



Summer Series

May 27–August 12, 2026
\$125 per person for all 12 lectures

We have an exciting program in store with both in-person and livestreamed lectures, open to both Osher members and non-Osher members.

Towson.edu/OsherRegistration

Osher at Towson University—In-Person lectures

The schedule of in-person lectures will be held in the **College of Liberal Arts (CLA) at Towson University**. Parking in the adjacent Towsontown Garage is included. Registrants will receive directions and parking information before the start of the Summer Series. Each lecture will be approximately 90 minutes long, including Q & A.

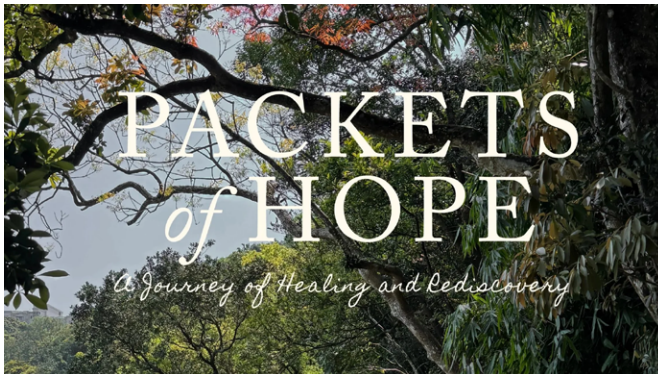
TOPIC	SPEAKER	DATE	TIME
107 Days at Sea: The Journey That Changed Everything	Jill Chalsty	Wednesday, May 27	10 a.m.
Freud and Gandhi	Ed Fotheringill	Wednesday, June 3	10 a.m.
The Politics of Faith	Saima Sitwat	Wednesday, June 10	10 a.m.
Odysseus and the Ladies: A Hero is Defined	Jacqueline Hedberg	Wednesday, June 17	10 a.m.
Five Generations, Zero Rulebook	Shernette Grant	Wednesday, June 24	10 a.m.
The 21 st Century Supreme Court and Threats to Democracy	Jonathan Hensley	Wednesday, July 1	10 a.m.

Osher at Dartmouth College—Livestreaming at TU and online

To round out the summer program, we will be offering a series of lectures produced by the **Osher at Dartmouth College** program with two ways to participate. We will livestream each lecture in the College of Liberal Arts (CLA) at Towson University to view together, allowing for discussion among the group. We will also provide lecture links for participants who wish to watch on their own. Unless otherwise stated, the livestreamed lectures will run 9–11:30 a.m. with a short break preceding the Q & A.

TOPIC	SPEAKER	DATE	TIME
SESSION 1: What Can the Declaration of Independence Teach Us About Artificial Intelligence	Brinnae Bent	Wednesday, July 8	9 a.m.
SESSION 2: Can AI Think Like a Doctor?	Adam Rodman	Wednesday, July 15	9 a.m.
SESSION 3: AI: Too Artificial? Too Intelligent? Too Much Energy?	Dan W. Reicher	Wednesday, July 22	9 a.m.
SESSION 4: What Will Be the Economic Impacts of AI?	Patrick Wheeler	Wednesday, July 29	9 a.m.
SESSION 5: Is AI Leading Us Toward a More Dangerous World Disorder?	Michèle Flournoy	Wednesday, August 5	9 a.m.
SESSION 6: How Can We Build Human Morality Into AI?	Walter Sinnott-Armstrong	Wednesday, August 12	9 a.m.–12 p.m.

Osher at Towson University—In-Person lectures



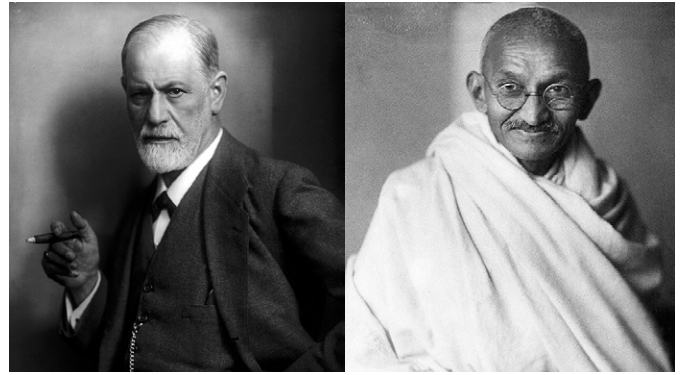
107 Days at Sea: The Journey That Changed Everything

Jill Chalsty

Wednesday, May 27 at 10:00 a.m.

