

PALAC ... where people and ideas meet

STUDY DISCUSSION PROGRAMS FALL 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 facilitator 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. Half-year membership is just \$15 per person or \$25 per couple for the remainder of the 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 your dues and group payments in with your Fall registration form.

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 14th. 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 facilitators 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 2027

Tuesday, September 15, 9:30 am – 12 pm
Altadena Community Center
730 E Altadena Dr, Altadena, CA 91001

Fall Retreat

Tuesday, October 20, 9 am – 3 pm
Altadena Community Center
730 E Altadena Dr, Altadena, CA 91001

RESCHEDULED FROM SUMMER

Anyone who registered for S12 or 309 for Summer is automatically registered for these Fall dates. If you decide not to attend, please inform the PALAC office immediately.

S12 Arkansas and the Total Solar Eclipse



Come and experience an exciting slideshow of Adrienne's photos of her trip to Arkansas. Arkansas is a hidden gem, a beautiful state with lovely landscapes, world-renowned museums and the perfect location to

have seen the solar eclipse in April 2024. Lively music will accompany the slides and have your toes tapping along with the show.

Friday, 7:15 pm, Oct 9

Facilitator Adrienne Bass

Host Gaye Shepard

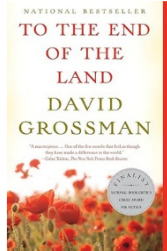
Place Villa Gardens, 842 E. Villa Street, Pasadena

Members \$5

Non-Members \$10

309 *To the End of the Land* by David

Grossman



Just before his release from service in the Israeli army, Ora's son Ofer is sent back to the front for a major offensive. In a fit of preemptive grief and magical thinking, so that no bad news can reach her, Ora sets out on an epic hike in the Galilee. She is joined by an unlikely companion, Avram, a former friend and lover with a troubled past, and as

they sleep out in the hills, Ora begins to conjure her son. Ofer's story, as told by Ora, becomes a surprising balm both for her and for Avram. ISBN-13: 978-0307476401

Wednesday, 10 am, Nov 18; Dec 2, 9, 16

Facilitator Carla Lazzareschi

Members \$31

Host Audrey Vaughn

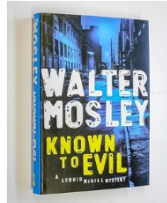
Non-Members \$41

Place Altadena

FALL SESSION 2026

401 *Known to Evil: A Leonid McGill*

Mystery by Walter Mosley



The press has said that Walter Mosley's work "transcends category and qualifies as serious fiction." If you like a good detective story, I hope you will join us as we read and discuss *Known to Evil*, a modern-noir crime fiction by an American author called "one of our

national treasures." ISBN-13: 978-0451232137

Thursday, 10 am, Oct 1, 8, 15, 22

Facilitator Deborah Fox

Members \$22

Host Deborah Fox

Non-Members \$32

Place South Pasadena

402 *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 2, 9, 16, 23, 30; Nov 6

Facilitator David Whitcomb

Members \$10

Zoom

Non-Members \$20

403 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 5; Nov 2; Dec 7

Facilitator Prakash Shrivastava

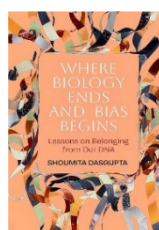
Members \$10

Zoom

Non-Members \$20

404 *Where Biology Ends and Bias Begins*

by Shoumita Dasgupta



Well-meaning physicians, parents, and scientists often spread misinformation about what biology can and can't tell us about our bodies, minds and identities. In this book, the authors draw on the latest science to correct common misconceptions about how much of our social identities are actually

POSTPONED

based in genetics. Dasgupta weaves together history, current affairs, and cutting-edge science to break down how genetic concepts are misused and how we can approach scientific evidence in a socially responsible way. ISBN-13: 978-0520397149

Days and Dates TBD

Facilitator Susan Kane

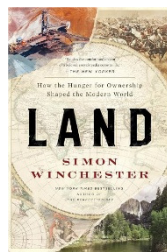
Members \$38

Host TBD

Non-Members \$48

Place TBD

405 *Land* by Simon Winchester



Land examines how the hunger for ownership shaped the modern world. Winchester confronts the essential questions: who actually owns the world's land, how much of it do we really need, and why does it matter? We will read selected chapters of this book and, if there is interest, read additional chapters in the Winter. ISBN-13:

