

LP² A Lifelong Peer Learning Program at the Graduate Center, CUNY

THE OBSERVER
November 30th, 2020

NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear members,

I had the opportunity last week to discuss the resilience and ingenuity of LP² members when Advisory Board chair Harold Berkowitz and I met with researchers conducting a survey on how CUNY's adult and continuing education programs have transitioned to remote learning and teaching. As one of the researchers is a Graduate Center PhD student and another person on the call works in language and literacy programs across the University, we saw potential for future collaborations and initiatives. It's exciting to share the breadth and depth of LP² as a program and community while continuing to forge new connections with the GC and across CUNY.

As included in the last issue of the Observer, we will convene a General Membership Meeting on December 15 from 3-4PM. The agenda is centered on the amendments to the Advisory Board Guidelines. Please register and submit your questions in advance using the Eventbrite link later in this issue.

I am very pleased to see the Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion developed by the Diversity Committee and approved by the Advisory Board to reflect the strength of the LP² community and as an articulated commitment to advancing social justice inside and outside of the classroom. Read on for more about this statement and the full text, also on the Zine (linked below).

Thank you to those who have submitted your registration forms for Spring 2021! If you need assistance, please be in touch with our office at engagement@gc.cuny.edu and please submit your ranked preferences by this coming Sunday, December 6.

As a final reminder, payment is due this Friday, December 4 for the Fall semester and for Fall 2020-Spring 2021 if you are planning to enroll for the full year. If you have been in touch with us over the past week, you will be hearing back from Ariana in the coming days after returning from vacation.

We have two events coming up this week – today at 4PM is a talk by the Bulgarian Ambassador to the UN about the rescue of Jewish people in WWII and what it's like to work at the UN in New York City. On Friday, we have the final Fridays@3 talk of the semester by Dr. Martin J. Blaser about the human microbiome and the role of bacteria in public health. Please register for each (see below) to receive the Zoom information and bring your friends and questions for these esteemed speakers!

Stay safe and be well,
Mariel

Please register for this week's LP² events using the links below:

TODAY! Monday, November 30 at 4PM: [Bulgarian Ambassador Georgi Velikov Panayotov on WWII Rescue of Jews](#)

Friday, December 4 at 3PM: [Fridays@3 with Martin J. Blaser, M.D.](#)

NOTE FROM THE ADVISORY BOARD

Commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

On November 24, the LP² Advisory Board unanimously adopted this commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. It was drafted and adopted by the LP² Diversity Committee to assure our members that everyone is welcome, comfortable and unthreatened by language when attending study groups and while the primary purpose is to address the use of language in study groups and in fact, in all LP² venues.

The full commitment is printed below and is [on the Zine](#). The Advisory Board expects that everyone will honor, accept and abide by the commitment.

Harold
For the Advisory Board

LP² A Lifelong Peer Learning Program Commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

LP² is a multicultural secular organization whose membership is dedicated to the pursuit of lifelong learning and fellowship. In our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion, we agree to respect the rights and sensibilities of all members.

LP²'s goal is to expand diversity, which includes gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, politics, culture, socio-economic status and disability.

- We have adopted this Commitment to ensure these goals. We seek a community and culture that is respectful, open, curious and thoughtful. We challenge ourselves to continue learning within a supportive and dynamic environment.
- We will confront overt and implied bias, exclusion and prejudice if and when they occur.
- We treat all members respectfully and acknowledge their equal rights and intellect.
- We avoid stereotyping and coded language.
- While we may study past or present usage, we do not use derogatory terms or slurs to describe or refer to any group or person.
- We respect our membership's diversity and avoid comments that presume all members share the same religion or culture.

As members of LP², we agree to support and practice these principles.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Register for Spring

Registration for the spring semester is now open, and the deadline is Sunday, December 6th. The grid and descriptions of study groups are

available through an email sent last week and on the Zine. The registration form has also been posted and is available through the Zine.

Classes begin on Monday, February 1st and run through May 14th, 2021. All study groups will be conducted on Zoom.

- You can find the Study Group Grid here: [Spring 2021 Grid](#)
- And the Registration Form here: <https://formfaca.de/sm/lc9Vr9LIn>

If you have any problems accessing the registration material, contact the GC office via email to engagement@gc.cuny.edu.

GMM: Guidelines Amendments

Tuesday, December 15th at 3PM

At this GMM we will discuss the amendments to our Guidelines recommended by the Advisory Board. These Guidelines would govern LP² operations and relationships with the Graduate Center over the coming years.

