



THE HOUSTON SEMINAR



FALL 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.

Fall 2023

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September

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STUDY TOUR

FOR TRIP PRICING AND FURTHER INFORMATION, OR TO PLACE YOUR NAME ON AN INTEREST LIST, PLEASE CALL 713-666-9000 OR EMAIL REGISTRAR@HOUSTONSEMINAR.ORG.

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

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 4–
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 8

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. Our study tour will be led by guides **Stephen Fox** and **Rafael Longoria**. The trip includes two nights in San Miguel de Allende, concluding with two nights in Santiago de Querétaro. Please note that there will be walking tours each day, as buses are not allowed in the historic centers.

COURSES

Cities of Silver: A Survey ^{IP}

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 6:00–7:45 P.M.,
TRANSART FOUNDATION, 1412 WEST
ALABAMA, 77006. LIMITED ENROLLMENT.

Mexico is so close, and yet so different. It has an architectural legacy that spans three thousand years—including ancient archeological sites, colonial cities like Santiago de Querétaro, Guanajuato, and San Miguel de Allende that were founded by the Spanish almost 500 years ago and still retain their old-world charm, as well as a remarkable assortment of recent architecture.

Please join us when **Stephen Fox**, architectural historian, and **Rafael Longoria**, distinguished professor at UH Hines School of Architecture, compare and contrast these three historic gems. Although this presentation is offered in conjunction with the October study tour, it is open to all.





Houston 2026: Hosting the World Cup

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 6:00–7:30 P.M. ZOOM INFORMATION
WILL BE PROVIDED TO SUBSCRIBERS.

In 2026, the World Cup will be hosted in Houston in addition to 15 other cities across the United States, Canada, and Mexico. Other successful bidders include Atlanta, Dallas, Kansas City, Toronto, and Mexico City.

Hosting the World Cup is a big deal for America's fourth largest city. It will serve as a catalyst for the substantial growth of the game and draw huge crowds to Houston, raising significant revenue and putting the global spotlight on our state-of-the-art sporting venues and facilities, not to mention our vibrant hospitality and cultural centers. **Chris Canetti** will give us an insider's presentation on what it took for Houston to successfully compete for this prestigious award. From seating capacity to infrastructure, human rights to hospitality, hear Chris bring to life the virtues of Houston as a world-class sporting city.

Chris Canetti is president of the Houston 2026 World Cup Host Committee and oversees the city's plans to host the 2026 FIFA World Cup. Prior to his current role, Mr. Canetti was with the Houston Dynamo for 13 years and served as club president for eight years. He was also responsible for creating the Houston Dash, Houston's professional women's soccer team.



Courtesy: Small Steps Nurturing Center

Early Childhood Education in Houston: Are We Preparing Our City's Children to Succeed?

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 3, 10:00-11:30 A.M., SMALL STEPS
NURTURING CENTER, 2902 JENSEN, 77026. LIMITED
ENROLLMENT.

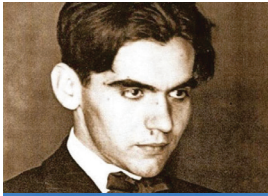
High-quality early childhood education programs help prepare children for success in elementary school and beyond. Decades of research show that these programs have strong and persistent benefits, including substantial learning gains, better social and executive function skills, increased high school graduation rates, and improved short- and long-term health outcomes.

However, too many Houston families miss out on this opportunity, deterred by unavailability of space at nearby programs, cost (for those who don't qualify for free tuition), lack of information, and other factors. Some children go to daycare that provides few educational benefits; others stay home. Nearly half of Houston Independent School District students enter kindergarten lacking early literacy skills that make them "school ready."

How can we as a city change this? What is a "quality" Pre-K program? What role do our state legislators play? Can we learn from San Antonio's new Pre-K scholarship program? Two respected educational leaders will discuss these and other issues and respond to questions. Our conversation will take place at a Small Steps campus and will include a classroom visit.

Sehba Ali is the Chief Executive Officer of KIPP Texas Public Schools, a charter school network of 59 schools with nearly 34,000 students across the state. She is the former Superintendent of KIPP Houston Public Schools and the former Chief Academic Officer for KIPP Bay Area Schools.

