

PALAC ... where people and ideas meet

STUDY DISCUSSION PROGRAMS SPRING 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 If you have not already done so, now is the time to pay your 2025 membership dues, allowing you to pay for groups at the discounted membership rate. Please send them in with your Spring 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

Program Planning Meeting for Summer and Fall

Wednesday, March 26, 9:30 am – 12:30 pm
La Casita Del Arroyo
177 S. Arroyo Blvd. Pasadena, CA 91105

Potluck

Saturday, June 7 at the Wilanders'

SPRING SESSION 2025

201 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, Apr 2, 16; May 7, 21; Jun 4, 18

Leader Lane Dolan

Members \$10

Non-Members \$20

Place Pasadena, El Portal Restaurant, inside or outside

202 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, Apr 4, 11, 18, 25; May 2, 9

Leader David Whitcomb

Members \$10

Zoom

Non-Members \$20

203 Movie STARS, Spring 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, Apr 6, 20; May 4, 18; Jun 1, 15

Leader James Liu

Members \$10

Zoom

Non-Members \$20

204 Movie STARS, Spring 2025 - Group B

See Movie STARS, Winter 2025 - Group A

Monday, 4 pm, Apr 7, 21; May 5, 19; Jun 2, 16

Leader James Liu

Members \$10

Zoom

Non-Members \$20

205 Movie STARS, Spring 2025 - Group C

See Movie STARS, Winter 2025 - Group A

Monday, 7 pm, Apr 7, 21; May 5, 19; Jun 2, 16

Leader James Liu

Members \$10

Zoom

Non-Members \$20

206 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, Apr 7; May 5; Jun 2

Leader Prakash Shrivastava

Members \$10

Zoom

Non-Members \$20

207 A Brief History of Intelligence:

***Evolution, AI, and the Five Breakthroughs That Made Our Brains* by Max Bennett**

This book offers a paradigm shift for how we understand neuroscience and AI. Max Bennett chronicles the five “breakthroughs” in the evolution of human intelligence and reveals what brains of the past can tell us about the AI of tomorrow. ISBN-13: 978-0063286351

Tuesday, 2 pm, Apr 8, 15, 22, 29

Leader Gay Bruveris

Members \$33

Host Gay Bruveris

Non-Members \$43

Place Pasadena

208 Movie - 12 Angry Men (1997)

12 Angry Men is a 1957 American legal drama directed by Sidney Lumet in his feature directorial debut, adapted by Reginald Rose from his 1954 teleplay. A critique of the American jury system during the McCarthy Era, the film tells the story of a jury of twelve men as they deliberate the conviction or acquittal of a teenager charged with murder. While considering the charges, disagreement and conflict among the jurors forces them to question their morals and values. It stars an ensemble cast, featuring Henry Fonda (who also produced the film with Rose), Lee J. Cobb, Ed Begley, E. G. Marshall, and Jack Warden.

Wednesday, 2 pm, Apr 9

Leader Marjorie Levin

Members \$5

Zoom

Non-Members \$10

209 *The Wager: A Tale of Shipwreck, Mutiny, and Murder* by David Grann

After three groups dissecting the works of James Joyce, I was ready for an easy-to-read adventure. This was it! From the author of *Killers of the Flower Moon*, it is a grand tale of human behavior at the extremes, a page-turning story of shipwreck, survival, savagery, and reckoning. The powerful narrative is not only a spell-binding story but raises issues about power, morality and the rule of law. Occurring in the mid-18th century it deals with themes that are applicable to current times. ISBN-13: 978-0385534260

Tuesday, 10 am, Apr 15, 22, 29

Leader Tony Koerner

Members \$28

Host Sue Hogan

Non-Members \$38

Place Pasadena

210 *The Righteous Mind - Why Good*

***People are Divided by Politics and Religion* by Jonathan Haidt**

Respected social psychologist Jonathan Haidt suggests that we use six key aspects to establish our sense of morality and make judgments: care/harm, fairness/cheating, loyalty/betrayal, authority/subversion, sanctity/degradation, and liberty/oppression. Different political and cultural groups emphasize these aspects differently, leading to misunderstandings and communication barriers. In this session, we will examine our own moral systems using Haidt’s Moral Foundations Test and discuss how his ideas can help us communicate more effectively across political and cultural divides. ISBN-13: 978-0307455772

