



Leading the Way to Lifelong Learning

Conductor

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President's Corner

*Nancy Johnson,
President*



Welcome, Gentrainers, as we begin our forty-first year as the Gentrain Society of Monterey Peninsula College. As you may know, the Society was created when a group of Gentrain course graduates joined together in hopes of creating a way to continue "life after Gentrain." Initially, membership was limited to those who had to have completed all

15 units of the Gentrain Program. I was only halfway through the course at the time, so I had to wait impatiently until the following year to join. Thankfully, membership requirements were soon revised to welcome anyone with an interest in lifelong learning.

As I write this, your new Board has met just once, so there isn't much to report yet. However, I can tell you that we have voted to put a deposit on the Oregon Shakespeare Festival for 2026. More news will be available about this popular event when Allison Porter and her committee finalize plans.

Rather than giving a report, I would like use this space to ask each of you to reflect on how we can strengthen our organization this year. When I last served as President in 2001-2002, we had approximately 700 members. Unfortunately, as the years passed, many of our popular activities, such as Short Courses and Travel Study tours, had to be discontinued because of cuts in state funding. **The Board would be like to know your ideas about any programs or activities - intellectual, social, or cultural - that would help this very special organization to flourish and even begin to grow once more. All suggestions are welcome. Please send your ideas to admin@gentrain.org.**

As you know, organizations like ours thrive on the energy of volunteers, but at the moment we are, ironically, without a Chair for the Volunteer Committee. The purpose of the committee is to support the Gentrain faculty, help with registration, arrange to have snacks at lectures, and perform other support functions as needed. If you are good at organizing willing volunteers, we would value your help; please let us know.

And finally, our Wednesday Lectures remain the

Society's greatest contribution to lifelong learning. It has been a while since we have surveyed members about the topics that most inspire attendance. The "big four" come to mind: history, art history, philosophy, and literature. But what else sparks your interest: music, world affairs, political science, anthropology, theatre? Let us know. Equally important, are there topics that make you want to stay home? Is there anything we should avoid? Please share your thoughts at admin@gentrain.org. And please, bring a friend to a Gentrain Society Wednesday Lecture.

Happy learning!

Don't forget to register for the spring semester by January 25, the last day to register without an add code.

Gentrain Society Board Meetings

The next Gentrain Society Board meeting will be held on campus on **November 19, (no meeting in December)** at 2:45 pm in MPC Social Sciences 104. **This Meeting is open to all Gentrain Society Members.**

Membership Report

Merry Nolte, Membership Chair

Welcome to these new Gentrainers: Lynn & Stevan Berardo, Mary W. Palmer, Julie Tonus and Darleen Trautsch. We are nearing the end of our membership renewal period. If you have not yet renewed, you will get a final reminder from me this month. Please send in your check by the end of the year.

If you do not receive a message from me, your membership is current.

A Message from Alan Haffa

After 23 years of teaching literature and directing the Gentrain Program at MPC, I made the decision to retire after the spring semester, 2026. It's been the honor of a lifetime to work with my colleagues in Gentrain and be part of this wonderful, life-long learning community. I will never forget traveling to Greece and then going to Troy in Turkey



with our Gentrain students and Tom Logan. There have been tough times as we saw the college's support for the program reduced over the years, but I am proud that we always found a way to adjust and to keep the core program. In the next year, I will be working with the Gentrain Board to ensure there is a good transition and that the program continues after I am gone. I have a year now to figure out what I will do post-retirement, but we are still planning a Gentrain trip to the Ashland Shakespeare Festival next August. Thank you all for the wonderful memories learning together.

Dr. Alan Haffa

Special Events

Michael Sovereign, Rene Kimzey, Co-chairs

It was good to see so many Gentrainers at the recent Colton Hall Concert. It was a terrific performance by a classical guitarist who played a variety of music styles. It was also the celebration of Admission Day, the day California became a state, 175 years ago. Statehood was made possible in part by the California Constitution which was written here in Colton Hall in only six weeks. The constitution was bilingual, gave women rights to their own property and changed the balance of slave to non-slave states by rejecting slavery--a great deal to celebrate. The next concert is scheduled for November 1st, featuring John Weed, a local Celtic fiddler, who has given Wednesday Gentrain Society Wednesday Lectures on this music and its instruments. Hope to see you there.



November 6th was third in the Gentrain Society's movie events. Hope you didn't miss the Watergate pre-lecture and film *All The President's Men*. Upcoming is the end of the semester social to be held in the Sam Karas Room of the MPC Library on Dec. 9 after class.

Scholarship Report

Vikki Logan, Scholarship Chair

A new memorial Gentrain Society scholarship has been set up by Robert Marcellini and his daughter, Kristen in honor of Robert's wife Linda. Robert is a Past Vice President of the Gentrain Society. Information about the scholarship is shown below:

The Linda Marcellini Art Scholarship Fund is established in loving tribute to a woman whose soul was deeply intertwined with creativity and expression. No matter what life threw in Linda's path, her passion for art never wavered--it was her sanctuary, her voice, and

her joy. This scholarship honors her enduring spirit and seeks to empower aspiring artists who, like her, feel the irresistible pull to create. Through this fund, her dream lives on in the hands of future visionaries, ensuring that her legacy continues to inspire beauty, courage, and imagination in the world.



Linda Marcellini

The Gentrain Book Club

Gerard Kapolka

The Gentrain Book Club will continue reading Charles Dickens' *Little Dorrit* for the next two months. If you wish to join our discussions, please email Gerry Kapolka at gtkapolka@gmail.com. We meet through Zoom on Wednesdays at 7pm.

