



# SOAR

## Spring 2026

# Course Descriptions

SOAR Office  
382 Van Housen Ext.  
SUNY Potsdam  
MWF 9am-2pm  
(315) 267-2690

### 1 — 3D Printing: It's Not Sci-Fi!

Cap: 10

**Presenter:** Casey DeJesus-Webb

**Location:** SUNY Potsdam Makerspace Room - Loughheed Learning Commons

**Classes:** 1 session / 1.5 hours

**Day, Date and Time:** Monday, 4/6, 2:00-3:30

**Description:** Dive into 3D printing with SUNY Potsdam's resident expert - Casey! Learn the basics of bringing 3D models to life using free online websites and community-made software. Start with an idea, find or make a model, then let the printer do the rest! Participants will learn how to work with consumer-grade 3D printers and Tinkercad, a free, browser-based 3D modeling software while they let their creativity soar!

**Presenter's Background:** Casey DeJesus-Webb is a SUNY Potsdam Music Education Graduate Student who has been the SUNY Potsdam Makerspace's Manager for the past three years. Beyond that, he has worked with 3D printers for the past five as a Makerspace Assistant and a hobbyist. He has worked on a large range of projects, from small product prototypes for business majors and conducting batons for music majors, to sidewalk stamps for the Town of Potsdam and full suits of 3D printed armor. In his eyes, the biggest limiting factor to the possibilities of 3D Printing is your creativity!

**Note:** Participants should establish a free account at Tinkercad.com to be used during class.

### 2 — And Your Question Is?

Cap: 40

**Presenter:** Charles Robinson

**Location:** SUNY Canton Dana Hall 230

**Classes:** 3 sessions / 1.5 hours

**Day, Date and Time:** Wednesdays, 4/8-4/22, 2:30-4:00

**Description:** This course is designed to answer topical questions that attendees may have regarding, for example: (i) law enforcement for investigating crimes and making arrests; (ii) courts for adjudicating pre-trial matters, trials, and appeals; (iii) corrections for probation and parole, and jails and prisons; (iv) citizen rights, liabilities, and responsibilities for reporting crimes and for being victims of crimes; (v) civil liberties and national security; (vi) internet-facilitated crimes. The presentation is in no way intended to be delivered as legal advice.

**Presenter's Background:** Charles Robinson is an Assistant Professor in the Criminal Justice department at SUNY Canton, where he joined the faculty in 2023. Charles first started teaching in higher education from 2010 through 2021 at a university in North Carolina. His teaching experience is comprehensive and extensive in criminal justice courses and criminology courses. Prior to becoming a professional in higher education, Charles practiced law for many years, and his legal career is also extensive and comprehensive, with experience in state and federal criminal and civil trial litigation, state and federal criminal and civil appellate litigation, and state and federal administrative litigation. Although he no longer actively practices law, he formerly was licensed in the states of Oklahoma and North Carolina, and he still retains his active law license for the state of Tennessee. Charles is a former chairperson for the North Carolina Bar Association Section on Constitutional Rights and Responsibilities. As a military veteran, he is a former Captain in the U.S. Marine Corps. Charles received his B.A. from Wesleyan University, his M.A. in Criminal Justice from SUNY Albany School of Criminal Justice, and his law degree from Washington and Lee University School of Law.

### 3 — Artificial Intelligence for Seniors: Baking, Breaking, and Pontificating, Oh My!

Cap: 45

**Presenter:** Anthony Betrus

**Location:** SUNY Potsdam Barrington Student Union Multi-Purpose Room

**Classes:** 1 session / 1.5 hours

**Day, Date and Time:** Tuesday, 4/28, 10:00-11:30

**Description:** From smart ovens to self-braking cars to chatty robots, AI is quietly baking, breaking, and pontificating its way into daily life. In this fun, hands-on session for the young at heart, we'll explore how artificial intelligence can make life easier, safer, and a little more interesting one recipe, one road trip, and one conversation at a time.

**Presenter's Background: Dr. Anthony Betrus** has been teaching at SUNY Potsdam since 1997, and in 2023 he was awarded the SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching. He has taught a number of technology-related courses for seniors, most recently on Virtual Reality. He is on the SUNY AI Task Force for integrating AI tutors into online learning and is currently teaching a professional development course for area teachers on integrating AI into their classrooms.

**Note:** Bring a charged smart phone to install apps on the phone.

#### **4 — Beginning Woodcarving**

**Cap: 10**

**Presenters: Susan Kocsis, Pat Jenkins**

**Location:** SUNY Potsdam Flagg 164

**Classes:** 10 sessions / 2 hours

**Day, Date and Time:** Fridays, 3/6-5/8, 1:00-3:00

**Description:** Learn the basics of woodcarving, from choosing your tools, learning knife safety and techniques, to completing at least three beginner projects. We will also explore the nature of different woods, how to work with and across the grain of the wood.

**Presenter's Background: Susan Kocsis** has been carving for over ten years, starting at the Champlain Valley Woodcarvers group in 2014. She demonstrates carving techniques, pen turning and has helped develop a hands-on Soap Carving booth at the Saratoga Woodcrafters Showcase for children of all ages who are interested in learning about carving. She is a member in good standing of the Northeast Woodworkers Association and has a background in Occupational Therapy, which offers her a unique perspective on teaching. **Pat Jenkins** became interested in carving at a young age but did not actually start carving until 2015 when she joined the Champlain Valley Woodcarvers in Plattsburgh. She has demonstrated carving at several venues including the Clinton County Fair, Babbie Farm Museum and the Saratoga Woodcrafters Showcase. Pat is an avid craft person doing many things from spinning yarn, knitting and crocheting, ceramics, sewing, and many more.

**Note:** Please do not purchase any carving tools before classes begin. Materials and web links provided during class.

#### **5 — Borneo-The Island of Three Countries**

**Cap: 60**

**Presenter: Juanita Babcock**

**Location:** SUNY Potsdam Timmerman 131

**Classes:** 1 session / 1.5 hours

**Day, Date and Time:** Tuesday, 3/10, 1:00-2:30

**Description:** Borneo has always been a source of intrigue, conjuring up headhunters, orangutans, and tropical weather. In this course we will explore firsthand the island with all its mystique and offerings.

