

## Historical Fiction Morning Group

As in the past, the Historical Fiction morning group has selected for consideration classic and historical fiction novels that reflect the conference's theme. In 2014, we will discuss a group of books that depict the aspirations of people from widely different times, classes, nation states, and ethnicities/races and the systematic inequities they experience on a daily basis that often prevent their aspirations from coming to fruition. We will start with the classic *Jude the Obscure* by Thomas Hardy, with David Jones facilitating the discussion. The second novel is John Dos Passos's *The 42nd Parallel* (the first volume of what is known as his U.S.A. trilogy), and Tom Stockdale will provide background and lead the discussion. David Dornan will then lead us in a discussion of Sembene Ousmane's *God's Bits of Wood*. The final work to be discussed is Ayana Mathis's *The Twelve Tribes of Hattie* (facilitator—Mary Papke). If you are interested in reading background on the Hardy and Dos Passos novels, you might consider checking out the Norton Critical Edition of *Jude the Obscure* and the Library of American edition of Dos Passos's *U.S.A.* (the latter contains a detailed chronology of world events cited in the trilogy). The Ousmane novel is available from Heinemann, and Mathis's novel will be released in paperback by Vintage this month. If you have questions, please email Mary Papke, the convener, at [papke@utk.edu](mailto:papke@utk.edu).

Contact: Mary Papke ([papke@utk.edu](mailto:papke@utk.edu)) with any questions.

## Forms of Autobiography

The theme of the general meeting is: "Minding the Gap: Educating for Economic Justice" but we often move graciously beyond the theme based on our interests and writing projects. However, the theme could stimulate some contributions about travel, class differences in our family history or current lives, the financial condition of women, or maybe the gap in relationships caused by war.

Some other ideas for a panel or individual presentation:

Downton Abbey and Me(or Not Me)

How Comic Books Affected My Life

History of a Body Part and What I Learned from It

EXCITING PRESENTATIONS LINED UP

Barbara Babcock, Actress and SVHE member will do a reading from: *The Belle of Amherst*, a one person play in the voice of Emily Dickinson. Question: Would someone like to read a selection of Emily Dickinson poems?

Janet and Carl Edwards will recount their experiences at the Moral Monday demonstrations in Raleigh including being arrested and the prospect of a trial.

Betsy Williams will share her book for middle schoolers, part of which is based on exaggerated versions of her own life.

Joan McKee will share some stories as she reflects from her retirement residence.

Maria-Victoria Abrika has a series of poems about her mother's death and her adjustment process. These readings could be part of a panel about memories of parents or others.

We'll have a session based on StoryCorps.org.

More contributions are welcome in the form of music, questions of how to write about oneself, the place of humor and deep feeling in personal writing and thinking. Formats can vary with 1 or 2 presentations in a morning or perhaps a talk and a panel. Discussion is essential and lively!

Contact: Lynore Banchoff ([Lynoreb@sbcglobal.net](mailto:Lynoreb@sbcglobal.net)) or 650 327-1234

## Pop Culture

Issues of inequality pervade the television shows, movies and music that we consume daily. Yet, how often do you have the time to synthesize or analyze the various messages (about income and class) packaged as entertainment? Join the Popular Culture Group for four mornings of just such education, reflection and debate. (Schedule is subject to change.)

Day 1: The American Dream: Truth or Myth?

Day 2: Portrayal of Inequality and Women in Animation

Day 3: Orange and Blue

Day 4: Net Neutrality

More in depth information regarding each day's discussion, including a list of recommended viewing, can be found [here](#).

### **Sustainability**

We will examine aspects of sustainability and environmental planning, seeking to discover solutions to these challenging issues. We are planning a field trip focusing on a local issue related to the environment, continuing our practice of linking some of our discussions to the place and region where the SVHE meeting is held. Our field trip this year is in the planning stages, but some of our concerns this year will be Food and Farming. We are always open to new voices and directions, and share stories and poetry, personal reflections and environmental discoveries. We will also integrate other proposed presentations and readings from interested participants that relate to sustainability, planning or the environment. Please email information on proposed presentations and readings to Jo Margaret Mano by June 15. Contact: Jo Margaret Mano: ([manoj@newpaltz.edu](mailto:manoj@newpaltz.edu))or 845-255-6722.

