

Academy of Learning in Retirement

*A continuing education
community program*



Welcome to ALIR!

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

Spring 2026

On-Campus & Online Class Catalog

ALIR 2024-25 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

Inshort: 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.**

Double your pleasure! Double your fun!
Take two classes, (four classes?) – never just one!

Round up your own set of multiple classes!



- o Find out about the birth of modern Italy (p.18 & 30) ... while learning the Italian language (p.12)
- o Watch a smartly-curated film series about spies (p. 23) ... and get an inside look at the CIA's origins (p. 22)
- o Dig deep into the science of forensics (p. 24) ... then watch forensics in action when finding missing art masterpieces (p.9)
- o Get expert updates on our (aging) major biological systems (p.16) ... and view the x-rays and other technology that allow us to see inside some of those systems (p.13)
- o And since apparently not all string players can sing, the ukulele class is looking for background singers this spring!

Important Dates Spring 2026

Tuesday, Jan 6 **Online payment opens for Spring; you must pay before registering**

Monday, Jan 12 **Registration for classes opens; ongoing throughout the Spring**

Wed, Jan 21 Instructors' meeting | Orientation for new students

Monday, Jan 26 First day of classes

Monday, Feb 23 First luncheon

Week **March 9-13** Spring Break. No on-campus classes; NEISD closed

Monday, March 16 First day of 2nd 6-weeks classes

Wed, March 25 Second luncheon

Wed, April 15 Wed, Third luncheon: High School Scholarships Awards

April 22 **Friday**, Art Exhibition and Performing Arts Demonstrations

April 23/24 End of Spring term

Payment and Registration

AboutALIRregistration

- Registration is open and on-going throughout the spring.
- 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 January 12.
- **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 Spring 2026 term (January through April) is **\$85.00**. This single fee allows you to attend as many classes during the term as you want.
- On **Tuesday, January 6** 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 an 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), the **payment link** is <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/9040E4BABA72CA3FB6-61184012-alir>

How to register for classes

- After you've paid your Spring tuition, you'll get a confirmation of payment.
- When registration for classes opens on **Monday, January 12 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 January 12 (and throughout the rest of the term), use the registration link you were emailed to go to SignUpGenius to add a class. Again, no password or account is needed.

Classes by Category

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!

Campus Classes (Day offered)
Online Classes (Day offered)

Applied Art/Art Appreciation

Basic Watercolor (**Mon**)
New! Lost Art - Missing Masterpieces (**Mon**)
New! The Miniaturists (**Tues**)
Zen Painting (**Tues**)
Acrylic Painting Open Studio (**Tues**)
New! Visual Artists Gone Too Soon (**Tues**)
Seeing Art Anew (**Wed**)
Pastels Painting (**Thurs**)
Calligraphy (**Thurs**)
Diamond Dot (**Fri**)

Current Events/General Studies

Computer Technology/Digital Graphic Arts (**Mon**)
Genealogy Workshop (**Tues**)
Socrates Café (**Tues**)
New! Managing Unconscious Bias (**Tues**)
New! Donald Trump (**Tues**)
Memory Lane (**Wed**)
New! Planning for the Inevitable (**Wed**)
New! Gardening in San Antonio (**Wed**)

Economics/Finance/Science

Greek and Roman Technology (**Mon**)
New! Sustainability (**Tues**)
New! Retirement Strategies & Medicare (**Tues**)
New! Organizing Affairs & Retirement Visioning (**Thurs**)
New! Financial Planning for Retirees (**Thurs**)
New! Legacy – Planning with a Purpose (**Thurs**)
Introduction to Forensics (**Thurs**)

Film/Theater

Murder is ... **Still** Funny! (**Mon**)
Movies in French (**Tues**)
New! Eyes on the Spies (**Thurs**)
New! Three Films by Kurosawa (**Thurs**)
Come Fly with Me (**Fri**)
Nordic Noir (**Fri**)

Valentine Popup Class One Day Only!

Thursday, Feb. 12
1:00-2:15



Mini-Mosaics & Memories

Guided by professional artist Susan Butler, celebrate special memories by making a mini-mosaic keychain using mosaic tiles, jewelry findings and adhesive clay.

If you have a small keepsake, say, a single earring, charm or pendant you no longer use but would like to preserve, bring it along (as long as it's no larger than a quarter). It might work in this project. All other supplies will be provided; a \$12 supply fee is requested. **NOTE:**

registration is required.

You'll walk away with your own artistic masterpiece, just in time for Valentine's Day! (Max 20)

Health/Wellness

Heartfulness Meditation (Mon) (Fri)
Vet to Vet and You (Mon)
Conscious Living Circle (Mon)
New! Glad Rads (Tues)
Health and Aging, Part 2 (Wed)
Tai Chi/Qi Gong (Wed)
New! Dance Fitness (Wed)
Enhancing Peace and Happiness (Thurs)
Yoga-Inspired Stretching (Thurs)
Flow Yoga (Thurs)
New! ALIReady! (Fri)

Campus Classes (Day offered)
Online Classes (Day offered)

ALIRians have a rare opportunity to work with knowledgeable pros and equipment to learn what to do in emergencies, before help arrives. **Check out this exceptional offering on page 25.**

History/Political Science

New! The Comanche in Texas (Mon)
New! The Evolution of Texas 1821-1846 (Mon)
New! Raging Blue Gorilla: Supreme Court (Mon)
New! Henrietta Lacks and her HE-LA Cells (Tues)
The Presidency (Tues)
New! Clarence Darrow and His Times (Tues)
New! Book Circle: **Sapiens** (Wed)
New! Risorgimento: Unification of Italy (Wed) (Thurs)
New! A History of Fabrics and Textiles (Wed)
Understanding the Holocaust (Wed)
Our Presidents Did **What?** (Wed)
New! USA: A Visual History of Everybody (Thurs)
Turning Points in Am. History, Part II (Thurs)
History of the CIA, Continued (Thurs)
New! Moctezuma Encounters Cortes (Thurs)
New! Exploring Historic and Abandoned Houses (Fri)

Language

Spanish for Beginners (Mon) Intermediate & Early Adv.
Spanish (Mon) **New!** Fluency with Stories (Mon) Hold Your Tongue! Silly Errors in Talking & Writing (Mon) Baby Italian II (Tues) Lecturas in Espanol (Tues) Baby French II (Wed) **New!** Intermediate German (Wed) American Sign Language (Thurs)

Literature/Creative Writing

Classic American Short Story, III (Mon)
Memoir Writing (Mon)
Poetry of the 21st Century (Mon)
New! Literary Masks and Deceptions (Tues)
Power of the Pen (Tues)
New! Women in 19th-century English Fiction (Tues)

Music/Dance

The Artof Songwriting (**Mon**)
International Mountain Dancing (**Tues**)
The Travis Picking Method (**Tues**)
Learn to Line Dance (**Tues**)
Salsa y Mas – Let's Dance! (**Tues**)
Line Dance (**Wed**)
Introduction to Ukulele (**Wed**)
New! Backup Singers (**Wed**)
Ukulele Jam Band (**Wed**)
Introduction to Guitar (**Thurs**)

Campus Classes (Day offered)	Online Classes (Day offered)
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World Cultures/Philosophy/Religion

New! A Journey into the Underland (**Tues**)
New! Thinking Styles (**Wed**)
New venues! Exploring Mexico through Food (**Fri**)
Healthy Indian Cooking (**Fri**)
New! Study of the Book of Revelation (**Thurs**)

Recreation/Leisure

New! American Mahjong for Beginners (**Mon**)
Making Greeting Cards (**Wed**) Card and Board Games (**Wed**) **PopUp!** Mini-Mosaics Keychain (**Wed**) Brain Games (**Thurs**) (**Thurs**) **New!** Beginner's Guide to Birding (**Thurs**)

Memory Lane

It's not a podcast, not exactly a radio show or home movies, but for the last few years, ALIRian **Don Gadberry** has been creating memory-inducing collages of music, video, movie and TV clips that are **guaranteed** to take you back in time!

