

Academy of Learning in Retirement

*A continuing education
community program*



Welcome to ALIR!

This catalog and more
information are available at
www.ALIRsanantonio.org

Course Catalog Fall 2025



ALIR 2025-26 Council

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Classes are located online, and at

North East I.S.D. Community Education Building
8750 Tesoro Drive, San Antonio, Texas 78217

Have questions?

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Mission Statement

The Academy of Learning in Retirement (ALIR) is an all-volunteer organization which provides opportunities for lifelong learning with social and community engagement.

Welcome to ALIR

In short: All people age 50+ are welcome at ALIR. You need to **register to attend a class** (whether it's on campus or online) and in order to register you **first need to pay** a single fee – you can then attend as many classes as you want during the term. *See page 2 for payment and registration details.*

Get Zooming: Curious about an ALIR online class, but hesitant about using the Zoom application to go online? We happily offer one-on-one assistance to learn (or improve) basic skills so that you can tap into a new world of learning and socializing by taking a class online. Contact **Linda Comeaux** at *Lcomo@aol.com* to schedule help and you'll be ready!

Hats off to ALIR Instructors! You can read tidbits about them at the end of this catalog. But this Fall, three deserve a shoutout ... **Geary M. Schindel** is a professional geoscientist who has worked in geology, hydrology, and water resource investigations for 40+ years - check out his three environmental classes. And while **Morgan Montalvo** brings substantial acumen to his Spanish Civil War class, he also is the son-in-law of **Norma Rios**, an iconic early leader of ALIR! Lastly, anyone who is a maker and creator might consider the online class *Awareness and Seeing* to take advantage of the artful eye and legendary wisdom of **Mary Bowman**, now 98 years old.

Important Dates Fall 2025

Monday, Aug 11	Online payment opens for Fall; <i>you must pay before registering</i>
Monday, Aug 18	Registration for classes opens ; ongoing throughout the Fall
Wed, Sept 3	Instructors' meeting Orientation for new students
Monday, Sept 8	First day of classes
Tuesday, Oct 7	First luncheon
Monday, Oct 20	First day of 2nd 6-week classes
Tuesday, Nov 4	Second luncheon
Week Nov 24-28	No classes, NEISD closed for Thanksgiving
Tuesday, Dec 2	Third luncheon
Thursday, Dec 4	Art Exhibition and Performing Arts Demonstrations
Friday, Dec 5	End of Fall term



Payment and Registration



About ALIR registration

- Registration is open and on-going throughout the Fall.
- To register, you must **first make your payment**. After paying, you'll then receive an email with a link to go to **register on SignUpGenius**, beginning August 18.
- *Note: You don't need a SignUpGenius password or account to pay or register!*
- Registration or payment questions? Contact alir@NEISD.net.

Payment (do this before you can register)

- Tuition for the Fall 2025 term (September through December) is **\$85.00**. This single fee allows you to attend as many classes during the term as you want.
- On **Monday, August 11**, all ALIRians will get an email with this catalog attached, along with a **payment link** to pay tuition at SignUpGenius.
- Once you click that link and are on the SignUpGenius website, you **don't need a password or account** – just go to the payment box at the bottom of the page and pay with a debit or credit card (it's secure and encrypted).
- If you can't pay online, you may submit a check made out to **Academy of Learning in Retirement** and deliver it in person to Willson Donovan at the NEISD building, 2nd floor, or mail it to Tom Colbourn, ALIR Treasurer, 26428 Enchanted Wind, San Antonio TX 78260.
- If you didn't receive the original emailed payment link (if you are new to ALIR for instance), Fall's link is <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/9040E4BABA72CA3FB6-57777249-alir>

How to register for classes

- After you've paid your Fall tuition, you'll get a confirmation of payment.
- When registration for classes opens on **Monday, Aug. 18 at 9:30**, you will receive a *new* email with the links for class registration at SignUpGenius. **Use these links to register.**
- **Select the class** you want by going to the correct weekday, then to the time. Once you've found it, click the check box. **(Note that online classes are listed separately.)**
- **Select another class if you want**, on any day and time, by clicking its check box. Be very careful that your classes don't conflict with your prior choices.
- **Click the "Submit" button** at the bottom of the page – **don't forget this step!** 
- **Fill in the required contact information** (name, email address and phone number) so instructors can contact you, and then – you're enrolled! Watch for confirming email(s).
- After September (and throughout the rest of the term), use the registration link you were emailed to go to SignUpGenius to add a class.

Classes by Category

Campus Class (Day offered)
Online Class (Day offered)

Classes vary in the number of weeks offered;
most are for 12 weeks, but some are 6- or 3-weeks

PLEASE READ THE CLASS DESCRIPTIONS WHICH FOLLOW BEFORE ENROLLING

Applied Art/Art Appreciation

New! Portraits, Selfies & Real People (**Mon**)
Basic Watercolor (**Mon**)
New! Masterpieces & Shady Ladies (**Mon**)
Zen Painting (**Tues**)
Acrylic Painting (**Tues**)
Awareness and Seeing (**Wed**)
New! Make Greeting Cards Pop! (**Wed**)
Pastels Painting (**Thurs**)
Fundamentals of Photography (**Thurs**)
Unical Calligraphy (**Thurs**)
Free-form Diamond Dot (**Fri**)

Current Events/General Studies

New! Power of the Pen (**Mon**)
Computer Technology/Word Processing (**Mon**)
Computer Technology/Spreadsheets (**Mon**)
Genealogy Workshop (**Tues**)
Socrates Café (**Tues**)
Planning for the Inevitable (**Wed**)
New! The Power of Words (**Fri**)

Economics/Science

New! Forensics (**Tues**)
Secret Life of Water (**Wed**)
Climate Change and You (**Wed**)
Our Rare Earth (**Wed**)
New! Artificial Intelligence (**Thurs**)

Film/Theater

Movies in French (**Tues**)
New! Murder is ... Funny (**Tues**)
New! Screen Satires (**Thurs**)
New! Nordic Noir (**Fri**)
New! Come Fly Away - Christmas (**Fri**)

Leisure/Recreation

New! Mahjongg (**Mon**)
Board & Card Games (**Wed**)
Chess Club (**Thurs**)
Brain Games (**Thurs**)(**Thurs**)

Health/Wellness

Heartfulness Meditation (**Mon**) (**Wed**)
Vet to Vet and You (**Mon**)
Stretch and Strength (**Mon**)
Conscious Living (**Mon**)
Topics in Women's Health (**Tues**)
New! Advances in Aging Research (**Wed**)
Tai Chi/Qi Gong (**Wed**)
New! Finding Peace & Happiness (**Thurs**)
Flow Yoga (**Thurs**)
Chair Yoga/Stretching (**Thurs**)

Campus Class (Day offered) Online Class (Day offered)
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History/Political Science

Texas Biographies (**Mon**)
New! Greek & Roman Technologies (**Mon**)
New! Spanish Civil War (**Tues**)
New! English History 1485-1832 (**Tues**)
New! Our Presidents (**Wed**)
Memory Lane (**Wed**)
Understanding The Holocaust (**Wed**)
New info! History of the CIA (**Thurs**)
New! Japonisme (**Thurs**) (**Wed**)
Turning Points Am. History, Part 1 (**Thurs**)
1900 Galveston Hurricane (**Fri**)

Language

Intermediate/Adv. Spanish (**Mon**)
New! Hold Your Tongue! Annoying Spoken English (**Mon**)
Lecturas en Espanol (**Tues**)
Baby French (**Wed**)
New! Baby Italian (**Thurs**)
American Sign Language (**Thurs**)

Literature/Creative Writing

New! Classic American Short Story (**Mon**)
Memoir Writing (**Mon**)
Poetry of the 21st Century (**Mon**)
New! First American Woman Writer (**Mon**)
New! The American Dream and Literature (**Tues**)
New! Writing Compelling Family Story (**Thurs**)

