Board Meeting

At the start of the meeting on Wednesday, Harold introduced James Muyskens, Interim President of the CUNY Graduate Center, who echoed his warm welcome to the IRP printed in last week’s Observer. President Muyskens again looked forward to a long beautiful friendship between the Grad Center and the IRP. Following the president’s remarks, Brian A Peterson, Interim Senior Vice President for Finance and Administration and Dean for Academic Initiatives and Strategic Innovation of the CUNY Graduate Center, and Mariel Villeré, Director of Program Development for OAISI, also welcomed the IRP to the Grad Center.

Expressing regret that we were not meeting in person, Brian and Mariel look forward to a rewarding long-term association with the IRP. At the end of the meeting, they replied to questions from board members, saying they expected to have the Zoom licenses we requested by the start of the summer term; were very glad to hear that so many members had registered for the summer sessions; and were working with the CUNY communications officers and with The New School to prepare the public announcement of our coming to the Graduate Center.

Save The Date: Town Hall

"Welcome to the Graduate Center, with the staff of the Office of Academic Initiatives and Strategic Innovation"

- Date: Tuesday, May 26 (first day of Summer Session), 2:45-4PM

Study Group Registrations

Summer Session 1

A record-breaking 222 members registered for the 16 Summer Session 1 study groups. The results for this session are being emailed now to coordinators and participants; coordinators will receive their rosters, and participants will receive their individual schedules. If you registered for Summer Session 1 and have not gotten your schedule by end of day Tuesday, please notify Adam immediately at irp@newschool.edu.

As a result of the large demand, study groups are very full, but there are still a few places left in the following:

- A Way with Words–Mon. AM
- History of Science and Cosmology–Thurs. PM
- Gothic Literature–Tues. AM
- Nostromo by Joseph Conrad–Tues. PM

As there is so little time before the start of classes next week, we will fill the remaining slots on a first come, first served basis. Send requests to Adam at irp@newschool.edu. Your request must say "ADD A STUDY GROUP" in the subject line in order to be considered.

Summer Session 2

Yesterday, Sunday the 17th, was the priority due date for Summer Session 2. A total of 204 members registered for the 16 study groups. The
Registration Team will be working on Session 2 this week.

Fall

Registration for the Fall 2020 semester will open within the next couple of days. Look for the registration materials in your inbox.

The high volume of registration for both summer sessions demonstrates yet again the importance of IRP in our lives, and the vital role we are playing in helping each other get through this difficult period. Once again, we express our gratitude to the members who have stepped forward to coordinate a total of 32 study groups, and to the members of the Tech Committee who have worked tirelessly to make it all possible. Thank you, all.

Telephone Outreach Project

At the recommendation of the Community Committee, the board in early April approved a project to contact all IRP members by phone to see how they were faring during the COVID-19 pandemic. Between April 28 and May 8, the 42 members who volunteered to make the calls phoned 332 members and reached 80 percent of them. (Some people could not be reached because they had relocated temporarily to avoid the density of the city and did not have mobile phone numbers on file.) The volunteers were trained in active listening and given a guide for questions to be asked during the telephone conversations.

In general, IRP members are managing the stay at home period remarkably well. Overall, 50 percent rated themselves as “doing fine,” 28 percent as “doing OK” and 18 percent as “generally OK but with some ups and downs.” Only four percent described themselves as “sad, anxious or depressed” some or much of the time. The project leadership followed up with this last group immediately and connected them with resources, when they were needed.

The prevalence of anxiety and depression in the IRP group is markedly less than that found in the CUNY COVID-19 New York Community survey where, during a similar time frame, 40 percent of the respondents described themselves as depressed at least half the time and 32 percent said they were anxious at least half the time.

IRP members expressed their appreciation for the calls and approximately one-quarter requested call backs. Moreover, the volunteer callers, initially concerned about making “cold calls,” found the experience very rewarding. All-in-all this project strengthened our community ties during this difficult period. The calls will be repeated in six to eight weeks to maintain contact with members as the stay at home period continues.

NEW ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mandatory Zoom Upgrade

Ruth Mackaman of the Tech Committee advises that we should accept update requests from Zoom. After May 30, all Zoom clients on older versions will receive a forced upgrade when trying to join meetings. Click here for more information.

Events between Spring and Summer Terms

Click here for the updated grid and descriptions of all activities between Spring and Summer terms, open and closed. For your convenience, the updated grid and descriptions are also on page 5 of this Observer. Here are the additions to the calendar since last week.

Reflections on Virtual Life
Friday, May 22, 10:30 AM
With Jan Adler; let him know you want to attend at adlerjan@optonline.net and he will send you an invitation.

Advances in Civilization
Thursday, May 28, 4PM
A discussion of Tolstoy, led by Sophie Balcoff. If this is your first time participating in this class, email stephenkalinsky@gmail.com for a Zoom invite.

