



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

The Fall Short Courses program will feature 13 courses and will run from October 6 to December 22, 2026.

Here's what you need to know:

- The course listing will be available on Monday, September 14, 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 **Tuesday, September 22 (at 9:00 a.m.) through Monday, September 28.**
- **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 September 22).**
 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. YOU WILL NOT RECEIVE A SEPARATE CONFIRMING EMAIL!! Make a note of the course you signed up for. Also, if you get this 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 chart at the beginning of the course listing below summarizes, in alphabetical order, the title, date, time, location, and capacity 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 September 29. 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 this.

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 Fall 2026 CEC Short Courses

Course Title	Course Date/Time	Course Instructor	Course Capacity	Course Location
African American Schools During the Jim Crow Era	Tues. Nov. 3, 10, 17, 24 10:00 a.m.-12:00 noon	Elly Greene	30	TNC Classroom
American Broadway Musicals	Tues. Dec. 1, 8, 15, 22 1:00-3:00 p.m.	Ellen and Harvey Simsohn	60	MST Chesapeake
Apple Watch	Thur. Oct. 15, 22, 29 1:00-2:30 p.m.	Trudy Downs	25	Zoom
Beginning Zentangle®	Tues. Oct. 6, 13, 20, 27 10:00 a.m.-12 noon	Melanie Rothchild	12	VSQ Craft Studio
Deadlier than the Male 3: Margery Allingham	Mon. Dec. 7, 14 10:00 a.m.-12 noon	Jean Sonntag	36	TNC Classroom
Great Works of Architecture Depicted in Art	Thur. Dec. 3, 10, 17 10:00 a.m.-12 noon	Ruth Manchester	50	Zoom
Chekhov Short Stories	Sat. Oct 24, Nov, 14, 28 10:00-11:30 a.m.	Dillies Pilevsky	36	TNC Classroom
iOS 27 What's New	Thur. Nov. 5, 12, 19 1:00 -2:30 p.m.	Trudy Downs	50	Zoom
Keep Your Brain Healthy and Smart	Mon. Nov. 16, 23, 30 1:00-2:30 p.m.	Phyllis Burson and Jennie Lane	30	MST Chesapeake
Life Ledger	Wed. Oct. 7, 14, 21 7:00 -8:30 p.m.	Sharon MacInnes	30	TNC Classroom
Style and Forms of J.S. Bach's Music	Mon. Nov. 2, 9, 16, 23 10:00 a.m.- 12 noon	John Planer	18	TNC classroom
Understanding Families Through Plays	Sat. Nov. 7, 14 10:00 a.m. -12 noon	Karen Lewis	25	LSC Card Room
Why Intelligence Succeeds and Why It Fails.	Mon. Dec. 7, 14 1:00-2:30 p.m.	David Sherman	60	MST Chesapeake

African American Schools During the Jim Crow Era

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 and why these came about, we will consult noted historians, including Ira Berlin on slavery and Eric Foner on Reconstruction, examine primary sources such as a virtual visit to the restored Laurel Grove School, and watch the acclaimed documentary *Rosenwald*.

Course Format: In person, course capacity of 30 students

Dates and Time: November 3, 10, 17, 24—10:00 a.m.-12:00 noon

Location: TNC Classroom

Course Sign-up Link: Coming: September 22 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 10 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 taught several of these recently as Riderwood Short Courses.

American Broadway Musicals

Description: This course will introduce the students to some of the key composers and lyricists of American musical theater. Each session will highlight the work of a particular composer or composing team: Richard Rodgers & Oscar Hammerstein II, Frank Loesser, Sheldon Harnick & Jerry Bock, and Stephen Sondheim. We will talk about what makes their work noteworthy or even revolutionary, learn about their creative process, and introduce the students to some of their well-known and lesser-known musicals. We will watch interviews with these creative individuals, listen to many songs and watch some performances.

Course Format: In person, course capacity of 60 students

Dates and Time: December 1, 8, 15, 22—1:00-2:30 p.m.

Location: MST Chesapeake

Course Sign-up Link: Coming: September 22 at 9 a.m.

Instructor: Ellen Simsohn, resident

Bio: Ellen and her husband, Harvey, are both former educators and long-time lovers of American musicals. They believe that their knowledge of musicals is both wide and deep. Though they have developed this course together, Ellen will be the instructor.

Apple Watch

Description: This course will cover the main functions of the Apple Watch including the most important apps-- Health, Activity and Emergency Features. This is a beginner's course.

Course Format: Zoom, course capacity of 25 students

Dates and Time: October 15, 22, 29—1:00-2:30 p.m.

Course Sign-up Link: Coming: September 22 at 9 a.m.

Instructor: Trudy Downs, resident

Bio: Trudy Downs teaches Apple device classes for PGCC SAGE program and previously taught this course as part of that program. This course is now a short course and free. Trudy tutors 3 hours per week on Apple devices and has been working with Apple devices for 20+ years.