Music/Dance

Hula-La (**Mon**)
Beginning Line Dance Steps (**Mon**)
International Mountain Dancing (**Tues**)
Line Dancing (**Tues**)
New! Salsa y Mas (**Tues**)
New! Travis Picking Method (**Tues**)
Introduction to Ukulele (**Wed**)
Ukulele Jam Band (**Wed**)
Intro to Guitar (**Thurs**)
Spanish Through Song (**Thurs**)

World Cultures/ Philosophy/Religion

New! Keys to Thailand (**Tues**)
New! The Baroque in Mexico (**Thurs**)
New! Biblical Women (**Thurs**)

On-Campus Courses

Fall 2025

Monday

The Classic American Short Story

Richard S. Pressman, PhD

9:30-10:45 Monday 1st 6 weeks (9/8-10/17) and 4th 3 weeks (11/10-12/5)

For six weeks, we will read a short story a week. This discussion course will continue where the Spring term course left off, covering writers Ambrose Bierce, Kate Chopin, Charles Chesnutt, Mary Wilkens Freeman (pictured), Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Edith Wharton, O. Henry, Stephen Crane, and Jack London. Both new and continuing students are welcome. We will use the same text as before: Stefan Dziemianowicz, ed., **Great American Short Stories**, ISBN# 978-1-4351-7216-6. Although discussion questions are provided, class conversation is wide open. All ideas are welcome. *After a 3-week hiatus, the course will continue in the last three-week period of the Fall term.* (Max 20)



New!

Greek and Roman Technology: *From the Catapult to the Pantheon*

Tom O'Brien/John Lyons

9:30-10:45 Monday

12 weeks



This unusual and engaging presentation of Greek and Roman history focuses on technology as a key contributor to the success of the two civilizations. Professor Stephen Ressler of West Point uses videos, models, and vivid demonstrations in his Great Courses® lectures, which we will follow up with brief discussions after viewing. Some ALIRians will share appropriate engineering stories as well. (Max 28)

Hula-La!

Ingrid Hetrick

9:30-10:45 Monday

4th 3 weeks (11/10-12/5)

Want to dance your way to being fit? Hot Hula Fitness® is a fun, easy-to-follow Polynesian dance-based exercise format suitable for all fitness levels. This blend of Pacific Island dances will strengthen many of our large muscle groups – shoulders, arms, abdominals, gluteals and quads. We'll dance to popular music and to the beats of traditional Pacific drums! Be prepared to dance in your bare feet and bring a sarong or hip scarf. (Max 35)

New Info!

Texas Biographies: *Houston, Travis, Santa Anna*

Don Glessner

9:30-10:45 Monday

12 weeks

Our favorite ALIR Texas historian will devote the first 8 weeks of this class to an in-depth look (revised and updated) into the life of Sam Houston, followed by a 3-week study of William Barrett Travis. We will conclude with a one-week biographical sketch of Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna.



Beginning Line Dance Steps

Sandra Y. Goodrum

9:30-10:45 Monday

1st 6 weeks (9/8-10/17)

This class is designed for non-dancers who want to teach their two left feet a move or two! Don't sign up if you have already enrolled in the regular line dance class in the past, since this class will be learning very basic steps during its six weeks. (Max 15)

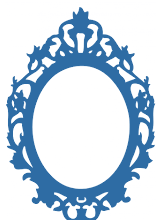
New!

Portraits, Selfies, and Real People (Like You)

Judith Sobre/Gladys Koranek/Carolee Moore

11:00-12:15 Monday

2nd 6 weeks (10/20-12/5)



As long as people have made representations of themselves, they have been making portraits of specific individuals. This trio of experienced, erudite and knowledgeable art instructors are teaming up to explore the many aspects of portraiture through history, locations and media, as well as the nuts and bolts of portrait-making itself. (Max 30)

Conscious Living Circle

Dee Kite, PhD/Roz Gagliano

11:00-12:15 Monday

12 weeks

As part of this community of ALIRians, you will use the free Mastermind online self-assessment tool to identify and clean up the loose ends in your life that may be holding you back from greater balance and satisfaction. Detailed checklists will enable you to review your own physical environment, finances, relationships, physical health and spiritual health. Then the group will combine brainstorming, education, peer accountability and support to help you set progress goals. New participants will need to complete an initial draft of this checklist before our first meeting; the instructor will send a link to it upon enrollment. (Max 15)

Intermediate to Early-Advanced Spanish

Suzette Pelayo

11:00-12:15 Monday

12 weeks

This course will emphasize correct grammatical usage, new vocabulary, verb forms in the various tenses used in conversation, and idiomatic expressions. We will continue with the book **Complete Spanish Step by Step** by Barbara Bregstein, Premium Second Edition, 2020 (ISBN 978-260-46313-2). The book will be supplemented with materials provided by the instructor. Please bring a spiral notebook to class. (Max 20)

Computer Word Processing: MS Word

Thomas Lake

11:00-12:15 Monday

1st 6 weeks (9/8-10/17)

Explore the basics of Microsoft Windows (versions 10 & 11) with ALIR's long-time computer guru. This class includes the basics of word processing and document management as well as some more advanced techniques. We'll cover *formatting* (page layout, margins, views, fonts, printing); inserting and editing *graphic content* (pictures, online clipart, charts, shapes, borders, bullets, 3D images); *saving, sharing, and printing* options (creating folders, organizing your files, creating multiple versions); and *templates* (your own, built-in, modifying, formatting, web page design). And, depending on your questions and needs, even more. (Max 20)



Computer Spreadsheets: MS Excel

Thomas Lake

11:00-12:15 Monday

2nd 6 weeks (10/20-12/5)

Spreadsheets can be a powerful tool, and Microsoft Excel is one of the most useful. This class will include many basic and some advanced skills. We'll work on *entering data* (importing, formatting); *creating formulas* (math functions, calculations, copying formulas, inserting functions); *saving, sharing, and printing* options (creating folders, organizing your files); creating *templates* (your own as well as built-in templates). We'll learn to analyze data, make charts and graphs, and more. (Max 20)

Basic Watercolor

Jeanette Lowell

1:00-2:15+ Monday

12 weeks

Watercolor for the fun of it! Artists of all levels are welcome. The first class will include the color wheel and values. A supply list will be available, and we'll also discuss paper, paints and brushes. Bring any you may already have. (Max 22)

Stretch and Strength

Ingrid Hetrick/Letty Dietes

11:00-12:15 Monday 1st 3 weeks (9/8-9/26) & 4th 3 weeks (11/10-12/5)

Are you feeling stiff and tight all over? This is the class for you! We will move and stretch our muscles – even fingers, toes, ankles, wrists and some we didn't know we had! After a short musical warm-up, we will perform a variety of dynamic and isometric stretches while standing, seated on a mat, kneeling and side-lying. We'll draw from Yoga, Pilates and traditional stretches to help our muscles become more supple. Let's sprinkle in some (optional) strength exercises. If you have a Yoga mat, please bring it. *All fitness levels are welcome and can be accommodated.* (Max 35)

New!

America's First Accomplished Woman Writer

Richard S. Pressman, PhD

1:00-2:15 Monday 1st 6 weeks (9/8-10/17)

Have you ever heard of Susanna Rowson? Considered America's first serious woman novelist, she authored two short Early American novels – **Rebecca; or The Fille de Chambre** and **Sarah; or the Exemplary Wife** – each just 165 pages. The first is semi-autobiographical, as it includes her family's difficult time in America during the Revolution, while the second, rather than traditionally ending with a marriage, begins with one that should never have taken place. We will spend two weeks discussing the historical and biographical background of the novels, then two weeks on each novel. Both texts, long out of print, are available only from the instructor at \$10 each. This is a discussion class rather than a lecture class. (Max 10)



New!

Hold Your Tongue! Annoying and Silly Misuses of the English Language

Richard S. Pressman PhD

1:00-2:15 Monday 4th 3 weeks (11/10-12/5)

Does it irk you when someone says, "I did good on the test today"? Or how about when you hear people endlessly describe the extremes as "incredible"? Then you will enjoy this mini-course. We will work from a prepared list of at least 56 errors, misuses, or just annoying expressions: what people say, as well as how people say it. We will entertain any contributions or questions – especially doubts! – from all colleagues in our community of learners. A prime opportunity to rant! (Max 20)

New!

