

TOPICS OFFERED FOR FALL 2013

Please note that the books listed for each course are only possible candidates. Do not buy any until the pre-meeting and a decision on the common reading is made.

***Classes start September 3rd and end December 31st.
Holiday periods are adapted to by individual class voting.***

1. (AMG) AMERICAN GRACE

In this class we will explore the role of religion in private and civic American life today. This country is unique in being deeply religious, religiously diverse, and remarkably tolerant. And yet many of us decry (some applaud) our plurality in religious family life, and the trend toward an avowedly secular yet spiritual life.

Based on two of the most comprehensive surveys ever conducted on religion and public life in America, this book examines the survey statistics and reports on congregational life in different communities and the causal cultural shifts affecting that life. Our research and class discussions will focus on: the 1960's sexual liberation; the growth of conservative, evangelical politics; the rise of feminism in the pews; liberal attitudes about premarital sex and homosexuality; and the increasing number of "Nones" – those claiming no institutional religious affiliation whatsoever (19.6% of us). There are many possible topics for presentations in this book, including: changing sexual attitudes, the impact of feminism on traditional religious denominations, the rise of religious right, and unusual religious cults. In sum we will examine why religion often separates us and how interfaith movements can unite us by showing how people of different faiths can happily work together, live together and even marry partners of a different (or no) faith.

Common Reading: *American Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us*
by Robert Putnam and David Campbell (2012)

2. (AOM) THE ASCENT OF MONEY

For millions of people, the recession has generated a thirst for knowledge about how our global economic system really works, especially when so many financial experts seem to be equally baffled. In this S/DG we will consider the world's financial history using the book *Ascent of Money* by economist and historian Niall Ferguson. He offers insight into these questions by taking viewers step-by-step through the milestones of financial history that created this system, visiting the locations where key events took place and poring over actual ledgers and documents — such as the first publicly traded share of a company — that would change human history. Ferguson maintains that the history of money is indeed at the core of our human history, with economic strength determining political dominance, wars fought to create wealth and individual financial barons determining the fates of millions.

Through this history viewers learn economic fundamentals on subjects such as sub-prime mortgages and credit default swaps, real estate bubbles and how the Chinese economy has risen to a powerful place in the financial world.

There are numerous topics for presentations, such as:

- Would mankind really be crucified on a cross of gold? William Jennings Bryan talked of the “trickle down” theory ‘way back in 1896. What are the pros and cons of a gold standard in today’s world?
- How have New York and London become world financial centers?
- Should CEOs be held criminally responsible for misrepresenting the financial instruments that they sell, considering their ramifications?
- Should the Fed micromanage the economy on a daily basis instead of trying to correct it once or twice a year?
- The history of financial families like the Medicis and the Rothschilds, and how they became banking dynasties.
- The history of sovereign debt defaults.

Common Reading: *The Ascent of Money: A Financial History of the World* by Niall Ferguson (October 2009)

3. (ART) ART IN A NUTSHELL

This is an art appreciation class for people who like to know a little something about everything. Using the text below, we will dip into all areas of the art world, including topics such as: Art Techniques, Philosophy of Art, Art Through the Ages, Famous Artists, Museums, Art Around the World, Paleolithic Art, Artistic Oddities, Art Curators, and Thailand’s Painting Elephants.

To enhance the class experience, participants may wish to bring in news clippings about current art related events, invite guest speakers or visit a local art museum.

Possible Presentation topics:

- Leonardo da Vinci
- The Psychology of Color
- Art in the Catholic Church
- The Factory of Andy Warhol
- Los Angeles Murals
- Use of Art in Advertising

Common Reading: *The Daily Book of Art: 365 readings that Teach, Inspire & Entertain* by Colin Gilbert, Dylan Gilbert & Elizabeth Gilbert (October 2009)

4. (BAN) THE BEST AMERICAN NOIR OF THE LAST HUNDRED YEARS

For the Fall trimester enjoy a short story class that looks at the best American noir (slightly dark writing) of the last hundred years. "Noir" is, in a word, offers the best

example of the nightmare of flawed souls with big dreams and how and why the all-time sure thing goes bad. . The collected stories are arranged chronologically, beginning with a 1923 piece from Tod Robbins (whose story was the inspiration for Tod Browning's classic horror film FREAKS), and ending with a 2007 entry from Lorenzo Carcaterra. There is a strong emphasis on recent noir (the 30s get one entry, the 60s and 70s two), but everything ultimately balances out, and you'll have a hard time telling which stories come from which decades (except for the fact that they're clearly labeled as such).

