

*Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend:  
Crown Jewels, Haute Couture, Hollywood  
Glamour, & More!*

*Course Syllabus*

*Lifelong Learning Collaborative  
Spring 2026*

*Coordinators*

*Kip Brott*

*Celene Healy*

*Laura Tucker*

***Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend:  
Crown Jewels, Haute Couture, Hollywood Glamour, & More!***  
***Time: Tuesdays, 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM***  
***Dates: March 24 – May 12***  
***8 Weeks***

**Course Description**

Behold the glittering arc of jewels across the centuries -- from royal treasure troves to stylish runways to bejeweled celebrities and Hollywood's brightest stars! Think of the crowns of British royalty, Marie Antoinette's infamous diamond necklace, and the Russian Imperial treasures -- juxtaposed with Marilyn Monroe's shimmering moment in *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* or the unforgettable jewel collections of the Duchess of Windsor and Elizabeth Taylor. We'll go beyond the West to the lavish courts of Ottoman sultans and Chinese emperors, then come back home to examine the Rhode Island jewelry industry. We'll also explore the artistry of great jewelers like Tiffany and Cartier, the enduring cultural impact of legendary stones like the Hope Diamond, and some breathtaking jewelry exhibits in the world's leading museums.

Jewels have forever been woven into the fabric of our politics, our style, and our collective imagination. Whether symbols of power, icons of wealth, or tokens of love, they have always embodied both fantasy and reality with eye-popping splendor. This course invites you to experience them in all their glory. After all, as Marilyn reminded us, "*Diamonds may not talk, but they do have stories to tell.*"

**Format**

Class members will give a presentation on a topic they select from a prepared list. We'll also watch a movie about a spectacular jewel heist – *Topkapi* from 1964 starring Melina Mercouri, Maximilian Schell, and Peter Ustinov.

**Resources/Expenses**

Online reading material and YouTube videos will be assigned for review before each class session. No additional expenses.

**Coordinators**

Kip Brott earned his BA and MA degrees in art history from UCLA, and he's taught a number of popular fashion courses at LLC previously. Kip has also led several fashion-themed reading groups at the Athenaeum Library here in Providence and he's been a frequent guest lecturer at Hamilton House. Email: [johnbrott17@gmail.com](mailto:johnbrott17@gmail.com) Phone: (626) 354-1620

Celene Healy is a retired English teacher who has been a member of LLC for over 12 years. She's coordinated many LLC courses, including short stories, museums of the world, and places to see and visit in Rhode Island. Email: [celenehealy66@gmail.com](mailto:celenehealy66@gmail.com) Phone: (978) 846-2819

Laura Tucker is a retired high tech corporate librarian and business continuity manager. She's been an LLC member for 10 years, taking mostly theatre and film courses. She's the Performing Arts liaison on the LLC Curriculum Committee and a member of the LLC Tech Committee. Email: [laura.tucker29@gmail.com](mailto:laura.tucker29@gmail.com) Phone: (585) 329-0451.

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Weekly Presentation Schedule  
Spring 2026*

<i>Week</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Session A</i>	<i>Session B</i>
<i>1</i>	<i>March 24</i>	<i><u>Introduction to the Course</u> All About Jewels! Course Syllabus Technical Assistance Upcoming Class Presentations</i>	<i>When Fashion Shines: Dazzling Jewels &amp; Flashy Embellishments in Haute Couture Presented by Kip Brott</i>
<i>2</i>	<i>March 31</i>	<i>The Crown Jewels of Great Britain Presented by Mary Ellen O'Sullivan &amp; Edie Weinstein</i>	<i>Scandal at Versailles: Marie Antoinette &amp; The Affair of the Diamond Necklace Presented by De Feldman</i>
<i>3</i>	<i>April 7</i>	<i>Faberge Eggs: Treasures of the Last Russian Tsars Presented by Linda Guccione</i>	<i>Tiffany &amp; Cartier: Defining Luxury Across Two Continents Presented by Janice Golden</i>
<i>4</i>	<i>April 14</i>	<i>Beyond the West: The Chinese Imperial Court Presented by Pat Moriarty</i>	<i>Beyond the West: The Ottoman Sultans Presented by Roz Kurzer</i>
<i>5</i>	<i>April 21</i>	<i>Jewels on Display: Unforgettable Museum Experiences Presented by Mary Welch</i>	<i><u>Movie Day: A Spectacular Jewel Heist!</u> Topkapi (1964) Starring Melina Mercouri, Maximillian Schell, &amp; Peter Ustinov (We'll watch the movie at home with Class Discussion in this slot ) Presented by Class Coordinators)</i>
<i>6</i>	<i>April 28</i>	<i>Fabulous Collections: The Duchess of Windsor Presented by Deborah Chorney</i>	<i>Fabulous Collections: Elizabeth Taylor Presented by Karen Borger &amp; Jill Tobak</i>
<i>7</i>	<i>May 5</i>	<i>Legendary Jewels: The Hope Diamond &amp; Other Historic Baubles Presented by Jonathan Shiff</i>	<i>Cinematic Sparkle: Jewels in the Movies Presented by Susan Baugh</i>
<i>8</i>	<i>May 12</i>	<i>Bringin' It All Back Home: The Rhode Island Jewelry Industry Presented by Gloria DePaola</i>	<i>Jewelry Extravaganza: BYOJ (Bring Your Own Jewels!) Wrap-Up Discussion Closing Remarks</i>

