

PALAC ... where people and ideas meet

STUDY DISCUSSION PROGRAMS WINTER 2025

PALAC offers continuing liberal arts education to adults of the San Gabriel Valley and beyond. If you enjoy the excitement and stimulation of discussing ideas in a new learning situation, whatever your educational background, you're welcome in any of PALAC's programs.

We are offering some groups in person and others on Zoom. But since we can never be sure about the evolution of COVID, our plans regarding holding groups on Zoom, in-person indoors, or outside might change. The locations for all groups appear after the discussion group's description and meeting details. For outdoor groups, if the weather is bad, the leader may choose to hold the session for that day on Zoom rather than outdoors. For groups that are in a park, please bring your hat, chair, and snack. **For all in-person sessions, full vaccination is required.**

JOIN US PALAC offers additional advantages and activities to members. Membership is just \$30 per person or \$50 per couple for the calendar year. Call 626 797-2380 for details or mail your registration and check to PALAC, 1015 N. Lake Ave., Suite 108, Pasadena, CA 91104.

REGISTER Now is the time to also pay your 2025 membership dues, allowing you to pay for groups at the discounted membership rate. Please send them in with your Winter registration form and check.

Most groups are limited to 10-15 participants. This provides a comfortable, intimate atmosphere for discussion. Early registration will help assure you a place in your selected group. If you register close to the time the group begins, please contact the office to verify group openings. You will receive confirmation of your selected group(s) by email if you have email.

Get your registration form in ASAP. Please! Once again, we will use a lottery system to give everyone an equal chance to get in their chosen groups. For those discussion groups and safaris that are oversubscribed, the office will hold a lottery about two weeks after the program brochure is published. Be sure to get your registration form and payment to the office before the lottery. And don't forget, dues-paying members receive priority.

We will order books approximately three weeks before each group begins. If you plan to drop a group, please let us know before then, or we will not be able to refund you the cost of the book.

New leaders and hosts are the lifeblood of PALAC. Please call the office to volunteer: 626-797-2380.

DATES TO REMEMBER

Annual Meeting
TBD late January
11:30 am – 3:00 pm
Place TBD

**Program Planning Meeting
for Summer and Fall**
TBD day in the last week in March, 9:30 – noon
Place TBD

WINTER SESSION 2025

101 Selected Articles in the Natural Sciences

As a group, we will select articles from Scientific American, Science magazine and the NY Times science section. Selections will mostly, but not exclusively, lean towards the natural sciences. Come learn about and discuss the latest trends and discoveries in biology, medicine and the like.

Friday, 10 am, Jan 3, 10, 17, 24; Feb 7, 14

Leader Susan Kane **Members \$10**
Host Gay Bruveris **Non-Members \$20**
Place Pasadena

102 The Economist magazine

A review and discussion of selected articles from The Economist magazine. Participants are sent copies of articles about events and people around the world and they are expected to relate their views on each article.

Friday, 2 pm, Jan 3, 10, 17, 24, 31; Feb 7

Leader David Whitcomb **Members \$10**
Zoom **Non-Members \$20**

103 Movie Adaptations of Short Stories

This is another session of a very popular group that took place during the summer. However, it will be modified slightly—there will be only one session a month and participants do not need to buy the book *Adaptations: From Short Story to Big Screen* by Stephanie Harrison. Approximately two weeks

before each session, the leader will send participants a copy of the short story that inspired the film and information regarding the streaming services where the film is available. The discussion will be based on a comparison between short story and movie. The cost of streaming will be borne by the participant.

