

**THE OBSERVER
DECEMBER 13, 2021**

NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Members,

This week is the final week of the Fall term – we made it! I’m looking forward to having more of you on campus in the Spring. Remember that your registration forms are due by end of day this Friday (All of the necessary details are included below). You will receive your rosters and schedules in early January. In the coming weeks, coordinators of Hyflex and in-person study groups will receive more information about coming to the Graduate Center and the training for the Hyflex equipment. Members who register for Hyflex and in-person study groups will be sent more information and instructions over the break about getting into the building.

Thanks all who came to the Maria Gloria Dominguez Bello talk on Friday as well as the Unmasking Bias talk by Professor Van Tran on Monday. Recordings of both will be made available as soon as they are closed captioned; \ we will share links to watch.

You can read more about our new team member, Monben Mayon, in this week’s Observer. We are really pleased to welcome her and she has been able to participate in the recent LP² events over the past two weeks as part of her introduction to the program.

We also welcome new members for the Spring who are gathering for the first time this week (via Zoom) for an orientation session. Thank you to the mentors who have been among the first points of contact.

I will host Director’s Office Hours this Friday from 1:30-2:30PM. Drop in to say hello. If you would like to speak with me one on one over the break, please send an email to mwillere@gc.cuny.edu and we will find a time.

Wishing you all a bright season and a restful break.

My best,
Mariel

Director's Office Hours:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://gc-cuny->

[edu.zoom.us/j/87450295130?pwd=Q3FMMUlqeWQzYVFUU1hhMmQzaWdpZz09](https://gc-cuny-edu.zoom.us/j/87450295130?pwd=Q3FMMUlqeWQzYVFUU1hhMmQzaWdpZz09)

Meeting ID: 874 5029 5130

Passcode: 383634

Our office contact information:

engagement@gc.cuny.edu

212-817-2474

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND EVENTS

Spring Semester Registration DEADLINE THIS FRIDAY *

Click on [the Grid](#) study group name to find a description of the topic, a draft syllabus, whether it will be fully **in-person**, **Hyflex** (in-person or Zoom) or **Zoom** only; course duration (12 or 6 weeks) and the 6 week study groups by session,

[The Registration Form for Spring 2022 study groups is here.](#) Please choose and rank your preferences (#1 being your first choice), and note how many study groups in total you would like to enroll in.

*Full details on registration and the calendar for the Spring semester are on the last pages of this Observer. **The registration deadline is Friday, December 17, 2021.**

From the LP² Advisory Board

We hope everyone will enjoy a happy, restful and re-energizing intersession break before returning for the Spring semester. The Observer is also taking a break; this is the last issue until we return on January 24, a week before Spring study groups begin. Until then we wish you all:



Vaccination Data on GC-CUNY Campus - Good News!

Harold Berkowitz, LP² liaison to the Graduate Center COVID Reactivation Committee, reports that for those of us returning (or thinking about returning) to campus for class in the Spring Semester, **100% of GC students returning to campus are vaccinated** and at least **96% of faculty and staff are vaccinated**. These numbers are good news and should reassure us that the Graduate Center building will be a safe environment. Moreover, everyone on campus is required to be masked.

Also, here's a tip for speeding entry to the building: Once you receive your vaccination Access Pass, you can print the QR Code (the box with the dots) and use the copy to gain entry to the building. That way you can avoid any fussing with your smart phone in the lobby. Everyone is also encouraged to access the Graduate Center Website for up-to-date COVID information by going to this [page](#).

Introducing Monben Mayon, New Member of the Engagement Staff



Monben Mayon is a poet, painter, and scholar recently from Newark, NJ, but born in Monrovia, Liberia. Her immigration to the United States early in her childhood and her observance of the differences and similarities between Liberian culture and African American culture is the foundation of her interests in African diasporic studies. She received a Bachelor of Arts in African American and African Studies from Rutgers University and is currently pursuing graduate study in Anthropology and Education at Teachers College, Columbia University. Monben enjoys cooking, is deeply

passionate about literature, and her own lifelong love of learning makes her eager to serve the community of LP² scholars.

