The fall semester has always been my favorite of the entire year, even going back to my undergraduate years, there’s just a different feel on this campus once the weather begins to cool and the leaves begin to change. Maybe it’s because the campus is quiet in the summer that the fall semester feels like a time of rebirth, new classes, a chance to learn something new. That feeling has carried on with me during my time with OLLI.

For those members who travel in the summer or visit with family or just take it easy, the fall semester is a time to re-emerge and re-immers you in learning – lifelong learning.

"Lifelong learning is the ongoing, voluntary, and self-motivated pursuit of knowledge for either personal or professional reasons. Therefore, it not only enhances social inclusion, active citizenship, and personal development, but also self-sustainability, rather than competitiveness and employability.” (Commission of the European Communities, 2006). I actually found that quotation on Wikipedia, a site I normally would not visit. But I have to say, they nailed the essence of lifelong learning. There is not one word in that description of lifelong learning that doesn’t belong. It’s perfect. And I think it’s how every Osher Lifelong Learning Institute nationwide looks at learning.

I hope this is how all of you – our lifelong learning members – feel about OLLI too.

Chris Elliott
Director
Course Spotlight:  
PIANO FOR BEGINNERS: LEVELS I & II  
By: Patrick Piscitelli, Program Specialist

The sounds of Schubert fill the auditorium as Professor Chris Madden plays a piece of music by one of his favorite composers and talks with us about the upcoming semester where OLLI will be offering Piano Levels I and II for beginners.

“Adults often have two reactions when the topic of piano comes up: ‘I wish I wouldn’t have quit.’ and ‘I’ve always wanted to learn.’ In offering this class, we’re hoping to reach adults who love piano and are interested in playing for enjoyment.” says Madden the primary professor leading Piano for Beginners Levels I and II.

Chris Madden is currently working on a D.M.A. in Piano Performance and Pedagogy at OU after having received his M.A. in Music Theory/History from Penn State University and an M.M. in Piano Pedagogy from Florida State University. (Piano Pedagogy is the study of the teaching of piano.)

Although Madden plays mostly classical music, in Piano for Beginners students will have the opportunity to learn a variety of musical genres from folk songs to newly-composed songs and the popular songs of today.

“We try to incorporate a pop project for students who want to learn a particular song, and we also offer duets for students that want to play together!” says Professor Madden.

As part of OLLI’s hands-on courses, Piano for Beginners gives students the chance to learn the skills required to proficiently play the piano. In our intimate class structure with no more than 16 students per class, students will have the unique opportunity to work directly with state of the art technology and one of the best piano teachers in the state. The facility features 18 cutting-edge pianos complete with headphones, allowing students to focus solely on what they’re playing, and giving the instructor a chance to listen in and provide individual feedback to help them progress and reach their musical goals.

This semester, OLLI at OU is offering two levels of Piano for Beginners: level I for those who have never played the instrument or would like to become more familiar at a comfortable pace and level II, for those who have completed level I (either this semester or spring 2015) and strive to continue sharpening their piano skills.

Level I will begin Friday, August 28 and will conclude October 9, 2015, all sessions are at 2:00 – 3:30 p.m. Level II meets October 16, through December 11, 2015 at the same time. All sessions will take place in the Catlett Music Center, located near the intersection of Elm Ave. and Boyd St on OU’s Norman campus. Ample parking is available on the top level of the adjacent parking garage on Elm Ave.

Space is limited, go to www.ou.edu/olli to sign up today or call our office at 405-325-3488.

We look forward to seeing you in the fall!
The National Weather Service (NWS) is considered by many the crown-jewel of the University of Oklahoma and for good reason. Their unyielding dedication to measure and deliver accurate weather is nothing short of amazing. It is a privilege to have the National Weather Service associated with the University of Oklahoma, but even more of a treat to have one of their top meteorologists as an OLLI instructor. Recently, meteorologist Jami Boettcher discussed her experiences teaching with the OLLI program and her parents’ long-term involvement with the program.

How long have you been teaching for OLLI?

Jami: My OLLI experience began in the Fall of 2012, offering a Senior Seminar, Research to Operations to Saving Lives at the National Weather Center. Starting in Spring 2014, I switched to offering Mornings with the Professor sessions, as my National Weather Service (NWS) workload became too great. What I’ve since discovered is the great benefit of designing a single lecture each semester and choosing different topics (while keeping my day job!). The preparation helps me to relearn some weather fundamentals that I once understood well, but no longer use regularly. I have also offered lectures on content that is more familiar, such as interpreting Doppler weather radar.

What motivated you to lead an OLLI course?

Jami: I love teaching, especially to a face to face audience. Since the NWS has offices throughout the United States, my teaching is usually conducted with distance learning tools. All teaching environments have their strengths and limitations, but OLLI provides the best possible classroom experience for me. I love teaching in any format because I never stop learning myself. I have the same passion for learning that draws OLLI members to this wonderful program.

