



LIRA NEWSLETTER

LEARNING IN RETIREMENT ASSOCIATION
Office of Community and Cultural Affairs – UMass Lowell
Member of Road Scholar Institute Network
Tel.: (978) 934-3135 Web: uml.edu/community/LIRA



March 2025

Vol. 32 No 1

Spring Semester begins March 10!

Join us for LIRA's annual Spring Town Meeting

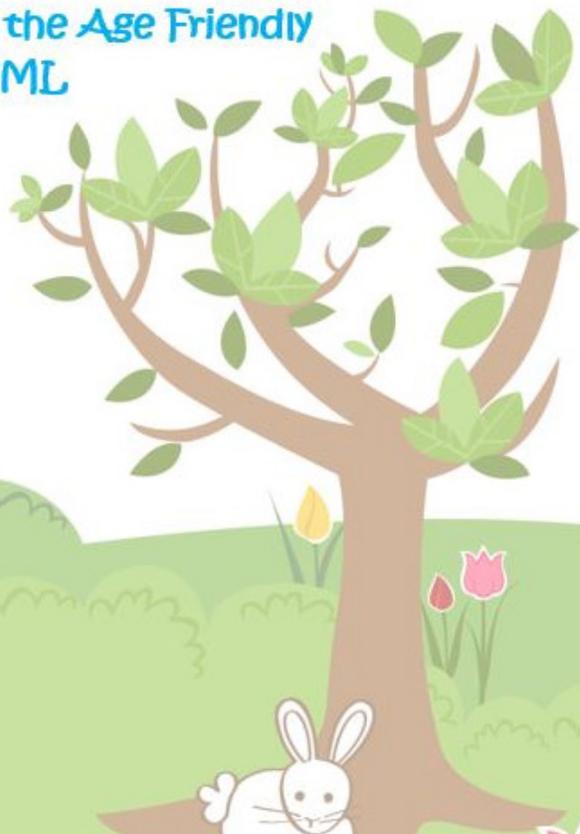
Where:	Jacqueline and Edward Moloney Hall, University Crossing, Room 260 or on ZOOM
When:	Tuesday, March 4
Time:	10 a.m. to Noon



Speaker: Ramraj Gutam, member of the Age Friendly University Steering Committee at UML

Plus...

Hear about our spring programs!



From the President:

Hello everyone and welcome to the LIRA Spring 2025 Newsletter. It is hard to believe, but spring is actually expected to arrive this month.

I want to start by paying tribute to my good friend and former LIRA president, Richard Grove, who died in January of this year. He led our organization for 6 years and was my personal mentor for this job. I will certainly miss him, as we all will.

I hope everyone enjoyed the 2025 Winter Intersession. We had many very interesting and informative lectures and field trips. Many thanks to all who helped plan and execute the Intersession schedule.

The LIRA Spring Semester looks to be chock full of exciting and interesting learning opportunities. One particularly unique event is the Burmese Community Luncheon on Saturday March 29 that is hosted by the LIRA Diversity committee in concert with the UML Alumni Association. The cost will be \$30 per person. Please be sure to bring your checkbook and sign up at the Town Meeting. Also, let Lynn Tyndall know if you have any food sensitivities.

LIRA's best source of new members is when existing members invite their friends to join. If you know someone who might be interested in something we offer this spring, please invite them to attend a couple of classes to see if they want to join.

We are planning our LIRA 2025 Town Meeting event for Tuesday March 4, 2025, in the Jacqueline and Edward Moloney Hall (UCC-260) located on the second floor at University Crossing. Parking is available to anyone with a parking hangtag in the Fletcher Street lot. Our speaker for the Annual Meeting event is Ramraj Gautam, Ramraj along with LIRA's own Nancy Pitkin are members of the Age Friendly University Steering Committee at UML and he will talk about the current initiatives of that program. Additionally, Jim Rutter and Bev Rudeen will introduce the Spring Semester during the meeting.

Peter Sebelius

Scholarship Fund

Dear Members,

The other day I was stopped on my way out the door of CVS by a young woman who touched my arm. It was Gabriela, one of the UMass Lowell students to whom we gave the LIRA Scholarship at the Holiday Party this year. She introduced me and my husband to her boyfriend and told him what good work we do, having seen it herself that day. She thanked me and asked me to tell you how much the scholarship means to her. Gabriela is a student in behavior analysis and autism studies who volunteers on campus to work with students with developmental disabilities, and in Lowell volunteers as a sexual assault counselor, all while maintaining a 3.9 GPA. She also works part time to help support herself.

Thank you for your contributions to the LIRA Scholarship Fund to help students like Gabriela! Remember... our fundraising ramps up in September, but you are welcome to donate to the fund any time during the year! You can email a check (payable to UMass Lowell to):

Debby Friedman
21 Jonathan Lane
Chelmsford, MA 01824

*Debby Friedman**

LIRA FUN AND GAMES

Complete this "Strands" with no hints and share your results with me (beckybronson241@gmail.com). The first three people to do this will get chocolate at the Town meeting!

Click here to play: strandstudio.thegoodboi.net/play?id=BP28V1

Becky Bronson*



Richard Grove Obituary

Richard B. Grove, age 81, a resident of North Andover, formerly of Chelmsford, passed away peacefully at Lawrence General Hospital on Wednesday, January 22, 2025, surrounded by his loving family. He was the beloved husband of Nancy Y. (Young) Grove with whom he enjoyed 21 years of marriage.