Reminder: ArtSig Visit

Salon 94, 3 E. 89th St.,

Wednesday, December 15 at 10:15AM

For information about Salon 94: <https://salon94.com/about>

To register, contact Dick Kossoff (chemkos@aol.com)

For questions about the event, contact Nancy Small (nasmall7@gmail.com)

Intersession Break Activities

Mondays, January 3 & 17 at 3PM:

Stories Aloud with Sharon Girard

We invite you to the pleasures of reading aloud. The stories are emailed to you in advance. 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 an opportunity to read to all who wish to do so.

We're considering stories by Elif Batumen, Italo Calvino, Deborah Eisenberg, Gogol, Nicole Krauss, Grace Paley, Eudora Welty, Saramago, de Maupassant. We welcome your suggestions too.

We'll Zoom for about an hour and a half each Monday.

Email Sharon at sgirard@gc.cuny.edu for the Zoom link. Please indicate if you would like to be a reader.

Thursday, January 6 at 2PM

Reflections on Making Decisions as NYC Opens with Jan Adler

It looks like much of what makes NYC special has opened up again. Now each of us is grappling with what we personally feel comfortable doing. This workshop will be a chance to share your thoughts and strategies on how you are making decisions and hear what others are thinking. If you are interested contact Jan Adler at jadler@gc.cuny.edu and you will receive a Zoom invite the week before.

Monday, January 10 at 11AM

A Virtual Walk in the Woods at the New York Botanical Garden with Carolyn Grossner

In the year prior to the pandemic Carolyn kept a journal outlining her experiences monitoring designated trees for seasonal changes in the forest at the NYBG. She will first give us an overview of the garden and its mission and then take us on a journey lasting from February through November. We will learn about the science of Phenology which measures climate change, visit the forest and see trees, plants, fungi, birds, insects, and even an adorable snake named Slinky. It will be A Walk in the Woods not usually possible in January.

Email Carolyn at cgrossner@gc.cuny.edu anytime between now and January 8th and she will make sure you get a reminder and the link.

Wednesday, January 12 at 2PM

LP² Weighs in on *The New York Times* Readers' Selection of the Best Books of the Last 125 Years with Steve Kalinsky

To celebrate the 125th anniversary of the Book Review, *The New York Times* has invited readers to select the "Best Book" published in the last 125 years. Thousands of nominees have been submitted and the Times has selected the 25 top contenders (+/-) and scheduled a run-off election. Which books made the cut and which did not...and the 1600+ comments on NYT.Com have morphed into the great polarizing (literary) "food fight" of the 21st century. Please join Steve (on Zoom) for a look at the *Times* contest and a no holds barred discussion of just what constitutes a "Best Book."

Please email Steve at skalinsky@gc.cuny.edu for a Zoom invite.

Thursday, January 20 at 2PM

THE GREAT LP² READ: *The Mystery of Mrs. Christie* by Marie Benedict

Join with your colleagues for our fourth Great LP² Read.

"A stunning story... The ending is ingenious, and it's possible that Benedict has brought to life the most plausible explanation for why Christie disappeared for 11 days in 1926."—The Washington Post.

Agatha Christie disappeared for 11 days in December 1926 and it is hotly contested what occurred during that time. Marie Benedict draws on this true story for a historical fiction book that incorporates the elements of a suspense novel. To participate, email Jane Case Einbender jeinbender@gc.cuny.edu, obtain the book and read it on your own. You'll receive a Zoom invite before the session.

Wednesday, January 26 at 1PM

Book and Film Discussion with Robert Sholiton
BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN: Story to Screenplay

We follow the path from Annie Proulx's 28-page 1997 New Yorker story to Larry McMurtry and Diana Ossana's 97-page Oscar-winning screenplay that Ang Lee turned into a masterful 2 1/4-hour film that won him the best director Oscar. The story, screenplay and three very brief essays by the author and screenwriters are all included in our text. We'll also screen a few key scenes from the film, which I suggest that you view or review. Our text is *Brokeback Mountain: Story to Screenplay*, Annie Proulx, Larry McMurtry and Diana Ossana, available as either a 151-page Scribner paperback or on Kindle. The film is available on Amazon Prime or Vudu. To participate email Bob at rsholiton@gc.cuny.edu. You'll receive a Zoom invite before the session.