Here below, for your convenience, is a summary of the amendments. This summary together with the complete amended Guidelines themselves are [available on the Zine](#).

Within two weeks following the meeting, members will be asked to vote on the amendments by secret ballot, and an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the ballots cast will be required for adoption.

Plan to discuss this important issue—and others—and also see the new Advisory Board and your old and new friends. Bring your own refreshments! Please [register here](#) to receive Zoom details and submit your questions for the GMM in advance (within the registration form).

Summary of the Amended Guidelines

These amendments were proposed and adopted by the IRP/GC Transition Board and then by the IRP Advisory Board on October 27, 2020. The Transition Board was established by the interim senior vice president of administration and finance and the dean for academic initiatives and

strategic innovation of the Graduate Center. The purpose of the guideline amendments is to make the language reflect the organization's integration into the Graduate Center and also to highlight recent changes that have developed over recent years in the IRP's membership, operations, goals and governance.

Throughout the Guidelines the name of the organization has been changed to LP² A Lifelong Peer Learning Program, and the parent institution has been changed from the New School to The Graduate Center of the City University of New York.

The **Statement of Purpose** now includes the recruitment of a diverse membership.

Section II: The Guidelines provide for a separate summer fee ensuring that they reflect actual practice. The guidelines also now provide for a separate fee for those allowed to take one study group a semester. Both provisions are at the discretion of the director. This formalizes the waiver of the requirement to take two study groups. The IRP/GC Transition Board adopted this provision with the express intention of attracting members of under-represented groups who are ambivalent about joining the LP² and potential members who may not be fully retired.

A review of a member's performance by the director was changed from required to permitted.

Section III: Requirements to become members of the Advisory Board were changed. There is no longer a distinction between "at large" representatives and "coordinator" representatives. All representatives are "at large." All twelve elected members still must have been members for at least one year and now one seat is reserved for a member of less than three years, to ensure that newer members have a voice on the board.

The years that the Vice Chair of the board may serve were reduced from five to four years and the years for the Chair were reduced from six to five years.

The Admissions and Curriculum Committees will continue to appoint one member to be a voting member of the board and now the Diversity Committee will appoint a member replacing the Development Committee representative.

Meeting requirements for the Advisory Board were changed from once a month to bi-weekly during each semester.

Section VIII: Terms for committee members have been reduced to four years and for chairs to five years.

Section IX: GMM's are to be held once a semester instead of once a year.

Memorial for Marshall Marcovitz

When our beloved Marshall died this past September, his wife, Liz Levy, told us the family would arrange a Zoom memorial for early December to celebrate Marshall's life. The plans have now been set. Liz and Marshall's children invite Marshall's friends and colleagues to join them on Sunday, December 6th at 6PM. If you would like to attend, please send an email to Miriam Lawrence at mlawrence@gc.cuny.edu. She will send you the Zoom invitation.

Voter Registration Project

With the Georgia runoff for two Senate seats coming on January 5th, here are some suggestions from the Voter Registration Project for how to become involved:

Fair Count - Fair Count worked on the 2020 Census but has transitioned to Ballot Chasing/Vote By Mail (VBM) organizing and is increasing its field capacity to reach as many new voters as possible. [Make a tax-deductible contribution to Fair Count here.](#)

New Georgia Project - This nonpartisan organization founded by Stacey Abrams is dedicated to registering new voters -- primarily young people and people of color as well as stoking turnout. In advance of the November 3rd election, NGP registered some 400,000 new voters. Now they're scrambling to register the estimated 23,000 who will turn 18 before the December 7th registration deadline that will enable them to vote in the January 5th runoffs. [Make a tax-deductible contribution to the New Georgia Project here](#) (watch the video on the landing page)

The People's Agenda - Provides a range of voter education activities including registration, mobilization initiatives to get out the vote and election security and voter protection programs. This organization is on the front lines of the battle to revise repressive requirements like mandatory ID and exact signature match. [Make a tax-deductible donation to The People's agenda website](#) (You will need a PayPal account or call them at (404) 653-1199).

Phone Banks, Postcard and Letter-Writing Campaigns need Volunteers

For information on several of these campaigns and to find the one that is right for you [click here for details.](#)

EVENTS



LP² Special Event
November 30,
4PM
Georgi Velikov Panayotov, Bulgarian ambassador to the UN

The Bulgarians rescued all of the 48,000 Jews living in Bulgaria during World War II. (Although Bulgaria allowed the Germans to deport about 11,000 Jews in Bulgarian-occupied Macedonia and part of Romania.) Only Bulgaria and Albania ended the war with more Jews than before the war. Ambassador Georgi Velikov Panayotov will speak about the rescue and what it is like to be a UN ambassador here in New York.

