



THE HOUSTON SEMINAR

SPRING 2023



THE HOUSTON SEMINAR

The Houston Seminar was founded in 1977 for the purpose of stimulating learning and cultural awareness. Each spring and fall the nonprofit group offers lectures and study tours focused on varied topics that may include art, architecture, literature, music, theater, history, politics, philosophy, psychology, religion, the natural environment, and current trends and events.

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A NOTE TO OUR PATRONS

We are excited to continue offering study tours along with a combination of Zoom and in-person courses in Houston. Most Zoom courses will be recorded, and you will be able to register for and view them on our website for the duration of the semester. Please note that by registering for Zoom courses, you are understood to be giving your permission to be recorded.

Spring 2023

Study Tours

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The Art, Architecture and Ambition of Dallas

THURSDAY, MARCH 23–
SUNDAY, MARCH 26



© Cunningham Architects

STUDY TOURS

For our Texas tour this spring, we go north to experience the visionary urban planning and public art in Dallas. This all-star trip will feature visits to some of the city's most significant public spaces, private homes, and collections.

From our downtown lodgings at the chic Hotel Indigo, we will tour the extraordinary art installations at AT&T Stadium, home to the Dallas Cowboys, and visit the storied Temple Emanu-El, an icon of modernist architecture. We will visit Klyde Warren Park and learn how an ambitious plan to build a park over a freeway knitted together the urban fabric of central Dallas. We will tour historic Fair Park, home to the Texas State Fair, to see how this Art Deco gem has been lovingly restored in recent years. We will also explore the spectacular architecture of the arts district on Flora Street downtown, as well as the Trinity River Audubon Center, situated on a 120-acre haven for wildlife that was reclaimed from a former illegal dump site.

Of course, no trip to Dallas would be complete without visiting several architecturally significant private homes where our hosts will share their fine art collections and beautiful grounds. During our trip, the renowned architectural historian **Stephen Fox** will join local experts on our tour of this dynamic city. On our way home, we will stop in historic Corsicana where we will see a remarkable artist residency located in a former Oddfellows Lodge building from the 1890s.

April in Washington, D.C.: A Study in Contrasts

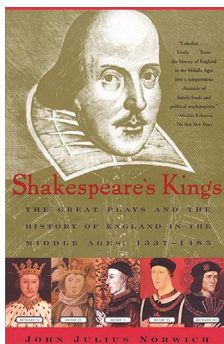
THURSDAY, APRIL 20–SUNDAY, APRIL 23



Spend three days with the Houston Seminar viewing stellar art in unique settings and exploring the Washington, D.C. area. We plan to visit Glenstone, the very modern private museum created by collectors Emily and Mitch Rales, located on nearly 300 acres in the rolling hills of Potomac, Maryland. The Museum, at the forefront of today's art world, is exceptional for its contemporary art, architecture, and landscape. While in Maryland we will travel to Annapolis and have a private tour of the Naval Academy.

In contrast to Glenstone, we will visit the Hillwood Estate, Museum and Gardens, the legacy of Marjorie Merriweather Post. This Georgian mansion, decorated in the French style and sited in formal gardens, is representative of the established, largely homogenous Washington society to which Mrs. Post belonged. We will tour the Washington National Cathedral and have a walking tour of historical Old Town Alexandria which is filled with activity, restaurants, and shops. Each evening we will retire to The Alexandrian Hotel, a beautiful historic site located in the center of Alexandria. Travelers should be comfortable walking or standing for extended periods of time.





Shakespeare's Kings

THREE WEDNESDAYS, JANUARY 18 AND 25, AND FEBRUARY 1, 6:00–7:30 P.M. LOCATION ON RICE UNIVERSITY CAMPUS WILL BE PROVIDED TO SUBSCRIBERS. LIMITED ENROLLMENT.

William Shakespeare wrote in an era that wrestled over core questions about politics—the workings of government, the parameters of international law, the nature of political rule, and the ideal qualities for leaders. Kingship and political statecraft were thought of in the language of theater; therefore, theater frequently addressed urgent political questions through history or chronicle plays. Since playwrights could not write directly about their own present-day politics without fear of reprisal (or death), they looked back to the War of the Roses and other moments in the history of England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales.