He was born in Chicago, Illinois on March 4, 1943, and was the son of the late Roy and Susan (Hensley) Grove. Due to Roy's career with the Social Security Administration, Richard lived in a number of states during his youth. His high school years were spent in Carnegie Pennsylvania where he graduated in 1961 and was a National Merit Scholar. Richard earned a B.S. and M.S in Mathematics from Carnegie Tech in 1964 and 1965 respectively. He was a graduate student in the newly formed Carnegie Mellon University Computer Science Department through 1969. He specialized in programming language implementation and compilers, spending most of his career at his beloved Digital Equipment Corporation (DEC). He joined DEC in 1971 and rose to the level of Corporate Consulting Engineer, the highest technical designation in the company. He was the project leader for the PDP-11 and VAX FORTRAN compilers, worked on VAX Ada V1, and was a founding member and leader of the GEM compiler project contributing technically to the code generation phases. He was a member of DEC's design team for the Alpha AXP calling standards and architecture and was a member of the ANSI X3.13 FORTRAN Committee. After the acquisition of portions of DEC by Intel, Richard continued at Intel until he retired

in 2007. He was named an Intel Fellow in 2002 and was responsible for leading engineering efforts for advanced compiler technology and optimization. He was a lifetime member of the Association for Computing Machinery, joining it as a student in 1962 and maintaining membership until his death.

Richard had a lifelong passion for learning and was always sharing interesting articles on current events, science and technology with his family. In retirement, he was deeply involved in the Learning in Retirement Association (LIRA) at UMass Lowell. He served as the president of LIRA for 6 years and for many years coordinated and co-taught its Great Decisions series. He enjoyed travelling and learning about the history and culture of everywhere he went – especially if the history could include a ride on a train! His family fondly remembers his love of games, especially Liverpool Rummy and Ticket to Ride, and all the conversations we shared around the table while playing together. No family gathering was ever complete without at least one game. Richard enjoyed many visits to Camp Calumet over the years where both son Matt and grandson Tim served on the summer camp staff; visits were especially fun if they could be combined with a ride on the North Conway scenic railway.

In addition to his loving wife Nancy, Richard is survived by his son Dave and spouse Laura Grove of Ridgefield Connecticut, son Matthew and spouse Diane Grove of Tewksbury Massachusetts, and son James and spouse Niki Paton of Denver, Colorado, his sister Linda and spouse Hidemi Kondo of Tokyo Japan, and brother Ken and spouse Sharon Grove of Boise, Idaho, and his grandchildren Amy, Tim, Alex, and Caroline Grove, and his nieces and nephews Kei Kondo, Bryan and Heather Grove. He is pre-deceased by his brother Robert and his beloved first wife of 36 years Karen (Hill) Grove.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made in Richard's memory to Camp Calumet or Trinity Lutheran Church.

2025 Nominating Committee

Members of the Nominating Committee this year are: Steve Cerand, Bev Rudeen and Jim Rutter. All LIRA officers (President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer) serve one-year terms and may be reelected. We will be electing a new slate of officers at the May Annual Meeting. If you wish to nominate a candidate for any of these positions, please let the nominating committee know as soon as possible.

Amazing photos by Jesse Heines

LIRA member Jesse Heines dazzled us with some incredible photographs from his SCUBA diving excursion in Honduras. Here are a few:





Newsletter Committee

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LIRA 2025 Spring Semester Course Descriptions

Most programs will be available via Zoom, other than those listed as In Person Only. For programs listed as hybrid, the presenter will be in person in room 106 of the University Suites building at UMass Lowell and the program will also be available via Zoom. The presenter will be remote for all programs labeled Zoom only. Please check your email for the weekly program announcement, and for any last-minute changes or additions.

*** denotes LIRA member.**

“Masterworks of American Art” Mondays 3/10 – 4/28 10 a.m. – noon (Hybrid) (No class 4/21 - Patriot’s Day)

“Masterworks of American Art” is a video course from “The Great Courses” company.

Our Lecturer William Kloss, Ph.D. is an art historian for the Smithsonian Museum in Washington, D. C. He will explore American Art from the colonial period to the early 1900s. This spring we will complete 14 lectures in 7 weeks, continuing in the fall to complete the course. As we begin to celebrate our nation’s 250th birthday, this is a fitting way to explore our nation’s beginnings through this American Art survey course.

*Coordinator: Beverly Rudeen**

Geology of the Massachusetts Middlesex County Area and a bit beyond

Monday 3/10 1 - 3 p.m. (Hybrid)

Presenter: Bill Vales

This presentation will discuss general geological concepts including geologic time, plate tectonics, rock cycle, mineralogy, dating methods and glaciation. Bill will draw on examples of various landforms and structures in the local area as well as “greater New England” to illustrate concepts. Many of the examples presented will use pictures he has taken. The talk will wander through various geologic concepts and places much, like Bill wanders around the White Mountains of New Hampshire, the central Massachusetts area,

Cape Cod, the Maine coast and, for that matter, his backyard pursuing his passion of geology.

NOTE: Although the presentation will be hybrid, much of Bill's presentation are exhibits which will be shown on Zoom with a close-up camera but will be much better appreciated in person in University Suites.

*Coordinator: Bob Stevens**

The Business of Sports

Monday afternoons: 1:30 - 3 p.m. 3/17 - 4/28

(No class 4/21 - Patriots Day) and

Wednesday afternoons: 1:30 - 3 p.m., 3/19 - 4/30

Hybrid/Zoom (see speaker list below)

Note non-standard times

Organizer - UML Professor Jeffrey Gerson

Sports is big business. This course is a survey of the business of sports as described by the people involved with it. Each week, invited guest speakers will share their insights and experiences and answer questions about their corner of the sports world. The course concentrates on the local Boston area sports scene and will include representatives of local and national sports franchises, event organizers, medical & nutritional experts and many more.

