

Morning Groups meet Thursday – Saturday from 9:00-Noon.

Academic Game Design: "The Academic Senate"

Convener: David Stewart david.stewart@csulb.edu

Complex role-playing academic games represent both a new (and old) initiative for teaching the humanities. We will read for the FM the Reacting to the Past "Game Designer's Handbook" and brainstorm the creation of one or more games including one for new faculty hires tentatively titled the "Academic Senate Game." What are the key texts related to the nature and purpose of universities? What are the key "decision" or "crisis moments" in the formation of the modern North American university? How might the European "Bologna Process" inform this? Could we formulate a game that might orient new faculty to the meaning of the university and the importance of faculty governance in tension with a background of anti-intellectual currents and funding constraints?

Celebrating the Search

Convener, Carol Ochs cochs@earthlink.net

With one year off to catch our breath (after 30 years), Celebrating the Search is back with a cast of exciting thoughtful presenters. Carl Edwards will reflect on retirement and his continuing spiritual journey, Ruth Hooke will lead us on a trek from Yale Divinity School to Quakerism, Thomas Treanor will take us on an autobiographical faith journey, Carol Ochs will describe the process (and product) of having to summarize her life's work in five minutes, and Ralph Norman may help us understand the difference between religious literacy and religious competence. There is room for you to make a presentation on art, literature, life journey, etc. The presenters have much to offer and the group as a whole brings its own inimitable warmth and openness to every session. Contact Carol for further information or to offer to make a presentation.

Forms of Autobiography

Convener: Mary Treanor mtreanor@valpo.edu 574-233-5409

The Forms of Autobiography group is interested mainly in intention, decisions about form, and strategies of shaping one's personal story. We aim for a balance between presenters' own autobiographical work and studies of such materials by others. Last summer's discussions gave us a more clearly articulated insight to carry forward: attention to the form that a particular autobiographical work takes is important to the writer and to the audience; we will be more mindful of the choice of form in our own writing and as we listen to another's work.

Presentations have been promised already; several relate to aspects of the Summer Meeting's general theme: Imagination and Compassion in Higher Education. Joel Cunningham will reflect on leadership in Christian higher education. George Newtown has crafted a personal essay delving into the erotics of teacher-student relationships, including reflections on Plato and on the experiences of colleagues; it is titled "Goofy."

Marianne Finnegan will present "Searching for Form: a Memoir of a Memoir." Ruth Hooke will share her memoir, "Westtown Alma Mater: how Quaker School shaped my values for life." Margaret Pearson will discuss recorded interaction with a text as a form of autobiography. Last, but not least, Lynore Banchoff will share her poetry and invite our response; her work is entitled "Pressing Memories--Life, Time, and the Sears Catalogue."

We are always happy to greet returning members and eager to welcome new ones.

Historical Fiction Morning Group

Convener: Mary Papke Papke@utk.edu

The Historical Fiction Morning Group will take up the issue of compassion, imagination, and justice in the books selected for summer 2012. We will first discuss Toni Morrison's *A Mercy*, a short novel set in the colonial period that details the "personality types that violently came together in the New World." We will follow this with Barbara Corrado Pope's *The Blood of Lorraine*, a police procedural that is set in 1894 and explores the rise of anti-Semitism after the arrest of Dreyfus on the charge of treason. (You may want to read her first book in this series, *Cézanne's Quarry*, which introduces her main characters, but that is not necessary.) Our third book is Theodore Dreiser's *An American Tragedy*; a tremendous bestseller in 1925 based on a real-life murder case and considered a classic "work of mythic force" today. As one critic notes, "few novels have tracked so relentlessly the process by which an ordinary young man (motivated, ironically, by naïve dreams of self-betterment) becomes capable of a ruthless murder." It is a long book, so plan to start reading soon. Our final selection is Irène Némirovsky's *Suite Française*, a novel written before Némirovsky's death at Auschwitz and then lost for sixty-four years. The book details life in France at the time of the Nazi occupation. One critic calls it "transcendent, astonishing....The last great fiction of the war." Group facilitators include Alfred Guillaume, Jr., Melanie Smith-Guillaume, and Mary Papke. Please plan on joining us for informative and spirited discussion.

Imagination and Empathy in Myanmar (formerly known as Burma)

Convener: Dorothy Guyot jungle gymn@gmail.com

Purpose: To gain insights into a country emerging rapidly and unevenly from fifty years under a military dictatorship and to brainstorm on a curriculum for a liberal arts college in Yangon (Rangoon) that will promote the opening of the country to the world.

Subtopics:

Day 1 The dynamics of the political-economic context.

Day 2 Imagination: Contemporary Myanmar painting, a field trip to the ArtAsiaNYC Center in Greendell NJ, 45 minute drive from Drew in fellows' cars. Richard Streiter, retired Dean of Pratt Institute, will introduce us to his collection.

Day 3 Empathy: Application of Daniel Golman's Emotional Intelligence to Myanmar society as understood through a few short stories.

Day 4 Brainstorming for a new liberal arts college curriculum that will promote imagination and empathy.

Required Readings:

Day 1

David I. Steinberg. *Burma/Myanmar: What Everybody Needs to Know*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010. 216 p. Amazon \$11.53.

The author is the American who best understands the economics and politics of Myanmar. A professor at Georgetown, he has written this set of pithy answers to basic questions.

