

Instructor Biographies

Susie Andres has a bachelor's and master's degrees from UNO. She worked in Special Education and after retirement, she took the Master Gardener class through LSU. Susie has enjoyed sharing her horticulture knowledge and continues to learn through many Master Gardener volunteer opportunities.

Ernest Ayo is the founder of Panache Croquet Club of St. Francisville. Of the four previous "Beginning Croquet" taught, we have former students as members. Mr. Ayo is a former Army officer ('66 - '72) Registered Pharmacist, RN, Nurse Anesthesiologist, CAP Pilot, now retired and living in St. Francisville.

Katie Bailey is a MLIS student at LSU who is originally from Columbus, OH. She graduated with a MA in American History and specializes in 19th Century American political history. She received her BA in History from Ashland University and graduated magna cum laude.

Donald Beale is Director, Online Distance Learning, for LSU Online & Continuing Educations. He also teaches courses in English and film.

Thomas Beard has a PhD from Duke University and is an alumni professor of economics at LSU. He has taught thirty-nine opera courses for the Lagniappe Chapter of OLLI at LSU and eight opera courses for the OLLI chapter at Auburn University.

Agnes Bickham is a Yoga Alliance ERYT with experience of 1,000+ teaching hours. She received her Yoga Teacher Certification from Shambhava School of Yoga in Kona, Hawaii. She has practiced and taught Hatha Yoga at various studios and venues in the Baton Rouge area. Agnes teaches yoga as a stabilizing practice that grounds students, promoting a sense of well-being, strength, confidence, balance, and joy.

Jim Bolner received his bachelor's degree in education from LSU, his master's from LSU in government, his Ph.D. in political science at the Univ. of Virginia. He has taught at the Univ. of Alabama and the Univ. of Massachusetts at Amherst before coming to LSU in 1967.

As a foreign correspondent and later intelligence analyst, **Henry Bradsher** lived and worked in formerly colonial areas on six continents, and then lectured on cruises in all Seven Seas. As Associated Press bureau chief in Moscow, he well knew Russia and Ukraine. Adding to background on them with extensive reading and contacts with current specialists, his classes will end with Putin's aggressions.

Harsha Chacko is a Professor Emeritus of Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism Administration at the UNO where he taught for 33 years and has successfully completed the requirements for the Certified Specialist of Wine from the Society of Wine Educators. Dr. Chacko is the wine director for Bonne Cuvee Wine Tours, a company with a mission to provide wine educational experiences.

Gail Chisum graduated from high school in Pocomoke City, Maryland. He then graduated from Ouachita Baptist University with a BA in business. He was commissioned as a 2nd Lt. In the Army, he served in Vietnam and was honorably discharged as Captain. He is retired as Vice President of Sales with Farm Bureau Insurance.

Daniel Christian earned a MA in Theology from St. Mary's Seminary and University in Baltimore, MD. and has taught Dante for nearly forty (40) years. In addition, he delivered numerous public presentations on the Divine Comedy, mostly while living and teaching in Baltimore, MD. He also has published numerous essays about Dante in scholarly journals.

Charlotte Lowry Collins received art degrees from LSU and UNO, and an M.F.A. from Memphis College of Art. She was an Associate Professor of Art at Kennesaw State Univ. and taught at SELU. Charlotte is the Director of the Olde Towne Arts Center, and a founder/ board member for the Krewe of Mona Lisa and MoonPie. She currently teaches Talented Arts at University View Academy.

Elizabeth Cruzado earned a PhD in Geography and Anthropology at LSU. She is a Peruvian anthropological archaeologist studying the development of complex societies in the Central Andes. She is interested in the entanglements between material culture, heritage preservation, and community outreach. Her dissertation examined the previously understudied Nivin region (north-central Peru) and integrating community members in archaeological activities and the preservation of cultural heritage.

Erica Daigle, PhD, is a native of Louisiana and received her BS and MA from LSU. Her PhD work at the University of Iowa focused on English Renaissance literature (especially Shakespeare) and medical history. Erica has taught OLLI courses on Shakespeare, world mythology, film, and various topics from Renaissance literature.