**Presenter's Background: Juanita Babcock** is a longtime world traveler who has visited countries on every continent. She loves to explore new cultures, the history of each country, world religions, international politics, and the uniqueness of every country she visits. Juanita has presented numerous Vicarious Voyages for SOAR over the past several years.

#### **6 — Breathing, Balance, and Brains**

**Cap: 30**

**Presenters: Jennifer McDonald, Deborah Molnar, Derek Brown**

**Location:** SUNY Canton Wicks Hall 214

**Classes:** 1 session/ 1.5 hours

**Day, Date and Time:** Tuesday, 4/7, 12:00-1:30

**Description:** Join the SUNY Canton Physical Therapist Assistant faculty and students for an interactive session where you will learn how your breath impacts overall wellbeing, the importance of maintaining balance (especially as we age) and how physical activity can improve brain health and function.

**Presenter's Background: Dr. Deborah Molnar, PT, Dr. Jennifer McDonald, PT and Derek Brown, PTA** are licensed physical therapy professionals with extensive experience in both clinical practice and teaching.

**Note:** Wear comfortable clothes and shoes to allow for easy movement.

#### **7 — Chemistry Making Life Better - CANCELLED by the Presenter**

**Cap: 42**

**Presenter: Richard Partch**

**Location:** SUNY Potsdam Flagg 233

**Classes:** 1 session / 1.5 hours

**Day, Date and Time:** Monday, 4/13, 3:00-4:30

**Description:** Chemicals are what all things in the universe are made of. Their molecules are millions of different atom compositions and structures, and chemists create new ones able to advance human enjoyment. This course exposes you to how some molecular adaptations have improved everything humans feel, see, smell, taste, and touch.

**Presenter's Background: Richard (Dick) Partch** was a Professor at Clark University lecturing and mentoring bachelor, master and doctoral students for 60 years. He enjoyed accolades from alumni and earned over \$6 million in external funding for research.

## **8 — Chronic Disease Self-Management**

**Cap: 15**

**Presenters: Ellen Nichols; Penelope Rattan**

**Location:** Potsdam Town Hall, 18 Elm Street, Potsdam

**Classes:** 6 sessions / 2.5 hours

**Day, Date and Time:** Mondays, 3/2-4/6, 1:00-3:30

**Description:** The Chronic Disease Self-Management Program is a six-week, evidence-based workshop designed to empower adults living with ongoing health issues such as diabetes, heart disease, arthritis, lung disease, and for caregivers who provide support to adults with chronic disease. This program, led by trained facilitators (living with chronic conditions themselves) teaches practical skills to improve daily life and overall well-being. Participants learn how to: (i) build healthy habits that support long-term wellness, (ii) manage pain, fatigue, and difficult emotions, (iii) improve nutrition, physical activity, and sleep, (iv) communicate effectively with healthcare providers and loved ones, (v) set personal goals and create action plans that work.

**Presenter's Background: Ellen Nichols** is retired and earned her degree in Nursing from SUNY Plattsburgh. She has been an RN for over 40 years. Her certification to teach this course was obtained in 2017 from a Stanford University program through the Self-Management Resource Center. **Penelope Rattan** is retired from a 60-year career in social work, nursing home administration and substance use disorder programs. She has a BA from Keuka College in Sociology and Psychology and is a 5-yr certified Lifestyle Coach for this program.

**Note:** This program provides a free resource book that participants will take home with them.

## **9 — Composting: Almost Everything Composts; Saving the Planet in an Important But Small Way**

**Cap: 42**

**Presenter: Brad Pendergraft**

**Location:** SUNY Potsdam Flagg 205

**Classes:** 1 session / 1.5 hours

**Day, Date and Time:** Wednesday, 4/29, 1:00-2:30

**Description:** This course will cover and emphasize understanding composting including proper management; use of greens and browns; various systems; what increases or slows composting; when compost is ready to use; troubleshooting problems; and current food waste and minimizing it so we can save the planet. A small spoiler alert for those who read until the end - there will be cats.

**Presenter's Background: Brad Pendergraft** has bachelor's degrees in Geology and Art, and a master's degree in education. He taught night classes in the Geology department at SUNY Potsdam for 15 years and Earth Science at Salmon River Central High School for 17 years. Brad moved to the North Country 46 years ago to homestead on 180 acres and built a stone house, raised Black Angus cattle and honeybees. Gardening started his journey into composting. He is a Master Gardener.

## **10 — Conservation Efforts for Threatened North Country Wildlife**

**Cap: 42**

**Presenter: Glenn Johnson**

**Location:** SUNY Potsdam **STOWELL 211 - New Location**

**Classes:** 2 sessions / 1.5 hours

**Day, Date and Time:** Monday, Wednesday, 3/9-3/11, 1:00-2:30

**Description:** This course will detail the natural history and conservation ecology directed towards two wildlife species in Northern New York: the state-threatened Blanding's turtle and the Endangered Spruce Grouse. The presentations will focus on Glenn's work, his students' work, and work his colleagues have conducted over the past 27 years on both of these iconic species. There will be some live turtles to show, including a Blanding's turtle.

**Presenter's Background: Glenn Johnson** is a Professor in the Biology department at SUNY Potsdam where he teaches conservation, ecology and vertebrate biology courses mostly. His main interest is Conservation Biology, especially endangered vertebrates and most particularly amphibians and reptiles. He coauthored a *Field Guide to Amphibians and Reptiles of New York* and has authored numerous scientific papers and technical reports on threatened vertebrates in New York and Pennsylvania.

## 11 — Denizens of the Deep

Cap: 54

**Presenter:** Walter Conley

**Location:** SUNY Potsdam Kellas 101

**Classes:** 1 session / 1.5 hours

**Day, Date and Time:** Tuesday, 3/24, 10:00-11:30

**Description:** This course explores the unusual creatures that inhabit our oceans, with a focus on the deep sea. We will also discuss the many challenges of living in a cold, dark, high-pressure environment with little food.

