

Forever Learning Summer Academy

June 21 - 27, 2026

Duke
ALUMNI

Forever Learning Summer Academy

A Duke Alumni Lifelong Learning Program

Feel like a student again. Come back to Duke to engage with world-class faculty and experience college life at the Forever Learning Summer Academy.

Ignite your curiosity and rediscover the Duke spirit at the Forever Learning Summer Academy! This immersive, week-long experience blends the intellectual spark of college life with the fun and camaraderie of summer camp. Connect with a captivating course curriculum, exclusive access to campus experiences, and exciting outings around Durham. Start your educational adventure by selecting a course from a catalog curated from some of Duke's most popular classes. Each seminar-style course is 15 hours of engaging class time with a renowned Duke faculty member and other lifelong learners. Every course is designed

to be interdisciplinary, challenging, and fully accessible—inviting you to stretch your mind, no matter your academic background.

Each day begins with class on Duke's West Campus among the iconic Gothic stones and arches. In the afternoons, all participants have the opportunity to experience on-site educational and experiential tours and talks across campus and in Durham.

The vibrant academic, cultural, and social environment that defines both Duke University and the city of Durham will be on full display to enjoy during this week-long experience.

We cannot wait to see you on campus this summer!

"A rare opportunity to be a student again....but in a very different way. Not checking your box for your major or getting enough credits to graduate....just a love of learning and curiosity about something new."

—Laura Wright '85, M.B.A.'87

Schedule

SUNDAY

5:30 p.m.	Orientation
6:15 p.m.	Opening Reception
7 p.m.	Opening Dinner

MONDAY

7:30 - 8:30 a.m.	Breakfast @ Washington Duke Inn
9 - 10:30 a.m.	Classes @ West Campus
10:30 - 11 a.m.	Tea/Coffee Break
11 - 12:30 p.m.	Classes
12:45 - 1:45 p.m.	Lunch
2 - 3:30 p.m.	Plenary Lecture
Free Evening	

TUESDAY

7:30 - 8:30 a.m.	Breakfast @ Washington Duke Inn
9 - 10:30 a.m.	Classes @ West Campus
10:30 - 11 a.m.	Tea/Coffee Break
11 - 12:30 p.m.	Classes
12:45 - 1:45 p.m.	Lunch
2 - 3:30 p.m.	Duke Experience Tour
Free Evening	

WEDNESDAY

7:30 - 8:30 a.m.	Breakfast @ Washington Duke Inn
9 - 10:30 a.m.	Classes @ West Campus
10:30 - 11 a.m.	Tea/Coffee Break
11 - 12:30 p.m.	Classes
12:45 - 1:45 p.m.	Lunch
1:45 - 6 p.m.	Free Afternoon
6 p.m. - 9 p.m.	Group Durham Outing

THURSDAY

7:30 - 8:30 a.m.	Breakfast @ Washington Duke Inn
9 - 10:30 a.m.	Classes @ West Campus
10:30 - 11 a.m.	Tea/Coffee Break
11 - 12:30 p.m.	Classes
12:45 - 1:45 p.m.	Lunch
2 - 3:30 p.m.	Duke Experience Tour
Free Evening	

FRIDAY

7:30 - 8:30 a.m.	Breakfast @ Washington Duke Inn
9 - 10:30 a.m.	Classes @ West Campus
10:30 - 11 a.m.	Tea/Coffee Break
11 - 12:30 p.m.	Classes
12:45 - 1:45 p.m.	Lunch
2 - 3:30 p.m.	Hands-on Workshop
6 p.m.	Goodbye Dinner & Celebration

SATURDAY

7:30 - 8:30 a.m.	Breakfast @ Washington Duke Inn
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Disclaimer

Please note that some program times are subject to change as event details are finalized. While every effort will be made to adhere to the published itinerary, adjustments may be made to ensure the highest-quality experience for participants. We appreciate your understanding and flexibility.



Classes

Boccaccio's "Decameron"

Sometimes called the human comedy to match Dante's divine one, Boccaccio's "Decameron" gathers a hundred stories told by seven young women and three men over ten days during a fortnight's retreat from the plague in Florence. Widely censored even today, Boccaccio's stories make revolutionary claims about desire, language, gender, cultural difference, and power that continue to defy readers' expectations about what could be thought in the fourteenth-century.

