

**2024 Morning Group Descriptions**  
**All groups meet Th-Sun, 9-12am**  
**Contact individual group leaders for more information**

**Historical Fiction - Mary Papke - papke@utk.edu**

In light of the conference's theme—Equity & Community—we will discuss four novels that address issues of caste, class, gender and race as these factors play out in American life. The first novel is Jess Walter's **The Cold Millions**, “an intimate story of brotherhood, love, sacrifice and betrayal set against the panoramic backdrop of an early twentieth-century America that eerily echoes our own times.” Jeannette Walls's **Hang the Moon** is our second novel and “a thrill ride through Prohibition and change in the American South.” The third novel is Pulitzer-Prize winning **Trust**, by Hernan Diaz, a “tale of privilege and deceit” that interrogates “the reality-warping force of capital, and the ease with which power can manipulate facts.” Our final work brings us to the present day—Barbara Kingsolver's **Demon Copperhead**, her extraordinary reimagining of Dickens's David Copperfield transported to the mountains of southern Appalachia.

**Modes of Teaching**

The Modes of Teaching group provides a space for sharing, experimenting, and learning about effective, innovative, and inclusive pedagogical approaches. In addition to providing a safe, multi disciplinary environment of fellow instructors who deeply value the art of teaching, this group will include some open work time in which participants will be encouraged to take the time to develop their own teaching materials, lesson plans, and learning activities. There will also be opportunities for participants to test out new teaching ideas with short teaching demonstrations with a group of interested participants.

**Pop Culture - Erik Ecklund - ecklund@francis.edu**

Thursday

The Pop Culture morning group will meet to discuss the Barbie movie (available on Max at the time this is written).

Friday

The Pop Culture morning group will meet to discuss Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood and the movie A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood (available on Hulu at the time this is written).

Saturday

The Pop Culture morning group will travel to the Andy Warhol Museum.  
<https://www.warhol.org/>

Sunday

The Pop Culture morning group will gather to share other pop culture works (past, present, or on the horizon) that have caught the attendees' attention since we last met. All are encouraged to make suggestions for the topics of next year's gathering!

**Theorizing Culture – Eric Bain-Selbo -[ebainselbo@semo.edu](mailto:ebainselbo@semo.edu)  
Allen Dunn – [ardunn@utk.edu](mailto:ardunn@utk.edu)**

Meritocracy, Equality, and Equity

Whether myth or fiction, meritocracy is a fundamental element of American culture—including its higher education system. But how should we think about meritocracy? What are its costs and benefits? And what is its relationship to equality, equity, and community? In this year's Theorizing Culture seminar, we'll delve into all these questions (and more) through selected readings from these works:

*The Meritocracy Trap: How America's Foundational Myth Feeds Inequality, Dismantles the Middle Class, and Devours the Elite*, by Daniel Markovits

*The Tyranny of Merit: Can We Find the Common Good?* by Michael J. Sandel

*The Aristocracy of Talent: How Meritocracy Made the Modern World*, by Adrian Wooldridge

Selections and reading schedule will be available no later than June 1.

**Writing Retreat - Dorothy Hurlburt - [dhurlburt1@gmail.com](mailto:dhurlburt1@gmail.com)**

Do you wish for a good block of time to develop or even complete a writing project? This seminar is for those who want to write and to create in an encouraging environment. Come with a specific project in mind, or in progress, whether it is a scholarly article, a set of poems, a memoir, novel, mixed-media artifact, or something else. During these sessions we will begin by sharing and exchanging ideas about our projects, then we will get down to writing. We will tailor the meeting according to the needs of participants with spontaneous opportunities for discussion, collaboration, or feedback. At the end of the morning the group will reconvene to talk about how it's going. We would be happy to hear from people ahead of time about projects you are working on or how you would like to use the time.