Thursday, January 27 at 2PM

Stand your Ground Laws — Help or Harm?
with Joy Schulman

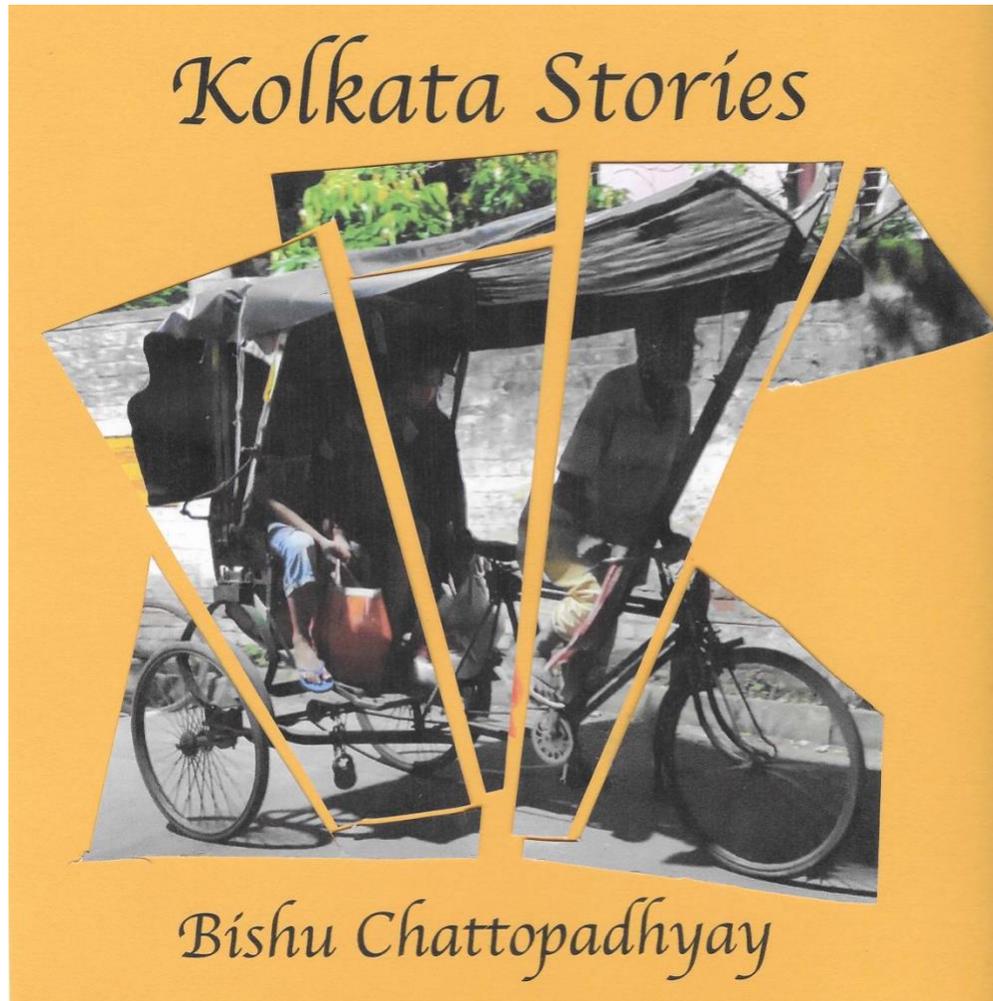
The state of Florida passed a "Stand Your Ground" law in 2005. Prior to that, for hundreds of years, the general concept in most laws governing lawful behavior, when attacked, was "Duty to Retreat" except in your own home. This Stand Your Ground law has impacted the very recent Kyle Rittenhouse case in Kenosha, as well as the Trayvon Martin case. These laws are meant as a deterrent to crime. The statistical result has been inconclusive; at worst they have encouraged vigilante behavior. Most controversial in using the plea when the defendant was carrying a gun is what provokes the initial attack. Joy will send out links to current articles a week before (no more than 90 min. of reading) to lay the basis for a lively discussion.

To participate, email Joy at jschulman1@gc.cuny.edu
You'll receive a Zoom invite before the session.

