

New Trier Extension Instructors

Gloria Baez

As a native of Ecuador, South America, Gloria has enjoyed teaching Spanish at all levels. Her teaching experience includes workshops on Marquez and other Latin American authors. She has traveled all over the world and applies these experiences to her classroom activities. Gloria participated in an international foreign language conference and received an Oral Proficiency Instructor Certification (O.P.I.) and is a member of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFEL). She is President of the Chicago Chapter of the United Nations Organization for the Development of Human Rights for Women (PPSEWA).

Ellen Blum Barish

Ellen is a personal essayist whose work has appeared in national publications and aired on WBEZ's Chicago Public Radio. Ellen's award-winning, syndicated column on women and family issues was published for more than a decade. Her essay collection, "Views from the Home Office Window: On Motherhood, Family and Life," was published in 2007. She has taught writing at several Chicago-area universities including Northwestern University where she earned her master's degree in journalism. Ellen teaches personal essay workshops at StoryStudio North Shore and has facilitated workshops at Ragdale and Off Campus Writer's Workshop. She is currently at work on a collection of spiritual essays. For more information please visit www.ellenblumbarish.com

Alisha Betancourt-Mullen

Alisha was born in Havana, Cuba and came to this country in 1961 after the Bay of Pigs. She has taught French and Spanish since 1963, has been at NTX since 1998 and enjoys it immensely. She is widowed and lives in Highland Park. Alisha has four children.

Jan Churchwell

Jan has been playing Bridge for over 50 years. She has been on the Chicago Contract Bridge Association's (CCBA) Board of Directors since 2005, has run tournaments, chaired the Intermediate/ Newcomer Committee and been Secretary of the CCBA since 2008. Jan believes that the only way to learn to play bridge is to play... and play... and play. While bidding can (and does) continually evolve, playing the cards doesn't change. Nobody will be right all the time and four different personalities at each table make the game always different and never boring. Jan looks forward to helping you learn and improve your Bridge game.

Ann Cusack

Ann has been a T'ai Chi practitioner since 1991. She has studied with Barry Schultz since 1995 and has participated in Shen Long retreats and workshops, including the International Conference in Taiwan. Ann is also a clinical psychologist, registered nurse and a member of the American Holistic Nurses Association. She has a private practice and teaches at Northwestern University's Family Institute.

Lucien Dall'Agata

Lucien has been a student of yoga since 1977 in France. While working as a philosophy teacher there and as an employee of the French Government abroad, he managed to deepen his studies of yoga. Coming to the US in the nineties, he took this opportunity to widen his experience by studying with a variety of teachers from different styles. He completed his studies in 2003 at Integrative Yoga Therapy, where he achieved a 200 hour level certification, as recognized by the Yoga Alliance and has been teaching on the North Shore area since 2004. He combines postures, breath work, body awareness and

deep relaxation for a "whole person" approach, focusing on adapting the practice to the needs of the students.

Pamela Dell

Pamela is the author of more than sixty books for children, both fiction and nonfiction, and for all age levels. She has been creating entertainment and educational content for kids since 1990, including not only books but also computer games and other interactive multimedia, educational material, and fictional narrative-based websites geared to young people. In the 1990s she was a co-founder of Purple Moon, an acclaimed multimedia developer in San Francisco geared toward preteen girls, and she is the author of "Doodlebug & Dandelion," a fiction serial published monthly in Spider Magazine, from the Cricket Magazine Group. Pamela has also worked as an editor and content developer for Scholastic, Inc., Warner Bros., Knowledge Adventure, World Book, Inc., and many other publishers and entertainment companies. She has taught workshops for the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators as well as private classes and workshops for at-risk teen girls.

