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SMC Expands Weekend College Courses

By Andrea A. Firth

Saint Mary's College (SMC) has expanded their Weekend College to include an array of non-credit course offerings designed to peak the interest of adult learners throughout Lamorinda. "The response to our earlier courses has been great," says Grete Stenersen who runs the program at SMC. "Expanding the program has been a natural follow on to our commitment to come up with interesting ways to create bridges with the community," she adds. The first thing one should know about SMC's Weekend College is that it is not on the weekend. Most of the courses are offered on weeknights between 6:00 and 8:00 p.m. and taught by SMC faculty and alumni. (Stenersen reports that a new name for the Weekend College is under consideration.)

SMC's selection includes classes focused on the appreciation of poetry, prose, and the classics. One such course is a "Meet the Author" Book Club where participants get to come and discuss books with a faculty facilitator and then attend a free reading by the author on campus. "I see this as a way to deepen your experience of the Creative Writing Reading Series by engaging with a group in discussions beforehand," states Marilyn Abildskov, Director of the MFA Program in Creative Writing at SMC. "From my perspective, the only thing better than going to a literary event is going to a literary event and getting the chance to talk with other people about it. This gives people from the community a chance to do both," she adds.

"It's About Time" taught by longtime SMC faculty member Phillip Dow, a widely published poet with an optimistic, unconventional approach, will explore time using multiple perspectives from various academic disciplines, different cultures, and personal experiences of members of the class. "Time is serious and playful at the same time. We save it. We lose it. We are run ragged by it. It drags on," Dow riffs. "We'll employ the shared inquiry process that is favored at SMC to discover what [the participants] want to do with time," he adds. "Our understanding will be driven by engaging one another."

Other Fall courses include a review of famous films, an introduction to the philosophy of wine, and learning how to write your own story or care for your aging family member. All the courses are designed to provide opportunities for participants to enrich themselves according to Stenersen. "All of the faculty are very excited about having the opportunity to share with the community around us."

SMC's Weekend College Courses, Fall 2009

"Meet the Author" Book Club

6:00 to 7:30 p.m. (followed by author's reading at 7:30)

Wednesdays, Sept. 2, 9, 23 and 30; Oct. 14 and 28, Nov. 11

"It's About Time," Part I

6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Wednesdays, Sept. 2, 9, 16, 23 and 30; Oct. 7

"It's About Time," Part II

6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Wednesdays, Oct. 14, 21 and 28; Nov. 4, 11 and 18

[While participating in Part I is suggested for registration in Part II, it is not required.]

Telling Our Stories: A Memoir Writing Class

6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Mondays, Sept. 14, 21 and 28; Oct. 5, 12 and 19

Telling Our Stories II: A Memoir Writing Class

6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Tuesdays, Oct. 27; Nov. 3, 10, 17 and 24; Dec. 1

Alumni and Friends Great Books seminars

6:30 to 8:00 p.m.

Tuesdays, Sept. 15, Oct. 20, Nov. 17, Jan. 19, Feb. 16, Mar. 16, Apr. 20 and May 18

Understanding Our Aging Family Members

6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Wednesdays, Sept. 16, 23 and 30; Oct. 7, 14 and 21

Famous Films: Viewing Values in Society

6:00 to 8:00pm

Wednesdays, Sept. 16, 23, and 30; Oct. 7, 14 and 21

The Philosophy of Wine: An Introduction

6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Thursdays, Oct. 15, 22 and 29; Nov. 5, 12 and 19

Poetry by Nature

6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Mondays, Oct. 19 and 26; Nov. 2, 9, 16 and 23

For more information go to <http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/weekendcollege>. To register for these courses, contact Grete Stenersen, Weekend College Director, at 925/631-4162 or gsteners@stmarys-ca.edu.

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