Fall 2026

Live and Learn Course Guide



Live and Learn Sponsors

The Jewish Senior Life Live and Learn Community at Hechtman and Fleischman Apartments is supported by generous grants from Jewish Federation of Detroit and the Matthews Family Foundation.

What is JSL's Live and Learn Community?

Jewish Senior Life's award-winning Live and Learn Community is an exciting initiative that provides a range of university-level educational offerings right on Hechtman and Fleischman Apartments. Courses are taught by experts from world class institutions and cultural partners and presented in various formats to accommodate a variety of learning styles. Each course is designed to foster student engagement and community connection. Come join us to experience the joy of learning alongside others!

All classes will take place in the Hechtman 1 Activity Room.

Jewish Senior LIFE

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Behind the Brushstrokes: The Genius of Vincent van Gogh

The 19th Century Dutch painter Vincent van Gogh is considered one of the most fascinating and beloved artists the world over. While his paintings now sell for small fortunes and museums featuring his artwork still draw huge crowds, Van Gogh never sold a single painting during his lifetime. This lecture will explore aspects of his difficult life and along with the wonderful energy of his masterpieces.

Instructor: This class will be taught by Louisa (Lisa) Ngote, Special Lecturer and Curator of Visual Resources at Oakland University. With both Bachelor's and Master's Degrees from Wayne State University, Louisa lectures widely on Roman and biblical art.

Thursday, September 10 2 PM - 3:30 PM

Charlie Chaplin: The Brilliance Behind the Laughter

Charles Chaplin was the lovable vagabond who ate his shoe, went daffy on an assembly line, and lampooned Hitler. The star and director of such classics as *The Gold Rush, City Lights, Modern Times,* and *The Great Dictato*r, Chaplin was the world's most famous man in the 1920s, yet by the early 1950s he was banished from his adopted country. Join us to learn more about the laughter, artistry, and heartbreak of Chaplin's extraordinary life and career.

Instructor: Max Alvarez is an author, film historian and former film curator at the Smithsonian National Museum in Washington, D.C.. He has partnered with leading cultural and educational institutions to expand public understanding of film's cultural impact.

Thursday, September 17 2 PM - 3:30 PM

Wayne State University presents: Resilience and Positive Psychology

Aging, like every stage of life, brings both challenges and exciting new possibilities. Join us for an afternoon with the former Director of the Wayne State University's Institute of Gerontology for an engaging look at resilience and the surprising strengths that often grow with age. Drawing on decades of research, we'll gather practical, uplifting insights on navigating challenges while embracing the unique gifts of later life.

Instructor: Dr. Peter Lichtenberg, distinguished psychologist and gerontologist, is an expert in the psychology of aging, resilience, and financial decision-making in later life. He has authored more than seven books, and is a past president of The Gerontological Society of America.

Thursday, September 24 2 PM - 3:00 PM

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Discovering King David's Kingdom

Join us for a fascinating look at 13 years of archaeological discoveries that are helping us better understand the early Judean kingdom at the time of King David, around 1,000 BCE. We'll explore the excavation of Khirbet Qeiyafa, a site believed to be the biblical city of Sha'arayim, and examine the remarkable evidence—including the oldest known pro-Hebrew inscription—that connects this ancient community to the Judean kingdom.

Instructor: Dr. Michael Pytlik teaches The Archaeology of Israel among other courses at Oakland University. He has excavated numerous sites throughout Israel, including Middle Bronze Age Canaanite sites, Iron Age Judean sites, and a Carmelite monastery. Mike holds a Doctor of Science in Jewish Studies from Spertus College, as well as a Masters in Jewish Studies and a BA in History and Philosophy.

Wednesday, October 7 11 AM - 12 PM

The Edmund Fitzgerald What Really Happened?

What really happened to the Edmund Fitzgerald? Shipwreck historian Ric Mixter, one of the rare few who descended 550 feet in a submersible to visit the wreck site, brings the story to life through rare footage, firsthand interviews, and more than 20 years of research into the ship and her 29 lost crew members. Blending history, investigation, and human storytelling, Mixter will examine the leading theories behind the vessel's tragic sinking during Lake Superior's infamous November 1975 storm.

Instructor: Ric Mixter is an award-winning maritime preservationist who has produced more than 30 shows on local history for PBS. He has appeared on both the History and Discovery Channels as a shipwreck expert, bringing his energy and dynamism to make history come alive.

Thursday, October 8 2 PM - 3:30 PM

The Docs of War: Detroit's Dr. Joel Leib & Dr. Paul Gold

Dr. Paul Gold and Dr. Joel Leib have shared an extraordinary journey—from middle school and medical school to serving together in Vietnam and building a 50-year medical practice partnership. Their experiences in Vietnam, though very different, shaped them as physicians, friends, and people. Join them as they reflect on a remarkable lifelong friendship and the experiences that shaped their lives and careers.

Instructors: Paul Gold MD, a Purple Heart and Silver Star recipient, served as a combat physician. Joel Leib MD worked as a radiologist and oversaw a hospital of six beds. The two opened a family medicine practice in Waterford and worked together for 50 years.

Thursday, October 15 2 PM - 3:30 PM

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Michigan's Midterm Elections: What to Expect in 2026

Don't miss this insider's look at Michigan's upcoming midterm elections, covering the key races and issues shaping the state's political landscape. We'll also examine how Michigan fits into the national picture, including what to expect in the battle for control of the U.S. House and Senate. Attendees will leave with a clearer understanding of both the local stakes and the national forces at play this election cycle. Bring your questions for this discussion and civil discourse.

Instructor: Dave Dulio is a Distinguished Professor of Political Science and Director of the Center for Civic Engagement at Oakland University. He is a frequent guest political analyst on both local and national news programs and for our own Live and Learn Community.

Thursday, October 22 **2 PM - 3 PM**

Michigan's Hidden Synagogues

From vanished shuls to historic congregations and synagogues that still stand today, uncover the fascinating and often surprising story of Jewish life in Michigan. Drawing on the collections of the Jewish Archives, we'll explore the people, places and communities behind Detroit's synagogues and discover what these sacred spaces reveal about the history of Jewish Detroit.

Instructor: Robbie Terman is the director of the Leonard N. Simons Jewish Community Archives at the Jewish Federation of Detroit and a partner in the Joan Meyers Jampel Center for Michigan Jewish Heritage. With a master's degree in Library and Information Science and Archival Administration from Wayne State University, Robbie is on a mission to ensure the past is not forgotten.

Thursday, October 29 **2 PM - 3:30 PM**

The Jewish Community of Northwest Detroit

Immerse yourself in Detroit's postwar Jewish neighborhoods and learn about the transformative changes that contributed to the community's relocation northward in the mid-20th Century. Part of a broader migration from the city's core, we'll hear why neighborhoods like Dexter-Davison and Livernois-Seven Mile became a significant hub for Jewish life, with many synagogues, schools and organizations established to serve the growing population.

Instructors: This session will be taught by Risha Ring, Past President of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan. Risha is a frequent lecturer for JHSM and remains on the Board of Trustees.

Thursday, November 12 **2 PM - 3 PM**

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