Beginning Zentangle®

Description: Called Yoga for the Brain, Zentangle is art that anyone can do! If you can make a line /, a circle o, a dot ., and an arc), you can Zentangle. You will be guided to learn simple patterns that when repeated make beautiful art that is relaxing, easy and fun. It is presented in a sequence that enables you to put pen to paper and immediately see results. The course offers all the basics of this art form including the elements, enhancers, shading and composition. Benefits include increased relaxation, stress reduction, confidence, empowerment, focus, and inspiration. You need no prior art experience for this class. All materials are supplied for a fee of \$20 due on the first class.

Course Format: In person, course capacity of 12 students

Dates and Time: October 6, 13, 20, 27—10:00 a.m.-12:00 noon

Location: VSQ Craft Studio

Course Sign-up Link: Coming: September 22 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!

Deadlier than the Male 3: Margery Allingham

Description: Margery Allingham may be the least well known of the 4-5 authors who have been labelled Queens of Crime beginning in the 1920's and 1930's. And yet she is interesting both for her life story and the quality and great variety of writing she did, perhaps the most varied of the Queens of Crime. This course will explore the writing life of Allingham, who began writing at age 7 and published her first novel at 19! We will discuss two mystery novels of hers, *Death of a Ghost* and *Traitor's Purse*, that demonstrate her varied approaches to the genre. Both novels should be read by the second class of the course. There is no requirement to have taken previous Deadlier than the Male offerings as each Deadlier than the Male course stands on its own.

Course Format: In person, course capacity of 36 students

Dates and Time: December 7, 14—10:00 a.m.-12:00 noon

Location: TNC Classroom

Course Sign-up Link: Coming: September 22 at 9 a.m.

Instructor: Jean Sonntag, resident

Bio: Jean Sonntag has an MA in English from the University of Virginia. She began teaching English at Millersville University in PA, and then relocated to work 25 years as an intelligence analyst at the National Security Agency. There she spent 7 years teaching intelligence reporting at NSA's National Cryptologic School and was named Teacher of the Year. She retired early to teach credit literature courses at Howard Community College. During 18 years of varied credit literature teaching, she developed the college's credit course in the English Bible as Literature and was named Adjunct of the Year for the English Dept. From 2016-2025 she taught the Bible as literature and female detective fiction in Howard's Continuing Education Department.

Great Works of Architecture Depicted in Art

Description: Have you ever viewed a work of art and wondered why the artists included various architectural elements? During the late Gothic and Early Renaissance periods (1300s-1500s), artists would often frame historical events with elaborate architectural details such as a Nativity scene ensconced in a Roman ruin. Artists would also paint "portraits" of buildings. For example, a young gentleman, on the grand tour, might purchase a scene of Venice to enhance his English country house. Monet's 30-plus paintings of the Rouen Cathedral give us an impression of the facade and not a "photographic" image. So travel to view the great buildings of the world and see how artists "saw" them.

Course Format: Zoom, course capacity of 50 students

Dates and Time: December 3, 10, 17—10:00 a.m.-12:00 noon

Course Sign-up Link: Coming: September 22 at 9 a.m.

Instructor: Ruth Manchester, resident

Bio: Ruth Manchester was an instructor in the Art History Department, Montgomery College, Rockville, MD for 32 years where she taught History of Art and Architecture. Currently, she is an instructor in the Life Long Learning program there, teaching architectural history both in person and online. Her interest in this area goes back to her tenure as a student at the University of Minnesota where she pursued her degree in nursing, and simultaneously took courses in the history of art and architecture. Later, she attended the University of Maryland and received an MA in art history. She has traveled widely, taking note of the art and architecture of many countries. Her most recent presentation was a talk on "Nurses Depicted in WPA Murals" in June at a national conference.

How Chekhov Made Sense of His Surroundings Through His Short Stories

Description: Short stories are timeless in their magical ability to help us make human connections with the author, the narrative, with one another and with ourselves. In this course, we will read a few of Anton Chekhov's stories out of hundreds. We will explore Dr. Chekhov's strange family, his serious illness, his medical practice, his plays, his journeys to faraway places, his late marriage and his influence on the short stories of Raymond Carver.

Course Format: In person, course capacity of 36 students

Dates and Time: Saturday. October 24, November 14, 28—10:00-11:30 a.m.—**Note: non-consecutive weeks**

Location: TNC Classroom

Course Sign-up Link: Coming: September 22 at 9 a.m.

Instructor: Dillies Pilevsky, resident

Bio: Dillies Pilevsky was born in Utica, New York, the 7th child of Russian immigrants. She had a lifelong desire to be a teacher. She graduated with a BA from Albany State Teachers College and an MA from Brooklyn College with post-graduate work at the University of Chicago and Columbia University. She retired from the NYC School System as a high school teacher of Social Studies and English, and began a new career at Brookdale Community College in Lincroft, New Jersey. There she taught world literature devoted to classic short stories for 30 years. Upon moving to Riderwood, she taught for 8 years in the PGCC SAGE program and now looks forward to teaching Chekhov in the Short Courses Program.

iOS 27—What's New, What's Important, What You Need to Know

Description: This course provides an overview and accompanying detail of the new features in Apple's iPhone and iPad iOS operating systems. The changes impact our iPhone/iPad users. If they know about these, they can understand what is happening on their device when the major operating system update takes place. Then they know about brand new features and also how to change their settings to make their devices meet their personal needs rather than some "ideal user" default.