List of guest speakers:

Mar. 17: Lee Berke, Pres. of LMB, Sports Media Consultant - **Zoom Only**

Read "The Fast Track" by Jane McManus for Mar. 19

Mar. 19: Jane McManus, sportswriter and author of *The Fast Track: Inside the Surging Business of Women's Sports* (Publication date Feb. 21, 2025) - **Hybrid**

Mar. 24: Nancy Clark Sports Nutritionist- **Zoom Only**

Mar. 26: Sports Gaming Critics, Mark Gottlieb and Harry Levant, Public Health Advocacy Institute -**Hybrid**

Mar. 31: Sports Gaming Advocates, Alexandra Costello and David Forman, American Gaming Association - **Zoom Only**

April 2: Tom Werner, co-owner of Fenway Sports Group (includes the Boston Red Sox of Major League Baseball and Liverpool of the English Premier League) - **Zoom Only**

April 7: Devan McConnell, Director of Sports Performance, Utah Hockey Club via - **Zoom Only**

April 9: Brad Davidson, UML Music Business Professor and director of the documentary film, *Lightning in a Bottle: The Electrifying Run of UMass Basketball* **-Hybrid**

April 14: Sports Law, Unions, Agents, Sponsorships **-Hybrid**
Paul Kelly, former Executive Director of the NHLPA, Jackson/Lewis & Jay Fee, former NHL agent and sports business law expert, Nelson/Mullins

April 16: Cathal Conlon, VP of Marketing for the New England Revolution, MLS **-Hybrid**

April 23: Allen Hershkowitz, Sports and Sustainability consultant for the NY Yankees, NBA, MLS... Is Sports Sustainable? **-Hybrid**

April 28: Adam Naylor, Sports Psychologist, What is the Mental Game? **-Hybrid**

April 30: Dr. Tom Gill, Orthopedic Surgeon, The Role of the Team Doctor in the Business of Sports **-Hybrid**

*Coordinator: Peter Sebelius**

Death Stalks a Lowell Canal
Monday, 5/5 10 a.m. - noon (Hybrid)
Presenter: UML Professor Robert Farrant

On September 15, 1987, as Southeast Asian and Latino parents were engaged into what became a nearly two-decade-long struggle to desegregate Lowell's public schools, an 11-year-old white child assaulted a 13-year-old Cambodian sixth grader fishing on the banks of the Pawtucket Canal. He fell into the canal and drowned, his death part of a widespread surge of anti-immigrant, anti-refugee violence in Massachusetts and across the country. Based on interviews, federal court records, and historical research, this talk focuses on what happened that day in the context of persistent efforts being made in Lowell by parents using *Brown vs. Board of Education* and the 1964 Civil Rights Act to sue the city of Lowell and its School Committee in federal court to guarantee their children equal access to education.

*Coordinator: Susan Lemire**

Cyber and Terrorism

Tuesdays, 3/11 - 4/29 10 a.m. - noon (Zoom only)

Presenter: Samuel J. Curry

Chief Information Security Officer for Zscaler

The line between digital and kinetic life experience is becoming more and more blurred in all aspects of the human experience. The debate whether the term “cyber” can be jammed in front of any word is contested around new words in the English language like Cyberwar and Cyberterrorism. This course will focus on the evolution of violent extremism and terrorism, the cultural background in modern times for politically, religiously and racially motivated violent extremism and in particular the intersection of these with Western culture and Anglo common law. The purpose of this is as background for understanding the brave, new digital world that our human conflicts now encounter.

What is cyberterrorism? Is terrorism supercharged by the Internet? How do Nation States use terrorism as a tool of the state? What is the role of the criminal world in this ecosystem? What do new technologies, such as near perfect deep fakes and large language models, do to the threat landscape for individuals, companies, governments and societies? This class will provide selected voluntary reading, lectures and discussion groups on all of this and more, examining historical examples from British Israelism (the basis for modern White Nationalism), American historical involvement in Latin America and Nazi-derived Eco-terrorism to more recent Global Jihadism, Right and Left wing political extremism and new and emerging trends.

Of necessity, some cyber subjects and material will be covered and will be explored. The professor teaches at Harvard (Cyber) Wentworth Institute of Technology (Cyberterrorism) and at Nichols College (Cyber) and is a Chief Information Security Officer at Zscaler, Inc. in addition to sitting on a number of boards of directors and is a Fellow at the National Security Institute.

As an important note, the course maintains a tone that is, necessarily, academic and insensitive to particular proclivities (political, cultural, etc.) in the audience; this approach will be maintained at all times. Curiosity and safety are important within the classroom when dealing with weighty topics, current themes of violence and politically and culturally sensitive subjects.

*Coordinator: Simon Curry**

German Elections 2025 Part 2

Tuesday, 3/11 1 - 3 p.m. (Hybrid)

Presenter: Jim Pope*

(Note: Part 1 presented during winter intersession)

The German national elections are scheduled for 23 February 2025. This will be the first time a government in Germany has lost a vote of confidence and has been forced to call an early election.

The topics covered are:

- The German system of government.
- German political parties and who belongs.
- Post WWII German elections.
- How candidates are selected.
- How one votes in Germany.
How the votes are counted; how the seats are allocated to each party; who gets those seats?
- How the government is formed.
- How the Chancellor is chosen.
- Why the current government lost a vote of confidence.
- The issues in this election.
- Similarities and differences among the German, American, British, and other governmental systems.
- How this election turned out and its meaning for Europe and U.S.