Monday, 4 pm, Jan 6; Feb 3; Mar 3

Leader Charles Schufreider, Prakash Shrivastava,
Coralie Whitcomb **Members \$10**
Zoom **Non-Members \$20**

104 Outline: A Novel by Rachel Cusk

Outline is a novel in ten conversations. Spare and lucid, it follows a novelist teaching a course in creative writing over an oppressively hot summer in Athens. She leads her students in storytelling exercises. She meets other visiting writers for dinner. She goes swimming in the Ionian Sea with her neighbor from the plane. The people she encounters speak volubly about themselves: their fantasies, anxieties, pet theories, regrets, and longings. And through these disclosures, a portrait of the narrator is drawn by contrast, a portrait of a woman learning to face a great loss. ISBN-13: 978-1250081544

Tuesday, 2 pm, Jan 7, 14, 21, 28

Leader John Swain **Members \$23**
Host John Swain **Non-Members \$33**
Place Pasadena

105 The Rebel Angels by Robertson Davies

Gypsies, defrocked monks, a mad professor with a passion for the dark side of medieval psychology, and wealthy eccentrics—a memorable cast populates Robertson Davies' brilliant spectacle of theft, murder, scholarship, and lust for the beautiful coed that beguiles them all. The novel is set at a Canadian university, and is a total delight. ISBN-13: 978-0670590636

Wednesday, 10:30 am, Jan 8, 15, 22, 29

Leader Stanley Oropesa **Members \$26**
Host Tony Koerner **Non-Members \$36**
Place Pasadena

106 Current Movies, Wednesdays

As a group, we will choose the films either from a local theater or from a streaming source. We will watch them independently and then meet at El Portal Restaurant in Pasadena for discussion. Participants will pay for movie tickets or rental. Please only sign up if you anticipate being available for a majority of the meeting dates.

Wednesday, 3 pm, Jan 8, 22; Feb 5, 19; Mar 5, 19

Leader Lane Dolan **Members \$10**
Non-Members \$20
Place Pasadena, El Portal Restaurant, inside or outside

107 Creation Lake by Rachel Kushner

This is the author's second Booker Prize short-listed novel. A woman is caught in the crossfire between the past and the future in this part-spy novel, part-profound treatise on human history. Sadie Smith, a 34-year-old American undercover agent of ruthless tactics, bold opinions and clean beauty, is sent by her mysterious but powerful employers to a remote corner of France. Her mission: to infiltrate a commune of radical eco-activists led by the charismatic Svengali Bruno Lacombe. This is a work of high art, high comedy, and irresistible pleasure, from the author of the also Booker Prize-nominated *The Mars Room*. ISBN-13: 978-1982116521

Thursday, 10 am, Jan 9, 16, 23, 30

Leader Patrick Mathews **Members \$39**
Host Patrick Mathews **Non-Members \$49**
Place Pasadena

108 Classic Literature Through Short Stories

This group will explore world classic literature, as viewed through short stories written by internationally prominent authors. Short stories can be read in a short time compared to longer novels and yet reveal many fundamental human situations around the world.

Monday, 12 noon, Jan 13; Feb 17; Mar 17

Leader Prakash Shrivastava **Members \$10**
Zoom **Non-Members \$20**

109 Movie STARS, Winter 2025 - Group A

Discussion of critically acclaimed and notable movies, present and past, and from all over the world. Selected movies will be viewed online prior to each meeting. Streaming choices are usually available in free, subscription, or pay-per-view format. Costs will be borne by the viewer. Links to view each movie online are provided for each meeting. For examples of movies from past seasons, email leader - jkliu47@gmail.com.

Sunday, 4 pm, Jan 12, 26; Feb 9, 23; Mar 9, 23

Leader James Liu **Members \$10**
Zoom **Non-Members \$20**

110 Movie STARS, Winter 2025 - Group B

See Movie STARS, Winter 2025 - Group A.

Monday, 4 pm, Jan 13, 27; Feb 10, 24; Mar 10, 24

Leader James Liu **Members \$10**
Zoom **Non-Members \$20**

111 Movie STARS, Winter 2025 - Group C

See Movie STARS, Winter 2025 - Group A.

Monday, 7 pm, Jan 13, 27; Feb 10, 24; Mar 10, 24

Leader James Liu **Members \$10**
Zoom **Non-Members \$20**

112 Developing an Eye for Life - Photography of Our Surroundings and Adventures

A photo journey into our lives: each participant will present up to three photos taken that week of anything that has caught their eye. All photos will be welcomed; just bring your story. The photos will be emailed to the leader, to be shown in large format on a TV.

