



**SENIOR  
PROFESSIONALS**  
*Illinois State University*

*Providing Lifelong Learning and University Engagement*



**HYBRID CLASSES**

**Spring / Summer 2026**

# **Academy of Seniors & Mornings with the Professors**

[seniorprofessionals.illinoisstate.edu](http://seniorprofessionals.illinoisstate.edu)

# ACADEMY OF SENIORS

## FORMS OF PARTICIPATION:

1. **Attend in-person** at Illinois State University's Alumni Center, 1101 N Main St, Normal
2. **Watch online** via Zoom.

Register online at [seniorprofessionals.ilstu.edu](http://seniorprofessionals.ilstu.edu) or call (309) 438-2160.

Zoom participants will receive a Zoom link a week prior to their classes and again the morning of their classes.

- **\$35 for Senior Professional members**
- **\$45 for non-members**
- **\$15 for single-session** (in-person only, payable at door).

For in person, pricing is **per person**. For ZOOM, one registration **per household**.

### Price includes:

- Four 2-hour sessions (one Academy of Seniors class) **or**
- Five 2-hour Mornings with the Professors lectures

## 1. SAUDI ARABIA AND REINVENTION OF MODERNITY

**February 3, 10, 17, 24 (Tuesdays)**  
**1:30-3:30 pm**

Saudi Arabia under Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman is not struggling to reconcile tension between modernity and tradition so much as reinventing the very concept of state and society. NEOM, the Saudi model "city of the future," is both a physical and social experimentation in engineering that proposes a radically different ordering of human life.

This class will examine the many projects of Mohammed Bin Salman since he gained power in 2015. Learn about his maneuvering within the Saudi royal family and his campaigns against elite rivals, his efforts to rebrand Saudi Arabia with world class entertainment as well as the ruthless control he exerts over dissident journalists, rebellious neighbors and international critics.

**Janice Jayes**, Instructional Assistant Professor of History, Illinois State University

## 2. NAVIGATING THE STATE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

**March 23, 30 (Mondays), April 8, 15 (Wednesdays)**  
**1:30-3:30 pm**

For decades, higher education has been synonymous with growth — more students, more campuses, more research, more global influence. But what happens when a model based on growth reaches its natural limits?

The state of higher education in the US is one of transition. Colleges and universities are balancing their roles as centers of learning and research with demands for affordability, accountability, accessibility and relevance.

Ongoing debates about public funding, student debt, free speech on campus and the value of a college degree reflect broader questions about how higher education should serve both individual students and society as a whole. Learn how these challenges are being addressed while paving the way for future success.

**Kyle Griffith** (March 23), *Dean of Students for Campus Life, Deputy Title IX Coordinator, Division of Student Affairs, Illinois Wesleyan University*

**Gabriel Spaulding** (March 30), *B. Charles and Joyce Eichhorn Ames Professor of Physics, IWU and 2025 President of the American Association of Physics Teachers*

**Sarah Diel-Hunt** (April 8), *Interim Provost and Vice President, Academic and Student Affairs, Heartland Community College* and **Chris Downing**, *Associate Vice President, Development and Community Engagement, HCC*

**Marci Rockey** (April 15), *Assistant Coordinator and Academic Advisor, College Student Personnel Administration Master's Program, Instructional Assistant Professor, Educational Administration and Foundations, ISU*

## 3. BIG BANDS: ALIVE AND WELL

**March 31, April 7, 14, 21 (Tuesdays)**  
**9:30-11:30 am**

Since the beginning of jazz and throughout the changing times of music (bebop, rock and roll, fusion, etc.), big bands have endured. In this class Orcherton will touch on bands that are continuing the excitement, those that are asking what big band is and how the tradition continues. Artists will include:

**Duke Ellington, Count Basie** — Often considered the defining sounds of big band. They innovated

sounds and styles that are still considered as benchmarks for the genre.

**Gordon Goodwin** — Considered a strong revitalizer of the style, bringing in new audiences.

**Kenny Wheeler** — His unique perspective has permeated composition, arranging and improvisation for a large ensemble.

**Darcy James Argue** — Following in the steps of all the previous groups, this group is on the forefront of what a big band can be.

**Jenelle Orcherton**, *Artistic Director/Founder, Champaign-Urbana Jazz Festival*

#### 4. OLD “MASTERS”? WOMEN AND THE ARTS FROM 1400 TO 1750

**April 6, 13, 20, 27 (Mondays)**  
**1:30-3:30 pm**

Historically, exceptional Renaissance and Baroque artists have been referred to as “Old Masters,” and it has been assumed that women were systemically prevented from participating in the art world except under highly unusual circumstances. However, in the last ten years, museum exhibitions and countless academic publications have demonstrated precisely the opposite.

Learn about women who worked in the arts during the Early Modern period of 1400 to 1750. Shaped by several recent and ongoing exhibitions at museums such as the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, the National Museum of Women in the Arts, and The National Gallery (London), this class will focus on artists from across Europe and in a variety of media: sculpture in marble, wood, and wax, oil painting, pastels and watercolors, paper cutting and glass engraving, printmaking and other materials often deemed outside the boundaries of “fine art.”

