

THE INSTITUTE FOR RETIRED PERSONS (IRP)

HISTORY & GENERAL INFORMATION

HISTORY. In the fall of 1983, Dr. Harold Schaffer, Dean of Continuing Studies at Wilson College, organized a small group of interested local citizens to explore offerings to retired persons. In January 1984, temporary rules were drafted and a steering committee made plans for classes to begin in March. The first semester began on March 6, 1984 with five classes. Subsequently, a first general meeting was held, and the name Institute for Retired Persons was adopted.

By the fall of 1985, IRP classes included creative writing, conversational Spanish, and music. As the membership grew, classes were moved to Prentice Hall, and subsequently to the Science Center. In 1987, the IRP curriculum expanded to the current eight-week schedule with 39 lectures per semester. By the fall of 2007, the IRP had expanded to more than 300 members, with lectures held in both the Science Center and Laird Hall.

In the spring of 2018, Wednesday lectures were moved to Thomson Hall. For the last several years, we have had between 351 and 445 members enrolled, with an average of more than 80 persons attending lectures.

ORGANIZATION. The IRP is a 501(c)3 non-profit institution. All donations to the IRP are tax-deductible.

LOCATIONS. The IRP meets at Wilson College, located at 1015 Philadelphia Avenue (which is also US Route 11), Chambersburg, PA 17201, approximately one mile north of downtown Chambersburg. Normally, Tuesday and Thursday lectures meet in Wilson College's Harry L. Brooks Complex (also known as the Science Center) auditorium, and on the four Wednesdays in Thomson Hall. Some lectures may be at different Wilson College locations. On some occasions, lectures may be held at other locations in the Greater Chambersburg area.

For directions to Wilson College, with a campus map, see the About IRP page of the IRP website at IRP-online.org.

NOTE: No food or drink is permitted in the Science Center Auditorium or in Thomson Hall. Smoking is prohibited anywhere on the Wilson College campus.

TIMES. Normally, two sixty-minute lectures are scheduled three mornings a week in eight-week semesters in the Spring (usually beginning the first or second week of March) and in the Fall (usually beginning the second week of September). Each lecture is followed by a fifteen minute questions-and-answers session. There are two morning lectures on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, except for four Wednesdays, which are set aside for excursions, and the last lecture day, which usually has one lecture and a members meeting. All lecture days begin at 9:00 AM and finish at 11:45 AM, with a 15 minute break between lectures. The schedule for each semester may have minor modifications to this format if there are too few qualified volunteer speakers, fewer than four volunteers to plan, organize, coordinate and supervise four bus trips, for bus trips on a day other than a Wednesday, for multiple-day bus trips, or for some other reason.

THE IRP EXPERIENCE. Members attend only those lectures that interest them; attendance is taken by head-count for each lecture, not by members' names. There are neither exams, nor homework, nor grades. Most speakers welcome questions from the audience, either during or after the presentation. The interval between lectures provides a chance for socializing, and possibly, interaction with the speaker.

In recent semesters, we averaged approximately 390 members enrolled per semester and more than 80 attendees per lecture.

SPEAKERS & LECTURE TOPICS. Speakers come from within the membership, the nearby community, academic institutions and government agencies; all are unpaid volunteers who have addressed a wide range of topics. Over time these have included archaeology, art, current events, economics, engineering, financial planning, geography, health & medicine, history, hobbies, literature, local interest, math, the military, nature, philosophy, physical sciences, political science, religion, sports, taxes, technology, travel, and more — a true potpourri.

To view or download the synopses for all lectures and bus trips since the Spring 2012 semester, visit the References page of the IRP website at IRP-online.org.

To see a list of all lecture topics presented in recent years by academic area, visit the Past Semesters page of the IRP website at IRP-online.org.

EXCURSIONS. Normally, excursions are planned for four of the eight Wednesdays of each semester. Each is a one-day bus trip to a place or places of interest, within a few hours drive from Chambersburg. On rare occasions, an IRP bus trip may be two or more days, or on a day other than Wednesday.

Trip departure locations are announced as far in advance as practical; typically, departure time is before 8:00 AM, with a return time by 7:00 PM.

The per-person cost varies depending on the trip location and other factors, but is usually between \$55 and \$110 per person for the typical one-day trip; cost is not included in the enrollment fee. Members usually receive a discounted price, and guests are welcome on a limited basis.

Trip sign-up dates are listed in the IRP schedule which is published approximately one month prior to each semester. Trip spaces are limited, so to give all members a fair chance to obtain a space, sign-up must be in person on the sign-up date. Trip sign-up is at the location of the lectures on the sign-up date. Typically members are in line when the doors open, usually well before 8:30 AM, prior to the first lecture.