In three sessions with **Joseph Campana**, we will consider Shakespeare's fascination with kings by paying special attention to two "historical chronicle" plays: *Henry V* and *Richard III*. Since each is the concluding play in a tetralogy, these works will allow us to look back to the tumultuous events that led to each reign. We will consider these relative to film and other adaptations of the works, like Richard Loncraine's *Richard III* and Laurence Olivier's or Kenneth Branagh's *Henry V*, and we will think about these works in conversation with James Shapiro's *Shakespeare in a Divided America* and Stephen Greenblatt's *Tyrant*, which consider Shakespeare's relationship to the past, present, and future of politics in America.

Joseph Campana is the William Shakespeare Professor of English and the Director of the Center for Environmental Studies at Rice University. He is a poet, arts writer, and scholar of Renaissance literature and has written essays on Spenser, Shakespeare, Nashe, Defoe, Middleton, poetry, and poetics. Professor Campana is the author of *The Pain of Reformation: Spenser, Vulnerability, and the Ethics of Masculinity* (Fordham UP, 2012) and three collections of poetry, *The Book of Faces* (Graywolf, 2005), *Natural Selections* (University of Iowa Press, 2012), which received the Iowa Poetry Prize, and *The Book of Life* (Tupelo, 2019).

New Paradigms in Therapy: The Psychedelic Renaissance

TWO TUESDAYS, JANUARY 31 AND FEBRUARY 7, 6:00–7:30 P.M. ZOOM INFORMATION WILL BE EMAILED TO SUBSCRIBERS.

In the 1950s and early 1960s, many in the psychiatric community regarded LSD and psilocybin as "wonder drugs" for treating addiction, depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder, among other

ailments. But the war on drugs initiative in the United States criminalized psychedelic substances and plants and ostracized their users. Psychoactive plants that have been used therapeutically by many traditional cultures throughout history have been banned both from research labs and the clinician's toolkit. In the last decade or so, research on psychedelics has made a comeback in medicine, particularly within mental health, a field that has found itself in deep ideological and methodological crises. In this course with **Adam Aronovich**, we will explore the intriguing therapeutic potential and concerns of psychedelics.

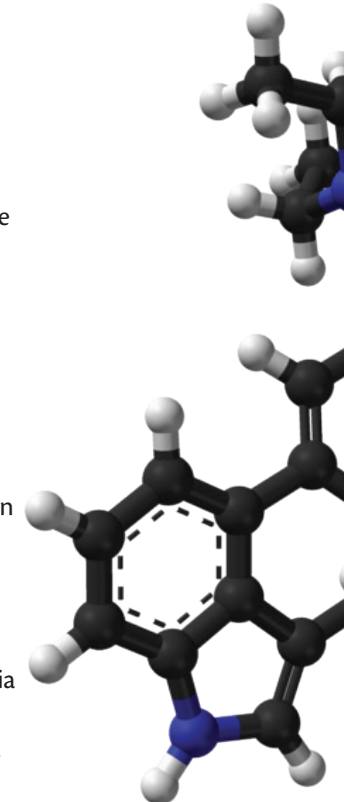
Adam Aronovich is the director of therapy and integration for Rē Precision Health, a wellness center on the Pacific Coast of Mexico. He is an active member of the Medical Anthropology Research Center and of the Chacrana Institute for Psychedelic Plant Medicines. Mr. Aronovich spent more than four years conducting research and extensive fieldwork in the Peruvian Amazon. He is the creator of Healing from Healing, a social media platform that casts a critical, skeptical, and humorous gaze at healing culture. He is a doctoral candidate focusing on medical anthropology and cultural psychiatry at the Universitat Rovira i Virgili in Spain.

How to Read a Poem

THREE WEDNESDAYS, FEBRUARY 8, 15, AND 22, 6:30–8:00 P.M. THE JUNG CENTER, 5200 MONTROSE, 77006.

This course begins with the assertion that great poems are not written in code, nor are they devised as puzzles for students to solve. Rather, great poems exist to communicate, often urgently, about the issues, beliefs, and feelings that are most important to all of us. Learning to read poems well, however, often takes practice and knowledge about how language operates under pressure, about how imagery communicates ideas, and, most of all, about how the music of language can serve as a vessel for thought and meaning. What does it mean to say a poem enacts thought? What exactly is free verse? Why do we say all poetry is a formal art? How has the relationship between the poet and the reader evolved over time? In this course, **Kevin Prufer** will offer close readings of poems by, among others, Emily Dickinson, Gwendolyn Brooks, Elizabeth Bishop, and T. S. Eliot, while at the same time offering participants tools for reading other poems well and thinking about poetry.

