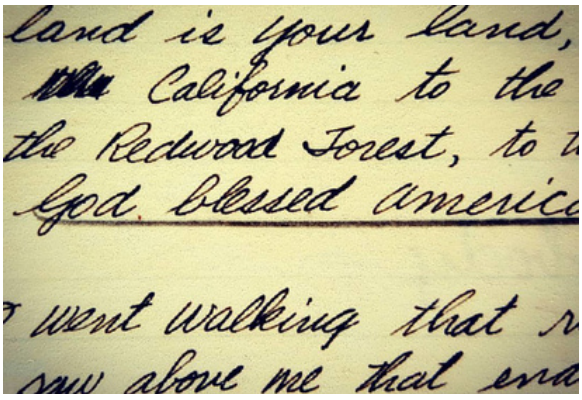
Osher Online™

A program of the Osher National Resource Center
at Northwestern University School of Professional Studies

WINTER2027

Folk Singers, the FBI, and the Second Red Scare

Some of the most prominent folk singers of the 20th century, including Woody Guthrie, Sis Cunningham, Pete Seeger, and Burl Ives, were also political activists with ties to the American Communist Party. As a result, the FBI, along with other government and right-wing organizations, kept meticulous files on them and worked to push them out of the cultural realm. Through music, video, news clippings, and records from Freedom of Information Act filings, we will explore these artists' lives and the systematic ways they were subjected to government surveillance and suppression.



Click here to view course promo video

YOUR INSTRUCTOR: Aaron Leonard



Aaron Leonard is an author and American historian whose writing focuses on the interplay of radicalism and governmental repression in the 20th century. Among his books are *Heavy Radicals, The Folk Singers and the Bureau, and Menace of Our Time: The Long War on American Communism*. Leonard has a BA in Social Sciences and History, magna cum laude, from New York University.

THURSDAYS, JANUARY 21 THROUGH FEBRUARY 25

8amPT | 9amMT | 10amCT | 11amET

Each live session is 90 minutes

- Thursday, January 21
- Thursday, January 28
- Thursday, February 4
- Thursday, February 11
- Thursday, February 18
- Thursday, February 25

To register, please contact your local Osher Institute.