

PALAC

... where people and ideas meet

STUDY DISCUSSION PROGRAMS FALL 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, snack, and drink. **For all in-person sessions, full vaccination is required.**

JOIN US PALAC offers additional advantages and activities to members. Membership is just \$15 per person or \$25 per couple for the rest of 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 Fall 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 on September 10th, two weeks after this 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 Winter and Spring 2026

October 3, 9 am – 1 pm
La Casita Del Arroyo
177 S Arroyo Blvd, Pasadena

Fall Retreat
Early November
Place TBD

FALL SESSION 2025

401 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, Oct 1, 15; Nov 5, 19; Dec 3, 17

Leader Lane Dolan

Members \$10

Non-Members \$20

Place Pasadena, El Portal Restaurant, inside or outside

402 Classic Literature Through Short Stories

Explore classic world literature through short stories by renowned authors. These concise works, compared to novels, vividly illuminate universal human experiences.

Monday, 12 noon, Oct 6; Nov 3; Dec 1

Leader Prakash Shrivastava

Members \$10

Zoom

Non-Members \$20

403 Movie STARS, Fall 2025 - Group A

Discuss critically acclaimed and notable films from various eras and countries, viewed online before each meeting. Streaming options include free, subscription, or pay-per-view formats, with costs covered by participants. Links to films, reviews and interviews are provided. For examples of movies from past seasons, contact the leader.

Monday, 4 pm, Oct 6, 20; Nov 3, 17; Dec 1, 15

Leader James Liu

Members \$10

Zoom

Non-Members \$20

404 Movie STARS, Fall 2025 - Group B

See Movie STARS, Fall 2025 - Group A

Monday, 7 pm, Oct 6, 20; Nov 3, 17; Dec 1, 15

Leader James Liu

Members \$10

Zoom

Non-Members \$20

405 *Who is Government?: The Untold Story of Public Service* by Michael Lewis

The Trump administration has vilified federal employees and taken steps to drastically reduce their number. And yet “the government” is a vast, complex system that Americans pay for, rely upon, dismiss and celebrate. It’s also our shared resource for addressing the problems of society. Made up of people, mostly unrecognized and uncelebrated, doing work that can be deeply consequential and beneficial, here you’ll meet eight people doing interesting jobs for the government who blow up the stereotype of the federal bureaucrat. ISBN-13: 979-8217047802

Tuesday, 12 noon, Oct 7, 14, 21, 28

Leader Carla Barnes

Members \$34

Host Fran Blackwell

Non-Members \$44

Place Pasadena, outside

406 *Aunt Julia and the Scriptwriter* by Mario Vargas Llosa

Mario Vargas Llosa's brilliant, multilayered novel is set in the Lima, Peru, of the author's youth, where a young student named Marito is toiling away in the news department of a local radio station. His young life is disrupted by two arrivals. The first is his aunt Julia, recently divorced and thirteen years older, with whom he begins a secret affair. The second is a manic radio scriptwriter named Pedro Camacho, whose racy, vituperative soap operas are holding the city's listeners in thrall. Pedro chooses young Marito to be his confidant as he slowly goes insane. ISBN-13: 978-0312427245

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

Leader Bob Diller

Members \$28

Host Margaret Hostrup

Non-Members \$38

Place Pasadena

407 *The Catalyst* by Thomas Cech

For over half a century, DNA has dominated science and the popular imagination as the “secret of life.” But over the last several decades, a quiet revolution has taken place. In a series of breathtaking discoveries, a diverse cast of brilliant scientists have revealed that RNA - long overlooked as the passive servant of DNA - sits at the center of biology's greatest mysteries: How did life begin? What makes us human? Why do we get sick and grow old? In *The Catalyst*, Cech brings together years of research to demonstrate that RNA is the true key to understanding life on Earth. ISBN-13: 978-1324110873

Wednesday, 12 noon, Oct 8, 15, 22, 29

Leader Susan Kane

Members \$29

Host Sue Hogan

Non-Members \$39

Place Pasadena

408 *From Page to Silver Screen: Brokeback Mountain*

Annie Proulx's short story was selected as one of the best short stories in the first 100 years of the *New Yorker*. The motion picture won Academy Awards for Best Director (Ang Lee), Best Screenplay, and Best Score, in addition to being nominated for Best Film. Session one discusses the story; session two explores the film. Copies of the short story as it appeared in the *New Yorker* (10/13/97) will be forwarded to the participants approximately two weeks before the first session. Any streaming costs will be borne by the participant. Note: Both story and film include explicit gay sexual content, presented tastefully.