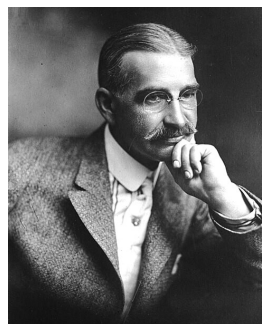
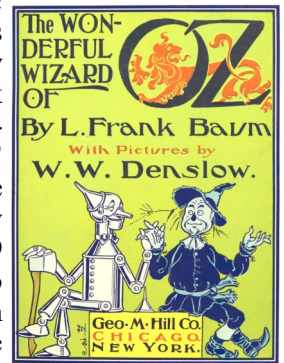
Wednesday Lectures

Gentrain Wednesday Lectures are held in LF 102 from 1:30 to 2:30 pm. Visitors are welcome; no charge or registration is required.

Wednesday, Nov. 19, 2025, 1:30pm

The Wonderful Wizard of Oz An American Fairy Tale

In 1902 *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* by L. Frank Baum was published. In 2000 the Library of Congress called the book "America's greatest and best-loved homegrown fairytale." Others have called it the "quintessential American fairy tale." L. Frank Baum 1856-1919 was born in NY, moved to Chicago and ended up in California. During his lifetime he wrote 55 novels, 83 short



L. Frank Baum

stories and 53 scripts including 13 more Oz books, short stories and scripts. But is *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* just a children's book, or is there a deeper meaning? Tom will discuss the book, its possible meaning and mention the other Oz books.

In the 1890s Baum was a supporter of the Populist Party and its presidential candidate William Jennings Bryan. The Populist Party advocated for the farmers and laborers. Can one see reflections of their beliefs in the book?



Tom Logan taught Gentrain and MPC history classes for 30 years.

Wednesday, Dec. 3, 2025, 1:30 pm
Social Media and Teen Mental Health

Social media presents a double-edged sword for teenagers, offering both opportunities for connection and engagement, but also risks to mental health and well-being. While social media can facilitate social support and communication, excessive use and exposure to certain content can lead to anxiety, depression and body image concerns. Krista Reuther will explain how to support teens in using social media wisely.

Krista Reuther, LCSW, MPH, is assistant director of Montage Health's Ohana campus, a behavioral health center for children and adolescents.



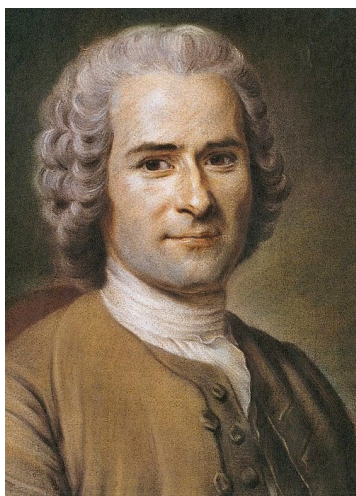
Next Wednesday Lecture will be January 21, 2026

MPC Fall Gentrain Program

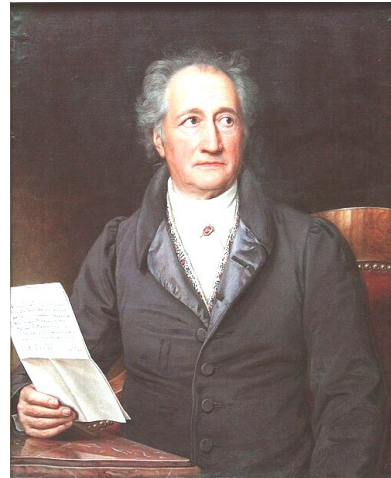
November 11, 13, 18, 20, 25 December 2, 4, 9, 11

GENT 11/411: Reaction and Revolution (1775-1815)

The course studies the causes, events, central figures and consequences of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Age. Additionally, it examines the connections between this historical foundation and the philosophy, literature and art, including such figures as Rousseau, Kant, Wordsworth, Goethe, Goya and Beethoven. The Romantic Movement ties together both the political and cultural events of the period.

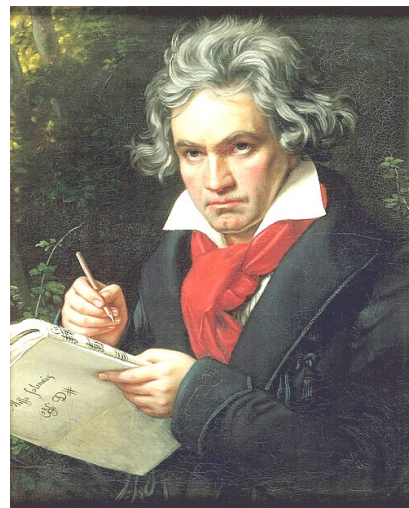


Jean-Jacques Rousseau



Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Francisco José de Goya



Ludwig van Beethoven

The Gentrain Program will continue with the first class on January 27, 2026.

The Gentrain Society of MPC

2025 - 2026

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Allison Porter (831) 394-8051
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The Gentrain Society of Monterey
Peninsula College
980 Fremont St Monterey, CA 93940
Phone: 646-4224 gentrain.org

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Paul Blum, Co-Editor
Terry Blum, Co-Editor
Phone: 372-0895
Email: tblumgm@gmail.com

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Gentrain Society Scholarship Fund

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(Please make your checks payable to MPC/Gentrain Society)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Amount enclosed: \$ _____

Invitation to Join

Dues: \$35 per year, \$50 Couples

Send your check payable to the *MPC/Gentrain Society*

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____ **Telephone:** _____

E-mail address: _____

____ **I would like to learn about volunteer opportunities.**

Please clip out and send to:
Membership, *Gentrain Society* - MPC
980 Fremont St., Monterey CA 93940

*Happy
Holidays*