

The Learning Lab

Woodstock's Own Adult Education Experience

Spring, 2018 classes

Behind the Scenes at Northern Stage

Anthropology of Food and Eating

Media Is a Plural Noun

Society and the Environment in History

Visions of a Better World

In the Times of the Troubadours



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Behind the Scenes at Northern Stage

Amanda Rafuse & guest artists

Have you ever wondered what goes into producing professional theater? Join Northern Stage Leadership Team member Amanda Rafuse plus special guests and artists to experience first-hand the journey from choosing the play in the season selection process, developing a vision and design for the production, the casting and rehearsal process, and exactly what it takes to bring such a delightful and complex production to life.

This workshop runs in conjunction with Northern Stage's spring play, *Noises Off!*, and features invitations to three special Insider Events as well as a discussion with the cast and production team for this joy-filled production. Called the funniest farce ever written, *Noises Off* presents a manic menagerie as a cast of itinerant actors rehearse a flop called *Nothing's On*. "The most dexterously realized comedy ever about putting on a comedy. A spectacularly funny, peerless backstage farce" – *The New York Times*

Workshop: Monday, April 2, 2:00 – 4:00 p.m. Lemal Community Room in the Production & Administration Building, 76 Gates Street, White River Junction, VT.

Insider Events:

Tuesday April 3, 12:00 – 2:00 p.m. *Noises Off!* Script Club, Byrne Theater in the Barrette Center for the Arts, 74 Gates Street, White River Junction, VT

Sunday, April 8, 3:00 – 4:00 p.m. Invited Tech, Byrne Theater

Saturday, May 12, post-show (approx. 9:30 p.m.): Cocktails with the Company, Roesch Lobby in the Barrette Center for the Arts

Amanda Rafuse is Associate Director of Northern Stage. Originally from Massachusetts, Amanda has journeyed through Washington DC, California, Indiana, Ireland, Kansas City, New York, and Minnesota to finally arrive in Vermont. As a development specialist, Amanda works with organizations to hone communications, develop audiences, and grow value within communities. Since coming to Northern Stage in 2013, Amanda managed the Campaign for Northern Stage, raising the dollars necessary to build a new home and forge a strong financial foundation for the beloved company while implementing a new membership model and growing the annual operations giving program. With more than 20 years as a professional actor and teaching artist, Amanda brings her love of storytelling and community building to the stage, the classroom, and the board-room. Audiences may remember Amanda from her roles in Northern Stage's *Fox on the Fairway*, *A Christmas Carol*, or as Mrs. Webb in *Our Town*. Amanda received her Bachelor's degree from the University of Notre Dame and her Master of Fine Arts from the University of Kansas City – Missouri.

The Origins of Yucky and Yummy: The Anthropology of Food and Eating

Dr. Barbara Butler

Fueling our bodies is but a small part of what people seek when we choose our food. Not only do we not eat all that provides nutrition, but enthusiastically eat things that are not nutritious. We also imbue what we eat with meanings that go way beyond providing fuel for our bodies. Complex conversations about status, ethnic affiliation, family values, gender and transcendent



truths are carried on when we choose, cook and eat food. Why don't Hindus eat beef or Jews eat lobster or Americans eat horse? How did caviar come to signify prestige?

This course will explore the interactions between the biological dimensions of human food and the cultural elaborations and constraints on what and how we eat. Our reading will include a collection of articles, some of which engage controversial topics, which should ensure lively discussions in class. A highlight of the course is our snack time, when we share our culinary cultural backgrounds with each other.

Thursdays, April 5 through May 24, 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Norman Williams Library (First floor)

Dr. Barbara Butler grew up in Durham, New Hampshire and now lives in Woodstock. She retired in 2007 as a professor of anthropology at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. Her main research focused on indigenous Andean peoples. In 2006, thirty years of involvement in an Ecuadorian indigenous community resulted in the publication of *Holy Intoxication to Drunken Dissipation*, an examination of change through the lens of drinking rituals. A food lover herself, Barbara finds the study of food and eating endlessly fascinating. This course has been very popular when taught for OSHER at Dartmouth.

William Boardman

We will explore contemporary news media of as many sorts as seem to matter, with attention to their impact, accuracy, intellectual integrity in shaping American political culture. We will examine as many concrete examples as possible as well as exploring traditional and contemporary frameworks for assessing journalistic worth.

Wednesdays, April 4 through May 9, 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Norman Williams Library
(History Room)

A collage of various local newspaper front pages from different regions in Texas, including East Texas, the Dallas/Fort Worth area, and the Houston area. The papers are overlapping and tilted at various angles, showing headlines about local events, sports, and community news. Visible headlines include 'Shepherd All-Stars win district', 'Howdy Party set for July 2', 'Two Panthers make TSWA teams', 'Lakewood takes championship', 'TW wins 7-on-7 tournament', 'Area teens compete in match at Kingwood library', 'Zapeta ready to take over as CTSD AD', and 'Howdy Party set for July 2'. The papers are from various dates in 2016, mostly July.

Society and the Environment in History

Ananda Forest

In this course, we will explore the responses to environmental challenges by various societies in history and why societies fail and perish, or succeed and thrive. We will be focusing, ultimately, on the challenges faced by America at this unique moment in history.

