THE POETRY OF EMILY DICKINSON
Thomas Dorsett

Session I
Monday, 9:30 a.m. (begins March 4)
Fee: $65

Emily Dickinson, along with Walt Whitman, were not only the greatest American poets of the 19th century, but arguably the greatest American poets of all. This course focuses on the poetry of Emily Dickinson. No preparation is necessary. However, participants are strongly encouraged to read or reread examples of her poetry prior to class. You won’t regret it! Dickinson’s poetry is still able to shake us up, adding color to ordinary life. Her poetry is always accessible, yet like light, her poems can lead us beyond our complacencies into realms which she referred to as “the vast acres of perhaps.” Their themes are subjects which concern us all, wonder, nature, love, death and immortality. “The world is too much with us,” wrote Wordsworth, implying that the inner world is not with us enough. In this course we will explore the inner and outer worlds of Emily Dickinson which will help the readers gain perspective on much-needed balance between these two essentials aspects of everyone’s life. Her best poems are among the greatest poems ever written. This course will aim to demonstrate why this is so and to share the delight revealed by her poetry.

Thomas Dorsett, M.D., a pediatrician, set out early in life to earn a Ph.D. in German literature. Even though he moved to the field of medicine, his devotion to his early love never left him. He now leads a group that reads and discusses German literature in German. He is also a widely published poet whose mentor was the renowned Philippine poet, José Garcia Villa. He is the author of two books of poetry in translation, one from German to English, the other from English to German. He has previously taught courses for Osher on Thomas Mann, Franz Kafka, Albert Camus, Rainer Maria Rilke, Walt Whitman, Goethe, and John Keats.

THE BRONTË SISTERS AND THEIR WORLDS
Jacqueline Wilkotz

Sessions I and II
Thursday, 11 a.m. (begins March 7)
Fee: $130 ($65 for each session)

Four motherless, imaginative children grow up at the edge of the moors—so begins the Brontë legend, born of the novels of the three sisters, Charlotte, Emily, and Anne. That compelling tale is entwined with the works that grew from fantastic childhood worlds but also from social reality and adult artistry. We will look at Charlotte’s Jane Eyre (and also Villette), Emily’s Wuthering Heights (and also her poetry), and Anne’s The Tenant of Wildfell Hall. Careful attention to these stories of character, passion, and fate leads to an appreciation of their power and complexity as well as an understanding of their continued influence in such a relatively recent work as the novel Wide Sargasso Sea, in which Jean Rhys gives another version of Jane Eyre’s Mr. Rochester. This course is an expansion of Wilkotz’s 2011 course on the Bronte sisters but it is not necessary to have taken the previous course to enjoy this one.

Jacqueline (Jan) Wilkotz, holds a Ph.D. from the University of California, Berkeley. She is professor emerita at Towson University, where she taught in the English and Women’s Studies departments, including courses in women’s literary tradition. Her most recent Osher courses were on Virginia Woolf, Jane Austen, and the Bloomsbury Group.
EXPERIENCING NORTHERN ITALY FROM THE TRAVELER’S PERSPECTIVE
Marc Bellassai

Sessions II
Monday, 9:30 a.m. (begins April 8)
Fee: $65

This course brings Northern Italy to you until you have a chance to visit or revisit this region yourself. Experience life and culture of some major cities of this region along with several small, but noteworthy cities of interest. In this course, you will learn about Milan and Venice as well as some side trips from each location. Milan’s riches include the Sforza Castle, Galleria di Brera, La Scala, the Milan Cathedral, and an amazing design and fashion culture. Then, you will learn about Cremona, Brescia, Pavia, and Varese—all within day-trip distance from Milan. Venice boasts world-famous canals and is home to the Venice Biennale and the Venice Film Festival. The attractions also include St. Mark’s Place, the Doges’ Palace, and the Rialto Bridge. A haven for art and culture, Venice is also a great starting point for trips to the nearby cities of Padova, Ferrara, and Mantova. Each locale will begin with an historical overview, usually from the original Roman or Etruscan settlers, through to modern times—touching on each city’s own special dialect, local craft and cuisine, and cultural icons. Through this illustrated tour of Northern Italy, you will learn about the fascinating museums, concert and theater venues, local foods, diverse cultural and religious traditions, and key Italian phrases that will be useful when you get the chance to travel to this wonderful part of Italy. The only thing better is to be there in person. This course will help enrich your next travel experience to Northern Italy.