*Coordinator: Jim Rutter**

Meditation

Tuesday, 3/18 and Thursday, 3/20 1 - 3 p.m (In Person Only)

Presenter: Barbara Kumara, Chopra-certified meditation instructor

Meditation has become a broadly generalized concept: to meditate on or think about something, to relax for a minute, to listen to soothing words, etc. The meditation practice that you will learn is specific and simple, yet very powerful. The practice is rooted in ancient eastern philosophy, yet adapted to today's lifestyles. Practicing this meditation is scientifically proven to provide significant health benefits and an overall increase in the experience of well-being.

In today's society, the potential for our anxiety levels to become problematic is growing, whether we are aware or not. Our first focus will be on understanding why and how stress impacts our well-being, and its specific health threats. The second focus will be on meditation as the antidote, potentially reversing and preventing the harmful effects of our worries, an underlying factor in many illnesses.

Whether you have tried meditation in the past, don't like the idea, or currently have a strong practice, this class will provide you with a gem or two. You will have the opportunity to practice basic meditation techniques in the group setting of class and on your own between classes. In the second class, Barbara will answer any questions you have after practicing on your own and address any other barriers to your success.

*Coordinator: Lynn Tyndall**

Myanmar's Struggle for Freedom and Democracy **Tuesday, 3/25 1 - 3 p.m. (Hybrid)**

Presenter: UML Professor Ardeth M. Thawngmung, Political Sci. Dept.

This lecture focuses on the historical roots of escalating violence in Burma/Myanmar, a country conventionally regarded as one of the longest military dictatorships and civil wars in the world. Professor Thawngmung will present multiple challenges faced by Myanmar from the perspectives of a scholar/expert on the country, and from her own experiences as someone who grew up in Myanmar, as well as who assisted Burmese/Myanmar refugees who have been resettled in Lowell. Despite the fact that Myanmar has been mired in conflict and civil war since it gained independence from the British in 1948, Professor Thawngmung will show how and why she remains optimistic about the future of the country. She attributes her optimism to the resilience, resourcefulness, and resolute of Burmese people to continue to fight for freedom, democracy, and peaceful coexistence. This session will incorporate PowerPoint slide presentation, short documentary film, testimony of students who continue to challenge military dictatorship, and discussion with participants.

*Coordinator: David Troughton**

Health and Lifestyle

Tuesdays, 4/1 - 4/15 1 - 3 p.m. (Hybrid)

Presenter: UML Professor Jerry Hojnacki

Tuesday, 4/1 To Drink or Not to Drink

What are the adverse effects and possible benefits of alcohol consumption?

Tuesday, 4/8 Stroke, Blood Pressure, Diet

What dietary and lifestyle factors may lead to increased blood pressure and risk of stroke?

Tuesday, 4/15 Cancer, Diet, and Lifestyle

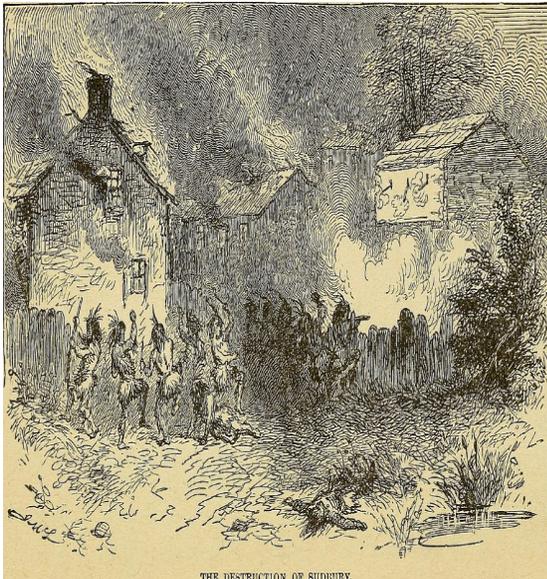
What factors in diet and lifestyle may predispose or protect against the development of cancer?

*Coordinator: Suzanne Gamache**

The Sudbury Fight

Tuesday April 22, 1 - 3 p.m. (Hybrid)

Presenter: Mark Nichipor



On April 21, 1676, just 349 years and one day before this class, over five hundred Wampanoag, Nipmuc, and Narragansett warriors attacked the frontier settlements of Sudbury (today Sudbury and Wayland) in the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Various companies of English militiamen from nearby settlements marched to that town's defense and were drawn into ambushes and suffered heavy losses. The battle was the largest fight and the last major Native American victory in King Philip's War before their final defeat in southern New England in August of

1676. All but forgotten today, the sites and stories of this battle are still there to be found by the curious who look for them.

*Coordinator: Peter Sebelius**

Searching for the 'Water of Life' --Eau de Vie!

Wednesday, 3/12 10 a.m. - noon (Hybrid)

Presenter: UML Professor Bob Gamache

What do you do if your vineyard is so productive that you end up with an overabundance of wine? It doesn't sound like too much of a problem, and in this situation very often a vintner will distill the surplus wine to make a number of products: Eau de Vie, Marc, and Cognac (France), Grappa (Italy), Raki (Greece), and many others. Bob Gamache will describe the process, from harvesting the grapes in his vineyard in Dunstable named Chateau Lydia, to the distillation process, to the final bottling of the two products he makes—Eau de Vie and Brandy.

*Coordinator: Suzanne Gamache**

Living with Radiation. The first 100 years

Wednesday, 3/12 1 - 3 p.m. (Hybrid)

Presenter: Tom Vales

When we hear radiation, we all think of nuclear reactors and atomic bombs; however, natural radiation is common in our lives and something to be understood and not feared. This will be an overview of radioactivity, starting with the scientific nomenclature, followed by a brief discussion of the two most common types of radiation detectors. Finally, a hands-on demonstration and discussion of a variety of radioactive items covering but not limited to commercial, military and medical applications.