Of course, you can drop by his online gathering every Wednesday afternoon (see page 29) ... the crowd is congregating and would love to see you there! (Register first to get on his email alert list.)

And big news – his prior sessions have now been posted on ALIR's website and are available for you to “veg out” with anytime you have a spare hour and are bored with typically **blah** media offerings. Don's sessions are organized by date, so you can pick a date that has some meaning for you or just choose one at random. Most have a ‘theme’ or focus as well!

Find him at <https://www.alrsanantonio.org/memorylane>

On-Campus Courses

Spring 2026

Monday

The Classic American Short Story III

Richard S. Pressman PhD

9:30-10:45 Monday

12 weeks

We will read a classic American short story each week, with this term's literary portfolio focusing on writers including Bret Harte, Kate Chopin, Edith Wharton (pictured), O. Henry, Stephen Crane, Jack London, Willa Cather, Sherwood Anderson and F. Scott Fitzgerald. 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, the conversation in class is wide open and stimulating. All ideas are welcome. (Max 20)



New!

The Comanche in Texas

Don Glessner

9:30-10:45 Monday

1st 6 weeks (1/26 – 3/6)



The people we call the Comanche migrated from Asia 10-15,000 years ago. Over time they evolved from stone age hunter-gatherers to become the finest light cavalry force in the world. They stopped Spanish, French and Mexican movements into Texas and held up Anglo immigration for fifty years. During the 1800s, their population was reduced by 95% because of warfare and disease. By the 1870s they were contained on a reservation in Oklahoma. Today, they are tax-paying citizens with a growing population. In this course, we will cover it all.

New!

The Evolution of Texas 1821-1846

Don Glessner

9:30-10:45 Monday

2nd 6 weeks (3/16 – 4/23)

Between 1821 and 1846, Texas evolved from a Spanish colony to a Mexican state, to an independent republic to annexation by the United States. Every step involved a war. You will leave this class with a better understanding of how the State of Texas came to be what it is today.

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 will be followed up with brief discussions after viewing. Some ALIRians will share appropriate engineering stories as well.

(Max 28)

**Spanish for Beginners**

Jennifer Lawlace/Leigh Shapleigh

9:30-10:45 Monday**1st 6 weeks (1/26 – 3/6)**

This is a basic Spanish language course, beginning with verb conjugation. The Fall 2025 class covered the first four chapters of the text we're using, **Easy Spanish Step-By-Step**, by Barbara Bregstein (ISBN 978-0-07-146338-6). Let's move on together! These two instructors bring a fresh approach to learning the language that they both love. (Max 20)

New!**Fluency with Stories**

Lourdes Cervantes

9:30-10:45 Monday**2nd 6 weeks (3/16 – 4/23)**

Increase your fluency in Spanish with stories! We will use beginner-friendly stories to learn Spanish in context, moving from the simplest childhood stories to short stories and poetry from well-known authors. No book is needed; the instructor will provide handouts for the class.

Intermediate and 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)

The Art of Songwriting

Scott Duncan

11:00-12:15 Monday

1st 6 weeks (1/26 – 3/6)

The class is for beginning or seasoned songwriters. We will cover song structure by understanding verse/chorus/bridge, the use of rhyme scheme, and the use of imagery and word choice. We will cover linking words to melody, and learn how to get started or unstuck through the use of song prompts, songwriting exercises, and other tips. If you play guitar you may bring it; however, you don't have to play an instrument to write a song. If needed, adaptations will be made for students who took the class last year. (Max 10)

Heartfulness Relaxation and Meditation

Sailaja Manne MD

11:00-12:15 Monday

2nd 6 weeks (3/16 – 4/23)



Heartfulness Institute is a global nonprofit organization with thousands of volunteer trainers who serve more than 10 million meditators. Heartfulness techniques have proven effective in reducing stress and anxiety, improving sleep, enhancing emotional intelligence, and exploring the heights and depths of human consciousness. During these sessions, we will conduct experiential relaxation and meditation by a Certified Heartfulness meditation trainer. We will also do some simple yoga breathing exercises to relax your mind and body. (Max 30) **NOTE:** This class is also offered online on Fridays.

Computer Technology and Digital Graphic Arts

Thomas Lake

11:00-12:15 Monday

12 weeks



We'll work with Microsoft Windows versions 10 and 11, using an assortment of Windows' accessories: Mail, Snipping Tool, Sticky Notes, calendar, calculator, etc. We'll discover the creativity hidden within components of Microsoft Office: Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Publisher. Some time will be devoted to better understanding computer security threats and safeguards as well as on improving internet searches. Finally, we'll focus on the basics of digital photography and digital images, working with your own digital photos. We'll emphasize using those digital images in Word documents, PowerPoint presentations, and Publisher projects. (Max 20)

Murder is...*Still* Funny!

Dr. Rhonda Rowland/Tresa Fey

11:00-2:15 Monday

2nd 3 weeks (2/16 – 3/6)

We had such a jolly time watching murderous mayhem last term that we're ready for more this Spring! Enjoy the instructor's choice of three amusing, albeit deadly, films, along with their trivia and history. Prizes that tie in with the movie will be given at the end of each class. **NOTE:** double class (Max 30)

Conscious Living Circle

Dee Kite/Roz Gagliano/Sherri Shadrock

11:00-12:15 Monday 12 weeks

As part of our ALIR community, you'll use the Conscious Living Checklist to take stock of the areas in your life that may need a little attention or updating - those "loose ends" that can quietly get in the way of greater balance and satisfaction.

The checklist includes seven sections—My Space, Medical, My Body, Financial/Legal/Civic, Technology, Spiritual Well-Being, and Relationships—to help you look at life from every angle. Together, we'll use brainstorming, shared learning, encouragement, and gentle accountability to set progress goals and celebrate steps forward. Before the first meeting, participants will need to complete an initial draft of the checklist; the instructor will email you a PDF when she receives the roster. (Max 15)

New!**LostArt: Stories of Missing Masterpieces**

GinaBillington

1:00-2:15 Monday**1st 6 weeks (1/26 – 3/6)**

Mysteries, stunning graphics, intriguing stories behind the theft and/or destruction of some of the world's most famous pieces of art -- join us in viewing a fascinating Great Courses® class taught by Noah Charney, an art historian who specializes in art crime and forgeries. Topics include thievery, forgery, plunder, iconoclasm, accident, and some unsolved cases such as those one might discover in a "Museum of Lost Art."

