.

Location: MST Chesapeake

Course Sign-up Link: Coming: February 23, 2026, at 9 a.m.

Instructor: Andy Schmookler, resident

Bio: Andy Schmookler is an author and public intellectual whose work has focused for decades on the forces that have shaped human civilization. His prize-winning book *The Parable of the Tribes: The Problem of Power in Social Evolution* (University of California Press) presents his theory explaining why civilization has developed as destructively as it has. A summa cum laude graduate of Harvard College, Schmookler earned his Ph.D. in a program specially created at Berkeley to accommodate the scope of his integrative, multi-disciplinary explanation of human history. In multiple other books, and hundreds of newspaper columns published across the country, Dr. Schmookler has articulated an integrative framework aimed at enabling humankind to gain greater control of its future and to develop a more humane and viable civilization.

COURSE TITLE: Ekphrastic Writing, a Response to Art

Description: Art can inspire creative written responses that otherwise might remain unexpressed. This class will encourage participants to explore selected art works as prompts for short poems, memory writing, or previously unexpressed perceptions. We'll share our work and make constructive suggestions about how to strengthen or clarify our work.

Course Format: In person, course capacity of 15 students.

Dates and Time: Tuesdays, April 28, May 5, 12 and 19, 10 a.m.-noon

Location: TNC Classroom

Course Sign-up Link: Coming: February 23, 2026, at 9 a.m.

Instructor: Sindy Parrott, resident

Bio: Sindy (Sara) Parrott taught high school students for 40 years in Massachusetts, the Middle East, and Maryland. She earned degrees from Wellesley College, Harvard Graduate School of Education, and a Ph.D. in American Studies from George Washington University. She was an Agnes Meyer Washington Post Teacher of the Year for Howard County and for many years ran an all-county student writers' group in Howard County.

COURSE TITLE: 50 Shades of Classical Music

Description: Over the past two years, Clint Marshall's music classes have been filled to capacity, and many disappointed residents have been left wondering what they have missed. In response to that concern, this course will present a sampling of one class each from three different courses that have been offered.

Participants attending this new course are certain to leave convinced that they hadn't missed a thing, but they may also leave with a few of the many benefits and thrills that come from experiencing some of the world's greatest music. Each session will incorporate various video and audio examples aimed at providing insight into masterworks of both classical music and opera. All residents, from novice to experts, are welcome to join us. They may learn a little in this short course, or they may learn a lot. Either way, they won't be bored!

Course Format: In person, course capacity of students: 280.

Dates and Time: Mondays, March 16, 23, and 30, 7:30-8:45 p.m. (Note, this is an evening class)

Location: LSC Encore Theater

Course Sign-up Link: Coming: February 23, 2026, at 9 a.m.

Instructor: Clint Marshall, resident

Bio: Clinton Marshall is equally well known for his vast knowledge of music as well as for the things that he makes up as he goes along. He is affectionately known as Riderwood's Professor and Maestro, a title bestowed on him by himself. Clint enjoys an international reputation as a gifted teacher, conductor, clinician, adjudicator and lecturer. He has conducted at the Palace for Children and Youth in Kiev, Ukraine; appeared eleven times as artist-in-residence at the prestigious Rocky Mountain Music Festival in Banff, Canada; served as the keynote speaker for the British Columbia Music Educators Conference in Victoria, B.C.; and served on the faculty of the International Music Camp held at the Peace Gardens. A resident of Riderwood, Clint is well known for his entertaining and engaging teaching style.

COURSE TITLE: How Culture Influences Mathematics

Description: Were you taught that there is only one correct answer to any math problem? Or that we use base 10 because we have 10 fingers? But our clocks have numbers from 1 to 12. Why and what difference might it make in how we schedule our day? If you like how such issues make you rethink the relationship of culture and mathematics, the lectures and discussion in this course will expand your thoughts.

Course Format: In person, course capacity of 32 students.

Dates and Time: Tuesdays, March 17, 24, and 31, 1:00-3:00 p.m.

Location: LSC Card Room

Course Sign-up Link: Coming: February 23, 2026, at 9 a.m.

Instructor: Resha Putzrath, resident

Bio: Although Resha's doctorate is in quantum biophysics, for decades she has explored the effect of culture on history and religion as well as mathematics.