NOTE: Although the presentation will be hybrid, Tom's presentation contains many exhibits and demonstrations, which will be shown on Zoom with a close-up camera but will be much better appreciated in person in University Suites.

*Coordinator: Bob Stevens**

Donald Trump and the Global Shift to the Right: Analyzing Origins and Causes

Wednesday, 3/19 10 a.m. - noon (Hybrid)

Presenter: UML Professor John Wooding

This session will be an interactive discussion developing a scientific and analytical approach to the rise of conservative popular nationalism by examining antecedents, historical and current events, and motivations of voters and supporters. The goal is to figure out what this phenomenon means for politics and democracy, and what our analysis tells us about the trajectory of political engagement in the coming years.

*Coordinator: Suzanne Gamache**

David Drinon Art

Wednesday, 3/26 10 a.m. - noon (Hybrid)

Presenter: David Drinon

Dave will discuss his process and experiences of painting on location (*en plein air*) and then finishing them up in his north light studio. He will have on display a few recent paintings, including one of Andover. Dave will also discuss a brief history of the Boston painters of the mid-late eighteenth and early nineteenth century that traveled to Paris to enhance their classical training but were influenced by the impressionist movement that was evolving and how it influenced and changed their work when they returned to the US.

*Coordinator: Lisa Hertel**

Tour Lowell's Whistler House Museum of Art

243 Worthen St., Lowell, MA

Wednesday 4/2, 10 a.m. – 12 noon (Trip)

Presenters: Sara Bogosian and Whistler House staff

Established in 1878 by a group of artists and art patrons, the Lowell Art Association, Inc. is one of the oldest incorporated art associations in the United States. It is also the birthplace of American artist James McNeil Whistler, and his mother, Anna Whistler, is the subject of one of Whistler's

most famous paintings, "Whistler's Mother" (Arrangement in Black and Grey No. 1). The Lowell Art Association purchased the residence in 1908, and it is now known as The Whistler House Museum of Art. The museum maintains its permanent art collection and organizes contemporary and educational art exhibitions in the adjacent Parker Gallery.

The tour is limited to 20 people and will be docent-led for 1 to 1- 1/2 hours. The admission cost is \$12 per person.

Parking is available in a metered lot behind the museum on Dummer Street. Access is via Market Street. Additional metered on-street parking is also available.

Accessibility: The first floor of the historic house and the Parker Gallery are ADA compliant with access to the house via a ramp in the rear. The historic home has second and third floors accessed via staircases.

*Coordinator: Carolyn Walsh**

Weather and Climate Models
Wednesday, 4/9 10 a.m. - noon (Hybrid)
Presenter: UML Professor Mathew Barlow

We'll look at how weather and climate models work: what physical principles they're built around, how they've improved over time, how we test them, and what their limits are. This will allow us to understand how we can make climate projections decades in advance even though weather prediction skill is limited to two weeks or so. We'll discuss what these models—which encapsulate our physics-based understanding of the climate—can and can't tell us about future climate change and how to address it.

The exponential growth in computer power over the decades now means that we can run some types of models on a laptop. The original weather forecast model can even be run in a web browser and we'll use that to interactively explore some basic aspects of the atmosphere and how we model it. Finally, we'll talk about some of the recent advances in Artificial Intelligence (AI) in weather and climate modeling.

*Coordinator: Bob Stevens**

Development of Adeno-associated virus (AAV) gene therapy for genetic diseases

Wednesday, 4/23 10 a.m. - noon (Zoom only)

Presenter: UMass Chancellor Dr. Terrence Flotte

For this presentation, Chancellor Terrence Flotte, M.D., will zoom from UMass Chan Medical School in Worcester. An internationally known pioneer in human gene therapy, Flotte will discuss his research and trials using gene therapy as a treatment of genetic diseases that affect children, including cystic fibrosis, type I diabetes, and disorders of fatty acid oxidation.

Dr. Flotte has been the principal investigator of multiple clinical gene therapy trials, including the first-ever human use of AAV vectors (Adeno-associated virus), a trial in cystic fibrosis patients that began in 1995, and recent trials involving Tay-Sachs disease.

*Coordinator: Suzanne Gamache**

Tour of UML Arboretum

Wednesday, 4/30 10 a.m. – noon (Tour)

Presenter Kevin Block, UML Grounds Operations Manager

UMass Lowell has been a Tree Campus USA for more than 10 years and recently, in February 2023, was accredited as a level II arboretum. Kevin will discuss what these two recognitions are, and how we achieved them, as well as what it means for the University, the surrounding community, and our urban forest. We will then venture out onto campus to look at the many landscape improvements and additions that have occurred over the past few years since we have become an arboretum. Bring your horticulture and arboriculture questions, as well as your love for trees.

We will meet for a brief presentation by Kevin Block in University Suites, room 106. We will begin our tour after that.

*Coordinator: Peter Sebelius**

Foreign Policy Association presents Great Decisions Spring 2025

Thursdays, 3/13 - 5/1 10 a.m - noon (Zoom Only)

Presenters: Various

The mission of the Foreign Policy Association today, as it has been for over 100 years, is to serve as a catalyst for developing awareness, understanding, and informed opinion on U.S. foreign policy and global issues. Through its balanced, nonpartisan programs and publications, the FPA encourages citizens to participate in the foreign policy process. FPA's Great Decisions program has flourished over the past 60 years into a multi-dimensional global studies program, adapted to multiple formats, including informal discussion groups, public lectures and formal secondary and university courses. Published annually by FPA, the Great Decisions briefing book highlights eight of the most thought-provoking foreign policy challenges facing Americans today.