Ana Schick has been the Executive Director of Small Steps Nurturing Center for more than ten years. Small Steps' two campuses provide high-quality education and other support to economically at-risk



Federico García Lorca

children ages two through six living in poverty in Houston.

An Introduction to García Lorca: Images as Time Frames

TWO WEDNESDAYS, OCTOBER 11 AND 18, 6:00–7:30 P.M. DIRECTIONS WILL BE PROVIDED TO SUBSCRIBERS. LIMITED ENROLLMENT.

Federico García Lorca (1898-1936), one of the most essential and influential poets of the twentieth century, lived only a few decades, but his works span centuries. Join Professor **Carlos Jimenez** in a two-session course exploring the poetry of García Lorca. Deeply rooted in the Andalucía of his birth, García Lorca is the archetype of the artist whose voice becomes that singular universe that unites all languages. The lyricism of his writings astonishes through the immediate force of images coursing through his poems, prose, and plays.

OCTOBER 11: The first session will situate García Lorca in his Andalusian milieu, examining in detail the mesmerizing mastery of his *Romancero Gitano* collection (the *Gypsy Ballads*, 1928) and the time frames that compose the elegiac, incomparable *Lament for Ignacio Sánchez Mejías* (1935).

OCTOBER 18: The second session will focus on two seminal works that reveal a wounded yet luminous poet in search of new avenues of expression. We will start with the primeval pulse that runs through *Poet in New York* (1930) and will conclude with the consummate achievement of *Diván del Tamarit* (1934).

Carlos Jimenez is an award-winning architect, a professor at Rice University's School of Architecture, and principal of Carlos Jimenez Studio.