978-0062938343

Tuesday, 10 am, Oct 6, 13, 20, 27

Facilitators Coralie & David Whitcomb

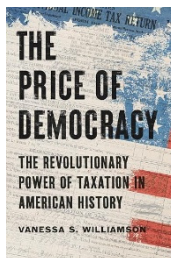
Members \$25

Host Coralie Whitcomb

Non-Members \$35

Place Glendale

406 *The Price of Democracy: The Revolutionary Power of Taxation in American History* by Vanessa Williamson



The author is an economist at the Brookings Tax Policy Center. *The Price of Democracy* uncovers how fights for fiscal fairness have defined American history, claiming taxes are the public's most powerful weapon in the fight for a real democracy. Fights over taxes have always been proxies for deeper conflicts over who is included in "We the

People." As hard as anti-tax crusaders have fought to create an America that redistributes not from rich to poor, but from poor/ middle to rich people, the battle rages on. ISBN-13: 978-1541606111

Tuesday, 2 pm, Oct 6, 13, 20, 27

Facilitator Louis Rubenstein

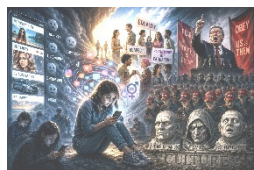
Members \$31

Host Louis Rubenstein

Non-Members \$41

Place Arcadia

407 *Where Are We Headed? Exploring Cultural and Social Changes*



We are experiencing uncertainty and challenge as our society and culture adapt to new technologies, industries, and conventions. This three-part reading and discussion group will

consider a few of the major social-cultural shifts that are impacting our daily lives and, equally importantly, those of our children and grandchildren. Readings from the popular press will be provided two weeks prior to each session. Session 1: The impact of social media on mental health. Session 2: Emerging trends in gender dynamics. Session 3: The politics of culture: Authoritarianism, evil, and stupidity.

Wednesday, 12 noon, Oct 7, 14, 21

Facilitator Stuart Sigman

Members \$10

Host Katherine Gavzy

Non-Members \$20

Place Sierra Madre

408 *Current Movies, Wednesdays - Group A*



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

Wednesday, 3 pm, Oct 7, 21; Nov 4, 18; Dec 2, 16

Facilitator Lane Dolan

Members \$10

Non-Members \$20

Place Pasadena, El Portal Restaurant, inside or outside

409 *Current Movies, Wednesdays - Group B*

See 408 Current Movies, Wednesdays - Group A

Wednesday, 3 pm, Oct 14, 28; Nov 11, 25; Dec 9, 23

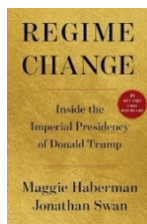
Facilitator Susan Phifer

Members \$10

Non-Members \$20

Place Pasadena, El Portal Restaurant, inside or outside

410 *Regime Change: Inside the Imperial Presidency of Donald Trump* by Maggie Haberman and Jonathan Swan



New York Times reporters Maggie Haberman and Jonathan Swan reconstruct the first year of Trump's second presidency: the use of executive power, the inner White House, and the distance between the public spectacle and what their sources say happened in the room.

Fintan O'Toole wrote in the *Times* that the

book is a "riveting and richly textured narrative" whose value is that it works "to wrest reality back from the distorted world of entertainment, illusion, fantasy and denial that Trump has generated around himself." ISBN-13: 978-1668067246

Friday, 12 noon, Oct 9, 16, 23, 30

Facilitator Bhargav Oza

Members \$29

Zoom

Non-Members \$39

411 *Movie STARS, Fall 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 facilitator.