OR

Thant Myint Oo. *Where China Meets India: Burma and the Crossroads of Asia*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011. 361 p. Amazon \$17.82.

The author earned his bachelor's at Harvard and his PhD in history at Cambridge. In his third book he weaves together history and his experiences to explain the current situation of Myanmar.

Day 2

Visit the website www.artsaisanyc.com for examples of artistic imagination in this country cut-off from the contemporary art world.

Day 3 Readings will be emailed in advance to participants.

Selections on compassion made by a Sri Lankan monk from Buddhist texts

Daniel Goleman's thoughts on President Obama seeking compassionate Supreme Court justices

Two short stories from Myanmar.

Day 4 Readings will be emailed in advance to participants.

A framework to spark brain storming on how general education courses and co-curricular activities could foster imagination and empathy. The context is a high quality, American accredited, liberal arts college planned for opening in Yangon (Rangoon) in 2013. It will enroll perhaps 1,000 students at full size.

The convener is the life fellow, Dorothy Guyot, who with her husband and Dr. Khin Maung Win has created a 16 month bridging program enabling over 100 high school graduates to win scholarships to colleges abroad. Now they starting graduate school or coming home to assist the transformation of their country. Contact her at dguyot@aya.yale.edu and during May at 408 772-9789

Pop Culture

Conveners: Judy Meschel ([meschelja at aol dot com](mailto:meschelja@aol.com)) or Dan Sack ([sack at rnc dot com](mailto:sack@rnc.com)).

The Popular Culture morning group aims to take a particularly SVHE-like look at the popular culture(s) around us. We want to see what the media we consume tell us about the worlds we live in and the values that shape them--and how those worlds and media shape popular culture in turn.

Saturday

Higher Education in Prime Time: NBC's Community

Gregory A. Robbins, Chair, Department of Religious Studies, Associate Professor, History of Christianity and its Scriptures, University of Denver

Not since *The Paper Chase* (1978-86), has there been a popular TV series that pulls aside the curtain on the day-to-day lives students in higher education. NBC's critically-received *Community*, just renewed for a fourth season, offers a glimpse into the experiences of seven students at fictional Greendale (Colorado) Community College. The students, brought together initially as a study group for a Spanish 101 class, quickly become a tight social network, despite their highly varied backgrounds, personalities, values, and reasons for attending college. Creator Dan Harmon's arch

view of the role of higher education in American life is replete with pop culture references that parody television and film clichés and tropes, and betrays, I would argue, touching insight about the intangibles the pursuit of the of the mind can offer in an increasingly important, tho' often overlooked segment of higher education: the community college.

Sunday

Patriotic Music

Stephen J. Sfekas, Judge, Circuit Court for Baltimore City

The US has at least 4 national anthems, perhaps even 6. (There is the official one, of course, plus The Battle Hymn of the Republic, God Bless America, America the Beautiful, and perhaps I'm Proud to be an American and America. The four main ones have interesting back stories and the songs have different moods and are used differently.)

Monday

Pop Culture and the Naked Self

Eric Bain-Selbo, Department of Philosophy and Religion, Western Kentucky University
From television shows to Barbies, from movies to sports teams, people find a fetish that serves to fill the void left by the absence of religious and political ideology. Despite the therapeutic benefits, however, my claim is that, in a viciously circular manner, popular culture fetishes depend upon and promote a kind of self that is feeble and diminished—a kind of self that we would be wise to avoid.

Tuesday

Zombies!

Dr. Kelly J. Baker, Religious Studies, University of Tennessee Knoxville

(tentative) Kids These Days

Visiting members of the Young Adult Morning Group
Current trends in tween pop culture consumption

Sustainability: Exploring Solutions

Convener: Jo Margaret Mano manoj@newpaltz.edu.

We will examine aspects of sustainability and environmental planning, seeking to discover solutions to these challenging issues.

UPDATE! Continuing our past tradition of integrating a local field trip with our Morning Group experience, we have planned a field trip to meet with Ranger Dave at the Great Swamp Visitor Center, to discover more about this unique place, as well as a visit to the nearby Raptor Trust. Interested? Check out www.greatswamp.org and www.raptortrust.org! Jeff Guidry's book *An Eagle Named Freedom* and Marie Winn's *Red-Tails in Love* give a fine introduction to raptor rehabilitation and the hawk world.

The sustainable lessons learned from wetland environments (like the Great Swamp) provide an innovative way to embrace "Doing Water Right," discussing blue-green technology in urban water management. Andy Goldsworthy's vision of both ephemeral and enduring celebrations of the natural environment will provide an artistic perspective to our subject.

We still have space for a couple of presentations, so email manoj@newpaltz.edu if you have suggestions for a presentation or reading. As always, we welcome newcomers and friends to our Morning Group.

Theorizing Culture

Co-Conveners: Eric Bain-Selbo eric.bain-selbo@wku.edu and Allen Dunn ardunn@utk.edu

Perspectives on Empathy and Compassion

This year we will be reading a number of different pieces on compassion and empathy. These pieces will be from multiple disciplines (for example, biology, philosophy, history, etc.). A reading list will be available by June 1 so that participants can read them in advance of the meeting. If you have suggestions, please feel free to e-mail one or both of the conveners.