Great Decisions 2025 Topics

American Foreign Policy at a Crossroads 3/13-3/20

Author: G. John Ikenberry

LIRA presenter: Neal Berenson*

FPA's Great Decisions program has flourished over the past 60 years into a multi-dimensional global studies program, adapted to multiple formats, including informal discussion groups, public lectures and formal secondary and university courses. Published annually by FPA, the Great Decisions briefing book highlights eight of the most thought-provoking foreign policy challenges facing Americans today. This chapter will explore the contours of the U.S. foreign policy debate as it plays out in a world of multiple and escalating crises and domestic polarization.

U.S. Changing Leadership of the World Economy 3/27-4/3

Author: Daniel Drezner

LIRA presenter: Steve Cerand*

Under President Biden, the U.S. has advanced new ideas about trade, technology, industrial policy, competition with China, and the organization of the world economy. For most of the postwar era, the U.S. has tied its global leadership to cooperative agendas aimed at creating a more open-world trading system, but that has apparently come to an end. What are America's options and opportunities as a leader of the world economy? How will America's "foreign policy for the middle class" and strategic competition with China impact its leadership role? How can the postwar rules and institutions

of the world economy be made safe for economic nationalism and great power competition?

International Cooperation on Climate Change 4/10-4/17

Author: Josh Busby

LIRA presenter: David Troughton*

The 2015 Paris Agreement established a UN-sponsored framework for negotiations on climate change and global warming. In subsequent COP meetings, experts and political leaders have come together seeking common cause for this growing global crisis. What is the future of these efforts, and what have they yielded? What is the U.S. role in fostering cooperation on climate change? In a divided country, what are the possible futures for American policy leadership?

The Future of NATO and European Security 4/24-5/1

Author: Kori Schake

LIRA presenter: Peter Sebelius*

European security is more uncertain than it has been for decades. Putin's Russia has launched a war with Ukraine on its doorstep, and America's uncertain role as leader of NATO and security provider has been called into question with the failure of Congress to pass supplemental military support for Ukraine. What are Europe's options, and how might developments on both sides of Western Europe – in Ukraine and across the Atlantic – impact its choices? What are America's stakes in NATO and Europe's strategic dilemmas?

Coordinators: Steve Cerand and Neal Berenson**

Great Decisions Presenters' Workshop

Tuesday, 4/29 and Monday, 5/5 1 – 3 p.m. (Hybrid)

Presenters: LIRA Great Decisions Program Co-coordinators
(Neal Berenson* & Steve Cerand)*

Have you ever thought of presenting a *Great Decisions* topic for LIRA? We hope so and this workshop will help you to organize a topic for presentation and lead a discussion with LIRA members. Under the leadership of former LIRA President and *Great Decisions* Coordinator, Richard Grove, the *Great Decisions* program has been a critical mainstay of learning and discussion for LIRA members.

Sponsored by the Foreign Policy Association, the *Great Decisions* program is America's largest discussion program on world affairs. The program provides background information and policy options for the eight most critical issues facing America each year.

Whether you are a first-time or former *Great Decisions* presenter, this two-part workshop will help you to create a *Great Decisions* presentation or improve your presentation skills. The workshop will examine the annual *Great Decisions* "Briefing Book" and the resources (YouTube videos, printed reference material, websites, AI resources, etc.) provided by the Foreign Policy Association and other organizations to support a *Great Decisions* topic and discussion group. Neal and Steve will demonstrate how these resources can be compiled and organized to support your Great Decision presentation. They will also discuss the support resources and mentoring that would be available if you decide to accept the challenge of creating a presentation next semester. You do not need to be an "expert" to present a *Great Decisions* topic.

Coordinators: Neal Berenson and Steve Cerand**

Addressing the High Cost of Housing in Massachusetts

Thursday, 3/13 1 – 3 PM (Zoom only)

Presenter: Adelaide Grady

Massachusetts faces a significant housing crisis, with rising costs placing immense strain on households with limited incomes. In this lecture, we will explore the current state of the housing market, including key statistics on rental and purchase prices. We'll discuss the barriers to affordability, such as zoning restrictions and high construction costs, and the shortfall of affordable units for extremely low-income residents.

The session will also highlight the various initiatives aimed at tackling these challenges, from state and federal programs like the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program and MBTA Communities to innovative housing models, such as accessory dwelling units. Attendees will gain insights into the efforts of non-profits and public-private collaborations working to create sustainable solutions.

Join us to deepen your understanding of the housing crisis and explore how policymakers, developers, and communities can come together to make housing more accessible for everyone.

*Coordinator: Chris Geggis**

The History of American Veterans and a Lowell Connection

Thursday, 3/27 1 - 3 p.m. (Hybrid)

Presenter: UML Professor Pat Fontaine

The history of veterans is not just the history of the military. It is also the evolving and very personal relationship between state and federal governments, ordinary citizens and women and men who served our country.

There is also a local Lowell connection. Edith Nourse Rogers through her long career as a legislator of the 5th district, is called the Angel of Veterans, from the time she visited with her husband, Congressman John Jacob Rogers WWI battlefields to today's Rogers post 911 STEM scholarship awarded to veterans. This presentation will also underline some of the extraordinary and turbulent and forgotten periods of veterans' history: The Bonus Army March of 1932, the 1945 strike by Black WACs at Fort Devens and the deadly Labor Day hurricane of 1935 that killed 205 plus veterans. Edith was involved in all these events, not forgetting her co-sponsorship of the GI Bill.