This week-long course will focus on discussing these hundred stories, examining two of Boccaccio's days for each of our class days. To keep reading reasonable key stories will be identified for discussion, though participants are urged to read as much as possible to discover new connections in Boccaccio's complex web of tales. During class we will analyze Boccaccio's narrative strategies, his autograph manuscripts, medieval and modern illustrations (Botticelli), and cinematic and literary adaptations (Pasolini, Atwood). We will also visit rare books to explore some censored editions and other illustrated versions.



Note: Participants need to purchase Boccaccio's "Decameron" translated by Wayne Rebhorn, published by Norton. The ISBN is 978-0393350265. Do not buy the Norton Critical Edition or Norton library version since they are both incomplete.



Faculty: Martin Eisner, Professor of Romance Studies

Martin Eisner is Professor of Italian at Duke University. He is the author of "Boccaccio and the Invention of Italian Literature" (Cambridge, 2013), which was published in Italian as "Boccaccio e l'invenzione della letteratura italiana" (Salerno, 2022), and "Dante's New Life of the Book" (Oxford, 2021), which won the Howard R. Marraro Prize from the Modern Language Association. He has just completed the forthcoming "Boccaccio: The Disguised Revolutionary" (Reaktion Books). His research has been supported by the Mellon Foundation, the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton, the American Academy in Rome, the American Philosophical Association, and the Fulbright Foundation.

Lincoln and the Civil War

Elected president on November 6, 1860, Abraham Lincoln could not have known then that over the next four years, he would lead the United States through the bloodiest war in the nation's history, a war that would tear the nation apart and result in revolutionary changes that few could have foretold. By the time Lincoln took office as the nation's 16th president on Monday, March 4, 1861—having received only 39.7 percent of the popular vote—seven states in the South had seceded and war would be declared the following month. In this course, we will explore Lincoln's leadership of the nation from 1861 to 1865 with particular attention to the constitutional, political, and military crises he faced and the transformation of the Union war to include the destruction of slavery.



Faculty: Thavolia Glymph, Peabody Family Distinguished Professor of History

Thavolia Glymph is Peabody Family Distinguished Professor of History, Professor of Law, Professor of Gender, Sexuality, & Feminist Studies, and Duke Population Research Institute (DUPRI) Faculty Research Scholar. She is the author of "Out of the House of Bondage: The Transformation of the Plantation Household" (2008) which won the Philip Taft Labor History Award, was a finalist for the Frederick Douglass Book Prize, and listed as one of "Five Books to Make you Feel Less Stupid About the Civil War" in *The Atlantic*. She is also the author of "The Women's Fight: The Civil War's Battles for Home, Freedom, and Nation" (2020), winner of several book prizes including the Albert J. Beveridge Award and the Joan Kelly Memorial Prize from the American Historical Association; the Civil War and Reconstruction Book Award, Mary Nickliss Prize, and Darlene Clark Hine Award from the Organization of American Historians; and prizes from the Southern Association for Women, the Society of Civil War Historians and Watson-Brown Foundation, and the John L. Nau III Center for Civil War History. "The Women's Fight" was also a finalist for the Lincoln Prize. She is co-editor of two volumes of "Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation, 1861-1867" and has published numerous articles and essays, including the prize-winning article, "Rose's War and the Gendered Politics of a Slave Insurgency in the Civil War." Glymph is an elected member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the Society of American Historians, past president of the American Historical Association and the Southern Historical Association, and an Organization of American Historians Distinguished Lecturer. Honors include the 2025 Distinguished Service to Labor and Working-Class History Award from the Labor and Working-Class History Association; the 2025 Raymond Gavins Distinguished Faculty Award from the Samuel DuBois Cook Society; and the Thomas Langford Lectureship Award from Duke University. She held the 2023-2024 Rogers Distinguished Fellowship in Nineteenth Century History at the Huntington Library and has served as the John Hope Franklin Visiting Professor of American Legal History at Duke Law School. She has served as historical consultant for the National Museum of African American History & Culture, the International African American Museum (IAAM), the National Constitution Center, PBS documentaries such as "Mercy Street" and the film, "Harriet" and lectured and presented conference papers nationally and internationally.