Kevin Prufer is the author of nine poetry collections and the editor of many books on literary translation, literary publishing, and European and American poetry. He is also the recipient of fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Lannan Foundation. Profes-



Lori Nix, *Tent Revival*, 1999, Archival pigment print

sor Prufer's recent poetry collections have won the Julie Suk Award, been short-listed for the Rilke Prize and long-listed for the 2019 Pulitzer Prize, and earned spots on best-of-the-year lists from the *New York Times*, *Publishers Weekly*, and *BookList*. He is a professor in the Creative Writing Program at the University of Houston.



Courtesy: Anita Jaisinghani



Masala: A Culinary Exploration

WEDNESDAY MARCH 1, 1:30–3:00 P.M. PONDICHERI BAKE LAB, 2800 KIRBY, SUITE B240, 77098. LIMITED ENROLLMENT.

The cuisine of India is a sensory experience—the smell of aromatic spices, the sight of colorful ingredients, the sound of satisfaction after every bite. Each region of India offers distinct flavors and textures that result in food which is not only delicious but filled with vitality. Join us at Pondicheri's Bake Lab as award-winning chef and owner **Anita Jaisinghani** introduces us to the cuisine of her native India and her approach to cooking—simple, seasonal, sustainable, and most importantly, a celebration of the senses. Our visit will include a family-style lunch, a talk with chef Anita, and an introduction to the basic spices used in Indian cooking. Chef Anita's new book, *Masala*, will be available for purchase, and she will gladly sign your copy.

Anita Jaisinghani was born and raised in India and is of Sindhi descent. Trained as a microbiologist, she developed her love of food into a career, beginning with a catering business and selling chutneys through Whole Foods Market. Her first restaurant job was at Café Annie where she worked in the pastry department. Ms. Jaisinghani opened Indika in 2001, serving deeply personal dishes that illustrated her desire to portray Indian food in a new light. Pondicheri followed in 2011, expanding with the 2014 opening of the Bake Lab + Shop. With all of her kaleidoscopic menus, chef Anita combines the complexities of Indian cuisine with leanings toward the ancient body of wisdom of Ayurveda, the magic of spices, and the goodness of fresh, local ingredients.



Paradise is a Garden: Islamic Gardens and their Reach

THREE TUESDAYS, MARCH 21 AND 28, AND APRIL 4, 6:00–7:30 P.M. FORUM OF CIVICS, RIVER OAKS GARDEN CLUB, 2503 WESTHEIMER, 77098. LIMITED ENROLLMENT.

From Eden to the Hanging Gardens of Babylon to the Taj Mahal, gardens have captivated visitors and armchair travelers for eons. Garden history can be understood in many cases as political and imperial history. Designed for exclusivity, pleasure, sanctuary, and evidence of aesthetic prowess, formal gardens operated as sites of political power and earthly manifestations of the ideal.

In this course, **Lisa Balabanlilar** will trace the course of the pleasure gardens of imperial Iran (beginning with the Achaemenids of the sixth century BCE) as they spread west in the eighth century to Andalusia, Islamic Spain, and east through Central Asia to Mughal India. The forms and features of the paradise garden would find new expression in the landscapes of Renaissance Italy, finally moving north to early modern Europe. While understanding the garden as art form and sacred space, this class explores the relationship between landscape and power, emphasizing the complexity and dynamism of the imperial pleasure garden tradition.

Lisa Balabanlilar is a professor of history at Rice University where she has received numerous prestigious teaching awards. The focus of her research is the Timurid-Mughal Empire of Central and South Asia; her broader research interests encompass Islamic South and Central Asia and early modern Islamic Empires (Ottoman, Mughal, and Safavid). Professor Balabanlilar's most recent book is *The Emperor Jahangir: Power and Kingship in Mughal India* (I.B. Tauris, 2020). Her current book project is a comparative global study of imperial pleasure gardens called *The King's Garden*.