ONLINE ART SHOW

From: Claude Samton

Title: Album Cover: *Midnight Rickshaw*



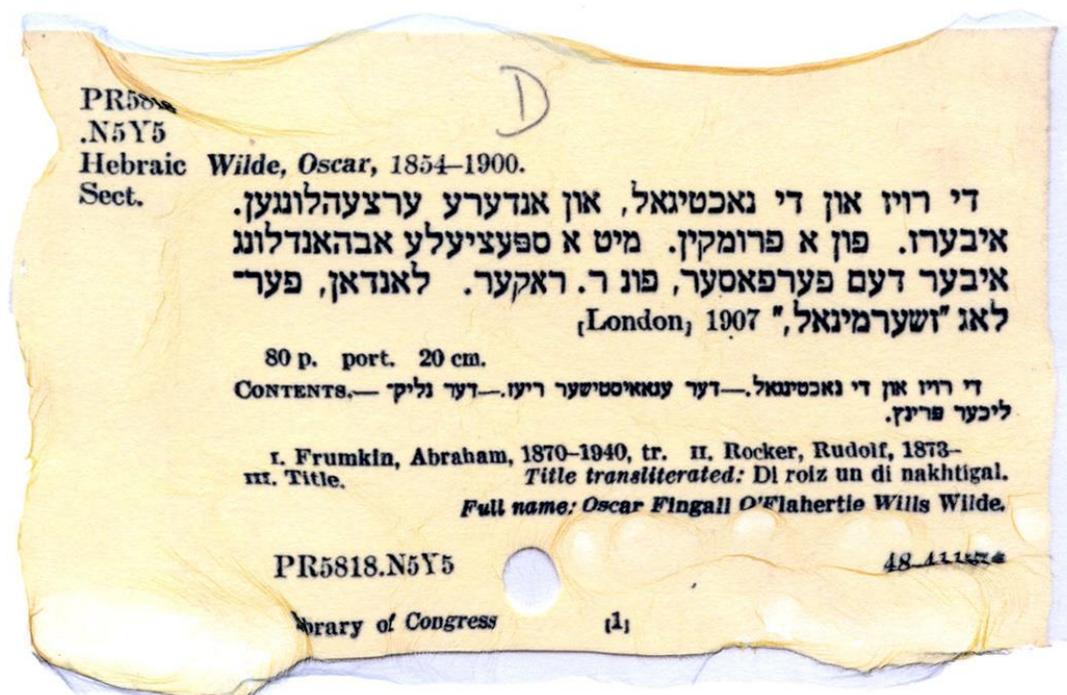
Claude says: I didn't do too much art this summer but created an album cover for an Indian jazz musician. The main piece is called *Midnight Rickshaw*. I'm working on a new book called *Brushes with Celebrity*.

Calling All Painters, Sculptors, Photographers, Block Printers, Ceramicists
and Textile Artists!

Display the creative work you have been doing this summer in the Online Art Show. Send a photograph of your work with a title and a brief statement about it to Carol Millsom at cmillsom@gc.cuny.edu. Art works appear in The Observer in the order in which they are received.

MEMBER FORUM

From Rosalie Frost - I invite all LP² members and friends to my art exhibit titled *Simulacrum: A Library Card Catalog (after Borges)* at the Soho Photo Gallery, running from December 10, 2021, through January 2, 2022. The Gallery is located in Tribeca at 15 White Street, New York, NY 10013. (212) 226-8571.



I was drawn to these library catalog cards because they were no longer publicly available and were so resonant in my memory. I felt as if these vestigial, analog objects were being resurrected by me from a kind of oblivion. Libraries had either placed them in long-term storage, used

