

## **NEXT WEEK AT QUEST**

**December 2 - 5, 2024**  
**This Is an A Week**

There are three links for all classes for the semester: Auditorium, Classroom 15-17, and Classroom 27. Click on the appropriate link below to join a class no earlier than 15 minutes before its start.

Below are given the links (in red), meeting IDs, and passcodes for the three meeting rooms. If Zoom is installed on your computer, you can enter any hybrid class by clicking on the appropriate link:

### **AUDITORIUM**

**Meeting ID: 861 6851 3691**

**Passcode: 252525**

### **ROOM 15-17**

**Meeting ID: 886 0175 9047**

**Passcode: 252525**

### **ROOM 27**

**Meeting ID: 872 5172 0128**

**Passcode: 252525**

Alternatively, you can enter a class using your browser by going to <https://zoom.us/join> and typing in the Meeting ID for the room of your class along with the passcode. Also, you can attend classes via phone by dialing 1-929-205-6099. You will be asked for the Meeting ID and possibly the passcode.

**NOTE:** All classes are conducted at 25 Broadway and are listed as either Hybrid or In-person only. Hybrid classes are available to members attending at 25 Broadway and to members attending from home via Zoom. In-person only classes are presented solely at 25 Broadway with no Zoom option.

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**MONDAY, DEC 2 @ 10:30 AM – NOON**

**Course:** **ROCK AND ROOTS ALBUMS**  
**Album:** “Skindiver” by Nona Hendryx (1989)  
**Presenters:** Steve Koenig, Wayne Cotter  
**Room:** Auditorium  
**Format:** Hybrid  
**Coordinators:** **Steve Koenig**, Wayne Cotter  
**Tech Support:** **Victor Brener**, Michael Wellner

Released at the same time as Gary Numan’s electro-rock masterpiece *Cars*, and also described by Discogs.com under the rubric “synth-pop,” Nona Hendryx’s *Skindiver* could also be described as a dystopian and perhaps feminist take on the musical and lyrical future. Pitchfork.com says it “swells in with electronic patterns of flutes and drums that paddle and struggle-like feet against the tide.”

First attaining fame as a member of the soul trio Labelle (“Lady Marmalade”), Nona Hendryx later “heard the sound of a new world, one in which technology mediates tenderness. Modern electronics and ancient drums and the timeless demand to love directly, and to be loved in return, have their place here. *Skindiver* is a Black queer epic on a human scale.”

**Course:** **STAR-CROSSED LOVERS**  
**Subject:** Romeo and Juliet in Opera  
**Presenters:** Frieda Lipp, Mary Beth Yakoubian  
**Room:** 15-17  
**Format:** Hybrid  
**Coordinators:** **Mary Beth Yakoubian**, Peter Dichter  
**Tech Support:** **Felix Pina**, Ruth Ward

More than 20 operas have been based on Romeo and Juliet. The two most popular are Vincenzo Bellini and Charles Gounod.

Frieda will review Gounod's opera “Romeo et Juliette” and show several segments from the 2005 Metropolitan Opera production. Anna Netrebko is Juliette and Roberto Alagna is Romeo. This stellar production by the Belgian stage and opera director Guy Joosten is lamentably the only American production by Joosten who has otherwise worked extensively the opera houses throughout Europe.

Mary Beth will introduce Bellini’s *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*, a classic example of Bel Canto opera. You will leave humming the gorgeous melodies of *Romeo and Giulietta*.

**MONDAY, DEC 2 @ 12:10 -12:50 PM**

**Course:** LUNCHTIME ACTIVITY  
**Subject:** Smart Phone Photography  
**Presenter:** Tamara Weinberg, Frank Montaturo  
**Room:** 15-17  
**Format:** In-Person Only  
**Coordinators:** Sheryl Harawitz, Andrea Irvine  
**Tech Support:** Sheryl Harawitz

Come join Tamara and Frank in a conversation about photography...specifically about the use of your Smartphone in taking interesting photos. Our first session will cover some tips and tricks for cellphone photography, although on an ongoing basis this is not intended to be a "how to" class. Hopefully, those among us with more expertise will share their knowledge. We will view one another's images...respond thoughtfully...suggest fun assignments for future meetings. As always, bring your lunch.