**Presenter's Background:** **Dr. Walt Conley** earned his B.S. degree in Fisheries from the University of Massachusetts - Amherst, an M.S. in Marine Biology from the University of Massachusetts - Dartmouth, and his Ph.D. in Marine Science from the University of South Florida. He has worked as a research scientist and professor in multiple states, including almost two years on ships, primarily in the Gulf of Mexico. His research includes protected species (sea turtles and manatees) and plankton trophodynamics, including deep sea anchovies.

## 12 — Don't Throw it Away! Using Food Waste to Generate Energy and Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Cap: 25

**Presenters:** Jan DeWaters; Stefan Grimberg

**Location:** Cornell Cooperative Extension Learning Farm (CCEL), 2043B NY-68 #4453, Canton

**Classes:** 1 session / 2 hours

**Day, Date and Time:** Tuesday, 4/28, 1:00-3:00

**Description:** Food waste represents more than 20% of the waste discarded to landfills. Instead of throwing it away, food waste can be processed to recover important resources: ENERGY and FERTILIZER. Participants will learn about food waste management and anaerobic digestion, a process that converts organic wastes into biogas, a carbon-free energy substitute for natural gas. We will tour the anaerobic digester system at the CCEL, which treats food waste from Canton Central School cafeterias. Participants will also view algae reactors and learn about research investigating the addition of algae to dairy cow feed to reduce methane emissions.

**Presenter's Background:** **Jan DeWaters** is a faculty member at the Institute for STEM Education at Clarkson University. She uses her background in environmental engineering to engage in education research and teach introductory-level courses that focus on the significance of engineering contributions to society and the environment. **Stefan Grimberg** is a Professor at Clarkson University's Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering and is co-director of the Center of Excellence in Healthy Water Solutions. His research explores ways to improve anaerobic digestion systems, so they will be economically viable for smaller farms or smaller waste generators.

**Note:** Interested participants can explore the Food-to-Energy project at <https://sites.clarkson.edu/foodwaste/>

## 13 — Driver Safety by AARP

Cap: 35

**Presenter:** David Stewart

**Location:** St. Lawrence-Lewis BOCES, Canton

**Classes:** 2 sessions / 3 hours

**Day, Date and Time:** Wednesday, Thursday, 5/6- 5/7, 1:00-4:00

**Description:** AARP's Smart Driver course is approved by New York State for insurance discounts and driver's license point reduction. Smart Driver is the nation's largest refresher course designed specifically for older drivers but is open to all age groups. The course helps participants update their driving knowledge, skills, and confidence. New York State requires participants complete the full course to receive a 10% reduction in the base rate of automobile and motorcycle liability and collision insurance premiums for three years. Participants may also be eligible to reduce as many as four points from their driving record. This is a 2-day, 3-hrs per day, course.

**Presenter's Background:** **David Stewart** is a retired university administrator and former radio and TV reporter. He has taught 200 safe-driving courses, primarily in Northern New York.

**Note:** Casual dress. Participants must bring their NYS driver's license to class and a current AARP membership card (if a member). **The required course fee (\$25 for AARP members, \$30 for non-members) is payable at the first session (cash or check payable to AARP).** Participants **must pre-register and arrive 20 minutes prior** to the scheduled start time of the first session.

## 14 — Equine-Assisted Learning

Cap: 50

**Presenter:** Laura Zellweger

**Location:** Canton Free Library

**Classes:** 1 session / 1.5 hours

**Day, Date and Time:** Wednesday, 3/18, 2:30-4:00

**Description:** Equine-Assisted Learning (EAL) partners horses and humans through facilitated activities to develop life skills for educational, professional, and personal goals. This course will explain why horses are excellent partners for this work and explore how a variety of people can benefit. There will also be a focus on EAL education through a program offered at Candlelite Farm, called Horse-Powered Reading.

**Presenter's Background:** Laura Zellweger is the Co-Owner of Candlelite Farm in Colton, NY and a life-long horse girl and breeder of Morgan Horses. She is certified through PATH International as a Therapeutic Riding Instructor and an Equine Specialist in Mental Health and Learning. She is currently an Equine Assisted Learning candidate through PATH International.

**Note:** Go to *Candlelite Farm* on Facebook for further reading.

## 15 — Exploring the Possibilities through Self-Directed Education

Cap: 50

**Presenter:** Maria Corse

**Location:** Canton Free Library

**Classes:** 1 session / 1.5 hours

**Day, Date and Time:** Wednesday, 4/1, 2:00-3:30

**Description:** This course will define Self-Directed Education, including key characteristics and benefits. Through visual aids and discussion, the instructor will provide specific features, misconceptions, and myths around self-directed education, as well as other forms of alternative education. She will explain her work at Deep Root Center supporting youth from all over the St. Lawrence Valley, including the process of founding a not-for-profit and the funding issues related to promising access to any child who needs this support through a "pay what you can" policy. She will also invite participants to explore how they can (or already) use the concept of self-directed learning in their own lives.

**Presenter's Background:** Maria Corse (pronouns: she/her) is a seasoned facilitator, mentor, and self-directed educational consultant with 22 years of experience in alternative educational settings. Determined to provide a safe, non-coercive, self-directed learning option in Northern New York where she can support young people to follow their interests and choose their own unique paths, Maria founded Deep Root Center in January 2014. Maria firmly believes that learning is an individual pursuit - driven by curiosity, interests, and aspirations. And, within that, education is a collaboration, which includes a supportive community, mentorship, mutual respect, trust, deep conversations, questions, hands-on experimentation, and playfulness.

**Note:** Deep Root Center website - <https://www.deeprootcenter.org/>

Deep Root Center on Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/deeprootcenter>

Peter Gray - Free to Learn - [https://substack.com/@petergray?utm\\_source=global-search](https://substack.com/@petergray?utm_source=global-search)

<https://www.self-directed.org/>

*Learning is Natural School is Optional* by Ken Danford (Co-founder of North Star)

*How Children Learn and Teach Your Own* by John Holt

## 16 — Global Murder: A Country-by-Country Breakdown of Serial Killers

Cap: 42

**Presenter:** Liz Brown

**Location:** SUNY Canton Dana Hall 230

**Classes:** 2 sessions / 1.5 hours

**Day, Date and Time:** Wednesdays, 4/22-4/29, 1:00-2:30

**Description:** Step into the chilling history of killers with a presentation that maps the global landscape of serial murder. From infamous cases that gripped the world to lesser-known killers who operated in the shadows, we'll explore how different countries have been shaped by, and responded to, serial homicide.