Which class has been your favorite to teach?

Jami: Probably Cloud Spotting. The content seemed daunting to me when I first made the commitment, but I now know that I was listening to an inner voice. While designing that lecture, I was going through the loss of a dear friend and colleague. Cloud spotting helped me to reconnect as an individual with something that I loved and shared with her: the power and beauty of Oklahoma skies. The audience interaction that day was just incredible for me, and I’ve been cloud spotting with new eyes ever since.

What do you like most about OLLI at OU?

Jami: Everyone involved is there for the joy of learning. It is a core value. Curiosity and a willingness to listen and learn enrich us all.

How did you become involved with OLLI at OU?

Jami: My mother, Nancy Allard, is a well-known OLLI member, and she has been enriched by the program for many years now. She and I were having lunch in the atrium of the National Weather Center on a Wednesday. The day of the week is significant because Indian tacos are served at the Flying Cow Cafe. Indian tacos draw people from main campus, such as Chris Elliott and other OLLI folks. On that day, my mother introduced me to Chris, and we began talking. It was an opportunity that has since turned out to greatly exceed my expectations.

What is it about meteorology that interests you the most?

Jami: My weather expertise at this point in my career is radar meteorology, and it comes from the perspective of an NWS decision maker. Our weather radars can detect everything from bats leaving their caves to massive hail to rotation in thunderstorms to heavy snow bands to smoke from wildfires to....well, you...
Every semester the University of Oklahoma offers a Presidential Dream Course, which is just as it sounds – a course funded by OU President David L. Boren and taught by the University’s best faculty.

This fall one of the Dream Courses being offered is In Search of the Great Depression and New Deal and taught by Keith Gaddie and David Wrobel. Gaddie is a professor and department chair in political science and Wrobel is a Professor History.

This course will look at the Great Depression of the 1930s and how it transformed both the relationship between the national government and its citizens and the physical landscape of the nation through massive public works projects.

“This Dream Course really will have it all,” said Keith Gaddie. “It will meet all semester, include traditional OU students and OLLI students, guest speakers, and even a film series.”

Every semester the University of Oklahoma offers a Presidential Dream Course, which is just as it sounds – a course funded by OU President David L. Boren and taught by the University’s best faculty.

This fall one of the Dream Courses being offered is In Search of the Great Depression and New Deal and taught by Keith Gaddie and David Wrobel. Gaddie is a professor and department chair in political science and Wrobel is a Professor History.

This course will look at the Great Depression of the 1930s and how it transformed both the relationship between the national government and its citizens and the physical landscape of the nation through massive public works projects.

“This Dream Course really will have it all,” said Keith Gaddie. “It will meet all semester, include traditional OU students and OLLI students, guest speakers, and even a film series.”

OLLI members will attend the regular sessions with traditional students for 16 weeks, they will also attend five sessions with just OLLI members with Dr. Gaddie and Dr. Wrobel along with guest speakers, including David Levy. Dr. Levy is a professor emeritus in history and the author of two volumes of the history of the University of Oklahoma. OLLI members may remember a course he offered a few years ago on Mark Twain and his involvement in the President’s Day of Learning.

This will truly be a unique experience and we encourage as many OLLI members to attend as Dream Courses are a one-time offering.
MEMBER SPOTLIGHT:
Bill and Millie Audas
By: Elizabeth Kellogg, Program Coordinator

For Bill and Millie Audas, education is not merely a pastime, but a lifestyle. Throughout the duration of their careers, they have been dedicated to educating themselves and those around them, imbedding their own lives in the principles and enriching the lives of those they meet.

“Education is our world,” Millie says. “We love the people. We love the culture.”

Bill and Millie Audas have been dedicated Osher Lifelong Learning Institute members for four years, but knew about the program long before their participation began. After prompting from a childhood friend, Julie Klopfenstein, Bill and Millie decided to take the program for a spin and have not looked back.

“For us, being involved in OLLI is an additional enrichment for our life in Norman. There are many different people, whose background differ and we each add such a special history,” Millie says.

Despite a common love for the program, there are different aspects that keep the Audas’s coming back. Truly enjoying the seminar courses, Bill is happy to have the opportunity to delve into class subjects a little more deeply. However, for Bill it is the diversity and variety that is present in the OLLI program that he finds most attractive.

Having enjoyed classes on Buddhism, Shakespeare, art, music, meditation and several how-tos, the opportunities to learn have been abundant. Bill even takes pride in being the “godfather” of the Tai Chi class, having found the instructor, Phil Joy, and helping it come to fruition with the OLLI coordinators.

“We’ve been here 35 years and all of these years we have been promoting OU. It’s been our world. I don’t know many universities that have such a high caliber of programs and faculty,” says Bill.