Brian Earl

Captain Brian Earl, owner of Sea Safaris Sailing School, has been sailing for over 35 years on various size craft in a variety of waters. From the West Coast to the East Coast... the Great Lakes, Inland lakes and Internationally. This extensive experience has given him a unique perspective of various weather, water and yacht conditions you might find where you sail. Brian is a licensed Coast Guard 100 Ton Master Captain and an ASA Instructor Evaluator. He's taught for over 25 years in a number of different learning environments. Brian was recently recognized by the ASA for Outstanding Instructor of the Year. He maintains certificates in Red Cross First Aid, CPR and AED.

Janet Evans

Janet taught French at Barrington High School for over thirty years. She has also taught Spanish, EFL, ESL and French to students whose age ranged from 5 to 75 years old. In addition to living, studying and teaching in France for many years, her travels to Quebec, Belgium, Switzerland, Morocco and French-speaking Louisiana have given her an appreciation and understanding of other francophone cultures. She has a B.S. in education and a M.A. in French from Eastern Illinois University. The Chicago-Northern Illinois Chapter of the American Association of the Teachers of French awarded her its "Prix du Chapitre" in 1995. Her former students named her to "Who's Who Among American Teachers" in 1992 and 2002. She has had leadership roles in the American Association of the Teachers of French and the Illinois Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages.

Elaine Feinblatt

Elaine is an enthusiastic yoga instructor certified through the Himalayan Institute. She has studied and practiced yoga since 1985 and has taught for sixteen years. She draws from several yoga masters to bring you interesting classes as your journey toward a healthier, happier and longer life.

Kevin W. Fitzsimons

Kevin is an attorney and certified public accountant specializing in the areas of estate planning, probate, income taxation, and business law. He received his Bachelor of Science Degree from Indiana University, where he was a Chick Evans Scholar, and his Doctor of Juris Prudence with honors from John Marshall Law School. Mr. Fitzsimons conducts numerous seminars in the areas of estate planning and income taxation.

Vicki Foreman

Vicki has been practicing meditation since 1978 when she first learned Transcendental Meditation while earning her undergraduate degree in Health Science and Psychology. Finding that it not only relieved the stress of college life but also improved overall attitude, mood, creativity, memory and ability to focus, she was hooked. Vicki has studied various forms of meditation, received training in Kundalini Raja Yoga, is a certified Deepak Chopra Primordial Sound Meditation instructor and is also a Reiki Master. She has been teaching adults and teens to meditate since 2000.

Nancy Gandelman and Debbie Siegel

Nancy and Debbie are experienced bakers and cake decorators. Nancy has worked at several bakeries on the North Shore and they both trained in the Wilton technique of cake decorating. Debbie and Nancy regularly host cake decorating parties and events throughout the Chicago area, at which they teach cake decorating to groups of all ages.

Linda Georgoulis

Linda started fencing in 1989, and continues to fence locally and nationally. She has been coaching and officiating for more than 20 years. She has been involved in independent fencing programs as well as those at both Maine West and Stevenson high schools. Along with New Trier, these schools make up the three oldest operating high school programs in Illinois. Linda has been with the Extension program since 2006.

George Glastris

George spent ten years in London at Christie's and Sotheby's, the five years at Skinner's Auction House in Boston. While there, he was also a regular appraiser on Antiques Roadshow. George keeps up with the market, now as a private appraiser and auctioneer.

Linda Goldman

Linda is a Certified Professional Organizer specializing in transforming environments from chaos and clutter into peace and serenity and helping people let go of things and paper they no longer need. Her company was launched 10 years ago and has been featured on radio and in various Chicago area publications. She holds a business degree from the University of Illinois, is a member of the National Association of Professional Organizers (NAPO) and the Institute for Challenging Disorganization. She is also on the Board of NAPO's Chicago Chapter. Prior to launching her business, Linda worked for almost twenty years in corporate training, human resources and management. For more about Linda, please visit her website at www.AltogetherOrganized.org.