At 63, Jill Chalsty boarded a ship alone, grieving her husband's death and battling cancer. What began as a voyage around the world became far more than a trip. In this lecture, Jill shares the story behind her memoir *Packets of Hope*, inviting participants to travel alongside her through the ports she visited, the people she met, and the reflections that transformed personal adversity into strength and global impact. Jill demonstrates how one person's courage can create ripples that span continents. **Participants are encouraged to read her memoir, available to download for free at www.packetsofhope.com, before the presentation.**

Jill Chalsty, founder of Overcoming Obstacles, has empowered over 180 million young people worldwide through life skills education. Her journey of loss and cancer inspired Packets of Hope, illuminating the power of resilience, love, and service.



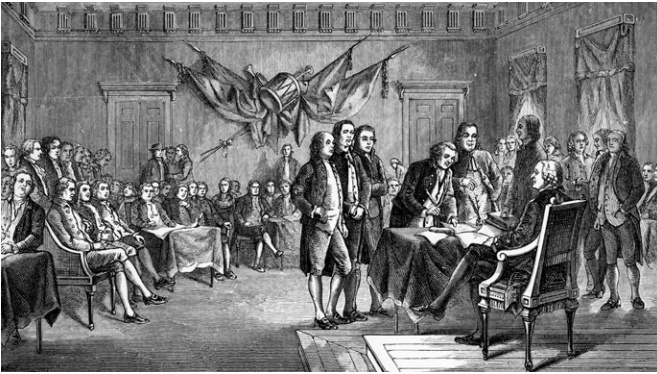
Freud and Gandhi

Ed Fotheringill

Wednesday, June 3 at 10:00 a.m.

Freud and Gandhi. Two historical figures of immense importance. And yet, to mention the two together seems mischievously odd, and somewhat disturbing. After all, it is hard to imagine two more disparate characters. Gandhi was a devout Hindu who lived a life totally dedicated to God. Freud, on the other hand, was an angry atheist. He despised religion in all its forms and felt it was a malicious enemy to mankind. Gandhi was an apostle of peace and non-violence, qualities that Freud wished for in mankind, but sadly saw as impossible. While Gandhi was immortalized as a peace hero, Freud was left to dig the mental trenches to heal a society of its psychological turbulence. Although Freud and Gandhi were to become world famous, there is no evidence that either was aware that the other existed. We can only imagine what a conversation between the two of them may have been like. This lecture will compare and contrast these two giants of intellectual history and conclude something quite astonishing: Freud and Gandhi actually mirrored one another in many respects. Their vision of human nature and motivation in their personal lives were nearly identical.

Edward Fotheringill has taught philosophy at the college level for over 45 years. For many of those years he held the position of senior lecturer of philosophy at both Towson University and Goucher College. For the last ten years of his career, he was professor of philosophy and intellectual history at the Maryland Institute College of Art.



The Politics of Faith

Saima Sitwat

Wednesday, June 10 at 10:00 a.m.

As the United States of America celebrates 250th year of the Declaration of Independence, faith continues to show up in civic life in multiple ways. From the earliest Pilgrims to Thomas Jefferson's copy of Quran and religiously affiliated super PACs backing political candidates, faith has been front and center in American politics both as a unifying and divisive force. Join Saima Sitwat for a story of America through the lens of faith and what it means to be a citizen of a religiously diverse democracy.

Saima Sitwat is an educator, writer, and speaker. She is a native of Karachi, Pakistan and has lived in the United States for the last 23 years. Saima serves as the assistant director of Ecumenical and Interfaith Ministries at Loyola University Maryland. Additionally, she facilitates public programming on race, religion and identity politics. She is also the author of her memoir, American Muslim: An Immigrant's Journey. Saima's writings and multi-media projects can be accessed [through her website](#).



Odysseus and the Ladies: A Hero is Defined

Jacqueline Hedberg

Wednesday, June 17 at 10:00 a.m.

This lecture is simply one person's take on what makes Homer's "Odyssey" still interesting nearly 3,000 years after it was composed. It is such a fascinating poem because of the way Homer uses the women of his story to define what it means to be an epic hero. As the Greek warrior Odysseus faces the tests and trials of his journey back to Ithaca after the Trojan War, we not only meet a number of women but, in knowing them, we come to know Odysseus. He is the sum total of the qualities of all the women in this story. Each of these women represents an attribute which must be acquired for Odysseus to qualify for the title of epic hero. It is the wisdom, practicality, physical attractiveness, authority, propriety, ruthlessness, and cunning that they represent which distinguish him as a special person.

Jacqueline Hedberg taught history in Baltimore County and with the Department of Defense Overseas Dependent Schools in Germany and Japan. Since retiring, she has spearheaded the restoration of an historic graveyard on Hoopers Island, where she was born, and written extensively about her birthplace. She has taught Osher classes about slavery on the Eastern Shore, Reconstruction in Maryland, and Native Americans losing their land. Her research on slavery led her to write Plantations, Slavery & Freedom on Maryland's Eastern Shore published by The History Press in 2019.