Many of the expected names are here: Ellroy himself; James M. Cain; Mickey Spillane; Patricia Highsmith; James Lee Burke; Dennis Lehane; Joyce Carol Oates (who manages to appear in every collection of every genre, somehow); Lawrence Sanders; Elmore Leonard. We get a nice little horror story from David Morell, a sci-fi story from Harlan Ellison, and a straight-noir piece from horror author Ed Gorman. If this sounds like an eclectic collection (and it is) that's because Ellroy and Penzler are working from a certain definition of noir. They draw a distinct line between "noir" and "detective" fiction, insisting that noir's Hollywood counterpart (film noir) isn't representative of the literature itself (thus, no Dashiell Hammett). It still leaves enough room for pieces that push the boundary, though, and the result is a collection aimed to please. These are hard-hitting stories that star characters with few redeeming features; these stories are dark and twisted, violent and obsessive. They'll scare you, they'll thrill you,.

Common Reading: *The Best American Noir of the Century* edited by James Elroy and Otto Penzler

5. (BEL) THE IDEA FACTORY: BELL LABS AND THE GREAT AGE OF AMERICAN INNOVATION

Bell Laboratories, which thrived from the 1920s to the 1980s, was the most innovative and productive institution of the twentieth century. At its peak, Bell Labs employed nearly fifteen thousand people, twelve-hundred of whom had PhDs. (Thirteen would go on to win Nobel prizes). It was a citadel of science and scholarship as well as a hotbed of creative thinking. This S/DG examines the unique magic of Bell Labs through the eyes and actions of its scientists. We'll follow these ingenious, often eccentric men, as they invent radio astronomy, ride unicycles through the corridors, and pioneer the principles that propel today's technology. We'll learn how radar came to be, and lasers, transistors, satellites, mobile phones, and much more. Aside from discussing the amazing scientific advancements of Bell Labs, we plan to explore these intriguing questions:

What are the principles of innovation? How do new technology and new ideas begin? Are some environments more favorable than others? How should they be structured, and how should they be governed? Can strokes of genius be accelerated, replicated, standardized?

Common Reading: *The Idea Factory: Bell Labs and the Great Age of American Innovation*, by Jon Gertner (2012)

6. (BYZ) SAILING FROM BYZANTIUM

Based on the book of the same title, which is a fascinating account of how the Byzantine Empire influenced three nearby civilizations. Byzantine scholars established academies in pre-Renaissance Italy, which taught Greek and re-introduced lost classical learning, and this in turn helped to kick-start the Italian Renaissance. Byzantine missionaries traveled throughout the Slavic lands, especially Bulgaria and Russia, and developed the Cyrillic alphabet to increase literacy and learning to the Slavs. Byzantium shared Greek science and philosophy with the nearby Muslim civilization, which enriched their own medieval renaissance. Unfortunately we in the West aren't taught much about the gifts of Byzantium; this book helps to correct this deficiency.

This book offers numerous possible presentation topics, including the adventures of two Byzantine monks with the Slavs, the Greek academies established on the east coast of Italy, the preservation of the classical Greek language, literature, and science in Byzantium, and the complicated relationship of Byzantium with its Muslim neighbors.