Events Continuing in Summer

Short Stories Aloud
Tuesdays at 4PM, starting June 2
We Zoom once a week for an hour and a half to read stories aloud. See description in link to updated grid above and in last pages of this Observer. Please email Sharon Girard for an invitation at proustmatters@gmail.com.

New Possible SIG: Spanish Conversation
Interested in practicing your Spanish? Would you consider a meeting once a week or every other week in a six-to-eight-member group? Members should be able to read and discuss short newspaper articles, a short story, general information or anything of interest. If you are interested, please contact Myriam Bucatinsky at myriambuca@gmail.com.

ONLINE ART SHOW
Carol Sterling provides our nineteenth contribution to the online art show.

Title: New Adventure
By: Carol Sterling, 24” x 36” Acrylic Painting
According to Carol: “I experimented with a new artistic style: abstraction. This painting celebrities my love of color, line and shape.”

MEMBER FORUM
We’re looking for short items about experiences with virtual reality and physical distancing that you find funny or unexpected and also tips on how to negotiate these difficult weeks. Please keep them coming to Leslie Davis at ldavis7104@yahoo.com.

Enlightenment/Entertainment
From Judy Monson: OPERA America (operalink@operaamerica.org) offers information about some of the newly added and upcoming streams offered by opera companies across North America.

From Bob Sholiton: MCC Theater is offering a virtual LIVELAB presentation of “The Sentinels,” a one-act play by Matthew Lopez and directed by Rebecca Taichman, daughter of IRP members Lorne and Ettie Taichman. It will be live streamed at 5:30PM on Wednesday, May 20, on YouTube. Details are at https://mcctheater.org.

From Leslie Davis: This week’s video, more on opera. Here’s the link: https://youtu.be/uL52AuF4QzY.

Accomplishments
A New Novel by Lucy Kirk: "The Poison Factory - Operation Kamera" has been launched. So, if you’re sitting home alone, imprisoned by the coronavirus, here’s something that will fill your hours. It's a spy story: Russians, assassinations, London, Moscow, and a female CIA heroine. There’s also a love story. What more could you want? Lucy’s Facebook author page can be found at: https://www.facebook.com/Deckyaka-Lucy/?modal=admin_todo_tour.

To purchase it, go to: https://store.bookbaby.com/book/The-Poison-Factory or a bookstore of your choice to purchase it. Enjoy!

From Jenny Ross: I took this picture on May 13th during my daily walk in Forest Hills Gardens. I waved to the ladies in their cart drawn by a horse and could not see their faces as they
were wearing masks, but I was smiling behind mine, and I know they were, too.

REMINDERS

Voices Special Edition

The deadline for writing and photos dealing with the current crisis is May 31. Contact Charles Troob at ctroob@verizon.net.

RESOURCES

IRP Zine
- For the fall and spring calendars, click here.
- Observer Archive: https://www.irpzine.org/irp-observer1-1

CUNY Events
- Graduate Center Spring Public 2020 Events—To view the lineup, click here: www.gc.cuny.edu/publicprograms
- School of Labor and Urban Studies (SLU) public programming schedule, 2019-2020
- Public programs in Midtown Manhattan
## IRP Activities During Break Between Spring and Summer Terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday</th>
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| *The Giver Book Discussion*  
-Kalinsky, Brody- |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 19     | 19      | 20        | 21       | 22     | 23       | 24     |
| 4PM:   | 1PM:    | 11AM:     | 11:15AM: | 10:30AM: |   |       |
| *[closed]*, MovieGroup  
-O’Connell- | *[closed]*, Story Hour  
-Girard, Schiffman- | *Great IRP Read*  
-LeSchack- | *Federalists Forever*  
-Miller- | *Reflections on Virtual Life*  
-Adler- |   |       |
| 4PM:   | 1PM:    | 12:15PM:  | 2PM:     | 4PM:   |          |       |
| *[closed]*, Theater SIG  
-Smith- | *Men’s Group*  
-Fleishman- | *Women’s Group*  
-LeSchack- | *Who’s the Worst?*  
-Otey, Kalinsky- |          |       |
| 4PM:   | 1PM:    | 1PM:      | 4PM:     |        |          |       |
| *[closed]*, Story Hour  
-Girard, Schiffman- | *[closed]*, Theater SIG  
-Smith- |          |          |        |          |       |
| 4PM:   |         | 4PM:      |          |        |          |       |
| MovieGroup  
-O’Connell- | *Current Events*  
-Kalinsky- |          |          |        |          |       |
| 25     | 26      | 27        | 28       | 29     | 30       | 31     |
| 4PM:   | 12:15PM:| 4PM:      | 4PM:     |        |          |       |
| MovieGroup  
-O’Connell- | *Men’s Group*  
-Fleishman- | *Advances In Civilization*  
-Opher, Kalinsky- |          |        |          |       |
| 26     | 27      | 28        | 29       | 30     | 31       |        |
| 4PM:   | 4PM:    | 4PM:      |          |        |          |       |
| MovieGroup  
-O’Connell- |       |           |          |        |          |       |