Jared Day, PhD, taught American history at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh for 16 years. His areas of expertise are U.S. political, urban, and cultural history as well as world history from the 15th century to the present. He now teaches at Three Rivers Community College in Norwich, CT.

Following his BS in Landscape Architecture from Syracuse Univ. and MS from the Graduate School of Design at Harvard Univ., **Charlie Fryling** worked several years for an international landscape architecture firm. In 1967, he accepted a job at LSU and has been teaching in the School of Landscape Architecture ever since. During his driving trips across America, he has taken a wealth of photographs, which he uses to illustrate his lectures.

Bethany Garfield, PhD LSU, is a disaster preparedness and relief specialist who's been taking life one disaster at a time since completing a Geography and Anthropology doctorate with a focus on disaster science and management. Bethany received a master's degree in journalism and communications from the Univ. of Oregon. Bethany aspires to make people a little bit safer.

Erika Gibson is a second year PhD student at Louisiana State University. She earned her MA in War and Society at Chapman University where her long-time love of Thomas Jefferson inspired her thesis on Jefferson's dining and entertaining practices as president. Her current research looks at the intersection of race, material culture, society, and politics in the formative years of the White House.

Dolores Gonthier, M.D., an internal medicine physician, contributes medical content to a company that develops physician board certification preparation materials and has consulted various groups to address healthcare system challenges. She practiced medicine and served as a medical director at a health insurance company. She completed medical school and residency in at the Univ. of Pittsburgh.

Jerisse Grantham, owner of the Jeffie Jean Dance Studio, is a certified dance teacher. She earned her BS from LSU and has enjoyed teaching dance for more than 30 years. She is also a 20-year adjunct faculty member of Tulane University.

Lawrence "Sal" Guidry, PhD, has been a licensed psychologist for over 40 years. He was a staff psychologist at VA Medical Center for 27 years, a clinical associate psychology professor in the Dept. of Psychiatry at Tulane Medical School, and in the Dept. of Psychiatry at LSU Medical School.

Meghan Hodges is a doctoral student of Comparative Literature. She holds an MA in Hispanic Studies from LSU and wrote her thesis on representations of the declining Spanish Empire.

Rachel Howatt is a PhD Candidate in the English Department at LSU. She has been knitting and crocheting for 13 years and enjoys making sweaters, stuffed animals, hats, socks, and everything in between.

Trent James is a board-certified family physician, retired from active practice.

Sally Jones is a retired French and English teacher. She received a teaching degree from LSU and taught in EBR parish for 20 years. French was her major area of study and taught all levels in high school and middle school.

Trish Kaplan has a MA in Education from George Washington Univ. An advocate for cats and volunteer at Cat Haven, she delights in teaching people about them so that the two species can live in harmony with each other. You might find her researching or surfing the internet on feline topics. She once overheard a student say, "I've had cats for years, and I never knew that!"

Robert Kelly successfully completed courses required for professional pickleball registry. He has been playing pickleball for over 14 years and has won more than 200 medals in states like Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi, Dallas, Minnesota, and Texas. Robert loves the game and looks forward to sharing it's growth.

Owen Kemp has been a yoga instructor for many years and received her yoga training through the Living Yoga program at the Barsana Dham Ashram in Austin, TX. She attended training sessions at the Omega Institute in Rhinebeck, NY & various venues around the country & internationally. Owen's style is best described as flow.

Ceren Keser is a PhD candidate in the Department of Political Science at LSU. Before joining LSU, I received my bachelor's degree in International Relations with a double major in Economics from İşık Univ., Istanbul in 2017. Ceren's research area is International Political Economy with a specialization in trade politics. Her dissertation examines the role of interest groups in the formation of trade policy.

Layne Langley is a graduate of ULL with a degree in Vocational Home Economics Education and a master's degree in Human Resources (a combination of nutrition and child and family studies). She also has a 4-H Youth Development Specialization. Layne is currently a Nutrition Agent with the LSU AgCenter. She delivers nutrition programs to adults and youth in West and East Feliciana Parishes.

