
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

January 8

Transcendentalism and The Oversoul

A brief explanation of Transcendental philosophy will be presented followed by discussion of Ralph Waldo Emerson's essay on the *Oversoul*. Passages will be read aloud and questions raised for the group to explore.

January 15

The Oversoul and Its Contemporary Relevance

Study of Emerson's essay on the *Oversoul* will continue. Questions about the ethical and practical influence of Transcendental ideas will be considered along with the scientific and social relevance of this perspective.

January 22

Henry David Thoreau's "Higher Laws"

Discussion will focus on Chapter 11 of Thoreau's *Walden*. Embedded in his description of what he learned while living at Walden Pond is his recognition of "Higher Laws." The laws point to a more natural and universal basis for ethical living.

January 29

Educational Reform and the Ideals of Bronson Alcott

An introduction to an era of educational reform will review how Bronson Alcott pioneered in setting up schools based on a vision of education that evoked a creative, nonviolent and cooperative spirit in children. His vision challenged the traditional practices of strict discipline and rote conformity.