LITERATURE AND LANGUAGE

- Eugene O’Neill: The Man and His Work with Playhouse on Park—Joe Discher, Sasha Brätt
  Wed., Feb. 8, 10–11:30 a.m.-KF Room;
  Tues., Feb. 21, 10–11:30 a.m.-KF Room;
  Wed., March 1; 7:30–10 p.m.-Playhouse on Park

- The Emergence of England II: Politics, Religion, and the Arts 1550-1600—Humphrey Tonkin
  Mon., March 27; April 3, 10, 17, 24; 3–4:30 p.m.
  Wilde Auditorium

- The First Psychological Novel: Jane Austen’s Emma—Catherine Stevenson
  Tues., March 28; April 4, 11; 10:30 a.m.–12 p.m

All classes are held in Mortensen Library, KF Room, unless otherwise noted.

Online registration is available at hartford.edu/presidentscollege.
EUGENE O'NEILL: THE MAN AND HIS WORK WITH PLAYHOUSE ON PARK—Joe Discher, Sasha Brätt
Eugene O'Neill: From the Page to the Stage. An inside look at the director’s process as pertaining to his play A Moon for the Misbegotten and the director’s process for the current production at Playhouse on Park. A director’s look at the text, themes, casting, design, and staging of the play from start to finish.

This is a three-session course based on the life and work of American playwright, Nobel laureate and Pulitzer Prize winner Eugene O’Neill. The first session will be lead by Moon for the Misbegotten director Joe Discher and will focus on staging an O’Neill play and the process of starting with a script and bringing the text to life onstage. Playhouse on Park literary manager Sasha Brätt will lead the second session, and delve into the life of Eugene O’Neill, including his largest accomplishments and major works. The final session will include a live performance of the Eugene O’Neill play A Moon for the Misbegotten, following which there will be a question and answer session with the cast of the performance.

Cost: $110; Fellows, $100

THE EMERGENCE OF ENGLAND II: POLITICS, RELIGION, AND THE ARTS 1550-1600—Humphrey Tonkin
The 16th century in England was characterized by, among other phenomena, continuing religious controversy and rapid urbanization. While the religious controversy concerned doctrine, it was primarily a manifestation of the monarchy’s efforts to centralize power and exercise control in an economy that required unprecedented exchange of information and far greater movement of capital. Competition among factions and competition between nation states became ever sharper. England shifted from a largely oral culture to a largely literate culture. The English language stabilized, the universities and the professions expanded, and a newly literate population sustained such major writers as Philip Sidney, Edmund Spenser, and William Shakespeare.

When James VI of Scotland became James I of England, succeeding Elizabeth in 1603, the thrones of England and Scotland came together, though religious tensions, intertwined with political tensions, that had torn England apart in much of the 16th century emerged anew in the seventeenth, leading to civil war and a new era of limited monarchy.

“The Emergence of England II, 1550–1600” will continue this story by examining the upheavals of the reigns of Edward VI and Mary Tudor, and the uneasy but enduring Elizabethan settlement that followed in 1558. The newly wealthy invested in grand and ostentatious country houses, the better to declare their importance. Poets both praised the Queen and advocated for their political positions. Dramatists, exploiting the opportunity provided by a populous London, wrote plays that amused, entertained, and edified the public, indulging their nostalgia and providing them with a sense of history. And, through it all, the traditionalists kept writing poetry, telling stories, and composing music that looked backwards to the middle ages as much as they looked forward to a new England. This was a time for the unscrupulous and the gallant, the cruel and the compassionate the insular and the cosmopolitan. Out of it came a new England in the British Isles, and a New England beyond the seas.

Cost: $95; Fellows, $75

THE FIRST PSYCHOLOGICAL NOVEL: JANE AUSTEN’S EMMA—Catherine Stevenson
Published 200 years ago, Emma continues to delight readers with its intimate portrait of a mind at work. In this case, the mind is that of the “handsome, clever, rich” Emma Woodhouse and the “work” is the persistent misinterpretation of the data of the senses in the service of Emma’s imagination. With exquisite control of narrative structure, Jane Austen fashions sparkling comedy out of the heroine’s misunderstanding of reality. In three sessions we will explore the origins of this comic masterpiece and its place in the Austen canon. We will also look closely at the complex and groundbreaking narrative structure of the novel, its pervasive irony and the hidden “novel-within-a-novel” that provides a “surprise twist” near its conclusion. If time permits, we will also dip into scenes from the wonderful film/video versions of the novel and some contemporary re-telling of Austen’s story.

Cost: $80; Fellows, $70