Common Reading: *Sailing from Byzantium: How a Lost Empire Shaped the World* by Colin Wells (July 31, 2007)

7. (DOC) THE DOCUMENTARY MOVIE

Not long ago, if you wanted to see a documentary film, you had to take a course, go to a movie festival, or catch it on PBS. Nowadays we can find documentaries on our TVs through the magic of the Internet, Netflix and other on line sources or from our libraries. While your basic Hollywood studio movie is primarily made to make money, a documentary is the expression of its creator's personal passion. This S/DG will explore the world of modern masters of the documentary. Presenters will choose a film that class members can view at home before each class session, and then present for discussion whatever facets of the film they choose – the contents or subject, the techniques, the background, the directors focus on the subject, and its effect on public opinion. Many Omniloreans after taking this class have been amazed at the diversity of what is available and how many of these films are unexpectedly enriching.

No Common Reading.

8. (DTH) TALKING ABOUT DEATH WON'T KILL YOU

Dr. Elizabeth Kubler-Ross wrote her landmark book, "On Death and Dying," in 1969. More than 40 years later we're still uncomfortable talking about death. This class will examine various aspects of the journey each of us must take. We'll

begin by reading “Final Exam: A Surgeon’s Reflections on Mortality.” The author, a transplant surgeon and UCLA faculty member, recounts her own experiences with death beginning with her days as a med student. She describes the moral and psychological pressures on physicians and the need for better training. From there, the class will examine the process of dying from the viewpoint of the patient and his family.

Possible presentation topics:

- Cultural Differences in Dealing with Death
- Ethical Concerns in Treating Terminal Illness
- The Journalistic Specialty of Obituary Writing
- Hospice Care
- The Funeral Industry in America
- Religious Beliefs About Death

Possible Common Reading:

Final Exam: A Surgeon’s Reflections on Mortality, by Pauline W. Chen (2007)

How We Die, by Sherwin B. Nuland (2008 ed.)

Final Gifts: Understanding the Special Awareness, Needs, and Communications of the Dying, by Maggie Callanan and Patricia Kelley (2012 ed.)

9. (ENG) THE STORY OF ENGLISH

A work of profound scholarship and powerful storytelling, Robert MacNeil’s classic nine-part PBS series remains one of the great narratives of linguistic studies. Steeped in history, geography, sociology and political drama, *The Story of English* has little to do with dictionaries, official documents or highbrow literature. Rather, it is a tale of language used for immediate needs – in street talk, popular entertainment, war and trade – and it covers more than a millennium of civilization’s ebb and flow. Vividly capturing a sense of global dynamics, the series traveled to 16 countries and across 5 continents as it followed the evolutionary path of the first worldwide language.

We will use the Third Revised Edition of the companion book, which expands on the original text, as the common reading. S/DG members are also encouraged to watch the videos, which are now available to be viewed online at no cost. Some of the many possible topics for presentation include regional dialects and accents, why English is so difficult for foreigners to learn, how babies acquire language, and the history of the Oxford English Dictionary (OED).

Common Reading: *The Story of English: Third Revised Edition*, by Robert McCrum, Robert MacNeil, and William Cran (Dec. 31, 2002; 496 pages)

Supplementary Material:

The Story of English, Programs 1-9 (1986), starring John Barton and Peter Hall (9-part series, 58-59 minutes each), available as 63 short You Tube videos at <http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL6D54D1C7DAE31B36>

10. (EPI) THE EPIGENETICS REVOLUTION

Have you ever wondered if identical twins are really identical? And if not, how and why are they not identical? This is only one of the many, many biological puzzles being illuminated and solved by the new science of epigenetics. Everyone has likely read, or heard, the word 'epigenetics', and wondered, "What are they talking about?" This SDG will answer that question.

This new field of epigenetics is already a powerful tool for investigating disease and inheritance. Each person has a genome, his/her genes composed of DNA, and an epigenome, composed of molecules other than DNA. Think of your genome as written in ink, and your epigenome written in pencil. Your genome, or parts of it, is passed on from generation; your epigenome, or parts of it, can also be passed on, but slowly the pencil markings get erased, but new pencil markings will be added. Why and how?