Weekly Reading & Video Assignments  
*Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend:  
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Spring 2026  
Week 1 – March 24

**Session A**

**Introduction to the Course -- Welcome!**

*All About Jewels!*

*Course Syllabus*

*Technical Assistance*

*Upcoming Class Presentations*

*Presented by: Course Coordinators*

Reading Assignment

*The Hidden Meaning Behind Your Favorite Gemstones – Vogue Magazine, April 2017*

[https://www.vogue.com/article/meaning-history-gemstones-rubies-emeralds-diamonds?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.vogue.com/article/meaning-history-gemstones-rubies-emeralds-diamonds?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

Video

*The DeBeers Diamond Campaign: Love's Lasting Symbol*

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2mEDjY\\_9vXU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2mEDjY_9vXU)

**Session B**

**When Fashion Shines: Dazzling Jewels & Flashy Embellishments in Haute Couture**

*Presented by Kip Brott*

Reading Assignment

*Fashion Fusion: When Jewellery Inspires Fashion Trends*

[https://www.katerinaperez.com/articles/fashion-fusion-when-jewellery-inspires-fashion-trends?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.katerinaperez.com/articles/fashion-fusion-when-jewellery-inspires-fashion-trends?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

Video

*The Evolution of Jewelry in Fashion: A Historical Examination*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y0DMxkKtRtQ>

**Week 2 – March 31**

**Session A**

**The Crown Jewels of Great Britain**

*Presented by Mary Ellen O'Sullivan & Edie Weinstein*

Reading Assignment

*The Crown Jewels*

<https://www.hrp.org.uk/tower-of-london/history-and-stories/the-crown-jewels/>

Video

*The Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II: The Crowning Moment, 1953*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=inKSvLk7kiI>

**Session B**  
***Scandal at Versailles:***  
***Marie Antoinette & the Affair of the Diamond Necklace***  
***Presented by De Feldman***

**Reading Assignment**

***A Brief History of the Jewelry Scandal That Ended Marie Antoinette, Town & Country Magazine***  
**<https://www.townandcountrymag.com/style/jewelry-and-watches/a62694255/marie-antoinette-diamond-affair-history/>**

**Video**

***The Affair of the Diamond Necklace***  
**<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aLU1wNntRa0>**

## Week 3 – April 7

### Session A

*Faberge Eggs: Treasures of the Last Russian Tsars*  
Presented by Linda Guccione

#### Reading Assignment

*A Brief History of the Faberge Egg*  
<https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-history-faberge-egg>

#### Video

*Faberge Eggs: Jewels of the Russian Crown*  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qv\\_QgxIrgTc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qv_QgxIrgTc)

### Session B

*Tiffany & Cartier: Defining Luxury Across Two Continents*  
Presented by Janice Golden