The Power of the Pen: *Crafting Persuasive Op-Eds & Letters to the Editor*

Martha Spinks, PhD/Anne Pearson

1:00-2:15 Monday

3rd 3 weeks (10/20-11/7)

or 4th 3 weeks (11/10-12/5)



The focus of this class is to learn techniques for effectively persuading public officials and other voters using Letters to the Editor and Op-Ed pieces. In week 1, the instructors will explain the basics of writing good opinion pieces. In week 2, the class will review published opinion pieces and discuss if they are effective and why. In week 3, students will bring an opinion piece they've drafted for class review and comment, and to make it ready for submission for publication. Choose just one of the two 3-week classes offered. (Max 12)

Introduction to Mahjongg

Judy Sobre/Gladys Koranek

1:00-2:15 Monday

12 weeks

Mahjongg is a captivating tile-based game that combines skill, strategy, and a touch of luck. It requires focus, concentration, and thoughtful planning. While the rules may seem complex at first, learning Mahjongg is a rewarding journey – one not a mastered overnight, but one that unfolds gradually through practice and play. We'll take a friendly step-by-step approach to understanding the fundamentals so beginners can gain confidence while enjoying the social and mental stimulation that makes Mahjongg such a beloved pastime. (Max 20)



Tuesday

New!

Keys to Thailand

Arlene B. Fisher

9:30-10:45 Tuesday

3rd 3 weeks (10/20-11/7)

This condensed, discussion-focused class will give you some keys to understanding the history, literature and contemporary society that makes up the complex culture of Thailand. We'll consider the influence of the monarchy and of the military, as well as the role of Buddhism, in appreciating this Southeast Asian nation.



Zen Painting

Mary Bowman/Margarita Benavides

9:30-10:45 Tuesday

12 weeks



This fall, the Sumi Zen Painting Class will concentrate on chrysanthemums, Thanksgiving, and Christmas motifs. We emphasize that students produce an original art piece each week and we will be painting a mum on the first day of class. A paper fee of \$5 will be collected for papers and materials, and other art materials and tools will be available for cash purchase. (Max 23)

Movies in French

Amanda Churchill-Bergman

9:30-12:15 Tuesday

12 weeks

Voilà! Join us to watch movies in French with English subtitles. If you're taking conversational French at ALIR or elsewhere, this would be an excellent companion course. If not, the movies and the company are still outstanding. **NOTE:** double period

International Mountain Dancing

Linda Carolan

9:30-10:45 Tuesday

12 weeks

Mountain Dance has gone global! Enjoy dancing to music of the world ... Switzerland, Germany, the Ukraine, Ireland, Italy, the US and more. We combine simple figures and dance formations with easy-to-accomplish steps such as basic 'walking steps'. We will learn to count to 3 with our feet and, as always, no partner is needed. Be ready to smile a little and laugh a lot! (Max 30)



Line Dancing

Jean E. Moore/Pat Hedges

11:00-12:15 Tuesday

12 weeks

Line dancing is an enjoyable way to get exercise and improve your balance. Most of the dances we will do are considered beginner or 'improver' level, which means they can be learned fairly quickly. Each dance is demonstrated clearly, and the welcoming community of ALIRian line dancers invites you to come dance with them! (Max 30)

New!

Murder is ... Funny

Dr. Rhonda Rowland/Tresa Fey

11:00-2:15 Tuesday

1st 3 weeks (9/8-9/26)

Watch three classic movies known for the humor involved when tracking down a murderer ... yes, there *are* films depicting murder as amusing! You'll learn facts about the background of each movie and take home a prize that correlates with the week's film. Let's enjoy a laugh or two while watching these movies together.

NOTE: Double period (Max 20)

New!

A Deep Dive into English History: 1485 to 1832

John Fagin

11:00-12:15 Tuesday

12 weeks

This course will not cover all of English history but instead will focus in on the dynamic period from 1485 to 1832. And this tight timeline means there will be major emphasis on the Tudor and Stuart dynasties. In addition, we'll also trace the development of the British government as it evolved into a constitutional monarchy. (Max 40)



New!

Learn the Travis Picking Method

Rudy Salazar

11:00-12:15 Tuesday

2nd 6 weeks (10/20-12/5)



If you're ready to move forward in your musical skillset, consider working with ALIR's resident ukulele pro to learn the Travis Picking method this Fall. This style requires the ukulele student to be able to play the 1, 6, 4, 5, in the key of C at minimum, and possibly in the keys of F and G. You will be introduced to picking chord melody style as opposed to strumming. (Max 12)

Acrylic Painting

Valentina Messer

11:00-2:15 Tuesday

12 weeks



This perennially popular class will cover basic rules of composition, still life and landscape. Within a supportive and welcoming atmosphere, the instructor will share a variety of techniques for painting with acrylics. **NOTE:** double period including lunch break. (Max 20)

New!

The American Dream and Literature

Dr. Patricia Lonchar

1:00-2:15 Tuesday

2nd 6 weeks (10/20-12/5)

The concept of "The American Dream" is multifaceted, resilient, and enduring. The class will examine excerpts selected from the Declaration of Independence, Bradford, Franklin, Emerson and Twain, as well as a few other works (provided by the instructor); class members will need to have their own copies of *The Great Gatsby* and *Death of a Salesman* to discuss in class. Our exploration of selected literary works should suggest how the "dream" has been shaped and reshaped through time, revealing its relevance to the experience of the authors and their audience. (Max 35)



Robert Indiana

New!

Introduction to Forensics

Peter Platteborze, PhD

1:00-2:15 Tuesday

4th 3 weeks (11/10-12/5)



A quick look at the books in our lending library proves that a lot of ALIRians love a good mystery – so here's your chance to better understand and appreciate forensics. This course, led by a retired Army biochemist and university instructor, will serve as a brief introduction to

the field of forensic science and the various key disciplines often used to solve crimes. If time permits there will be a discussion about crime scenes and the common types of physical evidence. The structure of this course is largely based on the Richard Saferstein textbook **Criminalistics, an Introduction to Forensic Science**. (Max 37)

New!

The Spanish Civil War: *Clash of Ideologies, Clash of Arms*

Morgan Montalvo

1:00-2:15 Tuesday

1st 3 weeks (9/8-9/26)

Considered by many historians the "curtain raiser" for World War Two, the Spanish Civil War is a far more complex conflict borne both of uniquely Iberian socio-political conditions and external ideological influences. The knowledgeable instructor, a former reporter and foreign correspondent, distills Spain's complex 1936-39 conflict and identifies contemporary lessons for the 21st-Century mind. **NOTE:** the final class will run an extra 20 minutes long. (Max 35)



Lecturas en Espanol

Estela Royal/Mary Martinez

1:00-2:15 Tuesday

12 weeks

This class reads and talks about stories of the Hispanic world, in Spanish, so it is intended for intermediate Spanish language students. We will conclude the last two readings of the book **Leyendas del Mundo Hispano** used in the Spring and continue our journey with the new book **Lecturas Avanzadas - A Spanish AP Reader** by Elisabeth Giulianelli (ISBN 1-56765-483-5). (Max 30)

New!

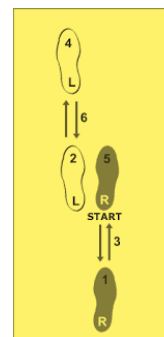
Salsa y Mas – *Let's Dance!*

Albert Zulaica/Connie Zulaica

1:00-2:15 Tuesday

2nd 6 weeks (10/20-12/5)

It's time to get your body moving to Latin rhythms! In this fun and rousing beginner dance class, we will learn some basic dance steps for three of the most popular Latin dances -- Merengue, Bachata, and Salsa. No experience? *No problema!* No partner? *No problema!* Join us for some great music and dance moves, but please wear comfortable, hard-soled shoes. (Max 25)



Topics in Women's Health

Ron Valdez, MD

1:00-2:15 Tuesday

1st 3 weeks (9/8-9/26)

Here's a golden opportunity for informed and open discussions about women's health with a retired local obstetrician/gynecologist. His focus on well-being and life phases covers topics such as cancer screening, menopause, osteoporosis, and pelvic floor health. These talks are informal, with plenty of time for questions and shared discussions.