Wednesday, 3 pm, Jan 15, 29; Feb 12, 26

Leader Gay Bruveris

Members \$10

Host Gay Bruveris

Non-Members \$20

Place Pasadena

113 First Person Singular by Haruki Murakami

Haruki Murakami is a popular contemporary Japanese writer and translator. His work has been described as easily accessible, yet profoundly complex. Eight masterful stories in this new collection are all told in the first person by a classic Murakami narrator, a lonely man. Some are nostalgic looks back at youth; others are set in adulthood. The stories all touch beautifully on love and loss, childhood and death, all with a signature Murakami twist. The reader is left to decide if these stories are memoir or fiction. ISBN-13: 978-0593311189

Monday, 2 pm, Feb 3, 10, 17, 24

Leader Sue Komarek and

Tony Koerner

Members \$25

Host Tony Koerner

Non-Members \$35

Place Pasadena

114 An Unfinished Love Story: A Personal History of the 1960s by Doris Kearns Goodwin

Dick and Doris Goodwin were married for 42 years and married to American history even longer. Dick named and helped design Lyndon Johnson's Great Society and was a speechwriter and close advisor to Robert Kennedy. Doris was a 24-year-old graduate student when selected as a White House Fellow working directly for Lyndon Johnson and later assisting on his memoir. The Goodwins' last great adventure involved finally opening the more than 300 boxes of letters, diaries, documents, and memorabilia that Dick had saved for more than 50 years – an unparalleled personal time capsule of the 1960s, illuminating public and private moments of a decade when individuals were powered by the conviction they could make a difference; a time, like today, marked by struggles for racial and economic justice, a time when lines were drawn and loyalties tested. ISBN-13: 978-1982108663

Tuesday, 2 pm, Feb 4, 11, 18, 25; Mar 4

Leader Bob Diller

Members \$33

Host Ruth Judkins

Non-Members \$43

Place Altadena

115 Blood Memory: the Tragic Decline and Improbable Resurrection of the American Buffalo by Dayton Duncan and Ken Burns

The buffalo is the iconic beast of the American frontier. It was central to the lives of Native Americans, and both were victims of the westward expansion of the United States. This book was written to accompany the Ken Burns PBS documentary "The American Buffalo", available to watch via streaming. We will discuss both book and documentary as they trace an arc of destruction, resilience and recovery, and what this tells us about America. ISBN-13: 978-0593537343

Wednesday, 7 pm, Feb 5, 12, 19

Leader Katherine Gavzy

Members \$32

Host Katherine Gavzy

Non-Members \$42

Place Altadena

116 The Age-Proof Brain -- New Strategies to Improve Memory, Protect Immunity & Fight Off Dementia by Marc Milstein, PhD

Here is an opportunity to find out the latest science on how and why our brain ages from an expert who follows the latest developments and is known for making the science not just easy to understand, but actionable. Described as a life-changing book, it offers us an opportunity to live our best lives, including boosting our focus, sleeping better and stressing less, along with new medical understandings for why that is so important. ISBN-13: 978-1637741429

Thursday, 2 pm, Feb 6, 13, 20, 27

Leader Deborah Fox

Members \$29

Host Deborah Fox

Non-Members \$39

Place South Pasadena

117 Great Decisions 2025

The Foreign Policy Association, an independent, non-profit organization, publishes *Great Decisions*, a yearly series of in-depth articles by policy experts and global thinkers. The leader, with participants' input, will choose six articles from the series for discussion. Options are: "American Foreign Policy at a Crossroads," "U.S. Changing Leadership of the World Economy," "U.S.-China Relations," "India: Between China, the West, and the Global South," "International Cooperation on Climate Change," "The Future of NATO and European Security," "AI and American Security," and "After Gaza: American Policy in the Middle East."

