Arllen Acevedo has studied metaphysics and meditation for over 40 years. She is a retired certified art and English teacher and has over 16 years of teaching experience. She obtained her B.A. from the Pontifical Catholic University of P.R. and her M.F.A. in Education from Boston University. She is also a certified hypnotist and has been a member of the National Guild of Hypnotists, Inc. since 2011. Arllen has also been a volunteer teaching directed meditation since 2011 at the Senior Center in Leominster, MA.

Courses: Guided Meditation; Creating Subconscious Paintings.

Gail Allo owned and ran a local flower shop for twenty years before becoming a high school English Teacher. She has also been an opera enthusiast for over 40 years.

Courses: Introduction to Opera; Holiday Designs

M. Sawkat Anwer came to United States for higher studies with the intention of returning to Pakistan. Before he could finish studies, war broke out resulting in the creation of Bangladesh. He lost three brothers in the war and their property was heavily damaged. He decided to delay his return. One thing led to another and he is still here.

Courses: Armchair Travel; On the Road to America: The Men's Immigrant Experience.

Dr. Ursula Anwer was born in Germany. She is a Neurologist and Sleep specialist. She has been practicing in Worcester, MA for more than 25 years. She graduated from the Technical University in Munich, Germany as an MD, also has an MS in Biochemistry from Kansas State University.

Courses: Armchair Travel; On the Road to America: The Women's Immigrant Experience

Bill Ayadi is a retired engineer born in Tunisia. He was educated in both Tunisia and Europe. Arabic was his first language and he grew up immersed in its stories and traditions. He is a life-long student of history, literature, and art.

Courses: Basics of Financial Management; Dining to Learn: Indian Ocean Curry Cuisines;

On the Road to America: The Women's Immigrant Experience; On the Road to America: The Men's Immigrant Experience

Chris Barnacoat is a retired elementary teacher who has taught in England, Australia, and Massachusetts. Along with his many other interests, he finds that retirement gives him the time to stir the culinary cauldron. He loves to learn about the art of healthy eating and the amazing role that certain foods and nutrients play in our healthy lives. He also enjoys gardening, projects around the house, travel, and is currently studying WWI.

Course: Cooking: A Healthy Heart Through Healthy Eating

Sushmita Basu has a Master's degree in Psychology and taught for many years in Liberal Arts and Management Departments. She has a keen interest in fine arts and has exhibited her work at Fitchburg State University and in the Brooks Pond office in Leominster. From an early age, Sushmita was drawn to the practice of meditation. Over the years, meditation helped her to overcome social and personal difficulties, live fearlessly with dignity, and practice compassion.

Courses: Guided Meditation; On the Road to America: The Women's Experience

Aldo Bianco emigrated from Trieste, Italy in April of 1953 at the age of 6.5. He received his BA from Queens College in Geology and his Masters Degree from Brooklyn College, with a concentration in geochemistry. Aldo taught high school and then became principal of the Yeshiva Academy in Worcester, for 28 years. After retiring, he accepted a position in the Math and Science department at Mount Wachusett Community College, where he is still teaching as an Adjunct Professor.

Courses: Italian Café; On the Road to America: Immigrant Experiences

Jean Borgatti has been consulting curator of African and Oceanic art at the Fitchburg Art Museum since 2010. She has faculty status at Clark University where she taught between 1984 and 2004 in the Visual and Performing Arts Department, and at Boston University, where she is a research fellow at the African Studies Center. She received her B.A. in Art History (Modern Art) from Wellesley College in 1966, and her M.A.
and PhD in Art History (Non-Western Art) from UCLA in 1971 and 1976 respectively. She has carried out extensive research in Nigeria in 1971-1974 (doctoral research), 1979 (post-doctoral research) and 2002-2004 as well as 2014-2016 as a Fulbright Scholar. In the late 1990s, she travelled extensively in Oceania to better understand the context of the traditional art. Her most recently opened exhibition at FAM is Moving Objects: Art from Africa and Oceania.