#### Reading Assignment

*Cartier vs. Tiffany: The Story Behind the Jewellery*  
[https://gatsbyjewellery.co.uk/blogs/famous-jewellers-spotlight/cartier-vs-tiffany-the-story-behind-the-jewellery?srsltid=AfmBOopRm8a5g\\_nCBycOobvzc8-9F23Jv3CBLEfNgaRpSfeep1Epfvfv](https://gatsbyjewellery.co.uk/blogs/famous-jewellers-spotlight/cartier-vs-tiffany-the-story-behind-the-jewellery?srsltid=AfmBOopRm8a5g_nCBycOobvzc8-9F23Jv3CBLEfNgaRpSfeep1Epfvfv)

#### Video

*History of Jewelry Design: Cartier*  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=emhcZXA5AbU>

*Tiffany & Co.: How This High-End Brand Was Created from Scratch*  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oFhc3YyFnRc&t=137s>

## Week 4 – April 14

### Session A

*Beyond the West: The Chinese Imperial Court*  
Presented by Pat Moriarty

#### Reading Assignment

*The History & Significance of Ming Jewelry*  
[https://dolphingalleries.com/blogs/dolphin-galleries-blog/the-history-and-significance-of-ming-jewelry?srsltid=AfmBOopuj\\_vdu3Mo1ibzfoGY06xRdpCYVyndeSY6gIMCNVGknCMhECea](https://dolphingalleries.com/blogs/dolphin-galleries-blog/the-history-and-significance-of-ming-jewelry?srsltid=AfmBOopuj_vdu3Mo1ibzfoGY06xRdpCYVyndeSY6gIMCNVGknCMhECea)

*Qing Dynasty's Jewelry: How the Empress & Her Consorts Used Adornments to Show Love and Power*  
<https://www.caram.de/post/qing-dynasty-jewelry-how-the-empress-used-adornments-to-show-love-and-power>

#### Video

*Exquisite Jewels from the Ming & Qing Dynasties*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TxgTPTeNlRs>

## Session B

### *Beyond the West: The Ottoman Sultans*

*Presented by Roz Kurzer*

#### Reading Assignment

*Imperial Treasury of the Ottoman Sultans*

<https://thediamentalk.in/imperial-treasury-of-ottoman-sultans/>

#### Video

*Historic & Elegant Ottoman Empire Jewelry Collection*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mkyS8cEzC8Y>

## Week 5 – April 21

## Session A

### *Jewels on Display: Unforgettable Museum Experiences*

*Presented by Mary Welch*

#### Reading Assignment

*Van Cleef & Arpels Exhibition "Art of Fine Jewelry" -- Musée des Arts Decoratifs, Paris*

<https://bloggingfromthemas.wordpress.com/2012/12/02/van-cleef-arpels-exhibition-art-of-fine-jewelry-at-the-musee-des-arts-decoratifs/>

*Cartier: Victoria & Albert Museum*

<https://www.vam.ac.uk/exhibitions/cartier?srsId=AfmBOoprjIaltDch8BOeaafuyYKt1tQsEVGEzwhnSUPFgDtX4WPe13SG>

#### Video

*Jewelry: The Body Transformed – Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wx9sTtoL-Qg>

## Session B

### *Movie Day: Topkapi, 1964*

#### *A Spectacular Jewel Heist!*

*A group of international criminals plan to steal an emerald-encrusted dagger from the Topkapi Palace Museum in Istanbul.*

*Watch at home, discuss in class!*

*Stream for free on Pluto: <https://pluto.tv/us/on-demand/movies/60513983e52b47001baf0f07>*

#### Video

*Trailer for Topkapi*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Giv4-gNKePg>

## WEEK 6 – April 28

**Session A**

***Fabulous Collections: The Duchess of Windsor  
Presented by Deborah Chorney***

**Reading Assignment**

*Wallis Simpson: The Duchess of Windsor's Jewels*

<https://www.collectissim.com/en/wallis-simpson-duchess-of-windsors-jewels/>

**Video**

*Duchess of Windsor's Jewelry Collection*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lox86fO9WCA>

**Session B**

***Fabulous Collections: Elizabeth Taylor  
Presented by Karen Borger & Jill Tobak***

**Reading Assignment**

*Elizabeth Taylor: The Fabulous Jewelry Collection*

<https://www.collectissim.com/en/elizabeth-taylor-the-fabulous-jewelry-collection/>

**Video**

*The Collection of Elizabeth Taylor*

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ODPUwi\\_DxMs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ODPUwi_DxMs)