Wednesday

The Secret Life of Water

Geary Schindel

9:30-10:45 Wednesday

1st 3 weeks (9/8-9/26)



This short course will cover multiple aspects of water, including the hydrologic cycle, surface streams and rivers, causes of flooding, dams, private and public water supplies and systems, water wells, and groundwater. In concert with the instructor's extensive regional background, emphasis will be placed on the Edwards and Trinity aquifers, water use, water quality, and water conservation. (Max 35)

New!

Advances in Aging Research

Aris Nikas MD

9:30-10:45 Wednesday

2nd 6 weeks (10/20-12/5)

Working with the latest data on how the human body and mind age, including on a molecular level, this class will consider what mechanisms shape the aging process. The instructor, a physician, will share ways to apply this emerging knowledge to our everyday activities, nutrition and habits. (Max 37)

Baby French

Fred Johnson

9:30-10:45 Wednesday

12 weeks



Baby French will use the text **Learn French with Short Stories – Fifteen Beginner Stories with Parallel French and English Text** by French Hacking. Though we will pick up with Chapter 4 of the text, we'll work to bring students who did not attend the summer class up to speed. Our main goal: to pronounce French correctly; our secondary goal: to learn simple conversation. No one will be asked to speak or read in French until they are confident enough to speak individually. No prior knowledge of French is required. Most ALIR French students are A1 level (0-500 words)

and only a very few are at A2 (500-1500 words). *Nous sommes toutes des débutantes*. We also will listen to a few French songs and perhaps learn a joke or two! *Bienvenue à notre classe de français*. (Max 30)

Introduction to the Ukulele

Sandra Goodrum/Albert Zulaica

9:30-10:45 Wednesday

12 weeks



If you've heard ALIRians strumming their ukuleles along to popular tunes and wondered if you'd like to try as well – then this is the perfect place to start.

Weeks 1-6 will be spent learning one- and two-finger chord songs, and then in classes 7-9 we'll learn the chord progressions in the key of C. We'll wrap up by practicing a few songs selected by students. The instructor will provide songbooks, but you will need to bring a ukulele (soprano, concert or tenor) with 4 strings tuned to GCEA, a music/recipe stand, a tuner and a 3-ring binder; short nails on your left hand are highly recommended! *Class goal:* having fun making music together. (Max 20)

Ukulele Jam Band

Bob Carlson

11:00-12:15 Wednesday

12 weeks



Come rock out with the Ukulele Jam Band! We'll play songs by The Beatles, Elvis, Dylan, Simon & Garfunkel and other pop, folk and easy rock favorites you grew up with. We keep it simple – if you can play C, F, and G7 chords to start, you're in the band! Bring any size ukulele and a tuner; a tabletop music stand is optional. (Max 18)

Heartfulness Meditation

Sailaja Manne MD

11:00-12:15 Wednesday

1st 3 weeks (9/8 – 9/25)

Heartfulness Meditation includes simple core practices to transform us from within. These practices lead away from the complexity of the mind to the simplicity of the heart and can be easily integrated into daily routines. Heartfulness techniques have been studied and proven effective in reducing stress/anxiety, improving sleep, enhancing emotional intelligence and exploring human consciousness. This class, designed for seniors, will include topics like nutrition, sleep, loneliness and more. Each session will include experiential relaxation and meditation. Please bring a yoga mat or cushion for comfortable sitting. **NOTE:** This class is also offered online on Mondays. (Max 30)

Our Rare Earth

Geary Schindel

11:00-12:15 Wednesday

1st 3 weeks (9/8 – 9/25)

What factors must come together to create a habitable planet? They can include the type of star most likely to be conducive to life, a habitable "Goldilocks Zone," the need for stable, near- circular orbits, a large moon as well as a Jupiter-size planet, large oceans, plate tectonics, and of course the evolution of plant-based life into more complex life forms that ultimately lead to intelligent life. This learning will unlock a discussion of the long-term prospects for our planet. (Max 30)



Tai Chi/Qigong

Julie Nyren/Peter Nyren

11:00-12:15 Wednesday

12 weeks

This semester we will be teaching the 24-form Yang Style Tai Chi routine and the 8 Pieces of Brocade Qigong warmup. The practice's gentle flowing movements can lead to better balance, fitness and mental health. (Max 35)

New!

Japonisme: Japanese Influence on Western Culture

Nancy Fix Anderson, PhD

11:00-12:15 Wednesday

2nd 6 weeks (10/20-12/5)



Japan's borders were closed to most westerners from the early 1600s until 1853. The opening of Japan led to European and American fascination with and absorption of this extraordinary and (to them) exotic culture and society. Focusing on the years 1853-1920, we will study the aesthetic movement known as *Japonisme*, a French word

coined in 1872 to describe the Japanese influence on so

many aspects of western culture and society. We will discuss *Japonisme* in western art, music, literature, architecture, interior design, landscaping/ gardening, religion, sports, and body art (tattooing). **NOTE:** This class is also offered online on Thursdays. (Max 35)

New!

Making Greeting Cards **POP!**

Naomi Best/Judy Callier

11:00-12:15 Wednesday

12 weeks

We're entering the season of holiday card exchanging – although handmade greeting cards can be a wonderful expression of friendship year round. This hands-on class will give you techniques and ideas for crafting beautiful and unusual greeting cards. Participants are asked to pay a supply fee of \$10, as many supplies will be provided. (Max 20)

New!

Art Masterpieces, Luncheons and Shady Ladies

Barbara Maphet/Rodney Brown

1:00-2:15 Wednesday

12 weeks

These artful instructors will take you back in time to some fascinating worlds of well-known artists such as Raphael and Peter Bruegel. You will learn, for instance, why paintings of Sargent, Lempicka, and Velasquez (pictured) were so controversial, what impact Venus had on art, and what luncheons have to do with art!

You will also learn about shady ladies and the artists who painted them, as well perhaps, as how the Pre-Raphaelites interpreted The Lady of Shallot.



Understanding the Holocaust

Steven and Susan Butler

1:00-2:15 Wednesday

2nd 6 weeks (10/20-12/5)

We will begin with a historical perspective of the European Jewish experience as well as prewar Germany, followed by discussion of rise of Nazism and the Holocaust. Our sessions will include examining the powerful effects of propaganda and hearing a personal story by a Holocaust survivor descendent. Finally, we'll share a description of the San Antonio Holocaust Museum's education program and outreach.

Climate Change and You

Geary Schindel

1:00-2:15 Wednesday

1st 3 weeks (9/8 – 9/25)

This class will cover the history and science of climate change using credible data from various government and NGO sources, including the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Climate change is here and is the result of pumping large amounts of CO₂ and methane into the atmosphere, especially since WWII. However, warnings contained in the 1978 and 1983 reports from the National Academy of Sciences were ignored and attempts were made to discredit the science – meaning precious time has been wasted. Today, the effects of climate change are becoming ever more apparent: the warming and expansion of the oceans, record high temperatures across the globe, loss of alpine and continental glaciers, bleaching of ocean corals, melting of the arctic permafrost, mass extinction of plants and animals, and increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather events including hurricanes, floods and droughts. Let this expert give you the facts.



Planning for the Inevitable: A Baby Boomer's Guide

Peggy Brown/McKenzie Granger

1:00-2:15 Wednesday

12 weeks

So much can happen in a moment - a fall or an illness, a death - that suddenly requires quick actions involving finances, legal authority, a new living arrangement or a home sale. The solution: *have a plan*. This class will cover a variety of topics related to aging-related challenges and decisions. Topics will include senior living choices, family-focused resources for care management, legal and financial issues, paying for long-term care, funeral planning and end-of-life decisions, Alzheimer's and dementia, depression and mental health, aging in place, cyber security and crimes against seniors, downsizing, and selling the family home and making a move.

