



Course Catalog

Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Learning

Summer Session 2026



Find out more at [assumptionwise.org](https://www.assumptionwise.org)

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Summer Session 2026

WISE is delighted to **mark the 250th anniversary of our nation** with a **six-week summer session** to acknowledge and learn more about our historical milestone. This session offers several compelling short classes between Memorial Day and Independence Day that celebrate the aspirations described by our Declaration of Independence and provide the chance to reflect on America's evolution. There are also some special events and social activities to engage with fellow WISE members and friends.



The WISE Summer Session is open to all. Whether you are a long-time member, or thinking of giving WISE a try, this session is the perfect time to take a class or two at significantly reduced rates.

Each class session is only \$10 (for example, \$20 for a two-week class, \$30 for a three-week class, etc.). There has never been a better time to take a WISE class.

Visit the WISE website to register for classes today



How to Contact Us

The WISE office is on the Assumption University campus in La Maison Française, Room 206. Our regular office hours are Monday through Thursday from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm.

Find us at assumptionwise.org
or visit our Facebook page

Email: wise@assumption.edu
Phone: 508-767-7513

Summer 2026 Overview

Zoom classes: These are held online via Zoom; links are made available upon registration

Category	No.	Title	Instructor
Politics	S1	Suitcases Full of Socialism	K Hakkarainen
Art History	S2	The Peale Artistic Dynasty	M. Chiarchiaro
History	S3	Clara Barton: Angel of the Battlefield	P. Macek
Culture/Arts	S9	American Culture: 250 Years of Democracy Change	M. Gordon

In-Person classes: These are held on campus at Assumption University (unless otherwise noted)

Category	No.	Title	Instructor
Music	S4	Songs of America: An Eclectic Portrait	J. Corn
Politics	S5	Supreme Court Then and Now	J. Ross
Poetry	S6	American Patriotic Poetry	T. Brennan
Religion	S8	Congregationalism: Colonial New England's Religion	G. Shahinian

Events: WISE has some fun social activities planned in addition to classes; refer to schedule

Annual Meeting: Exclusively for WISE members, this annual gathering celebrates our year and looks ahead to the next

Movie Mondays: Featuring historic and patriotic-themed movies throughout the month

Sundae Social: A fundraiser to end the summer session; featuring ice cream and Americana Trivia

Woo Sox Baseball Game: Fun with WISE at Polar Park in Worcester

DAR Chapter House Tour: Members, join us for an exclusive private tour of The Oaks on Lincoln Street, Worcester, home of the local chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution since 1914

Summer Session Course Descriptions

S1. Suitcases Full of Socialism: Immigrants who Brought Marxism to America

Mondays 10:00 – 11:00 am
June 1, 8, 15

Zoom



Ignited by Karl Marx, German, Jewish, and Finnish immigrants brought their best books with their best clothes to America and set about to make their new home a more equitable place to live. Joseph Weydemeyer, Abraham Cahan, and Antero Tanner, organized industrial, garment, and mine workers for fair wages and workplaces. They were ideologically similar but ethnically distinct in their missions to evangelize Marxism in their communities.

In this three-session course, we'll see how the groups of socialist immigrants catalyzed the American labor movement, only to fracture under the pressure of political and ideological forces at home and abroad.



Instructor: Karl Hakkarainen is a long-time WISE instructor who has taught courses on history, technology, intellectual property law, music, and literature. He is currently researching Martin Hendrickson, a Finnish immigrant who was dubbed "The Apostle of Socialism."

S2. The Peale Dynasty: America's Revolutionary Artistic Family

Tuesdays 10:00 – 11:00 am
June 9, 16

Zoom



Brothers Charles and James Peale fought with George Washington during America's Revolutionary war, but they also created a dynasty of American artists working through the 19th century. We will explore the works of Charles and James, as well as their children, Rembrandt, Raphaele, Titian, Margareta, Anna, and Sarah, considered the first American woman to succeed as a professional artist.



Instructor: Martha Chiarchiaro has brought history to life through the art of the times for more than 30 years. She received her Masters' degree in the History of Art from Williams College and teaches a variety of art history courses at the Worcester Art Museum and other local cultural organizations. Her specialty courses related to specific periods, artists, and activities provide a more in-depth look at the life and times of the people who are part of the exploration. Martha is fascinated by American history and the role of American artists in portraying the American Revolutionary War.

