Join our English Conversations Classes

While we dream of being reunited in person, the WL is committed to keeping all of our members and volunteers safe. English Conversation Classes will return on Zoom, and are free!

We will be holding basic, intermediate, and advanced classes for the Spring 2022 term, and hope we might be back in person next semester. We welcome international visitors with an MIT connection, whether as students, scholars, alumni/alumnae, or their partners.

Students must have an MIT affiliation, either currently or in an earlier year. The signup website has a question about your MIT link. Please let us know if you are a returning student or if you are new to MIT and/or our classes.

We normally charge $100 for a semester of our classes, but will waive the fee this term. If you’re able, please consider a donation to support the Women’s League and programs like this.

Thank you to our amazing teachers!

Register online: wl.mit.edu

Wreath-Making Returned!

The Women’s League has been making holiday wreaths for 77 Mass Ave since the 1930, and in 2020, in the grip of the pandemic, we were not able to gather in person to make them. Luckily, Buildings & Grounds stepped in to make sure the long December nights could still be lit up!

In 2021, we were able to gather in person, and a team of volunteers, masked up and in the festive spirit, came to the student center in early December to help make these giant wreaths. It was wonderful to be back in person - chat with new and old friends, and smell the evergreen garland!

Many hands made light work and, the wreaths were hung and adorned with lights by our friends at Buildings and Grounds. Thank you to everyone who volunteered, and CAC for hosting our event.

Photo by Ron Hoffmann. Thank you, Ron!
March Tuesday 1st: Padmini Pillai
via Zoom, 12-1pm

Dr. Padmini S Pillai is an immunoengineer bridging the gap between advances in immunology & the development of new biomaterials to treat human disease. She will tell us about her scientific journey and research, highlighting the crucial role of mentorship (in and out of science), obstacles she has faced along the way, the importance of SciComm, and making STEM more equitable.

Dr. Pillai completed her Ph.D. in Immunobiology at Yale Univ. in the lab of Prof. Akiko Iwasaki, where her research was the first to identify excessive inflammation as the reason flu infection is more deadly in the elderly than in younger adults, & suggested a new potential strategy for combating the flu in susceptible individuals by blocking an inflammatory pathway in the lung.

Dr. Pillai is a postdoc in the lab of Prof. Robert Langer at MIT, where she is developing biomaterial & nucleic acid strategies to boost anti-tumor immunity & treat chronic inflammatory diseases. Dr. Pillai was a 2019 Delegate to the American Academy of Achievement & Young Pioneer at the World Frontiers Forum. Dr. Pillai is also a musician, trained in piano, violin, and South Indian Classical music, and has provided backup vocals for Grammy award-winning artist, Angélique Kidjo at venues including the Kennedy Center, Lincoln Center, Bonnaroo, & Carnegie Hall.

February Thursday 17th: Meghana Ranganathan
via Zoom, 12-1pm

Meghana Ranganathan is a Ph.D candidate in the Department of Earth, Atmospheric, and Planetary Sciences at MIT. Her research focuses on understanding the changes that are occurring to ice sheets on Earth as the climate changes. In her free time, she loves to read and write fiction.

No longer a glacial pace: what is happening to Earth's ice sheets and what does it mean for the climate and for societies?
Much of Earth's ice may be concentrated at the poles, but it has had profound implications for Earth's climate and for societies, and what happens to Earth's ice in the next 100 years may shape lives all over the world. In this talk, we'll discuss the surprising things that ice can do, how important ice has been in the past to Earth and to human history, and the rapid changes that we're likely to see to glaciers and ice sheets in the coming decades.
Tuesday April 5th: **Sophia Liu**  
via Zoom, 12-1pm

Sophia Liu will discuss her career path, current research in developing tools for studying cell interactions across time and space, and the most useful

Sophia graduated in 2017 from MIT with a BS in Chemical-Biological Engineering. She is currently a PhD candidate at Harvard Biophysics and affiliated with the Harvard-MIT HST program, co-advised by Fei Chen and Eric Lander. As an undergraduate, she worked in Robert Langer’s Lab on a microfluidic device for antigen delivery and in Alex Shalek’s Lab on single-cell sequencing for neuronal nuclei. She is broadly interested in developing methods for measuring cell interactions in space and over time in immune contexts.