**Saskia Beranek**, *Associate Professor, Art History, Wonsook Kim College of Fine Arts, ISU*

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*A limited number of scholarships are available. To inquire, call (309) 438-2160 and ask for Laura.*

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*Your registration gives consent for photos taken at programs to be used for advertising and/or publicity purposes by ISU, its licensees and/or member organizations; you waive all claims for any compensation for such use or for damages.*

# MORNINGS WITH THE PROFESSORS

**March 27, April 10, 17, 24, May 1** (No class April 3)  
**9:30-11:30 am**

Classes will be held at ISU's Alumni Center, 1101 N. Main St., Normal, IL

## THE ROAD TO SESAME STREET (Via Zoom) March 27

**(Available to view at the Alumni Center on the big screens or through a Zoom link)**

Back by popular demand, this highly dynamic couple will entertain and enlighten us about their journeys to Sesame Street and their entertainment careers.

Leslie will discuss character development and how the arts and Sesame Street play a key role in helping kids navigate life to grow "stronger, smarter and kinder." She will share her personal journey, educational background and her artistic skills as a performer-creator in a "show-and-tell" approach to her work on Sesame Street.

Paul will share insight about Sesame Street music from 'page to stage' and how songs are created for the show, plus live performance and celebrity experiences.

**Paul Rudolph**, *3-time Emmy Award Winner for Sesame Street, Music Editor, Music Director, Composer, Arranger, Audio Engineer*

**Leslie Carrara-Rudolph**, *2-time Emmy Award Winner for Sesame Street, Entertainer, Puppeteer, Voice Actor, Artist, Writer and Creator.*

## BUILDING THE BRIDGE: MCLEAN COUNTY'S FIRST NON-CONGREGATE SHELTER PROGRAM

**April 10**

Home Sweet Home Ministries' innovative model of non-congregate shelter serves the community's unsheltered residents. Known as "The Bridge," this village consists of private sleeping cabins clustered around a central clubhouse-style building that offers on-site connections to supportive services as well as laundry, toilet and bathing facilities. The project provides dignified, interim housing with a focus on privacy and stability for residents, allowing them to work toward long-term recovery and permanent housing solutions. Mr. Burgess will share data that led to identifying the need to expand the capacity for,

and configuration of, additional shelter for unhoused community members.

**Matt Burgess**, *Chief Executive Officer, Home Sweet Home Ministries, Bloomington*

## HOW DOES LOCAL NEWS GET MADE?

April 17

Hear from WGLT leadership about the ethical considerations that shapes reporting and how a kernel of an idea evolves into a fully vetted, published story. Gain a clearer understanding of how and why reporters and editors make the choices they do. Learn how WGLT fits into the broader NPR Network and WGLT's academic partners at Illinois State University, including the station's robust internship program alongside the student-run Vidette. Discover how WGLT is adapting to a rapidly changing funding landscape for public media, and what that means for Bloomington-Normal's only nonprofit newsroom.

**Ryan Denham**, *WGLT Content Director*

**Eric Stock**, *WGLT News Director*

## HUMAN TRAFFICKING 101: UNDERSTANDING ITS LOCAL AND GLOBAL IMPACT

April 24

This informative and eye-opening presentation will shed light on one of the most pressing human rights issues of our time. This session will provide a foundational understanding of human trafficking – what it is, how it happens, who is affected and how to identify warning signs. Carol will share real-world insights from her work at the Center for Prevention of Abuse, explain the local and global impact of this crime and offer practical steps individuals and communities can take to help prevent and respond to trafficking. Whether you are new to the topic or looking to deepen your knowledge, this presentation will provide tools to make a difference.

**Carol Merna**, *Chief Executive Officer, the Center for Prevention of Abuse, Peoria*

## THE DIGITAL GENERATION: HOW SOCIAL MEDIA AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ARE RESHAPING MENTAL HEALTH

May 1

Why are rates of depression and anxiety climbing alongside smartphone adoption? Social media has fundamentally changed how we connect, think and feel—sometimes fostering genuine community, other times causing serious problems across all ages. Dr. Lannin will examine current trends on platforms

like TikTok and Instagram reels, including research on attention, memory and mood. He will also explore burgeoning research on artificial intelligence's (AI) psychological effects and how these patterns may play out as AI becomes integrated across education, business and our personal lives.

**Dan Lannin**, *Professor of Psychology, ISU*

## CLASSROOM JOURNEY



### EXPLORING THE MAJESTIC MORTON ARBORETUM IN LISLE, IL

Tuesday, May 5, 7:00 am – 7:00 pm

**\$110 for members | \$125 for non-members**

The Morton Arboretum, spanning more than 1,700 acres, is dedicated to the study, conservation and upkeep of trees and plants from around the world. This internationally recognized botanical garden and research center includes rolling meadows, woodlands, wetlands, lakes and beautifully designed gardens.

The Morton Arboretum serves as a place for recreation, discovery and inspiration, encouraging people to develop a deeper connection to the natural world. Learn about extensive tree collections, including rare and endangered species; discover the vital role trees play in supporting ecosystems and human life.

