

**Food for Thought – A Potpourri**  
**Tuesdays, April 6, 13, 20, 27, May 4**  
**10 - 11:30 a.m.**

This course features presentations on a different subject each week.

Week 1. Self-published authors panel discussion. Local authors, **Michael Davi, Tom Willemain, Janine Cammarata, Paul O'Brien, and Jessika Hazelton**, will describe their journey to self-publishing and then engage us in an interactive panel discussion. Maybe there is a self-published book in your future.

Week 2. UCALL member **Rich Alben** will present, “The Righteous Mind – Why Good People are Divided by Politics and Religion,” based on the book by Jonathan Haight.

Week 3. “Tales of the Mohawk” by **Bob Cudmore**. Bob is a popular local radio commentator and a student of our rich Mohawk Valley history.

Week 4. “The Origin and Extinction of Species” by **George Shaw**, professor emeritus of geology, Union College.

Week 5. “The Transfinder Story” by **Antonio Civitella**, CEO of Transfinder Corporation. Tony has an inspirational and informative tale to tell about how he started our Schenectady-based Transfinder Corporation.

**Coordinators: Jim Burns, Geri Mulligan, Paul O'Brien**

**Our Criminal Justice System: Where Are We Now, and Can We Do Better?**

**Tuesdays, April 6, 13, 20, 27, May 4**

**1 - 2:30 p.m.**

Critical elements of our system of criminal justice are in need of examination. Law enforcement is not always even handed. Prisons are overcrowded, with many incarcerated for nonviolent crimes. There is public distrust among some segments of society. What steps are being taken to address these issues?

Week 1. Chief **Eric Clifford** of the Schenectady Police Department will discuss reforms in police training, body cameras, community policing, as well as gender and minority issues on the force.

Week 2: **Tom Andriola** and **Trista Deame** of the NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services will discuss the crime cycle, youth, and the system: How can we deal with young offenders to help them avoid a life of crime? Topics will include sentencing reform, re-thinking mandatory minimums, the parole-rate discrepancy between white & non-white inmates, and should “three strikes” be called out?

Week 3. Albany County District Attorney **David Soares** and New York State Sheriffs’ Association Executive Director **Peter Kehoe** will present differing views on the legalization of drugs, and will discuss how the drug industry factors in.

Week 4. **Cheryl Vallee**, executive director of Schenectady’s Center for Community Justice, and **Alice Rudnick**, principal court analyst at the New York State Unified Court System, will discuss the concepts of restorative justice, community and societal resolution of ongoing issues, and alternative dispute resolution.

Week 5: **Jennifer Peterson**, Deputy Warden, Cheshire CT Correctional Facility and **Matt Lowen** of the Vera Institute will discuss Connecticut’s T.R.U.E. Program of intensive rehabilitation of young offenders. They will cover the program’s philosophical roots and how it has worked in practice.

**Coordinator: Harry Willis**

**Unsung Heroes of the Pandemic...Organizations that have made a difference**

**Wednesdays, April 7, 14, 21, 28, May 5**

**10 – 11:30 a.m.**

The current pandemic has made a difference in every life in our country and, indeed, most of the world. But as many of us have had the privilege of hunkering down and watching the developments from the safety of our homes, many New York organizations and their members have been on the front lines, ensuring that society continues to operate at some level.

In this course we will explore organizations that perhaps did not get the headlines during the darkest days, but nonetheless did heroic work to ensure our safety and well-being as well as that of the members they serve. It is relatively simple for the media and we ourselves to focus on the myriad negative aspects of this pandemic. But to say that there are many more stories of the thousands of citizens that are the heroes among us is a deep understatement. During this course, we will listen to the top leaders of these organizations. They will tell us not only about the wonderful work their members have done, but how the organizations themselves helped through communication, education and intervention to make it possible for needed services to be delivered by those very members to a public in crisis. Organizations represented during this five-week course will be:

Week 1. **James Calvin**, Executive Director, New York Association of Convenience Stores

Week 2. **Natasha Perincka**, Executive Director, The Food Pantries

Week 3. **Robert Schneider**, Executive Director, New York School Boards Association

Week 4. **Mark Eagan**, Executive Director, Capital Region Chamber of Commerce

Week 5. **Mike Lanotte**, Executive Director, New York State Funeral Directors Association

**Coordinator: Bonnie McCullough**

**From Pre-Classical to Classical Music (1720-1800)**

**Wednesdays, April 7, 14, 21, 28, May 5**

**1 – 2:30 p.m.**

In music, Bach and Handel have been considered the predecessors of Classical music. In the last three decades, musicologists have begun to question this ancestry. They find the beginnings of the Classical period not with J.S. Bach and his generation, but his sons, especially J.C. Bach and CPE Bach. They draw the origins of the Classical period to mostly Italian sources, but also include French influences. Of the many Italian composers, we will present pieces by G. B. Pergolesi and Niccolò Jommelli. Early on in his career, Christoph W. Gluck wrote mostly Italian music for the Court in Vienna. Later he became a very prominent figure of the French style. As a result, he wrote his most famous work, *Orfeo ed Euridice*, in Italian style for Vienna and reworked it to a French version, *Orphée et Eurydice*, for Paris. In the Italian version Orpheus was sung by a castrato, while for the Paris version a high tenor was used. Using Orpheus and other works of Gluck we can present the major differences between the Italian and French style. From Gluck we move to Josef Haydn, the father of the symphony and the string quartet. Haydn is famous for his work at Esterhazy. When he retired a new world opened up for him and he wrote stunning symphonies and oratorios late in his life. We will sample his music and explore his idiosyncrasies and why he always was such a beloved composer. W. A. Mozart was a generation younger than Haydn and died before him. Many of his works possess a mystic quality, a depth that approaches the unspeakable and unknowable. Whether it is one of his famous operas, his symphonies, his instrumental concerts, his sacred works or his chamber music, Mozart never fails to astound. We will select some known, but also less often performed masterpieces, such as the *Gran Partita K. 361* to get to understand Mozart's music.