Five Generations, Zero Rulebook

Shernette Grant

Wednesday, June 24 at 10:00 a.m.

We are living in a time when five generations can occupy the same family, community, classroom, boardroom, church, or workplace, yet there is no shared rulebook for how to understand one another well. Too often, generational differences are reduced to clichés, frustrations, or shallow stereotypes. This presentation offers something richer by inviting participants to examine how history, culture, economics, technology, and social change shape each generation's values, fears, expectations, and sense of identity. Through reflection and discussion, we will consider not only what divides generations, but also what connects them, along with the role of legacy in what each generation preserves, releases, and passes on.

Shernette Grant, PhD, is a leadership strategist, speaker, and founder of Unorthodox Leadership Consulting & Management Services. With experience spanning education, nonprofit leadership, executive coaching, and organizational development, she helps leaders and organizations better understand how people, systems, and culture shape performance. Known for her practical insight and engaging style, Dr. Grant brings a thoughtful and dynamic perspective to conversations about leadership, change, and human behavior across generations.



The 21st Century Supreme Court and Threats to Democracy

Jonathan Hensley

Wednesday, July 2 at 10:00 a.m.

The United States Supreme Court has often been viewed as a protector of individual liberties and civil rights. However, the Supreme Court of the 21st century has made decisions that weakened democracy. Among other decisions, the court has made it more difficult for Congress to protect voting rights, insulated current and future presidents from accountability, and taken a selective approach to executive power that appears politically driven. Additionally, some of its important recent decisions have been made hastily and without transparency on its emergency docket or shadow docket. This lecture will detail some of the threats to democracy posed by the Supreme Court, and how the court might be reformed to make it an institution that protects the rights of all Americans and strengthens democratic institutions.

Jonathan Hensley, J.D., Ph.D., is an assistant professor of political science at Towson University, where he also serves as a prelaw advisor. Dr. Hensley teaches courses on the American judicial system and its relationship to American politics. His research interests include judicial decision-making and the efforts of organized interest groups to influence the U.S. Supreme Court. Dr. Hensley has also worked as a program manager in the Maryland Judicial College, and practiced law in Tennessee and Virginia.



Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Dartmouth

The Osher at Dartmouth College Summer Lecture Series 2026 is available to Osher at Towson University 2026 Summer Series registrants.

The lectures will meet weekly on Wednesdays, 9–11:30 a.m, unless otherwise noted. Each lecture will be livestreamed and will have a scheduled break before Q & A.

Osher at Towson University participants have two options for participation in these lectures:

1. Join others in the College of Liberal Arts classroom to view the livestreamed lectures and discuss with fellow students.
2. View the livestreamed lectures from home or another location on your own.

The Dartmouth College Summer Lecture Series livestreamed presentations will be recorded and available to view at a later date.

HOW IS ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE TRANSFORMING AMERICA?

This year marks the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, a document drafted during a gathering of delegates from each American colony, who debated principles and ideas related to a new phase of government and self-determination. The Declaration states in its second paragraph, “We hold these truths to be self-evident...”

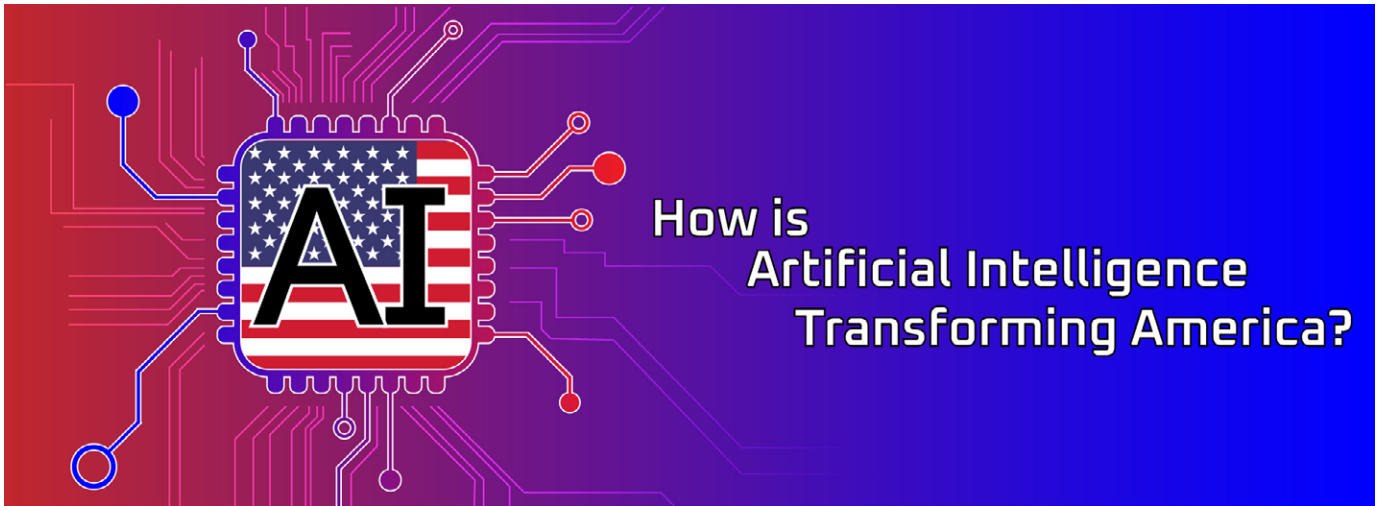
This year is also the 70th anniversary of the 1956 Dartmouth summer research project, in which a small group of scientists gathered to study the conjecture that every aspect of learning or any other feature of intelligence can, in principle, be so precisely described that a machine can be built to simulate it. It was during this conference that the term “Artificial Intelligence” (AI) was first used.

