



# The MICL Letter

January 2025

Spring Session A

## A Message from MICL President - Bruce Clifton

# Awaken with the **SPLASH** of MICL



Have you heard of the Wide Awakes? In the 1850s, the Slave Power of the South had seized political power over the federal government. Slavery, which Frederick Douglass called “the pet monster of the American people,” was devouring more and more of America’s territory. In addition, violence was growing across the country. In the midst of this perceived darkness and chaos, something unexpected happened. It was both an “awakening” and “abandonment” of sorts. Like puddles of water connecting with other puddles, a movement formed. This group called themselves the Wide Awakes and they learned to navigate the political waters. Soon, hundreds of thousands of White and Black men, women, consisting mostly of working-class Americans in their twenties, led a surprisingly diverse and unlikely coalition that resulted in the election of Abraham Lincoln. The world was forever changed.

At MICL, we ultimately don’t know the consequences of our learning together. But, we do know that we, as MICL members, come together as a type of coalition, bringing diverse perspectives to our conversations. Coupled with a culture of valuing evidence-based learning, we make it possible for those “aha” moments to occur in the environments of our classes. As a result, we often find ourselves learning new ideas, abandoning our previous misconceptions, which lead us down unforeseen, but far more satisfying paths. In the pages that follow, take a moment to peruse our engaging MICL courses. But, I must accompany my recommendation with a warning. You may find your mind unexpectedly transformed and thus your previously-taken paths reevaluated. Allow me to end my letter with this quote (emphasis mine) from one of my favorite people from history:

*“Sit down before fact like a little child, and be prepared to give up every preconceived notion, follow humbly wherever and to whatever abyss Nature leads or you shall learn nothing.”*









Thomas Henry Huxley



Dan Gorman

**FIELD TRIPS:**  
**We now have a new**  
**Field Trip Director: Dan Gorman**  
**Details to come**

**SESSION A Classes:**  
**January 13 thru**  
**February 14, 2024**

Spring 2025 Session A					
January 13 – February 14, 2025					
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
10 am to NOON	 Travels Around the World	 History of India	 Early Humans	 Current Events	 MICL at The Movies
1 pm to 3 pm	 Triumph of Christianity	 The Great Migration	 Writing it Down!	 On Tyranny	

**2024-2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

- President Bruce Clifton
- President-Elect Johnnie Williams
- Secretary Linda Lagace
- Treasurer Dorothy Ford
- Curriculum, VP Bob Droual
- Communications Debi Jackson
- Facilities Noel Russel
- Membership Roger Jackson
- Publicity Betty Stewart
- Hospitality Maureen Fuertes
- Field Trips Dan Gorman

**CLASSES ARE HELD**

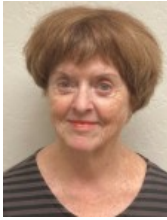
**IN THE EL CAPITAN CENTER BUILDING**  
**MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY**  
**DURING FALL & SPRING SEMESTERS**  
**Summer Session No Mondays or Fridays**

Annette Olsen Immediate Past President  
 Vicki Vander Veen MJC Comm. Ed. Specialist  
 MJC Lifelong Learning (209) 575-6063  
 MJC West Campus, El Capitan Bldg. 2201 Blue Gum Ave.  
 Modesto, CA  
**George Pettygrove, 1920-2014**  
**Odessa Johnson** Founders

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10:00 AM TO 12:00 NOON

Coordinator:  
**Betty Stewart**



**TRAVELS AROUND THE WORLD:** In this class we bring in MICL members and friends of members to tell us about their trips, near as well as far and wide. You can expect lots of great pictures, perhaps videos, and most of all, stories about the trips. In addition to the experience of virtually going along on these trips, you will learn how the trip was planned and other background information. For good reason, this course has consistently been the MICL class with the largest attendance. Come and see the world!

