

Fall 2023 Instructor Bios - OLLI at NC State University

Listings are alphabetical by instructor last name.

Course Name	Full Name	Bio
Food Safety: A Farm-to-Table Approach	Donald Anderson	<i>Donald Anderson</i> ; master's degree in economics from NC State; worked as an economist and statistician for 25 years at Research Triangle Institute (now RTI International), conducting regulatory analyses and other projects for food safety regulators at both the Food and Drug Administration and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA); employed for 14 years in Washington, D.C. and Wilmington, N.C. for the Food Safety and Inspection Service of USDA.
Lecture -- Shaded Splendor: Cultivating a Glorious Native Woodland with Brie Arthur	Brie Arthur	<i>Brie Arthur</i> ; bestselling author and gardening personality, Arthur is widely known for her leadership with the national Foodscape movement and her lively, information packed presentations; with more than two decades of professional horticulture experience she is a long-time contributor on the Emmy award winning PBS Television show "Growing a Greener World"; follow Brie's gardening journey through her website, BrieGrows.com or her social media and YouTube channel, Brie the Plant Lady.
Why the Jews? Understanding and Recognizing Antisemitism	Sheldon Bleiweiss	<i>Shelly Bleiweiss</i> ; a retired clinical social worker, a child of two Holocaust survivors, and a former docent at Holocaust Museum Houston; a Holocaust educator for over 20 years, Shelly has spoken to hundreds of school students, dozens of religious and civic groups, and numerous senior living communities; Shelly is an experienced OLLI instructor for NC State, Duke, and U of Pittsburgh, and has also taught classes for the Creative Lifelong Learning program at Granville County Senior Center; he is a member of the NC State Council on the Holocaust and NC Holocaust Speakers Bureau.
Lecture -- What's Happening to My Lawn?	Lee Butler	<i>Lee Butler</i> ; B.S., Agronomy/Turfgrass Management, M.S., Plant Pathology, NC State; 24 years working as an extension specialist at NC State in turfgrass pathology.
Lecture -- Eliza House Trist: A Woman's Westward Journey	Karen Chase	<i>Karen A. Chase</i> ; author, speaker, and brand designer; her first novel, <i>Carrying Independence</i> , was a nominee for the 2020 Library of Virginia Literary Awards; historical fiction focusing on the signing of the Declaration of Independence, the novel was awarded #12 of the 100 Best Indie Books of 2019; she is a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution; originally from Canada, she lives in Richmond, V.A.
Lecture -- Hummingbirds: Behavior, Biology and Physiology	Christine Copenhaver	<i>Christine Copenhaver</i> ; PH.D. in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology (University of California, Irvine); 30-year career in environmental consulting conducting ecological analyses for hazardous waste site cleanups.
Miscarriages of Justice?	Mary Jude Darrow	<i>Mary Jude Darrow</i> ; Loyola University School of Law; Clarkson University, Potsdam, NY; Assistant DA - New Orleans District Attorney's Office; Assistant U.S. Attorney in the Eastern District of Louisiana, and Eastern District of North Carolina; Criminal Defense Attorney; Assistant DA – Durham, NC.
Duke Chapel and Gothic Architecture	Kenyon Davenport	<i>Kenyon Davenport</i> ; B.A. Design, M.A. Medieval Science; retired teacher of secondary history; Visitor Relations Assistant, Duke University Chapel
Lecture -- The Goldsboro Broken Arrow	Joel Dobson	<i>Joel Dobson</i> ; former Air Force officer in Strategic Air Command; retired from Burlington Industries/BGF.
Henry V – A Play for All Time	Ian Finley	<i>Ian Finley</i> ; playwright and actor; MFA in Dramatic Writing, New York University; 2012 Piedmont Laureate in Playwriting; 20 years teaching Shakespeare as Director of Education at Burning Coal Theatre Company; Chair of Fine Arts at Research Triangle High School; guest artist at colleges and universities throughout the Triangle.