As our nation speeds into a new era of technological advancement, we are struggling with questions about truth and the influence of AI. No longer confined to research labs or Silicon Valley startups, AI has become a ubiquitous partner in our daily lives, summarizing information, generating images and text, supporting scientific breakthroughs, assisting with legal and medical research, and accelerating problem-solving in fields as diverse as climate science, economics, engineering, and the arts. Conversely, the high energy and water demands of its data centers, the fear of job displacement, ethical concerns regarding creative properties, and the potential erosion of privacy through surveillance and information access are issues that generate a sense of unease as this technology embeds itself deeper into our daily lives. Of utmost concern is the fact that AI has also become a tool used in the proliferation of disinformation and “deep fakes,” which can subvert our understanding of reality. What happens when truth is no longer “self-evident?”

AI has the potential to become a practical tool worth understanding, as well as a confounding puzzle when it comes to detecting truth. This year’s Summer Lecture Series will feature presentations by six experts across a wide range of fields, who will provide clarity, context, and confidence to anyone — novice and expert alike — in seeking to understand the benefits and challenges of Artificial Intelligence.

Excited about this year’s series? Enjoy some reading!

Several of this year’s speakers have recommended some titles to help enhance your experience of the series. Visit our [Book Recommendations page](#) to learn about their suggestions!



Osher at Dartmouth College—Livestreaming at TU and online

Topic	Speaker	Date	Time
SESSION 1: What Can the Declaration of Independence Teach Us About Artificial Intelligence? View full description	Brinnae Bent, Executive in Residence in the Engineering and Professional Programs, Pratt School of Engineering at Duke; Director, Duke TRUST Lab	Wednesday, July 8	9 a.m.
SESSION 2: Can AI Think Like a Doctor? View full description	Patrick Wheeler, Executive Director of the Center for Digital Strategies, Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth College	Wednesday, July 15	9 a.m.
SESSION 3: AI: Too Artificial? Too Intelligent? Too Much Energy? View full description	Dan W. Reicher, Senior Scholar, Stanford Doerr School of Sustainability; Senior Fellow, Dartmouth Irving Institute for Energy & Society	Wednesday, July 22	9 a.m.
SESSION 4: What Will Be the Economic Impact of AI? View full description	Patrick Wheeler, Executive Director of the Center for Digital Strategies, Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth College	Wednesday, July 29	9 a.m.
SESSION 5: Is AI Leading Us Toward a More Dangerous World Disorder? View full description	Michèle Flournoy, Co-Founder and Managing Partner, WestExec Advisors; Co-Founder and Chair, Center for a New American Security	Wednesday, August 5	9 a.m.
SESSION 6: How Can We Build Human Morality Into AI? View full description	Walter Sinnott-Armstrong, Chauncey Stillman Distinguished Professor of Practical Ethics, Duke University	Wednesday, August 12	9 a.m.–12 p.m.



Summer Series

The Osher Summer Series starts on May 27 and is open to both Osher members and non-members.

Registration for the Osher 2026 Summer Series is an amazing flat rate price of \$125 per person for all 12 lectures. This price includes all in-person lectures and livestreamed lectures from the Osher at Dartmouth College Summer Lecture Series.

We hope you'll join us this summer!

[Register here](#), or copy and paste this link:

<https://towson.my.site.com/evt/s/osher-event-detail?eventId=a42UJ000000y9I9&cntry=US>