**Course:** Art of Oceania: Polynesia—Where Sharks Walk on Land

**Janet (Blanchard) Coleman** was born in St. John, New Brunswick, Canada and immigrated to Leominster as a child. French was her first language. She attended local Catholic schools and graduated from Fitchburg State and had a career as an educator. In retirement she is an active grandmother, reader, and crafts woman.

**Course:** On the Road to America: The Women’s Immigrant Experience

**Eric Budd** has taught at Fitchburg State since 1994. He is a full professor in the department of Economics, History and Political Science with research interests in the 3rd World, conflict resolution, democratization, etc. His book on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was published in 2012.

**Course:** Through the Eyes of a Child: Children and Global Issues in Film

**Alicia Calderon** was born and raised in Ecuador. She completed her education at Fitchburg State University and is a Bilingual Licensed Mental Health Counselor. She specializes in treating anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress symptoms particularly in the Latinx community.

**Course:** On the Road to America: The Women’s Immigrant Experience

**Bob Champlin** is professor emeritus at Fitchburg State University where he taught geology, earth science and physical geography for 30 years, led student field trips throughout North America and either participated in or led vertebrate fossil digs in Colorado, Utah, Wyoming and Mexico. He has received awards for teaching from Lexington High School, MA, East Carolina University and most recently FSU’s Vincent J. Mara Award for Outstanding College Teaching.

**Course:** Water, A Geologist’s Viewpoint

**Joe Choiniere** is Mass Audubon’s Central Sanctuaries Property Manager, dividing time between Worcester’s Broad Meadow Brook Education Center and Wildlife Sanctuary and Princeton’s Wachusett Meadow Wildlife Sanctuary. He has worked for Mass Audubon since 1975 at various sites and in different capacities. Joe is a lifelong naturalist and has a B.S. in Natural History from UMass Amherst.

**Course:** Stone Walls and Geology

**Jeff Cote** has been professionally studying, teaching, and/or practicing Qigong, Medical Qigong, Tai Chi, Baguazhang, Tao Yin, Taoist Meditation, and Zhongyi Medicine for nearly thirty years. Currently, he teaches in a variety of settings, both in the US and internationally, from community and senior centers to massage/bodywork/healing arts schools. He is a registered instructor with the American Organization for the Bodywork Therapies of Asia (AOBTA) in Tuina and Shiatsu, a professional diplomat in Chinese Medicine from the Tai institute of Oriental Medicine, and a professional member of the Wu tang Chuan Gung. He has been a guest lecturer at Northeastern University for the Holistic Nursing program, and the Tuina head instructor and clinic supervisor for the New England School of Acupuncture. He has also served as the National Director of Education for the AOBTA. He happily and willingly shares his knowledge and love for these arts with all who wish to learn them.

**Course:** Introduction to Qigong; Qigong II

**Katharine Covino-Poutasse,** Assistant Professor of English Studies, teaches writing, literature, and teacher-preparation classes at Fitchburg State University. Having finished her Ed.D. in Language Arts and Literacy at UMass Lowell in 2015, it is now her honor to teach, mentor, and support the next generation of secondary English teachers. Though she teaches at the college level, her research is focused on elementary school students and their teachers. Her specific interests include critical literacy, critical pedagogy, gender, (D)iscourse, and identity. In addition to her work as a teacher and researcher, she is also an advisor, a writer, a poet, an activist, an omnivore, a wife, a mother, and a devoted fan of Game of Thrones. Her three children are in 5th grade, 3rd grade, and Kindergarten.

**Course:** Exploring Graphic Novels
Martha Crawford is a retired consultant focused on customer development in the US and Europe. She has a background in political science and philosophy, and a long term appreciation of art, culture, and making connections.

Course: ALFA Salon: Continuing the Conversation

Edward Cronin is a retired professor of English and Film Studies at Mount Wachusett Community College. He taught film for over thirty years and presented numerous film series, including both Russian and French movies.

Course: When the West was Wild: American Western Movies

Louisa Dell’Amico has been a vegetarian and then a vegan for a combined total of 50 years, initially motivated by a concern for animal welfare, followed by an interest in promoting optimal health. In recent years, her interest in promoting vegan food is also fueled by her concern over environmental degradation and climate change caused by animal agriculture.