Board and Card Games

Suzette Pelayo

1:00-2:15 Wednesday

12 weeks



Connect with people who love playing games. Bring a board game or a deck of cards and teach your fellow ALIRians how to play a new game (if they don't already know). If you're looking for something entertaining and a tad competitive, spend some time with this welcoming group, even on a drop-in basis. (Max 20)

Thursday

Pastels Painting

Barbara Gadsby/Albert Zulaica

9:30-12:15 Thursday

12 weeks

Join this "dynamic duo" for a lively painting class using pastels! Open to (and welcoming to) all skill levels, this double period class will explore various techniques and surfaces. No experience necessary. The provided supply list will include pastels, either Rembrandt (box of 15 half sticks) or Nupastel (box of 24). Paper will be available for purchase at \$9, although returning students may use their own. **NOTE:** Double period (Max 24)

New!

The Baroque Influence in Mexico

Yvonne Soliz-Valdez, PhD

9:30-10:45 Thursday

2nd 6 weeks (10/20-12/5)



ALIRians will explore the Baroque influence in the formation of Mexican colonial society and how it separated the colonizers from the indigenous communities. We will also learn how the Baroque movement influenced Mexican art, architecture, textiles, food and music, from New Spain to the present day. (Max 25)

Flow Yoga

Jean Unser

9:30-10:45 Thursday

12 weeks



Build a flowing yoga practice that fits you -- including breathwork, basic asanas, stretching, core and balance work. This class does ask students to get up and down off the floor; please bring your mat and yoga blocks to class. (Max 30)

Turning Points in American History, Part 1

Tom Colbourn

9:30-10:45 Thursday

12 weeks

Have you ever wondered how history really happens? Is it predetermined and inevitable, or full of surprises? Is history a gradual evolution or can a single person or event change its direction forever? This Great Courses® class is the first part of a two-part course ending in the Spring term and covers the period from 1617 to 1872. What do *you* think were events during that timeframe that caused sudden and dramatic change in American history? Some that we'll discuss may surprise you.

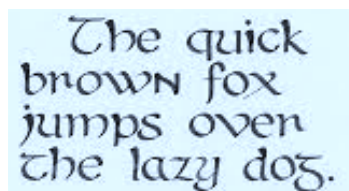
Uncial Calligraphy

Mary Bowman/Lee Brooks

9:30-10:45 Thursday

12 weeks

More artistic lettering is possible for all of us, and it can take less practice than expected. This fall we will concentrate on the ancient Uncial Script, used in the 4th to 8th centuries in Europe and, as always, we emphasize creating actual products employing this lettering. Basic marking pens and a kneaded eraser will be available for cash purchase (\$7 total) in class, and a \$5 fee is requested for special papers and materials distributed during class. Bring your marking pen collection from home, and a batch of scratch paper for use in practice. (Max 12)



New!

Spanish thru Song

Kitty Scott

9:30-10:45 Thursday

1st 3 weeks (9/8 – 9/25)



Dive into any level of your Spanish by listening, singing and discussing Spanish songs. Sharing music as well as singing together has been shown to improve pronunciation and has the further advantage of developing cultural awareness. (Not to mention the fun factor!) We'll start with two internationally famous, beloved Spanish songs – Guantanamera and Bésame Mucho. (Max 15)

Brain Games, Live & In Person

Steve Rutledge

11:00-12:15 Thursday

4th 3 weeks (11/10-12/5)

Join the fun as we play in real time with words and phrases, testing our memories and exercising our brain cells with wurdles, commonyms, hink pinks and other delightfully perplexing ways to expand our minds. All you need is pencil and paper and your thinking cap! This puzzling community always has a great time! (Max 15)

New info!

History of the CIA – Traitors

Peter Nyren/Julie Nyren

11:00-12:15 Thursday

1st 6 weeks (9/8-10/17)



This semester we will be focusing on famous traitors in U.S. intelligence history, both those who worked for CIA (e.g. Aldrich Ames) and those who came from other intelligence agencies (the FBI's Robert Hanson). We also plan to cover some famous traitors on the other side of the Iron Curtain who provided valuable information on Soviet capabilities that helped us win the Cold War. The instructors, both former CIA employees, plan to use videos from the CIA and the International Spy Museum websites. (Max 35)

Fundamentals of Photography

Peter Nyren

11:00-12:15 Thursday

2nd 6 weeks (10/20 – 12/5)

This class will use selected video segments from the Great Courses® *Fundamentals of Photography* with National Geographic® photographer Joel Sartre, combined with lessons from the instructor's considerable experience as a serious nature/travel/portrait photographer. This class will be geared for photographers of all levels, using cameras or cellphones. Will also include outings to local attractions for hands-on practice. (Max 15)



Yoga-Inspired Stretching

Kelleigh Lewis

11:00 – 12:15 Thursday

12 weeks

Many beneficial yoga stretches have been adapted – without losing their legendary effectiveness – for people who appreciate the value of stretching but who are also glad to have a chair to help with balance or stability. Join this longtime yoga practitioner to learn new ways to stay limber, flexible, strong and steady. (Max 37)

American Sign Language

Barbara Gadsby

1:00-2:15 Thursday

12 weeks



This class has a well-earned reputation for making learning Sign Language fun and easy. You'll learn everyday phrases and explore a bit of Deaf culture along the way. By the end of the 12 weeks, you should be able to carry on a fairly decent conversation. Join, learn and have fun, just in time for holiday celebrations! (Max 30)

New!

Baby Italian

Fred Johnson, MA

1:00-2:15 Thursday

12 weeks



Baby Italian will use the text *Le Adventure di Paul a Roma* by Serena Capilli for beginners. We will read Italian out loud to learn correct pronunciations. There will also be exercises to help your oral and written mastery of very basic Italian. We'll use a question-and-answer format to enhance your conversation skills. Frequent review will drive home basic constructions needed in conversation. Italian arias will provide a break and help us gain familiarity with operatic masterpieces. *Benvenuto a nostra classe di Italiano!* (Max 30)

An Introduction to Guitar

Felix Cerna

1:00-2:15 Thursday

1st 6 weeks (9/8 – 10/17)

Welcome to a class for beginners who would like to learn the most commonly used chords to play guitar. We will learn several chord progressions and use them with some easy-to-play songs. We will also become familiar with the notes on the fretboard, strings and string names, and several strumming patterns. Bring a guitar and a tuner (if you already have one) to the first class – and you'll be ready to start your musical journey! **NOTE:** This is a true beginner class, not one for "advanced beginners." (Max 8)

New!

Six Screen Satires

Geoff Leech & Joanna McKinnis

1:00-2:15+ Thursday

1st 6 weeks (9/8-10/17)



Enjoy this collection of six famous cinematic satires that laugh at 1940s-era rom-coms, that ridicule fascist dictators, and that spoof the master of suspense. You can be sure that this film-savvy instructor duo will inform and delight with their choices! Please be aware that all six films will run longer than 75 minutes (they vary from 88 to 125 minutes).

Chess Club

Stan Unser

1:00-2:15 Thursday



2nd 6 weeks (10/20-12/5)

Do you like to play chess, need to meet new partners, or just learn how to play and increase your cognitive exercise? We will work on improvement for beginners or masters and will match similar playing levels to make it enjoyable. Bring a chessboard if you have one, but it's not required. (Max 20)

Friday

Free-form Diamond Dot Art

Joan Lyons

9:30-12:15 Friday

1st 3 weeks (9/8 – 9/26)

We will use basic techniques we learned from using prepared kits in our earlier classes to move on to more creative free-form projects. We'll take all sort of objects, cards and canvas to add style and color with Diamond Dots. Your imagination, not a kit, will guide you through projects, along with suggestions from your fellow students and the instructor. Once enrolled, you will receive a list of project ideas; please note that there will be a fee of \$3 to help cover costs of glues and supplies.

