

# THE LLC in **MAY & JUNE 2026**



As many of you know, May is not part of our regular membership schedule. Because Otterbein is not in session in May, we have designed programming for events we are not able to do during the regular academic year. Each event will ask you to sign up just for that event, and each will have its own cost. You do not need to be a regular member to participate in any of the May events. Consider signing up with a friend or neighbor or family member, to allow them to experience the Lifelong Learning Community. We charge for these programs separately in order to pay the professors for their time outside of the semester. **WE WILL NOT BE AT THE POINT FOR THESE PROGRAMS, NOTE LOCATIONS. Parking will be available at the lot on Park St. across from Roush and Battelle, beside the Otterbein Thrift Shop.**

This year, May will offer us two minicourses, which each provide a chance to learn about a topic in some depth and at greater length than the regular fall or spring presentations provide. One will be "Divided/United: Slavery and Sectarian Conflict in 19th century America and Beyond", led by Dr. Paul Eisenstein, whom you know from the film series; this minicourse meets three times. The other will be "The Shock of the New: Music and Modernism in the 20th Century", led by Dr. Dennis Davenport of the music department, whom you may remember from his fall presentation to us, "The 1920s: The Reflection of Society in Musical Theatre, Early Jazz, and Country Music"; it meets four times. It is possible to take one or both of the minicourses.

We will also offer a film study afternoon, led by Dr. Karen Steigman, chair of the English department, who teaches in the film studies program at Otterbein. In addition, we have planned a tour of the new Westerville Justice Center, combined with social time and conversations. Though not in May, we are also organizing a day bus trip to explore Ohio, as we did last year, in early June--more information will be coming soon.

Registration will be online at the same link you have used for membership, or in person by cash, check or credit card. Deadline to register is May 7.

We hope to see you in May and June!

*LLC Programming Team*

May 11, 1 – 4 p.m.

Roush 114

\$10

Film Study and Discussion with Karen Steigman



Clint Eastwood's 1992 western, *Unforgiven*, has been called his masterpiece. Recognized by critics as the "culmination of Eastwood's 38-year association with the genre," *Unforgiven* received four Academy Awards, for Best Picture, Director (Eastwood), Supporting Actor (Gene Hackman), and Film Editing (Joel Cox). The film presents some of the fundamental conflicts of the classical Hollywood western on the significance of the frontier in American history, expansion and violence, and masculinity and identity. This talk will consider *Unforgiven's* place in the history of the western, Eastwood's own history with the genre, and the film's status as a "revisionist western" at the end of the American century.

About the instructor: Karen Steigman is a professor of English at Otterbein. She teaches courses on postcolonial literatures, American literature, film history, American 1970s cinema, and the western. She has published work on authors including Graham Greene and Joan Didion. Her current research focuses on 1970s experimental fiction and film.

Education:

PhD, English, University of Minnesota

MA, English and Comparative Literature, SUNY-Buffalo

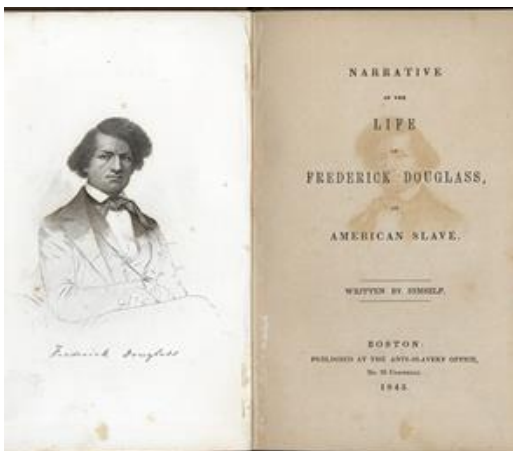
BA, English, SUNY-Buffalo

**May 12, 14, 18 1:30 - 3:30 p.m. Roush 118 \$50**  
**Divided/United: Slavery and Sectarian Conflict in**  
**19<sup>th</sup> century America and Beyond**  
**With Paul Eisenstein**