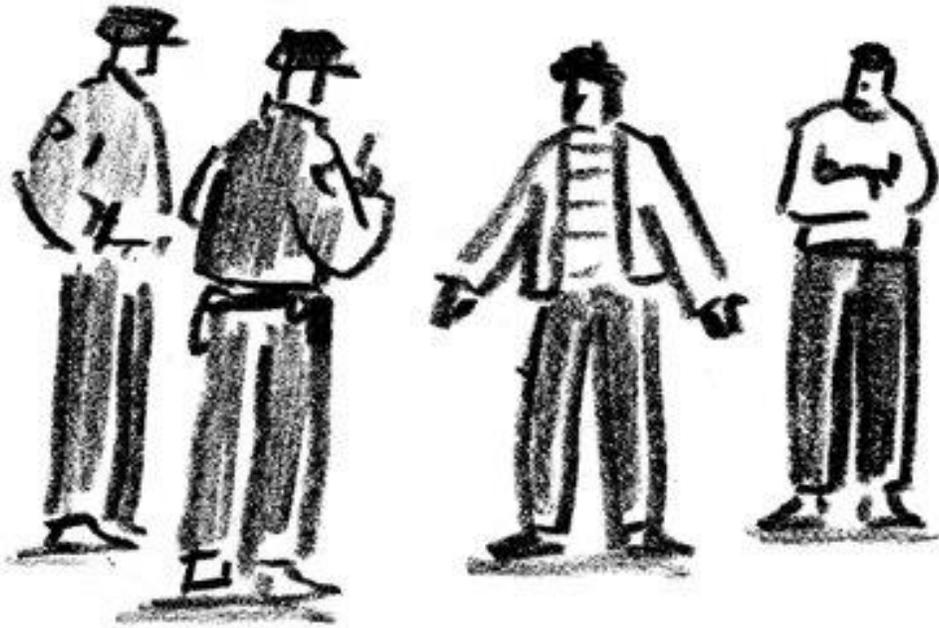
them as scrap paper ---- or just thrown them out. They played an important role to many as the portal to knowledge contained in books and other library holdings. Now, these remnant cards may serve as a unique portal to changing literary styles and periods ---- but also shifting aesthetic, social and cultural standards and expectations. Areas within images (such as the one above) may appear damaged, distorted or missing. Such randomly occurring effects are an apt metaphor for the devaluation of analog artifacts since the digital revolution began.

Carol Groneman spotted this NYT Metropolitan Diary entry involving and submitted to the Times by an LP² member.

An East Side Sondheim Story
(Agnes Lee, Illustrator)



Dear Diary: One Sunday night in the early 1980s, I dropped by my office on Park Avenue and 48th Street. As I was heading across Park Avenue to a parking garage in my small two-seater, a car ran a red light and T-boned me.



My car was crushed, and I was pretty shaken up. The police came to the scene. The other driver told the officers that I had run the light.



There were three people on a nearby corner who had seen the whole thing. Without hesitating, one approached the officers. He told them what he had witnessed and confirmed my story: The other driver had run a red light before crashing into me.



Still shaken, I approached the man and thanked him. He was reserved, humble and forthcoming. I asked for his name and phone number in case my insurance company needed to contact him. It was only when he told me his name that I learned this witness was Stephen Sondheim. Extraordinary!



The insurance company said later that the other driver's claim had been closed because of the witness's account. I called Mr. Sondheim to thank him again for stepping forward. He asked how I was feeling.

— *Barry A. Bryer*

ONGOING LP² EVENTS

The Women's Group meets at 3:45PM on Thursdays. Contact Arlyne LeSchack at aleschack@gc.cuny.edu.

The Men's Group meets at 3:45PM on Wednesdays. Contact Jay Fleishman at efleishman@gc.cuny.edu.

Stitch Away Stress meets at 4PM Tuesdays. Members share skills and enjoy the meditative benefits of handwork. Contact Michelle Harris at mharris@gc.cuny.edu.

Observer Submissions Send items for the next week's Observer to Micky Josephs at mjosephs@gc.cuny.edu by 5PM on Friday. Send Online Art Show entries and suggestions for virtual tours to Carol Millsom at cmillsom@gc.cuny.edu.

Member Forum If you have something to share with the LP² community, e.g., a photo, an article, a book or a web site that you've discovered and think would be interesting to members, send it to Micky at mjosephs@gc.cuny.edu for inclusion in the Member Forum.

Registration Procedure for the Spring Semester

The format for each study group is listed on [the Grid](#). Click on any study group name to find a description of the topic, a draft syllabus, and course duration (12 or 6 weeks). The full list of study group offerings is also below, organized by modality: fully **in-person**, **hyflex** (in-person or Zoom), or **Zoom** only; and the 6-week study groups by session.

