

Joe C. and Carole Kerr McClendon
Honors College

Informal Reading Groups

Spring Semester 2016

Meet just one hour per week with 10-15 Honors College students to discuss roughly 50 pages of reading from specific books on the topics described in the following pages. The only commitment you make is a good-faith effort to complete the reading and attend group meetings as often as you can, with the understanding there may be one or two weeks when you are unable to attend.

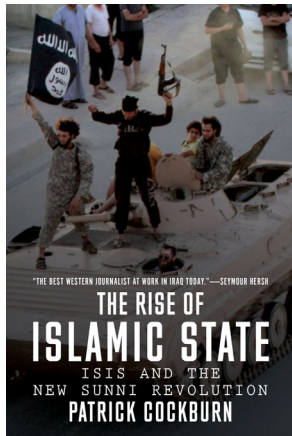
- **No tuition or fees**
- **No quizzes or tests**
- **No grades**
- **Free books**

Reading groups will begin the week of **February 1 - 5** and will meet from **4-14 weeks** as indicated in this brochure.

To sign up for a reading group, visit **<http://tinyurl.com/irgspring2016>** or **simply scan the QR code below**. Groups are filled on a first-come, first-served basis.

Books will be distributed at the Reading Groups Open House on **Thursday, January 28 at 6:00pm in David L. Boren Hall, Rooms 180 and 182.**

Students who have not reserved a spot in any group are welcome to attend the Open House and sign up for any reading group with available spots, but please note that quantities may be limited.



ISIS: The New Sunni Revolution *and* THE DIGITAL CALIPHATE

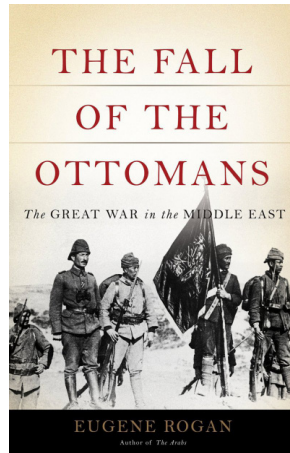
Mondays 11:30-12:20
DLBH 182
8 weeks

This group will read two new books, one by Patrick Cockburn and one by Abdel Bari Atwan.

Cockburn has been called “simply the best journalist working in Iraq today,” and the judges for the Award for British Journalism noted that he “spotted the emergence of ISIS much earlier than anybody else and wrote about it with a depth of understanding that was in a league of its own.”

Atwan’s book is “based on visits to the Turkish-Syrian border, online interviews with jihadists, and the access to leaders he enjoys as one of the Arab world’s most respected journalists.” Atwan provides a thorough overview of ISIS’ structure, philosophy, and recruitment methods – with an emphasis on its digital media savvy.

Moderator: Prof. David Ray



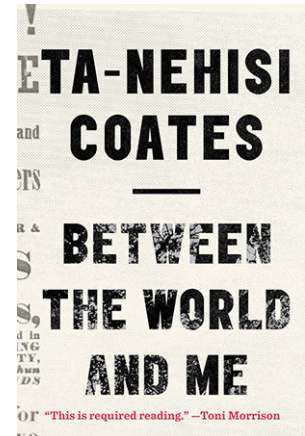
THE FALL OF THE OTTOMANS: The Great War in the Middle East

Wednesdays 11:30-12:20
DLBH 182
9 weeks

Award-winning historian Eugene Rogan brings the First World War and its immediate aftermath in the Middle East to vivid life, uncovering the often ignored story of the region’s crucial role in the conflict.

The subject of numerous rave reviews, this new work describes how the Ottomans took on the Russian, British, and French forces, and tried to provoke Jihad against the Allies in their Muslim colonies. Unlike the static killing fields of the Western Front, the war in the Middle East was fast-moving and unpredictable, with the Turks inflicting decisive defeats on the Entente before the tide of battle turned in the Allies’ favor. Rogan shows that the defeat that the empire suffered in 1918 was not total, and that its final collapse was neither an instant result of the 1918 armistice, nor inevitable.