**MONDAY, DEC 2 @ 1:00 – 2:30 PM**

**Course:** ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE: A BRAVE NEW WORLD?  
**Subject:** AI and Games  
**Presenter:** Steve Allen  
**Room:** Auditorium  
**Format:** Hybrid (To be Recorded)  
**Coordinators:** Wayne Cotter, Leslie Goldman, Michael Wellner  
**Tech Support:** Michael Wellner, Pete Weis

Starting in the 1950s when powerful computers were first developed, there has been a strong interest in trying to get computers to play non-physical games, such as checkers, backgammon, chess, and poker. This was both intellectually challenging and a good benchmark for advances in computational theory and technology. Major AI breakthroughs in the past decade have produced programs that can consistently win against world champions in chess, Go, and poker among other games.

This talk will look at the major intellectual advances behind these breakthroughs, the impact they have had upon the game playing communities, and the potential for applications to scientific progress. For example, Demis Hassibis, an AI researcher behind the most advanced chess and Go programs, just shared the 2024 Nobel Prize in Chemistry for research that directly grew out of his work on games.

**Course:** **THE PORTRAIT OF A LADY (by Henry James)**  
**Subject:** Final Reflections  
**Presenter:** Patricia Geehr  
**Room:** 27  
**Format:** In-Person Only  
**Coordinators:** **Patricia Geehr**, Sheryl Harawitz, Susan Keohane  
**Tech Support:** Sheryl Harawitz, Steven Chicoine

As we conclude *The Portrait of a Lady*, we reflect on Isabel Archer's journey—her ideals, choices, and sacrifices. The novel's ending leaves much to ponder: was Isabel's decision a surprise? Could she have chosen differently? We'll discuss whether the conclusion satisfies, frustrates, or deepens our understanding of Isabel's character. Join us as we explore what might lie ahead for Isabel and consider the power of her final decisions in shaping this classic tale of identity and agency.

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### **TUESDAY, DEC 3 @ 10:30 AM – NOON**

**Course:** **SUPREME COURT**  
**Subject:** The Role of the Supreme Court --- As Envisioned by the Founding Fathers, and After the Recent Election  
**Presenters:** Bob Gottfried, Sandra Abramson, Bob Belfort, Babette Ceccotti, Sandy Kessler, Stu Parker and Ken Sasmor  
**Room:** Auditorium  
**Format:** **Hybrid (To be Recorded)**  
**Coordinators:** **Michael Wellner**, Bob Gottfried  
**Tech Support:** **Victor Brener**, Michael Wellner

We invite you to join us for what is sure to be one of the more interesting and relevant Supreme Court classes of this semester. Led by Bob Gottfried, the presenters noted above will lead a panel discussion on the likely role of the Court in light of the Republican sweep in the recent election, and its likely effect on all of us. We promise a fascinating and important class.

**Course:** **NEW AND CLASSIC ESSAYS**  
**Subject:** The Wild World of Music by Burkhard Bilger  
**Facilitator:** Larry Shapiro  
**Room:** 27  
**Format:** In-Person Only  
**Coordinators:** **Steve Allen**, Martha Drezin, Ellie Schaffer, Larry Shapiro  
**Tech Support:** **Wayne Cotter**

What makes music music? Does the answer lie in how sound affects the brain? Who better to answer this question than a music-loving professor of neurology who leads a secret double life as a composer and musician? And if the research includes training elephants to play in an orchestra, the ideal essayist to cover all dimensions of the story is Burkhardt Bilger.