**\*1/20 MLK Day No Class\***

12:00 NOON TO 1:00 PM BREAK

1:00 PM TO 3:00 PM

Coordinator:  
**Jim Pack**



**TRIUMPH OF CHRISTIANITY:** In The Triumph of Christianity, Bart Ehrman, a master explainer of Christian history, texts, and traditions, shows how a religion whose first believers were twenty or so illiterate day laborers in a remote part of the empire became the official religion of Rome, converting some thirty million people in just four centuries. The Triumph of Christianity combines deep knowledge and meticulous research in an eye-opening, immensely readable narrative that upends the way we think about the single most important cultural transformation our world has ever seen—one that revolutionized art, music, literature, philosophy, ethics, economics, and law.

“How did a small, provincial Jewish sect called Christianity convert the mighty pagan Roman Empire? Bart Ehrman answers this baffling question with the same wit, passion, and rigorous scholarship that have made him one of the most popular religion writers in the world today. The Triumph of Christianity is a marvelous book.”— Reza Aslan, NY Times bestselling author of Zealot

**\*1/20 MLK Day No Class\***

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10:00 AM TO 12:00 NOON

Coordinator:  
**Jerry Jackman**



**HISTORY OF INDIA:** After a full semester, our course is finally the CURRENT history of the independent nations/states of India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. Getting to the modern world hasn't been easy for these nations or their people. But South Asian nations survive as complex struggling democracies.

Professor Fisher will conclude with "South Asia into the 21st Century". The remaining time provides the opportunity to see the fresh faces of these societies today, utilizing a few amazing videos from YouTube. Your comments and questions add to the richness of the course.

12:00 NOON TO 1:00 PM BREAK

1:00 PM TO 3:00 PM

Coordinator:  
**Johnnie Williams**



**THE GREAT MIGRATION:** The Great Migration of African Americans lasted from the 1910s to the 1970s. It spread from the US South to change the literal complexion of cities and towns across the Northeast, Midwest and West. During this time, an estimated 6 million African Americans joined the exodus from a Jim Crow life. As New York's Harlem Renaissance clearly shows, African Americans revolutionized American dance, popular music and literature.

As this course will show, everything from jazz, blues, gospel music, state lotteries and even open heart surgery was created by the descendants of the Great Migration.

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10:00 AM TO 12:00 NOON

Coordinator:  
**David Froba**



**EARLY HUMANS:** (This Great Courses series, produced in 2023, relies on the most up-to-date science, including DNA, and will give you insights that you probably did not have before.) You and the other 8 billion humans alive today are members of the only species that has survived in the genus Homo since its 2.5 million year evolutionary journey began. Many other species we know of and perhaps dozens yet to be discovered have all come and gone. Who were these long ago ancestors? Where and how did they live and die? And how are we even able to learn about these humans, some of whom became extinct millions of years ago? Professor Suzanne Pilar Birch shares her expertise and passion for discovery as she peels back the years to expose the emergence and lives of early humans in *Early humans: Ice, Stone, and Survival*.

12:00 NOON TO 1:00 PM **BREAK**

1:00 PM TO 3:00 PM

Coordinator:  
**Joyce Starkey**



**WRITING IT DOWN:** Do you like to write? Do you have family stories you want to share with your grandkids? Do you like to write poetry? If you answered yes to any of these questions, come join our writing group. Write anything you like at home and bring it to class when you are ready to share. We will enjoy what you wrote and offer friendly feedback. Don't worry, sharing is always voluntary! If you are not sure, come and listen to check it out. Come and join our writing community of writers and listeners.

10:00 AM TO 12:00 NOON

Coordinator:  
**To Be Announced**



**CURRENT EVENTS:** Have you ever watched TV or read a newspaper article, opinion, or letter to the editor and really wanted to discuss or react to what you read? *"Current Events"* is just the class for you. We discuss all kinds of issues and happenings from your neighborhood, local, regional, state, national, and world news. You bring in the topic, introduce it, and we all discuss it with the help of our collective expertise.

12:00 NOON TO 1:00 PM **BREAK**

1:00 PM TO 3:00 PM

Coordinator:  
**Anita Young**



**ON TYRANNY:** A historian of fascism offers a guide for surviving and resisting America's turn towards authoritarianism.