The Mughal Gardens
Courtesy: Narendra Bisht/
Sahapedia.org

The U.S. Supreme Court: Update 2023

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 29, 11:00 A.M. – 12:30 P.M.

ZOOM INFORMATION WILL BE EMAILED TO SUBSCRIBERS.

In its last term, the Supreme Court's new conservative majority flexed its muscle and handed down a series of controversial decisions that appear to have shaken public belief in the Court's impartiality. Noted legal scholar and commentator **Stephen Vladeck** joins us again for an update on the Court's current term and his thoughts on what we might expect in the future.

Stephen Vladeck is a nationally recognized expert on the federal courts and constitutional law. He currently holds the Charles Alan Wright Chair in Federal Courts at the University of Texas School of Law and is a distinguished scholar at the Robert S. Strauss Center for International Security and Law. He has argued a number of cases before the U.S. Supreme Court and the Texas Supreme Court, has served as an expert witness in federal and state courts, and has received numerous awards for his legal scholarship. Professor Vladeck is also recognized for his prolific popular writing, his podcasts and blogs, his legal casebooks on national security, and his appearances as CNN's Supreme Court analyst. His new book on the Court, *The Shadow Docket*, is scheduled for release in May 2023.



Courtesy: Buffalo Bayou Partnership

Clean and Green: Getting the Trash out of Buffalo Bayou

SATURDAY, APRIL 1, 10:00–11:30 A.M. SUNSET COFFEE BUILDING, 1019 COMMERCE, 77002. LIMITED ENROLLMENT.

If you have ever walked through Buffalo Bayou Park or visited Allen's Landing, you have probably seen plastic bottles floating downstream or plastic bags waving from trees as the bayou meanders toward Galveston Bay. These items roll out of cars and blow out of pickup trucks throughout the city. Because of our storm water drainage system, many wind up in our bayous, becoming an eyesore as well as a danger to water quality and the surrounding ecosystem.

Since 2002, Buffalo Bayou Partnership (BBP) has been on a mission to get as much trash out of Buffalo Bayou as possible. In 2021, that meant removing over 2,000 cubic yards of debris from the waterway—equal to a staggering 167 commercial dump truck loads. With a newly minted custom built, industrial strength Bayou Vac, which vacuums floatable trash out of the water, and a devoted team, BBP is making our bayous and bays cleaner and healthier.

Join us at the Sunset Coffee Building to hear from BBP's Field Operations Manager **Robby Robinson** and captain of the *Bayou Vac*, **David Rivers**, a.k.a. **Bayou Dave**, as they give a presentation on the work they are doing and its impact on our ecosystem. We will then take the short walk to Allen's Landing to watch the Bayou Vac in action.

Robby Robinson found a career on the water early in life. He was co-owner of a boat dealership for 20 years and has over 40 years of experience in the marine industry. Mr. Robinson has been with BBP for 14 years and was instrumental in the design and build of BBP's new *Bayou Vac*, a second-generation custom built vacuum boat used to clean the waterway. He also serves as captain of BBP's tour boat, *The Osprey II*.

David Rivers, a native Houstonian, has been in the environmental field for over 20 years. He has been with BBP for 12 years, serving as the captain of BBP's custom vacuum boats, the first-generation *Bio Vac* and the second-generation *Bayou Vac*. Previously, Mr. Rivers worked in the oil spill recovery and remediation field along the Gulf Coast. He also goes by the moniker "Bayou Dave" and has been featured on the *Kelly Clarkson Show* and *Good Morning America* and in the *New York Times* and the *Houston Chronicle*.



Courtesy: Buffalo Bayou Partnership



Jane Austen's *Persuasion*: A Soaring Novel of Second Chances

THREE WEDNESDAYS, APRIL 5, 12, AND 19, 6:00–7:30 P.M.
LOCATION ON RICE UNIVERSITY CAMPUS WILL BE PROVIDED
TO SUBSCRIBERS. LIMITED ENROLLMENT.

Less well known than her iconic *Pride and Prejudice*, Jane Austen's final novel, *Persuasion*, shows her at the height of her powers. A second-chance narrative, *Persuasion* engages with ideas of loss and memory while featuring Austen's most thoughtful and indeed intellectual heroine, who is about to age out of the marriage plot at the age of 27. A hymn to the British navy, and in particular to the domestic virtues of sailors and officers, the novel moves away from the concerns of the landed gentry to focus on an emerging professional class with new ideas about gender, work, and marriage.