The two underlying themes that have steered many of her choices throughout her life have been her love for nature and animals, and promoting health and wellness as a massage therapist, exercise instructor, and cooking instructor.

Course: Plant-Based (Vegan) Cooking

Dr. Adem Y. Elveren is an Associate Professor of Economics in the Department of Economics, History, and Political Science at Fitchburg State University, MA. He earned his Ph.D. degree in Economics at the University of Utah. He has two distinct research fields: social policy, and defense and peace economics. Regarding the former, he focuses on the gender dimension of the social policies in Turkey. Regarding the latter, he empirically analyzes the effect of military expenditure on the economy with a special focus on income inequality by using global data. He has several articles on these topics in major journals. He is a co-editor of Gender and Society in Turkey: The Impact of Neo-Liberal Policies, Political Islam and EU Accession by IB Tauris, 2012, and the author of Brain Drain and Gender Inequality in Turkey by Palgrave Pivot, 2018 and The Economics of Military Spending: A Marxist Perspective by Routledge, 2019.

Course: Current Economic Issues

Lena Ficco ("Fee–co") is an Assistant Professor of Psychological Science at Fitchburg State University. She teaches introductory and advanced level courses in biological and developmental psychology as well as cognitive neuroscience. Dr. Ficco earned her master’s and doctoral degrees from UMass Amherst, where she studied developmental cognitive effects of hormone treatments, such as birth control pills and hormone replacement treatment. Dr. Ficco enjoys teaching students of all educational backgrounds and makes “frightfully science–y” topics accessible and fun to learn.

Course: The Amazing Brain! Neuroplasticity and Healthy Cognitive Aging

Nancy Fillip has a passion for teaching. After graduating from Norwich University and serving in the Air Force, Nancy began a long stretch of teaching high school/middle school science and math, alongside coaching Varsity field hockey and gymnastics for 35 years. She has taught several ALFA classes, is a member of the executive board, the curriculum committee, and is the editor of the ALFA-Bits newsletter. Nancy has taught piano, clarinet, flute, and art at her home studio for several years and is currently an online professor for an educational company. Her interests also include writing, and she has published two non-fiction books and seven fiction novels.

Courses: The Intersection of Art and Science; Come Blow Your Horn: Woodwind Ensemble

Kathy Flynn is a retired elementary school teacher and ALFA curriculum committee member.

Course: Cooking: A Healthy Heart Through Healthy Eating

Anne Gilman is the author of the best-selling book Doing Work You Love, (Cheryl Gilman) McGraw-Hill/Contemporary Books, Barnes & Noble Books; Amazon/Create Space. Anne led career seminars across the country before she started offering creative writing workshops in New England. She also has over 20 years’ experience writing and editing books, local news, publicity stories, marketing and communications materials, proposals, and newsletters.

Course: Creative Writing & Memoir Workshop
Claire Gingras and her husband, Ed, lived in Belchertown, MA for 50 years and belonged to the Springfield Cyclonauts. They led bike rides with them in the summer and hikes in the winter. Four years ago, they moved to Westminster to downsize and be closer to their daughter. After a few years of looking for a similar biking group in this area (and not finding one), Claire decided to start her own through ALFA! Claire Gingras is an avid hiker, interested in leading local hikes. She has AMC leadership training and enjoys maintaining health and fitness in retirement years.

**Course:** ALFA Hikeabout

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Odette Harvey has taken several cooking classes including one taught by a chef from The Old Mill. While living in Canada, she was food service supervisor at a general hospital for ten years. She loves to organize, cook, and bake foods for cookouts and parties for close friends and family.

**Course:** Cooking: A Healthy Heart Through Healthy Eating

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Sally Hens is a retired teacher and dietitian. For eleven years, she worked as a National Park Ranger, eight years in Yellowstone, and one year at each Glacier, North Rim of the Grand Canyon, and the Cape Cod National Seashore.