New!**TheRaging Blue Gorilla: A Long Look at the Supreme Court**

Amanda Churchill-Bergman

1:00-2:15 Monday**12 weeks**

It hasn't always been *The Raging Blue Gorilla* – that's a mnemonic for Thomas, Roberts, Barrett, Gorsuch (the rest Just Sit Around Kicking Kittens). We're going to take a long look at the SCOTUS through the lens of its landmark decisions and their results, from *Marbury v Madison* to whatever happens by the end of spring. Our discussion leader once suffered through

a single year of law school (worst year ever she says) but is always game for a good discussion. Join us – experts welcome!

Basic Watercolor

Jeanette Lowell

1:00-2:45 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. **NOTE** extended time (Max 22)

Hold Your Tongue! Annoying & Silly Errors When Talking or Writing

Richard S. Pressman PhD

1:00-2:15 Monday**2nd 3 weeks (2/16 – 3/6)**

Does it irk you when someone says, "I did good today"? Or how about when you hear people endlessly describe the extremes as "incredible" or "awesome"? Then you will enjoy this mini-course. We will work from a prepared list of 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!**American Mahjong for Beginners**

Adrien Frank

1st 6 weeks (1/26 – 3/6)**1:00-2:15 Monday****AND 2nd 6 weeks (3/16 – 4/23)**

Learn to play American Mahjong! This class introduces the rules, tiles, and strategies of the game at a comfortable pace. Mahjong combines skill, memory, and luck -- while providing endless opportunities for laughter, friendship, and fun. It takes time and commitment to learn the rhythms and patterns of play. The rewards are great: stimulating your brain and enjoying lively camaraderie.

Beginners can register for **either session** to receive basic instruction. If you have completed the 1st 6 weeks class, you are invited to join the ongoing players group -- aka the **ALIR Mahj Squad**, meeting at the same time -- to continue to play, develop your skills, and learn new ones. Come and enjoy this exciting and social game with us!



Tuesday

New!

The Miniaturists

Joanna Valentine

9:30-10:45 Tuesday

2nd 3 weeks (2/16 – 3/6)

Why do we like to see representations of our lives in miniature? This art form dates



back to the Egyptians who placed miniatures of people and revered items in the pyramids as part of the burial process. Dollhouses were made as cabinet displays for wealthy patrons in the 1600s and became mass market household toys after World War II. Model planes, trains and cars became popular in the 1950s. Today there are

museums dedicated to the world of the miniature, and miniature displays are often one of the most visited items in other museums. This course will cover the history, psychology, art and obsession of miniaturists, discuss the skills required (which are many), and take a close look at some incredible examples of this art form. Book recommended, but not required: **In Miniature: How Small Things Illuminate the World** by Simon Garfield (ISBN: 9781786890795). (Max 30)



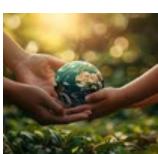
New!

Sustainability

Geary Schindel

9:30-10:45 Tuesday

1st 3 weeks (1/26 – 2/13)



The class will discuss human impacts on the planet and ways to decrease our environmental footprint. Led by a professional geoscientist with more than 40 years of experience in geology, hydrology, hazardous waste and water resource investigations, we'll discuss water, energy, food, and transportation issues. Our discussions will include considering various choices that can impact sustainability.

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 is an excellent companion course. If not, the movies and the company are still outstanding. **NOTE:** double period (Max 30)



New!

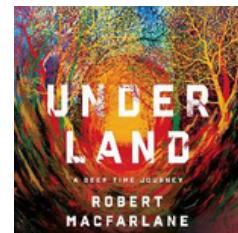
A Journey Into the Underland

Arlene Fisher

9:30-10:45 Tuesday

3rd 3 weeks (3/16 – 4/2)

This class will delve into a collective sampling of the ideas and exploration of worlds under the surface, across both the physical and the mythic dimensions. Along the way, we'll consider how humans relate to deep time, hidden spaces and ecological change. Our discussions will be centered around the 2019 book by Robert MacFarlane, **Underland - A Deep Time Journey** (ISBN 978-0-393-242140); to gain the maximum from this class we strongly recommend you read the book as well as join in class discussions.



Baby Italian II

Fred Johnson

9:30-10:45 Tuesday

12 weeks

We will study the Italian reader for beginners, **Due Amice e Una Bufera Di Neve** by Serena Capilli (ISBN: 979-1221076493). We will also use dialogues from **L'Italien** by Assimil, although there is no need to buy the book as the instructor will provide dialogues 15-28. Italian arias and fun songs will be worked in when possible. **Ciao!** (Max 30)

Zen Painting

Mary Bowman/Pat Schmitz

9:30-10:45 Tuesday

12 weeks

This long-running class opens up latent talents in the ancient way taught in Japan: **watch it being done, then do it yourself**. The instructors, aided by Lee Brooks and Maureen McCann, present different subjects each week for students to use to produce and take home -- notecards, bookmarks, magnets, gift wrap and so on. A number of basic materials, especially brushes, will be available for cash purchase, and a fee of \$5 is asked to cover papers etc. used in class. (Max 23)

International Mountain Dancing

Linda Carolan

9:30-10:45 Tuesday

12 weeks



Enjoy dancing to music of the world ... Switzerland, Japan, Germany, the Ukraine, Ireland, Italy, Japan, the US and more. We combine simple figures and dance formations with easy-to-accomplish steps (even for those of us with 'two left feet'). We share basic 'walking steps' as well as simplified clog or dance 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)

The Presidency

John Fagin

11:00-12:15 Tuesday

12 weeks

This course will cover the constitutional and historical roots of the US presidency.

We will include a discussion of the best and worst presidents in American history as ranked by historians. Moreover, we will spend time talking about the seven major roles or duties that all presidents must perform as a part of their job.

New!

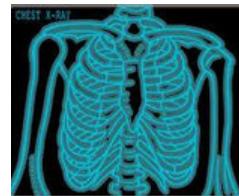
GladRads

Candice Castro, MD FACS

11:00-12:15 Tuesday

1st 3 weeks (1/26 – 2/13)

This class, taught by a long-time Army surgeon, will view and discuss actual x-rays and slides of the chest, abdomen, and other anatomical areas with both normal and abnormal findings. Having taught military Physician Associates for years, the instructor says “they always were interested when I showed them x-rays, pointed out anatomy, and translated medical terms for them.” You can share in this fascination, and learn some biological basics as well. (Max 30)



Acrylic Painting

Open Studio

11:00-2:15 Tuesday

12 weeks

This perennially popular class will morph this spring into an open studio format. Within its supportive and welcoming atmosphere, students can take advantage of this special set-aside time to work on their projects, perhaps also sharing favorite techniques for painting with acrylics with their fellow artists. **NOTE:** double period including lunch. (Max 20)

The Travis Picking Method

Rudy Salazar



11:00-12:15 Tuesday

2nd 6 weeks (3/16 – 4/23)

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 style requires you 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’ll be introduced to picking chord melody style as opposed to strumming. (Max 12)

Finally - Learn to Line Dance!

Jean Moore/Pat Hedges

11:00-12:15 Tuesday

12 weeks

Just in time for June weddings and summer reunions – here’s your chance to learn the basic steps to line dance. We will teach **absolute beginner** and beginner-level line dances. (Max 20)

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

Martha Spinks, PhD

11:00-12:15 Tuesday

1st 3 weeks (1/26 – 2/13)

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, will focus on 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. (Max 12)

New!