**Week 7 – May 5**

**Session A**

***Legendary Jewels:  
The Hope Diamond & Other Historic Baubles  
Presented by Jonathan Shiff***

**Reading Assignment**

*The 10 Most Iconic Jewels through History*

<https://www.bbc.com/culture/article/20230224-the-10-most-iconic-jewels-through-history>

**Video**

*The Top 5 Most Famous Gemstones in the World*

<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/zCdQIyw3dJw>

*The Hope Diamond: Why Is It the Most Mysterious Gem in History?*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2doFX1TXW5E>

**Session B**  
***Cinematic Sparkle: Jewels in the Movies***  
***Presented by Susan Baugh***

**Reading Assignment**

***The 50 Most Iconic Jewelry Movie Moments of All Time***  
<https://www.harpersbazaar.com/culture/film-to/g65384353/best-movie-jewelry-moments/>

**Video**

***Most Famous Jewellery in the Movies***  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4VfzyG4weKk>

**WEEK 8 – May 12**

***Session A***  
***Bringin' It All Back Home: The Rhode Island Jewelry Industry***  
***Presented by Gloria DePaola***

**Reading Assignment**

***Is Rhode Island Known for Jewelry? A Deep Dive into the State's Glittering Legacy***  
<https://dgjewelry.cn/is-rhode-island-known-for-jewelry-a-deep-dive-into-the-states-glittering-legacy/>

**Video**

***Preserving the Golden Legacy of Providence's Vintage Jewelry***  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uNmK2cToW7c>

***Session B***  
***Jewelry Extravaganza: BYOJ (Bring Your Own Jewels!)***  
***Wrap-Up Discussion***  
***Closing Remarks***

**Guidelines for Presentations**  
***Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend:***  
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***Spring 2026***

***Please Note: Need technical assistance with your presentation? Contact our resident "Tech Guru" Laura Tucker in-person (in the classroom) or by email at [laura.tucker29@gmail.com](mailto:laura.tucker29@gmail.com)***

**Format & Content**

Following our historical timeline, **each week two participants will give a presentation and lead a discussion for the group, one participant in Session A and the other in Session B in our 8-week course.**

**A. Participants will select the topic of their presentations in advance on a first-come, first-served basis from a list prepared by the coordinators.** We will need a total of 12 presenters, so it will be important that most everyone sign up to present depending on our total enrollment. If you wish, you may double up with a partner so long as all sessions are covered.

**B. There are many different formats you may use for your presentation,** including Power Point, Google Slides, videos, film clips, flip charts, and handouts. But no matter what format you use, remember that jewelry is a visual medium **so be sure to include plenty of pictures and visual aids.** If you have items of jewelry that are relevant to your topic, bring them along to show the class! Want to dress up like your favorite bejeweled screen goddess, celebrity, or movie character? ***Do it!***

**C. Many of our topics are historical by definition.** Is there an important timeline of events you wish to cover that will make your presentation more meaningful? If so, focus on chronology as appropriate.

**D. To complement the weekly presentations, the coordinators will assign reading material and videos of reasonable length that are to be reviewed in advance of each class; these can also be used in your presentation if you wish.** You may also wish to suggest an article, video, or some discussion questions to the class ahead of time when you present. If so, you can send out this information yourself, or you can send it to Laura & she will forward it to the class. Please try to get this information to your classmates as early as possible (e.g., at least one week ahead).

**E. Ideally your presentation should be approximately 30 minutes long with an additional 15 minutes for a discussion** led by you afterward, with assistance from the coordinators as needed.

**Research**

A few suggestions for conducting research on your fashion icon:

**A. The Internet has a wealth of information** on the various topics we'll be considering. Just enter a search request – for example, "Elizabeth Taylor's jewelry collection. You may be surprised how much material comes up for your review (e.g., articles, videos, film clips, etc.)!

**B. Books and magazines are another great source of information** (from the local library -- or try Amazon, Abe, E-Bay, etc. if you care to purchase at nominal cost).

C. **The coordinators will provide a selected bibliography** useful for preparing presentations or for optional further study.

D. **Prior discussion of presentation with coordinators (especially Laura!):** The coordinators welcome the opportunity to meet with you before your presentation to discuss your topic and strategize on how to present it. Meetings can be scheduled in person or by phone or email.