Possible Presentation topics:

- Why "Junk DNA" Isn't Junk
- New Info About Genetics and Criminal Behavior
- Cloning
- Can Epigenetics Fix Memory Problems?
- The Role of the Big Drug Companies in Genetic Research
- How Gluttony and Famine Affect Your Genes

Common Reading: *The Epigenetics Revolution: How Modern Biology is Rewriting Our Understanding of Genetics, Disease and Inheritance*, by Nessa Carey (March 2012)

11. (EQU) GREAT EQUATIONS AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES

"Equations are modeled on the patterns we find in the world around us," says Ian Stewart (Emeritus Professor of Mathematics), "and it is through equations that we are able to make sense of, and in turn influence, our world." This S/DG will explore each of the 17 equations in historical order as they are identified in the recommended course book to understand not just the equation; but the historical context of its discovery, the setting and application, the people involved, and the legacy it created. Several fields are covered in this book: physics, engineering, mathematics, statistics, information theory, chaos and economics where these seemingly basic equations have enabled us to predict eclipses, engineer earthquake-proof buildings, and invent the refrigerator. Possible discussion topics include: expansion of the personalities connected with the equations; current major scientific projects like Higgs-Boson; scientific discoveries that turned out poorly like cold fusion attempts; status of education in the sciences; cutting edge

developments which would not be available without these 17 equations. This is not a math or physics course, but a course for both those trying to understand the basis of the world around us and those who want to refresh and update their understanding of it.

Common Reading: *In Pursuit of the Unknown, 17 Equations that Changed the World* by Ian Stewart (March 2012)

12. (EUR) THE HIDDEN EUROPE: EVERYTHING YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT EASTERN EUROPE

This course will continue an interesting and fun look at the world of Eastern Europe. We will read and discuss the second half of the common reading, covering the southern part of eastern Europe -- Montenegro through Ukraine and Russia. There is no requirement to have studied the first half.

When people say that they're "going to Europe," they're usually referring to Western Europe. But what about Eastern Europe? You don't really know Europe until you visit its mysterious eastern side. By the way few countries actually admit to being in Eastern Europe despite the obvious geography.

The author's quest was simple: explore every country in Eastern Europe from the Gulf of Finland to the Black Sea. He saw them all in 2004 and then returned in 2008 to revisit them to see what had changed. He finally left in 2011 to share a side of Europe that few know.

Starting with Montenegro, you'll move south as far as Greece, then northeast, ultimately to Ukraine and Russia -- eleven countries and adventures spanning several years!

The Hidden Europe is an entertaining travelogue that also shares practical lessons that will impact your day-to-day life. You'll learn about today's Eastern Europe along with understanding the complex history of this fascinating region. Presentations could start with the book and fill in in more detail the virtually unknown countries that interest each member. Throughout history these have been the center of Empires and wars learn more about them and have a good time learning.

You'll also see how the locals live and realize that they do some things better than most of the world. You'll understand why smart money and groundbreaking tourists are flocking to this undiscovered territory. Best of all, you won't have to deal with the grumpy train ticket vendors.

Common Reading: *The Hidden Europe: What Eastern Europeans Can Teach Us* by Francis Tapon (April 28, 2012)

13. (GDR) GREAT DRAMATISTS

There continues to be life after Shakespeare! Explore the creations of other dramatists of western civilization. There will be no designated text. Instead, each participant will choose a playwright for presentation and assign (ahead of time, of course), an easily accessible play of the dramatist to be read by the group. Presentations will include information on the playwright's life and how he reflects the time period in which he wrote as well as a summary/analysis of his major plays. A discussion of the assigned play, led by the presenter, is also an important part of each session. Participants in the first two offerings of this group enthusiastically requested another session; so many playwrights, so little time!!! (Check out the GDR folder on the website to read what went on in the previous sessions.) This one has a blank slate, with the rich possibilities - Aristophanes or Moliere? Ibsen or Shaw? Albee or Pirandello? Chekhov or Synge? O'Neill or Miller? - What do the world's great playwrights have to say about humanity? (Please note: this session is not performance-oriented; it is more a study of drama as literature/art).

