

Digging Deeper VII: The Shape of the 21st Century

For more than a year, United for Peace of Pierce County has been conducting “Digging Deeper,” a Monday night book discussion group, often in the form of a study circle around a group of books, copies of which participants read, pass around, and discuss. Topics of study circles have included peak oil, climate change, and the corporation, as well as abiding themes of war and peace. Continuing in this tradition, on July 18, 2005, *Digging Deeper VII* will begin a four-week study circle examining five diverse works touching on a common theme: ***What key economic, environmental, political, and religious institutions are shaping the 21st century?***

- **Lester R. Brown, *Outgrowing the Earth: The Food Security Challenge in an Age of Falling Water Tables and Rising Temperatures* (W.W. Norton, 2005):** *“Falling water tables in countries that contain more than half the world’s people and rising temperatures worldwide pose a far more serious threat [than terrorism]. Spreading water shortages and crop-withering heat waves are shrinking grain harvests in more and more countries, making it difficult for the world’s farmers to feed 70 million more people each year. . . . Future security, Brown says, now depends on raising water productivity, stabilizing climate by moving beyond fossil fuels, and stabilizing population by filling the family planning gap and educating young people everywhere.”* The author is president of the Earth Policy Institute; his books have been translated into more than 40 languages.
- **Thomas L. Friedman, *The World Is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2005).** *Publisher’s Weekly:* *“For Friedman, cheap, ubiquitous telecommunications have finally obliterated all impediments to international competition, and the dawning ‘flat world’ is a jungle pitting ‘lions’ and ‘gazelles,’ where ‘economic stability is not going to be a feature’ and ‘the weak will fall farther behind.’ Rugged, adaptable entrepreneurs, by contrast, will be empowered. The service sector (telemarketing, accounting, computer programming, engineering and scientific research, etc.), will be further outsourced to the English-spoken abroad; manufacturing, meanwhile, will continue to be off-shored to China. . . . The last 100 pages on the economic and political roots of global Islamism are filled with the kind of close reporting and intimate yet accessible analysis that have been hard to come by.”* Thomas Friedman writes a regular column in the *New York Times*.
- **Ron Hira & Anil Hira, *Outsourcing America: What’s Behind Our National Crisis And How We Can Reclaim American Jobs* (AMOCOM, 2005).** *Publisher’s Weekly:* *“More than an exposé, the book shows how outsourcing is part of the historical economic shifts toward globalism and free trade, and demonstrates the impact of outsourcing on individual lives and communities. The authors discuss policies that countries like India and China use to attract U.S. industries, and they offer frank recommendations that business and political leaders must consider in order to confront this snowballing crisis — and bring more high-paying jobs back to the U.S.”* The Hiras are both Ph.D. economic policy specialists.
- **Bruce Lincoln, *Holy Terrors: Thinking about Religion after September 11* (University of Chicago Press, 2003).** *“It is tempting to view the perpetrators of the September 11 terrorist attacks as evil incarnate. But their motives, as Bruce Lincoln reveals in this insightful offering, were profoundly and intensely religious. . . . With great rigor and incisiveness, Holy Terrors sorts through the details and the religious rhetoric of September 11 — in the hijackers’ instructions, George W. Bush’s national address, Osama bin Laden’s videotaped reply, and Pat Robertson’s notorious interview with Jerry Falwell — and examines their implications for our understanding of religion and its interrelationships with politics and culture.”* Lincoln teaches at U. Chicago.
- **Samantha Power, *“A Problem from Hell”: America in the Age of Genocide* (Basic Books, 2002; paperback edition by Perennial, 2005).** *Publisher’s Weekly:* *“An uncompromising and disturbing examination of 20th-century acts of genocide and U.S. responses to them. . . . In the face of firsthand accounts of genocide, invocations of geopolitical considerations and studied and repeated refusals to accept the reality of genocidal campaigns simply fail to convince, she insists. But Power also sees signs that the fight against genocide has made progress. . . . This is a well-researched and powerful study that is both a history and a call to action.”* Samantha Power directs Harvard University’s Carr Center for Human Rights and is a former journalist.

MEETING SCHEDULE — Mondays from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. in July and August (July 18 & 25 and August 1 & 8) at the Mandolin Café, 3923 S. 12th St., Tacoma, WA.

Books are available for borrowing or purchase; there is no charge for participation. Contact Mark Jensen at jensenmk@plu.edu or 253-756-7519, or Ted Nation at tedn5@yahoo.com or 253-983-8997.