Monday, 4 pm, Oct 12, 26; Nov 9, 23; Dec 7, 21

Facilitator James Liu

Members \$10

Zoom

Non-Members \$20

412 *Movie STARS, Fall 2026 - Group B*

See 411 Movie STARS, Fall 2026 - Group A

Monday, 7 pm, Oct 12, 26; Nov 9, 23; Dec 7, 21

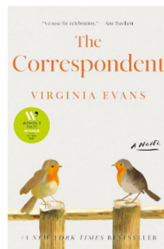
Facilitator James Liu

Members \$10

Zoom

Non-Members \$20

413 *The Correspondent* by Virginia Evans



The Correspondent is an unusual novel. It is written using an epistolary format – a style about which I was skeptical and unfamiliar. Can a story be told using written correspondence between characters? The answer to me is a resounding, "YES!" Virginia Evans, in her first published novel, *The Correspondent*, introduces Sybil Van

Antwerp, a retired 73-year-old attorney who is dealing with

loss of vision, problems of aging, concerns from her past, and uncertainty about the future. Her story unfolds as she writes and receives letters and emails from the important people in her life. ISBN-13: 978-0593798430

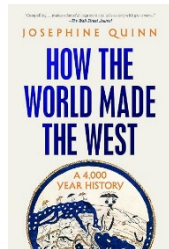
Wednesday, 10 am, Oct 21, 28; Nov 4, 11

Facilitators Tony Koerner & Norah Morley **Members \$32**

Host Tony Koerner & Norah Morley **Non-Members \$42**

Place Pasadena

414 *How the World Made the West: A 4,000 Year History* by Josephine Quinn



In *How the World Made the West*, Josephine Quinn poses perhaps the most significant challenge ever to the “civilizational thinking” regarding the origins of Western culture—that is, the idea that civilizations arose separately and distinctly from one another. Rather, she locates the roots of the modern West in everything from the law

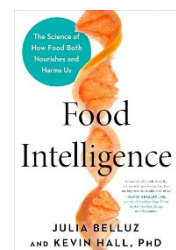
codes of Babylon, Assyrian irrigation, and the Phoenician art of sail to Indian literature, Arabic scholarship, and the metalworking riders of the Steppe, to name just a few examples. ISBN-13: 978-0593729809

Thursday, 12 noon, Oct 29; Nov 5, 12, 19

Facilitator Bhargav Oza **Members \$30**

Zoom **Non-Members \$40**

415 *Food Intelligence* by Julia Belluz and Kevin Hall



Nutrition isn't rocket science; it's harder. There are new diet fads, bold claims about superfoods and articles promising the secrets to lasting weight-loss and longevity. The more “expert” advice we hear about diet, the less clarity we have about what to eat. *Food Intelligence* cuts through the myths about nutrition to deliver a

comprehensive book on food, diet, metabolism and healthy eating. Humane and deeply reported, this journey into the science of what we eat will equip you with the food intelligence you need to better understand what's on your dinner plate, how it got there, and why you eat it. ISBN-13: 978-0593332306

Thursday, 2 pm, Oct 29; Nov 5, 12, 19

Facilitator Carla Barnes **Members \$33**

Host Fran Blackwell **Non-Members \$43**

Place Pasadena

416 *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley



Aldous Huxley's profoundly important classic of world literature, *Brave New World*, is a searching vision of an unequal, technologically-advanced future where humans are genetically bred, socially indoctrinated, and pharmaceutically anesthetized to passively uphold an authoritarian ruling order – all at the cost of

our freedom, full humanity, and perhaps also our souls. *Brave New World* has enthralled and terrified millions of readers, and retains its urgent relevance to this day as both a warning to be heeded as we head into tomorrow and as a thought-provoking, satisfying work of literature. Written in the shadow of the rise of fascism during the 1930s, *Brave New World* likewise speaks to a 21st-century world dominated by mass entertainment, technology, medicine and pharmaceuticals, the arts of persuasion, and the hidden influence of elites. ISBN-13: 978-0060850524

Tuesday, 2 pm, Nov 3, 10, 17

Facilitator Lisa Darling

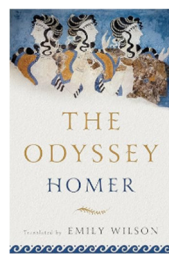
Members \$22

Host Coralie Whitcomb

Non-Members \$32

Place Glendale

417 *The Odyssey* by Homer, translated by Emily Watson



Homer's *Odyssey*, in Emily Wilson's clear, swift translation, is the same version Christopher Nolan has said he had in mind for his IMAX film. Whether you have already seen the movie or have been avoiding the crowds, we will read and discuss the poem itself: the homecoming, the tricks, the violence, and the lines Hollywood had to leave on the cutting-room floor. ISBN-13: 978-0393356250