No Common Reading.

14. (GEO) THE REVENGE OF GEOGRAPHY

We live in a very dynamic age. Worse, due to modern communications, we are informed of more of what's going on than we may want to know.

There are crucial areas of the world where the future will be determined more than in other areas. Egypt and Iran come to mind.

Robert D. Kaplan has written a book arguing where the critical geographical areas will be in our future. This S/DG will leverage off Kaplan's book to try to foresee what may happen in the near future and how we might prepare for that. Examples of possible presentations are: geography complexities for Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India; sensibilities of the borders for Iraq, Iran, and Syria; geographic boundaries for South American countries; borders for the Balkan countries; national boundaries for the Muslim countries that formerly were in the Soviet Union; border difficulties for Poland; etc.

Common Reading: *The Revenge of Geography: What the Map Tells Us About Coming Conflicts and the Battle Against Fate*, by Robert D. Kaplan (September 2012)

15. (H2O) DRINKING WATER'S HISTORY

When we turn on the tap or twist open a tall, cold plastic bottle, we might not give a second thought to where our drinking water comes from. But how it gets from the ground to the glass is far more complex than we might think. With concerns over pollution and new technologies like fracking, is it safe to drink tap water? Should we feel guilty buying bottled water? Is the water we drink vulnerable to

terrorist attacks? With springs running dry and reservoirs emptying, where is our water going to come from in the future?

Both the history of having drinking water and the environmental/political concerns can be considered while using the book *Drinking Water: A History*, by James Salzman as a guide. Possible presentation topics for this S/DG include: desalination; chlorination; safety from chemicals; local or global scarcity of water; agricultural uses of water; water-borne diseases; water rights/ownership; and realities of bottled water.

Common Reading: *Drinking Water: A History*, by James Salzman (November 2012)

16. (MOV) HISTORY ACCORDING TO THE MOVIES

This class will deal with films and their historical accuracy. The recommended book draws on the knowledge of 60 experts who examine the historical accuracy of a splendid array of classic movies such as *Julius Caesar*, *Aguirre the Wrath of God*, *Mutiny on the Bounty*, *The Last of the Mohicans*, *Gallipoli*, and *Gandhi*. They reveal what each movie has done right and wrong in portraying the complex threads of the stories as known to the world's most qualified scholars. These are movies that are available on DVDs. Watch the movie at home and see if you agree with the expert. It should be fun.

Nearly any of these essays will start a lively discussion, but to add value, presentations might consider: adding favorite movies not covered in the book; combining single movies into genres (Swords and Sandals; Westerns; Sports heroes), asking what a love interest does to historical accuracy; whether or not documentaries are superior; how to handle prehistoric material such as *Quest for Fire*; and how stories of pure invention, such as *The Name of the Rose*, may yet have historical value.

Common Reading: *Past Imperfect: History According to the Movies*, edited by Mark C. Carnes (1996)

17. (MUS) THE GREAT AMERICAN MUSIC PEOPLE

Did you ever wonder how or why a song or piece of music was written? Why it became popular? What influenced the composer/song writer? Was it history? Was it love? Was it financial? A Broadway play, a movie? Or was it just a composer's destiny? This S/DG will study and discuss American composers from the second half of the 20th century whose music contributed to modern music history. Presentations may be on any classical or popular composer/writers who influenced American music, such as Aaron Copland, Ferde Grofe, Andre Previn, Sammy Cahn, Johnny Mercer, Marvin Hamlisch, Henry Mancini, Duke Ellington, Burt Bachrach, Elvis Presley, Dolly Parton, Stephen Sondheim, Carole King, John Williams, John Cage, Rodgers & Hammerstein, and more. Members are

encouraged to use cross-disciplines such as videos, excerpts from feature films, audio, music history, literature, and music analysis (why a melody has certain traits/what affects the lyrics) in their presentations. If you just love music or desire to know how history/lifestyle affected American music composition, join this S/DG for a fascinating experience for an inside look at famous music, musicians and composers.