Literary Masks and Deceptions

Dr. Patricia Lonchar

1:00-2:15 Tuesday

2nd 6 weeks (3/16 – 4/23)



Most of us are familiar with the cliche "**appearances can be deceiving.**" This class will examine how several authors across historical periods employ this cliche to engage the reader and, at the same time, remind the reader that "things are not always what they seem." Students will need to have their own copies of Twain's **Puddin'head Wilson** and Wharton's **Ethan Frome** (paperbacks, available \$5-\$7). The instructor will provide copies of other readings. (Max 30)

New!

Clarence Darrow and His Times

Bernard Rauch

1:00-2:15 Tuesday

2nd 6 weeks (3/16 – 4/23)

Dive into the fascinating world of Clarence Darrow, one of America's most renowned and controversial defense attorneys. Together we will explore Clarence Darrow's life, his major trials -- including the Scopes Monkey Trial and the Leopold and Loeb Trial -- and his lasting impact on American law and society. The course will rely on a blend of materials such as documentaries and Great Course® lectures. (Max 35)



Lecturas en Espanol

Estela Royal/Mary Martinez

1:00-2:15 Tuesday

12 weeks

This ongoing class requires a good level of Spanish language knowledge, and always welcomes newcomers. This spring, we will finish the book **Lecturas Avanzadas**, a Spanish reader. We'll then move on with the book **Cuentos Folkloricos Latinoamericanos** by John Bierhorst (ISBN 0-375-71397-2). (Max 30)

New!

Visual Artists Gone Too Soon

Carolee Moore

1:00-2:15 Tuesday

1st 6 weeks (1/26 – 3/6)

This class will examine the artwork/biographies of artists who barely got started before dying too young. Some have become well-known with substantial bodies of work, but others remain in the shadow. We will explore and enjoy the promise they left us in their work and their lives. (*Pictured:* Keith Haring) (Max 20)



New!

Donald Trump

John Fagin

1:00-12:15 Tuesday

2nd 3 weeks (2/16 – 3/6)

The man, the myth, the reality. We will cover Donald Trump's background and business career. In addition, we will cover some of the myths about Trump that made him attractive to voters. Finally, we will review some of the policies that represent the true Trump record.

Salsa y Mas – *Let's Dance!*

Albert Zulaica/Connie Zulaica

1:00-2:15 Tuesday

12 weeks

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)

New!

Retirement Strategies & the Truth about Medicare

Susan Blumhorst MA

1:00-2:15 Tuesday

1st 3 weeks (1/26 – 2/13)

This class will dig down into the details of our US Medicare insurance program, as well as the many supplemental insurers who work with the program. The instructor, a financial professional specializing in insurance, will share information on various options you may have, even if you are already enrolled in Medicare.



Wednesday

Health and Aging, Part 2

Aris Nikas

9:30-10:45 Wednesday

1st 6 weeks (1/26 – 3/6)

This course will share both knowledge and tools to help us age well and stay healthy longer into our lifespans. The instructor, a physician, will focus on evidence-based research about our hearts, joints, minds, skin, etc., based on the latest book by Dr. Michael Greger, **How Not to Age**. Each class will discuss what actions have been proven to slow down the aging process. To more fully understand our bodies as they age, six of the major human organ systems will be covered this Spring.

Line Dance

Jean Moore/Pat Hedges



9:30-10:45 Wednesday

12 weeks

Line dancing is an enjoyable way to move around, get some exercise and improve your balance. Most of the dances we teach are beginner level, with a few high beginner/intermediate dances. Each is demonstrated clearly, and the welcoming community of ALIRian line dancers invites you to come dance with us. (Max 30)

Baby French II

Fred Johnson

9:30-10:45 Wednesday

12 weeks

This introductory class will continue to use the text **Learn French with Short Stories** by French Hacking (ISBN: 9798594345713), covering the final chapters 10-15. Also we will practice French dialogues taken from an optional text, **French Français** by Assimil (ISBN: 978-2-7005-0854-3). As before, our emphasis is learning to pronounce French correctly as well as to speak and understand simple French. We'll enrich our class learning with songs and videos whenever possible, as having fun while learning is an overall goal. (Max 30)

Out of Whole Cloth: A History of Fabrics and Textiles

Robin Skoglund, M.A

9:30-10:45 Wednesday

2nd 3 weeks (2/16 – 3/6)



Over the centuries, our clever ancestors discovered and enhanced natural materials to make their bodies and habitats more comfortable and more beautiful. They cultivated plants and raised animals to produce textiles from cotton, wool, silk, linen, etc. and learned how to loom, crochet and knit. Today we continue to create and enjoy new blends and synthetics for an astounding diversity of cloth. We'll weave together historic threads to better appreciate the fabrics in our lives.

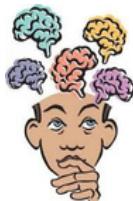
New!

Thinking Styles

Alan Grinnell Jones

9:30-10:45 Wednesday

1st 3 weeks (1/26 – 2/13)



Our discussions will coalesce around an overview of the evolution of agency and embodied minds. We'll begin by summarizing the work (often referred to as the "understandings") of researchers such as Michael Tomasello and Richard Wrangham, followed by a survey of our new and various understandings of human cognition. Next, we'll consider the work of John Dewey, Andy Clark, and Ian McGilchrist to consider the relation between thinking style and culture. We'll also review the work of John Tooby (coalitions) and Leor Zmigrod (flexible and rigid thinking). Throughout this short course, we will share authors and evidence to improve our own understandings of thinking styles. (Max 20)

Intro to the Ukulele

Sandra Goodrum/Albert Zulaica

9:30-10:45 Wednesday

12 weeks



If you've heard or watched ALIRians strumming their ukuleles along to popular tunes and wondered if you'd like to try as well – then this is definitely the right 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 15)

Backup Singers

Sandra Y. Goodrum

9:30-10:45 Wednesday

2nd 6 weeks (3/16 – 4/23)

This class will be held in conjunction with the *Introduction to Ukulele* class. You must be able to sing in tempo, in tune and be willing to be heard. (Max 8)



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 20)

New!

Intermediate German

William Weller

11:00-12:15 Wednesday

12 weeks

Although this instructor is passionate about languages and can speak French, Spanish and German, he will be speaking only German in this class. You, however, can answer in English, although German is preferred if you're able. The instructor will generate weekly lessons which he'll email to you before class. These lessons will contain grammar and exercises to get you speaking German. No book is required. (Max 12)

New!

Risorgimento: The Struggle for the Unification of Italy, 1815-1871

Nancy Fix Anderson PhD

11:00-12:15 Wednesday

2nd 6 weeks (3/16 – 4/23)



In the early-19th century, Italy was a patchwork of small independent states with large areas of the north controlled by the Austrian Hapsburg Empire and the Pope ruling the central Italian Papal States. In this course we will discuss how Italian nationalists succeeded by 1871 in liberating and bringing together these diverse lands into the unified state of Italy. We will focus on the leadership of the heroes of the **Risorgimento** ("rising again"): the romantic Giuseppe Garibaldi and his Red Shirts; the crafty realpolitiker Count Cavour, and the idealistic Giuseppe Mazzini.