## Descriptions

### Planned Events for the Break Between Spring and Summer Terms

**Monday**  
May 18, 3PM, Discussion: *The Giver* by Lois Lowry  
Join Steve Kalinsky and Arlynn Brody in a discussion of *The Giver*, which won the Newberry Medal in 1994. It was written for a young audience but contains riveting and powerful themes: Utopian Society, Memory, Individualism, and Euthanasia that should provoke a lively discussion. It is 200 pages long and can be obtained on Amazon for about $3.99 (Kindle). To purchase on Amazon, [click here](https://www.amazon.com). Email Arlynn Brody at olliebrody@gmail.com for an invitation.

May 25, 4PM, MovieGroup  
Sheila O’Connell will hold a fourth movie discussion on May 25 at 4PM. If you are interested, email Sheila at sheilajo@verizon.net and she will send you the movie assignment and a Zoom invite for the first session. Limited to the first 30 members who sign up.

**Tuesday**  
May 19, 1PM, Additional Theater SIG meetings, if warranted. *[closed]*
WEDNESDAY
May 20, 11AM, The Great IRP Read [closed]
Join with us in our first Great IRP Read. Our book will be *Slaughterhouse-Five* by Kurt Vonnegut which celebrated its fiftieth anniversary last year. Read the book on your own and come together on May 20th to discuss it. Email Arlyne LeSchack at lesca683@newschool.edu, obtain the book ($7.99 as a PB or Kindle download at Amazon, 288 pp.) and start reading.

May 20, ongoing weekly alternating Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 12:15PM, Men’s Group
Next meeting is Wednesday, May 20. If you want to participate, email Jay Fleishman at ejayfleish@aol.com and he will send you an invitation.

May 20, 1PM, Theater SIG [closed]
Bruce Smith leads a Zoom Theater SIG meeting where participants will view selected productions available online and then discuss the play production.

Ongoing, weekly, 4PM, Current Events Group
Join in a spirited discussion of weekly current events. Recent discussions included the many aspects of COVID-19. Email Steve Kalinsky at stephenkalinsky@gmail.com and he will send you a Zoom invite.

THURSDAY
May 21 11:15AM, Federalists Forever
The Federalist Papers study group was so successful that many of its members decided to continue for the next two weeks and, perhaps, on into the summer with a changed time. They are inviting all members to join their discussion of the value and utility of the Constitution as conceived by the founders at its origin, and as it has guided our nation through its history. They will now also explore how the Constitution has helped resolve some contemporary political conflicts and compare our democratic republican style of government with other forms of political organization.

Contact Howard Miller at howard3915@outlook.com if you are interested in joining and he will include you in the Zoom invitation and any other mailings, including a modest amount of readings for the Thursday meeting.

May 21, 4PM, Discussion: Who’s the Worst? Terrible U.S. Presidents
America has produced some really outstanding leaders (George Washington, Franklin D. Roosevelt and Abraham Lincoln for example) who have stepped up in perilous times and led our nation to glorious heights. Instead, please join Sara Otey and Steve Kalinsky for a discussion of two other occupants of the White House, James Buchanan and Donald Trump: bad leaders in tough times. One president lobbied the Supreme Court to rule against Dred Scott and took no action when states began to secede, opining: it’s illegal, but there is nothing I can do about it. The other president separates families and puts children in cages, blackmails Ukraine, and then there is his ongoing response to COVID-19.

Email Steve at stephenkalinsky@gmail.com and you will receive a Zoom invitation.

May 28, 4PM, Advances in Civilization
A discussion of Tolstoy, led by Sophie Balcoff. If this is your first time participating in this class, email stephenkalinsky@gmail.com for a Zoom invite.
Ongoing, weekly, 3PM (2PM on May 21), **The Women’s Group**
Join other women for discussions of current issues, both political and personal. Email Arlyne LeSchack at arlyneleschack@gmail.com and she will send you a Zoom invite.

**FRIDAY**
**May 22, 10:30AM, Reflections on Virtual Life**
With Jan Adler; let him know you want to attend at adlerjan@optonline.net and he will send you an invitation.

Ongoing, weekly, 4PM, **Pour at Four**
Set up your own “pour” and join your fellow IRPers to toast our continued social connection via Zoom. Email Susan Rubens at sfarubens@gmail.com. On the pour date just go onto the chat room website–IRP 24 hour Zoom Meeting Room: https://NewSchool.zoom.us/j/381380077. No Zoom invite needed.