No Common Reading.

18. (POE) THE ELEMENTS OF POETRY

Poetry is an art form that speaks to our minds and hearts. How can so few words say so much? Many of us claim not to understand it. We don't get it--especially contemporary poetry. In this course we will learn the elements of poetry so that we can understand and appreciate the works of the world's great poets. Although this course focuses on the elements of poetry rather than on particular poets, we will use as examples the works of many familiar poets including Emily Dickenson, Robert Frost, William Shakespeare, John Keats, Walt Whitman and Maya Angelou.

Participants are encouraged to bring examples of poems that illustrate topics of study, and to write their own poetry. Poetry can be a very personal thing, and we aim to appreciate rather than critique the uniqueness of each individual's poetic expression. We'll have the opportunity to read our works to others who appreciate and have a passion for this art form.

The latest edition of the book is very expensive so we will use a slightly earlier edition. Please contact the coordinator for exact edition.

Possible presentation topics include

- What distinguishes poetry from other forms of literature?
- How should poetry be read?
- What is imagery and how is it used in poetry?
- Similes, metaphors and personification
- Paradox, understatement, overstatement and irony in poetry
- Meaning beyond the literal details
- Rhyming scheme, rhythm and meter
- Biography and poems of a favorite poet
- Comparison of styles of different poets

Common Reading: *Perrine's Sound and Sense, an Introduction to Poetry* by Thomas R. Arp and Greg Johnson (12th edition)

19. (PTR) PETER THE GREAT: CREATOR OF AN EMPIRE

Peter the Great transformed Russia from a backward, medieval country into a European power. He expanded Russian territory from the Baltic Sea to the Pacific Ocean. He built a remarkable navy. He established and built St. Petersburg on swampland; the city became the new Capital of the Russian Empire, and it was as grand as any major city in Europe. This course will not only examine the man and his times but also set the stage by reviewing pertinent Russian history, and then conclude with an examination of Peter's legacy.

Possible presentation topics are *Start of the Russian Navy*, *Founding of St. Petersburg*, *The Great Northern War*.

Common Reading: *Peter the Great*, by Robert K. Massie (1986)

20. (SHK) SHAKESPEARE: ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE ...

The Omnilorean New Globe Theater plans a September-December season featuring 3 of the Bard's most popular plays. With players standing and with a few props, we propose to do reading walk-throughs of "**Romeo and Juliet**" (*Tragedy*), "**The Merchant of Venice**" (*Comedy*), and "**Richard III**" (*History*) — the latter based on the historical king whose legacy is now being seriously re-examined given the recent discovery of his remains.

In this SDG you will learn how to research all perspectives of Shakespeare's works — sources of each play upon which the Bard builds rich characters and enhances the plots, how to play each character "in character," themes, symbols, images, motifs, commentary on issues of the day, and all manner of *rhyme and reason*. Class members each serve on one play's Board of Directors, responsible for casting roles for the repertory and leading discussions based on the research — optionally adding videos, music, and costumes. For a glimpse of how we live the Bard in this S/DG, check <http://omnilore.org/members/Curriculum/SDGs/13a-SHK-Shakespeare/> to view the Winter-Spring Shakespeare class's website of links to references relevant to our plays and downloadable organizing artifacts.

There are no prerequisites, theatrical or otherwise. You will find that the Bard of Stratford-on-Avon will teach us, just as he's taught others for four hundred years. With plenty for the novice as well as the veteran, it is a *foregone conclusion* members will leave this class with a fuller understanding of the masterful story construction, realistic characters with depth and humanity, and the rich, evocative language which have earned William Shakespeare the title of greatest writer in the English language.

Common Reading: Selected Plays

21. (SMT) THIS WILL MAKE YOU SMARTER

This Will Make You Smarter presents brilliant-but accessible-ideas to answer "What scientific concept would improve everybody's cognitive toolkit?" This is the question John Brockman, publisher of Edge.org, posed to the world's most influential thinkers. Their visionary answers flow from the frontiers of psychology,

philosophy, sociology, and more. Surprising and enlightening, these insights will revolutionize the way you think about you.