#### ***Additional Tips***

A. We'll be studying a very exciting topic – **fabulous jewels!** -- so your audience will be geared up in advance to learn. **Relax and enjoy putting your presentation together for them!**

B. **Get organized!** Your fellow classmates will get the most from your presentation if it is presented systematically. Make an outline – what do you want to say and when do you want to say it? For example, you could start with an introduction that grabs their attention, continue with an illustrated discussion of your topic step-by-step, and end your remarks with a pithy conclusion that stimulates them to learn even more.

C. **Please don't read your entire presentation.** It's fine to work from notes but be sufficiently familiar with your material that you can speak to your classmates naturally. Eye contact is important too!

D. **Rehearse your presentation in advance.** Make sure you can move through your content easily within the allotted time. You might want to get feedback by presenting to a fellow classmate, friend, or family member. Listen to their suggestions and revise your slides/remarks to improve your impact on your audience.

E. **Check and recheck the technology you are using as part of your presentation.** Verify tech compatibility in the classroom the week before your presentation with one of the coordinators, especially Laura, (this will just take a few minutes). Various software programs can be used (PowerPoint, Google Slides, Apple Keynote, etc.) for your presentation. **Laura can provide further details on this.**

F. **For additional excellent suggestions** please consult LLC's Collaborative Learning Guidelines, especially pages 16-24. The link on LLC's website is: <https://www.lifelonglearningcollaborative.org/wp-content/uploads/Guidelines.pdf>

## **Selected Bibliography for Further Reading – Dive Right In!**

★ = Core Selection — recommended starting point

### **Crown Jewels & Royal Collections**

- ★ Anna Keay. *The Crown Jewels: The Official Illustrated History*. Thames & Hudson, 2011.
- Vincent Meylan. *Christie's: The Jewellery Archives Revealed*. ACC Art Books, 2016.
- Diana Scarisbrick. *Tudor and Jacobean Jewellery*. V&A Publishing, 1995.

### **Jewels & Scandal in History**

- ★ Frances Mossiker. *The Affair of the Diamond Necklace*. Phoenix Press, 2001.
- ★ Jonathon Beckman. *How to Ruin a Queen: Marie Antoinette and the Diamond Necklace Affair*. John Murray, 2014.

### **Fabergé & Russian Treasures**

- ★ Toby Faber. *Fabergé's Eggs: The Extraordinary Story of the Masterpieces That Outlived an Empire*. Random House, 2008.
- Géza von Habsburg. *Fabergé: Treasures of Imperial Russia*. Prestel, 2004.

### **Tiffany, Cartier, & Jewelry Houses**

- ★ Hans Nadelhoffer. *Cartier: Jewelers Extraordinary*. Thames & Hudson, 2007.
- John Loring. *Tiffany Style: 170 Years of Design*. Harry N. Abrams, 2008.
- Vivienne Becker. *Fabulous Costume Jewelry*. Thames & Hudson, 2012.

### **Beyond the West**

- Li Jian. *Forbidden City: Imperial Treasures from the Palace Museum, Beijing*. Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, 2014
- Gul Irepoglu. *Imperial Ottoman Jewelry: Reading History Through Jewelry*. BKG, 2012

### **Jewels in Museums & Exhibitions**

- ★ Clare Phillips (ed.). *Jewels and Jewellery*. V&A Publishing, 2019.
- Martin Chapman. *Cartier and America*. Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, 2009.

### **Collectors & Glamour**

- ★ Elizabeth Taylor. *My Love Affair with Jewelry*. Simon & Schuster, 2002.
- Meredith Etherington-Smith. *The Duchess of Windsor: The Uncommon Life of Wallis Simpson*. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1989.

### **Legendary Jewels & Stories**

- ★ Richard Kurin. *Hope Diamond: The Legendary History of a Cursed Gem*. Smithsonian Books, 2010.
- Marion Fasel & Penny Proddow. *Diamonds: A Century of Spectacular Jewels*. Harry N. Abrams, 1996.

### **Hollywood & Fashion**

- ★ Patricia Treble. *Hollywood Jewels: Movies, Jewelry, Stars*. Harry N. Abrams, 1992.
- Joanne Dubbs Ball. *Jewelry of the Stars: Creations from Joseph of Hollywood*. Schiffer, West Chester, 1991