NOTE: Double period (Max 20)

Come Fly Away – *To Christmas*

Joan Lyons

9:30-12:15 Friday

3rd 3 weeks (10/20-11/7)

This Fall, the "Come Fly Away" theme is not *where*, but *when* -- these three selected films will fill us with the Christmas spirit, a special time for getting together. The films will, as always, be Hollywood-produced; some might be based in the USA, some might be in a foreign country, but all will feature holiday hijinks and Christmas cheer. Our snack at the break will definitely have a holiday theme as the instructor looks forward to sharing her favorite time of year (and her cookie recipes?) with you.

NOTE: Double period (Max 22)



New!

Nordic Noir

Berit Mason

1:00-2:15 Friday

12 weeks

Nordic Noir is an official category of Scandinavian crime and mystery dramas made for television and film. This class will watch several series featuring crime and mystery stories set in contemporary Scandinavia, all with English subtitles. We'll discuss production elements that make this category of story-telling so popular. Please note that *Nordic Noir* depicts crime scenes, but the instructor will skip anything gratuitous or offensive. (Max 30)

Online ZOOM Courses

Fall 2025

Monday

Memoir Writing

Michael Burns

11:00-12:15 Monday

12 weeks

Every person has stories to tell. Your memories can be a cherished odyssey, a meaningful legacy connecting generations, or a way to recall and celebrate a special memory. Join this long-running online workshop to learn from and share your unique stories with others. (Max 30)

Heartfulness Meditation

Sailaja Manne MD

11:00-12:15 Monday

1st 3 weeks (9/8-9/26)

Heartfulness Meditation includes simple core practices to transform us from within. These practices lead away from the complexity of the mind to the simplicity of the heart and can be easily integrated into daily routines. Heartfulness techniques have been studied and proven effective in reducing stress/anxiety, improving sleep, enhancing emotional intelligence and exploring human consciousness. This class, designed for seniors, will include topics like nutrition, sleep, loneliness and more. Each session will include experiential relaxation and meditation. Please bring a yoga mat or cushion for comfortable sitting. **NOTE:** This class is also offered on campus on Wednesdays.

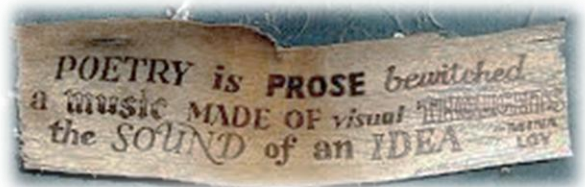
Poetry for the 21st Century

Jean Jackson

1:00-2:15 Monday

12 weeks

This is an ongoing class for those who wish to know more about poetry that is being written now (as opposed to what was in your high school textbook). We will read and discuss what makes a poem work for us. There will also be an opportunity to share what we've written. (Max 14)



Veteran to Veteran and You

Sherri Shadrock

3:00-4:15 Monday

12 weeks

If you are a US armed forces veteran or a family member of a veteran, you are welcome at this class. Vet to Vet is an established support organization, administered by veterans whose key goal is to improve and increase mental health services through community education and community services. Their motto – gladly teach, gladly learn – emphasizes the group's focus on mental health education. Find out more about the group at vet2vetusa.org. (Max 10)

Tuesday

Genealogy for Beginning and Advanced Researchers

Carole Bancroft

9:30-10:45 Tuesday

1st 6 weeks (9/8 – 10/17)

This is a workshop-type class for all who are interested in discovering more about their genealogy. For beginners, the instructor will help you get started researching your family's ancestry and creating a family tree. Continuing or advanced students will receive ongoing input about research tips, new sources, and ideas for knocking down those genealogy 'brick walls' of apparent dead ends. (Max 50)



Sharing ideas with friends via technology is wonderful. Who knew?

Socrates Café

Mike Burns

3:00-4:15 Tuesday

12 weeks

This class, popular with ALIRians for 17+ years, was inspired by the book **Socrates Café** and the belief that "an unexamined life is not worth living." The thought-provoking question posed for each week's discussion may come from *any* subject area – perhaps from religion or politics ... from culture or technology ... from metaphysics or science ... from government or history – who knows? (Max 25)

Wednesday

Always New!

Awareness and Seeing

Mary Bowman/Dee Duffy

11:00-12:15 Wednesday

1st 6 weeks (9/8-10/17)

This online class will concentrate on analysis of *any* original art works that a student wants to show and discuss. We see better when taught how to see, and this class opens our eyes as our awareness sharpens. Also this Fall we will be expanding a bit into some philosophical discussion on lifestyle choices and perhaps seeing them differently with input from this eldest of ALIR's regular teachers, now 98. (Max 16)

New!

Our Presidents: "He Did What??"

Don Gadberry

3:00-4:15 Wednesday

1st 6 weeks (9/8-10/17)

This class will look at some of the lesser-known facts and stories about our presidents. Each meeting will present information, both printed and online, about one or more U.S. presidents. Discussion will follow and each class participant will be invited to add to the story. Learn about which president swam nude in the Potomac, which one fed the White House rats, which one had 15 (or maybe 16) children, and add your own fun history stuff. (Max 50)



Memory Lane

Don Gadberry

3:00-4:15 Wednesday

2nd 6 weeks (10/20-12/5)

Where is, what is, Memory Lane? This delightful and popular class consists of video shows of music, history, art images, videos, poems, etc. from our past. The only requirements are that you zoom in, listen, watch and enjoy the sharing of memories. It's always a real blast from the past! Bring your wine, cheese, dance moves, popcorn and a box of tissues. (Max 100)



Thursday

New!

Artificial Intelligence

Dr. Pat Burr

11:00-12:15 Thursday

1st 3 weeks (9/8-9/26)

This class is all about AI. No experience with AI is needed. No super brainpower is needed. No tests are involved! This is a basic class to become more familiar with AI and to learn to be productive using this new tool. *Pro tip:* taking notes with paper and pen during class will help retain information (just as it did in high school)! (Max 35)

New!

***Japonisme*: Japanese Influence on Western Culture**

Nancy Fix Anderson, PhD

11:00-12:15 Thursday

2nd 6 weeks (10/20-12/5)

Japan's borders were closed to most westerners from the early 1600s until 1853. The opening of Japan led to European and American fascination with and absorption of this extraordinary and (to them) exotic culture and society.

Focusing on the years 1853-1920, we will study the aesthetic movement known as *Japonisme*, a French word coined in 1872 to describe the Japanese influence on so many aspects of western culture and society. We will discuss *Japonisme* in western art, music, literature, architecture, interior design, landscaping/gardening, religion, sports, and body art (tattooing). **NOTE:** This class is also offered on campus on Wednesdays. (Max 60)



The Original Brain Games

Pat Schmitz/Steve Rutledge

11:00-12:15 Thursday

1st 6 weeks (9/8-10/17)

Bring your brain, stamina and a pencil and paper as we work on exercises that will help keep your brain strong. Even online, this is a very interactive class. We will work on everything from long- and short-term memory, to solving problems, to working out novel solutions and paying attention to detail. All this beneficial brainwork comes packaged in often hilarious and unforgettable ways; be prepared to LOL at some point. (Max 20)

Writing a Compelling Family Story

Mike Burns

1:00-2:15 Thursday

2nd 3 weeks (9/29-10/17)

This class will meld together several elements that can be used to write a publishable and compelling family story. We will explore how to use genealogy, family stories, history, photographs, official records and artifacts as well as personal perspective, narrative and detective work to bring alive our family stories through generations. Emphasis will be on creating a record that will outlive us and upon which others can build. The instructor will share his own documented family story as an example, and the class will have workshop time to assist class members on their efforts.



New!

Finding Peace and Happiness

Mark Stokes/Sue Young

3:00-4:15 Thursday

12 weeks

This class will discuss daily strategies about how to minimize anxiety and stress and live in a mindful state of contentment, happiness, joy and gratitude. Within a supportive community, the sessions will discuss ways including meditation to help improve mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual health. Topics include living in harmony with the way things are, conducting peaceful interactions with others, embracing the inherent goodness of life, and more. **NOTE:** This is the evolution of a class first known as **Healthier Living**, then as **Mindful Living**, then as **Mindfulness Meditation**, all taught at ALIR by Mark Stokes for nearly 20 years. (Max 25)

New!