The registration deadline is Friday, December 17, 2021.

- The semester begins on Monday, January 31.
- The final day of study group meetings is Friday, May 8.
- Please note that Friday study groups meet 11:00am-12:30pm.

- If space allows, we will open registration for the second part 6-week classes starting on March 15.

[The Registration Form for Spring 2022 study groups is here.](#) Please choose and rank your preferences (#1 being your first choice), and note how many study groups in total you would like to enroll in. **Be sure to list as many options as you can.** You can submit multiple entries and the most recent will be used in the lottery.

Definitions:

1. **Zoom only:** No in-person component.
2. **Hyflex:** Zoom and in-person components. [See this video](#) of Howie Menikoff's Fall 2021 Hyflex study group as an example.
3. **In-person only:** No Zoom component; meets at the Graduate Center at 34th street and 5th avenue. (Not for the immunocompromised or mask averse)

If you register for a **Hyflex** class, you may attend in-person or on Zoom. The coordinator will reach out prior to the start of the term to confirm your preference for coming in person to the Graduate Center or participating remotely by Zoom.

PLEASE NOTE: Members in Hyflex or in-person study groups will need a CUNY-specific Access Pass (in a system called Cleared4) and a Graduate Center student ID. Instructions to secure these pieces will be sent to those on Hyflex /in-person rosters. When on campus, all members **need to wear masks** regardless of vaccination status per the CUNY mandate. As of right now, the elevators on campus have a capacity of four passengers.

Selection of study groups and registration is completed online and by lottery, organized by the Office of Academic Initiatives and Strategic Innovation. Every effort is made to provide all members with their first and/or second choices. Please be sure that your first-choice study group is ranked in Slot 1, your second choice in Slot 2, your third choice in Slot 3, etc., with as many options as possible, in order of preference, on the registration form. You may request as many film study groups as you like, but expect to receive no more than one, due to popularity.

You can enroll in a minimum of two (2) and a maximum of three and a half study groups (3.5, or the equivalent of three 12-week study groups and one 6-week study group) without any special approval from the director. Be in touch with the director, Mariel Villeré, with questions or to request other accommodations: mwillere@gc.cuny.edu.

Make sure to hit "SUBMIT" once you have completed the form, and you will receive an email confirmation to the email address you provided. *Please pay special attention to make sure you enter your email address correctly so that you receive the confirmation.*

If you are seeking **financial support**, please [complete this form](#) to request a scholarship from the IER (Institute for Education in Retirement).

For those planning to take a **leave of absence**, [please submit this form](#) and Mariel will be in touch.

Be in touch with us at engagement@gc.cuny.edu if you have any questions. Remember that the deadline to register is Friday, December 17.

Thank you!

Spring 2022 offerings in list form

Zoom ONLY Study Groups

- *The Divine Comedy*, Part I: Richard Zuckerman (Monday 9:30-11)
- Systemic Inequality: Frances De Lott, Marge Heins, Susan Herman, Marietta Meyers, Susan Sabatino, Mark Scher, Joy Schulman (Monday 2:00-3:30)
- Science Wednesday: Maureen Hatch, Mary Padilla, Hannah Shear, Lorne Taichman, Eva Vogel (Wednesday 9:30-11) – 6 weeks starting March 15
- Against the Grain – Early Stages of Human Development: Charles Troob (Wednesday 9:30-11)
- Jazz Appreciation: Tom Grant, Rob Tessler (Wednesday 9:30-11)
- Revisiting w. Somerset Maugham: Mary Semel (Wednesday 11:45-1:15) – 6 weeks starting January 31