Friday, 12 noon, Feb 14, 21, 28; Mar 7, 14, 21

Leader Bhargav Oza

Members \$47

Host Margaret Hostrup

Non-Members \$57

Place Pasadena

118 *The Best American Science and Nature Writing 2024* by Bill McKibben and Jaime Green

Award-winning environmentalist, author, and journalist Bill McKibben selects 20 science and nature essays that represent the best examples of the form published in the previous year. “This was the most anomalous year (so far) in human history,” guest editor Bill McKibben writes, “the year in which the relationship between people and planet showed its most dramatic signs yet of unraveling.” The selections in *The Best American Science and Nature Writing 2024* reveal a trying year for our planet—from the Lahaina wildfire tragedy to the lush Amazon jungle slowly turning to savanna—while also celebrating the earth’s beautiful and mysterious ways—from the largest beaver dam on earth to the heroic innovation to prevent birds from crashing into Chicago’s expanse of glass buildings. These essays offer solace in trying times, showing a way for a better future. They are, as McKibben says, “a reminder that this world is still a lovely and deep place, well worth the fighting for.” NOTE: If Group enrollment exceeds ten, discussions will be taken to Zoom (online). ISBN-13: 978-0063333994

Friday, 2 pm, Feb 21, 28; Mar 7, 14, 21, 28

Leader David Whitcomb

Members \$27

Host Fran Blackwell

Non-Members \$37

Place Pasadena

119 *Inheritance - The Evolutionary Origins of the Modern World* by Harvey Whitehouse

This book offers a sweeping account of how our biases have shaped humanity’s past and imperil its future. Using a pioneering new way of viewing our collective history that weaves together psychological experiments, fieldwork, and big data, the author argues that three biases drive human behavior everywhere: conformism, religiosity, and tribalism. The author then uses these three biases to try and save our future. ISBN-13: 978-1529152234

Tuesday, 4 pm, Mar 4, 11, 18, 25

Leader Gay Bruveris

Members \$33

Host Gay Bruveris

Non-Members \$43

Place Pasadena

120 What Makes a Good Short Story: comparing authors Tessa Hadley and Graham Swift

Both Tessa Hadley in “After the Funeral” (New Yorker 3/28/2022) and Graham Swift in “Hinges” (New Yorker 11/21/2022) demonstrate that they are masters of their craft. Each author takes a different approach to similar subject matter. We will compare and contrast their styles and ultimately address the question: “What makes a good short story?” Copies of the stories will be e-mailed to participants approximately two weeks before the session.

Thursday, 10 am, Mar 6, 20

Leader Charles Schufreider
Zoom

Members \$10
Non-Members \$20

121 *Nexus - A Brief History of Information Networks from the Stone Age to AI* by Yuval Noah Harari

Nexus considers how the flow of information has shaped us, and our world. Taking us from the Stone Age through the Bible, and the resurgence of populism today, Harari discusses the complex relationship between information and truth, bureaucracy, wisdom and power. He explores how different societies and political systems have wielded information to achieve their goals, for good and ill. He addresses the urgent choices we face as non-human intelligence threatens our very existence. ISBN-13: 978-0593734223

Thursday, 2 pm, Mar 6, 13, 20, 27; Apr 3

Leader Judy Blanton

Members \$36

Host Susan Zucker

Non-Members \$46

Place Pasadena

122 *Cane River* by Lalita Tademy

Beginning with her great-great-great-great grandmother, a slave owned by a Creole family, Lalita Tademy chronicles four generations of strong, determined black women as they battle injustice to unite their family and forge success on their own terms. They are women whose lives begin in slavery, who weather the Civil War, and who grapple with contradictions of emancipation, Jim Crow, and the pre-Civil Rights South. As she peels back layers of racial and cultural attitudes, Tademy paints a remarkable picture of rural Louisiana and the resilient spirit of one unforgettable family. ISBN-13: 978-0446678452

Tuesday, 12 noon, Mar 11, 18, 25

Leader Susan McKinley

Members \$26

Hosts Lisa Darling & Carolyn Karpin

Non-Members \$36

Place Alhambra

SAFARIS

S01 A trip to the Broad Museum by Metro A Line

Attendees can meet at Del Mar Station to ride (\$0.35 each way) together to the Bunker Hill station very close to the Broad. Or they can drive/carpool on their own and meet at the Broad entrance. Tickets to the Infinity Mirror Rooms exhibits will be reserved one month prior to visit. Entrance is free to the public. Museum parking is available at \$17 for 3 hrs. Museum is ADA compliant and has wheelchairs. Optional no-host lunch afterwards at a nearby restaurant.