COURSE TITLE: The Life Ledger: Your Life's Details at Your Fingertips (and for Your Loved Ones If You're Incapacitated).

Description: You know the file drawers and boxes of legal papers, bank statements, credit card bills, retirement/investment accounts, medical records, and insurance policies you've collected over the years? Now's the chance to get it all organized in a clear and easily understood fashion so that you and your heirs have a clear understanding of where you are today and what you want for the future. The Life Ledger is a comprehensive, practical organizational tool in which to capture your legacy: your legal, financial, health information, future care wishes, as well as your values. NOTE: Three 1 ½ -hour classes ratchet up to cater to all levels of computer skills but after attending the first class, it's up to you whether you need to attend classes 2 and/or 3.

Course Format: In person, course capacity of 30 students

Dates and Time: Tuesdays, April 7, 14, and 21, 7:00-8:30 p.m. (Note: this is an evening class)

Location: VSQ Classroom

Course Sign-up Link: Coming: February 23, 2026, at 9 a.m.

Instructor: Sharon MacInnes, resident

Bio: Sharon Cook MacInnes, Ph.D., is a professional genealogist, lecturer, teacher, and writer. Before becoming a genealogist, she was a high school teacher and professional curriculum designer both in Virginia and overseas. She is the curriculum designer for the current "Navigating As We Age" course and facilitates three of the twelve sessions.

COURSE TITLE: Nearby Native Plants

Description: The course covers ways to identify native plants and why they are important to the ecosystem. We will pay special attention to local trees, shrubs, vines and herbaceous plants. Native landscaping and gardening will be covered. Some class meetings will include short walks on campus. An optional fourth class may be a field trip to a local park that exhibits many of the native plants we cover.

Course Format: In person, course capacity of 12 students.

Dates and Time: Mondays, April 6, 13, 20, 1:00-2:30 p.m.

Location: LSC Classroom

Course Sign-up Link: Coming: February 23, 2026, at 9 a.m.

Instructors: Anne DeNovo and Becky Hedin, residents

Bio: Anne DeNovo is a certified Maryland Master Naturalist and frequent volunteer for Montgomery Parks and Nature Forward for native plant sales, plant surveys, amphibian monitoring and other programs. She was a Board member and field trip leader for the Maryland Native Plant Society and served as field trip coordinator for several years. As a Weed Warrior supervisor, she has led corporate, school and neighborhood groups for non-native invasive plant removal projects throughout Montgomery County. She has led Riderwood nature and tree appreciation walks for residents.

Becky Hedin chairs Riderwood's Grounds & Habitat Committee and chaired Riderwood's Earth Day for 8 years. She has a long-time interest in native plants starting in childhood with hikes in the Great Smoky Mountains. Her undergraduate degree was in biology. She was an active participant in Maryland Native Plant Society's trips and conferences. She led field trips for Audubon Naturalist Society aka Nature Forward and served as a Level Walker for the C & O Canal Association.

COURSE TITLE: Resilience in History: Two Case Studies

Description: Life for Black people during the Jim Crow Era (1877 to 1954) was characterized by economic subservience, political disenfranchisement and violence. Yet during this time African Americans resisted segregation, especially by educating their children. Two examples of this resilience were the Laurel Grove School – a one-room school established and maintained by a small community of freedmen and women in Northern Virginia, and the almost 5000 schools created in every state in the American South by the partnership between Booker T. Washington and Julius Rosenwald. To understand how these came about we will consult noted historians and examine primary sources including a virtual visit to the restored Laurel Grove School and a conversation with a descendant of the founders, and we will watch the documentary Rosenwald.

Course Format: In person, course capacity of 30 students.

Dates and Time: Wednesdays, April 8, 15, 22, and 29, 10 a.m.-noon

Location: VSQ Music Room

Course Sign-up Link: Coming: February 23, 2026, at 9 a.m.

Instructor: Elly Greene, resident

Bio: With an MAT in History from Yale, for about 30 years Elly Greene has taught a variety of history courses in secondary schools in Massachusetts and Northern Virginia, trained teachers, and designed curricula. For the last ten years she has led study groups with the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute in Washington DC on topics including Eleanor Roosevelt, the Laurel Grove School, the Progressives, Making the History of 1989, and Seven Photographers Documenting 20th Century America. She has recently taught some of these courses as popular Short Courses at Riderwood.

