SOCIAL SCIENCES

MUSLIMS IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD
Saima Sitwat

Sessions I and II
Tuesday, 11:00 a.m. (begins September 14)
Fee: $130 ($65 for each session)

This course will provide an overview of the Islamic principles and how they impact the societies and lives of their practitioners. We will investigate questions by reading passages from the Quran, exploring the lives of Muslims around the world, meeting American-Muslims, including those from the Baltimore area, and, if possible, observing prayers in-person.

Saima Adil Sitwat is a writer and educator. Originally from Pakistan, Saima has recently moved to Baltimore from Pittsburgh, where she served as the first woman president of the Muslim Association of Greater Pittsburgh (MAP). She is the author of her memoir “American Muslim: An Immigrant’s Journey.” Her website is www.saimasitwat.com.

REKNOTTING THE “UNTIED” STATES: Strategies for Stitching a Divided Nation Together
Michael Anft

Sessions I and II
Thursday, 11:00 a.m. (begins September 16)
Fee: $130 ($65 for each session)

In previous courses over the past three years, journalist and lecturer Michael Anft has led Osher members in discussions on the United States’ oft-divided history and how media consolidation and political propaganda have played a role in transforming social and political differences into threats to American democracy. In this discussion-based class, we’ll move beyond an analysis of the problem to ponder a way out. How can Americans come to trust each other once again? What will it take to get Americans moving forward, or to at least share the same reality? What reconciliation methods have been tried here or in other societies, and which ones might work here and now? Using a discussion format that will include breaking into groups to discuss solutions, we’ll explore a range of options—everything from constitutional change to reconciliation councils to reparations and wealth redistribution.

Michael Anft is an author, journalist, and teacher who has been grappling with sentences and sources professionally since graduating from high school way too long ago. Locally, he has been on staff at City Paper, Johns Hopkins Magazine, and Urbanite, and contributed regularly to The Baltimore Sun, The Baltimore Evening Sun, Baltimore Magazine, and The Washington Post. He currently writes and serves as a consultant for The Chronicle of Higher Education and contributes to AARP: The Magazine.
URBAN WILDLIFE: Wild Times in the City
Jody Johnson

Session I
Thursday, 9:30 a.m. (begins September 16)
Fee: $65

This course will examine wildlife in cities. Join us for a curious journey into the life forms that are very familiar such as birds, dogs, rodents, and common animals that are not very familiar (opossums, raccoons, bees). Looking deeper into cities, we will explore what the sanitation department finds on roadways, what the hospital and vaccination clinics need to have on hand in the form of medicines, and what is found in the underground systems such as subways, train tunnels, and sewers. Another approach will be to examine what species are either minded scientifically (such as the relationship between peregrine falcons and pigeon populations) or are enlisted into service (seeing-eye dogs, horses used by the police). The final aspect of urban wildlife will uncover the non-native animals that are housed in city homes such as snakes, tropical fish, performance animals, and other exotics.

Jody Johnson, Ph.D., teaches several college classes that are wildlife related, including “World Pollinators,” “Environmental Science,” “Physical Science” and “Science of Sustainability.” Her research work in honeybees also causes her to be linked to wildlife that affect bees including bears, skunks, mites, wasps, moths. As a mother of three boys, she has overseen the care of pet rats, hamsters, fish, rabbits, parakeets, parrots, tarantulas, doves, chickens, ducks, guineas, dogs, cats, snakes, and ferrets.

Session II
Thursday, 9:30 a.m. (begins October 21)
Fee: $65

Are you frustrated because your grandchildren will not go outside but instead play video games? This course will give you many ideas on how to entice children into the backyard and beyond. Projects will target kids of all ages, with varying skills sets. Most projects are inexpensive and can be accomplished with a few items bought from the grocery store, an art store, or an office store. Many of the projects will use stored items in the house, such as old paint, cardboard, small sections of wood, and plastic containers. Some projects may feature favorite toys. Others may convert kitchen liquids, solids, spices, and vegetables into science experiments.