Tuesday, 10 am, Nov 10, 17, 24; Dec 1, 8

Facilitator Patrick Mathews

Members \$31

Host Katherine Gavzy Nov 10, 24

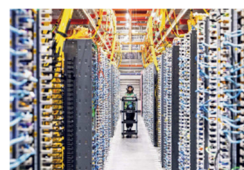
Non-Members \$41

Place Sierra Madre

Host Margaret Hostrup Nov 17; Dec 1, 8

Place Pasadena

418 AI's Impact on Critical Thinking



AI has its benefits, certainly in medicine. But when it comes to writing and critical thinking, it's a disaster. Read a series of NY Times articles on AI's effects on critical thinking and creativity. Also learn what Finland is doing to teach kids to spot AI fakes.

Friday, 12 noon, Nov 13

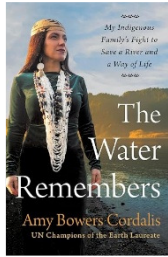
Facilitator Jane Crane

Members \$5

Zoom

Non-Members \$10

419 *The Water Remembers: My Indigenous Family's Fight to Save a River and a Way of Life* by Amy Bowers Cordalis



In a moving and engrossing blend of memoir and history, Amy Cordalis propels readers through her family's 170-year struggle to protect their rights and way of life. The struggle includes her great-uncle's landmark Supreme Court case, her great-grandmother's defiant resistance during the Salmon Wars, her family's ongoing battles

against state and federal overreach, and her own key role as General Counsel for the Yurok Nation spearheading the largest river restoration project in history. ISBN-13: 978-0316568951

Tuesday, 2 pm, Dec 1, 8, 15, 22

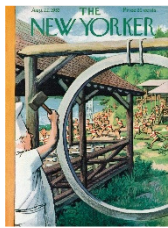
Facilitator Bill Urban

Zoom

Members \$26

Non-Members \$36

420 *From The New Yorker: Two by Cheever*



Over his career, John Cheever published more than 120 stories in *The New Yorker*. The 1950s was his most prolific period. We will discuss two stories from that decade, "O Youth and Beauty!" (August 22, 1953) and "The Five-Forty-Eight" (April 10, 1954).

Each of these short stories was also adapted

as part of the 1979 PBS series, *Three by Cheever*. In addition to discussing the stories, we will also discuss the PBS adaptations of these stories, which are now available for streaming on YouTube. (The third story, "The Sorrows of Gin," was one of the first stories, accompanied by the adaptation, that I led for PALAC). Copies of the two short stories and the YouTube links will be sent to the participants approximately two weeks before each session.

Thursday, 2 pm, Dec 10, 17

Facilitator Charles Schufreider

Host Adrienne Bass

Place Pasadena

Members \$10

Non-Members \$20

FALL SESSION SAFARIS

S14 Los Angeles Music Center theater complex



Come learn about the LA Music Center (Disney Hall, Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, Mark Taper Forum and the Ahmanson), gardens and

plaza. Find out about the history and architecture of these theaters and hear fascinating stories about the Music Center's 60 plus years. Hear about shows and presentations of the Center Theater Group, LA Master Chorale, LA Opera, LA Philharmonic and the TMC Arts group, and also view sculptures, tapestries, paintings and antiques. Meet in Disney Hall lobby. Optional lunch following. Carpooling is recommended. Parking at Disney Hall on 2nd Street is \$10 with validation at this event, or take the A line from Pasadena.