Because this is Italy, of course art and music will be an important part of our discussion of Italian nationalism. **NOTE:** This class is also offered online on Thursday. (Max 40)

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)

Making Greeting Cards

Naomi Best/Judy Callier

11:00-12:15 Wednesday

12 weeks

Learn to make beautiful and distinctive greeting cards using colorful paper, creative folds and a wide variety of embellishments. We had a great time making cards last fall, but be assured the cards we make this Spring will be different and varied. (Max 20)



Card and Board 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 competitive, spend some time with this welcoming group, even on a drop-in basis. (Max 20)

New!**Gardening in San Antonio**

Andrew Waring/Rachel Cywinski

1:00-2:15 Wednesday**12 weeks**

Connect with the San Antonio gardening community as we explore ways to have a thriving, beautiful garden today! Over our twelve weeks, these classes will teach you how to design, install, and maintain the garden of your dreams. This course is being offered to ALIRians by the Gardening Volunteers of South Texas (GVST). Let's get ready for a beautiful San Antonio spring! (Max 30)

**Planning for the Inevitable: A Baby Boomer's Guide**

McKenzie Granger

1:00-2:15 Wednesday**12 weeks**

A fall or an illness, a death – suddenly, quick actions are needed involving finances, legal authority, living arrangements or even a home sale. The solution: **have a plan**. This class covers aging-related challenges and decisions, addressing topics including 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.

Understanding the Holocaust

Susan Butler/Steve Butler

1:00-2:15 Wednesday**1st 6 weeks (1/26 – 3/6)**

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

▼▼▼▼▼★
Holocaust Memorial Museum
OF SAN ANTONIO

New!

Dance Fitness

Kristin Hartung

1:00-2:15 Wednesday

1st 6 weeks (1/26 – 3/6)

Stay active and have fun while dancing. This class offers simple-to-follow dance moves choreographed to a variety of music styles. In addition to gentle cardio through dance, we will focus on maintaining and improving balance and the importance of stretching to stay mobile. (Max 30)

Thursday

Calligraphy: Italic

Mary Bowman/Lee Brooks

9:30-10:45 Thursday

12 weeks

Having beautiful Italic printing is a useful skill (and often a sign of a well-rounded educated person!) so we will continue to concentrate on that font this winter/spring. You will go home each week with a notecard, bookmark, magnet, or other product made by your own hands. A paper fee of \$5 cash is requested to cover class supplies. In addition, if you don't have them, you will want to purchase the two marking pens we will use (\$3 each), and the kneaded eraser (\$1), all available in class. (Max 12)



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)

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 (and welcoming) to all skill levels, this double period class will explore various techniques and surfaces. No experience necessary. A supply list will be provided, but it 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. (Max 23)



Turning Points in American History, Part II

Tom Colbourn

9:30-10:45 Thursday

12 weeks

This Spring, our classes will conclude by covering 24 significant ‘turning points’ that our country faced during the years 1873-2001. We’ll view Great Courses® video lectures and discuss these events – some which were big, some small, but each in its way impacted America’s social, economic and political character. (Max 30)

New!

Intro to Financial Planning for Retirees

CobyHuerta

9:30-10:45 Thursday

2nd 3 weeks (2/16 – 3/6)

Retirement is a new chapter – and managing your finances shouldn’t be the hardest part of it. This short course offers a practical, plain-English overview of how to organize your financial life for long-term confidence. We’ll discuss the “four cornerstones” of personal finance, explore income sources such as Social Security, pensions, and required minimum distributions (RMDs), and review strategies for drawing income tax efficiently. Other topics include investment basics, risk management, and how to recognize common scams targeting retirees. No financial expertise required, just bring your curiosity and questions. ***This class is for educational purposes only. The instructor is a financial advisor, not an attorney or CPA.*** (Max 37)



New!

Your Legacy and Loved Ones – Planning with a Purpose

Savannah Forster/Coby Huerta

9:30-10:45 Thursday

4th 3 weeks (4/6 – 4/23)

Estate planning isn’t only for the wealthy – it’s for anyone who wants to make life easier for their loved ones. In this course, we’ll take a financial advisor’s approach to understanding how your assets and intentions come together to create a lasting legacy. You’ll learn how wills, trusts, and beneficiary designations work together, explore tax-efficient ways to transfer wealth, and consider how charitable giving can reflect your values. Expect clear explanations, real-world examples, and practical steps to help you prepare for productive conversations with your family and professional advisors. ***This class is for educational purposes only. Instructors are financial advisors, not attorneys or CPAs.***

Don’t forget!

**Special One-Day Class
Mini-Mosaics & Memories**

Thursday 2/12 1:00

Guided by professional artist Susan Butler, celebrates special memories by making a mini-mosaic keychain using mosaic tiles, jewelry findings and adhesive clay. ***See all the details, page 3***

Yoga-inspired Stretching

Kelleigh Lewis

11:00-12:15 Thursday**12 weeks**

Many beneficial yoga stretches and poses have been adapted – without losing their legendary effectiveness – for people who appreciate having a chair to help with balance or stability. Join this longtime yoga practitioner to learn new ways to stay flexible, strong and steady. Please bring a yoga strap to class. (Max 40)

History of the CIA

Peter Nyren/Julie Nyren

11:00-12:15 Thursday**1st 6 weeks (1/26 – 3/6)**

This Spring, we continue our insider study of the CIA by going back to the Agency's origin story. We'll describe some of the details of how and why the Agency was created after WWII and then dive into the first decade or so of its involvement in the Cold War. In addition to personal knowledge, we'll use selected videos from the CIA website, the Spy Museum, and other sources to shed light on this sly and influential agency. (Max 40)

**New!****Aztec Emperor Moctezuma II & His Encounter with Conquistador Hernan Cortes**

Estela Royal

11:00-12:15 Thursday**1st 3 weeks (1/26 – 2/13)**

What happened when two heroic and tragic figures collided, each with a different and personal focus: Moctezuma II, the Aztec ruler, and Hernan Cortes, the ruthless leader of the Spanish conquistadors? This class will hear the historic details. (Max 30)

**Brain Games, Live & In Person**

Steve Rutledge

11:00-12:15 Thursday**3rd 3 weeks (3/16 – 4/2)**

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!**Beginners Guide to Birding in North America**

Peter Nygren

11:00-12:15 Thursday**2nd 6 weeks (3/16 – 4/23)**

This experienced instructor will rely on selected lessons from James Currie's engaging Great Courses® video ***The Guide to Birding in North America***, combined with his own experiences photographing birds in San Antonio and beyond. This class plans at least one outing near the end of the course, probably to Mitchell Lake Audubon Center so we can (hopefully) see some of the birds Mr. Currie talks about in the wild.

