

# FIVE COLLEGE LEARNING IN RETIREMENT PROGRAM

## STUDY GROUP SCHEDULE

FALL, 1989

*Monday, 10:00 a.m. - Noon*

### **The Hudson River School of Art**

Thelma Isaacs

The nineteenth century saw a flowering of American Art. One of the most important and influential schools to come out of this period was the Hudson River school, which began with the explosive emergence of Thomas Cole in 1825. It was truly American art, showing the enchantment that Americans had with their world and their communal existence, and it had vitality and originality. Serious landscape painting in this country had its origin with these artists. We shall learn about the history and development of this school, including its extensions into the Western school, by examining the works and lives of individual artists and their influences on others. Slides and readings will be important resources. In addition, the group will visit the Berkshire Museum in Pittsfield and individual visits to the George Walter Vincent Museum in Springfield will be included. Each member will be responsible for presenting information about individual artists or groups of artists and their times, and will lead a discussion afterwards.

Dates: September 18 - December 11    Twelve Sessions  
Location: Five Colleges, Inc., Amherst

*Monday, 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.*

### **Gregory Who?**

Sister Jane Patricia (Freeland)

Our group will take a look at the medieval mind through its own contemporary writers: Gregory of Tours, historian; Gregory the Great, the Pope; Gregory VII, embattled reformer; and poets, chroniclers, satirists, dramatists, theologians, lovers, kings, critics, and mystics. Beginning with a survey of the limits of the period, we will "dig post holes" through the individual writers. We will carefully explore the fascinating history and incredible variety of literary forms and subjects of that period of a thousand years when Latin was a spoken language which was not only "decaying" (as too many people say) but changing and growing. We will read in translation, but group members who are able to handle selections in their original languages will be encouraged to do so, and to share their explorations with the group. Anyone with a special interest in medieval music would be a welcome resource.

Dates: September 18 - October 30    Six Sessions  
Location: Jones Library, Amherst

*Tuesday: 10:00 - Noon*

### **The Modern Political Novel**

Joseph Frank

The better political novels of the twentieth century are diversified in subject, style, and message. Like life itself, they are rich and ambiguous rather than simplistic and strident. Our group will consider the definition of the "political novel" and will try to identify the boundary, if any, between a political and philosophical novel. We will deal with the connection between novelistic techniques and political message. We will have no party line; instead, we will be argumentative and controversial as we explore the multiplicity and depth of half a dozen major works. On a more specific level, we will read books that deal with colonialism, racism, militarism, feminism, and a variety of political "isms". Our reading list (which can be changed if the group so desires) consists of:

Huxley: *Brave New World*  
Forster: *A Passage to India*  
Koestler: *Darkness at Noon*  
Achebe: *Things Fall Apart*  
Heller: *Catch 22*  
Gordimer: *July's People*  
Warren: *All the King's Men*  
Greene: *The Power and the Glory*

Dates: September 19 - November 14 Eight Sessions  
Location: Faculty Club, University of Massachusetts

*Tuesday, 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.*

### **The Quabbin Reservoir: Past, Present, and Future**

Gould Ketchen

After a proper introduction to the Quabbin and the surrounding area, including maps and descriptions, we will undertake a trip to the Reservoir to review what was there and what now exists. We will discuss the need for a major water supply for eastern Massachusetts in the early 1900's, a brief history of the four towns and many villages affected, the Quabbin's building and development from 1926 to 1939, some of the basic engineering concepts, the effect of the Quabbin on the environment, and wildlife in the area. Slides, films, and readings, including The Creation of Quabbin Reservoir: The Death of the Swift River Valley and The Lost Valley, will be our resource materials. The group will have a wide range of choices about the direction and focus of our discussions - there are numerous possibilities and the depth and breadth of our explorations can be determined by the imagination of the group.

Dates: September 26 - October 31 Six Sessions  
Location: Hampshire College

*Wednesday, 10:00 - Noon*

### **U.S. Foreign Policy In Central America In the 1980's: An Appraisal**

Gerard Braunthal

In recent decades, U.S. foreign policy issues have produced deep schisms among concerned groups and people. There is no consensus on policies and goals. Some argue that the United States must shoulder global responsibilities in the free world. Others argue that the country must

cease its neoimperialist policies and stop intervening in the affairs of other sovereign countries. By examining the historical and present political, military, and economic record of the United States in selected countries, group members might possibly come to a consensus. Some of the "hottest" discussion of political and military policies in recent years has centered on Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Panama. Each member, alone or in a team, will study the U.S. policy toward one country and report findings to the group as a prelude to a general discussion on the subject.