In this mini-course, we shall read and discuss two of the most significant American writers whose lives spanned almost the entirety of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in America: the slave-turned-abolitionist Frederick Douglass (1818-1895) and the uniquely American poet Walt Whitman (1819-1892). Douglass's *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (1845) catapulted its author to the forefront of the abolitionist movement, even though, at the time of its publication, he was still legally the property of his owner. Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* (1855) inaugurated an entirely new style and subject of poetry by rejecting rhyme and meter and by refusing to see any object or person as somehow unsuitable for inclusion in a poem. Both Douglass and Whitman, in their own ways, were reacting to the decades-long antagonisms and compromises that attended to the existence of slavery in America. After studying how Douglass and Whitman navigated an issue that only finally got resolved by the Civil War (and the passage of the 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, and 15<sup>th</sup> amendments), we shall consider Ben H. Winters' counterfactual novel, *Underground Airlines* (2016). In the world depicted in Winters' novel, Lincoln was assassinated in Indianapolis on the way to his inauguration, the Civil War was never fought, and slavery remains in existence in four states in 21<sup>st</sup> century America.

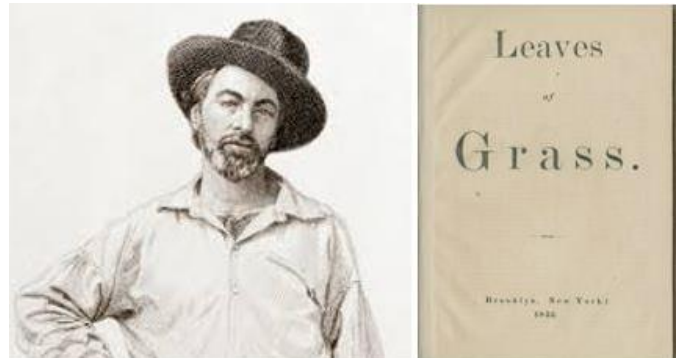
**Tuesday, May 12: Douglass' *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (1845)**

Douglass' *Narrative* is a book authored by someone born into slavery on the Eastern Shore of MD in 1818. Douglass came to the attention of noted New England abolitionists, who recruited him to speak and eventually to publish his book. Stories like Douglass' represented an alternative to the polemical denunciations of slavery by the Abolitionists. We shall consider how and why this is the case. Too, we shall take up the decisive moments depicted in Douglass' book, including some that anticipate his eventual break from his Abolitionist patrons. To augment our consideration of this famous book, I shall share some remarkable things that Douglass said and did in the decade before the Civil War and in the decades afterwards, including a trip back to the Eastern Shore that he made in 1877 to visit with the man who once owned him (who was, at that time, on his deathbed).

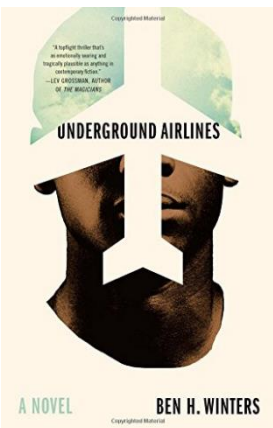


## Thursday, May 14: Whitman's "Song of Myself" (from *Leaves of Grass*) (1855)

Whitman published nineteen poems prior to the appearance of his monumental collection of poems, *Leaves of Grass*. These nineteen poems were published under the name **Walter** Whitman. The byline for *Leaves of Grass*: **Walt** Whitman. That, in a nutshell, tells us a lot about Whitman's desire to rid poetry and poems of their elitist (or aristocratic) pretensions. Whitman thought of his poem as a giant dinner table with enough seats for everyone. In his language and in his subject matter, he sought to enact a kind of radical inclusivity in his poems. "Song of Myself" is a colossal attempt to reject hierarchies, to forge a union of equals. As we consider Whitman's project in "Song of Myself," we might revel in the unbelievably unifying impulses that animate it. At the same time, however, we shall consider the sectarianism—indeed, the national crisis—that lingers on its outskirts. Can Whitman's poem model or bring together Americans of every rank, caste, hue, or occupation . . . when in that same America, some human beings are enslaved?