**Course:** ALFA Walkabout

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Joyce Hinckley is a retired psychologist and educator. She is also a life-long student of history, religion, art, and culture. She is truly passionate about making connections across disciplines.

**Course:** Dining to Learn: Indian Ocean Curry Cuisines

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Catherine Hunter was a museum curator, educator, and consultant for over twenty years. She has studied whaling in literature, fine art, and folk art as a member of the New Bedford Whaling Museum and the Melville Society.

**Course:** Moby-Dick Will Not Die!

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Katherine Jewell is a political and cultural historian of the United States. Her first book, *Dollars for Dixie: Business and the Transformation of Southern Conservatism in the Twentieth Century*, was published in 2017 by Cambridge University Press. She is currently working on a book about the history of college radio.

**Course:** America in the Roaring Twenties

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Dick Knowlton is a former Peace Corps volunteer, Vietnam veteran, and the former Director of Transportation for the organization that is now known as the Seven Hills Foundation.

**Course:** Armchair Travel

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Peg Knowlton graduated from Clark University in 1965. She taught in the Worcester School system following the Peace Corps until the early 80’s. She was an EMT in Rutland and was Captain of the Rutland town ambulance service for several years. She was also a dispatcher for the Worcester County and Life Flight emergency medical services and retired as a church secretary.

**Course:** Armchair Travel

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Walter Kondig is a 1965 graduate of Fitchburg State. He worked for 20 years for Foster Grant (R&D) and 20 years in the human service field. He retired in 2008. He has always loved to cook and bake.

**Course:** Cooking—A Healthy Heart Through Healthy Eating, Section I on Wednesdays

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Krishnabai is a private practice psychotherapist. For 10 years, she has been associated with the Ma Chetan Jyoti Music School in Rishikesh, India.

**Course:** Armchair Travel
Ann-marie LaBollita is an artist, studio art teacher, Let Your Yoga Dance instructor and Certified Yoga Instructor. She has been practicing yoga for over 20 years and believes in the transformative and healing power of yoga and the expressive arts. She happily spends her time teaching, in her studio and on her yoga mat.

Courses: Yoga for Pain Relief: Part I—The Upper Body; Yoga for Pain Relief: Part II—The Lower Body

Edwin Laetz is a retired teacher/administrator and he worked with the Leominster School Department for 30 years. He is a lifetime woodworker and continues with his passion building stringed musical instruments. Ed has been carving for the last six years with the Central Mass. Caricature Carvers Club and the North Port Carvers in Florida. He would like to pass on his carving skills to other folks to enjoy.

Course: Wood Carving Caricatures

Nick Langhart holds an M.A. in Historic Preservation from Cornell University. He is currently the Director of the Forbush Library in Westminster and docent trainer for Preservation Worcester. Nick has been an instructor for the Evolution of New England Architecture and for the History of Worcester’s Architecture at Clark University and Worcester State University. He is also vice president of the Steamship Historical Society of America, Inc. Formerly, he was Property Manager for the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities.

Course: Architectural Worcester in Pictures

Amy LeBlanc is a group fitness instructor who has been leading classes from Aqua Fitness to Zumba for many years. Coaching and caring for every student’s fitness goals and abilities keeps her classes comfortable and challenging.

Courses: Aqua Fitness; Zumba Fitness

Dr. Sau-Mei Leung has a Ph.D. in Biochemistry and is currently studying illustration and graphic design at Rhode Island School of Design Continuing Education Certificate Program. Dr. Leung enjoys helping people to uncover their hidden creativity.

Course: Chinese Brush Painting

Paul Luria has been performing and teaching as a musician on guitar, banjo, mandolin, ukulele, and harmonica for fifty years. He is a retired public school teacher and administrator.

Course: Beginners Harmonica

Paula Cookson Luria is a retired ESL & Bilingual teacher of Kindergarten through graduate level students. She loves to travel and frequently uses her Spanish skills while exploring the world.

Course: How to Survive Any Conversation in Spanish

Karen McNall is a retired elementary school teacher and a volunteer for the Leominster Recreation Department. Karen has a strong interest in the environment and the benefits of nature’s gifts.