The Evolution of Biblical Women: Concubines to Disciples and Missionaries

Julie Ouellette

3:00-4:15 Thursday

12 weeks



This is a chronological study of stories of women in the Bible, and how their social status changed from the time of Genesis to the era of Early Christianity. Our Old Testament study includes the stories of Hagar the Slave, the Concubines of Jacob, the Rape of Dinah, Rahab the Prostitute, Jael the Heroine, the Rape of the Levite's Concubine, the Rape of Princess Tamar, the Harem of King Xerxes, Gomer the Prostitute, and more. Our New Testament study will include Mary of Nazareth, the Samaritan Woman at the Well, the Woman Caught in Adultery, Mary Magdalene, Herodias, Martha and Mary of Bethany, Sapphira, Rhoda, Lydia of Thyatira, Deaconess Phoebe, Tabitha, Priscilla, and more. Our class will include reading and discussion with the instructor sending notes before each class. No prior knowledge of the Bible is necessary.

Friday

The 1900 Galveston Hurricane

Linda Comeaux

11:00-12:15 Friday

1st 3 weeks (9/8-9/26)



This year is the 125th Anniversary of the big storm, and it is still the worst natural disaster in US history! Why did it kill so many people? Did you have ancestors in the storm? How did it change history? Join us online as we learn more about this iconic Texas tragedy. (Max 50)

New!

The Power of Words

Judy Branch, EdD

1:00-2:15 Friday

1st 3 weeks (9/8-9/26)

Our first class will focus on famous quotes and thoughts about the power of words. Class two is about bestselling books on the power of words, with a guide on using Internet resources. Our third class will be hands-on, with students citing personal stories that illustrate the power of words in their lives. (Max 20)



Did you know? Each year, ALIRians contribute to a college scholarship fund for outstanding graduates of NEISD high schools. If you've ever wanted to help a young scholar achieve their dreams, this is a good way. (And while we're mentioning contributions, ALIR gratefully accepts legacy donations.)

Thanks for being part of our community of learners.

Fall 2025 At A Glance

Classes are of various duration; check the full description to confirm whether a class is 12-, 6-, or 3-weeks in length, and to confirm that no dates or times conflict.

↓ double period class	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Campus 9:30	American Short Story Texas Bios Greek/Roman Technology Beginning Line Dance Hula-la!	Movies in French ↓ Keys to Thailand Intl. Mountain Dance Zen Painting	Baby (Intro) French Secret Life of Water Aging Research Intro to Ukulele	Pastels Painting ↓ Baroque in Mexico Flow Yoga Singing in Spanish Am Turning Points, 1 Calligraphy: Uncial	Diamond Dot ↓ Let's Fly Away - Christmas ↓
Campus 11:00	Portraits Conscious Living Int/Adv Spanish Word Processing Spreadsheets Stretch/Strength	Murder...Funny ↓ Acrylic Painting ↓ Eng History 1485-1832 Line Dancing Travis Picking Method	Heartful Meditation Japonisme Our Rare Earth Ukulele Jam Band Tai Chi /Qi Gong Greeting Cards Pop	History CIA-Traitors Photography Brain Games Chair Yoga/Stretch	
Campus 1:00	Basic Watercolor ↓ 1 st Am Woman Writer English Misuses Power of the Pen Marjohgg	Forensics The American Dream Spanish Civil War Salsa y Mas Lecturas en Espanol Women's Health	Art Masterpieces The Holocaust Climate Change Board/Card Games Plan for Inevitable	Screen Satires ↓ Am. Sign Language Baby (Intro) Italian Intro to Guitar Chess Club	Nordic Noir
Online 9:30		Genealogy Workshop			
Online 11:00	Memoir Writing Heartful Meditation		Awareness & Seeing	Artificial Intelligence Japonisme Brain Games	1900 Galveston Hurricane
Online 1:00	Poetry 21 st Century			Compelling Family Story	Power of Words
Online 3:00	Veteran to Veteran	Socrates Café	Our Presidents Memory Lane	Finding Peace and Happiness Biblical Women	

ALIR Instructors

Fall 2025

Often called the "lifeblood of ALIR," the instructors who prepare and deliver ALIR classes are all unpaid volunteers, knowledgeable and willing to share. We enthusiastically applaud them.

Jacqueline Ackley received her M.D. via an Army Health Professions Scholarship and served in the U.S. Army as a doctor specializing in Pathology. Then, she retired in 2020 from her subsequent private practice as a hospital-based pathologist at BAMC, and now believes that line dancing has greatly enhanced her life!

Nancy Fix Anderson, a Professor Emerita of History at Loyola University New Orleans, has been teaching at ALIR for 12 years because she says she delights in being part of this stimulating community of intellectually curious, actively engaged people with such diverse life experiences.

Naomi Best worked in Finance for more than 25 years at a large public school district in Texas.

Mary Bowman, an ALIR icon, has "55 or so" years of teaching adult art education in several forms and disciplines. She was awarded a BA in Fine Arts '49 and has been a Calligrapher's Guild member for more than two decades.

Mike Burns has been a member of ALIR since he retired from USAA in 2016. His first class was Memoir Writing and that remains a passion, so Mike now hosts that class. He also hosts Socrates Café and serves on the ALIR Council as Chair.

Dr. Pat Burr is the former Vice President, Dean of the School of Business, and Distinguished Chair at the University of the Incarnate Word. She has taught Digital Media, Video Production, Audio Production, QR Code Design, and Artificial Intelligence. She confesses: "Being a nerd is so much fun."

CPA **Steven Butler** was a Partner in the firm Daniek, Butler CPAs. Now retired, he chalked up more than 40 years of experience in tax, business and personal financial planning.

A dance instructor for over 40 years, **Linda Carolan** has had performances in Germany, Venezuela, Mexico, and the US. She particularly enjoys clogging, Irish dance, the ukulele, and laughing. At this life stage, she's learned: (1) God is good, (2) it's great being married to your best friend and (3) counting to 3 with your feet is fun!

Bob Carlson's first ukulele was a rescue uke he found in a dumpster behind his college dorm. He's got a whole collection of ukuleles now and plays them whenever and wherever he can. Performing for an audience is always a thrill, but Bob also finds it exceptionally rewarding to teach his private students and group classes.

Amanda Churchill-Bergman spent 20 years teaching English to college students and is now happily occupied with ALIR and various kinds of needle work. She lives in a big house full of family and pets. "There is nothing like staying at home, for real comfort." — Jane Austen.

After graduating from the US Naval Academy, **Tom Colbourn** served as a Navy Surface Warfare Officer. With an MBA from Bryant University, he then had a career for many years as a manufacturing manager. Married with one daughter, Tom has volunteered at ALIR for 11 years, presenting courses and serving on the Council.

Linda Comeaux has been an ALIRian since 2018 as a participant, instructor and since 2022 on the ALIR Council. Along with decades volunteering with many community civic organizations, Linda spent 31 years in insurance, benefits, and risk management. She is married to ALIRian Don Gadberry – together they have 7 fantastic grandchildren!

John Fagin was born in Corpus Christi but grew up in an ever-moving US Navy family, and only settled in San Antonio when his father retired. After receiving both his BA and MA degrees in history from St. Mary's University, he taught first in public schools and later, until retirement, at San Antonio College.

While **Arlene Fisher's** professional life was spent as a certified Commercial Real Estate Appraiser (MAI), she has long studied Asian cultures. Her BS is from the University of Texas-Austin.

An aspiring computer geek, **Adrien Frank's** first foray at ALIR was 2007 when she taught Beginning Computers, the very basics. Recently, she's taught classes online, including "Three Museum Jewels in San Antonio" and "San Antonio Art on the Outside" as well "On-Line Dating for Seniors" taught in-person on campus.

Don Gadberry Don says he will never actually “retire” from teaching. After leaving the public schools after 40 years of service, he has been active in ALIR for the past 7 years. His past classes (all on-line) include Let’s Talk, Read All About It, Current Events, and Memory Lane.