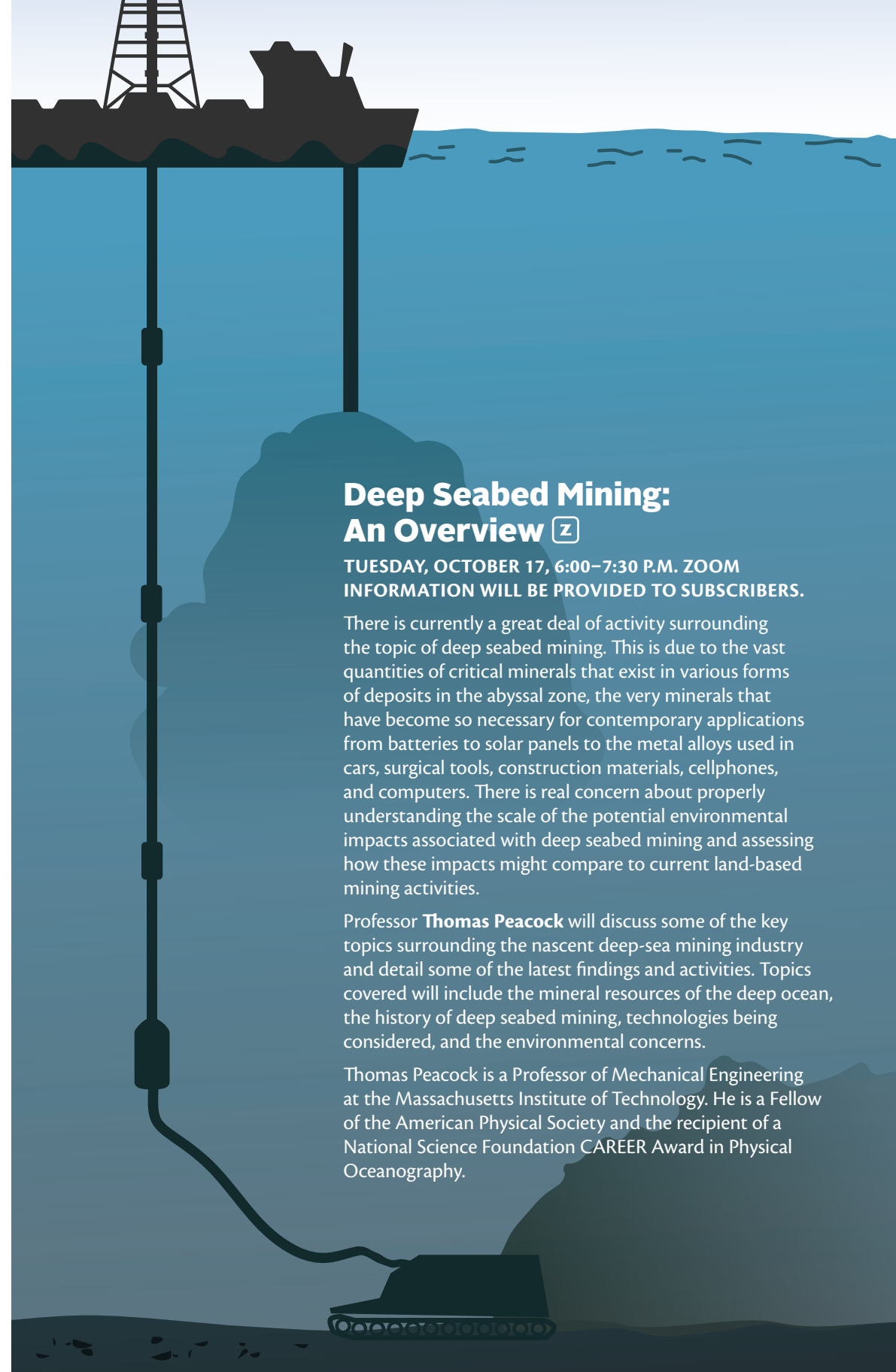
Women's Reproductive Health

TWO THURSDAYS, OCTOBER 12 AND 19, 6:00–7:30 P.M. ZOOM INFORMATION WILL BE PROVIDED TO SUBSCRIBERS.

These two courses are designed to provide an update on the state of reproductive health in Texas. Our speakers are on the front lines of advocacy and will discuss bills being presented and evaluated by Texas legislators ranging from contraception to abortion.

OCTOBER 12: The first session will explore policy as it relates to the Texas Legislature, which meets every other spring for five action-packed months. Experts on reproductive health and state advocacy will share recent updates to state law and policy after the 88th Texas Legislative Session with a focus on contraception, maternal health, and everything in between.

OCTOBER 19: The second session will present a panel discussion on the current state of affairs surrounding reproductive rights in Texas. Representatives from Every Body Texas, a nonprofit organization receiving Title 10 funds for reproductive and sexual health, and several front-line providers that are experiencing the effects of new legislation will share their challenges and concerns going forward and how women are experiencing these changes in real time.



Deep Seabed Mining: An Overview

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 17, 6:00–7:30 P.M. ZOOM INFORMATION WILL BE PROVIDED TO SUBSCRIBERS.

There is currently a great deal of activity surrounding the topic of deep seabed mining. This is due to the vast quantities of critical minerals that exist in various forms of deposits in the abyssal zone, the very minerals that have become so necessary for contemporary applications from batteries to solar panels to the metal alloys used in cars, surgical tools, construction materials, cellphones, and computers. There is real concern about properly understanding the scale of the potential environmental impacts associated with deep seabed mining and assessing how these impacts might compare to current land-based mining activities.

Professor **Thomas Peacock** will discuss some of the key topics surrounding the nascent deep-sea mining industry and detail some of the latest findings and activities. Topics covered will include the mineral resources of the deep ocean, the history of deep seabed mining, technologies being considered, and the environmental concerns.

Thomas Peacock is a Professor of Mechanical Engineering at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He is a Fellow of the American Physical Society and the recipient of a National Science Foundation CAREER Award in Physical Oceanography.

Blue Nile: A Culinary Exploration of Ethiopia

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 25, 11:30 A.M.-1:00 P.M. BLUE NILE, 3030 AUDLEY, 77098. LIMITED ENROLLMENT.

The fragrant seasonings of Ethiopia, including cinnamon, cardamom, ginger, basil, and turmeric drifting through Blue Nile, an authentic Ethiopian restaurant, will greet us as we begin our culinary and cultural exploration of that country's cuisine.