## Monday, May 18: Winters' *Underground Airlines* (2016)



Welcome to 21<sup>st</sup> century America, where slavery is still legal in four states (called the Hard Four), and where the network through which slaves escape is no longer likened to a railroad but instead to an airline. Winters' novel is narrated by a man who was once a slave and who now works for the U.S. Marshals as a slave hunter. The narrator has been sent to Indianapolis—the site of Lincoln's assassination on the way to his inauguration in March 1861—to catch an escaped slave. As he pursues his prey, however, the case is not what it seems. And soon, he gets himself smuggled into the Hard Four to find evidence that might lead, once and for all, to the toppling of slavery.

About the instructor:

Paul Eisenstein is a professor in the department of English at Otterbein, where he teaches introductory and advanced courses in literature and in film. He has also taught several courses in Otterbein's General Education Programs (Integrative Studies and Senior Year Experience Programs), including one on the meaning of the Holocaust for the 20th and 21st centuries. He is the author of a book on Holocaust Representation in Literature & Film and of a set of essays that analyze individual works of literature and film. His current project is focused on Denis Villeneuve's remarkable film *Arrival* (2016).

Education

Ohio State University, Ph.D., 1996

Ohio State University, M.A., 1991

Ohio State University, B.A., 1989

May 18, 19, 20, 21 10 a.m. Noon

Battelle 204 \$50

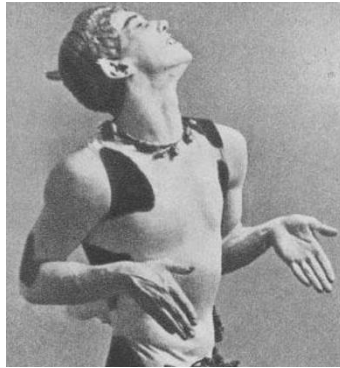
## The Shock of the New: Music and Modernism in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century

With Dennis Davenport

Gustav Mahler



Vaslav Nijinsky



Louis Armstrong and His Hot Five



Bessie Smith



This minicourse is a selection of highlights from HNRS 2600 Creativity and Culture, a course I have taught over the past four years. In creating the honors course, I wished to focus on one style period instead of the entire corpus of European classical music. Also, I wished to place the music content into

its general historical and cultural context.

In the honors course, we explore the music and culture of the Modernist Era, for our purposes 1890-1945. We begin with an introduction to precursors of modernism in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, then examine in some detail the music associated with artistic centers in Vienna and Paris from 1900 to the onset of World War I. We consider the upheaval of World War I (1914-1918) and then move on to music of the 1920s in the United States, including jazz, and music during the 1930s in the Weimar Republic of Germany and in the Soviet Union. The course ends with a brief overview of the years during and immediately following World War II (1939-1945).

Within each unit of the course, we relate music of the time to the visual arts, dance, architecture, literature, science, and the overall cultural landscape of Vienna, Paris, the United States, Germany, and the Soviet Union.

The LLC minicourse will take a brief tour of topics and music from the first units of the semester-long course: Vienna, Paris and the USA.

Monday 5/18: What is modernism? What is modernism in music? Wagner, Strauss.

Tuesday 5/19: Vienna – Mahler, Schoenberg

Wednesday 5/20 Paris – Diaghilev, Nijinsky, Debussy, Stravinsky

Thursday 5/21 USA – Jazz, Gershwin, Charles Ives

The text I use in the honors course is: Alex Ross, *The Rest is Noise*. It is not required for the minicourse! –But you may find it interesting for further exploration of the topics.