An Introduction to Guitar

Felix Cerna

1:00-2:15 Thursday**1st 6 weeks (1/26 – 3/6)**

Welcome to a class for absolute 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. You should bring a guitar and also a tuner (if you already have one) to the first class – and you'll be ready to start your musical journey! (Max 8)

New!**Eyeson the Spies**

Geoff Leech & Dr. Joanna McKinnis

1:00-2:15+ Thursday**1st 6 weeks (1/26 – 3/6)**

Film lovers who enjoy intrigue, danger, mystery and suspense won't want to miss these six highly acclaimed spy movies. One is set at the time of the French Revolution. Others take place in pre-World War II Europe, the Cold War, and in today's maze of cyber security. Films vary in length from 60 to 112 minutes, and most will run longer than our 75-minute class period. (Max 37)

**New!****Three Films by Kurosawa**

Geoff Leech/Dr. Joanna McKinnis

1:00-2:15+ Thursday**4th 3 weeks (4/6 – 4/23)**

As an encore to a recent course on ***Japonism***, we will screen three critically praised movies by the famous Japanese director Akira Kurosawa. They include ***Rashomon***; ***Throne of Blood*** (based on Shakespeare's 'Scottish Play'); and ***Ran*** (a Japanese version of King Lear). All three films run longer than 75 minutes. (Max 37)

American Sign Language

Barbara Gadsby

1:00-2:15 Thursday**12 weeks**

This class has a well-earned reputation for making the learning of 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, have fun! (Max 30)

Introduction to Forensics

Peter Platteborze, PhD

1:00-2:15 Thursday 2nd 6 weeks (3/16 – 4/23)

This class continues our brief introduction, started last Fall, to the field of forensic science and the various key disciplines often used to solve crimes. Likely topics to be discussed include common types of physical evidence, crime scene reconstruction, blood spatter analysis, death investigations and, if time permits, the use of forensic biometrics. The structure of this course is largely based on the Richard Saferstein textbook **Criminalistics, an Introduction to Forensic Science**.

Friday

Come Fly with Me

Joan Lyons

9:30-12:15 Friday**SPECIAL DATES 3 weeks (2/13, 2/20, 2/27)**

Come fly with us via a Hollywood movie to a different country, time or era. We'll learn how, when and why this movie was made, consider its theme or message, and listen to the music of a good score. Then we'll talk about the customs and foods of the sometimes exotic setting and, as always, our admirable instructor will treat you to something fun to eat that ties into the movie. **NOTE:** double period. (Max 24)

Free-Form Diamond Dots

Joan Lyons

9:30-12:15 Friday**SPECIAL DATES 3 weeks (3/20, 3/27, 4/10)**

We will continue to use our free-form method of doing diamond dots to create fun and fanciful projects. If you're new to Diamond Dots, you can bring a kit you've purchased online and we'll help you get started. If you been with us before, please bring in any thing you want to apply the dots to: cards, apron, shirt, shoes, bags or purses, hair clips, frames, and baskets if it can't run away, we'll put dots on it! Or, bring any previous (unfinished) projects. A fee of \$3 is requested to cover the use of provided glues and sealers. **NOTE:** double period. (Max 18)

New!

ALIReady!

Morgan Montalvo

11:00-12:15 Friday

1st 3 weeks (1/26 – 2/13)

ALIReady is a new, three-session series of personal and household emergency/disaster awareness and response classes. These courses employ a combination of easy-to-learn skills and readiness strategies. Our first class will cover CPR, including assessment and hands-only CPR practice. The next class is



part of a national program, Stop the Bleed, that trains you what to do in life-threatening bleeding situations until help arrives. The third class will cover how to assemble and maintain emergency and disaster readiness kits.

NOTE: attendance for all three sessions is mandatory; please do not enroll if you are unsure about attending all three classes. (Max 20)

New venues!

Exploring Mexico through Food

Yvonne Soliz Valdez, Ph.D

11:00-12:15+ Friday

1st 6 weeks (1/26 – 3/6)

This special ALIR treat is led by a knowledgeable instructor who provides context and stories around local restaurant visits. This term, we will visit the restaurants of the four chefs who are the current San Antonio representatives for the UNESCO *Creative City of Gastronomy* program. Each ALIRian will pay for their own meal. (Max 15)

Nordic Noir

Berit Mason

1:00-2:15 Friday

1st 6 weeks (1/26 – 3/6)

Nordic Noir is an official category of Scandinavian crime and mystery dramas made for television and film. We'll 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. While **Nordic Noir** depicts crime scenes, the instructor will skip anything gratuitous or offensive. (Max 30)

New recipes!

Indian Cooking

Kris L Challapalli/Madhu Challapalli

1:00-2:15 Friday

1st 3 weeks (1/26 – 2/13)



Join this long-time ALIRian and her MD son as they share recipes and techniques for preparing healthy meals for everyone, including Diabetics and Hypertensives, using Indian ingredients and spices. You know that while their emphasis will be on healthy eating, deliciousness won't be far behind! Let them know of any allergies. A single fee of \$10 to cover supplies is requested. (Max 20)

Online ZOOM Courses

Spring 2026

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 with Zoom, and you'll be ready!

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 with others your unique stories. (Max 30)



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 for the poets among us to share what they'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 Workshop, Beginning through Advanced

Carole Bancroft

9:30-10:45 Tuesday

12 weeks



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 25)

New!

Representation of Women in 19th-Century English Fiction

An Exploration of Gender, Society, and Literary Expression

Hella Hennessee, PhD 11:00-12:15 Tuesday

1st 6 weeks (1/26 – 3/6)

The 19th century was a transformative period for English literature, marked by tremendous social, political, and economic change. The representation of women in fiction from this era provides a window into contemporary attitudes toward gender roles, expectations, and the evolving place of women in society. This class will examine how women were depicted in 19th-century English fiction, highlighting prominent themes, notable authors, and the broader cultural context. We will discuss the movements of Romanticism, Realism, and Modernism including works by Sir Walter Scott, Jane Austen, The Bronte Sisters (Emily pictured), Charles Dickens, William Thackeray, George Eliot and Thomas Hardy. (Max 25)



Socrates Café

Mike Burns

3:00-4:15 Tuesday

12 weeks This class, popular with ALIRians for 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? You are encouraged to share your ideas and perspectives within this supportive group. (Max 25)

New!**Henrietta Lacks and her HE-LA Cells**

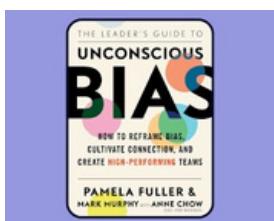
Linda Comeaux / Crystal Chatman-Brown

SPECIAL TIME 7:00pm Tuesday**1st 3 weeks (1/26 – 2/13)**

Henrietta's cancer cells (taken without her knowledge) became one of the most important tools in medical research and contributed to countless scientific breakthroughs, including the polio vaccine, cloning, and gene mapping. Meanwhile, Henrietta's family remained unaware of her legacy and struggled with questions of ethics, race, and medical consent. Based on the book **The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks** by Rebecca Skloot, this class will blend science, biography, and social commentary to explore the profound impact of Henrietta's cells and the human story behind them. (Max 50)

**New!****Managing Unconscious Bias**

Crystal Chatman-Brown / Linda Comeaux

SPECIAL TIME 7:00pm Tuesday**4th 3 weeks (4/6 – 4/24)**

Unseen assumptions shape healthcare decisions, and reframing bias can save lives. Learn strategies to “pause, reflect, and reframe” bias encountered in healthcare and beyond. You will gain practical tools to challenge bias, foster empathy, and strengthen the trust between you and your providers as well as in your everyday life. Our discussions will be based on the book **The Leader's Guide to Unconscious Bias: How to Reframe Bias, Cultivate Connection, and Create High-Performing Teams** by Pamela Fuller. The book emphasizes the importance of self-awareness, inclusive leadership, and intentional actions to build diverse and equitable cultures. This class is presented in partnership with the San Antonio Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority during Black Maternal Health Week. (Max 70)

Unconscious Bias: How to Reframe Bias, Cultivate Connection, and Create High-Performing Teams by Pamela Fuller. The book emphasizes the importance of self-awareness, inclusive leadership, and intentional actions to build diverse and equitable cultures. This class is presented in partnership with the San Antonio Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority during Black Maternal Health Week. (Max 70)