Describing herself as a "recovering journalist," **Sue Lincoln** is a retired news broadcaster who covered Louisiana state politics with NPR, LPB, Louisiana (Radio) Network, and the Bayou Brief. With minors in English, Sociology, History, and Women's and Gender Studies, she is an LSU grad. A lifelong feminist, she is a witch, and an ordained priestess with Covenant of the Goddess.

Linda Lightfoot has a BA from the University of Mississippi in journalism and political science. She is retired from The Advocate where she worked for 42 years, covering the judicial system, education and state politics before serving as executive editor for 15 years. She has put together 25 guest speakers courses for OLLI on issues important to Louisiana.

Merrie Lee Logan, originally from Iowa, attended The University of Iowa and La Universidad Iberoamericana, before graduating from LSU with a degree in Spanish, French and English. She taught in public and private high schools for almost twenty years before joining the awesome OLLI family.

Edwin Lyon retired from a career as an archaeologist and historian for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in New Orleans. He received his Ph.D in history from LSU, as well as his MA in anthropology. He taught Mississippi River courses in the evening at Tulane University for 10 years. He has been a cruise speaker for Mississippi River cruises from St. Paul to New Orleans.

Marchita Mauck is a retired professor of Art History and Associate Dean of College of Art and Design, LSU. She has a PhD degree in Medieval Studies from Tulane University. She was a visiting professor at Yale University, Notre Dame University, and Chicago Theological Graduate Union. Marchita served as a Liturgical Design Consultant for new church and church renovation projects throughout the US.

Vincent A. Medina is a fourth year in the Cognitive and Brain Sciences PhD program at LSU, researching sound and space perception. He earned an Aging Sciences BS from the Univ. of South Florida, and an Experimental Psychology MS from Seton Hall Univ. He was an intern for the U.S. Naval Research Laboratory at Stennis Space Center and U.S. Army Research Laboratory at Aberdeen Proving Grounds.

Antonio Molesini is an Italian wine specialist for Republic National Distributing Company. He is a native of Cortona, Tuscany, Italy and has conducted wine tastings and wine classes at various locations in Baton Rouge.

Pam Myers is a retired extension agent with a master's degree in nutrition from LSU. She is currently a part-time fitness instructor. She taught a variety of topics in classes, workshops and seminars. Pam learned to make her first basket from a co-worker over 35 years ago and went on to learn other styles on her own, making baskets for craft fairs, as gifts, as donations and for her own use and pleasure.

Adanna Ogbonna-Oluikpe is pursuing a PhD in English Literature at LSU. She has a bachelor's degree in Mass Communication and a masters in English language and literature from the Univ. of Ibadan Nigeria. She currently teaches introductory rhetoric and composition classes. Adonna is interested in Digital/New media studies, African and postcolonial studies, women studies, and Feminism(s).

Olivia Pass has a PhD in English and American literature from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette and two master's degrees from LSU--journalism and English. She taught high school English and journalism for 22 years before she began teaching on the university level. She enjoys both teaching and taking OLLI classes.

Jane Patterson started birding in 2005. She wanted to share what she was learning and started teaching classes and doing programs. She was honored at the National Audubon national conference in 2014 with the Dutcher award for outstanding service for her efforts in bird related education. Prior to becoming a birder, gardening was one of Jane's primary hobbies, so combining birding and gardening is one of her passions.

Brian Pope, MA, Univ. of Texas at Austin, performs the creative and hosting duties for Center Stage on WRKF-FM, a one-hour radio show that each week examines a topic or theme dealing with musical theater. He was inducted into the Theater BR's Hall of Fame in 2012. He has been an adjunct instructor at Northwestern State Univ. in Natchitoches where he teaches Musical Theater History and Literature.