Millie, on the other hand, enjoys partaking in classes that require less of a commitment. Mornings with the Professor are a perfect fit for her, as they are short and sweet in nature.

After finishing her doctorate, Millie could not stand the idea of taking more tests. Through OLLI, she has had the opportunity to learn in a classroom setting, without the obligations of a degree-seeking program.

“It is so much fun to take classes with colleagues. It makes being a student and learning such a pleasure.” Millie says.

Even her love of the French language and culture has been fostered through classes such as French Films. Having established a French Alumni Network with close to 100 people, Millie truly has such a joie de vivre, which she gives to everyone she meets.

The importance of education has been passed from Bill and Millie to their grandchildren. Having five granddaughters, ages ranging from five to seventeen, the Audas’s love to spend time with them when they are not traveling. To promote lifelong learning, they have set up five individual trust funds to benefit their grandchildren’s education.

“Just do it!” says the OLLI couple in unison. “Dig in! Just begin because as soon as you do, you will be addicted.”
If you’ve been part of the OLLI at OU program over the past couple of years, chances are you were in a course coordinated by Patrick Piscirelli. Patrick came to the OLLI program in the Fall of 2013 and has been a vital part of our growth over the past two years.

One of the goals of the OLLI at OU program is to increase membership and programming in the Oklahoma City area. We have been holding courses on OU’s Health Sciences Center campus since the Spring of 2014. It’s been an area of growth I’ve wanted us to focus on for a long time. In order to make that happen, I recently promoted Patrick to the position of program specialist. His new responsibilities will be to increase the number of course offerings in OKC and awareness of the program there.

Don’t worry though, Patrick will still have an office on the Norman campus and will continue to help kick off some courses in the Forum.

OLLI at OU is also proud to welcome Elizabeth Kellogg to the program. She will be replacing Amy Dickey as program coordinator for both the OLLI and Precollegiate Programs area. She has spent a good portion of her summer coordinating the academic summer camps offered here at OU.

Elizabeth is a recent graduate of OU’s Gaylord College of Journalism and Mass Communication.
OKC SPOTLIGHT: BOOK CLUB

By: Patrick Piscitelli, Program Specialist

For book lovers, few experiences can match reading quality literature and discussing those favorite texts with other readers. That is exactly the type of gratifying stimulation you can expect from Professor David Anderson’s OU Book Club being offered this fall in Oklahoma City.

Reading a book with friends is a joy unto itself. Discussing the different perspectives, themes, characters and styles adds to the appreciation of any piece of writing. But when you have the chance to discuss literature with a true master, entire new worlds are laid bare for your unmitigated enjoyment. Plot points and symbols that you may not have considered will be revealed and the story can take on an entirely new light as layer upon layer is unveiled for your appreciation. Fortunately for OLLI at OU members, Professor David Anderson is just such a master teacher, and his expertise in the relationship between literature and religion is sure to spark some interesting discussion for book club participants.

“The book club will allow us to have a sustained discussion of a single text, while also considering some of the larger themes that will pervade the texts chosen for each semester”, says Professor Anderson whose latest book Martyrs and Players in Early Modern England: Tragedy, Religion, and Violence on Stage was published last year by Ashgate Press. This semester the University of Oklahoma Book Club will focus primarily on works of fiction. Professor Anderson sees the Book Club as a cousin to the Poetry Club he hosts monthly on OU’s Norman campus. Each session will begin with Professor Anderson offering a few thoughts on the selected book, and then the group will discuss their ideas and impressions about the chosen texts.

OLLI members will experience benefits from joining this book club: new books with new people, intellectual stimulation, and the building of lifelong friendships to name a few. Joining a book club is both an escape and a journey into something rich and wonderful. It is a safe place for participants to exchange and challenge ideas, while welcoming new perspectives that add to the overall learning and comprehension.

But the rewards from being a part of such a mind opening book club far outweigh the simple pleasures of reading on one’s own. Not only will you be privy to Professor Anderson’s insights, but you will have the chance to share ideas with like-minded readers. And it is the camaraderie, the lively discourse, the cross pollination of ideas and perspectives that make the OKC Book Club such a popular course for our OLLI students.

Your involvement enriches everyone’s experience exponentially. This Book Club will meet once a month throughout the Fall semester at the Samis Center in Oklahoma City, starting Thursday, August 20 from 3:30 – 5:00 p.m. The book list for the fall semester includes: 1) Wolf Hall by Hilary Mantel, 2) Bring Up the Bodies by Hilary Mantel, 3) Desolation Island by Patrick O’Brien, 4) The Fortune of War by Patrick O’Brien, 5) I Claudius by Robert Graves.

Go to www.ou.edu/olli to sign up today or call our office at 405-325-3488 and register for the OKC Book Club today, where a wide world of reading awaits.