Dates: September 20 - December 13 Twelve Sessions  
Location: Faculty Club, University of Massachusetts

*Wednesday, 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.*

### **Creative Reconstructions of Renaissance Lives: Sorting Through Historians' Preconceptions**

Lorie Leininger

Can we reconstruct the lives of Renaissance women and men from material provided by historians who believed themselves to be unprejudiced? Honing our sensitivity to historians' contradictions, biases, and implausibilities, we will work together at reconstructing the lives of:

- \*Queen Mary of Guise, wife of James V of Scotland, mother of Queen Mary Stuart;
- \*John Hamilton, the Archbishop of St. Andrews;
- \*Margaret Douglas, the Countess of Lenox and mother-in-law of Mary Stuart - was she "a monstrously ambitious schemer"?
- \*Francis Stewart Hepburn, the 5th Earl of Bothwell, nephew of Mary Stuart - was he a "wizard" or an innocent man falsely accused?
- \*Queen Anne of Denmark, wife of King James VI, Mary Stuart's son - was she "trivial and stupid" or unusually perceptive
- \*Queen Mary Stuart herself - why even today does she have such impassioned accusers and defenders?

Copies of the biographies of these six historical figures will be provided for each group member. All members will keep journals of questions and issues that they would like to discuss at meetings. Groups of two or three will work on one of the six biographies, read additional material from a prepared reading list, and will make a presentation followed by questions and discussion.. Group members may suggest other historical figures to study and we will branch out to the larger question of what has led to prejudicial views of the past - and the present.

Dates: September 20 - December 27 Fourteen Sessions  
Location: Faculty Club, University of Massachusetts

*Thursday, 10:00 a.m. - Noon*

### **Discerning Patterns Through Autobiographical Writing**

Virginia L. Senders and Suzanne Lehman

"The life which is unexamined is not worth living."

Socrates

We shall examine our lives by writing about them. To have a shared reference, we will all read Jung's Memories, Dreams, Reflections and each of us will choose to read additional autobiographical writing by a person in the later years. As the weeks go by, we shall write from our

own life experience according to our individual proclivities - and share our findings and some of our writings among ourselves. Each person will have a partner who will read all that s/he writes (as desired - the right to privacy is always respected.) Group meetings will be used for exercises to stimulate memory and reflection, for discussion of the published autobiographies we are reading, and for sharing of our own work. If we are fortunate, what may emerge is a perspective that can only come in the later years as we look back on what we had previously seen as chaotic, absurd, or meaningless and find that it has become an integral part of a grander pattern.

"Grow old with me. The best is yet to be...  
The last, for which the first was made."

Robert Browning

Dates: September 21 - December 14 Twelve Sessions  
Location: Faculty Club, University of Massachusetts

*Thursday, 10:00 - Noon*

### **The French Bourbons**

Edgar Buck and Patricia Keating

To what extent were the Bourbons responsible for French military and cultural superiority in the 17th and 18th centuries? What were the causes and consequences of the French Revolution? How different might France be today if plans for a monarchical restoration in the 1870's had succeeded? From Henry IV to today's octagenarian claimant to the French throne, the Bourbons have been a fascinating family. As Nancy Mitford wrote: "Licentious or bigoted, noble or ignoble, there has seldom been a dull Bourbon." In this Bicentennial of the French Revolution, a study of the Bourbons provides the framework for reviewing French cultural achievements and examining the lasting impact of the Revolution of 1789. Each participant will be responsible for preparing a presentation for the group. Although certain basic material will be required of all, members may explore personal interests related to the general subject, such as literature, culinary arts, philosophy or other topics.

Dates: September 18 - November 11 Eight Sessions  
Location: Blanchard Student Center, Mt. Holyoke College

*Thursday, 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.*

### **Building a Better World with Lessons from the Past: the Shakers, the Perfectionists, and the Esperanto Movement**

Sally Muther Lawton

During the first meetings of this group, we will identify, distill, and clarify our ideas about Utopian idealism and discuss attempts by the Shakers, the Perfectionists, and the Esperantists to realize their various ideals. Group members will choose the areas they would like to explore in further sessions - daily life, community spirit, leadership and democracy, education, the arts, relationships with the outside world and membership, and the architecture of Paradise are possible topics. A field trip to the Hancock Shaker Village is planned for October. Our emphasis will be on ideals that we can share with the Utopians and evaluation of their successes and failures as we see them.

Dates: September 21 - November 11 Eight Sessions  
Location: Jones Library, Amherst

*Friday, 10:00 - Noon*

## **Language and Doublespeak**

Walker Gibson

What is "good English"? How does a look at the history of our language help us to understand contemporary uses of English? What tools can we assemble to take a hard look at contemporary English, especially the misleading uses by people in power? The focus of this group will be a wide-ranging study of language, with emphasis on Doublespeak - misleading language from places of power such as Madison Avenue, the White House, and the Pentagon. We will take a brief look at the history of English as it relates to contemporary styles, including racism and sexism in language: voice, metaphor, and irony. Our group will learn how to discriminate (if we can) "honest" uses of language from the gobbledegook and deceit with which we are often surrounded. During the second half of the group, after a mode of attack has been proposed and debated, each participant will lead a discussion of some contemporary text of his or her own choice - for example, a daily newspaper, a company handout, a government document, a group of ads. The maturity, sophistication, and wide experience with language of our group of learners should make our sessions particularly productive and lively.

Dates: September 22 - December 15    Twelve Sessions

Location: Field House, Smith College