Diana Gourguechon

Diana has been teaching yoga since the early 1990's and practicing it since the 1970's. She received her certification from the Himalayan Institute. Diana has an eclectic approach to yoga. Borrowing from different perspectives, she attempts to creatively incorporate them into her practice and share them with her students. She feels that the many benefits of yoga are available to everyone, regardless of physical condition, age, or previous experience. Each student is encouraged to work at their own capacity while practicing gentle movement, the postures, breath awareness and relaxation techniques. The body/mind connection and its influence on physical, emotional and mental health has become common knowledge. Yoga creates the conditions where the union of the body, mind and spirit re-unite and can be a powerful tool to enhance wellness and promote personal growth.

Sue Hershinow

Sue is an independent contractor in the field of Human Relations. She learned to play Mah Jongg as a teen and as a young mother played in a regular game. She began playing again with the resurgence in the game's popularity and taught a number of her friends how to play maj. A trainer by profession, Sue is a natural at helping students make sense of elements of the game. Her sense of humor and ability to cheer on her students endears her to them.

Pam Hultgren

Pam has been studying T'ai Chi Ch'uan since 1995 and has been teaching since 2000. She has participated in the Shen Long (Spirit Dragon) T'ai Chi weekend retreats, Shen Long Day celebrations, area-wide events, and international conferences held in Taiwan. She began studying T'ai Chi on a whim but quickly grew to appreciate the whole body health benefits of T'ai Chi. Pam works for a non-profit corporation in Glenview.

Tom James

Tom is a professional illustrator, painter and teacher. He has been teaching art to students of all ages for over 25 years. His paintings are included in the collections of Searle, Abbott Laboratories, Edens Bank, the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago, the law offices of McDermott Will & Emery, and many private collections. His illustrations have appeared in college and grade school textbooks, book covers, magazines and greeting cards. Tom works in oils, acrylics, colored pencils, pen and ink, and collage. His styles range from representational to abstract and include cartooning and illustration. For more information and to see examples of his artwork, please visit www.TomJamesArt.com

Joan Levy

During her thirty-seven years as a resident of Winnetka, Joan served six years on the Winnetka Board of Education and fourteen years on the New Trier High School Board of Education. She served as President of both Boards, as well as two years as President of the Illinois Association of School Boards. A Phi Beta Kappa graduate of the University of Michigan, Joan received her M.A. in history from Columbia University. An avid duplicate bridge player for more than forty-five years, Joan is a Silver Life Master and has won several regional and national bridge events. She is accredited as a bridge teacher and certified as a Duplicate Bridge Director by the American Contract Bridge League. She has taught bridge classes at NTX since 1991 and was a regular bridge lecturer with Arnie on cruise ships for fourteen years.

Phyllis Horn-Liparini

Phyllis has B.A. degrees in English and Theater from the University of Illinois and an M.A. in Italian from Northwestern. She has done post-masters studies in Italian and Comparative Literature, lived in Italy for ten years, and taught at Northwestern, DePaul and Roosevelt Universities. She is a Senior Lecturer in Italian at Northwestern, having taught there for twenty years. Phyllis created and directed NU's study abroad program in Italy for ten years. She is a longtime instructor for NTX and Evanston Township High School adult education. Marriage to an Italian and her many years in Italy have allowed Phyllis to develop one of her hobbies, Italian cooking. She leads trips to Italy and conducts cooking classes.

Mary Ann McGinley

Mary Ann holds a Master's degree in computer education and has been teaching computer classes to all age groups for more than twenty years. In her courses, Mary Ann combines her skillful teaching ability with her love of Macintosh computers. She does not speak "computerese" and uses a hands-on approach to make lessons easy to follow.

Domitille Renaud Nicolescou

Originally from France and now an American citizen, Domitille started teaching at NTX in 1989. She writes, "I find myself growing with the students. I love to discover new 'things' with them. I love to share ideas and feelings about new readings. I like to find new, attractive ways in teaching conversational French. I enjoy the variety of students and am overjoyed when my students reappear after a semester or year of absence."

Michael Olach

Michael is a loan officer with 17+ years of experience. He's owned rental properties, vacation home's, and has vast personal experience in buying, owning, and selling residential properties.