Course: ALFA Walkabout

Alison O’Hare started birding in 1998 and credits her participation in a program offered by Mass. Audubon as the trigger for her continuing interest in birds. She has been on the part-time staff and a volunteer at Mass Audubon’s Joppa Flats Education Center for several years. She teaches and co-leads Introduction to Birdwatching, Bird Banding Workshop, Sparrows Workshop, and Saturday Morning Birding Walks. Alison is a graduate of Mass. Audubon’s Birder’s Certificate Program, and she particularly enjoys sharing her knowledge with new birders.

Course: Fall into Birding

Diane Pedersen has been known primarily as a folk art painter, but more recently has been creating watercolors, logos and graphic designs. Her interests include gardening, wildflowers, social and cultural history, travel, contra-dancing, cooking, social issues, and community.

Course: Armchair Travel
Peder Pedersen came to the US from Denmark for graduate school in Biomedical Engineering at Univ. of Utah in Salt Lake City. Later, he taught for 11 years at Drexel University in Philadelphia before coming to Massachusetts in 1987. He recently retired from Worcester Polytechnic Institute after 30 years of teaching Electrical and Computer engineering and leading research in medical ultrasound imaging and smart-phone based medical image processing.

**Course:** Armchair Travel; On the Road to America: The Men’s Immigrant Experience

John Ryan has been active in the field of cell culture and biotechnology for over 45 years. He has always enjoyed sharing his expertise and experiences by teaching cell culture and biotechnology programs to both scientists trying to improve their research skills, as well as to children and adults interested in exploring new and exciting topics. His course is easily adapted to fit the level and interests of all students; all that is required is a natural curiosity and willingness to explore new areas and ideas.

**Course:** Cell Culture and the Biotech Revolution

Debbie Sayles explores trails daily. Hiking credits include the NET 50 Challenge, Wachusett Red Line, and leader for the North Central MA, Southern NH hiking group.

**Course:** ALFA Hikeabout

Dr. Teresa Fava Thomas teaches courses in American foreign policy and Italian-American history at Fitchburg State University. She has published two books: American Arabists in the Cold War Middle East, 1946-75: From Orientalism to Professionalism; and The Reluctant Migrants: Migration from the Italian Veneto to Central Massachusetts.

**Course:** Vietnam: A Century of Conflict

Carolyn Todd is an experienced art instructor. She has taught all types of students including adult, middle school, high school, and people with disabilities. She has a BFA and MA in the Fine Arts and Art Education.

**Course:** Drawing: Yes You Can!

Maurice Toolin is a retired systems design engineer whose career in International Telecommunications gave him the opportunity to travel to many countries around the world. Working with Government entities in Russia, China, West Africa, Indonesia, Pakistan, and many other places to establish global communications requirements and needs gave him the opportunity to immerse himself in diverse cultures and lifestyles.

**Course:** Armchair Travel

Dr. Shirley Wagner is a professor emerita at Fitchburg State University. She also is a certified American Contract Bridge League (ACBL) teacher and manager of the Twin City Bridge Club, which holds weekly duplicate bridge games on Wednesday mornings.

**Course:** Building Your Bridge Skills: Playing the Hands

Alice Welch is a retired librarian who started quilting when she retired in 2002. She has taken many quilting classes and has made many different kinds of quilts including lap robes, full bed quilts, jackets, and bags.

**Course:** Quilting

Dr. Paul I. Weizer is a Professor of Political Science at Fitchburg State University. During his more than twenty year tenure at the university, Dr. Weizer has taught courses in American government and politics and most of the university’s law classes. In addition, he has coached the university’s award winning moot court program. Dr. Weizer also served in a variety of leadership positions at the faculty and administrative level. Dr. Weizer served as president of the American Collegiate Moot Court Association and remains a member of its executive board. Dr. Weizer graduated from Temple University and holds a Master of Science degree in Public Administration and a Ph.D. in Political Science. He has published widely in the area of sexual harassment law, speech rights, and simulated legal education.

**Course:** Landmark Cases in Constitutional Law: The First Amendment