Jody Johnson, Ph.D., teaches several college classes that are wildlife related, including “World Pollinators,” “Environmental Science,” “Physical Science” and “Science of Sustainability.” Her research work in honeybees also causes her to be linked to wildlife that affect bees including bears, skunks, mites, wasps, moths. As a mother of three boys, she has overseen the care of pet rats, hamsters, fish, rabbits, parakeets, parrots, tarantulas, doves, chickens, ducks, guineas, dogs, cats, snakes, and ferrets.
COVID-19 laid bare deep flaws in the U.S. health system with its catastrophic response to the pandemic exposed on the international stage. Politicization and polarization of the two parties reflect opposing views of government’s role in healthcare. With congressional gridlock post ACA, broad changes in healthcare policy are being made via executive orders and policies of party in power. The Trump administration’s sweeping changes are being reversed, most quietly, by President Biden whose specific healthcare legislative direction is uncertain. With political wrangling and COVID-19 capturing headlines, big business is stealthily transforming our delivery system in ways largely invisible to the nation, often detrimental to clinicians and public health. While crowds cheered caregivers initially, abysmal treatment during COVID-19 contributes to their depleted ranks as they lose power and prestige in a profit-driven medical model. Clinicians resent the label “burnout” that puts onus on them, not systemic issues causing despair. This course looks ahead to post pandemic healthcare delivery and payment models that impact every U.S. resident, regardless of political party or religious affiliation.

Ann Farrell, B.S.N., R.N., is principal of Farrell Associates, LLC, a strategic healthcare consulting firm serving provider organizations, clinical vendors, and investors. Her background includes bedside nursing, faculty membership, health IT (HIT) vendor leadership, and industry consulting support. She is a nationally-recognized health IT expert, clinician, and patient advocate.
Session I  
Tuesday, 11:00 a.m. (begins September 14)  
Fee: $65  

This course continues the story of atomic and subatomic science in the 20th and 21st centuries. The pace of discovery accelerates and atoms become more and more relevant in the lives of ordinary people. In this course, you will meet many remarkable scientists such as Ernest Rutherford, Mary Curie, Niels Bohr, Werner Heizenberg, Robert Oppenheimer, Richard Feinman, and many others. You will learn about discoveries of the new strange world of quantum particles and how this science made possible the most wonderful technologies and the most frightful weapons. Join the course and follow the scientific journey from the discovery of electron in 1896 to the discovery of the God particle (Higgs Boson) in 2012.

Greg Pevzner is a retired software engineer/manager. He was born and raised in St Petersburg, Russia, where he received a graduate degree in physics from the Polytechnical University. After immigrating to the U.S., he received an M.S. in computer science from Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute. Prior to his retirement, he worked for over 30 years at AT&T Bell Laboratories in New Jersey, first as a software developer and later as a manager of an engineering team. Greg always had a keen interest in science, mathematics and history. He is eager to share his knowledge and enthusiasm of these subjects with Osher students.

Session II  
Friday, 9:30 a.m. (begins October 22)  
Fee: $65  

Many images of Earth from space or from the air transcend scientific interest and capture the incredible beauty and intense colors of our planet—from mountains and deserts to rivers and icy landscapes, even city lights seen from space. Examine hundreds of striking Earth images, some resembling works of art, to see our home planet as astronauts do. Discover how Earth appears looking back across our solar system and compare the beauty of our world to that of our planetary cousins.

Jim O’Leary served as chief astronomy specialist for the Maryland Science Center, producing programs for the Davis Planetarium and films for the IMAX 3D Theater, many of which played in theaters worldwide. He also oversaw renovation of the Science Center’s rooftop observatory and its 1927-era telescope. Jim has received education grants from NASA, NSF, NOAA and Johns Hopkins University, and, as part of an NSF-funded program, traveled to Chile to visit astronomical observatories and meet with astronomers and educators. He hosted the radio program Skywatch on WYPR, Baltimore’s NPR station, for 12 years and received the Excellence in Outreach Award from NASA Goddard Space Flight Center.