*Coordinator: Susan Lemire**

Ancient Cultures in Contact

Thursdays, 4/3 - 4/24 1 - 3 p.m. (Hybrid)

Presenter: Professor Jane Sancinito - UML

A merchant from Gaul dies while dealing Turkish wine on the island of Sardinia; the locals bury him with full honors. A young Syrian takes his turn patrolling Hadrian's wall and enjoys the woolen socks his family sent in their last care package. Within the Roman forum, a Greek woman worships at the temple of Isis and Osiris. Down the street, a scion of a Numidian royal family marries the daughter of a Roman Senator, who was, himself, originally from Spain. Every single individual brings with them goods, gods, and ideas from

their homeland and introduces them to others. Together, they form the ultimate melting pot in which diverse perspectives commingled and clashed: the ancient Mediterranean. In this four-week course, get to know the cultures of the ancient world beyond Greece and Rome and embrace the complexity of all the civilizations who were connected, and held apart, by the wine-dark sea. Individual classes will look at the cultural implications of warfare, trade, religion, and social ties and introduce learners to all the ways that these cultures, and their own, were influenced by contact with many, many others.

*Coordinator: Susan Lemire**

Peabody Essex Museum
Saints, Sinners, Lovers, and Fools:
Three Hundred Years of Flemish Masterpieces
Friday, 4/4 11:15 p.m. – approx. 4 p.m. (Trip)
NOTE: Nonstandard time

During the Renaissance, the region known today as Flanders in Belgium was home to visionary artists who developed radically new ways to depict reality, portray humanity and tell stories that continue to resonate with viewers today. This exhibition, co-organized by the PEM, the Denver Art Museum and The Phoebus Foundation, Antwerp, features rarely exhibited masterpieces by Peter Paul Rubens, Anthony van Dyck, Hans Memling, Jan Gossaert, Jan Brueghel, Clara Peeters, Jacob Jordaens, Frans Francken II and Michaelina Wautier, among many others.

This tour requires 10 people, and the admission cost per person will be \$25. (There will be a small additional cost for parking, but that can be worked out by drivers on the day of the trip.) The docent-led tour lasts about one hour. Admission also includes free access to the entire PEM. We will solicit carpool drivers and meet at Hannaford parking lot in Chelmsford for departure at 11:15 AM. We plan to leave the museum about 3:00 PM, to reduce the amount of time spent in rush hour traffic, but any individual carpool group can decide to stay longer if all agree. The museum closes at 5:00.

*Coordinator: Alan Friedman**

Please send email to alan-friedman@comcast.net to reserve your spots. It is important to know in advance that we have the minimum number to participate. We may be allowed to include more than 10 people, but I don't know how many more.

Andres Institute of Art
Friday, 5/2 10 a.m. - noon (Trip)
(Friday, 5/9 rain date)



Brookline, NH

The Andres Institute of Art was founded in 1998 by Paul Andres and John Weidman. It hosted the first International Annual Bridges and Connections Sculpture Symposium in 1999. The 140 acres has 12 miles of trails, with 100 sculptures by artists from 50 countries on permanent display along the trails. The art and trails are open and available to the public every day, for free. A former ski resort, the Andres Institute is a bit steep; be prepared.

*Coordinator: Lisa Hertel**

LIRA Lowell Area Dining Trail Part 4
Burmese Community Luncheon
Calvary Baptist Church
60 Hastings Street, Lowell, MA
Saturday, 3/29 Noon – 2 p.m.

Presenters: UMass Lowell Myanmar Student Club, “SayDaNar” Community Development Center, and Lowell International Church

To celebrate the richness of the food culture of Myanmar / Burma, LIRA members and guests are invited to the **“Eat to Educate” Festival**. This event will offer a wonderful opportunity to explore and savor an array of popular ethnic cuisines, desserts, and drinks from Myanmar. Beyond the food, the festival promises to be a vibrant blend of art and taste, featuring

traditional music, costumes, dance performances by Burmese youth, and inter-active cultural games.

Myanmar cuisine, often referred to as a “hidden gem” of Southeast Asia, remains lesser known compared to its Thai and Vietnamese counterparts. Myanmar’s food heritage is a treasure trove of rich cultural diversity, with unique dishes that reflect the traditions and flavors of its many ethnic communities.

Another unique feature of Myanmar is that it has hundreds of ethnic and language groups with their unique food and dresses. We plan to provide seven distinct kinds of dishes of seven different ethnic groups.

Whether you are a food enthusiast, an art lover, or simply curious about Myanmar’s rich cultural heritage, the **“Eat to Educate” Festival** is the perfect place to indulge your senses and connect with the Myanmar /Burmese community of Lowell and support educational programs for youth in Myanmar. Proceeds from this event will help to address food insecurity among children living in conflict areas of Burma/Myanmar.

Cost: \$30.00 / person. Pre-registration and payment required by Friday, March 14 LIRA members are encouraged to invite non-LIRA members.

Coordinator: David Troughton & LIRA Diversity Committee**

Film Discussion

**10 a.m. - noon
(Zoom only)**

Friday 3/28 - Gifted (2017) Discussion leader: Marie Tada*

Friday 4/25 - My Left. Foot (1989) Discussion leader: Carol Valcik*

Friday 5/24 - As Good As It Gets (1997) Discussion leader: Marie Tada*

Coordinator for film discussions: Marie-Anne Fernando

Book Discussion

**10 a.m. - noon
(Zoom only)**

Friday 3/21: Day, by Michael Cunningham Discussion leader: Karen Naka*

Friday 4/18: Captain Courageous, by Rudyard Kipling Discussion leader: Connie Lanseigne-Case*

Note: the following sessions are scheduled to run after the spring term officially ends.