The traditional Ethiopian meal always includes injera, a large sourdough flatbread made of teff, a gluten-free grain. In Ethiopian cuisine, it is customary to pick up foods from a large platter with injera and fingers—no need for utensils, though utensils will be available at Blue Nile. A mixed vegetarian platter and a sampler of delicious meats prepared in the true Ethiopian style will give everyone a taste of the authentic foods of this country in the Horn of Africa. After lunch, we will be treated to a traditional coffee service. Culinary delights, customs, and celebrations will be explained and discussed as the meal progresses.

Subversive Verses

TWO MONDAYS, OCTOBER 30 AND NOVEMBER 6, 6:00–7:30 P.M. PRIVATE RESIDENCE. DIRECTIONS WILL BE PROVIDED TO SUBSCRIBERS. LIMITED ENROLLMENT.

To paraphrase Russian poet Osip Mandelstam: Where is poetry more respected than a country where poets are killed for their verses? Of course, he was referring to the Soviet Union, but dictatorial regimes all over the world have held poets in similar deadly regard. In two sessions we will look at poems by writers who have been censored, exiled, imprisoned, or executed by regimes ranging from Stalin's Russia to Pinochet's Chile, Myanmar's ruling junta or today's Iran. What exactly are they afraid of?

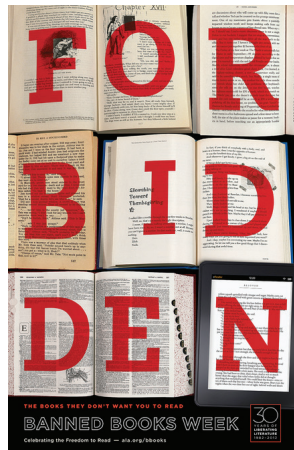
OCTOBER 30: The focus of the first session will be writers from the 1930s and '40s, such as Daniil Kharms (USSR) and Zuzanna Ginczanka (Poland).

NOVEMBER 6: In the second session we will examine more recent works by poets such as Heberto Padilla (Cuba) and Liu Xia (China) and songwriters Victor Jara (Chile) and Shervin Hajipour (Iran).

Our speaker, **Philip Boehm**, is an American playwright, literary translator, and theater director. He has translated into English more than 30 novels and plays by German and Polish writers and has received a number of translation awards as well as National Endowment of the Arts and Guggenheim fellowships.



Courtesy: Blue Nile



Philip Boehm



The Commons at Hermann Park: A Sneak Preview

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 10:30 A.M.–12:00 P.M. LOTT HALL, 6201 HERMANN PARK DRIVE, 77030. RAIN DATE: THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 10:30 A.M.–12:00 P.M.

Doreen Stoller, Hermann Park Conservancy's president since 2003, will provide an overview of Hermann Park's updated master plan. She will offer a brief history of the Conservancy and highlight the ambitious projects that will be coming to the park in the years to come. We will also learn about the soon-to-be opened 2.5-acre McWilliams Dog Park located along Brays Bayou near Cambridge Street and the highly anticipated Commons project at the corner of Fannin and Cambridge Streets—both major components of the Play Your Park Campaign.

Attendees will take a short walk from Lott Hall to the Commons site which will open in early 2024. With construction started in 2022, the Commons converts 26 acres in the southwest portion of the park into a vibrant community space with iconic playscapes, revitalized gardens, natural habitats, as well as activities for the whole family. The restoration and conservation of natural lands bordering McGovern Lake are central to the master plan and the Commons, with extensive native plantings as an important focus. Architect Marlon Blackwell and landscape architects Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates are responsible for the design. After the tour, you might want to stop at Ginger Kale for lunch.



Courtesy: Hermann Park Conservancy

When Opera Was "Verboten": 17th-century Christmas Oratorios in Dresden and Vienna

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 6:00–7:30 P.M. PRIVATE RESIDENCE. DIRECTIONS WILL BE PROVIDED TO SUBSCRIBERS. LIMITED ENROLLMENT.