Barbara Gadsby and **Albert Zulaica** are sibling instructors at ALIR. Albert, with a lifetime in various arts, now shares his knowledge with ALIRians. Barbara has taught Pastels at ALIR for many years. This dynamic-duo now co-teach, combining their skills & passion for art to enrich their students' experience.

After 20 years in the Air Force, **Don Glessner** retired as a Lt. Col., then spent 14 years at USAA, retiring as a VP. He holds both a BS and MBA degree. Don confesses that his passion is Texas history, especially the early 19th century; his proudest accomplishments are one wife, two kids and three grandkids.

Sandra Goodrum says she learned to dance at ALIR thanks to “awesome instructors”: Eloy Ramirez, Barbara Gadsby, and Linda Carolan. She also acknowledges that she learned to play the ukulele at ALIR thanks to “awesome instructors”: Rudy Salazar and Bob Carlson. Today, she’s a popular teacher herself.

Jean Jackson. ALIRian since 2000. Instructor, board member, ALIRian editor. This is the place to be. These are the people to be with.

Though he retired as a mechanical engineer, **Frederick Johnson** also taught at a college in Indonesia (1993-2000). Gaining fluency in a foreign language has always been a particular interest of his. He speaks three languages well, and French “passibly well,” having completed the 300-hour, 149-lesson, Assimil's *French with Ease* course.

In 1995, **Dee Kite's** career as a CPA and accounting professor was cut short by debilitating fatigue from MS. Since then, during the morning window of her limited energy, she has pursued mini-careers as a novelist, fine art photographer and Life Coach. Now retired, she lives with her husband and two dogs.

As a Retired Army Vietnam Combat Veteran, **Tom Lake** earned advanced degrees in education and business. As early as 1972, he developed computer applications, and he’s taught classes for the Army, the U.S. Dept of Energy, and the National Institute of Technology as well as at public and private schools. *Editor’s note:* Countless ALIRians owe their computer literacy to him.

Geoff Leech has been an active ALIRian since 2015, including chairing the ALIR Council during the COVID pandemic. He has offered more than 20 different ALIR courses on a variety of topics in history, science, literature and art history. Geoff is a retired naval officer and environmental engineer. He also has been a long-time docent at SAMA.

Pat Lonchar is an Emerita Professor of English, University of the Incarnate Word, and has offered many popular and engaging ALIR courses since 2010.

Joan Lyons believes that if you can learn it, you can teach it. Her love of ALIR and the sharing ideas and interests mean that she has taught multiple subjects – from cooking to history to travel to art to movies – at ALIR for more than 18 years.

John Lyons holds a Masters Degree in Engineering Technical Management from Texas A&M University and is a Life Senior Member of IEEE. He retired after more than 35 years in IT and telecom technology at companies that included IBM and Hewlett-Packard.

A Certified Heartfulness Trainer and physician, **Dr. Sailaja Manne** has practiced the Heartfulness way for more than 20 years. She is one of the key members of the Heartfulness Institute, currently working on several community initiatives for mental well-being. She often leads community sessions at public library and wellness locations.

Berit Mason works as a local journalist and published writer. She is half-Norwegian and has traveled extensively throughout Scandinavia. Closer to home, she recently produced a podcast about Texas Norwegians, now with the Institute of Texan Cultures.

Joanna McKinnis earned her MA and PhD in French Language and Literature at the University of Texas at Austin. She taught at UTSA for 30 years, designing and teaching a full range of courses, including French Language, Culture, Literature, and Film, the latter being her utmost favorite.

After retiring from a career in mental health social work, **Carolee Moore** returned to school for a master's degree in art history. She taught ancient through modern art history at UTSA and UIW for 15 years with special interest in neglected women artists and artists beyond western culture.

Aris Nikas is a physician with a long history of interest in nutrition and how it affects the human body, informed by his many years of clinical practice and research.

An Austin native and UT-Austin business school graduate, **Julie Nyren** served for six years in the US Air Force as a Russian linguist, and then for 28 years in the CIA in software development. She retired in 2014 after receiving a Meritorious Career Commendation Medal from the Agency.

Peter Nyren worked for the CIA for 33 years as an analyst covering the Soviet Union, Russia, and Ukraine -- including at the US Embassy in Kiev. He finished his career managing the CIA's Historical Review Program, which identifies and declassifies documents detailing Agency activities. Peter's Masters degree is from the LBJ School of Public Affairs at UT-Austin.

Tom O'Brien has had years of experience in engineering automated systems: airplanes, business systems, space robots, and computer systems. He has a BS in Electrical Engineering and an MS in Telecom and is a frequent ALIR instructor. His many interests include amateur radio, Information Theory, Game Theory and inventions.

Julie Ouellette is a native of 'Philly' and comes from a teaching background. She continues to work remotely for a company full time and enjoys doing deep-dive biblical research.

Anne Pearson is a graduate of Trinity University who spent years in journalism and corporate public affairs, having built her career on (among other things) clear, persuasive writing.

Suzette Pelayo spent 35 years as a teacher, principal and HR director before retiring in 2018. Suzette holds two degrees: a BA in Spanish and an MA in Educational Administration. At ALIR she has enjoyed teaching nutrition, cooking and Spanish, and served as Vice Chair of the ALIR Council and Chair of the Curriculum Committee.

Peter Platteborze, PhD, is a retired Army biochemist who transitioned into teaching at a university after his military career. Much of my more recent teaching has focused on the field of forensics, which is the application of science to the law.

Dr. Richard S. Pressman taught English at St. Mary's University for 37 years in a 45-year college teaching career. At ALIR, he has taught four courses so far, in addition to which he leads a book discussion group for faculty at St. Mary's and runs a not-for-profit company that rescues out-of-print Early American texts.

Dr. Rhonda Rowland was an educator for 33+ years and today shares her love of movies – especially the old black and white ones – with her fellow ALIRians, believing classic films still have messages for us today. She also loves friends, games, political discussions, Bible studies and ... adventures.

Steve Rutledge started life as well-travelled military brat who decided to pass on his love of learning to middle school science students. Now an ALIR Council member, Steve says while he used to probe the minds of middle schoolers, he now is looking to stretch the minds and memories of his fellow seniors.

Sherri Shadrock joined ALIR in the spring of 2024 and is a retired US Army Logistics and Transportation Corps Officer.

Geary M. Schindel is a professional geoscientist, now retired from the Edwards Aquifer Authority, who has worked in geology, hydrology, hazardous waste and water resource investigations in the US and abroad for 40+ years. He's been an adjunct professor at UTSA and the University of Belgrade, is co-chair of the Texas Hydro-Geo Workshop, and a fellow of the Geological Society of America.

Kitty Scott earned an MA from UTSA in Bicultural Bilingual Studies and during her career has taught ESL, Spanish, and Spanish through Song. In earlier years she performed in Spanish around South Texas. Since retiring, she has been teaching guitar, ukelele and voice.

Martha Spinks holds the Ph.D. in social welfare policy and has had a career in government and nonprofits writing and implementing policy and grants.

Mark Stokes, a veterinarian with a Master's in Public Health, spent 40 years in the US Air Force and served as the Chief Public Health Consultant for the AF Surgeon General. A long-time student of meditation, he has taught at ALIR for more than 17 years, including starting the Mindful Living/Meditation class as well as the Socrates Café class.

With a background and a BA in visual art, today **Jean Unser** is a 500-hour yoga therapy certified instructor. She acknowledges her affection for ALIR and especially enjoys celebrating a healthful yoga practice together with fellow ALIRians.

Dr. Ron Valdez is a retired local obstetrician/gynecologist with more than thirty years experience in private practice. At ALIR he has led classes focused on women's health and life phases.

Yvonne Soliz Valdez is a retired high school administrator. After receiving her PhD from Our Lady of the Lake University in 2006, she retired and moved to San Antonio. She then consulted for 13 years helping low-performing schools to succeed. She is a lifelong learner who loves to read and travel.