Thursday, 2 pm, Apr 17, 24; May 1, 8, 15

Leader Judy Blanton

Members \$22

Host Deborah Fox

Non-Members \$32

Place So. Pasadena

211 *Empire of the Summer Moon – Quanah Parker and the Rise and Fall of the Comanches, the Most Powerful Indian Tribe in American History* by S.C. Gwynne

The enthralling and tragic story of what happened when the relentless westward push of white settlers met the powerful and dominant Comanches and the legendary last Comanche war chief, Quanah Parker. This well-researched history, a Pulitzer Prize finalist, reads like a novel. Recommended background: view the John Ford classic film, *The Searchers*, based on the true story of Quanah Parker's captive mother; read *Bury my Heart at Wounded Knee* by Dee Brown. ISBN-13: 978-1416591061

Thursday, 12 noon, Apr 17, 24; May 1

Leader Katherine Gavzy

Members \$26

Zoom

Non-Members \$36

212 Short Stories from "Whatever

Happens, Probably Will" by John MacIlroy

We will explore two short stories drawn from "Whatever Happens, Probably Will". In this debut short story collection, John W. MacIlroy masterfully captures the moments when everything changes, revealing the heart of each character and the fullness of human experience. Some stories unfold with a sly wink, while others creep in slowly before delivering a bold final twist. Set in forgotten factory towns, quiet Midwestern streets and Southern cemeteries, these richly drawn tales embrace the gravitational pull of the past.

Tuesday, 12 noon, April 29

Leader Beth Mael

Members \$5

Zoom

Non-Members \$10

213 James: A Novel by Percival Everett

A brilliant, action-packed reimagining of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, both harrowing and darkly humorous, told from the enslaved Jim's point of view. When the enslaved Jim overhears that he is about to be sold to a man in New Orleans, separated from his wife and daughter forever, he decides to hide on nearby Jackson Island until he can formulate a plan. Meanwhile, Huck Finn has faked his own death to escape his violent father, who has recently returned to town. As all readers of American literature know, thus begins the dangerous and transcendent journey by raft down the Mississippi River toward the elusive and too-often-unreliable promise of the Free States and beyond. ISBN-13: 978-0385550369

Friday, 12 noon, May 2, 9, 16, 23

Leader Susan Kane

Members \$30

Host Louis Rubenstein

Non-Members \$40

Place Arcadia

214 No Democracy Lasts Forever by Erwin Chemerinsky

The Constitution has become a threat to American democracy. Due to its inherent flaws—its treatment of race, dependence on a tainted Electoral College, a glaringly unrepresentative Senate, and the outsized influence of the Supreme Court—Erwin Chemerinsky, the dean of Berkeley Law School and one of our foremost legal scholars, has come to the sobering conclusion that our nearly 250-year-old founding document can no longer hold. ISBN-13: 978-1324096887

Tuesday, 2 pm, May 6, 13, 20 and Tuesday, 11:30 am, May 27

Leader Carla Barnes

Members \$41

Host Fran Blackwell

Non-Members \$51

Place Pasadena

215 Play Reading: Harvey by Mary Chase

Come join us for a play reading of *Harvey* by Mary Chase with scripts in hand! Over the space of two weeks, we will choose and assign parts, have fun with costumes and characters, and read through the whole play. This is a very funny script with all sorts of antics involving Veta Louise, Myrtle Mae, and Elwood P. Dowd, who is often in conversation with Harvey, an invisible six-foot rabbit! There is Dr. Chumley, the psychiatrist, and Martin Wilson, his muscle man, and the ever lovely Miss Kelly, whose love is often ignored. With plenty of parts, you will be very welcome. And if you like playing the ham, you'll love this two-Saturday experience. Even better, if you have a few odd hats in your closet, bring them!