This three-session course led by **Helena Michie** will focus both on Austen's novel and on its film adaptations, including the controversial and unabashedly modern version from 2022 directed by Carrie Cracknell, which breaks the fourth wall and is accused of turning the story into an episode of "Fleabag." In the final session about the films, we will be thinking through the following questions together: What makes a good adaptation? What does "fidelity" to a text mean, and is it always a good thing? Why since the 1990s have there been so many Austen films—and why has *Persuasion* lagged behind in the number of its adaptations?

Participants are encouraged to have read the novel before the first session and to have watched a film adaptation before the third.

Helena Michie is a professor of English at Rice University and is the Agnes Cullen Arnold Professor in Humanities. She teaches courses in feminist theory, literary theory, and Victorian literature and culture. Professor Michie is also the director of Rice University's Center for Women, Gender, and Sexuality and the author of five books in Victorian Studies and the study of gender and sexuality.

Jane Austen

The MFAH: Two Collections Reimagined

TWO THURSDAYS, APRIL 6 AND 13, 10:00 – 11:30 A.M. 5601 MAIN, 77005, AND 5500 MAIN, 77004. PARKING AVAILABLE IN MUSEUM GARAGES. LIMITED ENROLLMENT.

Explore the newly reinstalled galleries of European art and the recent installation of the design collection with the experts at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (MFAH). The MFAH's major reinstallation of its European collections displays the works in fuller conversation with the history, culture, and faith of their times and includes items from the permanent collection that have rarely been on view. The MFAH's new galleries for decorative arts, craft, and design showcase one-of-a-kind masterpieces, as well as iconic modern and contemporary craft and design objects, and contain many works by international artists and designers not previously on display.

APRIL 6: Curators **Christine Gervais** and **James Anno** will guide us through the collection of European art featuring paintings, works on paper, tapestries, sculpture, liturgical objects, and decorative arts. The curators will explain the museology behind the installation and how they interacted with the architecture of the Beck Building to create the presentation in the eleven galleries.

APRIL 13: The second session focuses on the decorative arts, craft, and design collection. Curator **Cindi Strauss** will walk us through the new galleries in the Kinder Building, which were purposely built to highlight the creativity of handcrafted and industrially produced objects comprising furniture, tableware, jewelry, ceramics, textiles, and other objects made from a wide variety of materials.

Christine Gervais is The Fredricka Crain Director of Rienzi and Curator for Decorative Arts at the MFAH. She has curated a variety of exhibitions including *English Taste: The Art of Dining in the Eighteenth Century*, *Pattern Repeat: Wallpaper Then and Now*, and the major touring show *Houghton Hall: Portrait of an English Country House*. Ms. Gervais holds a B.A. in History from Trinity University, an M.A. in American Studies from George Washington University, and an M.Phil. with distinction in the History of Art from the University of Glasgow in Scotland.

A specialist of Renaissance and Baroque art, James Anno serves as Associate Curator of European art at the MFAH. Among the exhibitions he has curated are *Flesh & Blood: Italian Masterpieces from the Capodimonte Museum*, *Glory of Spain: Treasures from the Hispanic Society Museum & Library*, and *New Light on Old Masters: European Art from Houston Collections, 1300-1700* with Christine Gervais. Dr. Anno received his Ph.D. from Washington University in St. Louis.



Courtesy: MFAH

Cindi Strauss is the Sara and Bill Morgan Curator of Decorative Arts, Craft, and Design and Assistant Director, Programming at the MFAH where she is responsible for the acquisition, research, publication, and exhibition of post-1900 decorative arts, design, and craft. Ms. Strauss has authored or contributed to catalogues and journals on decorative arts and design topics and has been a frequent lecturer at museums nationwide. Her recent exhibitions are *Radical: Italian Design 1965-1985*, *The Dennis Freedman Collection* and *Electrifying Design: A Century of Lighting*. Ms. Strauss received her B.A. with honors in art history from Hamilton College and her M.A. in the history of decorative arts from the Cooper-Hewitt/Parsons School of Design.



