

PALAC ... where people and ideas meet

STUDY DISCUSSION PROGRAMS SPRING 2026

PALAC offers continuing liberal arts education to adults in 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.

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, up-to-date vaccinations are encouraged.

JOIN US PALAC offers additional advantages and activities to members. Membership is just \$30 per person or \$50 per couple for the entire 2026 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 haven't already paid your 2026 membership dues, allowing you to pay for groups at the discounted membership rate, do so now.** 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 on March 16th, 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 Summer and Fall 2026

March 24, 9:30 - noon
La Casita Del Arroyo
177 S. Arroyo Blvd., Pasadena

SPRING SESSION 2026

201 Current Movies, Wednesdays – Group A

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 1, 15; May 6, 20; Jun 3, 17
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 3, 10, 17, 24; May 1, 8
Leader David Whitcomb
Zoom
Members \$10
Non-Members \$20

203 Movie STARs, Spring 2026 - 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. *Please note we are skipping Apr 20.*

Monday, 4 pm, Apr 6; May 4, 18; Jun 1, 15, 29
Leader James Liu
Zoom
Members \$10
Non-Members \$20

204 Movie STARS, Spring 2026 - Group B

See Movie STARS, Spring 2026 - Group A

Monday, 7 pm, Apr 6; May 4, 18; Jun 1, 15, 29

Leader James Liu

Members \$10

Zoom

Non-Members \$20

205 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, Noon, Apr 6; May 4; Jun 1

Leader Prakash Shrivastava

Members \$10

Zoom

Non-Members \$20

206 Best American Essays 2024 by Wesley

Morris, Editor

The group will review two or three essays from the collection each session. Here are the editor's comments on a few of the offerings: "Some of these essays are marvelous experiments in style whose nerve and frankness disarm you." "Jenisha Watts had me straight weeping. Her sentences are quick, declarative, and frank...I couldn't think of a bigger gut-punch to open this book." "A marvel of argument against memory, the alleged truth of it...taught, generous, critical, self-critical." ISBN-13: 978-0063351554

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

Leader Bill Urban

Members \$23

Zoom

Non-Members \$33

207 Selected Articles in the Natural

Sciences

The group will select and discuss articles drawn from contemporary publications such as *Scientific American* and *Science and Nature*. Selections will focus on the natural sciences. Come learn and talk about the latest trends in biology, medicine and the like.

Wednesday, Noon, Apr 8, 15, 22, 29; May 6

Leader Susan Kane

Members \$10

Host Katherine Gavzy

Non-Members \$20

Place Sierra Madre

208 Current Movies, Wednesdays – Group

B

See Current Movies, Wednesdays, – Group A

Wednesday, 3 pm, Apr 8, 22; May 13, 27; Jun 10, 24

Leader Susan Phifer

Members \$10

Non-Members \$20

Place Pasadena, El Portal Restaurant, inside or outside

209 On Looking: A Walker's Guide to the Art of Observation by Alexandra Horowitz

This smart, charming book shows us how to see the spectacle of the ordinary. It is structured around eleven walks the author, a cognitive scientist, takes – mostly in her Manhattan neighborhood, with experts including an urban sociologist, an artist, a geologist, a physician, and a toddler. What they see and how they see it reveal the startling power of human attention and expertise. The sessions include one short walk where we can practice looking. ISBN-13: 978-1439191262

Thursday, Apr 9 at 2 pm; Apr 16 at 4 pm; Apr 23 at 1:30 pm

Leader Judy Blanton

Members \$26

Host Joan Stafford

Non-Members \$36

Place Pasadena

210 The Sisters of Auschwitz by Roxane

van Iperen

The Sisters of Auschwitz by Roxane van Iperen chronicles the remarkable true story of Jewish sisters, Janny and Lien Brilleslijper, unsung heroes of the Dutch Resistance during World War II. From their hidden woodland refuge, the "High Nest" they sheltered dozens of Jews and others fleeing the Nazis while actively resisting the occupation. Betrayed and captured, they survived the horrors of Auschwitz and Bergen-Belsen, even crossing paths with Anne and Margot Frank. Both miraculously lived through the Holocaust. Based on memoirs, archives, and survivor testimonies, this book celebrates their courage and reminds us of the power of ordinary people to act with extraordinary humanity against evil. ISBN-13: 978-0063097629

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

Leader Bhargav Oza

Members \$21

Zoom

Non-Members \$31

211 Movie - A Face in the Crowd (1957)

A Face in the Crowd is a 1957 American satirical drama film directed by Elia Kazan and starring Andy Griffith, Patricia Neal, and Walter Matthau. The screenplay is by Budd Schulberg. The story centers on Larry "Lonesome" Rhodes, a drifter who is discovered by the producer (Neal) of a small-market radio program in rural northeast Arkansas, and who rises to great fame and influence on national television. Participants are to view the movie on-line before the meeting. Costs are to be covered by participants.