Beth Oliver

Beth has 25+ years of experience teaching, motivating, and encouraging hundreds of students to stay committed to a fit and healthy lifestyle. Beth's favorite tag is : "If your heart is healthy your body will follow". Her workouts are developed to make you heart healthy and happy, and include Beth's abundant energy and motivation for all. Beth has a host of certifications including: Step Certification, Fitness Gets Personal, GI Jabb, Katlin Zamiar TRX, AFAA Personal Training Certification, Zumba Certification, Aqua Aerobics, and AFAA Silver Sneakers. Beth's classes are a perennial favorite with NTX students.

Sue Peterson

Sue has a degree in Textiles and Clothing from Iowa State University with further studies in graphic design and website construction. Sue continues her sweater design business of twenty years selling to small boutiques and catalogs around the country. You can see some of her designs at www.suepknits.com

Kathleen Picken

Kathleen holds a graduate degree in British History from University of Chicago. She has taught at NTX for 15 years. Kathleen has demonstrated a commitment to the humanities through her extensive involvement with organizations such as the Oriental Institute and the Field Museum of Natural History. In the past 15 years, she has planned and led more than 20 tours to locations such as the British Isles and France. She is the Vice President of Prologue Theater and a member of the board for University of Chicago's Court Theater.

Marilyn Richards

Marilyn is a (nearly) lifelong resident of Wilmette. She learned to play and love bridge while a high school student at New Trier. A graduate of the University of Colorado, she took time out from bridge to raise her family. After rediscovering the game and its many challenges, Marilyn threw herself into Duplicate Bridge and became a Life Master and an ACBL certified teacher. Her teaching style is a combination of instruction, patience and fun.

Jack Ross

Jack is a retired actuary having worked at Coopers and Lybrand followed by Price Waterhouse. He spent over twenty years at Aon Corporation where he was a consultant and partner specializing in the retirement and pension areas.

Jason Slezak

Jason is a Registered Investment Advisor, registered in the State of Illinois and registered with the National Association of Securities Dealers (NASD), working in various capacities in the Securities Industry for over 21 years. Jason is a member of Omicron Epsilon Delta, International Economics Honorary Society as well as a member in good standing with the Bond Club of Chicago, an organization founded in 1894. Jason has specialized in the area of Financial Planning for his primary clientele. Areas of expertise range from portfolio management and retirement planning to Trust planning and administration. Jason also works with business professionals in the crafting of different types of company-sponsored retirement plans, most notably in the area of 401(k) plans. Working with individuals to help them prepare for retirement with the use of financial planning techniques is especially key to forming the bond of a solid business advisory relationship that Jason enjoys with much of his clientele.

Shawn Smith

Shawn is a New Trier alumni ('92) with over 25 years fencing experience. He graduated from Michigan State University in '97 with a B.A. in Political Science, has a Masters degree in Education from National-Louis University, and is certified in Secondary Education. At Michigan State he was a four-year varsity letter winner in fencing and the Asst. Coach in '96/97. Shawn is has been the Asst. Coach of the Varsity and Junior Varsity Fencing team at New Trier since '97/98 and Head Coach of the NTX Fencing program since then as well. Other sports that Shawn enjoys include volleyball, gymnastics, swimming and diving.

Fran Vail

Fran has an MFA from Syracuse University and has continued to take numerous workshops with some of the Midwest's best artists. She has been teaching watercolor and pastels on the North Shore for over fifteen years. Her work has been shown in many juries and invitational art shows, and is represented by the Paint Box Gallery, Ephraim, WI.

Alex Valvassori

Alex is a seasoned information technology professional with over 15 years experience. Having worked at a Fortune 75 company for over 10 years, Alex brings a wealth of valuable business experience and knowledge to the classroom. Alex has a M.B.A. from Loyola University of Chicago and a B.A. from Northwestern University and is a Microsoft certified professional.

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