LP² member Bill Siegel is a diplomatic outreach team leader for the American Jewish Committee and has arranged this talk. [Register via Eventbrite here.](#)



**Fridays @3:
This Week!**

**Microbiologist
Martin J.
Blaser, M.D.**

Join us on
December 4 for
a talk by Dr.
Blaser on how a

perturbed microbiome fuels modern epidemics. Dr. Blaser will discuss his groundbreaking work on the relationship of the human microbiome to health and diseases including asthma, obesity, diabetes, and cancer. Dr. Blaser, who was included in Time Magazine's 2015 list of the 100 most influential people in the world, is Henry Rutgers Chair of the Human Microbiome at Rutgers University, Director of the Center for Advanced Biotechnology and Medicine, and Chair of the Presidential Advisory Council for Combatting Antibiotic Resistant Bacteria (PACCARB).

As always, members of LP² are welcome to invite friends and family to the talk. The Graduate Center will reach out to its large network, and we expect to have a large and enthusiastic audience. [Here is the link to register for the talk.](#)

**MORE WINTER BREAK
ACTIVITIES**

Tuesdays at Two

From December 22 through
January 28

Trump Set to Leave on January
20th. Now What?

Steve Kalinsky, Sara Otey, Barry
Levine and Maury Harris

As (slightly more than) half the nation celebrates the election of Joe Biden as the next President and (slightly less than) half the nation is dubious about the result, LP² weighs in. America heads into 2021 facing a major health crisis, a major economic crisis, a media revolution (conventional media v social media v internet outliers), and a very politically polarized population. We look at the issues, we look back for historical context, we examine the state of affairs in America today and we humbly attempt to predict the future. Our objective is to make sense of it all.

Please join our discussion group; for a Zoom Invite, please contact Steve Kalinsky at:

skalinsky@gc.cuny.edu

Stitch Away Stress

Tuesday, January 5th 10AM

Join us for a remote

knit/crochet/spin/weave/sew/stitch group. Share your skills and enjoy the meditative benefits of handwork. Depending on interest, we will set up several sessions during winter break. If you're interested, email Michelle Harris Mharris@gc.cuny.edu or Susan Herman Sherman1@gc.cuny.edu You will receive a Zoom invite the week before the session.

Shtisel - a Netflix series
Friday, 1PM on January 8, 15, 22 & 29

Watch all 24 episodes of the award winning Israeli TV show, which focuses on an ultra-orthodox Jewish family living in Jerusalem. We will meet on four Fridays to discuss them. Each episode is 45 minutes, and we will discuss six episodes in each meeting. To sign up, email Susan Herman sherman1@gc.cuny.edu. You'll receive a Zoom invite before each session. Susan and Jenny Ross will lead the discussions.

Book Discussion with Jane Case Einbender
***The City & The City* by China Mieville**
Wednesday, January 13, 1PM

"If Philip K. Dick and Raymond Chandler's love child were raised by Franz Kafka, the

writing that emerged might resemble [this] ...novel"—*Los Angeles Times*.

Part detective mystery, part dystopian tale, the novel illuminates fundamental and unsettling questions about culture and governance. If you are interested, email Jane Case Einbender jeinbender@gc.cuny.edu, obtain the book and start reading now on your own. You'll receive a Zoom invite the week before.

Book Discussion with ArylInn Brody
***The Girl with the Louding Voice* by Abi Dare**
Thursday, January 21, 1PM

In the voice of a 14-year-old Nigerian girl trafficked by her father who lives with the hope of getting an education, this beautifully written book deals with trafficking, education equality, women's rights, women as mentors, friendship, hope and motherhood. If you are interested, email Arlynn Brody abrody@gc.cuny.edu, obtain the book and start reading now on your own. You'll receive a Zoom invite the week before.

PREVIOUSLY ANNOUNCED

Reading Stories Aloud Monday January 4, 11, 18 & 25, 3PM

Sharon Girard and Helene Schiffman invite you to the pleasures of reading aloud. Stories are emailed to you in advance, but preparation is unnecessary. A panel of readers reads the story aloud - sprinkling its reading with interjections, questions, one-liners, insights wise and dumb and short digressions. During pauses, the entire group joins in for comments and questions.