How to Rule the World

From Babylon and Persia to Greece and Rome, empires have risen and fallen, but they always seem to make a comeback. Their defenders point to the stability and peace they bring to a chaotic world. Detractors highlight the despotism and cruelty involved in maintaining them. This course will explore the nature of power, politics and statecraft through the lens of empires, drawing on history, philosophy, and political theory, with a special focus on Greek and Roman thought. Questions we will ask are: What is power? Why do people and nations pursue power? Is this pursuit reasonable and practical, or dangerous for one's character? Why does the quest for power sometimes lead nations to pursue empires? What is an empire? What values do they embody? How do they rise and fall? Are they consistent with democratic government? Are they overall beneficial or harmful? In asking these questions, we will consider parallel issues of global governance today, bringing ancient history into dialogue with modern problems in foreign affairs.



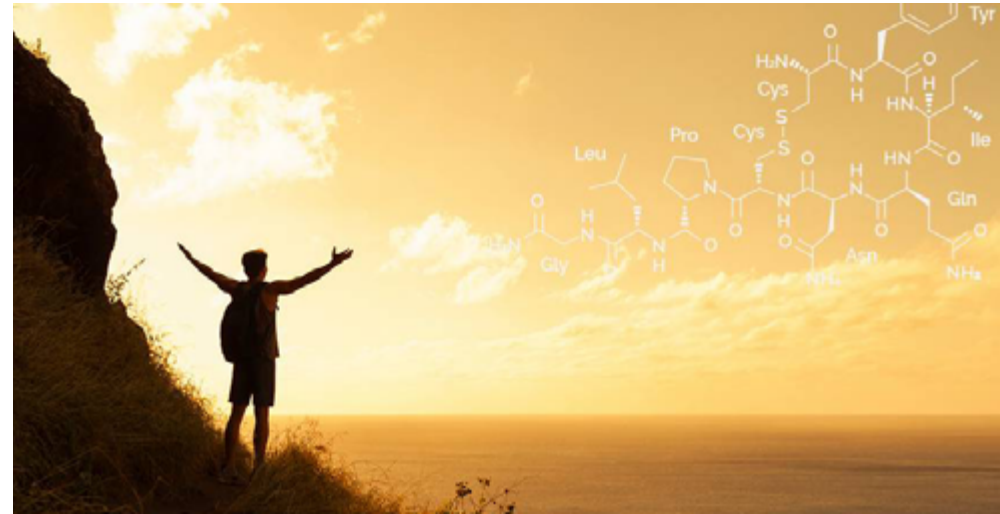
Faculty: Alfredo Watkins, Assistant Research Professor of Philosophy

Alfredo Watkins is an Assistant Research Professor in the Department of Philosophy at Duke University and the Executive Director of the Duke Transformative Ideas Program. He received a BA from UCLA and a PhD from UNC-Chapel Hill. His scholarly interests include ancient philosophy, political philosophy, and the philosophy of science. Watkins' research explores Plato's views on international relations, placing his thought in the context of ancient Greek history while putting him in dialogue with his contemporaries, especially Thucydides, Xenophon, and Aristotle. More broadly, Watkins is interested in the lessons empires of the past can teach us about foreign policy today. He is a faculty affiliate of the Duke Program in American Grand Strategy, the Duke Center for the History of Political Economy, and the Duke-UNC Ancient Philosophy Working Group. Watkins' teaching ranges across disciplines. His courses at Duke include 'Nationalism and Classical Political Theory,' 'Liberalism and its Critics,' 'Exploring Science and Religion,' 'Free to Think,' and 'The Good Life.'



Science of Happiness

This course will provide an overview of research in the scientific study of human strengths and happiness. We will discuss psychological theories, research, and intervention techniques that help us understand the positive, adaptive, and creative aspects of human behavior. How can psychologists explain the fact that despite difficulties, most people manage to live lives of dignity and purpose? We will learn about the beginnings of the field of positive psychology and how researchers define and measure happiness. We will also explore barriers to happiness (e.g., hedonic adaptation) and the scientifically validated factors and strategies to help us thrive.