### **Theorizing Culture**

The Theorizing Culture Group has settled on the following readings for its meetings. All readings with an asterisk (\*) will be made available to participants in electronic form. Participants are asked to secure a copy of *The Spirit Level* on their own.

#### Thursday

John Locke (from *Second Treatise on Government*)\*  
Friedrich Hayek ("The Constitution of Liberty")\*  
Robert Nozick (from *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*)\*

#### Friday

John Rawls (from *A Theory of Justice*)\*  
Robert Nozick (from *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*)\*  
Timothy Noah (from *The Great Divergence*)\*

#### Saturday

Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett, *The Spirit Level*, Part One

#### Sunday

*The Spirit Level*, Part Three, chaps. 13 and 16

Contact Allen Dunn at [ardunn@utk.edu](mailto:ardunn@utk.edu)  
or Eric Bain-Selbo at [eric.bain-selbo@wku.edu](mailto:eric.bain-selbo@wku.edu)

## **Celebrating the Search**

Celebrating the Search has been meeting for 35 years and is open and welcoming to all who would like to join our caring community. We currently have three presentations slated for this coming meeting— but our presentations are not academic papers with 623 footnotes. We stand on our own feet and are the authorities of our own life experiences. The group discovers where the presenter's story resonates with their own. This year Barbara Blair will tell us about how her journey as a Dominican Nun (for ten years) led to her dissertation on Buddhism. Melanie Howard will talk about her adult conversion to the Mennonite faith. And Dorothy Hurlburt will be presenting as well. Would you like to try out some ideas and get some feedback from a wonderful group of people? Contact Carol Ochs ([cochs@earthlink.net](mailto:cochs@earthlink.net)) if you have any questions or suggestions.

### **\*New for 2014\***

#### **Morning Wiki**

Best teachers find ways to enhance intrinsic motivations to learn. How can one harness technologies (that could and do function as distractions) to engage intrinsic motivation? How might we use apps, social media, YouTube, e-games, course management platforms, and wikis to build knowledge webs? We will learn together (through trial and error) by building our own knowledge web (in the actual form of a wiki?). Contact David Stewart ([david.stewart@csulb.edu](mailto:david.stewart@csulb.edu)) or Amy Berger ([amy.berger@mail.heidleberg.edu](mailto:amy.berger@mail.heidleberg.edu))

### **\*New for 2014\***

#### **Social Justice in the Academy**

In this seminar, we will focus on Reinhold Niebuhr's seminal work *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, and consider its value for teaching morality in contemporary higher education. We will consider whether Niebuhr's thought has contemporary value or should be relegated to the realm of historical inquiry. Reading: *Reinhold Niebuhr's Moral Man and Immoral Society* Contact: Greg Sapp: ([gsapp@stetson.edu](mailto:gsapp@stetson.edu))

### **\*New for 2014\***

#### **African Today through the lens of Fiction**

This new MG will focus on African writers, writers about Africa, and (possibly) African films in order to gain a better understanding of political, cultural, and religious life in contemporary sub-Saharan Africa. It will be an exploratory group, with volunteer discussion leaders rather than formal presentations, and each morning's session will focus on one or two works that participants will read in advance. Interested in learning more about Africa and sharing insights with Fellows with a range of disciplinary perspectives and personal experiences? Write to the convener, and volunteer to take responsibility for one of the works on the tentative list below, or propose an alternate. Among the works being considered: Chinua Achebe, *Anthills of the Savannah*; Ngugi wa'Thiongo, *A Grain of Wheat*; Bessie Head, *Maru*; James Mda, *Ways of Dying*; Okey Ndibe, *Foreign Gods Inc.* (whose author will join us via Skype); Susan Minot, *Thirty Girls*; and a film by Sembene Ousmane. A revised list and schedule will be sent to inquirers and posted on the SVHE website. CONVENER: David Hoekema (Calvin College) [dhoekema@calvin.edu](mailto:dhoekema@calvin.edu).