Saturday, 4 pm, May 24, 31

Leader Patti Brugman & Adrienne Bass **Members \$10**

Host Patti Brugman

Non-Members \$20

Place Pasadena

216 Movie Adaptations of Short Stories

Continuing the popular discussion groups that compare notable movies with the short stories they are based on, we have two sessions in Spring led by two different leaders. Participants will be provided a copy of the short story that inspired the film, along with information on where the film can be streamed. Participants are responsible for the cost of streaming.

Monday, 4 pm, May 19; Jun 16

Leaders Prakash Shrivastava, Coralie Whitcomb

Members \$10

Zoom

Non-Members \$20

217 Novella and film - "Foster" and *The Quiet Girl*

In Claire Keegan's "Foster" (*The New Yorker* Feb. 16 & 22, 2010), a poor young Irish girl is sent off to live in a childless home in southeast Ireland for the summer with an older couple. In the words of the *The New York Times*, this "beautiful new novella, ... is no less likely to move you than any heaping 400-page tome you'll read this year." The film *The Quiet Girl*, based on the novella, mostly in Gaelic with English subtitles, "is already a classic (The Guardian)," and will not disappoint. We will discuss "Foster" in our initial session and then follow up with discussion of *The Quiet Girl* in our final session. Copies of "Foster" will be provided to participants approximately three weeks before the initial session. Participants are responsible for the cost of streaming the film.

Thursday, 2 pm, May 22, 29

Leader Charles Schufreider

Members \$10

Zoom

Non-Members \$20

218 Great Decisions 2025 - Group 2

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."

Tuesday, 2 pm, May 27; Jun 3, 10, 17, 24; Jul 1

Leader Tom Komarek

Members \$47

Zoom

Non-Members \$57

219 *The Rest Is Noise - Listening to the 20th Century* by Alex Ross

The Rest is Noise weaves together historical, political, and cultural events of the 20th century and the music of that time. Ross draws revelatory connections between the century's most influential composers and the wider culture in Europe and the U.S. We will read discrete sections of the book. Discussion sessions will be supplemented with playlists highlighting significant advances in 20th century Western music and non-technical musical analysis to go along with each. ISBN-13: 978-0312427719

Thursday, 10 am, Jun 5, 12, 19, 26

Leader Patrick Mathews

Members \$39

Host Patrick Mathews

Non-Members \$49

Place Pasadena

220 *The Complete Stories* by Flannery O'Connor

This is a continuation of our session a few months ago, and we will be reading four stories other than the ones we covered in the earlier group. Flannery O'Connor wrote some of the darkest, funniest, and most insightful tales about the deep south that you will ever read. Like her hero, James Joyce, she both loved and loathed what she took such pains to depict, and the stories add humor and sometimes violence to her assessment of what she saw around her. Alfred Kazin, reviewing her final collection in the New York Times Book Review said, "... she expressed something secret about America, called 'the South' with that transcendent gift for expressing the real spirit of a culture ... Completeness is one word for it; relentlessness and unsparingness would be others. She was a genius." ISBN-13: 978-0374515362

Thursday, 2 pm, Jun 5, 12, 19, 26

Leader Stanley Oropesa

Members \$23

Host Margaret Hostrup

Non-Members \$33

Place Pasadena

221 *Transit* by Rachel Cusk

After her family's collapse, a writer and her two sons move to London, triggering personal, moral, and artistic transitions. Confronting vulnerability, power, death, and renewal, she struggles to rebuild her life. Through an impersonal yet piercing gaze, *Transit* explores childhood, fate, suffering, and change. In this second novel of her acclaimed cycle, Rachel Cusk captures the tension between inhabiting and escaping one's life with unsettling honesty and precision. ISBN-13: 978-1250151797