Kevin Portz holds a MA degree in history from the University of Texas at Dallas. A federal retiree who worked for the Social Security Administration, he is a former manager of the Baton Rouge Social Security District Office. Kevin served four years as an adjunct professor of history at Dallas College/Richland. He currently volunteers as a docent at the LSU Rural Life Museum.

Sue Potts received a BS, masters and Educational Specialist in education from LSU. After teaching history for 40 years, she retired. Since retirement she has worked as a city guide for Visit Baton Rouge, the riverboats, the Old Governor's Mansion, the Old State Capitol and the current Governor's Mansion.

Lee Randall was an Air Force Brat and went to high school in Alexandria, LA. She studied Art and Art History at LSU and graduated with a BA in 1979. She is a working artist, illustrates children's books, and builds one-of-a-kind puppets, as well as other commissioned work. Lee was an art teacher for 30 years, 24 of them at Runnels, where she also taught Art History.

Darlene Reaves is a retired high school science teacher and current resident of St. Francisville. She has enjoyed taking yoga classes for over 40 years and has recently completed the online EdX course "The Science and Practice of Yoga."

Martha Robson loves to play bridge! A retired pastor, she time playing at the bridge club in Metairie and online. She also believes that playing bridge is one of the best things you can do for your brain, and she loves helping people learn how to approach this complex and fascinating game.

Ralph Schomburg has a BS in math and an MBA in finance. He worked for NASA in Houston, TX and retired as Assistant CFO, Johnson Space Center. He was a part-time math instructor at San Jacinto College. He is an avid bridge student and enthusiast.

A yoga instructor since summer of 2006, **Jane Simmons** obtained certification from The Living Yoga Program of Austin Texas. Further training and teaching have included workshops in New York, Baton Rouge, and Portugal, and has included students of all ages. Her approach to yoga has been inclusive, meeting the students at their level and making the best yoga accessible to all.

Patti Lee Smith graduated from Lima Senior High School and became a licensed practical nurse. She has taken various art and study courses.

Versa Stickle has degrees in English and Library Science from the University of South Dakota and LSU. She enjoys writing and encouraging others to share their stories.

Dana Territo has been voluntarily writing weekly Alzheimer's Q&A Columns in The Advocate since 2013. She retired from Alzheimer's Services over three years ago. She is a graduate of the Religious Studies Institute at St. Benedict Seminary College and has professional certification from the New Orleans Archdiocesan Spirituality Institute in Spiritual Direction as well as a Certificate in Gerontology.

Taylor Thompson is a current English PhD student at LSU. In 2020 graduated with my BA in English from BYU-Idaho and will get a MA this fall. Taylor has experience teaching composition and literature courses at the undergraduate and technical college levels and enjoys teaching and discussing English and linguistic topics with others.

Emily Toth (Ph.D., Johns Hopkins) is in her second century of teaching about women writers and women's lives. Her published books include academic advice under "Ms. Mentor," biographies of Kate Chopin and Grace Metalious, and an award-winning Civil War novel.

Francis W Vanderwall, a theologian and author of six books in spirituality and psychology, was awarded his PhD by the Graduate Theological Union and his Master of Divinity from the Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley. He is a professor emeritus from the Franciscan Univ. and has taught courses for OLLI over the last 10 years. He was a Jesuit for almost 30 years.

Kirk Vidrine, owner of V-Well Solutions, has worked as a fitness professional for over 18 years. He developed and implemented wellness programs for Shell Oil. He has an undergraduate degree in dietetics and a MA in Human Nutrition from LSU. Kirk has performed research in nutrition and body composition, bone health, and bio compounds, and has presented his research at national conferences.

Amy S. West is an educator with a BS Degree in Education from LSU. She is the owner and manager of Westdome Nursery which specializes in the production of microgreens and edible flowers. Amy has had a lifetime of interests in gardening and its benefits to one's health.

Sean Whyard is a Ph.D. student in the Political Science Department at LSU. Research focus includes campaigns, parties, and voting behavior. He earned MA in Political Science at the University of West Florida - Summer 2021 and his BA in Political Science at the University of North Florida - Fall 2018.