Experience the beauty and wonder of the arboretum on a guided tram tour. Then spend some time exploring the grounds before ending the afternoon with a program in the Education Center.

*Cost includes transportation, site fees, tram ride, educational program, snacks and lunch onsite at the Ginko Restaurant.*

*The bus will depart from ISU's Office of Parking and Transportation lot, 709 N. Main St., Normal.*

**Fred Walk**, founder of The Historic Route 66: A Geographic Journey, will accompany us on the bus and enlighten attendees about his work on conservation, trees and trails on Route 66 near Towanda.

# REGISTRATION #1

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Nickname \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ St \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Home Phone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Work/Other Phone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email \_\_\_\_\_

*Senior Professionals does not sell or share its e-mail list with anyone outside the university.*

**Members of Senior Professionals pay a reduced rate to attend classes.** To become a member of Senior Professionals and receive the discounted pricing, download a membership form from [SeniorProfessionals.ilstu.edu/Membership](http://SeniorProfessionals.ilstu.edu/Membership). Membership forms and payment MUST be processed separately from class registrations.

**WALK-INS:** Payment for \$15.00 single-sessions (cash or check) will be collected at the door. No pre-registration will be accepted for walk-ins.

## CLASSES

To attend in-person classes, the cost is per person. To attend virtual classes, only one registration per household is required.

	Member (In-Person) \$35	Non-Member (In-Person) \$45	Member (Virtual) \$35	Non-Member (Virtual) \$45
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>1. SAUDI ARABIA AND REINVENTION OF MODERNITY</b> (all four sessions)	_____	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>2. NAVIGATING THE STATE OF HIGHER EDUCATION</b> (all four sessions)	_____	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>3. BIG BANDS: ALIVE AND WELL</b> (all four sessions)	_____	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>4. OLD "MASTERS"? WOMEN AND THE ARTS FROM 1400 TO 1750</b> (all four sessions)	_____	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>5. MORNINGS WITH THE PROFESSORS</b> (all five sessions)	_____	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>6. CLASSROOM JOURNEY BUS TRIP</b>	Member \$110: _____		Non-Member \$125: _____	
<b>Total:</b> _____				

**PAYMENT METHOD** To pay online, go to [SeniorProfessionals.IllinoisState.edu](http://SeniorProfessionals.IllinoisState.edu).

Check enclosed, payable to **Illinois State University**  VISA  MasterCard  Discover  AmEx

Card # \_\_\_\_\_ Name on Card \_\_\_\_\_

Exp Date \_\_\_\_\_ CVV# \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

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# REGISTRATION #2

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Nickname \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ St \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Home Phone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Work/Other Phone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email \_\_\_\_\_

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<input type="checkbox"/> <b>3. BIG BANDS: ALIVE AND WELL</b> (all four sessions)	_____	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>4. OLD "MASTERS"? WOMEN AND THE ARTS FROM 1400 TO 1750</b> (all four sessions)	_____	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>5. MORNINGS WITH THE PROFESSORS</b> (all five sessions)	_____	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>6. CLASSROOM JOURNEY BUS TRIP</b>	Member \$110: _____		Non-Member \$125: _____	
<b>Total:</b> _____				

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Exp Date \_\_\_\_\_ CVV# \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

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## CLASS REGISTRATION

**ONLINE:** [SeniorProfessionals.IllinoisState.edu](http://SeniorProfessionals.IllinoisState.edu)

**BY MAIL:** Senior Professionals, Illinois State University, Campus Box 8610, Normal, IL 61790-8610

**BY PHONE:** (800) 877-1478 or (309) 438-2160, Mon. - Fri., 8:00 am - 4:30 pm,

**ON-SITE:** Conference Services, Illinois State University Alumni Center,  
1101 N Main St, Normal, IL, Mon. - Fri., 8:00 am - 4:30 pm

**REFUNDS:** To receive a full refund for MWP or Academy classes, your registration must be cancelled no later than one week prior to the start date of each class; a \$10 processing fee will be charged after that date. To receive a full refund for the Classroom Journey bus trip, cancellations must be received no later than one week prior to the trip unless there is a wait list and another individual can fill the seat.

### JOIN SENIOR PROFESSIONALS AND PAY A REDUCED RATE TO ATTEND CLASSES

Senior Professionals is an organization open to persons of retirement age. No prior affiliation with ISU required. Members select their level of involvement, with opportunities to get involved in a variety of ways, including socializing at special events, attending classes, mentoring students, conducting mock interviews, reviewing resumes and planning programs.

The cost to join is an annual tax-deductible donation of \$125.00 made payable to ISU Foundation. Monies go to support program offerings, expenses and student awards. Members are eligible to receive a Redbird Card, which allows use of Milner Library, Tech Zone computer services, a technology help line and more.

To sign up, download a form at [www.SeniorProfessionals.ilstu.edu/Membership](http://www.SeniorProfessionals.ilstu.edu/Membership) or request one at [lakowa2@ilstu.edu](mailto:lakowa2@ilstu.edu) or (309) 438-2160. Membership forms MUST be processed separately from class registrations.



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