Moderator: Prof. David Ray



BETWEEN THE WORLD AND ME by Ta-Nehisi Coates

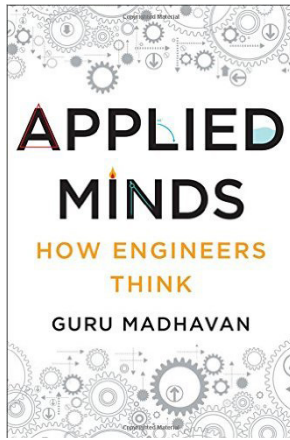
Thursdays 5:00-5:50
CCD1 214
5 weeks

Framed as a letter to his teenaged son, Ta-Nehisi Coates' *Between The World And Me* is really a letter to America concerning its fraught racial past and present. As an editor at the *The Atlantic*, Coates has won awards for articles about Barack Obama's historic election, the case for reparations, and the modern prison-industrial complex.

In *Between The World And Me*, he offers his son advice on how to comport himself as a young black man in America, the truth of history, and his own coming-of-age growing up in Baltimore during the crack epidemic of the 1980s before attending Howard University and finding his journalistic voice. Coates has garnered comparisons to James Baldwin in his dissection and analysis of issues of race in America.

As the nation has recently taken a renewed look at institutionalized racism, the subjects covered in this book have never been more germane.

Moderator: Blessing Ikpa and Will O'Donnell



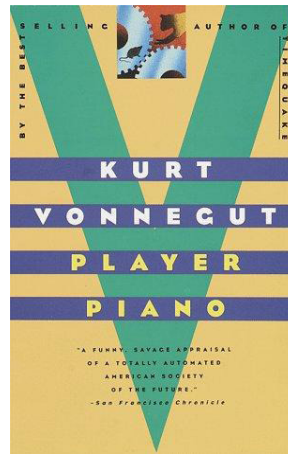
APPLIED MINDS: How Engineers Think by Guru Madhavan

*Mondays 2:30-3:20
CCD1 217
5 weeks*

Engineers are titans of real-world problem-solving, yet are strangely invisible, notes biomedical engineer Guru Madhavan.

In this riveting study of how they think, he puts behind-the-scenes geniuses such as Margaret Hutchinson, who designed the first penicillin-production plant, center stage. Writing with a liveliness that reflects the energized, creative, problem-solving people he talks about, Madhavan presents a completely engaging survey of what engineers do. One review notes “this thoroughly engaging book demonstrates that engineering thinking is truly multidisciplinary, multinational, and multicultural. Through its diverse cast of engineers and wide-ranging examples of their achievements, the book leaves little doubt that our world is a better place because of the engineers who inhabit it.”

Moderators: Prof. David Ray and Wes Herron



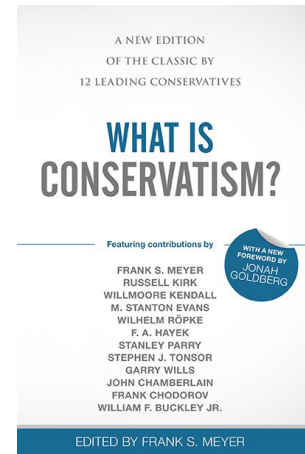
Kurt Vonnegut's PLAYER PIANO

*Mondays 1:30-2:20
CCD1 217
8 weeks*

Player Piano is Kurt Vonnegut's first novel. Published in 1952, the novel tells the story of a near-future world in which all manual labor has been replaced by machines. While working at General Motors, Vonnegut saw punch-card computers replacing machinists and remarked that “[t]o have a little clicking box make all the decisions wasn't a vicious thing to do. But it was too bad for the human beings who got their dignity from their jobs.”

Player Piano explores the effects of capitalism and automation by portraying a dystopian post-World War III world in which the rise of the technocracy comes at the expense of the forcibly unemployed poor.

Moderator: Prof. David Ray



WHAT IS CONSERVATISM?

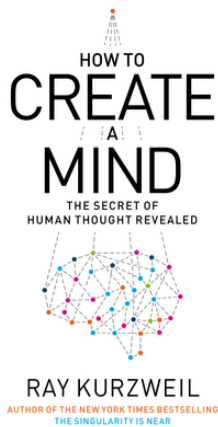
*Tuesdays 2:30-3:20
CCD1 217
4 weeks*

“Just what is conservatism?”

Many people are seeking answers, especially as conservatives seem to retreat into factions—Tea Partiers, traditionalists, libertarians, social conservatives, neoconservatives, and on and on. But this illuminating book shows what unites conservatives even as it explores conservatism’s rich internal debate.