**Presenter's Background:** Liz Brown is the Executive Director for the Center for Workforce, Community & Industry Partnerships (WCIP) at SUNY Canton. She was previously a Professor in the Criminal Justice Department where she taught forensic science and criminal justice courses for 14 years.

## 17 — How To Read a Painting

Cap: 25

**Presenter:** Caroline Downing

**Location:** SUNY Potsdam Brainerd 215

**Classes:** 2 sessions / 1.5 hours

**Day, Date and Time:** Tuesdays, 3/24-3/31, 2:00-3:30

**Description:** Make the most of your next visit to an art museum or gallery. You will learn the technical vocabulary used by artists, art historians, and critics, and will practice creating your own formal analysis of an artwork. We will look at examples of modern and contemporary art in order to better understand the art movements of the 20th and 21st centuries.

**Presenter's Background:** Caroline Downing has been teaching Art History and Archaeology at SUNY Potsdam for 35 years. She earned her doctorate in Classical Archaeology at Indiana University, writing on Late Roman wall painting.

**Note:** Handouts with art vocabulary will be distributed in class.

## 18 — Imagine Korea through Food

Cap: 20

**Presenter:** In-Sil Yoo

**Location:** SLU Eben Holden Kitchen

**Classes:** 1 session / 1.5 hours

**Day, Date and Time:** Thursday, 3/12, 11:15-12:45

**Description:** Discover Korea through one of its most beloved dishes, bibimbap. In this hands-on cooking class, participants will explore the cultural stories, regional variations, and culinary traditions behind this colorful rice dish. You'll learn how to prepare classic ingredients such as marinated vegetables, sauces, and toppings, and assemble bibimbap with your own personal touch. Along the way, we'll discuss the dish's history, symbolism of harmony and balance, and its place in everyday Korean life. No prior cooking experience is needed, just curiosity, appetite, and a willingness to taste and explore!

**Presenter's Background:** In-Sil Yoo grew up in Seoul, South Korea where she enjoyed her mother's home cooking and the everyday abundance of flavorful Korean food. It wasn't until she moved abroad that she fully appreciated the joy, comfort, and creativity of making Korean dishes herself. Her love of cooking is rooted in sharing the colors, balance, and bold flavors of Korean cuisine with others, especially those curious about easy, delicious home-style meals. Yoo studied at Hanyang University in Korea and the Fontainebleau Schools in France. She earned her doctorate in Composition from the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music and has taught at St. Lawrence University since 2003.

**Note:** A check made payable to In-Sil Yoo for \$10.00 to cover the cost of ingredients must be mailed in with the registration form.

## 19 — Improving Your Garden Soil

Cap: 50

**Presenter:** Erica LaFountain

**Location:** Cornell Cooperative Extension Learning Farm, 2043B NY-68 #4453, Canton

**Classes:** 1 session / 1.5 hours

**Day, Date and Time:** Thursday, 4/2, 10:30-12:00

**Description:** This class will cover home garden soil sampling and testing as well as how to interpret, and act on the results. Increase the productivity of your garden and save money by adding amendments that are needed. This information will apply to ornamental, berry, fruit tree, and vegetable plantings. You'll be eager to test your soil by the end of class!

**Presenter's Background:** Erica LaFountain is the county's Community Horticulture Educator at Cornell Cooperative Extension. With years of farming, gardening, and orcharding experience, she's ready to help you both improve and get the most out of your soil.

## 20 — Intro to Fitness Center

Cap: 20

**Presenter:** Ashley Keenan

**Location:** SUNY Potsdam Shane T. Shaul Fitness Center

**Classes:** 1 session / 1.5 hours

**Day, Date and Time:** Monday, 4/20, 10:00-11:30

**Description:** This course will cover how to properly use the cardio and weight machines in the Shane T. Shaul Fitness Center. It will be an open discussion, so please come with questions and be ready to try fitness equipment!

**Presenter's Background:** Ashley Keenan has been the Fitness Center Director at SUNY Potsdam for 10+ years. She has an ACE Personal Training Certificate, is a Vdot running coach, and a Spin Instructor. She loves working with a variety of clients, specifically those who are here for fall prevention.

**Note:** Please come prepared to exercise, with close-toed shoes.

## 21 — Intro to the Alexander Technique

Cap: 20

**Presenter:** Beth Robinson

**Location:** SUNY Potsdam MAXCY HALL DANCE STUDIO, 3rd Floor - New Location

**Classes:** 2 sessions / 1.5 hours

**Day, Date and Time:** Mondays, 3/16-3/23, 10:00-11:30

**Description:** The Alexander Technique is a proven, safe, self-care method to stop pain, stress, and muscular tension caused by everyday misuse of the body. In this class, learn how our everyday movements such as sitting down, standing up, and walking may create unnecessary tension in our bodies. Through increased awareness, and occasional gentle hands-on guidance from the teacher, we create the possibility for change.

**Presenter's Background:** Beth Robinson is a certified Alexander Technique Teacher. She received her training at the Montreal School of the Alexander Technique. A member of the American Society for the Alexander Technique (AmSAT), and Chair of the Committee for Alexander Technique in the Performing Arts. Beth has worked individually with musicians, actors, dancers, athletes, and pregnant women. She also taught the Alexander Technique in the Theater and Dance Department at SUNY Potsdam for 17 years.

**Note:** Participants are encouraged to wear comfortable clothing. For more information visit

<https://alexandertechniqueusa.org>

## 22 — Intro to the Alexander Technique - Part 2

Cap: 20

**Presenter:** Beth Robinson

**Location:** SUNY Potsdam MAXCY HALL DANCE STUDIO, 3rd Floor - New Location

**Classes:** 2 sessions / 1.5 hours

**Day, Date and Time:** Mondays, 3/30-4/6, 10:00-11:30

**Description:** This class will build on the activities presented in the first session with additional attention to the eyes, the breath, as well as any specific interests of the participants.

