

Scaling *The Magic Mountain* Spring 2026 | Coordinator Sandy Levis

Course Description: Have you always wanted to read Thomas Mann's Nobel Prize-winning novel of ideas set in a Swiss sanatorium but were daunted by its length and/or scope? Here is the support group you need! This is a low-key exploration of a classic of world literature, emphasizing our shared journey of discovery.

Format: We'll read a manageable portion of the book—approximately 70 pages—each week and then discuss our impressions. Participants will take turns presenting their findings on germane topics, including but not limited to: Mann's biography; the history and treatment of tuberculosis; the advent of Freudian psychoanalysis; rising totalitarianism in pre-WWI Europe; isolationism; Swiss neutrality; and critical reception of the work. Together we will reach the summit. Excelsior!

Resources/Expenses: *The Magic Mountain* by Thomas Mann, translated from the German by John E. Woods. Vintage International paperback edition, 1996; \$22.00 at barnesandnoble.com.

Coordinator: Sandy Levis is a recent transplant to Providence from Pittsburgh, Pa., where she served as the literary editor of *Pittsburgh Quarterly* magazine. *The Magic Mountain* has been in her "To Be Read" pile for many years.

SCHEDULE

March 16: READ pp.xi - 68; Foreword - "One Word Too Many"
Presentation: Intro to course and Critical Reception of MM (Sandy)

March 23: READ pp.68 —138; "One Word Too Many" to "Growing Anxiety/Two Grandfathers and a Twilight Boat Ride"
Presentations: German Literature (Liz) AND Thomas Mann's Biography and Oeuvre (Stuart)

March 30: READ pp.138 —216; "Growing Anxiety etc." to "Freedom"
Presentation: Tuberculosis (Terry)

April 6: READ pp. 216 — 281; "Freedom" to "Danse Macabre"
Presentation: Freemasonry (Susan)

April 13: READ pp. 281 — 362; "Danse Macabre" to "Someone Else"
Presentation: Belle Epoque (Penney)

April 20: READ pp. 362 — 432; "Someone Else" to "Operationes Spirituales"
Presentations: The Great War (Sam) AND Walpurgisnacht (Bob)

April 27: READ pp. 432 — 489; "Operationes Spirituales" to "A Good Soldier"
Presentation: Swiss Neutrality (Jonathan)

May 4: READ pp. 489 — 564; "A Good Soldier" to "Mynheer Peeperkorn (continued)"
Presentation: Humanism (Robert L.)

May 11: READ pp. 564 — 644; "Mynheer Peeperkorn (cont'd)" to "Highly Questionable"
Presentation: Freudian Analysis (Douglas) AND Nietzsche's Philosophy and Influence on MM (Gordon)

May 18: READ pp .644 — 706; "Highly Questionable" to Finis Operis
No presentation, just discussion and final thoughts