<https://www.thebroad.org/>

Tuesday, 11 am, Jan 14

Leader Susan Phifer

Members \$5

Non-Members \$10

Place 221 S Grand Ave, Los Angeles

S02 Frederick R. Weisman Art Foundation

tour

This Mediterranean-style villa has hand-painted ceilings, stucco details, and wood-inlaid floors. It contains the 20th Century art collection of Fred and Billie Weisman. Over 400 works of art include those by Cezanne, Picasso, Kandinsky, Ernst, Miro, Magritte, and Warhol. An additional annex and garden hold large works by de Kooning, Rothko, Frankenthaler, Lichtenstein, and others. The private docent tour provides information about the collection and the family's efforts to create it. Carpooling recommended - very limited parking. Stairs and crowded spaces may be too strenuous for those with walking/standing difficulties.

<https://www.weismanfoundation.org/>

Thursday, 1:30 pm, Jan 30

Leader Judy Blanton

Members \$5

Non-Members \$10

Place 265 N Carolwood Dr, Los Angeles

S03 Birth of the Movies

Bob Koster has been lecturing on cinema history for almost two decades on the college level. One of the more fascinating subjects is "How Movies were Invented." Actually, the first movie films as we understand the term were invented by a Frenchman in Connecticut, who took the first films with his camera in Leeds, England. The story of his work and the subsequent fight with the Edison Corporation is just fascinating. We can even see the first films ever made. Note: Per Villa Gardens policy, no walk-ins are permitted; prior registration is required for attendance.

TBD day and date, 2 pm

Leader Bob Koster

Members FREE

Host Gaye Shepard

Non-Members FREE

Place Villa Gardens, 842 E. Villa Street, Pasadena

S04 Academy Museum of Motion Pictures

The Academy Museum of Motion Picture contains seven floors and is the largest museum in the United States devoted to the arts, sciences and artists of moviemaking. Exhibits which will be available in March include: Significant Movies and Moviemakers; Hollywoodland; Stories of Cinema; Inventing Words and Characters; Animation; and Color in Motion and Film Programs. Fanny's Restaurant in the museum offers lunch, dinner and "grab and go" options. Please wear comfortable shoes. Handicap accessible. Registration fee includes Group Senior pass (\$17). Carpooling is recommended. Paid parking is available at nearby LACMA (\$20) or the Petersen Automotive Museum (\$21).

<https://www.academymuseum.org/en>

Wednesday, 10 am, Mar 12

Leader Carolyn Karpin

Members \$22

Non-Members \$27

Place 6067 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles 90036

Option to purchase books yourself

The Board has decided that all books purchased for our groups will be sent directly from Amazon to your homes. However, if you wish to support another bookseller by purchasing your books there, the cost of any group will be \$10 for members and \$20 for non-members (unless there is a ticket or other expense involved). We have included the ISBN in our group descriptions to ensure that you purchase the correct edition of the book.

In our program brochure, PALAC publishes the cost of each discussion group. This includes the price of the book, convenient delivery to your home, and office overhead. If you choose to buy your own book rather than using the office's book delivery system, we request that you follow these simple steps:

- When filling out your registration form, adjust the price to \$10 for members or \$20 for non-members.
- When completing your registration form, check the option that says "I will be responsible for buying my own books."
- Jot a note to yourself to remind yourself to order or buy the book. Be sure to order your book early to give the bookstore or online service time to check availability!
- Keep the ISBN in the brochure handy when ordering online or shopping at a store. This ensures you will have the same edition of the book as the rest of the group.

(Note: Buying your own book may end up costing you more than if the office orders the book for you.)