✈ Study Tour

FALL 2023

Cities of Silver: Santiago de Querétaro, San Miguel de Allende, and Guanajuato

The Houston Seminar will explore the colonial—and contemporary—heritage of three central Mexican cities founded in the sixteenth century and renowned for their architectural, artistic, and cultural heritage. Santiago de Querétaro (1531), Guanajuato (1548), and San Miguel de Allende (1555) lie near sources of mineral deposits whose discovery in the eighteenth century would make Mexico the world's leading producer of silver. Today, all three cities are UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

TO PLACE YOUR NAME ON AN INTEREST LIST,
PLEASE CALL 713-666-9000 OR EMAIL
REGISTRAR@HOUSTONSEMINAR.ORG.

Discounts

Teachers and students with a school I.D. may attend classes for a discounted fee. Please call the registrar for details.

Refunds

For refund requests that occur at least two weeks before a course begins, a 20% cancellation fee will be charged. If others have been turned away from a limited-enrollment course, no refund will be issued unless your place can be filled. Refund policies for courses involving travel will differ.

Enrollment

All courses are available on a first-come, first-served basis. You may enroll by mail, email, phone, or online.

Gift certificates

These are available for a single session, a specific course, or a dollar amount, which the recipient may apply toward any course(s). Please call for more information.

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announcements
of pop-up events,
course updates,
and other news.

[houstonseminar.org/contact](mailto:registrar@houstonseminar.org)



Course List and Reservation Form

Please send
reservation form
and payment to

THE HOUSTON SEMINAR

P.O. Box 22764
Houston, TX
77227-2764

(713) 666-9000

registrar@
houstonseminar.org

Register online at
houstonseminar.org

Amount Enclosed

\$

- ☐ Check
- ☐ Visa
- ☐ MasterCard
- ☐ American Express

PLEASE ENROLL ME/US IN THE FOLLOWING COURSES:

The Art, Architecture, and Ambition of Dallas Thursday, March 23–Sunday, March 26	For trip pricing and further information, please call 713-666-9000 or email registrar@houstonseminar.org.
April in Washington, D.C. - A Study in Contrasts Thursday, April 20–Sunday, April 23	
Shakespeare's Kings Three Wednesdays, January 18 and 25, and February 1, 6:00–7:30 P.M., \$35 per session, limited enrollment	<input type="checkbox"/> January 18 <input type="checkbox"/> January 25 <input type="checkbox"/> February 1
New Paradigms in Therapy: The Psychedelic Renaissance Two Tuesdays, January 31 and February 7, 6:00–7:30 P.M., \$25 per session	<input type="checkbox"/> January 31 <input type="checkbox"/> February 7
How to Read a Poem Three Wednesdays, February 8, 15, and 22, 6:30–8:00 P.M., \$35 per session	<input type="checkbox"/> February 8 <input type="checkbox"/> February 15 <input type="checkbox"/> February 22
Masala: A Culinary Exploration Wednesday, March 1, 1:30–3:00 P.M., \$75, limited enrollment	<input type="checkbox"/> March 1
Paradise is a Garden: Islamic Gardens and their Reach Three Tuesdays, March 21 and 28, and April 4, 6:00–7:30 P.M., \$35 per session, limited enrollment	<input type="checkbox"/> March 21 <input type="checkbox"/> March 28 <input type="checkbox"/> April 4
The U.S. Supreme Court: Update 2023 Wednesday, March 29, 11:00 A.M.–12:30 P.M., \$25	<input type="checkbox"/> March 29
Clean and Green: Getting the Trash out of Buffalo Bayou Saturday, April 1, 10:00–11:30 A.M., \$60, limited enrollment	<input type="checkbox"/> April 1
Jane Austen's Persuasion: A Soaring Novel of Second Chances Three Wednesdays, April 5, 12, and 19, 6:00–7:30 P.M., \$35 per session, limited enrollment	<input type="checkbox"/> April 5 <input type="checkbox"/> April 12 <input type="checkbox"/> April 19
The MFAH: Two Collections Reimagined Two Thursdays, April 6 and 13, 10:00–11:30 A.M., \$50 per session, limited enrollment	<input type="checkbox"/> April 6 <input type="checkbox"/> April 13

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THE HOUSTON SEMINAR

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HoustonSeminar.org

Daytime
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Spring
2023

