

Learn from the masters

Take online classes from famous high achievers

School's out for the summer, but that doesn't mean you have to stop learning.

You probably don't want to spend a hot July day sitting in a classroom while a dry as dust teacher drones on about some arcane subject. But what if you could learn how to

make movies from masters such as Ron Howard or Martin Scorsese? Wouldn't it be a gas to take comedy lessons from Steve Martin or Judd Apatow? How about mastering chess with Garry Kasparov, journal-

ism with Bob Woodward, singing with Christina Aguilera, conservation with Jane Goodall or tennis with Serena Williams?

Masterclass.com offers online courses with some of the biggest names in a wide variety of disciplines. All of the people mentioned above offer courses as well as many others, including acting with Samuel L. Jackson, architecture with Frank Gehry, basketball with Stephen Curry, screenwriting with Aaron Sorkin and jazz with Herbie Hancock.

The courses aren't free. You can take individual classes for \$90 or get access to all of the classes for \$180 a year. The lessons are divided into short video segments that you can watch at your leisure. A class may be comprised of 25 to 30 or more of these segments.

The celebrity teachers all have short trailers you can watch to get an idea of what their courses entail. The site also has an option to try a free seven-day trial period before you commit. The courses can be viewed on a desktop computer or on mobile devices with the MasterClass app.

I haven't taken any of the courses, so I can't vouch for the quality of the instruction. But the site has an impressive roster of talent. It's hard to imagine any of these people attaching their name to a shoddy enterprise just to make a buck. None of them appear to be hurting for money, so I assume the classes have some value.

The site itself is slickly designed. A black background unifies all of the pages. The photos and videos used to promote the classes are all well-lit and professionally shot. The typography is clean and organized. The navigation is OK, but it could use a navigation bar at the top to make all the sections more easily accessible.

Since I didn't sign up for any courses, I don't know how the user experience is once you get "inside" the classes. The site advertises exclusive video content, workbooks and online communities for members. I suppose you could do worse than learning to cook from Gordon Ramsay.

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