**TUESDAY, DEC 3 @ 12:10 -12:50 PM**

**Noon Meeting:** Scholarships for CCNY/CWE students.  
**Coordinators:** **Elaine Martin**, Michael Wellner

In an effort to answer the many questions that have come up about these scholarships, Dean Mercado and Dee Dee Mozeleski, the head of all of CCNY's fund raising efforts. This is designed to be an information and question-and-answer session, with the objective of increasing the number of scholarships for CWE students.

Please join us; no commitments required. Help us brainstorm our way to enabling us to give even more scholarship funding to worthy CWE students.

**TUESDAY, DEC 3 @ 1:00 – 2:30 PM**

**Course:** **HISTORY OF NEW YORK CITY**  
**Subject:** Class Canceled  
**Format:** **Hybrid (To be Recorded)**  
**Coordinators:** **Ilene Winkler**, Susannah Falk-Lewis, Penelope Pi-Sunyer, Michael Wellner

Class is canceled

**Course:** **FLAWED GREATNESS OF THOMAS JEFFERSON**  
**Subject:** Friendship Between Political Adversaries and Assessing Jefferson's Legacy  
**Presenter:** Sandy Kessler  
**Room:** 15-17  
**Format:** In-Person Only  
**Coordinators:** **Sandy Kessler**, Andrea Irvine  
**Tech Support:** **Steve Chicoine**

In our final class, we will consider the remarkable friendship between Thomas Jefferson and John Adams in order to assess the prospects for healing the great political divide that exists in the United States today. We will also address the following question in order to assess Jefferson's legacy: As we approach the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, what parts of Thomas Jefferson's legacy do you think have enriched the political health of our country and what parts have diminished it?

**Course:** **CREATIVE WRITING WORKSHOP**  
**Subject:** Using Vivid Words to Improve Our Writing  
**Presenter:** Judy Hampson  
**Room:** 19  
**Format:** In-Person Only (**Note: This class ends at 3:00 p.m.**)  
**Coordinators:** **Helen Saffran**, Judy Hampson, Donna Ramer  
**Tech Support:** None Assigned

In this class we will begin with a 10-minute writing response to a prompt, which you can choose to share with the group or not. We'll review our earlier writing and look at how we used vivid words to extend a descriptive piece.

We'll continue experimenting with creating poems from a piece of prose. You may bring in writing you have done at home in any genre, in poetry or prose, and the group will offer constructive responses to it. Writing that is read in class should be under 750 words, but longer pieces can be read over consecutive classes. Please bring in 14 copies of at-home writing to share with the class. A suggested topic: *Describe a real or imaginary person and give them unusual characteristics.*

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**WEDNESDAY, DEC 4 @ 10:30 AM – NOON**

**Course:** **POWER: THE GLORY OF IT**  
**Subject:** Monarchies - The Power of Sovereign  
**Presenter:** Paul Adler  
**Room:** Room 15-17  
**Format:** In-Person Only  
**Coordinators:** **Andrea Irvine**, David Bartash, Marion Schultheis  
**Tech Support:** **Tamara Weinberg**, Ellen Shapiro

We'll take a look at a variety of monarchs from various cultures through history. Some may be familiar to you, and some may not. The projection of power, the grandeur, and the pomp. From the 13th century King Mansa Musa of the Mali Empire, who was reputed to be the wealthiest person in history, to present day modern head of state, Albert II of

Monaco, and quite a few more in between. A good dose of history, and perhaps a bit of fun too.

**Course:** **SHAKESPEARE: THE TEMPEST**  
**Room:** 27  
**Format:** Hybrid  
**Coordinators:** **Roy Clary**, Jim Brook, Ellie Schaffer  
**Tech Support:** **Ellie Schaffer**, Bob Reiss

The class will:

1. Read aloud the end of the play beginning with Act 5, scene 1, line 310.
2. Discuss Prospero's power as both a magician and artist, as well as other aspects of the play.
3. See Acts 3, 4, and 5 as performed at the Stratford Shakespeare Festival in 2010 with Christopher Plummer as Prospero