The panel changes from session to session - giving all who wish to read the opportunity to do so. We're considering stories by Elif Batuman, Shirley Jackson, Italo Calvino, Anita Desai, Deborah Eisenberg, Gogol, Jamaica Kincaid, Nicole Krauss, Herman Melville, Sigizmund Krzhizhanovsky, Grace Paley, Zadie Smith, as well as revisiting some of our favorite authors such as Raymond Carver and Flannery O'Connor. Email Sharon at sgirard@gc.cuny.edu for the Zoom link. Please indicate if you would like to be on a panel.

China & the US: What Lies Ahead with Tom Hardy Thursday, January 7, 1PM

This is a second follow-up to Tom's study group. We speculate on the composition of President Biden's cabinet and on the relationship between the new administration and China. Former class members will automatically be signed up to receive a Zoom invite. Others who wish to participate should email Tom Hardy at thardy@gc.cuny.edu.

Impressionism in the Met: A Guided Tour with Carolyn Grossner Thursday, January 14, 1PM

The Met has the finest collection of Impressionist art outside of Paris. We will take an hour tour (repeated from this past summer's course) of some of the greatest examples of Impressionist art including works that led to the movement as well as works of post-Impressionism. This is intended simply to be a relaxing lunch-hour talk about beautiful paintings with no Q&A afterwards. Please join me at this link on January 14 (see next page):

<https://gc-cuny.zoom.us/j/99824417700?pwd=T2g0WUZRZXBCYVVqcCtEQkFpZUlyQT09>

The Great LP² Read
The Reluctant Fundamentalist
by Mohsin Hamid
Wednesday, January 27, 1PM

Join us for our second Great LP² Read. Our book was both shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize and a New York Times bestseller. Depending on how many people sign up, we will organize one or more Zoom discussion groups during the break. If interested, email Jane Case Einbender at jeinbender@gc.cuny.edu, obtain the book and start reading. You'll receive a Zoom invite the week before the session.

Comedy Writing Workshop with Robert Chan

Interested in participating in a comedy writing workshop over winter break? If I receive positive responses, I'll set up a Zoom meeting to discuss procedure, mechanics etc. My initial thought is for participants to write a short piece of comic writing prior to each meeting for us to share and

discuss. We could also post and discuss examples of comic writing.

Anyone with a funny sense of humor (no need for it be a humorous one) is invited. I would appreciate any suggestions or guidance. If you are interested or offended, please contact me at rchan@gc.cuny.edu or call me at 646-678-0320 and leave a voicemail. (I usually don't pick up for fear of creditors, scams and car insurance sales pitches).

Theatre in Performance SIG

Encore: The Theatre in Performance SIG offered this summer will be revived during the winter break and then continue through the spring semester. Coordinated by Bruce Smith, the SIG meets every other week to discuss recordings of live play productions available for streaming. The initial plays will be chosen from Digital Theatre, a British streaming service that has a variety of critically acclaimed productions for £9.99 (approximately \$13)/month.

The SIG will start during the first week of January; members can start participating then. (Since this activity will continue, members can also join at the start of the spring semester.) The SIG is open to all

LP² members. If you are interested, please contact Bruce at bsmith2@gc.cuny.edu to receive more detailed information. Note: Both past SIG participants and new ones should respond to Bruce via email ASAP.

CALL FOR MORE BREAK ACTIVITIES

Armchair Traveler Discussion Leaders. We're looking for volunteer(s) to lead virtual travel adventures. We'll pack our imaginary bags and come along with you and our colleagues to discuss international destinations we'd love to visit or revisit. We'll share memorable experiences and travel strategies that will enrich our future adventures. Tech help is available to set up and help you run the Zoom session. You'll receive a Zoom link to send to participants. To volunteer to lead our "tour group," contact Jan Adler at adlerjan@gc.cuny.edu.

Book Discussion Leaders Do you have a book (fiction or nonfiction) that you have enjoyed? Are you willing to lead a one-session discussion on the book during the winter break? If yes, contact Jan Adler at adlerjan@gc.cuny.edu. We'll announce the session in the

Observer, and participants will sign up with you, obtain the book and read it on their own before the session. Tech help is available to set up and assist you in running the Zoom session. You'll receive a Zoom link to send to participants.

Other Ideas? The Community Building Initiative is looking for volunteers to lead additional activities during the break. Your activity can meet once, twice or multiple times. Fall coordinators can offer a one-session favorite "encore" presentation. Please submit your activity to Jan Adler at jadler@gc.cuny.edu.

ONGOING EVENTS

Advances in Civilization
Thursday December 3, 4PM
Barry Bryer on Thomas Jefferson

Contact Steve Kalinsky for a Zoom invite at skalinsky@gc.cuny.edu.

