

**THE OBSERVER
JUNE 7, 2021**

NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear members,

Happy summer! I hope you're enjoying a break and/or summer study groups. A gentle reminder that if you would like to add or drop a study group, please fill out this form:

https://formfaca.de/sm/3CX_Hm9G4 by the end of the day tomorrow, Tuesday June 8.

We will be sending Fall 2021 schedules and rosters next week. It may feel like you have been waiting longer than usual and this is because the registration deadline was extended by one week to allow folks more time to consider their options with the changes in potential hybrid offerings. I do not have any updates on the hybrid classes yet as we will not know until August about our fall room assignments from the Registrar.

At last month's Graduate Center Reactivation Committee Meeting, we launched a new element: an expert-led talk, the first of which was given by LP² member Barry Levine and his wife, Shirley, both MDs. I have thanked them several times but will once more here, as they clearly delivered the most relevant information about coronaviruses past, present, and future; the science behind mRNA vaccines; and the general landscape of the pandemic at this moment of change.

It was such a success that not only did people stay late to hear more of their insights, but also the President of The Graduate Center has since asked them to give a similar talk as part of a community meeting for the campus later this month.

As a reminder, the fall planning for The Graduate Center is for up to 60% building occupancy and priority is given to masters and doctoral students whose academic progress has been impeded by the pandemic; with that, each academic program is delivering two or three courses in an in-person or hybrid format. Given the overall reduced capacity of the building in the fall, we are aiming for two or three LP² study groups with an in-person component. Many of us are vaccinated, but we should keep in mind that not everyone is in New York City or in the CUNY community. Cuomo's mandate for vaccinations applies only to matriculated students enrolled in in-person classes in New York State colleges and universities and is contingent on the FDA revising emergency use authorization to regular use for one of the vaccines. The City University Board of Trustees has yet to approve policy about vaccinations, testing, and building entry (this is expected at the next board meeting at the end of this month). Part of this policy includes provisions for employees as well as access for students who are not enrolled in in-person classes but need access to student services, for example. The Graduate Center leadership is doing everything we can to bring those who want to be in the building back in the safest possible way.

Next week on Wednesday, June 16 at 3PM, we have a special talk by Professor Charles Liu as part of the newly minted LP² Science Series. **Please register here in the link included below in the announcement.** Those who have already registered will receive a reminder later this week with the meeting details.

As I write this, I'm questioning if anyone has taken a real "break." In addition to the aforementioned member activities, I have also met with some of you about the new LP² website, orientation for new members, and planning the admissions calendar for next year. Last week, we conducted the second pilot of the new LP² workshop on diversity, equity, and inclusion with fifteen members and two adept designers-facilitators, your peers Rita Silverman and Terry Hamilton. In addition to a big thank you to Rita and Terry, I want to thank all of the participants who have provided feedback in the first and second pilots. We are moving ahead with plans to deliver this workshop for coordinators in September and later offer something similar for all LP² members, as this is a cooperative and peer learning program.

I strongly encourage all fall coordinators to sign up when we announce the dates as it has only become clearer through these conversations among LP² members that the interactive exercises help us, in the words of participants, to "better understand some of the possible perspectives," and "create new bonds among us". It is an intellectual activity in itself to work through case studies, but it is also an opportunity for reflection and important to move through this process together as a community – both as coordinators and participants. Additional comments from participants in the pilot called the workshop "worthwhile, engaging, and intellectually stimulating," its style "validating and non-judgmental," and ultimately that it "makes sense to raise members' consciousness, and sensitivity as well as sometimes apply 'semantic therapy' to the language we use."

As was said in a debrief following the pilot, the function of learning is to build relationships with people who are different from ourselves –along many lines—and lifelong peer learning is about learning from each other in many dimensions. The commitment you have all made to lifelong learning is inspiring and inherent to

lifelong learning is personal growth. May we continue to grow and change as fellow travelers.

Take good care,
Mariel

Our office contact information:

engagement@gc.cuny.edu

212-817-2474

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND EVENTS

Observer Summer Schedule

During the Summer months, The Observer has a curtailed publication schedule:

Mondays, June 21

July 12, 26

August 9, 23.