Daniel Kahneman on "focusing Illusion", John Lehrer on controlling attention, Richard Dawkins on experimentation, Aubrey De Grey on conquering our fear of the unknown, Martin Seligman on ingredients of well-being, Nicholas Carr on managing "cognitive load", Steven Pinker of win-win negotiating, Daniel C. Dennet on benefiting from cycles, Jaron Lanier on resisting delusion, Frank Wilczek on the brain's hidden layers, Clay Shirky on the "80/20 rule", Daniel Goleman on understanding our connection to the natural world, V. S. Ramachandran on paradigm shift, Matt Ridley on tapping collective intelligence, John McWhorter on path dependence, Lisa Randal on effective theorizing, Brian Eno on "ecological vision", Richard Thaler on rooting out false concepts, J. Craig Venter on multiple possible origins of life, Helen Fisher on temperament, Sam Harris on the flow of thought, Lawrence Krauss on living with uncertainty.

This study/discussion group would focus on these great thinkers and their ideas combining research and lively discussions by our great Omnilore thinkers.

Common Reading: *This Will Make You Smarter: New Scientific Concepts to Improve Your Thinking*, edited by John Brockman (February 2012)

22. (TCH) TECHNOLOGY'S IMPACT IN OUR LIVES

In the last 30 years, computers and technology have changed how we live. We use the internet to communicate through email, Skype, and social media; find things and places with Wikipedia, Google maps, GPS; and amuse or educate ourselves with researching topics, TED Talks or any number of games. Computers and technology have added much to our lives, but have we lost anything in the process.

This S/DG would focus on both the benefits and drawbacks of the increasing utilization of computers and technology. Sherry Turkle has been a faculty member of MIT studying computer culture for the last 30 years and has authored her third book on the topic, *Alone Together*, which looks at the interpersonal/social/psychological changes associated with technology. Possible presentations could look at the following: social media; online game industry; changes over the 30 years; smart phones; online education; genealogy searches; robots; automation in cars; computerization in medicine; and uses to assistance disabled individuals.

Common Reading: *Alone Together: Why We Expect More From Technology and Less From Each Other*, by Sherry Turkle (2011)

23. (WSH) GEORGE WASHINGTON – THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF OUR FIRST PRESIDENT

What was it like being born in 1732, growing up in the American colonies, and then becoming the father of your country? This S/DG will study the life of George

Washington and his accomplishments. His was a dominant personality in three of the most critical events in the founding of the United States: as winning general in our Revolutionary War, as the presiding head over the Constitutional Convention, and as leader of the first national administration – our first Presidency. He kept together a rebellious, inexperienced band of patriots to defeat the then largest superpower in the world - always lacking sufficient funds from a Congress that could often barely muster a quorum. He kept the course presiding over a secret convention of Congressional delegates that were committed to factions that needed to compromise to accomplish their true purpose. He could have become Emperor - but unlike many power-seeking presidents of the past century – simply chose not to, retiring in beloved obscurity to Mount Vernon. We will learn why they called him "first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen." The assigned text will be supplemented by presentations on various aspects of his life so that we may appreciate the interplay between the man and the period. Topics for presentation might include: Washington's early life, his experience in the French – Indian War, running Mount Vernon, leading the Revolutionary War effort, His private life after the War, his role in the Constitutional Convention, being the 1st US president etc.

Common Reading: *George Washington, The Founding Father*, by Paul Johnson (2005)

24. (CSU) CSUDH FALL 2013 LECTURE SERIES

The Fall 2013 Osher Lecture Series topic has yet to be determined. The topic and topic lineup for this series will either be printed in the Sept.-Oct. 2013 newsletter or sent as an e-mail sometime in September.

If you are interested in the CSUDH lecture series, let us know by placing an X in the coordinator box next to the CSU topic, so we can have a list of those to inform when more details become available about the series. However, do NOT enter it in the course "order of preference box" along with your other S/DG topics.