**Presenter's Background:** Please refer to Course #21.

**Note:** Please refer to Course #21.

## 23 — The Journey No One Talks About

Cap: 29

**Presenter:** Kate Favaro

**Location:** SUNY Potsdam KELLAS 102 - New Location

**Classes:** 1 session / 1.5 hours

**Day, Date and Time:** Monday, 4/13, 10:00-11:30

**Description:** Let's talk about the journey we'll all be on someday but don't talk about: end-of-life. This session invites you to explore the end-of-life journey and how Hospice can walk alongside you or a loved one. Learn to notice the subtle shifts in health and about the value of connecting with Hospice early, understand how care is offered (where, when, and at what cost) and discover the support available for families facing grief. By shining light on this journey, we hope to offer clarity, comfort, and empower you to make choices with confidence.

**Presenter's Background:** Kate Favaro, C.T. a native Adirondacker and graduate of SUNY Potsdam, Kate has worked for Hospice of St. Lawrence Valley for four years. Normalizing conversations about end-of-life planning, death, dying, and grief has become an unforeseen passion of hers. When not doing this work or supporting individual grievers, she can be found by the lake with a good book or adding stamps to her well-worn passport.

**Note:** Come prepared to ask questions and participate!

## 24 — Learning Through Play: Pedagogy in Children's Museums

Cap: 35

**Presenter:** Sharon Vegh Williams

**Location:** North Country Children's Museum, 10 Raymond Street, Potsdam

**Classes:** 1 session / 1.5 hours

**Day, Date and Time:** Thursday, 3/5, 1:00-2:30

**Description:** This course examines the role of children's museums as innovative learning environments that promote hands-on, interdisciplinary, and play-based approaches to education. Participants will explore STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics) pedagogies as applied in informal learning settings, with a focus on how these methods foster creativity, inquiry, and problem-solving. The course will also trace the development of the North Country Children's Museum and its ongoing impact on children ages 12 and under throughout the region.

**Presenter's Background: Sharon Vegh Williams** has worked in children's museums and schools for over 30 years. She was awarded the Provost Fellowship at the University of Rochester where she earned a Ph.D. in multicultural education. Her writing has been published in the *Association of Children's Museums Quarterly Journal*, the *Journal of American Indian Education*, and *Teacher Education Quarterly*. Her book, *Native Cultural Competency in Mainstream Schooling*, was published by Palgrave Macmillan. She has worked as a museum consultant in North Africa as a Fulbright Specialist. **Note:** Please refer to the following link for more information: <https://www.northcountrychildrensmuseum.org>

## 25 — Lifecycle of the Hutterites

Cap: 48

**Presenter: Suzanne Smith**

**Location:** SUNY Potsdam Flagg 206

**Classes:** 1 session/ 1.5 hours

**Day, Date and Time:** Monday, 4/6, 9:00-10:30

**Description:** Dr. Suzanne Smith will share her experiences living among and studying the Hutterites across several decades. She will walk participants through the important beliefs and behaviors of Hutterites from birth until death by showing pictures of her time spent on colonies throughout North America.

**Presenter's Background: Suzanne Smith** is SUNY Potsdam's 18th president and joined the campus in April 2023. She served as the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs at Georgia Southwestern State University from 2018-2023. Dr. Smith worked at Washington State University Vancouver from 1997-2018 and eventually transitioned from faculty to administration. She believes in putting student success at the forefront of everything she does. Throughout her stay in Washington, she spent considerable time working with, and researching the Hutterites, their parenting practices, and their way of life. She has authored many publications and has presented throughout the country on this topic.

## 26 — Line Dancing

Cap: 50

**Presenter: Laurell Brault**

**Location:** SUNY Potsdam MAXCY HALL DANCE STUDIO, 3rd Floor - New Location

**Classes:** 6 sessions / 1.5 hours

**Day, Date and Time:** Wednesdays, 3/18-4/22, 1:00-2:30

**Description:** A low-impact line dancing course for beginners and people who just love to dance. Participants will learn basic steps and dance routines using music from various genres.

**Presenter's Background: Laurell Brault** served in the United States Navy for 36 years and retired as a Captain in 2011. She and her husband Jim moved to the area in 2013 and currently reside in Norwood. Laurell "discovered" line dancing in 2014 and now considers it her favorite form of dance.

**Note:** Comfortable shoes with smooth soles will make it easier for participants to execute turns and pivots. Dance sneakers or leather-soled shoes are preferred. Sneakers or low-tread shoes should be avoided as they tend to stick to the floor.

## 27 — Living with Tea: Introducing Japanese Tea Ceremony and Tasting

Cap: 30

**Presenters: Kaori MacWilliams, Mark MacWilliams, Mai Sato**

**Location:** Potsdam Civic Center Community Meeting Room, 2 Park Street, Potsdam

**Classes:** 1 session / 1.5 hours

**Day, Date and Time:** Friday, 5/1, 1:00-2:30

**Description:** This course introduces the history and culture of Japanese matcha power tea. Included is a demonstration of an actual tea ceremony. Participants will learn how to make their own tea and sample it.

**Presenter's Background: Kaori MacWilliams** is a master of the Omotesenke, one of the major tea schools in Japan. She started studying tea when she was a teenager. **Mark MacWilliams** is Kaori's partner and a professor of religious studies at SLU. He specializes in Japanese Buddhism and has studied Japanese arts. **Mai Sato** is studying under Kaori and will serve as an assistant.

**Note:** At the first class, please bring \$2 in cash to reimburse Kaori for course expenses.

## 28 — Mah Jongg for Fun I

Cap: 12

**Presenters: Carol Rossi-Fries, Pam Dumas**

**Location:** Potsdam Civic Center Community Meeting Room, 2 Park Street, Potsdam

**Classes:** 6 sessions / 2 hours

**Day, Date and Time:** Tuesdays, Thursdays, 4/7- 4/23, 9:00-11:00

**Description:** This course is for beginners with NO experience playing Mah Jongg. Focus will be on identifying tiles, how to read the Mah Jongg card and how to play a basic game using the rules of American Mah Jongg. A helpful reference is *A Beginner's Guide to American Mah Jongg, How to Play the Game and Win* by Elaine Sandberg.