Friday, 5/16: Finding Margaret Fuller: a novel by Allison Pataki, 2024, 395 pages. Discussion leader: Steve Buccieri

Friday, 6/20: Elon Musk by Walter Isaacson, 2023, 670 pages. Discussion leader: Bob Hanlon

Coordinator for book discussions: Sheila Pariseau

Chelmsford Library Lecture Series

Registration required

Monday 3/10: 7 p.m. Boston Light Station

Thursday 4/24: 1 p.m. American Calliope: Mercy Otis Warren and the Writings of a Revolutionary - Step back in time with a founding mother from Massachusetts, Mercy Otis Warren, often described as the muse of the revolution. She used her passion for poetry and prose to persuade others to join the cause.

*Coordinator: Stan Powers**

LIRA 2025 Spring Calendar

Zoom Only in Red

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
March 3	March 4 10 am to Noon LIRA Town Meeting	March 5	March 6	March 7	
March 10 10 am to Noon Masterworks of American Art 1 to 3 pm Geology of MA Middlesex County Area 7 pm Chelmsford Library Series	March 11 10 am to Noon Cyber and Terrorism 1 to 3 pm German Elections 2025	March 12 10 am to Noon Searching for the 'Water of Life' – Eau de Vie! 1 to 3 pm Living with Radiation	March 13 10 am to Noon Great Decisions 1 to 3 pm The High Cost of Housing in Massachusetts	March 14	
March 17 10 am to Noon Masterworks of American Art 1:30 to 3 pm The Business of Sports	March 18 10 am to Noon Cyber and Terrorism 1 to 3 pm Meditation (In-person only)	March 19 10 am to Noon Donald Trump and the Global Shift to the Right 1:30 to 3 pm The Business of Sports	March 20 10 am to Noon Great Decisions 1 to 3 pm Meditation (In-person only)	March 21 10 am to Noon Book Discussion Day Michael Cunningham	
March 24 10 am to Noon Masterworks of American Art 1:30 to 3 pm The Business of Sports	March 25 10 am to Noon Cyber and Terrorism 1 to 3 pm Myanmar's Struggle for Freedom and Democracy	March 26 10 am to Noon David Drinon Art 1:30 to 3 pm The Business of Sports	March 27 10 am to Noon Great Decisions 1 to 3 pm History of American Veterans and a Lowell Connection	March 28 10 am to Noon Film Discussion Gifted	March 29 Noon to 2 pm LIRA Dining Trail Part 4 Burmese Luncheon Calvary Baptist Church
March 31 10 am to Noon Masterworks of American Art 1:30 to 3 pm The Business of Sports	April 1 10 am to Noon Cyber and Terrorism 1 to 3 pm Health and Lifestyle	April 2 10 am to Noon Whistler House Museum Tour (Trip) 1:30 to 3 pm The Business of Sports	April 3 10 am to Noon Great Decisions 1 to 3 pm Ancient Cultures in Contact	April 4 11:15 to 4 pm (Trip) Peabody Essex Museum	

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>April 7 10 am to Noon Masterworks of American Art 1:30 to 3 pm The Business of Sports</p>	<p>April 8 10 am to Noon Cyber and Terrorism 1 to 3 pm Health and Lifestyle</p>	<p>April 9 10 am to Noon Weather and Climate Models 1:30 to 3 pm The Business of Sports</p>	<p>April 10 10 am to Noon Great Decisions 1 to 3 pm Ancient Cultures in Contact</p>	<p>April 11</p>	
<p>April 14 10 am to Noon Masterworks of American Art 1:30 to 3 pm The Business of Sports</p>	<p>April 15 10 am to Noon Cyber and Terrorism 1 to 3 pm Health and Lifestyle</p>	<p>April 16 1:30 to 3 pm The Business of Sports</p>	<p>April 17 10 am to Noon Great Decisions 1 to 3 pm Ancient Cultures in Contact</p>	<p>April 18 10 am to Noon Book Discussion <i>Captain Courageous</i> Rudyard Kipling</p>	
<p>April 21 No Classes today</p>	<p>April 22 10 am to Noon Cyber and Terrorism 1 to 3 pm The Sudbury Fight</p>	<p>April 23 10 am to Noon Development of AAV Gene Therapy 1:30 to 3 pm The Business of Sports</p>	<p>April 24 10 am to Noon Great Decisions 1 to 3 pm Ancient Cultures in Contact 1 pm Chelmsford Library Series</p>	<p>April 25 10 am to Noon Film Discussion <i>My Left Foot</i></p>	
<p>April 28 10 am to Noon Masterworks of American Art 1:30 to 3 pm The Business of Sports</p>	<p>April 29 10 am to Noon Cyber and Terrorism 1 to 3 pm Great Decisions Presenters' Workshop</p>	<p>April 30 10 am to Noon Tour of UML Arboretum (Trip) 1:30 to 3 pm The Business of Sports</p>	<p>May 1 10 am to Noon Great Decisions</p>	<p>May 2 10 am to Noon Trip to Andres Institute of Art Brookline, NH</p>	
<p>May 5 10 am to Noon Death Stalks a Lowell Canal 1 to 3 pm Great Decisions Presenters' Workshop</p>	<p>May 6</p>	<p>May 7 10 am to Noon LIRA Annual Meeting</p>	<p>May 8</p>	<p>May 9</p>	

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				<p>May 16 10 am to Noon Book Discussion <i>Finding Margaret Fuller: a novel</i> Allison Pataki</p>	
				<p>May 24 10 am to Noon Film Discussion <i>As Good As It Gets</i></p>	
				<p>June 20 10 am to Noon Book Discussion Elon Musk Walter Isaacson</p>	