Marc Bellassai studied at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music where he earned a bachelor’s degree in music. He went on to earn a master’s in music and artist diploma from Indiana University. He was a Fulbright IIE scholar from 1994-6, at the Civica Scuola di Musica and Castello Sforzesco in Milan, Italy. He currently teaches harpsichord, art history, and directs the Early Music Ensemble at Towson University. Mark also performs with several Maryland early music groups including Vivicantando, Charm City Baroque, Tazzina Dramatica, Mountainside Baroque, and others.

THE EASTER NARRATIVES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT
Father Bob Albright

Sessions I and II
Thursday, 1 p.m. (begins March 7)
Fee: $130 ($65 for each session)

The catalytic event/mystery that sparked Christianity was the resurrection of Jesus from the dead and his exaltation at the right hand of God. This Easter mystery created a force in the ancient Western world that has developed into present-day global consciousness and a worldwide religion. Of the three central mysteries in Christianity, the Easter mystery remains the one that goes beyond the boundaries of Christianity since all life will die. The hope of an afterlife, the dreams of heaven and resting in peace haunt the minds of the conscious world. Studying this Easter mystery will help us uncover some essential questions of life. As we explore the language used by the writers of the New Testament, we hope to gain a better understanding of what happened to Jesus and what promises are the basis of Christian belief. We will raise some of the essential questions (and contradictions) that this mystery poses, investigate the earliest Christian faith formulae found in the New Testament, examine stories of encounters with Jesus after his death, and end “at the tomb of Jesus” in our final class. For believers and non-believers alike, this in-depth study will be an awakening to the beauty of the literature of the Bible, the use of symbolism, and the faith of those who wrote the narratives of this central event/mystery of Christianity. Please bring a Bible (any version) with you to every class. Note: This is a repeat of the course offered last in spring 2016.

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.

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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.

Session II
**Thursday, 9:30 a.m. (begins April 11)**
**Fee: $65**

“It all began here. A story that would change the world. A story that could only happen here. Here among these people. A people once free, who were slaves. I was a young child when we started walking.” However, since the mid-19th c. Common Era scholars, archaeologists, clergy, and lay people have seriously questioned whether the Exodus happened at all. Is it just another folk tale? For example, how did the staffs of Aaron and the Pharaoh’s men become snakes? Can we identify the Pharaoh? What happens when two million people leave a country? To answer these questions, we will look at the text and see what it says. We will look at the inherent discrepancies, examine recent scholarship and archaeology, and understand how this story of Moses in Egypt became combined with the tradition of Abraham in Canaan. Finally, we will try to figure out why a nation would state that its ancestors were slaves in a foreign country.

Ellen O’Brien holds a B.A. from St. Catherine’s University in St. Paul, Minnesota, an M.L.A. from the Johns Hopkins University, a J.D. from the University of Maryland School of Law, and an M.A. from St. Mary’s University and Seminary, Educational Institute. She practiced law for 30 years all the while continuing her theological studies, primarily in the area of the Hebrew Bible. She has taught several courses for Osher including “The Book of Job” in fall 2017.

**HINDUISM: The Path to Final Truth**
Edward Fotheringill

Session II
**Wednesday, 11 a.m. (begins April 10)**
**Fee: $65**

Hinduism is the oldest school of Asian philosophy, dating back to 1,000 BC. Originating in India, it predates Buddhism by 400 years. As one of the four world religions, Hinduism expresses a spiritual tradition second to none. In this course, we will examine the fundamental themes and principles of Hindu philosophy, including the four paths of yoga (jnana, bhakti, karma, raja), the immortality of the soul (Atman), karma, the absolute reality (Brahman), the nature of impermanence, the experience of presence, and the experience of enlightenment (samadhi). Lectures will focus on essential passages from the three principle texts of Hindu philosophy: the *Upanishads*, the *Bhagavad Gita*, and the *Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*. Plenty of time will be allowed 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”.