COURSE TITLE: Sustainability: Concepts and Practices

Description: This course will explore concepts of sustainability at local, national and international levels. Through readings and discussions and reports, we will analyze how sustainability affects the environment, the economy and the health and well-being of people, the lives of other organisms, and the future of the planet. We will examine each of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). We will explore how Riderwood groups and clubs address SDGs. Participants will be invited to focus on their own sustainability goal and relevant thoughts and actions.

Course Format: In person, course capacity of 20 students.

Dates and Time: Tuesdays, April 14 and 21, May 12, 1:00-2:30 p.m. (Note: the third class meets 3 weeks after the second class)

Location: LSC Card Room

Course Sign-up Link: Coming: February 23, 2026, at 9 a.m.

Instructor: Jennie Lane, resident

Bio: Jennie Lane has been living in Riderwood for a year. She created RW's Peace Corps and More group and the Car Free Living Group. She serves on Riderwood's ECO-R committee and the Continuing Education Committee. She is still working remotely as an Associate Professor within the Graduate School of Education at Bilkent University in Ankara, Turkiye. She received her BS in biology from Florida Southern College and Master's degrees from Columbia Teachers College and the University of Wisconsin—Stevens Point. She earned her PhD in Curriculum and Instruction from UW-Madison. From 1995 to 2012, she directed the Wisconsin K-12 Energy Education Program (KEEP). Her other work experience includes co-authoring the Project WET Curriculum and Activity Guide which is used throughout the world, teaching public school in New York City and Lewiston, and instructing pre-service teachers in Thailand and at the University of Wisconsin—Stevens Point. Her research areas include environmental, place-based, and sustainability education.

COURSE TITLE: Understanding Families Through Plays

Description: In this two-week course, participants will read the play *A Raisin in the Sun* by Lorraine Hansberry. Participants read the play in advance for class discussion, focusing on family related themes, such as, family/sibling relationship, gender roles, multi-generational patterns, and gender issues. Reading the play beforehand will enrich class participation.

Course Format: In person, course capacity of 18 students.

Dates and Time: Saturdays, May 2 and 9, 10 a.m.-noon (Note: this is a weekend class)

Location: TNC Classroom

Course Sign-up Link: Coming: February 23, 2026, at 9 a.m.

Instructor: Dr. Karen Gail Lewis

Bio: Dr. Karen Gail Lewis has been practicing family therapy for over 54 years and has authored numerous books and professional articles about marriage, gender relationships, singles, and adult siblings. She has taught in several universities in US and in Chile, and presented her work nationally and internationally.

COURSE TITLE: Who Got the Holy Grail?

Description: Evidenced by attitudes ranging from the deeply spiritual through the silly and outlandish, the grail has fascinated western culture for over nine centuries. Assumptions about the origins of the grail range from the literary to the faux-historical. Hitler wanted it; so did Indiana Jones, Perceval, Monty Python's King Arthur, and many others fictional and real. This course explores the origins of the grail legend and some of its most colorful and powerful manifestations—whether in literature, art, film, or popular culture. It also explores some of the persistent questions associated with the grail: Is the goal to seek the grail or possess it? Is it even a physical object or rather a metaphor for spiritual aspirations? Course includes some video and a few short readings.

Course Format: In person, course capacity of 18 students.

Dates and Time: Tuesdays, March 24, 31, April 7, and 14, 10 a.m.-noon

Location: TNC Classroom

Course Sign-up Link: Coming: February 23, 2026, at 9 a.m.

Instructor: Janina Traxler, resident

Bio: Other than her years abroad (France, China), Janina Traxler spent her entire life in Indiana until moving to Riderwood in August 2023. For 39 years she taught all levels of French and many courses in literature at Manchester College (now University) in northeast Indiana. She received her BA from Manchester in French and math, and her MA and PhD degrees in French from Indiana University. Her scholarship focuses on the medieval legend of King Arthur, first popularized in 12th-century French literature before spreading to all major European cultural traditions. Facets of that literature include the love stories of Tristan and Isolde and Lancelot and Guinevere, the grail legend, plus all things pertaining to Merlin, Camelot, Excalibur, and the Round Table.