HUMANITIES

CHANEL VS. SCHIAPARELLI
Jim O’Connor

Session I
Wednesday, 11 a.m. (begins September 12)
Fee: $65

For decades during the twentieth century, Coco Chanel and Elsa Schiaparelli were among the world’s best-known fashion designers. They were also bitter rivals. Schiaparelli was enormously inventive, working with artists—Jean Cocteau, Salvador Dalí, Leonor Fini, and Man Ray—to create her theatrical fashions. Chanel’s first ventures, a hat shop in 1910 and a boutique in 1913, were bankrolled by a lover, but her lifestyle as a modern woman with cropped hair who ran her own successful business provided a perfect marketing tool for her Little Black Dress and boxy suits. The rivalry? Schiaparelli derided Chanel as a “milliner,” and Chanel called Schiaparelli “that Italian artist who makes clothes.” It is said that Chanel set Schiaparelli on fire at a costume ball. (Guests put it out with seltzer water.) During World War II, Schiaparelli kept her business open, to continue to provide jobs for her employees. Chanel closed hers, except for Chanel No. 5, putting 4000 people out of a job.

Jim O’Connor holds a masters in art history from Hunter College. He has taught and lectured at the Parsons School of Design, where he was AAS Coordinator of Fashion History and Online Learning, and at Hunter College, Rutgers University, and the Baltimore Academy of Illustration. In summer 2016, for the Osher Institute, he spoke about the rational dress movement of the nineteenth century.

SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR:
Life, Philosophy, Feminism
Jo-Ann Pilardi

Sessions I and II
Thursday, 11 a.m. (begins September 13)
Fee: $130 ($65 for each session)

French writer, Simone de Beauvoir (1908–1986), was one of the most influential thinkers of the 20th century. Her now-classic feminist work, The Second Sex (1949), was written without the benefit of a women’s movement. Her multi-volume autobiography is a work of 20th century history, as well as the story of her life, an unconventional life (lived in tandem with philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre), which was both admired and criticized from the right and the left, and during which she relentlessly pursued the political and moral questions of her day, e.g., the Algerian war for independence. The great interest in her work through the late 20th and early 21st centuries has even led to a new philosophical field, “Beauvoir Studies.” Though her existentialist philosophy and novels are not well known by the general public in this country (eclipsed by the importance of The Second Sex—“the feminist Bible”), they raise serious and compelling questions about the human condition. Join us for a survey of the life and works of Simone de Beauvoir. Suggested (non-required) readings: The Ethics of Ambiguity, The Second Sex, The Blood of Others, Memoirs of a Dutiful Daughter, The Coming of Age.

Jo-Ann Pilardi, professor emerita, Towson University, taught philosophy and women’s studies at Towson University for 38 years and chaired Women’s Studies for nine years. An activist in Baltimore’s women’s liberation movement, she was also a “charter member” of TU’s Women’s Studies program. Her expertise is in continental and social-political philosophy and feminist theory; she has an M.A. in Philosophy (Penn State) and a Ph.D. in Humanities (Johns Hopkins) and has studied Beauvoir for many years. Her publications include a book and articles on Beauvoir, and articles on feminist theory, immigration, and hospitality. She has taught several other courses for Towson’s Osher.
HUMANITIES

THE INFANCY NARRATIVES IN MATTHEW’S AND LUKE’S GOSPELS
Father Bob Albright

Sessions I and II
Wednesday, 11 a.m. (begins September 12)
Fee: $130 ($65 for each session)

The birth stories of Jesus found in the New Testament have been the source of wonderment for Bible readers for centuries. They have produced such cultural activities as Christmas and gift giving. In this eight-week course we will delve into the mystery of these stories and why they have such magnetism on people of almost every country in the world—and why they have become even more important than Easter for the Christian world. Using a scholarly approach to the Bible, we will examine stories in both Gospels of Matthew and Luke as follows: first, an introduction to both narratives and their purposes as demonstrated by each Evangelist; the genealogy of Jesus, the birth of Jesus, the story of the astrologers and the story of the innocents in Matthew’s Gospel; the annunciations of John the Baptist and Jesus, the births of John and Jesus, and the circumcision and presentation of Jesus in the temple of Luke’s Gospel. Even though this appears to be a study of the New Testament only, you will be surprised to discover how rooted in the Old Testament these stories really are. This semester leads to Christmas and will, no doubt, give participants a new look on this ancient and unique Christian celebration. Please bring a Bible (any version) to class. Note: this is a repeat of the course that was offered in fall 2015.

Rev. Robert E. Albright is a retired Catholic Priest of the Archdiocese of Baltimore. He served as the Catholic Campus Minister at Towson University for 26 years before his retirement in July 2006. Through teaching a scholarly approach to the Bible over the past 50 years, Father Bob has explored greater interfaith issues at the Institute for Islamic, Christian, and Jewish Studies of Baltimore. He has studied twice in Israel at the International Center for Holocaust Studies and has been to Israel over 18 times leading study tours and retreats and doing private research in Biblical sites and studying the Palestinian/Israeli situation. Father Bob is engaged in numerous Catholic/Jewish endeavors including a funded program to educate Jewish and Catholic high school students in each other’s tradition.

A HISTORY OF ANTI-SEMITISM: A Documentary Study
Rabbi Floyd Herman

Sessions I and II
Tuesday, 11:00 a.m.
(begins September 18; class will meet during break week on October 9)
Fee: $130 ($65 for each session)

Anti-Semitism has occurred throughout the ages. This course will explore the history of anti-Semitism in Western society through an examination of some of the historical texts upon which it is based. We will trace the history of anti-Semitic writings from the ancient world, including Rome and the church, through modern writings up to the rise in anti-Semitism today in the Middle East, Europe, and even in the United States.

Rabbi Floyd Herman is the Rabbi Emeritus of Har Sinai Congregation in Owings Mills. He has been associated with the congregation for more than 35 years. He has taught undergraduates at Loyola University for more than 20 years and continues to teach in lifelong learning programs through the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Towson University, CCBC, Notre Dame, and Johns Hopkins University. He has been active in many religious and civic organizations in the Baltimore area and nationally.
FREUD AND THE THEORY OF PSYCHOANALYSIS
Edward Fotheringill

Session II
Wednesday, 11 a.m. (begins October 17)
Fee: $65

Sigmund Freud was a psychologist, social theorist, and philosopher. He stands alongside Darwin, Marx, and Einstein as one of the architects of the modern mind. Yet, he is one of the most polarizing and misunderstood intellectual figures of the 20th century. This course will undertake an examination of Freud’s theory of Psychoanalysis (clinical theory/social theory) with an eye toward answering the following question: What value do Freud’s ideas have for our personal lives as well as our contemporary culture? Specific areas to be addressed in the course: Freud’s theory of Psychoanalysis, including his ideas about the unconscious; the Id, Ego, and Superego; the analysis and meaning of dreams; the stages of psycho-sexual development; the oedipal crises; the psychoanalytic technique; and his vision of the possibilities for human happiness. During the class sessions, plenty of time will be allotted for open discussion.

Edward Fotheringill is an adjunct professor of philosophy and intellectual history in the department of humanistic studies at the Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA). He was a senior lecturer of Philosophy at Towson State University from 1979-1992, and a senior lecturer in Philosophy at Goucher College from 1989-2003. In the spring of 2017, he taught a course at Osher entitled “Buddhism: A School of Philosophy, a Way of Life, a Spiritual Path” and in spring 2018, he taught “Meditation Workshop: Philosophy, Technique, Practice”.

BIG THANKS to all Osher Volunteers who help to make Osher a success.