Wednesday

Seeing Art Anew

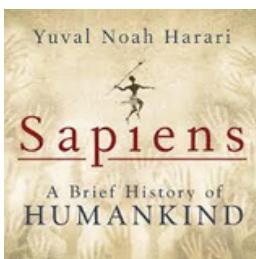
Mary Bowman/Dee Duffy

11:00-12:15 Wednesday**1st 6 weeks (1/26 – 3/6)**

This class aims to upgrade our experiences of many aspects of art. Through discussion, we challenge our limiting beliefs. We look closely at artworks, and explore the range of experiences inherent in art and art-making. Bring your own art to discuss, or simply listen to the co-instructors who each have a well-earned lifelong perspective of art making and viewing. (Max 12)

New!**Book Circle:Sapiens**

Amanda Churchill-Bergman

1:00-2:15 Wednesday**12 weeks**

FIRE gave us power; FARMING made us hungry for more; MONEY gave us purpose; SCIENCE made us deadly. Agree or disagree? Explore Yuval Noah Harari's **Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind** in depth with your fellow readers. The book is widely available and free if you have Kindle Unlimited. ISBN-13 is 978-0063422001. (Max15)

Our Presidents—*TheyDidWhat?!*?

Don Gadberry

3:00-4:15 Wednesday**1st 6 weeks (1/26 – 3/6)**

Let's continue our exploration into some of the lesser-known facts and stories about US Presidents. Last Fall, we talked about George W. Bush, John Quincy Adams, John Tyler, Andrew Johnson, JFK, and LBJ – this Spring we'll learn who owned 80 pairs of trousers, who was a surprise dark-horse candidate, and who lost because his VP runningmate lived with a slave as his partner. Each meeting starts with information about one or more of four presidents, followed by hearty discussion. (Max60)

Memory Lane

Don Gadberry

3:00-4:15 Wednesday**2nd 6 weeks (3/16 – 4/24)**

Where is, what is, Memory Lane? This popular continuing class consists of video shows of music, history, art images, videos, poems, etc. from our past. The only requirement is zooming in, listening, watching, and enjoying the memories. Bring your wine, cheese, dance moves, popcorn, friend, and a box of tissues.

Memory Lane

Thursday

New!

USA: A Visual History of Everybody

~~Dr. Judith Sobre 9:30-10:45 Thursday~~

COURSE HAS BEEN CANCELLED

1st 6 weeks (1/26 – 3/6)

~~What is now the United States (including Hawaii and Alaska) was inhabited by humans way before it acquired its territorial boundaries. How have we chronicled our visual remains? "American history" is usually defined by its European settlers. We'll certainly talk about that, but what about everyone else?~~

~~This will be a visual whirlwind tour covering whatever we can discover! (Max 30)~~



Brain Games

Pat Schmitz/Steve Rutledge

11:00-12:15 Thursday

1st 6 weeks (1/26 – 3/6)

Bring your brain, stamina and pencil & paper as we work on exercises that will help keep your brain strong. In this long-running, highly interactive class, we work on exercises that help with reinforcing your long- and short-term memory, solving problems to work out novel solutions, and paying attention to detail. Oh, and it's a boisterously fun class as well, with lots of laughs (and occasional loud groans). (Max 25)

New!

Risorgimento: The Struggle for the Unification of Italy, 1815-1871

Nancy Fix Anderson PhD

11:00-12:15 Thursday

2nd 6 weeks (3/16 – 4/24)

In the early-19th century, Italy was a patchwork of small independent states with large areas of the north controlled by the Austrian Hapsburg Empire and the Pope ruling the central Italian Papal States. In this course we will discuss how Italian nationalists succeeded by 1871 in liberating and bringing together these diverse lands into the unified state of Italy. We will focus on the leadership of the heroes of the

Risorgimento ("rising again"): the romantic



Giuseppe Garibaldi and his Red Shirts; the crafty realpolitiker Count Cavour, and the idealistic Giuseppe Mazzini. Because this is Italy, of course art and music will be an important part of our discussion of Italian nationalism. **NOTE:** This class is also offered on campus on Wednesdays.

New!**Organizing Your Affairs & Retirement Visioning**

Audrey Casas

11:00-12:15 Thursday**4th 3 weeks (4/6 – 4/23, 24)**

Get your affairs in order and firm up your retirement vision! We discuss legacy document prep and walk through the list and links of materials needed to organize your legacy. We delve into how you aspire to be remembered and how you want to live the rest of your life through introspection and goal setting. We examine all documents needed to prepare the heirs, in addition to advanced directive, and 'celestial exit' considerations. Finally, we consider holistic approaches—mental, physical, and spiritual—that enrich health and enhance life longevity. **Legal and financial advice is not offered.** (Max 25)

Enhancing Peace and Happiness

Mark Stokes/Sue Young

3:00-4:15 Thursday**12 weeks**

This class will discuss everyday strategies to minimize anxiety and stress and to love with a sense of greater contentment and gratitude. Within a supportive community, we discuss a number of ways, including meditation, to help improve mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual health. Topics will include the importance of good relationships, pursuing passions and meanings, practicing and cultivating optimism, self-care and well-being, and Random Acts of Kindness. Ultimately, happiness is about making conscious choices to cultivate positive emotions and behaviors, and building a life that aligns with your values and passions. (Max 25)

**New!****Study of the Book of Revelation**

Julie Ouellette

3:00-4:15 Thursday**12 weeks**

This term we will study the New Testament's **Book of Revelation**. As in prior classes, our time together will include reading the actual scripture and discussing it. The instructor emails notes prior to each week's class to aid in discussion. Everyone is welcome and no prior knowledge of Biblical literature is needed.

Friday

New!

Exploring Historic and Abandoned Houses

Linda Comeaux

11:00-12:15 Friday

3rd 3 weeks (3/16 – 4/2)

Are you a sleuth like me? Curious about historic properties? Like to watch home makeover shows? ... Or do you just need a moment of calm in the afternoon? We will explore abandoned and historic houses by video and perhaps see the remodel (if available). Some mystery and research included! Bring your own popcorn or pillow. (Max 50)



Heartfulness Relaxation and Meditation

Sailaja Manne MD

11:00-12:15 Friday

2nd 6 weeks (3/16 – 4/24)

Heartfulness Institute is a global nonprofit organization with thousands of volunteer trainers who serve more than 10 million meditators in more than 160 countries. Heartfulness techniques have proven effective in reducing stress and anxiety, improving sleep, enhancing emotional intelligence, and exploring the heights and depths of human consciousness. During these sessions, we will conduct experiential relaxation and meditation by a Certified Hearfulness meditation trianer. We will also do some simple yoga breathing exercises to relax your mind and body in preparation for the meditation.

NOTE: this class is also offered on campus on Monday.

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.

Spring 2026 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.