We will start by taking a historical perspective, looking at previous societies that have risen and fallen in order to understand natural cycles and how humans respond to these cycles. In particular, we will examine how societies relate to their physical environments and how this relationship plays a determining role in each society's fate. We will then take a closer look at our own society to see, beneath partisan hype and media froth, what we should truly be concerned about and why we should have profound hope.

This course will focus on three primary texts: *Collapse* by Jared Diamond (author of the groundbreaking *Guns, Germs and Steel*); *The End of Growth* by Richard Heinberg (social and economic visionary); *The Sixth Extinction*, the *New York Times* bestseller by Elizabeth Kolbert. No reading is required for this class, but students are encouraged to obtain copies of these landmark works for their libraries. There will be a 40-60 page recommended reading for each class.

Wednesdays, May 9 – June 13, 2:00 – 4:00 p.m.. At Nan Bourne's home on River St.

Ananda Forest is a graduate of Oberlin College (A.B., Anthropology/English) and Yale Law School (J.D.). He has been a teacher for over thirty years, including 6 years in the English department at St. Anne's School in Brooklyn Heights; 12 years teaching shamanism and shamanic techniques at Spirit Hollow, a center for shamanism and spiritual ecology in Shaftsbury, VT; and the past fourteen years teaching history and anthropology at the Community College of Vermont. Being in the classroom is one of his greatest joys!



Visions of a Better World: Contemporary Social Movements

Ron Miller

Many of us feel that we are living in bleak times. Political, economic and social systems seem to be breaking down, both nationally and globally. Climate change is causing increasingly massive disruption, and perhaps most perplexing, common understandings of truth and reality seem to be dissolving. Participants in Ron's class "Civilization at a Crossroads" last fall explored the underlying causes of these crises, and many asked what we can do to respond constructively. This course provides some tangible answers, whether or not you took the previous course.

Millions of people across the U.S. and around the world are stirred by visions of a better world, and they are developing new approaches in many arenas. They are daring to rethink and reinvent institutions on local, regional, national and international scales. While reflecting diverse influences and points of view, they share an emerging realization that modern civilization has entered a phase of historic transformation: it is our very *worldview* that is shifting.

This class will offer an overview of these diverse new visions. We will consider emerging movements and concepts such as the "new economy," agroecology, permaculture, transition towns, food sovereignty, relocalization, reclaiming the commons, Slow Food and Slow Money, and many others. Most of these hopeful and promising movements are rarely recognized in the mainstream press, so they remain largely unfamiliar. In this class we'll become acquainted with the concepts, leading thinkers, and origins of these evolutionary trends.

Tuesdays, April 17 – May 1. 2:00 – 4:00. At Nan Bourne's home on River St.

Ron Miller has taught at Goddard and Champlain colleges, published two journals on educational alternatives, founded an independent school near Burlington, and written or edited several books, including *Free Schools, Free People* (a study of radical education alternatives in the 1960s) and *Most Likely to Secede* (a collection of essays exploring local autonomy and resilience in Vermont). He received a Ph.D. in American Studies from Boston University and has always loved exploring unconventional ideas. He is the coordinator of the Learning Lab.



In the Times of the Troubadours

Rai D'Honoré

Medieval Occitania (today southern France) was a vibrant, blossoming society that, during the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, offered a more tolerant, educated, and creative culture than do many contemporary societies. Occitania gave rise to the troubadours, who reflected its culture in their philosophy, poetry, and music. Why was this considered so radical a culture, and how did it differ from the status quo of most western countries of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries? What changed it? What was the origin of troubadour Fin'Amor philosophy? Live performances of songs by Bernart de Ventadorn, Jaufré Rudel, Arnaut Daniel, Richard I, Guilhelm Figuera, and Guillaume de Machaut will illustrate the extent of troubadour philosophy on contemporary music and literature.



This class will be held in the evening.

Tuesdays, May 1 – 22, 6:30-8:00 p.m. Norman Williams Library (History Room).

Rai d'Honoré has been on the faculty at numerous colleges and universities in the US and overseas, including The American University, the University of Maryland, the National University of Lesotho. Most recently at East Carolina University, she designed and directed the Language Academy, lectured at the Fletcher School of Music, organized medieval colloquia, took students on study abroad trips, and coordinated a Medieval & Renaissance Festival. Rai received her Ph.D. in Modern Languages from the Catholic University of America, with a specialization in political, sociological, and sexual heresy in medieval French literature. She also composes and performs troubadour-style songs and has also led horse trails through the mountains of Lesotho and been an archaeological guide for jeep safaris in Turkey.

Founded in 1999 as WESAW (Winter Education Series at Woodstock), the Learning Lab provides a high quality adult education experience and is open to all. We are an entirely volunteer-run organization, serving people of all ages in Woodstock and surrounding towns.



Tuition fees are \$30 to \$40, according to the number of sessions. Fees may be reduced or waived for those on limited income—please inquire.

Contact the Learning Lab by email: tllwoodstock@gmail.com
or by phone at (802) 310-2169

More information is available at www.thelearninglabwoodstock.com