S3. Clara Barton: Angel of the Battlefield

Wednesdays 1:00 – 2:00 pm
June 17, 24

Zoom



If you ask, why a course on Clara Barton, then the only answer I can think of is because she represents the greatest heroine America ever produced. Although this course covers briefly Clara's early and later life, it mainly chronicles one week in the life of Clara at the Battle of Antietam, a battle which redefines America with the ideal "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal." At Antietam, Clara's presence was everywhere: cooking her famous hardtack meal; washing the faces and hands of wounded soldiers; combing their hair; giving bread, wine, and water to the wounded; dressing the wounds of soldiers; assisting a surgeon on the amputation of an arm or leg; holding the hand of a dying soldier and closing the eyes of the dead. Clara's story at Antietam makes her one of the most extraordinary women who ever lived.

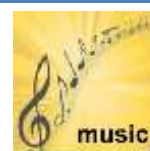


Instructor: Paul Macek has a bachelor's degree in both history and geography and a master's degree in both history and English. He has taught U.S. History and American Literature for over twenty-five years. He has also worked as a proofreader, copyeditor, indexer, translator, writer, and publisher for over thirty years. Paul Macek is the author of eight books: one on education, two on literature (one of which was a translation), and five on American history.

S4. Songs of America: An Eclectic Portrait

Wednesdays 1:00 – 2:00 pm
June 3, 10

In Person
AU Campus
Kennedy
119



In looking for a portrait that reflects America since our founding 250 years ago, there may be no better way to understand the broad and diverse nature of us than through our music. This course will attempt to do that through an eclectic mix of music and songs that reflect both the American ideal and a view of what we are today.

When thinking about the American experience since our founding, the first thing that comes to mind musically are songs like "God Bless America" and "America the Beautiful", and these certainly represent one aspect of our country. But we are much more than that. We are largely a nation of immigrants who came here in waves from different countries at various times – often driven here by poverty and conflicts in our homelands. We are also a country of regional differences, from the Northeast to the South to the Midwest to the Rockies and the West Coast. Songs reflect that – from "Georgia on my Mind" to "California Girls." Sometimes these differences result in a melting pot of cultures and ideals – other times in conflict and repression. This course will look to capture in music and song much of what made America, from its founding to what we are as a country today.



Instructor: Joe Corn spent most of his professional career as a working electrical engineer. His teaching experience has included science and math in the NYC school system, technology instructor at Springfield Technical Community College (STCC), engineering course instructor at Penn State University, and technical instructor at Moore Products Co. Since joining WISE 15 years ago, he has taught courses in both technology and music. Joe is a past President of WISE. He and his wife Bobbi reside in Grafton.

S5. Supreme Court: Then and Now

Wednesdays 3:00 – 4:00 pm
June 3, 10, 17

In Person
AU Campus
Kennedy
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This course will examine the history of the Supreme Court from its inception in 1790 to today. Not only has the Court played a role in shaping the history of America, but history and social change have shaped the Court. We will examine both institutional changes and swings in the ideology of the Court, in part by focusing on some landmark decisions of the Court.

In our final class we will consider the Court's role in these turbulent political times, and whether reform of the Court is desirable or possible.

Recommended reading: Linda Greenhouse, *The U.S. Supreme Court: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford Univ Press, 3rd Ed. 2023) ISBN #978-0197689462 (strongly recommended)



Instructor: John S. Ross, III (Jack) earned an A.B. degree (History) from Yale University, a J.D. degree from the University of Virginia School of Law, and an LL.M. degree (Taxation) from New York University School of Law. He practiced law in Washington D.C. for twenty years and served as an Adjunct Professor of Law at Washington and Lee University School of Law. Jack has taught numerous courses in the WISE program focused on constitutional law and the Supreme Court, and facilitates the WISE Supreme Court SIG.

S6. American Patriotic Poetry

Thursdays 10:00 – 11:00 am
June 4, 11

In Person
AU Campus
Kennedy
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This course will reflect on patriotic American poetry, both well-known and obscure, with an emphasis on New England authors whose words have inspired citizens and immigrants.