**WEDNESDAY, DEC 4 @ 12:10 – 12:50 PM**

**Course:** **DÉJEUNER FRANÇAIS**  
**Presenter:** Ruth Ward  
**Room:** 19  
**Format:** In-Person Only  
**Coordinators:** **Ruth Ward**, Donna Basile

### **Josephine Baker**

Qui était cette danseuse en jupe banane? Après sa carrière dans le show business, elle est devenue une résistante au nazisme en France et une activiste pour la liberté sociale et éducative en Amérique du Nord. De sa naissance dans le Missouri en 1906 à sa mort en France en 1975, sa vie s'est étendue à travers deux guerres mondiales en Europe aussi bien que le mouvement pour les droits civiques aux États-Unis.

Who was this dancer in a banana skirt? After her show business career, she became a resister against Nazism in France and an activist for social and educational freedom in North America. From her birth in Missouri in 1906 to her death in France in 1975, her life spanned two world wars in Europe as well as the civil rights movement in the United States.

**WEDNESDAY, DEC 4 @ 1:00 – 2:30 PM**

**Course:** **CINEMA QUEST: CURRENT & CLASSIC**  
**Films :** 1. Ezra (Gail Spitalnik)  
2. Conclave (Len Lavitt)  
3. Vertigo (Sol Makon)  
**Room:** Auditorium  
**Format:** **Hybrid (To be Recorded)**  
**Coordinators:** **Howard Salik**, Marian Friedmann, Vince Grosso  
**Tech Support:** **Michael Wellner**, Bob Reiss

Join us in the auditorium on December 4, 2024, for Cinema Quest Current and Classics. We'll review and discuss three great films: two current hits and one classic, all with Rotten Tomatoes ratings of over 90%.

First, Gail Spitalnik will introduce a heartfelt film about a stand-up comedian balancing co-parenting his autistic son, **Ezra**, while living with his father. It's a touching story about family and personal dreams (streaming on Prime, Apple, and Fandango).

Next, Len Lavitt will take us into the thrilling world of the Vatican in **Conclave**, which explores the intense process of selecting a Pope. This film is expected to make a splash during awards season (in theaters only).

Finally, Sol Makon will introduce us to the classic **Vertigo**, at the top of the American Film Institute's list of the best films ever. It's a suspenseful story about an SFPD officer hauntingly pursuing the double of his deceased wife (streaming on Prime, Fandango).

Don't miss this exciting afternoon of film!

**Course:** **HEALTH AND MEDICINE**  
**Subject:** Mold Contamination--The Bad, the Ugly, and the Harmful  
**Presenter** Adrienne Sprouse  
**Room:** 15-17  
**Format:** Hybrid  
**Coordinators:** **Karen Cullen**, Bob Gottfried, Donna Ramer  
**Tech Support:** **Pete Weis**, Tamara Weinberg

Mold contamination is common after Super Storms but can also occur when less severe causes of indoor water intrusion occur. Severe illness can develop and persist if mold is not identified and properly remediated. In this class we will discuss methods to diagnose mold-related illnesses and consider options for remediating buildings with mold contamination.

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## THURSDAY, DEC 5 @ 10:30 AM – NOON

**Course:** **SCIENCE AND SCIENTISTS**  
**Subject:** The Men and Women who Defined our Universe  
**Presenter:** Michael Hamburg  
**Room:** 15-17  
**Format:** Hybrid  
**Coordinators:** **Jim Brook**, Steve Allen, Judy Weis  
**Tech Support:** **Pete Weis**, Konstantin Dolgitser

Ever since the dawn of humanity, we have been trying to define our place in the universe and what it all means. Throughout history how we view the sky, and the universe has always affected how we shaped our societies right here on Earth. From the story-filled mythologies of our supernatural creations to the invisible waves and particles of cutting-edge astrophysics, we must salute the men and women who throughout our history braved skepticism, scorn, and even personal peril to advance our understanding of the universe. It has generally always been a struggle to get support for scientific knowledge from the powers that be. Humanity is truly a conservative animal whether because of superstition, political self-serving, or lack of education. Pursuing science is not an easy task, but today we see possibilities undreamed of just a few generations ago. We stand a decent chance of finding answers only if we wholeheartedly support those who have chosen to dedicate their lives to opening doors. Only time will tell.