Members may bring one guest; non-members will be accepted only after all member reservations have been accommodated. If there are spaces remaining after the initial sign-up date, reservations may be accepted by phone.

To view or download the synopses for all lectures and bus trips since the Spring 2012 semester, visit the References page of the IRP website at IRP-online.org.

To see a list of all previous bus trips since the Spring 2012 semester, visit the Past Semesters page of the IRP website at IRP-online.org.

SPECIAL EVENTS. Some semesters have one or more special events scheduled. These may include an IRP Anniversary Dinner, a special ethnic luncheon, or some other special event. The cost for attending special events is not included in the enrollment fee.

MEMBERSHIP ENROLLMENT. Membership in the IRP is open to anyone retired from his or her principal field of work.

The enrollment fee, paid each semester, is \$25 for a single member or \$40 for a couple, and covers attendance for all 39 lectures. Member enrollment does not include the cost of excursions or special events.

If members choose to do so, each spring we accept enrollment for the entire year if the members pay \$50 for one person or \$80 for a couple. While there is no discount for enrollment fee, it does save members time and postage cost to enroll for two semesters at one time.

Members who enroll by postal mail prior to the beginning of the semester will receive confirmation of their enrollment in the weekly bulletin sent by email approximately four or five days prior to the beginning of the semester. New members are provided an IRP identification badge, usually available the first time they attend a lecture, the week after the enrollment form is received.

Members are asked to retain and reuse their IRP identification badge for all subsequent semesters in which they enroll.

Please see the Enrollment page of the IRP website at IRP-online.org for instructions on how to join the IRP and download an enrollment form.

INFORMATION DISSEMINATION. A paper-copy IRP brochure [which includes the schedule, trip information, enrollment form, and a memo from the IRP Director] will be mailed to each member on the IRP mailing list, approximately one month prior to the beginning of each semester. Members may receive information by email only, or in the paper-copy brochure, or both. The enrollment form provides a place for members to provide or update their contact information. In order to minimize mailing costs and enrollment fees, lecture synopses are distributed prior to each semester by email, not in paper copy through the postal mail. The lecture synopses are also available in pdf format for download on the Synopses page of this website. Members without email or internet capability may obtain a paper copy of the synopses in person on each lecture day.

In keeping with our policy of cooperation with Wilson College, we will include information about Wilson College Common Hour lectures in the IRP weekly bulletins, unless they conflict with IRP scheduled lectures. Additional information about Common Hour lectures can be seen at: wilson.edu/common-hour.

The IRP also cooperates with other academic institutions by sharing information about educational activities and events that may be of interest to IRP members or other senior citizens in the greater Chambersburg area.

PRIVACY. The IRP does NOT sell or share personal information (address, phone number, email, etc. of members or volunteer speakers) with other persons or organizations.

HOW THE IRP OPERATES. The IRP has no paid staff and thus relies on energetic members with innovative ideas to contribute to its success. All functions of the group — from tracking membership, to managing finance, to planning programs — are performed by a dedicated group of volunteers. The IRP has no physical location at Wilson College other than a mail box and the use of the two auditoriums. The IRP staff welcomes suggestions and volunteers – see the Suggestions page or Volunteer page of the IRP website at IRP-online.org.

The IRP is a 501(c)3 institution; all donations to the IRP are tax deductible.

AT WILSON COLLEGE. Three parking lots are available to IRP members on lecture days. These include the Rosenkrans parking lot (at the south end of the campus), the Science Center parking lot (on the east / Edgar Avenue side of the Science Center), and in the Hankey Center parking lot (at the north end of the campus). These parking lots are shown on the map of Wilson College, available for viewing or download on the About IRP page of the IRP website at IRP-online.org. Vehicles with handicap tags are welcome in any handicap spot.

Student enrollment is continuing to increase at Wilson College and parking spaces are limited. We encourage IRP members to car-pool with other members as much as possible.

Food and drink are not allowed in any lecture hall.

Wilson College is a smoke-free campus; please do not smoke in any of the facilities or anywhere else on campus.

2020 CORONA VIRUS PANDEMIC. The Spring 2020 semester was terminated after the second week because of the pandemic shutdown. Because of the significantly increased risk of contracting the virus in large-group gatherings and a much higher lethality risk for senior citizens, the Fall 2020 semester was cancelled on June 27, 2020, prior to the publication of a schedule.

Enrollment was suspended indefinitely.

WEATHER CANCELLATIONS. IRP sessions will not meet in the event that Chambersburg schools are closed or delayed for bad weather or other emergencies.

Call 717-261-5680 for updates.

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