Courtesy: Mario Aschauer

In the seventeenth century, opera was not to be performed during Advent and Lent, neither in Protestant Saxony nor in Catholic Austria, but the courts in Dresden and Vienna worked around this prohibition. In 1664, Elector John George II of Saxony commissioned his court composer Heinrich Schütz to set the Nativity story in the “Italian dramatic recitative style.” Schütz, who had written the first German opera *Dafne* (now lost), responded with his joyful *Weihnachtshistorie* or *Historia der Geburt Jesu*. Around the same time, in Austria, the celebrated opera composer Giovanni Battista Pederzuoli, Kapellmeister of Dowager Empress Eleonora, rescued the Viennese court from operatic fasting with his delightful *Triologo nel Natale del Signore*, an allegorical celebration of Christmas.

Harpichordist **Mario Aschauer**, joined by a solo singer, will give us a fascinating glimpse into a Baroque world that combines religious piety and opera fever. We will get a foretaste of these two works—musical forerunners of the great oratorios and passions of later composers such as Bach and Handel—which will be performed in their entirety in December by Harmonia Stellarum Houston, led by Mario Aschauer.

Mario Aschauer is associate professor of music and director of the Center for Early Music Research and Performance at Sam Houston State University and teaches harpsichord at Rice University’s Shepherd School of Music.

How the “Deinstitutionalization” of Mental Hospitals in the 20th Century Led to the Homelessness Epidemic of the 21st Century

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 6:00–7:30 P.M. DIRECTIONS WILL BE PROVIDED TO SUBSCRIBERS.

In 1955 the United States reached its peak number of mental hospital beds, almost all of which were in state-run facilities. At that time, there were over 500,000 psychiatric beds compared with just over 50,000 as of 2014 — a ninety percent reduction during this six-decade period. The “deinstitutionalization” movement of the late twentieth century is a primary cause of the increased population of unhoused and unsheltered individuals living on our city streets. Though some less debilitating forms of mental illness are successfully treated in outpatient clinics, many individuals suffering from severe mental illness still need long-term residential care and treatment facilities.

A panel composed of thought leaders from the fields of law, religion, social services, and medicine—**Justice Gordon Goodman**, Texas 1st Court of Appeals, **Rabbi Oren Hayon**, Senior Rabbi, Congregation Emanu El, **Judson Robinson, III**, President of the Houston Area Urban League, and **Dr. Asim Shah**, Chief, Division of Community Psychiatry, Menninger Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Baylor College of Medicine—will discuss these issues and how to address them.



 STUDY TOURS

Coming in Spring 2024

Before Texas: Historic Ranches and Towns of Nuevo Santander

MARCH 12–16

Only after the U.S.-Mexico War of 1846–1848 was the southern tip of the state incorporated into Texas. From 1748 until 1824, this territory comprised the northern half of the Spanish colonial province of Nuevo Santander. In 1824, when it became a state of the Mexican Republic, Nuevo Santander was given the indigenous name of Tamaulipas. This tour will explore the river ranches between San Agustín de Laredo, founded in 1755 as part of the initial settlement of Nuevo Santander, and Brownsville, founded in 1848 in the aftermath of U.S. victory in the U.S.-Mexico War, which established the Río Grande (rather than the Nueces River) as the boundary between the United States and Mexico. This tour will focus on the historic ranch steads, townsites, and landscapes of the Río Grande/Río Bravo del Norte and the families who inhabit them today.





©Nelson Atkins

Where is Kansas City? What is Kansas City?

MAY 16–MAY 19

Missouri? Kansas? The answer is both. This holds true for many aspects of the region that will be brought to light during our visit to Kansas City, Missouri.

Kansas City is a conglomeration of neighborhoods. We will delve into how George Kessler’s greenway plan and J.C. Nichols’ real estate developments were realized and refer to how they are reinvented in Houston’s Hermann Park and River Oaks. Our tour will include visits to private collections as well as the world-famous Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, the Olmsted Brothers’ Swope Park, the WWI Memorial, and Loose Park, located on the site of a Civil War battle and former home of Kansas City Country Club.