Thursday, 10 am, Oct 9, 16

Leader Charles Schufreider

Members \$10

Zoom

Non-Members \$20

409 *Everyone Who Is Gone Is Here: The United States, Central America and the Making of a Crisis* by Jonathan Blitzer

Jonathan Blitzer's *Everyone Who Is Gone Is Here* explores the immigration crisis, tracing its roots to the complex history between the United States and its southern neighbors. Over the past decade, border crossers have shifted from Mexican laborers to Central Americans and others seeking asylum. Named one of the New York Times' top 10 books of 2024, this book anchors our discussions, alongside recent immigration developments. ISBN-13: 978-1984880826

Thursday, 2 pm, Oct 9, 16, 23, 30; Nov 6, 13

Leader Louis Rubenstein

Members \$29

Host Susan Zucker

Non-Members \$39

Place Pasadena

410 *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy: A George Smiley Novel* by John le Carré

In John le Carré's *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy*, the death of Control leaves British Intelligence, known as the Circus, in the hands of ambitious newcomers. George Smiley, nearing retirement, is drawn back when a would-be defector reveals a Soviet mole at the agency's core. Guided by his wits and a loyal team, Smiley confronts his Moscow Center rival, Karla, in a gripping hunt for the traitor. ISBN-13: 978-0143119784

Friday, 11 am, Oct 10, 17, 31

Leader Julio-Cesar Marin

Members \$23

Host Katherine Gavzy

Non-Members \$33

Place Sierra Madre

411 *The Sounds of Life: How Digital Technology Is Bringing Us Closer to the Worlds of Animals and Plants* by Karen Bakker

Karen Bakker's *The Sounds of Life* takes readers on a fascinating journey into nature's hidden soundscapes. Using cutting-edge digital technologies, scientists uncover vibrant

communication among creatures across ecosystems, revealing the interconnectedness of life. ISBN-13: 978-0691240978

Thursday, 10 am, Oct 23, 30; Nov 6

Leader Gay Bruveris

Members \$29

Host Gay Bruveris

Non-Members \$39

Place Pasadena

412 *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, Oct 31; Nov 14, 21; Dec 5, 12, 19

Leader David Whitcomb

Members \$10

Zoom

Non-Members \$20

413 Developing an Eye for Life with Photography

Inspired by the *New York Times*, participants will receive five photography assignments that invite you to look closely at the world. How often do you look – really look – at the world around you? These assignments will challenge group members to do just that.

Tuesday, 12 noon, Nov 4, 25; Dec 16; Jan 6, 27

Leader Gay Bruveris

Members \$10

Host Gay Bruveris

Non-Members \$20

Place Pasadena

414 *My Brilliant Friend* by Elena Ferrante

Elena Ferrante's *My Brilliant Friend*, named the *New York Times*' #1 book of the 21st century, is a timeless novel about the lifelong friendship of two women in post-World War II Naples. Growing up in a poverty-stricken neighborhood shaped by the black market, their bond navigates love, rivalry, and societal change. ISBN-13: 978-1609450786

Wednesday, 10 am, Nov 5, 12, 19; Dec 3

Leader Jane Crane

Members \$22

Host Jane Crane

Non-Members \$32

Place Villa Gardens, 842 E. Villa Street, Pasadena

415 *Transitions (40th Anniversary Edition): Making Sense of Life's Changes* by William and Susan Bridges

In *Transitions: Making Sense of Life's Changes* by William and Susan Bridges, named one of the top 50 self-help books, the authors offer a roadmap for navigating life's personal, cultural, and political changes. Whether chosen or unexpected, transitions bring opportunities and challenges. We'll discuss the Bridges' stages of transition and apply them to our own lives. ISBN-13: 978-0738285405

Thursday, 4 pm, Nov 6, 13, 20

Leader Judy Blanton

Members \$27

Host Joan Stafford

Non-Members \$37

Place Pasadena

416 *Kudos* by Rachel Cusk

Rachel Cusk's *Kudos*, the final novel in her acclaimed trilogy, follows Faye, a writer navigating a Europe in flux. Amid shifting personal and political identities, she confronts tensions between truth and representation in literary culture. Exploring family, art, justice, love, and the value of suffering, Cusk delivers a profound narrative from one of today's most important writers. ISBN-13: 978-1250207395

Monday, 2 pm, Nov 10, 17, 24; Dec 1

Leader John Swain

Members \$23

Host Tony Koerner

Non-Members \$33

Place Pasadena

417 Movie & Dinner with Charlie Chaplin at *The Circus* (1928)

What could be better than Charlie Chaplin or the circus in 1928? Join us to watch and discuss Chaplin's silent masterpiece, *The Circus*, together. We will enjoy popcorn during the movie, followed by a light dinner and a discussion of the film, which was nominated for Best Actor and Best Director at the first Academy Awards in 1929.

