The Learning Curve Fall 2026

Visit thelearningcurvetucson.com or call 520-777-5817 to register.

Look Ma, I'm Dancin'!
The Art of the Broadway Choreographer

Look Ma, I'm Dancin'! celebrates the Broadway choreographers who elevated dance in the American Musical from *"bring on the girls"* entertainment to art. Agnes de Mille, Jerome Robbins, Bob Fosse, Michael Kidd, Gower Champion, Michael Bennett, and others created choreographic masterpieces that expanded the vocabulary of show dance and helped transform Musical Comedy into Musical Theatre.

Featuring show stopping numbers from the Golden Age of Musical Theatre, ***Look Ma, I'm Dancin'!*** explores the creative process of the Broadway choreographer. 21st Century choreographers continue to expand the power and dimension of dance on Broadway, creating new dance memories. From George Balanchine's *On Your Toes* to Andy Blankenbuehler's *Hamilton*, ***Look Ma, I'm Dancin'!*** is an all singing, all dancing extravaganza of dance on Broadway.

When: Tuesdays, Oct 6 – Nov 10 10:00 am – noon
Where: The LOFT Cinema, 3233 E Speedway (Theatre 1)
Cost: $249 (6 sessions)

Instructor: **Richard T. Hanson** is a Professor Emeritus at the University of Arizona where he created the nationally known Musical Theatre Program and headed the Acting /Musical Theatre Division at the UA School of Theatre Arts. He received the James P Anthony Award for sustained excellence in teaching.

Building New Boxes: A Workshop for Writers

Think outside the box, we're told. But the writer outside the box may struggle: too many choices may paralyze rather than liberate. In his new book, *Inside the Box*, David Epstein argues that boundaries can create breakthroughs and that the right constraints help us be more creative. In this workshop, we'll examine the contents of our old boxes, and we'll build new ones with challenges that will lead to fresh, original writing. Explore creativity and imagination in this multi-genre writing workshop including sample readings, writing exercises and assignments, group and instructor feedback, and discussion.

When: Fridays, Oct 9 – Nov 13 1:30 – 4:30 pm
Where: The Hampton Inn, 5950 N Oracle Rd
Cost: $239 (6 sessions)

Instructor**: Meg Files** is an award-winning writing instructor and the author of novels, short stories and poetry. She was the James Thurber Writer-in-Residence at Ohio State University and directed the Pima Writers' Workshop for 28 years.

The Monsters Among Us: A History of Fear, Myths and the Creatures We Created

Before they stalked our books and movie screens, monsters served as powerful symbols reflecting society's deepest anxieties. We will analyze these imaginary creatures through an academic lens, using history, anthropology, and sociology to deconstruct what we fear. By examining historical archetypes, we can trace the zombie from its Haitian origins, explore the evolution of vampire lore and analyze how werewolf trials and witch-hunting texts exposed societal fears.

When: Thursdays, Oct 15 – Nov 5 130 – 3:30 pm
Where: Loft Cinema, 3233 E Speedway (Theatre 4)
Cost: $149 (4 sessions)

Instructor: **Kassi Sue Bailey**, an archaeologist and biological anthropologist whose work explores the line between what humans fear and what they leave behind. She holds degrees in archaeology and cultural anthropology from the University of Cincinnati and a master's from the University of Arizona, with fieldwork spanning Neolithic sites in Turkey and Albania to Paleoindian archaeology in Arizona.

The Age of Reagan: Man, Myth and Reality, 1970s-1990s

Amidst national anguish over high inflation, anxiety stoked by foreign threats, and a sense that the incumbent president had presided over a national "malaise," a presidential candidate with roots in entertainment, coined a catchy campaign slogan: Make America Great and promised to restore economic growth and throw out the liberal elites.

To his many admirers, Reagan restored American prosperity and greatness, at home and abroad. To his critics, however, Reagan was little more than a B-actor with few real accomplishments. How can both be true? How much of what we think we know about Reagan is based in liberal or conservative caricatures of Reagan? Let's find out….

Through lectures, discussions, and historic videos we will trace Reagan's career examine the ways in which the Reagan presidency continues to affect his successors and American life.

When: Wednesdays, Oct 21 – Nov 11 10:00 am - noon
Where**:** The Hampton Inn, 5950 N Oracle Rd.
Cost: $149 (4 sessions)

Instructor: ***Michael Schaller, PhD***, Regents Professor of History, Emeritus at the University of Arizona, specializes in 20th Century U.S. history. Among his several publications, 4 books focus on aspects of Reagan and his era.