- Documentary Film: Art and Avarice: Lynn Brenner, Mary Connelly, Bob Sholiton (Wednesday 11:45-1:15) – 6 weeks starting March 15
- Adventures in Print: Exploring Ideas in Narrative Non-Fiction: Elisabeth Gitter, Linda Gottlieb, Lorraine Matovina, Rita Silverman, Ken Witty (Wednesday 11:45-1:15)
- Qing Dynasty Part 2: Decline and Fall of the Last Chinese Empire: Eric Zimile (Wednesday 11:45-1:15)
- Alexander Pushkin and the Birth of Modern Russian Literature: Steve Kalinsky (Wednesday 2:00-3:30) – 6 weeks starting January 31
- Harper Lee: Two Novels About Race and Class in America: Arlynn Brody, Steve Kalinsky (Wednesday 2:00-3:30) – 6 weeks starting March 15
- Literary and Cultural Analysis: A Cognitive Approach: James Smith (Wednesday 2:00-3:30)
- Films of John Huston: Howie Menikoff (Wednesday 2:00-3:30)
- Dutch Seventeenth-Century Art: Deborah Markow (Thursday 9:30-11)
- Writing Workshop: Leslie Bedford, Charles Troob (Thursday 9:30-11)
- JFK Reappraised: Michael Shapiro (Thursday 9:30-11)
- Literary Analysis: Mary Rowan (Thursday 11:45-1:15)
- The Lives of Others: Reading Memoir 3: Jay Fleishman, Laini Gerald, Lesley Herrmann, Jenny Ross, Miriam Lawrence (Thursday 11:45-1:15)
- Do You Understand Dylan?: James Smith (Thursday 2:00-3:30)
- Sinclair Lewis, Satirist Extraordinaire: Steve Kalinsky, Sara Otey (Thursday 2:00-3:30)
- Advanced Guided Biography: David Grogan (Thursday 2:00-3:30)
- Memories: Writing Workshop: Andy Shapiro (Friday **11-12:30**)
- Great Stories, Not-so-great Relationships: Sophie Balcoff (Friday **11-12:30**)

Hyflex Study Groups

- Kazuo Ishiguro, A Thoughtful Man: Eileen Hanley (Monday 11:45-1:15) – 6 weeks starting March 15
- 4 Countries, 4 Books – What Literature Can Teach Us: Meera Kumar (Monday 11:45-1:15)
- The Movies Look at Working Women: Sheila O'Connell (Monday 11:45-1:15)
- US Health Care: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly: Charles Brecher (Monday 2:00-3:30) – 6 weeks starting March 15

- There Goes Rhymin' Simon – The Music of Paul Simon: Randy Ross (Tuesday 9:30-11)
- *These Truths, a History of the US* by Jill Lepore: Jeffrey Siegel (Tuesday 9:30-11)
- Happiness the New Science: Michael Hill (Tuesday 11:45-1:15)
- The Art of *The New Yorker* Profile: Aileen Gitelson, et al. (Tuesday 11:45-1:15)
- 21st Century Voices: Great Contemporary Novelists: Susan Smahl (Tuesday 2:00-3:30)
- Makers of Modern India: Ajit Kumar, Meera Kumar (Tuesday 2:00-3:30)
- International Mysteries: Other Cultures: Iris Zevin, Jack Zevin (Tuesday 2:00-3:30)

In-Person ONLY Study Groups

- Sleep (and Dreams): Don Ray (Monday 2:00-3:30)
- Philip Roth, *The Biography*: Arlyne LeSchack, Judy Zaborowski (Tuesday 11:45-1:15)
- Who's Afraid of Joseph Conrad?: Steve Reichstein (Tuesday 11:45-1:15) – 6 weeks starting March 15

6-Week Study Groups

1st session

- Revisiting w. Somerset Maugham: Mary Semel (Wednesday 11:45-1:15) – 6 weeks starting January 31
- Alexander Pushkin and the Birth of Modern Russian Literature: Steve Kalinsky (Wednesday 2:00-3:30) – 6 weeks starting January 31

2nd session

- Kazuo Ishiguro, *A Thoughtful Man*: Eileen Hanley (Monday 11:45-1:15) – 6 weeks starting March 15
- US Health Care: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly: Charles Brecher (Monday 2:00-3:30) – 6 weeks starting March 15
- Who's Afraid of Joseph Conrad?: Steve Reichstein (Tuesday 11:45-1:15) – 6 weeks starting March 15
- Science Wednesday: Maureen Hatch, Mary Padilla, Hannah Shear, Lorne Taichman, Eva Vogel (Wednesday 9:30-11) – 6 weeks starting March 15
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