Monday, 4 pm, Apr 27

Leader Coralie Whitcomb

Members \$5

Zoom

Non-Members \$10

212 Lessons from Cats for Surviving

Fascism by Stewart Reynolds

It's easy to feel overwhelmed by the daily news out of Washington, D.C., possibly accompanied by a "But what can I DO about it?" kind of response. This witty and incisive parody blending political resistance with feline wisdom draws on the traits of cats--independence, unpredictability, and boldness--as survival strategies against authoritarianism. With eleven irreverent but practical lessons, accompanied by humorous illustrations, Stewart Reynolds arms readers with the mindset to resist control, reclaim power, and embrace defiance with the confidence of a feline that rules its world. ISBN-13: 978-1538778005

Tuesday, 2 pm, May 5

Leader Carla Barnes

Host Fran Blackwell

Place Pasadena

Members \$24

Non-Members \$34

213 "Between the Shadow and the Soul" by

Lauren Groff

Lauren Groff borrows the title for her short story "Between the Shadow and the Soul" (New Yorker 12/16/2024) from Pablo Neruda's three stanza poem "One Hundred Love Sonnets: XVII." We will analyze both and discuss, among other things, whether a poem or short story is the more effective format for conveying human emotion. Copies of the short story and the poem will be provided to the participants approximately two weeks before the session.

Thursday, 2 pm, May 7

Leader Charles Schufreider

Host Coralie Whitcomb

Place Glendale

Members \$5

Non-Members \$10

214 Dear Life: Stories by Alice Munro

Alice Munro was awarded the Nobel prize for literature in 2013 after having received the Man Booker International Prize in 2009. These awards represented a new respect for the genre of short story writing. *Dear Life*, her last collection consisting of 14 short stories, was published in 2012. It serves to burnish her reputation for creating sophisticated stories out of humble, everyday life experiences. We will read between six and nine of these stories over a three-week period. They explore the human condition with compassion, sophistication, and appreciation for the trials and rewards of everyday life. ISBN-13: 978-0307743725

Monday, 10 am, May 11, 18, 25

Leader Tony Koerner

Host Jake Broderick

Place Pasadena

Members \$22

Non-Members \$32

215 The Abolition of Man by C. S. Lewis

The Abolition of Man explores why we shouldn't rely solely on reason while dismissing emotions. C.S. Lewis argues that reason detached from trained sentiments fails to grasp true human nature, producing "men without chests." He refutes claims that instinct equals pure reason, that science alone yields benevolence, or that it can serve as humanity's moral guide. Instead, Lewis defends universal moral absolutes – the *Tao* - as self-evident truths essential to all cultures and eras, famously noting: "If nothing is self-evident then nothing can be proved." This book, based on three 1943 Riddell Memorial Lectures at the University of Durham, appeals to Lewis fans and those seeking insight into traditional virtues and their life impact. ISBN-13: 978-0060652944

Tuesday, 2 pm, May 12, 19, 26

Leader Stanley Oropesa

Host Lisa Darling

Place Alhambra

Members \$19

Non-Members \$29

216 Great Decisions 2026

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. Series topics are: 1) America and the World: Trump 2.0 Foreign Policy; 2) Trump Tariffs and the Future of the World Economy; 3) US - China Relations; 4) Ruptured Alliances and the Risk of Nuclear Proliferation; 5) Ukraine and the Future of European Security; 6) Multilaterals Institutions in a Changing World Order; 7) US Engagement of Africa; 8) The Future of Human Rights and International War.

Thursday, 2 pm, May 14, 21, 28; Jun 4, 11, 18

Leader Tom Komarek

Zoom

Members \$47

Non-Members \$57

217 The Best American Science and Nature Writing 2025 by Susan Orlean

"The best science and nature writing – which these stories represent – reminds us of the wide world and our connection to it, and the multitude of ways we make our place in it," writes Susan Orlean in her introduction. This year's collection masterfully leads us to consider complex and utterly fascinating questions about the world. How does it feel to camp in one of the hottest places on Earth? Is the ability to recognize and remember faces a sign of intelligence? What does it mean for a species to be wild or invasive – are city pigeons and rats less deserving than the coyotes that recently wandered down from Westchester? ISBN-13: 978-0063414211

Friday, 2 pm, May 15, 22, 29; Jun 5, 12, 19

Leader David Whitcomb

Host Fran Blackwell

Place Pasadena

Members \$27

Non-Members \$37

218 *Material World: The Six Raw Materials That Shape Modern Civilization* by Ed Conway

Sand, salt, iron, copper, oil, and lithium – these fundamental materials have created empires, razed civilizations and fed our ingenuity and our greed for thousands of years. Without them, our modern world would not exist, and the battle to control them will determine our future. These make up our modern life: fiber-optic cables, the copper veins of our electric grid, the silicon chips and lithium batteries that power our phones and cars and more. In fact, we dug more stuff out of the earth in 2017 than in all of human history before 1950. Conway embarks on an epic journey across continents, cultures and epochs to reveal the underpinnings of modern life on Earth, traveling from the sweltering depths of the deepest mine in Europe to spotless silicon chip factories in Taiwan to the eerie green pools where lithium originates. ISBN-13: 978-0593467428