Unlocking the Keys: The Great Jazz Pianists

Jazz pianists are the foundational architects of jazz harmony and rhythm. Join Tucson Jazz Festival Executive Director, conductor, pianist, and educator Khris Dodge to explore the extraordinary musicians who transformed jazz with their unmistakable sound. Discover the music and stories of legendary pianists including Fats Waller, Thelonious Monk, Bill Evans, Herbie Hancock, Chick Corea, Ahmad Jamal, McCoy Tyner, Keith Jarrett, Oscar Peterson, and others whose influence continues to shape music around the world.

Through piano performances, engaging discussions, historic recordings, and video clips, learn how each artist developed a unique musical sound and influenced generations of musicians. You'll leave with a new appreciation for the remarkable pianists who helped define today's jazz.

When: Thursdays, Oct 29 – Nov 19 2:00 – 4:00 pm
Where: St Philip's in the Hills Episcopal Church Music Center, 4440 N Campbell Ave
Cost: $159 (4 sessions)

Instructor: **Khris Dodge** is a versatile musician and accomplished educator who has devoted more than 30 years to the Tucson arts community. He currently serves as Executive Director of the Tucson Jazz Festival and the Conductor and Music Director for the Tucson Pops Orchestra.

The Gifts of the Medici
Discover how the Medici family created the Renaissance in art and music and conquered the world. Starting out as simple citizens of the Florentine Republic, they ended up as Dukes and absolute rulers over the Duchy of Florence. Their influence spread throughout Europe. By patronizing the cultural developments of the day, the Medici successfully used art and music to glorify their rise and frequently soften their fall and guarantee their historical legacy.

When: Tuesdays, Dec 8 – Jan 12 10:00 am – noon (No class Dec 22)
Where: the LOFT Cinema,
Cost: $189 (5 sessions)

Instructor: **Kevin Justus** received his PhD in Art History from the University of North Carolina and his Masters in Music from the University of Arizona. He studies the intersection of art and music throughout history. He has taught at UNC, Duke University and the University of Arizona.

Afternoon Delight: Jazz at the Century Room

Join us at the Century Room, Tucson's only dedicated jazz club, and enjoy a special performance for The Learning Curve presented by local jazz musicians. Hosted by **Khris Dodge**, this afternoon session will be the perfect way to continue your journey into jazz and ring in the New Year in style.

When: Sunday, Jan 3 4:30 – 5:45 pm (Doors open at 4:00 pm)
Where: The Century Room, 311 E Congress St (at the west end of Hotel Congress)
Cost: $39 (***Proceeds will support the Tucson Jazz Festival***

Performers: **Khris Dodge** and **guest artists**

Food for Thought: A Lunch/Lecture Series

Nourish your intellect while you savor the delicious northern Italian dishes offered by **Vivace Restaurant, 6440 N Campbell Ave.**

The Quake that Drained the Desert

On May 3, 1887, an earthquake struck near the U.S.-Mexico border, changing two rivers and draining the aquifer. Hear the story of an American doctor and a Mexican engineer who went in search of the epicenter, while also learning about the ways this 7.4 magnitude earthquake continues to affect life in the greater Southwest.

When: Monday, Oct 12 or 19 (select one) 11:30 am – 1:30 pm
Where: Vivace Restaurant, 6440 N Campbell Ave.
Cost: $79 (includes lunch)

Presenter: **Mary Reynolds** is an urban planner and author who blends historical investigation with science reporting to reveal how past events still shape modern environmental realities.

Frida Kahlo's Wardrobe

Immerse yourself in the cultural roots of one of the world's most iconic artists as you trace Frida Kahlo's life from Mexico City to the isthmus of Tehuantepec, uncovering the places, people, textiles and traditions that shaped her unmistakable style. Discover how indigenous dress, skilled artisans and regional culture became inseparable from Frida's identity and enduring legacy.

When: Monday, Nov 9 or 16 (select one) 11:30 am – 1:30 pm
Where: Vivace Restaurant, 6440 N Campbell Ave.
Cost: $79 (includes lunch)

Presenter: **Robyn Waters**, Former Vice President of Trend and Design for Target, and recent guest lecturer at the Tucson Museum of Art and the Tucson Botanical Gardens

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The Long Christmas Dinner

Playwright Thornton Wilder breaks the boundaries of time as we measure it, and invites us to partake of "one long, happy Christmas dinner"-past, present and future. As generations appear, only the audience appreciates what changes and what remains the same. Enjoy selected readings of this iconic work by two of Tucson's favorite theatre professionals.

When: Monday, Dec 7 or 14 (select one) 11:30 am – 1:30 pm

Where: Vivace Restaurant, 6440 N Campbell Ave.
Cost: $79 (includes lunch)

Presenters: **Cynthia Meier** and **Joe McGrath,** Co-founders and Artistic Directors of the award-winning Rogue Theatre, have acted and directed in works by Thornton Wilder in recent seasons.

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