Lecture -- Gourds: From Growing to Crafting	Judi Fleming	<i>Judi Fleming</i> ; involved in the gourd world for nearly 30 years and teaches gourd art and craft classes across the U.S. as well as demonstrating gourds at several N.C. historic sites; she is the current President of the NC Gourd Society and the 1st VP of the American Gourd Society; she has won numerous awards for her gourd art.

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Henry V – A Play for All Time	Marc Fusco	<i>Marc Fusco</i> ; M.A., M.S., Marc has several degrees in Medieval and Renaissance Literature and History, with a focus on Shakespeare and Elizabethan Literature, and an M.S. in Space Studies, where he majored in space policy and history; he has taught at Arizona State, Duke, and UNC; Marc has taught Shakespeare at several institutions to students ranging from adults to junior high students.
Lecture -- African American Roots of Barbershop Harmony	Warren Fuson	<i>Warren Fuson</i> ; B.S. Physics/Math; Telecom engineer/manager; Barbershop Harmony Society thirty-year member, many years of chapter and district leadership positions; contest judge and Carolinas District VP of Contest and Judging; chaired Barbershop Revival, a diversity event at NCCU introducing African American students to barbershop as part of their musical heritage.
Lecture -- African American Roots of Barbershop Harmony	Andy Fuson	<i>Andrea Fuson</i> ; M.A. Writing and Literature, NC State; lecturer for 21 years; Barbershop Harmony Society member, 7 years; originator and Director of Development for Barbershop Revival; Oak City Sound board member.
The Film Industry in North Carolina	Guy Gaster	<i>Guy Gaster</i> ; B.S., Marketing, Arizona State University; M.S., Education, Florida State University; 20+ years of marketing experience in sports and entertainment with last 11 being with N.C. Film Office; native North Carolinian.
Henry V – A Play for All Time	Joe Gomez	<i>Joe Gomez</i> ; Emeritus Professor of English and Founding Director of the Film Studies Program at NC State; he is the author of two books on filmmakers: <i>KEN RUSSELL: THE ADAPTOR AS CREATOR</i> and <i>PETER WATKINS</i> , as well as various articles on film.
Lecture -- Storytelling with Jeff Gravley: NC State Athletics	Jeff Gravley	<i>Jeff Gravley</i> ; 1985 graduate in Speech Communication at NC State; worked 35 years in local sports broadcasting at WRAL in Raleigh and WEWS in Cleveland; two-time North Carolina Sportscaster of the year and seven-time regional Emmy award winner.
Lecture -- D-Day on VE Day - A Historical Perspective	Roy Heidicker	<i>Roy "Doc" Heidicker</i> ; received his Ph.D. in history from the University of Southern California; his dissertation was on the Civil War; at USC he was the Operations Manager for the Film School and the Event Manager for the university; Doc served in the US Marine Corps and was a 4th Fighter Wing Historian for 15 years; he deployed to Iraq and Kyrgyzstan; he and his wife Judine own classic aviation and war art.
Henry V – A Play for All Time	John Herold	<i>John C. Herold</i> ; Ph.D., SUNY Buffalo; retired lecturer in English at NC State; published articles on Tagore, Hardy, Powell and Pressburger, and Stephen C. Pepper
Juneteenth: Freedom For All	Earl Ijames	<i>Earl L. Ijames</i> ; B.A., History, minor in economics and African American Studies, NC State; Emmy Award winning farmer, historian, film maker; NC Military Society Lecturer (2006); consultant to Henry Louis Gates, Jr. in film "Looking for Lincoln" (2009); W.W. Law History Lecturer, Savannah, GA (2010); North Carolina Museum of History Inaugural Juneteenth Lecturer (2019); co-founder, Historian Capital City Juneteenth Celebration (2019-); Annie Casey Foundation Lecturer- Atlanta, GA (2022); Keynote- Rocky Mount Juneteenth Festival (2023)
Lecture -- Preventing Human Trafficking	Al Jackson	<i>Al Jackson</i> ; a life coach and sales consultant; has a bachelors degree in Theology from Luther Rice University; spent many years being a student ministry pastor and sales manager; his mission is to help people be inwardly healthy to enjoy success in all of life's pursuits; he has a passion for the marginalized, which drives his desire to stop human trafficking; he currently resides with his two boys in Morrisville N.C.