Monday, 4:30 pm, Nov 10

Leader Deborah Fox

Members \$15

Host Deborah Fox

Non-Members \$20

Place South Pasadena

418 *Angle of Repose* by Wallace Stegner

Angle of Repose, Wallace Stegner's 1971 Pulitzer Prize winner and Modern Library top 100 novel, follows Lyman Ward, a historian estranged from his family, as he chronicles his grandparents' journey through the rugged American West. This historical novel explores family ties, resilience, and personal reflection. ISBN-13: 978-1101872765

Tuesday, 2 pm, Nov 11, 18, 25; Dec 2, 9

Leader Lisa Darling

Members \$20

Host Lisa Darling

Non-Members \$30

Place Pasadena

419 What's Been Happening in the Supreme Court?

All new cases! We'll examine some of the most consequential decisions and emergency orders of the past term (2024-2025). New format: no more explanatory emails. Instead: an oral tutorial on the cases each week, with time for discussion. News articles, podcasts, court opinions, etc. sent via web links and PDFs. All reading is optional. Each week assumes some understanding of concepts discussed during prior weeks (e.g. executive power, enforcement of injunctions, due process, etc.).

Thursday, 2 pm, Dec 4, 11, 18; Jan 8, 15, 22, 29 Feb 5

Leader Susan Hershman

Members \$15

Zoom

Non-Members \$30

SAFARIS

S12 Slide Show of the Arctic Region: Iceland, Greenland and Baffin Bay

World travelers Patti and John Brugman present a narrated slide show of their Arctic adventures in Iceland, Greenland, and Baffin Bay. Through vivid photos and stories from two recent trips, this presentation immerses you in the Arctic's beauty. Visit Patti-world.com for a preview.

Friday, 2 pm, Oct 10

Leader Patti and John Brugman **Members \$5**
Host Gaye Shepard **Non-Members \$10**
Place Villa Gardens, 842 E. Villa Street, Pasadena

S13 Finding the Past at *Meridian Iron Works Museum*

The *Meridian Iron Works Museum*, built in 1985 in South Pasadena, has a rich history and holds a treasure trove of memorabilia to learn more about! From the Indiana Colony to the Oneonta Railway Station, Ostrich Farm, and the Raymond Hotel, come hear the stories and ask your questions on our own private tour, followed by a no-host lunch at Kaldi's. Free parking available on Meridian Avenue. Meet mid-street at the Watering Trough. Wear comfortable shoes and be prepared to stand in a smaller museum space for an hour. Suggested \$10 donation/person at entrance.

Friday, 11 am, Oct 24

Leader Deborah Fox **Members \$5**
Presenter Colleen Boken, Archivist **Non-Members \$10**
Place 913 Meridian Avenue, South Pasadena, CA 91030

S14 *The Robe* (1953)

The Robe (1953), a Biblical epic adapted from Lloyd C. Douglas's novel, follows a Roman tribune overseeing Jesus' crucifixion. The first film in CinemaScope, directed by Henry Koster, it stars Richard Burton, Jean Simmons, and others. Join us to watch and discuss its themes and cinematic impact.

Friday, 1 pm, Nov 7

Leader Bob Koster **Members \$5**
Host Gaye Shepard **Non-Members \$10**
Place Villa Gardens, 842 E. Villa Street, Pasadena

S15 *The Great Wall of Los Angeles*

The Great Wall of Los Angeles is a roughly half-mile-long mural painted on the concrete sides of the Tujunga Wash, depicting the history of California from prehistoric times to 1960, as seen through the eyes of women and minorities. Designed in 1978 by artist Judy Baca and created with the help of over 400 community youth and artists, the Great Wall is listed on the U.S. National Register of Historic Places. Current work is underway to add an additional half-mile of mural on the opposite side of the wash, portraying the period from 1960 to 2010. Carpool from the meeting place at the Pasadena Museum of History. Enjoy a no-host lunch at a local restaurant after the tour. Note: there are no restroom facilities

or water nearby. This event is not suitable for those using walkers or wheelchairs. Wear comfortable shoes.

Saturday, 9 am, Nov 15

Leader Carla Barnes **Members \$5**
Presenter Robb Grimm, local historian **Non-Members \$10**
Place Valley Glen, CA

S16 USC Campus

Join us for an exclusive guided tour of the USC campus, exploring new buildings and beautifully landscaped grounds in a comfortable tour car. Limited to seven passengers for an intimate experience, the tour lasts approximately two hours, starting in the late morning. A no-host lunch will be arranged for your convenience. With limited on-campus parking, carpooling is strongly recommended. Reserve your spot for this special journey through USC's vibrant campus!

Date and Time TBD

Leader David Whitcomb and Bhargav Oza **Members \$5**
Non-Members \$10

Place USC Campus

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.)