<input type="checkbox"/> double period class	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Campus 9:30	American Short Story Comanche in Texas Texas 1821-1846 Greek/Roman Tech Spanish for Beginners Fluency with Stories	Movies in French <input type="checkbox"/> The Miniaturists Sustainability Journey Underland Zen Painting Baby Italian II Intl. Mountain Dance	Baby French II Health and Aging II Line Dance Fabrics & Textiles Thinking Styles Intro to Ukulele Backup Singers	Pastels Painting <input type="checkbox"/> Flow Yoga Am Turning Points 2 Calligraphy: Italic Financial Planning Legacy Planning	Come Fly w Me <input type="checkbox"/> Diamond Dots <input type="checkbox"/>
Campus 11:00	Murder...Funny <input type="checkbox"/> Intermediate Spanish Art of Songwriting Heartfulness Relax Computer/Graphics Conscious Living	Acrylic Painting <input type="checkbox"/> The Presidency Glad Rads Travis Picking Method Beginner Line Dance Power of the Pen	Inter. German Risorgimento: Italy Ukulele Jam Band Tai Chi /Qi Gong Greeting Cards	Chair Yoga History of the CIA Moctezuma & Cortes Brain Games Beginning Birding	ALIReady! Mexican Cuisine: SA Restaurants
Campus 1:00	Basic Watercolor <input type="checkbox"/> Lost Art TRBG Supreme Court Hold Your Tongue! American Mahjong	Literary Masks/Decep Clarence Darrow Lecturas en Espanol Artists Gone Soon Donald Trump Salsa y Mas Retirement/Medicare	Gardening in SA Card/Board Games Plan for Inevitable The Holocaust Dance Fitness	Eyes on the Spies 3Kurosawa Films Intro to Guitar Am. Sign Language Intro to Forensics	Nordic Noir Indian Cooking
Online 9:30		Genealogy Workshop		USA History of All	
Online 11:00	Memoir Writing	Women in 19thcentury English Fiction	Seeing Art Anew	Risorgimento: Italy Brain Games Retire Organization	Historic/Abandoned Houses Heartfulness Relax & Meditation
Online 1:00	Poetry 21st Century		Sapiens Book Circle		
Online 3:00	Veteran to Veteran	Socrates Café SPECIAL TIME 7pm Henrietta Lacks Cells Manage Unconscious Bias	Presidents - What? Memory Lane	Peace & Happiness	Book of Revelation

ALIR Instructors

Spring 2026

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.

Nancy Fix Anderson, a Professor Emerita of History at Loyola University New Orleans, has been teaching at ALIR for 13 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 retired after 25 years with El Paso Independent School District in the district's Finance Department and today enjoys a myriad of creative endeavors.

Gina Billington is a lifelong Texan who retains her original accent, although it is sometimes a challenge to do so. After graduating with degrees in English and Social Science, her work life was spent with the Texas Department of Human Services where she ended up as a trainer in the SNAP program.

Susan Blumhorst holds an Master's degree and is a long-time financial professional specializing in medicare insurance products, focusing on explaining medicare and insurance options in easy-to-understand language.

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. Now retired, he chalked up more than 40 years of experience in tax, business and personal financial planning. He is also a Docent at the San Antonio Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Susan Butler has been a professional artisan for 40 years, working in metalsmithing, wire work, glass fusion, glass blowing (lamp work), mosaics and resin, and designing jewelry under her business label **Con Brio Accessories**. You might have seen her work on **Texas Country Reporter**! She's thrilled to bring her experience teaching jewelry making and mosaics to ALIR.

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.

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!

Audrey Casas is a transformational coach and healthcare executive who received her B.S. and Master's in e-Business from the University of Phoenix. She worked in various leadership roles with UnitedHealthcare and CHRISTUS Health throughout her 30+ years. She obtained her health and wellness coaching certification in 2022.

Candice Castro, MD, FACS, was an Army surgeon for 25 years and for 15 years taught military PA students (Physician Associates).

Crystal D. Chatman-Brown, RN, is a board-certified Family Nurse Practitioner and a Colonel (retired) with a 27-year-long career in the US Army. Today, at Conviva Legacy Place, she provides compassionate, patient-focused primary care. Dedicated to medical excellence, she earned her MS-Nursing from the Medical College of Georgia.

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.

Kris Challapalli was born, raised and lived in India as a young person, but has now lived in the USA for 55 years. A healthy eating advocate, she continues to love Indian spices and Indian cooking and graciously shares that love with her friends at ALIR

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!

Scott Duncan is a San Antonio based singer/songwriter who taught public school while regularly performing. A Kerrville New Folk finalist, his original songs have been called “classic folk and rougher-edged Texas sensibilities drawing from Celtic and western influences.”

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.

Savannah Forster is a financial advisor who specializes in retirement, risk management, and legacy planning, combining clear explanations with practical strategies to align financial goals with personal values.

An aspiring computer geek, **Adrien Frank**'s first foray at ALIR was 2007 when she taught Beginning Computers, the very basics. She has been on the Zoom Education Committee and has taught many classes on many topics, on Zoom as well as on campus. She currently serves as the ALIR webpublisher.

Don Gadberry has over 40 years of experience in public school classrooms, campus administration, and central office administration. He acknowledges that computers are his strong suit. But it's dancing, fishing, reading, and political news that keep him the most engaged. He currently compiles and hosts the online hour **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 admits 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.

Growing up in Germany, **Dr. Hella Hennessee** attended German and US universities and taught Cultural History and English Literature at universities in both countries. She’s lived happily in San Antonio for a dozen years and is glad to have found the ALIR community.

Coby Huerta is a financial advisor who helps retirees to build clear, practical financial plans for lasting security and to make confident, goal-oriented financial decisions.

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 “possibly well,” making it four!

Alan Grinnell Jones is a retired geologist and environmental investigator who has an enduring interest in human neuropsychology and human thinking styles. How did we come to have our cognitive abilities? How do genes and our nurture affect how we relate to others and to this beautiful planet?

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.

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.

Jennifer Lawlace is a retired social worker who began learning Spanish as a child when her family relocated from Indiana to Mexico City. She loves the language, and spoke Spanish daily in her profession.

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.

Dr. Pat Lonchar is an Emerita Professor of English, University of the Incarnate Word, and has offered many 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 almost 20 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.

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.

Morgan Montalvo is an award-winning former news anchor, foreign correspondent, and military affairs and investigative reporter. A former military officer, he recently retired as Public Relations Manager for the San Antonio Metro Health District and currently is a public health emergency management consultant.

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.

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 his 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 during 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

Born in New Orleans, **Bernard Rauch** joined ALIR in 2018 shortly after retiring from his position as an Air Force civilian employee. Married to ALIRian Wondra Chang, he is a frequent instructor, a member of the ALIR Council and on the board of the San Antonio Chamber Music Society.

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.

Professional geoscientist **Geary M. Schindel** is retired from the Edwards Aquifer Authority, and 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, is co-chair of the Texas Hydro-Geo Workshop, and a fellow of the Geological Society of America.

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

Leigh Shapleigh is a retired pediatrician who learned Spanish as a child in El Paso and continued studying it throughout her education and medical practice. She has kept her skills sharp by taking immersion courses in Spanish-speaking countries.

Robin Skoglund holds an M.A. in Linguistics/ESL and is retired from her instructing positions at SAC and UNAM in San Antonio.

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 16 years, including starting the Mindful Living/Meditation class as well as the long-running 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.

Joanna Valentine is the former Research Director for the California Federation of Teachers and an award-winning photographer. Her passion is the history of photography.

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.

William Weller admits to a passion for languages, speaking French, Spanish, and German. Having taught for multiple classes at ALIR, his students appreciate his BA in French and German, his Masters in Library Science, and that he taught English as a Second Language at the master level.