Patriotic Songs/Lyrics

- Star Spangled Banner
- Battle Hymn of the Republic
- How Are You; Sanitary?
- This Land Is Your Land
- Ragged Old Flag

Patriotic Poetry of New England

- The Ride of Paul Revere
- Old Ironsides
- Boston (Selected excerpts)
- Warren's Address
- America The Beautiful



Instructor: Tom Brennan previously taught two courses for WISE on Thomas Merton and his poetry.

S8. Congregationalism: Colonial New England's Religion

Thursdays 1:00 – 2:00 pm
June 4, 11, 18

In Person
AU Campus
Kennedy 119



Did you ever wonder why there is a Congregational church in almost every New England city or town? Where did Congregationalism start? Why was it so pervasive throughout colonial New England? What is the theology of Congregationalism and how does it differ from other expressions of the Christian faith? Why do many Congregational churches go by the name of United Church of Christ? What is its form of church government and how does that differ from other Christian traditions? How did the form of church government of Congregationalism influence the American understanding of democracy including the writing of the Constitution of the United States?

These are some of the questions that will be explored in this course.



Instructor: Rev. Dr. Gary Shahinian has been an ordained Congregational minister for 30 years serving six different Congregational churches. He has also been a Professor of Theology and Philosophy at both Christian and state colleges. Dr. Shahinian possesses a Ph.D. in Philosophy from the Free University of Amsterdam and three Master's degrees in Theology.

S9. American Culture: A Look at 250 years of Democracy, Change, and Pride through the Arts

Fridays 10:00 – 11:00 am
June 5, 12, 19, 26

Zoom



This course focuses on four central themes in American culture and the arts: symbols of freedom, landscape and space, changes in urban areas, and murals and street art. These themes will direct a variety of perspectives on the changing attitudes reflected in art and culture in the last 250 years from the colonial through the modern era.



Instructor: Margery Gordon graduated from Classical High in Worcester, Mass, and The American University where she received a BA and MFA. She was highlighted in the book *Museum People*, and published in *Gender Perspectives*, she was written up in the *Washington Post*, *Denver Post*, and *Worcester Telegram*. Margery received several awards and grants on Latino Arctic and Asian culture from Microsoft, Texas Gas Corporation, and more. She taught at OLLI and WISE at American and Assumption Universities. Margery served as museum educator at Smithsonian's American Art Museum and the National Museum of Natural History. She has given presentations and shown artwork globally.

Summer Session Schedule 2026

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
May 25  Memorial Day	May 26	May 27	May 28 WISE Annual Meeting 11:30 am 	May 29 Summer Classes Begin
June 1 <u>10 am</u> S1. Suitcases Full of Socialism Hakkarainen Zoom <u>1 pm</u> Movie Monday AU Fuller Auditorium	June 2	June 3 <u>1 pm</u> S4. Songs of America Corn AU Kennedy 119 <u>3 pm</u> S5. Supreme Court Ross AU Kennedy 119	June 4 <u>10 am</u> S6. American Patriotic Poetry Brennan AU Kennedy 119 <u>1 pm</u> S8. Congregationalism Shahinian AU Kennedy 119	June 5 <u>10 am</u> S9. 250 Years of American Culture Gordon Zoom
June 8 <u>10 am</u> S1. Suitcases Full of Socialism Hakkarainen Zoom <u>1 pm</u> Movie Monday AU Fuller Auditorium	June 9 <u>10 am</u> S2. Peale Dynasty Chiarchiaro Zoom	June 10 <u>1 pm</u> S4. Songs of America Corn AU Kennedy 119 <u>3 pm</u> S5. Supreme Court Ross AU Kennedy 119	June 11 <u>10 am</u> S6. American Patriotic Poetry Brennan AU Kennedy 119 <u>1 pm</u> S8. Congregationalism Shahinian AU Kennedy 119	June 12 <u>10 am</u> S9. 250 Years of American Culture Gordon Zoom

Schedule continued on next page

Summer Session Schedule 2026

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	
June 15 10 am S1. Suitcases Full of Socialism Hakkarainen Zoom	June 16 10 am S2. Peale Dynasty Chiarchiaro Zoom	June 17 1 pm S3. Clara Barton Macek Zoom 3 pm S5. Supreme Court Ross AU Kennedy 119	June 18 1 pm S8. Congregation-alism Shahinian AU Kennedy 119	June 19  10 am S9. 250 Years of American Culture Gordon Zoom	
June 22 1 pm Movie Monday AU Fuller Auditorium	June 23	June 24 1 pm S3. Clara Barton Macek Zoom	June 25 10:30 am DAR Private Tour 140 Lincoln Street Worcester, MA 	June 26 10 am S9. 250 Years of American Culture Gordon Zoom	SUNDAY June 28  Woo Sox Baseball Game 1:05 pm Polar Park
June 29	June 30 Sundae Social & Americana Trivia  1:30-3:30 pm AU Tinsley Community Center	July 1	July 2	July 3	SATURDAY July 4 Independence Day 