**Presenter's Background:** Carol Rossi-Fries was an educator for 37 years teaching at Potsdam Central School and SUNY Potsdam. This is her second year teaching Mah Jongg for SOAR and she has thoroughly enjoyed passing on her love of the game to others. It's a great way to exercise the mind, meet new people and have lots of laughs. Pam Dumas is a retired English teacher from Potsdam Central School who is an avid Mah Jongg player. This is her third semester assisting Mah Jongg for Fun classes and enjoys sharing her knowledge and enthusiasm for the game with new and experienced players alike.

**Note:** Materials will be provided in class for reference and for homework.

## **29 — Mah Jongg for Fun II**

**Cap: 12**

**Presenters:** Carol Rossi-Fries, Pam Dumas

**Location:** Potsdam Civic Center Community Meeting Room, 2 Park Street, Potsdam

**Classes:** 3 sessions / 2 hours

**Day, Date and Time:** Thursdays, 4/9-4/23, 11:30-1:30

**Description:** This course is designed for those who already know how to play American Mah Jongg but may need a refresher or want to form a group to play with on a regular basis. Participants will also be introduced to Siamese Mah Jongg, which is played with only two people. Please bring a 2025 Mah Jongg card and a game if you have them.

Emphasis will be on skill development, camaraderie and fun! A helpful resource is *A Beginner's Guide to American Mah Jongg: How to Play the Game and Win* by Elaine Sandberg.

**Presenter's Background:** Please refer to Course #28.

**Note:** The 2025 Mah Jongg card will be available for those who do not have one. Extra games or cards are welcome!

## **30 — Meet the Mediums (Art, That Is)**

**Cap: 20**

**Presenter:** Jennifer Cavanaugh

**Location:** The Gallery at Lake St. Lawrence Arts, 14 Main Street, Waddington, NY 13694

**Classes:** 1 session / 1.5 hours

**Day, Date and Time:** Tuesday, 5/5, 1:00-2:30

**Description:** The session will open with a brief tour of the Gallery, followed by a very basic introduction to three painting mediums; acrylic, pastel and watercolor. After meeting the mediums, members will go hands-on to create at least one small painting and/or greeting card, employing one or more paint mediums. Participants will leave the Gallery with at least one small, completed painting suitable for framing and/or a hand-painted greeting card and envelope. No painting experience is necessary!

**Presenter's Background:** Jen Cavanaugh is a retired vocal music teacher who decided - with a great start from SOAR - to take up painting. She has taken classes in watercolor and pastel but is largely self-taught. Born and raised in Potsdam, she and her husband now live in Waddington where she is an artist member of the Gallery at Lake St. Lawrence Arts.

**Note:** All materials will be provided by the instructor.

## **31 — Microsoft Word for Beginners Section I**

**Cap: 10**

**Presenter:** David Mathie

**Location:** SUNY Potsdam Flagg 232

**Classes:** 2 sessions / 1.5 hours

**Day, Date and Time:** Tuesdays, 4/28-5/5, 10:00-11:30

**Description:** Microsoft Word is the standard for word processing or writing. This class will teach you, step by step, how to use Microsoft Word how to open it, enter information, change fonts, highlight text, indent with tabs, and make bulleted lists.

**Presenter's Background:** A Potsdam native, **Dr. David Mathie** has served on the SOAR Board since 2019 and is Chair of the Curriculum and Scheduling Committees. In his pre-retirement life, he was a Professor of Music at Boise State University in Idaho for 24 years teaching trombone and music education, in-services and classes in basic computer techniques for college students and public-school teachers. He holds degrees in music from Ithaca College, Juilliard, and a doctorate from the University of Georgia. He was also a former professional trombone player in New York City. He has had absolutely no formal training in computers but has used them since the 1980s and enjoys being the person to fix computers when someone asks, "Who can fix my @! computer problems?" Fun side note: David's son is a Software Engineer.

**Note:** Please note that this is a course for members with some computer skills who are unfamiliar with or have never worked with Microsoft Word. Attendees must bring a laptop with Microsoft Word installed on their laptop. Participants should not register for BOTH sections of Microsoft Word for Beginners. Register for one section only.

### **32 — Microsoft Word for Beginners Section II**

**Cap: 10**

**Presenter: David Mathie**

**Location:** SUNY Potsdam Flagg 232

**Classes:** 2 sessions / 1.5 hours

**Day, Date and Time:** Thursdays, 4/30-5/7, 10:00-11:30

**Description:** Please refer to Course #31.

**Presenter's Background:** Please refer to Course #31.

**Note:** Please refer to Course #31.

### **33 — Naval Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 1944**

**Cap: 25**

**Presenter: Doug Rose**

**Location:** SUNY Potsdam Flagg 233

**Classes:** 4 sessions / 1.5 hours

**Day, Date and Time:** Wednesdays, 4/8-4/29, 2:00-3:30

**Description:** On October 20, 1944, General Douglas MacArthur made his triumphant return to the Philippines with the invasion of Leyte Island. Days later, the U.S. and Imperial Japanese navies engaged in history's largest sea battle in Leyte Gulf. Nearly 300 ships and 200,000 sailors and aviators were involved. This course will focus on the roles of key USN and IJN personnel, on each navy's bold plans to achieve victory, and on some astounding events involving both navies.

**Presenter's Background:** **Doug Rose** developed an interest in World War II during his teens in the 1960s. While teaching War and Literature at SUNY Canton, he assigned various texts about the war to his students, including *The Battle of Leyte Gulf* by Thomas J. Cutler.

**Note:** The relevant links and reading materials for this course can be found on the SOAR website, under Courses: Naval Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 1944

### **34 — Plato's Apology**

**Cap: 48**

**Presenter: David Curry**

**Location:** SUNY Potsdam Flagg 206

**Classes:** 3 sessions / 1.5 hours

**Day, Date and Time:** Thursdays, 3/26-4/9, 1:00-2:30

**Description:** In addition to being a brilliant piece of philosophy, Plato's *Apology* is a remarkable work of literature. In this work, Plato depicts his mentor Socrates on trial, defending himself against the charges of "corrupting the youth and worshipping gods other than the gods of the city." This short course will engage in a close reading of the *Apology*. We will also read some excerpts from other of Plato's Socratic works to fill in our picture of this enormously influential but disturbing man. Once we are acquainted with Socrates, we will put him on trial again to see how he fares in defending himself against a modern audience.