This presentation will acquaint you with the astronomers and physicists who have worked towards awareness and knowledge of our Universe. You will recognize some and become more familiar with others. In my research I also have become more informed about the importance women have played and continue to in the advancement of the understanding of the Universe. I welcome questions and comments at the end of the program.

**Course:** **QUESTER'S CHOICE**  
**Subject:** Evolution of Black Gospel Music  
**Presenter:** Mary Beth Yakoubian  
**Room:** Auditorium  
**Format:** Hybrid  
**Coordinators:** **Bob Gottfried**, Vince Grosso, Mary Beth Yakoubian  
**Tech Support:** **Steve Chicoine**

From its roots in the 18<sup>th</sup> century as an expression of enslaved people in the deep south, gospel music has grown into an international phenomenon. Today in the U.S., gospel recordings continue to outsell jazz and classical combined. In this class, you will go on a musical journey that highlights the beginning of gospel through its evolution to the present and its influence on current church culture.

**Course:** **OLD TESTAMENT AS LITERATURE & IN THE ARTS**  
**Subject:** King David and His Third Son, Solomon  
**Presenter:** Pete Weis  
**Room:** 27  
**Format:** In-Person Only  
**Coordinators:** **Joyce Hinote**, Peter Dichter, Jamie Sykes  
**Tech Support:** **Ilene Winkler**

Solomon, one of Bathsheba's five children with David, became David's successor because son number one, Absalom, had been killed in battle and son number two, Adonijah, was irresponsible. Solomon became known for his wisdom, for his love of poetry, and for his 300 wives and 700 concubines. All of this – David's mourning for Absalom, his obsession for Bathsheba, Solomon's anointment and subsequent accomplishments are well-represented in art and in music. The examples you will see and hear cover several centuries of art and music – Renaissance to contemporary. All are based on *Second Samuel*, *First Kings*, and *The Song of Songs*.

**THURSDAY, DEC 5 @ 1:00 – 2:30 PM**

**Course:** **WORLD OF RELIGION**  
**Subject:** Hinduism and Sikhism  
**Presenter:** Ruth Ward, Donna Basile  
**Room:** 27  
**Format:** Hybrid  
**Coordinators:** **Ruth Ward**, Bob Gottfried  
**Tech Support:** **Ruth Ward**

Hinduism, the world's third-largest religion after Christianity and Islam, originated in the Indus River Valley of India. It has approximately 1.4 billion followers, which is around 15% of the global population. Many scholars consider it to be the world's oldest religion, with complete scriptural texts dating back 3,000 years and with diverse roots and customs dating back more than 4,000 years.

Sikhism is a religion and philosophy that originated in the Punjab region of India around the end of the 15th century CE. It is one of the most recently founded major religions and among the largest in the world with about 25 to 30 million adherents. Sikhs believe in the one creator and the divine unity and equality of all humankind. Come and find out how today's Hindus and Sikhs practice their deeply rooted beliefs.

**Course:** **CONTEMPORARY SHORT STORIES**  
**Stories:** 1. Kaho (Anita Hunter)  
2. A Double-Edged Inheritance (Mary Buchwald)  
**Room:** 15-17  
**Format:** Hybrid  
**Coordinators:** **Nancy Richardson**, Mary Buchwald, Frieda Lipp  
**Tech Support:** **Felix Pina**

**Stories to read:**

**1.- “Kaho” by Haruki Murakami.** Presented by Anita Hunter

Japanese author **Haruki Murakami’s** stories are often full of surprises; “*Kaho*” is no exception. “I’ve dated all kinds of women in my life, but I’ve never seen one as ugly as you,” the man says. And so, begins the story.