Week 1: Italians and Bach sons

Week 2: Gluck and the French

Week 3: Haydn

Week 4: Haydn and Mozart

Week 5: Mozart

**Coordinator: Jim Comly**

**Coming to Terms with American Capitalism by Brad Lewis**

**Thursdays, April 8, 15, 22, 29, May 6**

**10 – 11:30 a.m.**

Support of and challenges to American capitalism are not new, but a combination of circumstances has arguably brought society to more strident, contrasting opinions on it from a wide swath of our population than since the 1930s. This course will examine key reasons for this, analyze the positions of some of the self-defined critics and defenders of American capitalism, and provide an analysis of key policy issues going forward.

**Week 1: The roots of modern American capitalism and its critics: a brief summary of how we got here.** After a brief summary of former philosophers ranging from the Stoics and Epicureans to Hobbes and Locke, the talk will focus on the practical capitalists in the 13 colonies and later the U.S. and two well-known authors on opposite sides—Ayn Rand and Karl Marx.

**Week 2: Deirdre McCloskey’s magnum opus on capitalism and the Great Enrichment.** Prof. McCloskey has authored a massive trilogy on “Bourgeois Virtues”—an unabashed defense of capitalism that starts with the question of why, before about 1800, even the most successful empires did not have mass prosperity that has spread to most of the world in our era—and indeed, mostly since the 1930s.

**Week 3: Have capitalism and slavery been joined at the hip in the U.S.? A look at the 1619 project.** A guest presenter will identify what he thinks are some very useful bull’s-eyes and some clear misses that muddy the water and sometimes draw the wrong conclusion.

**Week 4: Does an unusually successful system of capitalism tend to shut itself down?** Several famous commentators have strongly supported capitalism but concluded that its success either would, or might, lead to its shutdown. This talk will pay particular attention to whether unusually innovative and successful large organizations enabled by capitalism tend to do this, for one or another mechanism, with a comment on some recent research.

**Week 5: Why mass society with strong growth inherently requires compromises—and which ones should be made now?** We are in a pandemic that has emphasized both the power and problems of public and private health, advanced and long-used technology, challenges that have no or few precedents, and our own complexity as humans. This lecture will propose three suggestions on what we should and should not do.

**Coordinator: Mike Collins**

**Women Writers: Building an American Literary Tradition**  
**Thursdays, April 8, 15, 22, 29, May 6**  
**1 – 3 p.m.**

If you Google “famous American writers,” the first names that appear are Hemingway, Poe, Twain, Fitzgerald, Irving, Faulkner, Melville and Hawthorne. While this is a decidedly unscientific and unscholarly approach to literary study, it is telling that not a single woman writer tops the list. Yet without women writers and readers there may never have been an American literature. **Billie Bennett Franchini, Ph.D.** (Director of the Institute for Teaching, Learning and Academic Leadership at the University at Albany) will lead a discussion of works written by American women between the mid-19th and mid-20th centuries, with an eye toward making sense of the development of both American literature and women’s literary tradition. We will consider how women writers helped shape, stretch and question the American literary canon. We will put texts in conversation with each other, examining cultural contexts and writers’ treatment of issues including marriage, family, domesticity, sexuality, racial identity and the development of women’s voices. Participants should read and be prepared to discuss the following:

Week 1: *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte

Week 2: *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* by Harriet Jacobs

Week 3: *Summer* by Edith Wharton

Week 4: *Passing* by Nella Larsen

Week 5: *Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston

In order to allow for an active discussion, registration will be limited to 25 UCALL members.

**Coordinators: Jenny Overeynder and Linda Doyle**

**NASA's Search For Life Beyond The Earth**  
**Mondays, April 19, 26, May 3**  
**1 – 2:30 p.m.**

**Speaker: John W. Delano, Ph.D.**

Dr. John Delano, retired SUNY Albany Professor of the Department of Atmospheric and Environmental Sciences, will discuss the universe, the emergence of life on Earth, and the search for life within our Solar System and beyond.

**Week 1:** An introduction to the topic that contains basic information about the Universe, including its age and elemental abundances. Definition of life. Naturally occurring complex organic molecules that may have provided the building blocks for carbon-based life on Earth and elsewhere. Survey of data from objects in our Solar System (Mars, Europa, Enceladus, Titan) that have the potential for life, either in the present or in the past.

**Week 2:** Observational methods for detecting planets orbiting other stars. Concepts used to determine the characteristics of those planets bearing on their potential for harboring life (e.g., orbits, masses, diameters, and estimates of surface temperature). The strengths and limitations inherent in the concept of a Habitable Zone (aka Goldilocks Zone) will be discussed.

**Week 3:** Synthesis of data and concepts that have been used to identify specific planets with the highest potential for having life. Descriptions of upcoming NASA and European Space Agency (ESA) missions (i.e., Mars 2020 rover; James Webb Space Telescope) that are designed to further the search for life beyond the Earth.

**Coordinator: Jim Comly**