If you have information to be published in the Observer from June through August, e-mail Susan Rauch at srauch@gc.cuny.edu by the Fridays before the Monday issues above.

Science Series: AN LP² VOYAGE TO THE COSMOS

A talk by Dr. Charles Liu

Wednesday, June 16, 3PM

Dr. Charles Liu, a professor of physics and astronomy at the College of Staten Island and a faculty member at the Graduate Center, will be joining us on June 16 at 3PM for our second Science Seminar Series Talk on "AN LP² VOYAGE TO THE COSMOS."

Dr. Liu is also on the staff of the Hayden Planetarium at the American Museum of Natural History.

With co-authors Neil deGrasse Tyson and Robert W. Irion, Liu wrote "One Universe: At Home In The Cosmos (2000)", for which Tyson, Irion, and Liu were awarded the 2001 Science Writing Award (scientist category) of the American Institute of Physics.

Our own astrophysicist, John Gillespie, will interview Dr. Liu, after which we will take questions. This event is limited to LP² members.

The Registration link is <https://forms.gle/mnbH4XUbbG9tf3nj8>.

Pour at 4 Outdoors

Date: Wednesday, June 23rd (Rain Date: Thursday, June 24th)

Location: Stuyvesant Square Park (2nd Ave., from 14th- 17th Sts.)

Time: 4PM

Meeting Location: Inside the park; corner of Rutherford Place @17th St., across from St. George's Church

Host: Bob Cohn

Transportation: Buses: 2nd and 3rd Aves.
#6 subway (Lexington Ave.)

Remembrance of Pours Past (Courtesy of Carolina Borelli)



Upper West Siders, along with Upper East Siders, Chelsea-ites and NoMaders gathered at the Soldiers and Sailors Monument on Monday afternoon, May 24th, for Pour at Four. Many of us met for the first time ever in person, though our unmasked Zoom faces were recognizable. We all agreed that it was fun to see each other, relax and chat in beautiful Riverside Park. A young man campaigning for a City Council seat took a photograph of our group, though it seems that a few of us were out of camera range.

Call for Break Activities between Summer and Fall Semesters

The Community Building Initiative seeks volunteers to lead activities during the break from July 13th to September 3rd. Just as with our earlier break activities, yours can meet once, twice or multiple times. Whether it's a book or movie discussion, a current events discussion, a travel adventure or art presentation or

something else, your colleagues will appreciate your efforts. We also invite all current and past coordinators to offer a one session encore presentation selected from a prior study group. Tech help is available to set up and assist you run the Zoom session. You'll receive a Zoom link to send to participants. Contact Jane Case Einbender at jeinbender@gc.cuny.edu to propose your activity.

Tuesdays With Friends

The Tuesdays With Friends Committee is taking a preliminary look at a fall return of our popular afternoon gatherings. With many members fully vaccinated and regulations easing, we see a glimmer of normalcy. Although we're not quite ready to formalize an agenda we would like to identify members who might be interested in hosting an event in their indoor or outdoor space. On three Tuesday afternoons each semester the Committee sponsors small-group get-togethers featuring talks presented and hosted by LP² members. As most of you know, what makes TWF events unique is that they take place in members' homes (from 3:30 – 6:00 P.M.) making each event a pleasant occasion for socializing.

And that's where we reach out to you. If your apartment can accommodate 18 to 20 guests, we will happily be there to set up refreshments, arrange chairs, and help clean up when the party is over. And we arrange for refreshments to be delivered to your door.

These are precious opportunities to learn, schmooze and feast together. You the hosts will have fun and our sincere gratitude for making the party possible.

If you think you would like to volunteer your home, or have any questions, please contact Carolyn Preiss at cpreiss@gc.cuny.edu

MORE ZOOM BREAK ACTIVITIES

Tues. July 13th, 2PM – Note New Time

Polling and Public Opinion

with Carolyn Setlow and Ellen Sills-Levy

The news these days is filled with the results of public opinion polls on all kinds of topics. Discrediting polls has become a national pastime, especially around election seasons. And yet, for many of us, polls remain a black box. Does what the public thinks, even on critical public policy issues, really matter? What's the history of polling – and their accuracy? Can 1000 people really represent the entire nation? Why have they never interviewed me? Are their questions biased? In short, can we trust the polls, or would we be better off without them? Carolyn Setlow and Ellen Sills-Levy, two veteran pollsters/market researchers, explore the reliability of polls and their role in our democracy, in an abbreviated version of their spring study group. If you'd like to attend, e-mail Carolyn at csetlow@gc.cuny.edu, and you will receive a Zoom invite before the session.