**2.-“A Double-Edged Inheritance” by Hannah Giorgis.** Presented by Mary *Buchwald*

**Hannah Giorgis**, an Ethiopian American, is a staff writer at the *Atlantic* who covers culture. ‘*Double-Edged Inheritance*’ was first published in *Addis-Ababa Noir*, a 2020 anthology of crime noir short stories. There are startling consequences when family history is kept secret. It was shortlisted in The Caine Prize for African Writing, 2022.

Links for the two stories have been sent separately to all Questers via QuestBusiness email. A few printed copies of the stories will be available in the A-week box in the lunchroom.

Any questions, please email Nancy at [nancyrye9@gmail.com](mailto:nancyrye9@gmail.com).

**Course:** **ACTING WORKSHOP II**  
**Room:** Auditorium  
**Format:** In-Person Only  
**Coordinators:** **Roy Clary**, Dena Kerren  
**Tech Support:** None Assigned

Class members will present the monologues they have been working on.

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## CULTUREQUEST

### Belle da Costa Greene: A Librarian's Legacy

**Friday December 6, 3:00 PM**  
**The Morgan Library**  
**Docent led tour**

To mark the 2024 centenary of its life as a public institution, the Morgan Library & Museum presents a major exhibition devoted to the life and career of its inaugural **director, Belle da Costa Greene** (1879–1950). Widely recognized as an authority on illuminated manuscripts and deeply respected as a cultural heritage executive, Greene was one of the most prominent librarians in American history.

Greene is well known for the instrumental role she played in building the exceptional collection of rare books and manuscripts formed by American financier J. Pierpont Morgan, who hired her as his personal librarian in 1905. After Morgan's death in 1913, Greene continued as the librarian of his son and heir, J.P. Morgan Jr., who would transform his father's Library into a public institution in 1924. But her career as director of what was then known as the Pierpont Morgan Library—a leadership role she held for twenty-four years—is less well understood, as are aspects of her education, private collecting, and dense social and professional networks.

The exhibition traces Greene's storied life, from her roots in a predominantly Black community in Washington, D.C., to her distinguished career at the helm of one of the world's great research libraries.

- **When:** Friday, December 6<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 PM
- **Where:** Morgan Library and Museum. Please arrive no later than 2:45 PM
- **Cost:** \$15.00. Limited to 20 participants.

**TO RESERVE:** Contact Estelle Selzer at [Eselzer19@gmail.com](mailto:Eselzer19@gmail.com) ASAP to secure a reservation. Put Morgan Library Tour in the subject. Your email will be acknowledged. Please leave your check made out to Quest Lifelong Learning in the Culture Quest mailbox in the Office no later than 2:30 PM November 20<sup>th</sup>. We will have a waitlist.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Please sign up only if you intend to come. Anyone who doesn't show or cancel will be placed on "future waitlist only" when they sign up to attend future CultureQuest events. Thank you for your understanding.

## **HOLIDAY CULTUREQUEST EVENT**

### **Aida Final Dress Rehearsal**

**Friday, December 27, 10:30 AM – 1:45 PM  
Metropolitan Opera House**

Giuseppe Verdi's *Aida* returns to the Metropolitan Opera this season with a new production starring Soprano Angel Blue in her long-awaited Met role debut as the Ethiopian princess torn between love and country. The opera takes place in ancient Egypt in the time of the pharaohs. Michael Mayer's spectacular new staging brings audiences inside the towering pyramids and gilded tombs of ancient Egypt with intricate projections and dazzling animations.

- **When:** Friday, December 27<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 AM
- **Where:** Metropolitan Opera. Please arrive no later than 10:00 AM
- **Cost:** Free. Limited to 50 participants.

**TO RESERVE:** Contact Estelle Selzer at [Eselzer19@gmail.com](mailto:Eselzer19@gmail.com) ASAP to secure a reservation. Put Aida Rehearsal in the subject. Your email will be acknowledged. We will have a waitlist.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Please sign up only if you intend to come. Anyone who doesn't show or cancel will be placed on "future waitlist only" when they sign up to attend future CultureQuest events. Thank you for your understanding.

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