Lecture -- Digitization Project of San Ignacio Church in Colombia	Justin Johnson	<i>Justin Johnson</i> ; M.S., Assistant Professor in Media Arts, Design and Technology and D.Des. candidate in the College of Design at NC State, video game developer, digital artist; current research focuses on designing games, near-nature simulations for positive affect, and creating digital artifacts from real objects with photogrammetry.

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Lecture -- Management of Blood Glucose: Spotlight on GLP 1	Olga Kosmos	<i>Olga Kosmos</i> ; highly accomplished Nurse Educator, specializing in Diabetes Knowledge; with over 15 years of experience in the healthcare industry, Olga holds a B.S. in Nursing from Winston Salem State University, following her earlier graduation from Wake Tech Community College; as a Registered Nurse, Board Certified in Nursing and Certified Diabetes Care and Education Specialist (CDCES), Olga has dedicated her career to empowering patients in managing their diabetes by providing them with invaluable knowledge and guidance; her commitment to improving patient outcomes through education sets her apart as a compassionate and knowledgeable healthcare professional.
Lecture -- Reading "Old Crimes" with Jill McCorkle	Jill McCorkle	<i>Jill McCorkle</i> ; author of the <i>New York Times</i> bestselling <i>Life After Life</i> and the widely acclaimed <i>Hieroglyphics</i> ("One of our wryest, warmest, wisest storytellers" —Rebecca Makkai), brings us a breathtaking collection of stories that offers an intimate look at the moments when a person's life changes forever. Her newest collection of short stories is entitled <i>Old Crimes</i> .
Lecture -- Is the Electoral College a Threat to Democracy?	David McLennan	<i>David McLennan</i> ; B.A., M.A., University of Virginia; Ph.D., University of Texas at Austin; Professor of Political Science, Meredith College.
Lecture -- Rounder Records: A Brief History	David Menconi	<i>David Menconi</i> ; is an author and journalist in Raleigh; he has written for the <i>News & Observer</i> , <i>New York Times</i> , <i>The Bluegrass Situation</i> , <i>Billboard</i> , <i>Rolling Stone</i> and <i>No Depression</i> ; he has a Master's in journalism from the University of Texas; his 2020 book <i>Step It Up and Go: The Story of North Carolina Popular Music, from Blind Boy Fuller and Doc Watson to Nina Simone and Superchunk</i> won the North Caroliniana Society Book Award.
Lecture -- The Rise of Artificial Intelligence	Cade Metz	<i>Cade Metz</i> ; reporter with <i>The New York Times</i> , based in its San Francisco bureau; he covers "emerging technologies" and has led the <i>Times</i> ' coverage of artificial intelligence since 2017; formerly a senior writer with <i>WIRED</i> magazine; he is also the author of <i>Genius Makers: The Mavericks Who Brought A.I. to Google, Facebook, and The World</i> , the story of the people, ideas and companies behind the rapid rise of artificial intelligence; he grew up in Raleigh, North Carolina and studied English at Duke University.
The American Indian Wars 1865-1900	Dave Milidonis	<i>Dave Milidonis</i> ; founder and managing director of the non-profit organization, the National Veterans History Archival Institute (NVHAI); 1974 graduate, U.S. Military Academy, West Point; 20 years U.S. Army infantry experience; veteran OLLI instructor and 2019 recipient of the William C. Friday Award for Distinguished Service in Retirement, given by NC State's Association of Retired Faculty.
Movement and Dance: Choreography Workshop	Tara Mullins	<i>Tara Zaffuto Mullins</i> ; Associate Teaching Professor in the Department of Performing Arts and Technology, where she choreographs for the academic companies, teaches courses, facilitates the Faculty and Guest Artist Series, and creates interdisciplinary projects; Tara has a B.A. in dance from JMU and an MFA in dance from Arizona State University.