Pour at Four hosted by Susan Rubens meets from 4 to 5PM Fridays in the 24-hour chat room <https://sites.google.com/view/irpte/chstuff>. Want to co-host? Contact Susan at srubens@gc.cuny.edu.

The Women's Group meets at 3:45PM on Thursdays. Email

Arlyne LeSchack at
aleschack@gc.cuny.edu.

The Men's Group meets every Wednesday at 3:30PM. Email Jay Fleishman at
efleishman@gc.cuny.edu.

Observer Schedule

The last Observer for this semester will be on Monday, December 21. We will resume regular publication on Monday, January 25. We will publish during the winter break only when we have some news to communicate. Send your entries to Leslie Davis by Friday at 5PM at ldavis1@gc.cuny.edu. Online Art Show entries and suggestions for virtual tours should go to Carol Millsom at cmillsom@gc.cuny.edu.

Tech Notes

Please direct all IT inquiries to engagement@gc.cuny.edu and we will field the requests. Also note that the OIT (Office of Information Technology) at The Graduate Center does not provide assistance with personal computers or mobile devices. If you need assistance with a personal computer, please contact your PC manufacturer or your software vendor.

As a reminder, the user ID and password to access protected

areas of the Zine (www.irpzine.org) are NOT the same as your Graduate Center email/username and password. The user ID for the protected areas of the Zine is LPsquared; the Password is Fall2020. The secured portions are Members, Faces, and Calendar.

ONLINE ART SHOW

From Tom Ashley: Spectacular Verrazzano



Tom says: This is where I take my daily walk to escape the monotony of the pandemic.

ArtSig Suggests Virtual Tours

Museums and galleries have found innovative ways to make their exhibitions available to online

viewers. Until we can offer actual tours, ArtSig will suggest some of these for you to see.

The National Museum of Women in the Arts presents online tours of its current exhibition, Paper Routes, an ongoing series of works on and of paper

<https://nmwa.org/exhibitions/paper-routes-women-to-watch-2020/>.

Watch as Angela Glajcar, a paper sculptor, discusses her large-scale works

<https://nmwa.org/blog/women-to-watch-2020-angela-glajcar/>.

Explore the site for interviews with other women artists.

MEMBER FORUM

From Harold Berkowitz: Geese



CUNY EVENTS: UPCOMING & CONTINUING

Graduate Center Events

[Bulgarian Ambassador Georgi Velikov Panayotov on WWII](#)

[Rescue of Jews](#)

Monday, November 30, 4PM

[Translating Audre Lorde Now](#)

Monday November 30, 6PM

[Register here](#) to access the Zoom link.

[Jewish Community and Public Charity in Early Modern Germany](#)

Thursday, December 3, 12PM

[Ive Marx: "What Explains Low Countries' Exceptionalism when it comes to Income Inequality Trends?"](#)

Thursday, December 3, 4PM

[Book Talk: The Hispanic Republican](#)

Thursday, December 3, 6PM

[How Children Learn Language: A Talk by Jenny Saffran](#)

Thursday, December 3, 7PM

[Language, Learning, and Networks](#)

Friday, December 4, 10AM

[Cognitive Science Speaker Series: Dobromir Rahnev](#)

Friday, December 4, 1PM

[Sociolinguistics Lunch: Simanique Moody](#)

Friday, December 4, 2PM

[Fridays@3- Martin J. Blaser M.D.](#)

Friday, December 4, 3PM

[Sociology Colloquium Series:
Tressie McMillan Cottom](#)
Friday, December 4, 3PM

[Mind, Body & Soul: Afrofuturist
Sacred Sounds](#)
Friday, December 4, 4PM
[Register here](#) to access the Zoom
link. This event will be ASL
Interpreted, closed captioned, and
bilingual in English and Spanish.

[CIRCL: Magdalena Markowska
\(Computational
Linguistics/Phonology/Morphology
/ Field Work\)](#)
Tuesday, December 8, 6PM

[Philosophy Colloquium: Lucy
Allais](#)
Wednesday, December 9, 4:15PM

[Linguistics Colloquium: Valentine
Hacquard, Associate Professor,
Linguistics University of Maryland](#)
Thursday, December 10, 4:15PM

[Manipulation and Application of
Excitons](#)
Friday, December 11, 11AM

[Immigration Seminar Series:
Ismael García-Colón](#)
Friday, December 11, 3PM

[Anchored in Time: The date in
Apollonius' Argonautica](#)
Friday, December 11, 5PM