

STUDY CIRCLE – WINTER 2019

Visions of America

Meets Tuesday Evenings from 7:30 to 9:00 pm
1407 Chapala Street, Santa Barbara



Diverse expressions of the distinctive visions of America nurtured in American history will be studied. The ideas and ideals of the Founding Brothers, such as Jefferson, Paine and Franklin will provide a framework for focus on the aims and purposes of the American experiment. The distinctive visions of the Transcendentalists, the Progressive Reformers and the cultural innovators in literature, art and music will be explored. How the development of educational opportunities and civic participation drew out the potential for individual freedom and social progress will be analyzed. The expansion of an inclusive global vision embedded in the promise of American ideals will be evaluated. See website for readings: <http://www.worldculture.org>

The Transcendental Vision

February 5, 2019 - Margaret Fuller on the Rights of Women

In both her life's activities and her writing, Margaret Fuller presented an expansive view of women's potential. Her best, known work, *Women in the 19th Century*, called for women to be treated as intelligent and rational beings entitled to civil and legal equality. Her book is said to have influenced the founding of the women's rights movement three years later. She herself was an active reformer. As an editor of *Dial* magazine she worked closely with Ralph Waldo Emerson and other Transcendentalists to create a culture supporting their perspective.

February 12, 2019 - The Dynamic Voice of Walt Whitman

In his poetry and prose, most notably in *Leaves of Grass*, Walt Whitman boldly expressed a fresh vision of America and human nature that corresponded to the dynamic values of the post Civil War era. His was a universal vision of America's contribution to world history and of the humanistic possibilities for freedom and happiness. However, his "earthy" portraits of the "common man" led to much controversy over his poetry.

New Approaches to Religion

February 19, 2019 - The Emergence of Metaphysical Religion

From the mid-century skepticism of "liberal theology", there emerged new statements of "metaphysical religion" such as Theosophy and New Thought. Mindful explorations of cosmic realities were matched with inward and spiritual discovery of human potential and evolution.

February 26, 2019 – World's Parliament of Religions of 1893 and Its Legacy

In 1893 representatives from diverse religious perspectives gathered in Chicago to share their teachings. Among them were speakers from Asia who electrified the attendees and went on to introduce Americans to Hinduism, Vedanta and Buddhism. By the turn of the century, religious ideas and practice in America took on a global character.