The legacy of post-Civil War segregation led to a rich jazz scene in the 1920s and ’30s. It also allowed for the growth of the Negro Leagues. Today these eras are immortalized in American Jazz and Negro Leagues Baseball museums in the famous 18th and Vine neighborhood. Led by architectural historian **Stephen Fox**, travelers will learn about contemporary Kansas City and its civic commitment as a sports destination for the Kansas City Chiefs, Kansas City Royals, college basketball finals, women’s soccer, and the 2026 FIFA World Cup. And Kansas City BBQ will be on the itinerary!

To place your name on an interest list for these study tours, 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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Sign up for our email list to receive announcements of pop-up events, course updates, and other news.

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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

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- ☐ Check
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- ☐ American Express

PLEASE ENROLL ME/US IN THE FOLLOWING COURSES:

Study Tour Cities of Silver: San Miguel de Allende, Guanajuato, and Santiago de Querétaro Wednesday, October 4–Sunday, October 8	Please call 713-666-9000 or email registrar@houstonseminar.org .
Houston 2026: Hosting the World Cup Wednesday, September 13, 6:00–7:30 P.M., \$30	<input type="checkbox"/>  September 13
Cities of Silver: A Survey Tuesday, September 26, 6:00–7:45 P.M., \$60, limited enrollment	<input type="checkbox"/>  September 26
Early Childhood Education in Houston: Are We Preparing Our City's Children to Succeed? Tuesday, October 3, 10:00–11:30 A.M., \$35, limited enrollment	<input type="checkbox"/>  October 3
An Introduction to García Lorca: Images as Time Frames Two Wednesdays, October 11 and 18, 6:00–7:30 P.M., \$40 per session, limited enrollment	<input type="checkbox"/>  October 11 <input type="checkbox"/>  October 18
Women's Reproductive Health Two Thursdays, October 12 and 19, 6:00–7:30 P.M., \$30 per session	<input type="checkbox"/>  October 12 <input type="checkbox"/>  October 19
Deep Seabed Mining: An Overview Tuesday, October 17, 6:00–7:30 P.M., \$30	<input type="checkbox"/>  October 17
Blue Nile: A Culinary Exploration of Ethiopia Wednesday, October 25, 11:30 A.M.–1:00 P.M., \$75, limited enrollment	<input type="checkbox"/>  October 25
Subversive Verses Two Mondays, October 30 and November 6, 6:00–7:30 P.M., \$50 per session, limited enrollment	<input type="checkbox"/>  October 30 <input type="checkbox"/>  November 6
The Commons at Hermann Park: A Sneak Preview Wednesday, November 1, 10:30 A.M.–12:00 P.M., \$60, limited enrollment	<input type="checkbox"/>  November 1
When Opera Was "Verboten": 17th-century Christmas Oratorios in Dresden and Vienna Monday, November 13, 6:00–7:30 P.M., \$60, limited enrollment	<input type="checkbox"/>  November 13
How the “Deinstitutionalization” of Mental Hospitals in the 20th Century Led to the Homelessness Epidemic of the 21st Century Wednesday, November 15, 6:00–7:30 P.M., \$50, limited enrollment	<input type="checkbox"/>  November 15

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THE HOUSTON SEMINAR

P.O. Box 22764
Houston, TX 77227-2764
(713) 666-9000
HoustonSeminar.org

Daytime

Early Childhood Education in Houston: Are We Preparing Our City's Children to Succeed?

[Blue Nile: A Culinary Exploration of Ethiopia](#)

The Commons at Hermann Park: A Sneak Preview

Evening

Houston 2026: Hosting the World Cup

[Cities of Silver: A Survey](#)

An Introduction to García Lorca: Images as Time Frames

[Women's Reproductive Health](#)

Deep Seabed Mining: An Overview

[Subversive Verses](#)

When Opera Was "Verboten": 17th-century Christmas

Oratorios in Dresden and Vienna

[How the "Deinstitutionalization" of Mental Hospitals in the 20th Century Led to the Homelessness Epidemic of the 21st Century](#)

Study Tour

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

**Fall
2023**