Friday, 2 pm, Jun 6, 13, 20, 27

Leader John Swain

Members \$23

Host John Swain

Non-Members \$33

Place Pasadena

222 *The Feminine Mystique* by Betty Friedan

Landmark, groundbreaking, classic—these adjectives barely do justice to the pioneering vision and lasting impact of *The Feminine Mystique*. Published in 1963, it gave a pitch-perfect description of "the problem that has no name": the insidious beliefs and institutions that undermined women's confidence in their intellectual capabilities and kept them in the home. Writing at a time when the average woman first married in her teens and 60 percent of women students dropped out of college to marry, Betty Friedan captured the frustrations and thwarted ambitions of a generation and showed women how they could reclaim their lives. Part social chronicle, part manifesto, *The Feminine Mystique* is filled with fascinating anecdotes and interviews as well as insights that continue to inspire. This 50th-anniversary edition features an afterword by best-selling author Anna Quindlen, as well as a new introduction by Gail Collins. ISBN-13: 978-0393346787

Monday, 10 am, Jun 30, July 7, 14, 21

Leader Jane Crane

Members \$29

Host Jane Crane

Non-Members \$39

Place Villa Gardens, 842 E. Villa Street, Pasadena

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 our visit. Entrance is free to the public. Museum parking is available at \$17 for 3 hrs. The Museum is ADA-compliant and has wheelchairs. There will be an optional no-host lunch afterwards at a nearby restaurant. <https://www.thebroad.org/>

Tuesday, 11 am, May 13

Leader Susan Phifer

Members \$5

Non-Members \$10

Place The Broad, 221 S. Grand Avenue, Los Angeles

S05 Morning Jazz at Jones

Coffee and jazz – what better way to wake up on a Monday morning? This is an occasion both to enjoy live jazz AND to hear some master musicians and teachers talk about what they are doing, in a non-technical way, with their improvisations. Their goal is to act as "tour guides" through the various styles and approaches to this most creative of all musical forms. Jones Coffee Roasters offers live music, coffee, lattes and kombucha. There is limited street-only parking, so consider carpooling.

Monday, 9 am, Apr 7

Leader Stanley Oropesa

Members \$5

Non-Members \$10

Place Jones Coffee Roasters, 693 So. Raymond Ave., Pasadena

S06 Movie - Harvey (1950)

Harvey is a 1950 American comedy-drama film based on Mary Chase's 1944 play of the same name, directed by Henry Koster (Bob Koster's father), and starring James Stewart, Josephine Hull, Charles Drake, Cecil Kellaway, Jesse White, Victoria Horne, Wallace Ford and Peggy Dow. Josephine Hull won the Oscar for Best Supporting Actress. The story centers on a man who makes friends with a spirit taking the form of a human-sized rabbit named Harvey that only he sees, along with a few privileged others on occasion. After his sister tries to commit him to a mental institution, a comedy of errors ensues. Elwood and Harvey become the catalysts for a family mending its wounds and for romance blossoming in unexpected places.

Wednesday, 2 pm, Apr 30

Leader Bob Koster

Members \$5

Host Gaye Shepard

Non-Members \$10

Place Villa Gardens, 842 E. Villa Street, Pasadena

S07 When Our Town Was Young

Let's gather for dinner and explore the historical perspective of our hometown in the Pasadena area! We'll share stories, resources (like Google info, photos, and keepsakes) to rediscover the bits and pieces of our past that make our valley so special. Bring some history and a potluck dish to share. I'll host and have some ideas to consider if you're interested!

Sunday, 5 - 8 pm, May 4

Leader Deborah Fox

Members \$5

Host Deborah Fox

Non-Members \$10

Place South Pasadena

S08 The Job of a Book Editor: A

Discussion with Betty Sargent

Betty Sargent was at various times an editor at HarperCollins, Dell and others, Editor-in-Chief at William Morrow, and Fiction Editor at *Cosmopolitan* magazine in the days of Helen Gurley Brown, a job that included giving short fiction reviews on the Today show. Her first job in the publishing business was at *The New Yorker*, where she typed the manuscript for *In Cold Blood*. Most recently, she has edited more than 60 of Danielle Steel's novels, among other freelance commitments. After Betty's short presentation, there will be plenty of time for Q and A, so come prepared with questions.

Friday, 2 pm, May 30

Leader John Swain

Members \$5

Host John Swain

Non-Members \$10

Place Pasadena

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.)