Course Format: Zoom, course capacity of 25 students

Dates and Time: Thursday November 5, 12, 19—1:00-2:30 p.m.

Course Sign-up Link: Coming: September 22 at 9 a.m.

Instructor: Trudy Downs, resident

Bio: Trudy Downs teaches iPhone and iPad classes at Riderwood through both the PGCC SAGE program and the Short Courses program. She also tutors 3 hours per week in a variety of settings on questions about iPhone, iPad and other Apple devices. After retiring in 2005 and working in a Microsoft world for her career in Information Technology she tossed her briefcase in the air and moved to Apple products and hasn't looked back.

Keep Your Brains Healthy and Smart

Description: This class will begin with an overview of the brain, including its anatomy, how it functions, and what happens physiologically as we age. Next, we will discuss memory and techniques to keep your brain active and fit. There will be opportunities for participants to share ideas for maintaining healthy brains.

Course Format: In person, course capacity of 25 students

Dates and Time: Monday November 16, 23, 30—1:00-2:30 p.m.

Location: MST Chesapeake

Course Sign-up Link: Coming: September 22 at 9 a.m.

Instructors: Phyllis Burson and Jennie Lane, resident

Bio: This course will be co-taught by Phyllis Burson and Jennie Lane. Phyllis Burson, PhD, is a psychologist who taught courses at University of Maryland for 30 years and has conducted psychotherapy and coaching throughout her career. Jennie Lane, PhD, has a background in biology and taught a teacher education course called Science of Learning that identified parts of the brain involved in learning and memory.

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 2-hour classes 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: Wednesday October 7, 14, 21—7:00-8:30 p.m.

Location: TNC Classroom

Course Sign-up Link: Coming: September 22 at 9 a.m.

Instructor: Sharon MacInnes, resident

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

The Style and Forms of J.S. Bach's Music

Description: This is an interactive, four-session course on Bach's style and forms, but indirectly it surveys his works and reveals how his choices reveal his personality. It is intended for those familiar with Bach's music who wish to move beyond appreciation to understand how he structured his compositions and their distinctive characteristics. Elementary ability to read music, i.e. follow musical notation, will let students get the most out of this course.

Course Format: In person, course capacity of 18 students

Dates and Time: Monday November 2, 9, 16, 23—10:00 a.m.-12:00 noon

Location: TNC Classroom

Course Sign-up Link: Coming: September 22 at 9 a.m.

Instructor: John Planer, resident

Bio: John Planer has a PhD in musicology from the University of Michigan with a dissertation on Gregorian chant. He was Professor Emeritus of Music at Manchester University in northeast Indiana. His teaching areas were music history, advanced musical analysis, and general humanities. He has particular interests in rhythmic analysis, criticism and judgment, Jewish liturgical music, and Hugo Wolf's lieder.

Understanding Families Through Plays—*The Glass Menagerie*

Description: This two-week course will focus on *The Glass Menagerie*, by Tennessee Williams. We will discuss the play looking at relationships among family members, typical emotional and health issues, and gender roles that have been influenced by prior family generations. The class will look at these themes in context of the period in which it was written. We'll see how the richness of interpretation changes given the societal dictates. We'll also see how the play might be different if written by a playwright of a different race, ethnicity, or gender. This is a fun, interactive class. Reading the play beforehand will enrich participation.

Course Format: In person, course capacity of 25 students

Dates and Time: Saturday November 7,14—10:00 a.m.-12:00 noon

Location: LSC Classroom

Course Sign-up Link: Coming: September 22 at 9 a.m.

Instructor: Karen Gail Lewis

Bio: Dr. Karen Gail Lewis has been practicing family therapy for 56 years and has authored numerous books and articles about marriage, gender relationships, singles, and adult siblings.

Why Intelligence Succeeds and Why It Fails

Description: The intelligence services of the United States and other nations have had remarkable successes and failures over the past century. Using examples from the Second World War, the Cold War, and today, we will explore why intelligence succeeds and why it fails – at times, spectacularly – to protect national security and populations. Specific case studies will include the Battle of Britain, Pearl Harbor, Korea, the Cuban Missile Crisis, Vietnam, and the 9/11 attacks and their aftermath. We also will look at reforms that governments have made to address where intelligence has fallen short, as well technological innovations that have both enhanced the performance of the world's spy agencies and complicated their task.

Course Format: In person, course capacity of 50 students

Dates and Time: Monday December 7,14—1:00-2:30 p.m.

Location: MST Chesapeake

Course Sign-up Link: Coming: September 22 at 9 a.m.

Instructor: David Sherman

Bio: Dr. David Sherman retired from the Federal Government's Senior Executive Service in 2017. He served for 33 years at the National Security Agency, where he held a variety of managerial, analytic, and staff positions. He also held positions on the staffs of the National Security Council and National Economic Council and represented NSA to the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He was Dean of Academic Programs and Visiting Professor at the National War College from 2007 to 2010. Prior to joining government, he was Adjunct Faculty at Cornell University, where he taught for four years.