Tuesday March 8th: **Heather Kosakowski**  
via Zoom, 1-2pm

Heather L. Kosakowski is a PhD in the Brain and Cognitive Sciences Department. With PhD advisors Kanwisher and Saxe, Kosakowski’s research focuses on the development of higher-level perceptual processes in the awake infant brain. Specifically, Kosakowski developed techniques to increase the quality of functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) data collected from awake infants leading to the discovery of face-, body-, and scene-selective responses in the ventral visual stream of infants. Kosakowski’s research is focused testing theories of cortical function and development in the first year of life. Kosakowski had a non-traditional career path that included foster care, the Marine Corps, Community College, and being a single parent. Heather will discuss her research and career development, and how her life experiences led her to study the origins of the mind.

MIT's 48th Annual Celebration of the Life and Legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

**Open Your Heart to Truth and Love**

Thursday, February 10th  
11am-1pm

The MIT community gathers every February at a celebration of the life and legacy of Martin Luther King Jr. Speakers have included leaders who are prominent both nationally and in the local Boston/Cambridge community, in accordance with Dr. King’s dual emphasis on global and local issues.

The 2022 Celebration, hosted by MIT President L. Rafael Reif, is themed *Open Your Mind and Heart to Truth and Love*, and will take place virtually. The keynote speaker is Dr. Eddie S. Glaude, Jr., the James S. McDonnell Distinguished University Professor of African American Studies at Princeton University. There will also be remarks from Carolyn Carrington, Staff; Ufuoma Ovienmhada, G; and Brian Williams, UG. The event will be MC’d by Stewart Isaacs (G), with musical selections by the Morning Star Baptist Choir.

Register via diversity.mit.edu
Join the MIT Women's Chorale!

The MIT Women's Chorale, directed by Daniel Mahoney, invites new singers from the MIT community to join us for our spring semester. Until pandemic conditions permit otherwise, we will be meeting via Zoom, working on a program of music with the aim of singing an outdoor, in-person concert in the late spring.

Our first meeting will be Wednesday, January 26th from 7:30-8:30pm. Zoom instructions will be sent before the date along with music. We will sing muted, to the accompaniment provided by our pianist, Leona Cheung. Interested singers can contact us through the MIT Women's League: 617-253-3656 / wleague@mit.edu.

For more information, please visit our website: http://web.mit.edu/womensleague/womenschorale

Looking for an interesting read?

The Book Discussion group will host virtual meetings via Zoom. Please write to Nancy Holloman (nancyredsox@gmail.com) to be added to their mailing list.

- **February 16**
  - *Sing, Unburied, Sing*
  - Jesmyn Ward

- **March 16**
  - *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*
  - Betty Smith

- **April 20**
  - *Klara and the Sun*
  - Kazuo Ishiguro

- **May 18**
  - *The Greater Journey - Americans in Paris*
  - David McCullough

Fiber Crafts Group

It’s a good time to get creative and finish that project! The Fiber Crafts Group offers the space to craft online with friends. Meetings will be held throughout the Fall semester via Zoom. Feel free to sign in at any time over the hour, and stay for as long as you like. For a Zoom invite, please email Claudia James (nonnajames@gmail.com). All events are held 12:30-1:30pm.

- **2022**
  - February 15
  - March 15
  - April 19
  - May 17
  - June 21
League Interest Groups

BOOK DISCUSSION
Barbara Donnelly
781.646.4617
Maxine Jonas
jonas_m@mit.edu

CHORALE
Mary Shetterly
maryshetterly@gmail.com
web.mit.edu/womensleague/womenschorale

MITELL STORYTELLING
Kirsty Bennett
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FIBER ARTS
Claudia LaBollita-James
nonnajames@gmail.com

COMMUNITY CRAFT FAIRS
Brenda Blais
bmblais@mit.edu

CITYSIDE DINING
Jennifer Fleming
jfsousa@mit.edu

MIT JAPANESE WIVES GROUP
Kimié Shirasaki
mitjwg@mit.edu

The April Honorary League Luncheon will be held as a webcast. Invitations will be sent out mid September with details about how to access the talk. We hope to be able to hold an in-person event again soon.

The MIT Women's League Newsletter is published four times during the academic year. Please email the office for a hard copy of the newsletter or for any questions you may have.

Deadline for submission for the April Newsletter is March 1.

Manager Kirsty Bennett
Chair Cheryl Vossmer
Honorary Chair Christine Reif
Visual Identity Ink Design

MIT Women's League Newsletter

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Contact
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Find us online!
w.l.mit.edu
facebook.com/womensleague

The Spring Breakfast series will be back this year! Look out for an email announcement soon.