Faculty: Patty Van Cappellen, Associate Research Professor in the Social Science Research Institute

Patty Van Cappellen, Ph.D., is an Associate Research Professor in the Social Science Research Institute and Psychology and Neuroscience Department at Duke University. She also directs the Interdisciplinary Behavioral Research Center at Duke. She has a dual advanced degree in Biblical Studies and a Ph.D. in Social Psychology received in 2012 from the UCLouvain in Belgium. Her research uses psychological theories and methods to study emotions (e.g., awe and gratitude), religion, and flourishing. She asks questions such as “Does religion lead to individual well-being and social harmony: when, how, and for whom?” She is the recipient of multiple grants from the Templeton philanthropies to deepen her work on the science of religious practices (e.g., meditation, prayer, worship) and of emotions such as compassion and hope.

Website: <https://sites.duke.edu/bablab/>

“It was more than just a weeklong class, but that would have been enough on it’s own. It was also a great opportunity to reconnect with the good memories from my time at Duke and to discover all the growth and improvements continuing around Durham.”

—Josh Prince M.B.A.’93



REGISTRATION INFORMATION

COST

\$2,750 per person

Early Bird Price! \$2,500 for the week if booked before February 28, 2026

CANCELATION/REFUNDS

A \$500 (plus tax) deposit minimum per person is required at registration. The balance of the fee is due May 15, 2026 or at time of registration if after that date. Notification of cancellations must be received in writing. Refunds will be made in accordance with the following per person cancellation penalties based on the number of days before departure. Up to 120 days: \$150 administrative fee; 119-90 days: \$1,375; 89-60 days: \$2,062; 59 days or less: 100% of the total program price. If Duke cancels the program, a full refund will be issued. We strongly recommend that you purchase trip cancellation and medical insurance. Information about trip insurance is included with your confirmation packet or may be viewed at <https://duke.meyerandassoc.com/> and scroll to the section on Safeguarding Your Investment.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Selected course of study
- Welcome reception and dinner
- Breakfast Monday through Saturday
- Duke Dining Card to be used at campus eateries
- Closing reception and dinner
- Exclusive afternoon tours and lectures
- Group excursion in Durham

ACCOMMODATIONS

Hotel accommodations are not included in your registration fee. You are responsible for arranging your lodging for the duration of the program.

We will host breakfast at the Washington Duke Inn every morning. The shuttle to classes will pick up at the Washington Duke Inn daily at 8:30 a.m.. Breakfast and the shuttle are available to all participants, whether or not they are staying at the Washington Duke Inn.

REQUIRED READINGS

If your course has required readings, faculty will be conducting classes based on the assumption that all participants will have completed the required readings prior to arriving at Duke. Additional suggested readings may be provided along with other course information following the completion of registration.

PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS

Please note that this program will be challenging for anyone who has difficulty with walking or other mobility issues. Field trips and excursions often require up to one mile or more of walking including uphill terrain, stairways, and uneven ground. The age and layout of many buildings at Duke University can make them arduous to traverse as well. Our aim is to treat all participants equally and to keep our group together and safe throughout the program. Prospective participants with mobility difficulties, visual or hearing impairments, or other health concerns should make preliminary inquiries before signing up for this program.

INSURANCE COVERAGE

We strongly recommend that all participants take out insurance cover against cancellation of their travel plans (travel insurance can be obtained through the travel agent), and against personal accident and medical expenses, and against damage to or loss of personal property. Information about trip insurance may be viewed on the [Duke Alumni website](#). Scroll to the section on “Safeguarding Your Investment.”

REGISTRATION REFUSAL/PROGRAM REMOVAL

The Duke Lifelong Learning department in Alumni Engagement and Development has the authority to refuse participation or remove someone if their physical or mental condition, actions, or attitude negatively impact the program’s functioning or the rights, welfare, or enjoyment of other participants.

For more information and frequently asked questions please visit the [Forever Learning Summer Academy Registration Page](#). For assistance, please contact the Lifelong Learning team at **(919) 684-6564** or lifelonglearning@duke.edu