

Book and Play Review Group 2023-2024 (PSU-UWC)

We meet on the 4th Monday of the month at 1:30 pm at the Schlow Library Community Room.

Please Note: If the State College Area schools are closed for the entire day, our meeting will also be cancelled. However, if there is a 2-hour delay, our meeting will be on.

Date: September 25, 2023
Speaker: Prof. Yaw Agawu-Kakraba
Book: The Restless Crucible

The Restless Crucible narrates the story of Pedro de Barbosa, a Brazilian ex-slave now turned slave merchant, who must go up against Queen Ena Sunu, the powerful Dahomeyan monarch resolved to end slave traffic in her kingdom. The novel describes Pedro de Barbosa's fight to become free, as well as the events and actions that lead him to engage in the abominable yet lucrative slave trade.

Date: October 23, 2023
Speaker: Prof. William Kenyon
Book: Theatre & Stage Photography

“Documenting theatrical and stage events under the often-dramatic lighting designed for the production provides a number of specific photographic challenges, and is unlike most every other branch of photography”
This will be the topic of speech.

Date: January 22, 2024
Speaker: Prof. Roger Geiger
Book: The History of American Higher Education, Volume 1 and 2

Volume 1 covers the development of Universities from the founding of Harvard College in 1636 to World War II. Volume II covers the postwar transformation of the higher education system. This groundbreaking book provides the context we need to understand the complex issues facing our colleges and universities today. The talk will be based on and cover some aspects of this topic.

Date: February 26, 2024
Speaker: Prof. Mary Stuckey
Book: For the Enjoyment of the People: The Creation of National Identity in American Public Lands

This book “looks at the politics of the parks as well as what the parks can teach us about citizenship and what it means to be American. Combining interdisciplinary conversations about tourism, public memory, national history, park history, the presidency, and national identity, Stuckey contributes insightful ideas to the conversation on the history of national parks while examining the natural, military, and patriotic nature of America’s best idea”.

Date: March 25, 2024
Speaker: Prof. Christopher Beem
Book: Seven Democratic Virtues: What You can do to Overcome Tribalism and Save Democracy

The book outlines specific steps that average citizens can take to back the nation away from the brink. Instead of looking to political leaders, institutions, or policy for solutions to extreme partisanship, Christopher Beem argues that concerned citizens can and must take up the cause. He spells out seven civic practices we can all follow that will help us work against our antidemocratic tendencies and reorient the nation toward the “more perfect union” of our Founders.

Date: April 22, 2024
Speaker: Mia Bloom
Book: Pastels and Pedophiles: Inside the Mind of QAnon

Mia Bloom and coauthor Sophia Moskalenko expose how the QAnon conspiracy theory ensnared countless Americans, the role played by social media manipulations, and a possible way back to collective sanity.

Mia Bloom is a Professor of Communication at Georgia State University. She was formerly an associate Professor of International Studies at the Pennsylvania State University and a fellow at the International Center for the Study of Terrorism at Penn State.