**Presenter's Background:** **David Curry** taught philosophy at SUNY Potsdam for 35 years. His academic specialization was in Ancient Philosophy, especially the philosophies of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle.

**Note:** A PDF copy of the *Apology* along with supporting texts will be sent out to members by the course Ambassador prior to the first day of class.

### 35 — Poetry Workshop

Cap: 12

**Presenter:** Stephanie Coyne DeGhett

**Location:** SUNY Potsdam Flagg 210 New Location

**Classes:** 3 sessions / 1.5 hours

**Day, Date and Time:** Tuesdays, 3/3 (Postponed) -3/17, 3/24 (added), 1:00-2:30

**Description:** This course is designed to help you discover your way into the world of writing poetry and is meant for aspiring poets as well as those who have already begun their travels with poetry. Each class includes new avenues to explore, discussions of the elements of poetry and its craft, in-class writing to generate both ideas and questions, and small group discussions in which you can share your work if you choose.

**Presenter's Background:** Stephanie Coyne DeGhett is Professor Emerita of Creative Writing at SUNY Potsdam, where she taught creative writing for decades. Since retirement, she has given creative writing workshops and poetry readings and continues to publish. This past year, her poetry has appeared in *New Ohio Review*, *The MacGuffin* and the *Cider Press Review*. One of her short stories appeared in Issue 22 of *Story*, <https://www.storymagazine.org>

**Note:** More information about Stephanie may be found at <https://stephaniecoynedeghett.tumblr.com>

### 36 — Potsdam Humane Society (PHS) - Protecting Animals and Strengthening Our Community

Cap: 25

**Presenters:** Pamela Dumas, Caitlyn Wilson

**Location:** Potsdam Humane Society (Chad Fuller Bldg), 17 Madrid Avenue (SH 345), Potsdam

**Classes:** 1 session / 1.5 hours

**Day, Date and Time:** Thursday, 3/19, 3:30-5:00

**Description:** This course will provide information about humane societies across the country, the Potsdam Humane Society's history and mission statement, programs and volunteer opportunities, training schedules, and will provide a tour of the PHS shelter.

**Presenter's Background:** Pam Dumas retired from Potsdam High School after 32 years of teaching and has volunteered for over two years at the PHS. With over 30 years in education and healthcare, Caitlyn Wilson has been driven by compassion and connection. Her love for all critters and teaching led her to the PHS where she has proudly served as a volunteer and, since May 2025, she has served as the Dog Enrichment Coordinator.

### 37 — Put That Book Down and Come to Supper Now!

Cap: 12

**Presenter:** Elizabeth O'Brian

**Location:** Jernabi Coffeehouse, 11 Maple Street, Potsdam

**Classes:** 5 sessions / 1.5 hours

**Day, Date and Time:** Wednesdays, 3/25-4/22, 10:00-11:30

**Description:** Have fun exploring your life's Reading History. This course is loosely divided into five eras of your reading journey, giving you a chance to share fond or conflicting memories.

**Presenter's Background:** Elizabeth O'Brian has two master's degrees in education from SUNY Potsdam and St. Lawrence University. She taught at Ogdensburg Middle School for 30 years and served as a teacher and facilitator at the Strong Children's Museum in Rochester and the Adirondack Museum at Blue Mountain Lake.

**Note:** For the first session please bring *The Hardy Boys*, *Little Golden Books* and the like. Most importantly, review memories of being read to or learning about *Dick and Jane* in the one-room schoolhouse.

### 38 — Securing Your Future: Fixed Income's Role in Asset Allocation

Cap: 20

**Presenter:** Eleanor Menz

**Location:** Potsdam Town Hall, 18 Elm Street, Potsdam

**Classes:** 1 session / 1.5 hours

**Day, Date and Time:** Wednesday, 4/22, 9:30-11:00

**Description:** This course introduces the foundational concept of asset allocation and the relationship between risk and return in investing. Special focus will be given to the role of fixed income investments, such as bonds and other interest-bearing instruments, as a stabilizing force within a diversified portfolio. Participants will learn about various types of fixed income securities, their key features, and how they help to stabilize the portfolio.

**Presenter's Background:** Eleanor Menz has been a Certified Public Accountant and educator in Northern New York for over 30 years. She is also a retired Certified Financial Planner who provided comprehensive financial planning services to area residents prior to her retirement in 2022.

### 39 — Strength Training for Older Adults

Cap: 45

**Presenters:** Richard Bradshaw, Alexander Kodama

**Location:** Potsdam Town Hall, 18 Elm Street, Potsdam & Bjorn Fitness, Market Square Mall, 22 Depot Street, Potsdam

**Classes:** 3 sessions / 1.5 hours

**Day, Date and Time:** Mondays, 4/20-5/4, 11:00-12:30

**Description:** Being strong is an essential part of aging well. This seminar will explore the physical and psychological benefits of strength training, including increasing muscle mass and bone density, boosting mood, preventing injury, and improving brain health. **Session 1:** Held at the Potsdam Town Hall, will discuss the rationale for strength training and present evidence that strength training is appropriate for all older adults, regardless of their physical condition. **Session 2:** Held twice at the Bjorn Fitness Center. Participants will be introduced to various strength training exercises and equipment through practical demonstrations.

**Presenter's Background:** Richard Bradshaw, who retired in 2019, now resides in Colton with his wife Kathleen Wallace. He remains actively engaged in his community as a substitute teacher in the local public schools and as a presenter of SOAR courses. Richard is a grandfather of three and enjoys a variety of hobbies, including hiking, teaching, and weight training. His passion for strength training has led him to attend events such as the "Starting Strength Camp: The Self-Sufficient Lifter" in Wichita Falls, TX, and a session with Jonathan Sullivan, author of *The Barbell Prescription*, in Detroit, MI. Locally, he has trained with Alexander Kodama at Bjorn Fitness in Potsdam. Recently, Richard expanded his knowledge of barbell training and coaching by completing the Coaching 101 and Principles courses from the Barbell Logic Academy. Alexander Kodama, the founder and owner of Bjorn Fitness in Potsdam, is dedicated to empowering his clients to live longer, healthier lives. His journey began in 2019 when he started coaching friends and family, marking the inception of Bjorn Fitness. Since then, he has successfully led over 2,600 groups and one-on-one sessions annually. Alexander holds certifications from StrongFirst, Flexible Steel, and the National Academy of Sports Medicine, underscoring his expertise in fitness and wellness. Outside of his professional pursuits, he enjoys spending time with his five cats and one dog, indulges in math as a hobby, and is an avid reader. His true passion lies in creating innovative solutions that help people improve themselves and achieve their full potential.