All About WISE

The Worcester Institute for Senior Education was founded in 1993 and is an affiliate organization of the School of Graduate and Professional Studies at Assumption University in Worcester, MA.

The WISE Mission

WISE is a member-driven organization providing lifelong learning opportunities for older adults.

Our vision is to be a learning community that offers adults intellectual stimulation, socialization, personal growth, and opportunities for service.

Through peer learning concepts, members share their knowledge and experiences with each other by creating, coordinating, and participating in courses.



Be WISE and Join Now

Join WISE and you become a member of a community of lifelong learners. WISE members enjoy a variety of interesting courses together with a schedule of engaging educational and social events.

Members can enjoy performances and sports events on campus at no cost. Discounts are available when visiting Assumption University's recreation center, snack bar and dining hall.

The WISE Classroom

Membership allows access to all courses and events. Each session, WISE offers classes both online via Zoom and in-person on the Assumption University campus. Zoom classes (and even some in-person classes) are recorded for members to access at a time that is convenient for them.

Unlimited Course Selection

A WISE membership provides adult learners with unlimited access to a compelling selection of courses. Most Fall and Spring courses consist of five 90-minute classes, in a wide variety of topics such as music, art, history, technology, culture, science, nature and more. Most courses do not overlap, allowing members to take as many classes as they choose.

Teach at WISE

Do you have a special interest or hobby? WISE is always interested in welcoming new instructors and new topics. In addition to becoming a student, consider being a WISE instructor. For more information on teaching at WISE visit our website here: <https://assumptionwise.org/teaching>

Ready to Join WISE?

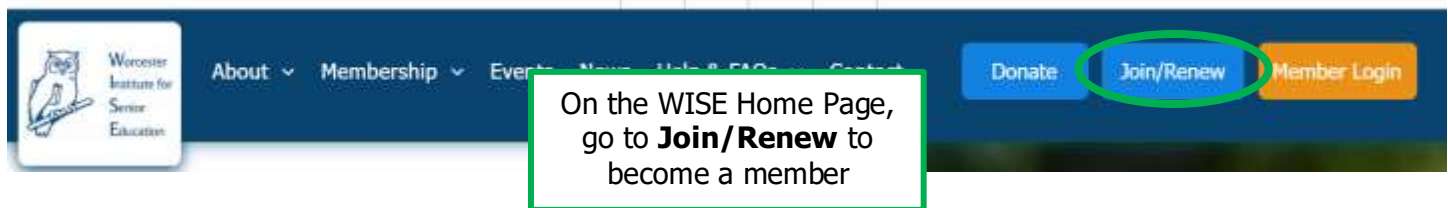
Visit the WISE website at assumptionwise.org to sign up and purchase a full- or half-year membership online.

Summer Session 2026: \$10 per class meeting

Membership Fees for the upcoming academic year:

Half-Year (Fall 2026 **or** Spring 2027) \$185.00

Full-Year (Fall 2026 **and** Spring 2027) \$365.00



Complete the membership form, which will prompt you to pay online with your credit card. If you prefer to pay by check, send your payment to:

WISE at Assumption University, 500 Salisbury Street, Worcester, MA 01609

You can also contact the WISE office directly to start your membership. We are here to assist you with logging onto our site, setting up your WISE profile, and/or registering for classes. Send us an email at wise@assumption.edu or call 508-767-7513. We are happy to help.

Once you are a WISE member, you can register for Fall and Spring classes via the WISE website. Sign up for one class or all of them! You will receive a confirmation email for each course you select.

Are you a director, member, or resident of an organization that might enjoy WISE classes? WISE has a special **Organizational Membership** designed for companies and facilities that wish to access our Zoom courses right at their own location. Contact the WISE office at 508-767-7513 to learn more about the details and pricing for this program.