Tuesday, 2 pm, Jun 2, 9, 16, 23

Leader Bob Diller

Members \$27

Host Louis Rubenstein

Non-Members \$37

Place Arcadia

219 *Wolf Hall* by Hilary Mantel

England in the 1520s is a heartbeat from disaster. If the king dies without a male heir, the country could be destroyed by civil war. Henry VIII wants to annul his marriage of twenty years and marry Anne Boleyn. The Pope with most of Europe, opposes him. Into this impasse steps Thomas Cromwell, a wholly original man, a charmer and a bully, both idealist and opportunist, astute in reading people and implacable in his ambition. But Henry is volatile: one day tender, one day murderous. Cromwell helps him break the opposition, but what will be the price of his triumph? *Note to participants: there is very limited parking at the host's location; car pooling is strongly suggested.* ISBN-13: 978-1250806710

Tuesday, 10 am, Jun 2, 9, 16, 23

Leader John Swain

Members \$23

Host John Swain

Non-Members \$33

Place Pasadena

SAFARI HOLDOVER FROM WINTER 2025

All those who registered for this safari are automatically registered for the new date.

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.

Wednesday, 1 pm, Jun 24

Presenter Bob Koster

Members \$5

Host Gaye Shepard

Non-Members \$10

Place Villa Gardens, 842 E. Villa Street, Pasadena

SPRING SESSION SAFARIS

S06 *Gamble House*

The Gamble House (1908) is a world-renowned masterpiece of the American Arts and Crafts movement. Commissioned by David and Mary Gamble of Procter & Gamble, it remains the most complete and authentic work of architects Charles and Henry Greene. Inside and out, the house celebrates wood through expressive structure, intricate joinery, and exquisite finishes that define its warm, harmonious spaces. Many visitors seek it out as an architectural bucket list destination or out of deep appreciation for the Arts and Crafts era. For others, it offers quiet renewal and inspiration. *Some stairs are on the tour; walkers are allowed. Senior admission, is \$17 payable at entry. Complete the visit with your PALAC friends at a no-host lunch at True Food Kitchen in Pasadena.*

Thursday, Noon, Apr 16

Leader Susan Zucker

Members \$5

Place Pasadena

Non-Members \$10

S07 *A Visit to the Judson Studios*

Tucked away in a rambling, two-story, shingle and stone structure in Highland Park lies the 125-year-old Judson Studios, the oldest family-owned and family-run stained-glass studio in America. Five generations of Judsons have worked with artists, architects and designers to create stained glass whose quality and craftsmanship are admired worldwide. *Private guided tour; maximum participation is 20. Price includes Senior \$30 entry fee. Due to its historic nature, the building tour is not wheelchair accessible.*

Tuesday, 10 am, May 19

Leader Susan Phifer

Members \$35

Non-Members \$40

Place Judson Studios, 200 South Ave. 66, Los Angeles

S08 "Exploring Pasadena's Past" in Old

Pasadena

Many people may be surprised to know that “Old Pasadena” hasn’t always been shopping and restaurants. Its history has been beautiful architecture and growing business ventures, but it also has a dark history of racial prejudice and forced displacement. Recently, many plaques and murals have been installed that tell the deeper story. We will focus our walk on the west side of Old Pasadena with its streets and many alleys, which once was a community of diverse peoples. We will also take a short detour to include Memorial Park and some interesting history. As we conclude, we will complete our circle on Dayton Street, a community that was once held the first black-owned businesses in Pasadena. This is a 2+ mile walking tour in a little over an hour. There are no stairs, mostly sidewalks with curbs. Difficulty is rated 1 or 2 out of 5. *Enjoy a no-host lunch at a local restaurant after the tour.*

Monday, 11 am, Apr 27

Leader Carolyn Karpin

Members \$5

Presenter Robb Grimm

Non-Members \$10

Place Pasadena

S09 The Amazing History of Rockhaven

Sanitarium

Joanna Linkchorst, President of the Friends of Rockhaven, will be speaking on the amazing history of Rockhaven Sanitarium. Rockhaven was founded 100 years ago by women for women, and its story touches on women’s history and the history of sanitariums and mental health care in Southern California. Joanna will be focusing on the lives of founder Agnes Richards and her grand-daughter, Patricia Traviss, who guided Rockhaven for nearly eight decades.

Saturday, 1 pm, Jun 6

Leader Carolyn Karpin

Members \$5

Host Gay Bruveris

Non-Members \$10

Place Pasadena

Payment Options

You can continue to pay by check, but you can now pay by Zelle. **The way PALAC is identified on Zelle is by its tag name, pasadenalac.** If you pay by Zelle, you must still send your registration form to the PALAC office either by US mail or by emailing a picture of your filled-out form. Since your payment will not arrive at the PALAC office with your form, you must help us match up the two by writing an identifier such as your last name and date in the box provided on your registration form. You must also put this same information in the “message/purpose/reason/memo” box when making your Zelle payment. Failure to do both may result in your registration being delayed. **Your use of Zelle does not affect your position in any lottery queue just because it arrives so quickly. Every part of the registration process remains the same as it always has.**

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.)