Friday, 10:30 am, Oct 2

Facilitator Adrienne Bass

Docent Clairette Brand

Place 111 S. Grand Ave., Los Angeles 90012

Members \$5

Non-Members \$10

S15 Spells and Passwords of Ancient Egypt



Join Patti and John Brugman for another narrated slideshow drawn from their recent travels in Egypt. Tomb walls and funerary papyri were not only art, they were instruction manuals. The Book of the

Dead and related "underworld books" armed the deceased with spells and, just as important, the secret names and passwords of the gatekeepers, heralds, and monsters who guarded each portal on the way to Osiris. Through the Brugmans' photographs from Cairo, Luxor, the Valley of the Kings and Queens, Dendera, and Abu Simbel, we will look at how those texts and images were meant to work, and why knowing the right words was a matter of eternal life or being turned away at the door.

Friday, 7:15 pm, Oct 16

Presenters John & Patti Brugman

Host Gaye Shepard

Place Villa Gardens, 842 E. Villa Street, Pasadena

Members \$5

Non-Members \$10

S16 Deanna Durbin: *Every Sunday* and *100 Men and a Girl*



Bob Koster presents two Deanna Durbin films and behind-the-scenes stories from his father, director Henry Koster. We will start with *Every Sunday* (1936), a ten-minute MGM short in which Durbin and Judy Garland sing a duet. A mix-up in Louis B. Mayer's office sent Durbin to Universal and launched Koster's career there. Then we will watch *100 Men and a Girl* (1937), one of six Durbin features he directed.

Friday, 2 pm, Nov 13

Presenter Bob Koster

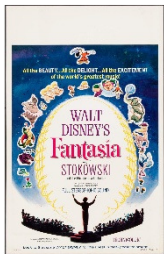
Members \$5

Host Gaye Shepard

Non-Members \$10

Place Villa Gardens, 842 E. Villa Street, Pasadena

S17 *Fantasia*



Bob Koster presents Disney's original *Fantasia* (1940), which brilliantly fused classical music and animation, bringing Leopold Stokowski and the Philadelphia Orchestra together with unforgettable images, from Mickey as the Sorcerer's Apprentice, dinosaurs dancing to Stravinsky, and cherubs floating through Beethoven.

After the screening he will talk about why this is one of his favorite films and how Disney tried to make classical music a popular art. Note: A sequel program on *Fantasia 2000* may be offered in a later season.

Wednesday, 1 pm, Dec 2

Presenter Bob Koster

Members \$5

Host Gaye Shepard

Non-Members \$10

Place Villa Gardens, 842 E. Villa Street, Pasadena

S18 Holiday Songs and Stories with Stephan Smith Collins



Celebrate the season with Stephan as he shares favorite holiday songs and heartwarming stories that evoke cherished memories. This gathering offers familiar melodies and gentle

humor for everyone to enjoy the spirit of the holidays together. Join us for a relaxed program that brings comfort, connection, and joy.

Wednesday, 2 pm, Dec 23

Presenter Stephan Smith Collins

Members FREE

Host Gaye Shepard

Non-Members FREE

Place Villa Gardens, 842 E. Villa Street, Pasadena

Filling Out the Registration Form Online

Both the brochure and the registration form are on the PALAC website. Go to the How to Participate page to find the links to both. <https://palac-pasadena.info/how-to-participate/> You may fill out the form online. After you have filled out the form, a pdf file will be generated which you can save and then email as an attachment to the PALAC office. If you pay by Zelle, you can both register and pay without printing or mailing anything! Note that you are not registering online, just filling out the form. You won't be registered until both your registration form and your payment (check or Zelle) are received by the PALAC office. Of course you may also print out the form at the end of this brochure (also available on the website), fill it in by hand, and mail it in.

Payment Options

You may continue to pay by check, but you may now pay by Zelle. PALAC is identified on Zelle as a business entity by its tag name, **pasadenalac**. Enter that tag in the place where you usually type a name, a phone number, or an email. (Banks may or may not ask for a name in the first step and entering Pasadena Area Liberal Arts Center is fine. Just do not enter a phone number or email.) If you pay by Zelle, you must still send your registration form to the PALAC office either by US mail or by email. The payment amount, date, and the name on the Zelle account you are paying from are sent to our bank and we have a record of that instantly. Please use the optional Zelle memo field to describe what the payment is for: programs, membership, Fall retreat, etc. **Your use of Zelle does not affect your position in any lottery queue just because it arrives so quickly.**

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 a photo of the book's cover and 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.