THE PRESIDENTS AND THE JEWS
David Saltzberg

Sessions I
Thursday, 11:00 a.m. (begins September 15)
Fee: $65

Presidents have powerful and complex responsibilities for U.S. residents. But what are the obligations of the presidents to small ethnic and religious groups and how does this relate to their overall missions? In this course we will attempt to answer this question by exploring the historical record of the relationship between the presidents and the American Jewish community. We will begin in revolutionary times and look at the tiny Jewish population and its interactions with George Washington. Next, we will study the evolving community at the time of the Civil War and its difficulties with Presidents Lincoln and Grant. We will then turn to the presidency of F.D.R. and review the intricacies of presidential decision making during the Great Depression and World War II. Finally, our most recent presidents and their impact on the Jewish community will be considered.

Dr. David Saltzberg recently retired from GBMC after practicing gastroenterology for 40 years. In 1992, he received a master’s degree in Jewish Studies from Baltimore Hebrew University. He has lectured extensively to Jewish groups on the intersection of American history, Jewish life, and medicine. Recent topics have included F.D.R. and the Jews, A Modern Perspective on Ritual Circumcision, Understanding the Kaddish Memorial Prayer, and Hank Greenberg and the High Holidays.

MUSLIMS IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD
Saima Sitwat

Session I and II
Monday, 1:00 p.m. (begins September 12)
Fee: $130 ($65 for each session)

This course introduces participants to the Muslims next door. Where did these people come from? Are all Muslims terrorists because it seems that all terrorists are Muslims? In this class, we will explore Islamic vocabulary from Allah-u-Muslims practice their faith in everyday lives. The result will be a nuanced understanding of Muslims and Islamic faith in American society.

Saima Adil Sitwat is a writer and educator based in Baltimore, MD. She writes and teaches about Islam, Muslims, and minorities in the United States of America. Saima has served as the first and only woman president of the Muslim Association of Greater Pittsburgh. She is the author of a recent memoir, “American Muslim: An Immigrant’s Journey.” Her book has been shortlisted for the William Saroyan International Prize for Writing 2022 at the Stanford Libraries and has received an Honorable Mention at the San Francisco Book Festival. Check out Saima’s works on her website: https://saimasitwat.com.
Thank you for being part of the Osher community!

SOCIAL SCIENCES

THE RECONSTRUCTION PERIOD—AMERICA’S FIRST CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT
Robert Baer

Session I and II
Tuesday, 9:30 a.m. (begins September 13)
Fee: $130 ($65 for each session)

The turbulent period of Reconstruction following the American Civil War has long been misunderstood. This historical era witnessed the first attempt by the U.S. government to promote racial equality after centuries of slavery. The course will explore issues dividing the nation in the post-war years, such as the Congressional Reconstruction efforts, impeachment of Andrew Johnson, movements to promote political and civil rights, and the birth of the Ku Klux Klan. It will also discuss the myths associated with this era and why the period is so relevant to understanding race relations in America today.

Robert Baer holds a B.A. in history from Towson University, an M.L.A. in the history of ideas from Johns Hopkins University, and a D.Ed. in higher education from Morgan State University. He spent 30 years as a college administrator in Connecticut, New York, and Maryland. He has been an instructor in history at York College-CUNY, Norwalk Community College, Community College of Baltimore, and Howard Community College.

A LONG SHADOW: Ideology in the German-Soviet War 1941–1945, and Contemporary Geopolitics
Jonathan Cordish

Session II
Thursday, 9:30 a.m. (begins October 20)
Fee: $65

The Allied victory over Nazi Germany in World War II is increasingly viewed, in Western democracies, as primarily an American and British victory, won on Western European battlefields. This course will examine how in fact Europe’s Eastern Front—the territory over which Germany and the Soviet Union fought from 1941 to 1945—was the central battleground of WWII in Europe. This course will focus on the rival ideologies that precipitated the German-Soviet conflict, and how this clash of ideologies turned the Eastern Front into a battleground of unprecedented scale, brutality, and human calamity. It will explore how this vast bloodletting continues to profoundly influence the ideological worldview and actions of Russia’s current leadership. A particular focus will be on how the legacy of the German-Soviet conflict has been crucial to Vladimir Putin’s ideological rationale for Russia’s contemporary war against Ukraine.

Jonathan Cordish is returning to Osher at Towson University with his third course on World War II history. His previous two courses examined aspects of combat in the Pacific and in Western European theaters. Jonathan is currently pursuing a master of arts in military history at the Citadel, the Military College of the University of South Carolina. He also holds a B.A. summa cum laude from Brandeis University, as well as a Master of Business Administration from the Wharton School.
Session II
Tuesday, 11:00 a.m. (begins October 18)
Fee: $65

The period after World War II brought political repression known as McCarthyism, and was officially sponsored by The House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC). This class will follow the history of the period and its relation to today’s current events, with an emphasis on the HUAC hearings at Sparrows Point and their impact on individuals and families in Baltimore County. Though not a prerequisite, this is an excellent follow-up course for anyone who enjoyed “The Movies of the Red Scare” in the spring semester.

Bill Barry is the retired director of labor studies at The Community College of Baltimore County-Dundalk. Bill has given lectures and taught courses at Osher on labor history, history and culture of the 1930s, and the history of slavery.

Barbara Blumberg Ressin graduated from Towson University with a B.A. in education. She taught three years in Baltimore City Public Schools and 25 years at Beth Tfiloh Community Day School. She was an adjunct faculty member at CCBC at the Owings Mills and Hunt Valley campuses. In addition, she lectured for Oasis in Montgomery County, Florida Gulf State University in Florida, and at various organizations, synagogues, and churches around the state.
CAPITALISM, GOVERNMENT, MONEY, AND THE FUTURE OF THE WORLD
Mark Yourek

Session II
Wednesday, 1:00 p.m. and Thursday, 11 a.m.* (begins October 19)
Fee: $130

*NOTE: This class will have class meetings on two consecutive days. Please plan to attend both classes each week.

Those of us who have strong political views tend to have clear attitudes about the things government should and should not do in our economy, in society, and otherwise. But how well grounded and well-informed are your attitudes towards capitalism and its interrelationships with government, especially when measured against a deep reckoning with economic history and the realities of the global economy? What exactly are the necessary roles, and the optimal roles, for government, in a market-capitalist economy like the United States? And what are inappropriate roles for government? What roles will help the U.S. compete most effectively in the world and make the nation as strong, economically, and strategically, as it can be? What government functions will help us maintain the healthiest society? How might the necessary and optimal functions of government need to change over time and how can we as citizens dialog productively on these questions, without falling into dead-end partisan posturing and name-calling? In this course, we will take a close look at how capitalism has evolved over its history; how our essential economic infrastructure has emerged and evolved, and how, at various times, government has affected the economy, either for good or bad, and either effectively or ineffectively. Our goal will be ambitious: to dramatically strengthen our grasp of how market-capitalist economies work, and of what roles government must play, and what roles it should or should not play. If we are successful, we will lay the foundation for a wiser and much more productive national conversation about economics, government, and our own future in the world.

Mark Yourek is a business professional who has worked for major corporations in the United States and around the world. He is a student of economics and international relations and holds an M.B.A. from UCLA and a B.A. in international relations from USC.