**Note:** Participants will attend only one of the two sessions at the Bjorn Fitness Center. Attendance is based on which session they signed up for at the beginning of Session 1.

### 40 — Stretching for Couch Potatoes

Cap: 50

**Presenter:** Pam March

**Location:** SUNY Potsdam MAXCY HALL DANCE STUDIO, 3rd Floor - New Location

**Classes:** 8 sessions / 1 hour

**Day, Date and Time:** Thursdays, 3/19-5/7, 12:00-1:00

**Description:** Very mild to mid-level exercises sitting on, standing beside, and using a chair to stretch. Includes learning to stretch correctly, breath fully, body awareness, pain reduction, relaxation techniques, brief meditating, using stretchy bands, and moving cans around.

**Presenter's Background:** Since the age of 16, Pam March has taught dance, exercise and therapeutic movement both privately and in groups of ALL ages. She has been a Hatha Yoga practitioner for the last 60 years. Pam has been a professional trainer in the original Pilate's Body Conditioning exercise system in NYC for 13 years. Her work has also included the Feldenkrais and Alexander techniques, physical therapy, and psycho therapeutic integration of the body, mind and emotions to provide healing and various other modalities.

**Note:** Participants should bring two soup cans or light weights to the first class. Participants should wear loose fitting clothing, soft shoes and socks, and bring a water bottle.

### 41 — Tai Chi - Beginning

Cap: 50

**Presenter:** Pam March

**Location:** SUNY Potsdam MAXCY HALL DANCE STUDIO, 3rd Floor - New Location

**Classes:** 8 sessions / 1 hour

**Day, Date and Time:** Tuesdays, 3/17-5/5, 12:00-1:00

**Description:** This class includes basic Chinese warmups both standing and sitting down, Tai Chi meditation and introduction to the Yang 24 movement short form. Concerns of seniors will be addressed including balance, leg strength, endurance, relaxation and taking it easy on the joints, and learning how to relax.

**Presenter's Background: Pam March** is a certified Tai-Chi instructor from the Boston Institute of Kung Fu and Tai-Chi. In fall 2010, Pam received the "Leon LeBeau SOARing Educator Award" in honor of the exceptional and long-lasting impact she has had on the well-being of numerous SOAR members.

**Note:** Participants should wear loose fitting clothing, soft shoes and socks and bring a water bottle.

**Special Note:** **Beginning** students may **not** register for Tai-Chi - Continuing without prior approval of the instructor.

#### 42 — Tai Chi - Continuing

**Cap: 50**

**Presenter: Pam March**

**Location:** SUNY Potsdam MAXCY HALL DANCE STUDIO, 3rd Floor - New Location

**Classes:** 16 sessions / 1 hour

**Day, Date and Time:** Tuesdays, Thursdays, 3/17-5/7, 1:00-2:00

**Description:** This course is intended for students who already have familiarity with Tai Chi and Qigong. The course includes Qigong forms, traditional Chinese warmup exercises, Tai Chi meditation, movement phrases from the short form, and the eight method and five steps form.

**Presenter's Background:** Please refer to Course #41.

**Note:** Participants should wear loose fitting clothing, soft shoes and socks and bring a water bottle.

#### 43 — Watercolor Workshop

**Cap: 18**

**Presenter: Donna Kuhn**

**Location:** SUNY Potsdam Satterlee Hall 225

**Classes:** 10 sessions / 2 hours

**Day, Date and Time:** Fridays, 3/6-5/8, 10:00-12:00

**Description:** This workshop is designed for all levels of SOAR aspiring artists to get together informally to learn, paint, and improve their artistic skills through demonstrations and support from other participants. Instructions are provided for beginners. Participants share their work each week as a learning experience for all.

**Presenter's Background:** **Donna Kuhn** has participated in several SOAR art courses and has served as the coordinator for this course for several semesters. She is looking forward to this workshop and continuing to learn from the expertise shared by the participants.

**Note:** Supplies for the first class: basic watercolor set, watercolor paper tablet, brushes, container for water and inspiration for your first painting. Participants are encouraged to check out some YouTube tutorials for beginners and some examples of watercolor images on Pinterest.

<https://www.youtube.com>

<https://www.pinterest.com>

#### 44 — Yoga Nidra - Guided Meditation for Deep Relaxation

**Cap: 14**

**Presenter: Terry de la Vega**

**Location:** Trillium Yoga Room, Potsdam Presbyterian Church Community Center, 42 ½ Elm Street, Potsdam

**Classes:** 4 sessions / 1 hour

**Day, Date and Time:** Fridays, 3/6-3/27, 11:00-12:00

**Description:** Yoga Nidra is a guided meditation practice to cultivate deep relaxation in the body, mind, and spirit. Often referred to as yogic sleep, or divine sleep, this contemporary practice is based on ancient meditation and yogic wisdom. The practice of Yoga Nidra releases tension and stress naturally, calming the nervous system. All that is required is to lie down in comfort and listen. No yoga experience is needed.

**Presenter's Background:** **Terry de la Vega** is a certified 200-hour Kripalu Yoga Teacher with 25 years of teaching experience and ongoing training in various aspects of teaching yoga, including Prenatal Yoga, Restorative Yoga, Dynamic Gentle Yoga, and Divine Sleep Yoga Nidra. Terry teaches two weekly sessions of Dynamic Gentle Yoga at the Trillium Yoga Room, Potsdam Presbyterian Church Community Center.

**Note:** Wear comfortable, loose-fitting clothing. You will need to remove your shoes before entering the yoga room. Yoga mats, blankets, and bolsters will be provided.