

Creating Civic Engagement

Deliberative polling class provides a look at how information is processed

By VALERIE ORLEANS vorleans@fullerton.edu

Immigration and health care — two topics that cause a stir in local and national politics. For one political science class this spring, those issues will serve as a springboard to determine how people make decisions about them.



Pam Fiber-Ostrow

Under the direction of Pam Fiber-Ostrow, assistant professor of political science, the class will focus on deliberative polling where researchers (students, in this case) learn what the public thinks about certain issues, and, more importantly, if they would change their minds when provided with additional information.

Cal State Fullerton is one of 16 universities nationwide participating in a civic engagement program as part of the American Democracy Project, sponsored by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities. CSUF is the only California university involved in the deliberative polling project.

“Working in conjunction with the university’s Social Science Research Center, students will develop a phone survey that will be administered to 800 CSUF students,” Fiber-Ostrow said.

Her students will analyze the survey findings regarding their peers’ opinions on immigration and health care.

On April 12, 200 to 250 students who answer the original survey will be asked to attend a daylong program featuring experts in health care and immigration, representing both sides of these issues. If students agree to attend the program, they will be provided with a briefing document that discusses the topics in more detail and provides facts and figures to support or deconstruct theories.



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At the April program, audience members, after listening to the experts, will break into small groups and discuss what they’ve learned. They will join other groups periodically throughout the day. Fiber-Ostrow’s class will be involved in facilitating the program, analyzing the follow-up data and preparing press releases.

“We want to enrich our audience’s understanding of the issues and help them see the different dimensions to these often polarizing subjects,” Fiber-Ostrow said. “At the conclusion of the day, we will conduct the original survey again. The idea is to see whether learning and deliberating on specific topics can change people’s opinions and, if so, by what degree. This is a hands-on experience for the students to apply social science research, to see how people think and process information on issues relating to our democracy. This program allows our students to put into practice some of the skills they have acquired and see how this information can affect people’s beliefs and actions.”

Lifelong Learning

OLLI offers spring classes designed to fit baby boomer generation’s lifestyles

By GAIL MATSUNAGA gmatsunaga@fullerton.edu

Because baby boomers are approaching their “golden years,” the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) recently began offering classes and lecture series targeted to the interests and lifestyles of that generation.

All classes are held at the Ruby Gerontology Center. There is an author series that is free and open to the public, while the others listed require payment of OLLI membership fees. The courses include:

The OLLI Author Series

FEB. 9, 10 A.M.-NOON

“Rebooting Retirement ... With Energy, Passion and Purpose” with Barbara Waxman, speaker, life transitions coach and editor of “How to Love Your Retirement”



Barbara Waxman

FEB. 21, 7-9 P.M.

“Writing for Wellness” with Carol Celeste, author of “When the Old Block Chips — a Survival Guide for Adult Children of Difficult and Toxic Aging Parents”

MARCH 6, 7-9 P.M.

“Almost Everything Gets Better After 50” with Jane Glenn Haas, nationally syndicated columnist and author of “The Time of Your Life: Why Almost Everything Gets Better After Fifty”



D.P. Lyle

MARCH 20, 7-9 P.M.

“Hollywood Forensics: Real or Pure Fiction?” with D.P. Lyle, cardiologist, consultant and author of “Forensics & Fiction,” “Murder and Mayhem: A Doctor Answers Medical and Forensic Questions for Mystery Writers” and “Forensics for Dummies”

MARCH 27, 7-9 P.M.

“The Empty Nest” with Karen Stabner, author of “The Empty Nest: 31 Parents Tell the Truth About Relationships, Love and Freedom After the Kids Fly the Coop”

From Film to Finance and Beyond

MONDAYS THROUGH APRIL 14, 6-8 P.M.

“OLLI Art House Cinema”

SATURDAYS, FEB. 16 AND 23, 9:30 A.M.-12:30 P.M.

“The New Retirement: Our Power Years”

Healthy Living

TUESDAYS, APRIL 8 AND 15, 7-8 P.M.

“Mind-Body Exploration Through Yoga” with Alex Faris, gerokinesologist, certified fall-proof instructor and certified yoga instructor

TUESDAYS THROUGH FEB. 26, 7-8 P.M.

“Reduce Stress Through Yoga and Massage Therapy” with Mackenzie MacSween, CSUF certified massage therapist and registered yoga teacher

TUESDAYS, MARCH 4 AND 11, 7-8 P.M.

“Sex After 50 — Myth vs. Reality” with Laura Zettel-Watson, CSUF assistant professor of psychology

For more information or to register for classes, contact OLLI at 714-278-2446.

OLLI Receives \$1 Million Gift

In its continued support of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at Cal State Fullerton, the Bernard Osher Foundation has awarded the university \$1 million to create an endowment.

Funds from the gift will be used to upgrade OLLI’s facilities and equipment, market and promote the organization and keep membership fees consistent.

The Bernard Osher Foundation, established in 1977 by San Francisco businessman Bernard Osher, seeks to improve the quality of life through programs in the arts and humanities, integrative medicine and financial assistance for students in postsecondary education. The foundation currently supports 115 Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes on university and college campuses in 48 states, plus the District of Columbia.