Timothy Snyder is one of the most celebrated historians of the Holocaust. In his books *"Bloodlands"* and *"Black Earth"*, he has carefully dissected the events and values that enabled the rise of Hitler and Stalin and the execution of their catastrophic policies. With *"Twenty Lessons"*, Snyder draws from the darkest hours of the twentieth century to provide hope for the twenty-first. As he writes, "Americans are no wiser than the Europeans who saw democracy yield to fascism, Nazism and communism. Our one advantage is that we might learn from their experience."

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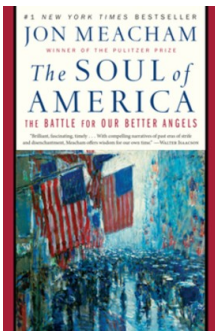
Coordinator:  
**Arlene Allsup**



**BOOK CLUB:** We meet the last Thursday of each Session. We read a nonfiction book one month and a fiction book the next month. The book is suggested and selected by the group and will be moderated by the person that suggested the book title. Our group is open to everyone, even if you have not read or have previously read the book. Please feel free to join the group for any of the meetings. Keep Reading!

**February 13, 2025**

**“Soul of America: The Battle for Our Better Angels”, by Jon Meacham**



Our current climate of partisan fury is not new, and in *The Soul of America* Meacham shows us how what Abraham Lincoln called the “better angels of our nature” have repeatedly won the day. Painting surprising portraits of Lincoln and other presidents, including Ulysses S. Grant, Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry S. Truman, Dwight Eisenhower, and Lyndon B. Johnson, and illuminating the courage of such influential citizen activists as Martin Luther King, Jr., early suffragettes Alice Paul and Carrie Chapman Catt, civil rights pioneers Rosa Parks and John Lewis, First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, and Army-McCarthy hearings lawyer Joseph N. Welch, Meacham brings vividly to life turning points in American history.

He writes about the Civil War, Reconstruction, and the birth of the Lost Cause; the backlash against immigrants in the First World War and the resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s; the fight for women’s rights; the demagoguery of Huey Long and Father Coughlin and the isolationist work of America First in the years before World War II; the anti-Communist witch-hunts led by Senator Joseph McCarthy; and Lyndon Johnson’s crusade against Jim Crow. Each of these dramatic hours in our national life have been shaped by the contest to lead the country to look forward rather than back, to assert hope over fear—a struggle that continues even now.

While the American story has not always—or even often—been heroic, we have been sustained by a belief in progress even in the gloomiest of times. In this inspiring book, Meacham reassures us, “The good news is that we have come through such darkness before”—as, time and again, Lincoln’s better angels have found a way to prevail.

10:00 AM TO 12:00 NOON

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Coordinator:  
**Noel Russell**



**FRIDAY AT THE MOVIES:** Start your weekend with a film, related to our current classes, that will carry you away to other times and places. After the movie, those who wish gather at a local eatery for lunch and discussion. The movie details are posted in the Weekly Update on the prior Friday.

Jan. 17: “ To Be Announced”

Jan. 24: “ To Be Announced”

Jan. 31: “ To Be Announced”

Feb. 7: “ To Be Announced”

**Feb 14: Lincoln Day No Class**

**In-Person Registration for [Spring 2025](#) at El Capitan: **Wednesday, January 8, 2025****

9:00 am - 11:30 am, **Presentation at 10:00 am**

# The MICL Lunch Hangout

*Tip: The MJC Food Court has deli sandwiches, salads, snacks, drinks, and more! It's just a short walk away!*

*Are you waiting for the afternoon class to start? Feel free to bring a lunch, sit at a "community table" at MICL, and enjoy eating and socializing with class members!*



**NOON TO 1:00 PM**

EVENT SCHEDULE			
Session A Starts	January 13, 2025		
Curriculum Committee	1st Tuesday	Jan. 7 & Feb. 4, 2025	3:45 pm
Board Meeting	2nd Tuesday	Jan 14 & Feb 11, 2025	3:45 pm
Birthday Luncheons	3rd Friday	January 17 , 2025	1:00 pm
Potluck	Last Thursday	February 13, 2025	11:30 am
Book Club	Last Thursday	February 13, 2025	1:00 pm
Session C Ends	February 14, 2025		

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