About the instructor:

Dennis Davenport is Professor of Music at Otterbein. Beginning Fall 2025 he is also Director of Integrative Studies, the core general education program at Otterbein. Dennis teaches in the Musical Theatre BFA program (MUSC 2043/2044 History of Musical Theatre), the Honors program (HNRS 2600 The Shock of the New: Music and Modernism; HNRS 3000 Your Brain on Music with Psychology Prof. Cindy Laurie-Rose), and SYE 4202/INST 2606 Vienna Travel Course with Music colleague Jim Bates.

His recent music direction for Otterbein Theatre & Dance production program includes Cabaret (Fall 2023) and The Pajama Game (Fall 2021). For Otterbein Summer Theatre recent credits include Always...Patsy Cline and Dames at Sea (2025), Forever Plaid and Beehive (2024), Baby and I Do, I Do (2023) and The Pirates of Penzance (2022). For Otterbein Opera Theatre, Dennis has music directed Cox and Box, La Serva Padrona, The Gift of the Magi (David Conte) and The Life and Love of Joe Coogan (Paul Salerni). Dennis has composed music for two one-act operas to libretti by his spouse Sarah Davenport under the collective title "First Encounters": Isak Dinesen Meets Marilyn Monroe, and Berthe Morisot Meets Edouard Manet. Both works have been produced by Otterbein Opera Theatre. Other original work includes scores for Brecht's Galileo at the University of Michigan Residential College, and for Brecht's Caucasian Chalk Circle at Otterbein. Dennis also serves as Music Director at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church and University Center on the OSU campus.

Education:

A.B. in Music, Princeton University

M. Mus. in Choral Conducting, Austin Peay State University

D.M.A. in Composition, University of Oregon

## **May 28 - Explore Westerville - 2 pm**

Tour the new Westerville Justice Center, 229 Huber Village Blvd., followed by a social hour at Carsonie's Westerville, 6000 Westerville Rd. Meet at the Center by 1:50 p.m. Tour will begin at 2 p.m. There is no charge for this activity. Afterward enjoy happy hour at Carsonie's on your own ticket.

# June 4 - Springfield, Ohio Architectural & History Tour

- **8:30 AM:** Depart The Point at Otterbein
- **9:30 AM:** Arrive at Hartman Rock Garden  
*Explore the unique garden and stone structures.*
- **10:30 AM:** Arrive at Clark County Historical Society at the Heritage Center *Tour the museum and learn about local Springfield history.*
- **11:45 AM** Lunch on your own at Charlo's



- **1:15 PM** Arrive at The Westcott House (85 S Greenmount Ave., Springfield) *Tour the Frank Lloyd Wright-designed Prairie Style masterpiece.*
- **3:00 PM:** Depart Springfield for Worthington
- **3:45 PM:** Rush Creek Village Neighborhood Cruise  
*(Worthington) A driving tour of the organic, Usonian-inspired neighborhood.*
- **4:30 PM:** Return to Westerville

**\$70 per person. ITINERARY TIMES ARE APPROXIMATE.**

**SEE NEXT PAGE FOR REGISTRATION FORM**

## May & June Explorations 2026 Order Form

### Orders accepted at LLC events

Class	Date	Time	Cost pp	Qty.	Total Cost
Unforgiven Film Study in Roush 114	May 11	1-4 p.m.	\$10		
Divided/United: Slavery and Sectarian Conflict in 19th century America and Beyond in Roush 118	May 12, 14 and 18	1:30-3:30 p.m.	\$50		
The Shock of the New: Music and Modernism in the 20th Century in Battelle 204	May 18-21	10 am-Noon	\$50		
Tour Westerville Justice Center	May 28	2 pm	FREE		
Springfield Ohio Architectural & History Tour *Space limited/ transportation included.	June 4	8:20 am-4:30 pm	\$70		
			<b>TOTAL</b>		

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Guest Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Payment by:  cash  check  credit card

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