Lecture -- The Intense Challenge of Poverty in North Carolina	Gene Nichol	<i>Gene Nichol</i> ; distinguished professor of law at the University of North Carolina; he was president of the College of William & Mary (2005-2008), law dean at the University of Colorado (1988-1995) and dean at UNC from 1999-2005; he is author of <i>LESSONS FROM NORTH CAROLINA: Race, Religion, Tribe and the Future of American Democracy</i> (Blair, 2023); <i>INDECENT ASSEMBLY: The North Carolina Legislature's War on Democracy and Equality</i> (Blair, 2020); <i>THE FACES OF POVERTY IN NORTH CAROLINA</i> (UNC Press, 2018); he's published articles in the Harvard, Yale, Chicago, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Duke, California, and Virginia law reviews and been a columnist for the <i>Raleigh News & Observer</i> for twenty years.
An Updated Tour of Our Solar System	Bill Pace	<i>Bill Pace</i> ; B.S., Engineering, NC State, MBA from UNC Charlotte; after a long career in the IT industry, he enjoys travel, golf and his grandpa time; he is the coordinator of OLLI's Science and Technology subcommittee and regularly instructs for the program, presenting technical topics from a conceptual viewpoint.
Lecture -- The Contentious Presidential Election of 1876	Jim Parina	<i>Jim Parina</i> ; B.S., Physics, St. John Fisher University; MBA, The University of Pittsburgh; spent 40 years in sales and sales management of scientific instrumentation, most dealing with DNA Sequencing.

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Discovering Carl Sandburg	John Quinley	<i>John W. Quinley</i> ; earned an Ed.D. in Higher Education Administration, an M.A. in Humanities, and a B.A. in Psychology; worked as a college administrator and faculty member at the community college and university level; he conducted classes about Sandburg for OLLI at UNC Asheville and Furman University; is a former docent at the Carl Sandburg Home; author of <i>Discovering Carl Sandburg: The Eclectic Life of an American Icon</i> .
Lecture -- How to Take Travel Photography	Paul Sausman	<i>Paul Sausman</i> ; B.S. in Marketing, Advertising and Photo Journalism from Ball State University; attended the U.S. Air Force School of Photography in Denver, where he was trained as a combat photographer; for the past 12 years Paul has taught photography at Wake Tech Community College.
Lecture -- Honey Bee Economics	Walter Thurman	<i>Wally Thurman</i> ; Professor Emeritus at NC State where he taught economics and wrote on agricultural and natural resource economic topics, including agricultural policy and honey bee economics; he received his Ph.D. in economics from the University of Chicago; he currently is writing on 19th century U.S. agriculture and how innovations in drainage technology and economic coordination transformed the Midwest into the Corn Belt.
Living with an Electric Vehicle	Thomas Toms	<i>Thomas Toms</i> ; BSEE, NC State; IEEE & ISA; over forty years of experience as a design engineer in the fields of power generation, systems integration, man-machine interfaces, and process automation.
Disaster: Big Technologies, Good People, Bad Decisions	Lee Ward	<i>Lee Ward</i> ; received his doctorate in higher education administration from NC State; M.S. in integrated science and technology from James Madison University; B.S. in biology from Salisbury University; over forty-three years he held faculty and leadership roles at five universities; he is Faculty Emeritus from JMU, author of <i>First Generation College Students</i> , and an instructor in the UNCW Honors College.
Lecture -- Digitization Project of San Ignacio Church in Colombia	Julie Wesp	<i>Julie K. Wesp</i> ; Ph.D., University of California, Berkeley; Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology and Faculty Affiliate with the Science, Technology, and Society Program, NC State; bioarchaeologist with expertise in Pre-Contact and Colonial Latin America, current research focuses on ancient DNA of African descendants in Colonial Mexico and co-director of the Temple of San Ignacio Archaeological Project in Bogotá, Colombia.
Historic Turner House Stories Revealed	Cheryl Williams	<i>Cheryl Crooms Williams</i> ; founder and president of The Historic Turner House Foundation, Inc., a 501©(3) non-profit; she is a self-described history enthusiast, continues a twelve year volunteer commitment to education, preservation and honoring the heroes in our community; previous Assistant Board Chair and Education Committee Chair of the Friends of Oberlin Village she has spent her time building community partnerships, managing events that uplift the stories of Historic Oberlin Village, participated in education and research program development.