Mondays at 3PM: July (19, 26) and Aug (9, 16) More Stories

Aloud with Sharon Girard and Helene Schiffman

Sharon Girard and Helene Schiffman invite you to More Stories Aloud during the second summer break. Participants will read stories aloud or just listen. We'll meet on Zoom. Sessions will last about an hour and a half. Stories are sent in advance by e-mail. The fun and emphasis are in our live reading as well as brief discussion. E-mail Sharon at sgirard@gc.cuny.edu for the Zoom link. Please indicate if you would like to read aloud.

Thursday, July 29th, 2PM

**Book Discussion with author Sabeeha Rehman & LP²
member Shelley Peck**

***Threading My Prayer Rug: One Woman's Journey from
Pakistani to American Muslim***

Sabeeha Rehman was born and raised in Pakistan and came to the U.S. in 1971. She will share and discuss her story, detailed in this, her first book, and her pursuit to define an American Muslim identity for herself, her children and grandchildren; as well as her transformation from a Pakistani Muslim to an American Muslim. Questions will be welcomed. Participants are encouraged to read the book prior to the session.

If you're interested, e-mail Shelley Peck at rpeck@gc.cuny.edu. You'll receive a Zoom invite the week before.

THE GREAT LP² READ

***Nineteen Eighty-Four* by George Orwell**

Wednesday, August 25th, 1PM

Join with us for our third Great LP² Read. Revisit the book about which *The New York Times* declared "Why '1984' Is a 2017 Must-Read." It shot to No. 1 on Amazon's best seller list in early 2017. We'll explore why the book has found a large readership in this "post-truth" era, how the dystopia Orwell described suddenly feels all too familiar and consider how we react to reading it today compared to when we originally read it.

Depending on how many people sign up, we will organize one or more Zoom discussion groups at this date/time.

To participate, e-mail Jane Case Einbender at jeinbender@gc.cuny.edu. Obtain the book and read on your own. You'll receive a Zoom invite the week before the discussion.

MEMBER FORUM

Barbara Lee Collins Memorial Service

Date: Monday, June 28th, 2021

Time: 5 – 7PM

On Zoom and in person

Location: Greenwich Village Funeral Home

199 Bleecker Street #A

The family requests that you please RVSP to Rufus Collins at rufuscollins@mac.com at your convenience; but let him know that you are a member of the IRP/ LP² and also whether you plan to attend in person or on Zoom.

Does the multitude of candidates for the upcoming NYC primary election set your head reeling? Perhaps primary election debates will help you narrow your focus. As we've learned, local elections are crucially important. Like last year, you can get your absentee ballot from your local election board and you do not have to state any reason for not voting in person.

Ettie Taichman, an organizer of the IRP/LP² Voter Registration Project, has forwarded this schedule of NYC primary debates from the League of Women Voters.

2021 Debate Schedule

— Primary Election Debates Election Day June 22 —		
Comptroller Democratic	Thursday, June 10 7 pm - 8 pm	Spectrum News NY1
Mayoral Democratic "Leading Contenders"	Wednesday, June 16 7 pm - 8 pm	WNBC-TV
Comptroller Democratic "Leading Contenders"	Sunday, June 20 9:30 am - 10:30 am	WNBC-TV
— General Election Debates 		

Election Day November 2 —		
Mayoral	Wednesday, October 20 7 pm - 8 pm	WNBC-TV
Mayoral "Leading Contenders"	Tuesday, October 26 7 pm - 8 pm	WABC-TV with the LWVNYC

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@qc.cuny.edu

Observer Submissions Send items for the next week's Observer to Susan Rauch at srauch@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 that you think would be interesting to members, send it to Susan at srauch@gc.cuny.edu for inclusion in the Member Forum.