What is Conservatism? was published in 1964, yet the arguments and observations it contains remain relevant today. It features powerful and diverse essays by thinkers such as Friedrich A. Hayek, Garry Wills, Wilhelm Ropke, and the founders of the Intercollegiate Studies Institute, Frank Chodorov and William F. Buckley Jr. Students of all political persuasions are welcomed to read and discuss this book with us!

Moderators: Michael Lutter and Destiny Crowley



HOW TO CREATE A MIND

by Ray Kurzweil

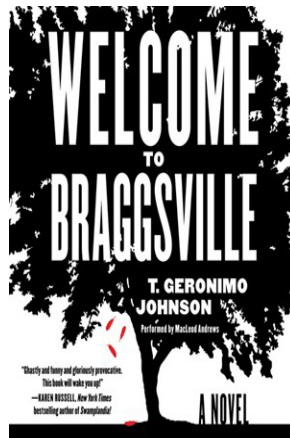
Wednesdays 4:30-5:20
CCD1 217
11 weeks

In *How to Create a Mind*, futurist and computer scientist Ray Kurzweil discusses how the mind emerges from the brain. Through this, he goes on to envision what this theory might predict for a future society.

Specifically, he discusses implications for emerging AI technologies and how this theory might be used to further develop the technology. As he looks on further into the future, he predicts the implications artificial intelligence has on the singularity—the idea that man will one day merge with machine. Despite the complexity of the subject matter, the book serves as a primer, so no background knowledge is required to understand it.

In the group, our discussions will focus on what conscience is, its implications on AI, the implications of AI on the real world, and the potential of the singularity.

Moderators: Chase Green, Colin Riggert, and Collin McLeod



WELCOME TO BRAGGSVILLE

by T. Geronimo
Johnson

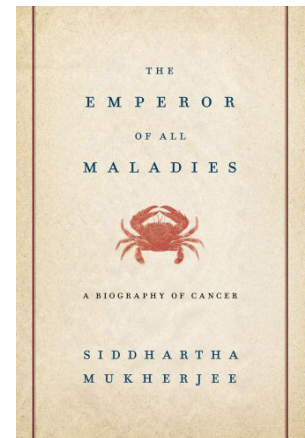
Wednesdays 2:30-3:20
CCD1 217
7 weeks

From the NYT Book Review, “A literary coming-of-age novel for a new generation, *Welcome to Braggsville* reminds us of the promise and perils of youthful exuberance, while painting an indelible portrait of contemporary America.”

Four University of Berkeley (Berkeley) students become friends. There is D’aron, the bright, naive kid from rural Georgia; blonde Candice, part Native American from Iowa; Louis Chang, the Malaysian-American student from California who wants to be a stand-up comedian; and Charlie, the introspective African-American student from Chicago.

Mix up race, class, sex, gender and season with the academic patois slung around in gen ed classes and watch the brew begin to bubble. There is plenty in this book to offend just about everyone and also exquisitely written passages capturing our collective humanity.

Moderator: Prof. Nancy Mergler

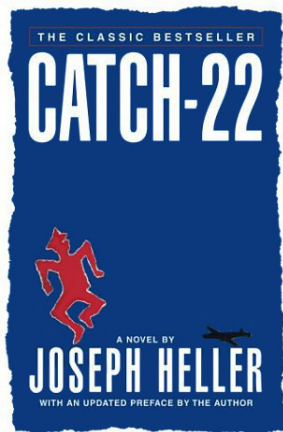


THE EMPEROR OF ALL MALADIES: A Biography of Cancer

Wednesdays 1:30-2:20
CCD1 217
10 weeks

From races for the cure to the bedside of a sick loved one or a personal battle, cancer impacts all of our lives. Yet despite cancer’s ubiquity, we often struggle to understand it. We are familiar with the destruction and emotional trauma that it causes, but cancer cannot be reduced to any single cause, physiology, or treatment. Instead, as Siddhartha Mukherjee’s work explores, cancer is really a collection of diseases that humanity has conceptualized in different ways throughout our long-standing struggle against it. This Pulitzer Prize-winning book explores how we have grappled with cancer over the centuries. With the expertise of a trained oncologist and the knack of a natural storyteller, Mukherjee takes his readers on a thrilling ride from the ideas of ancient Egyptian doctors to the labs of modern cancer researchers. As the historical narrative unfolds to demystify and humanize the disease, *The Emperor of All Maladies* emphasizes the resilience of the human spirit.

Moderators: Claire Winfrey and Elise Gordon



CATCH-22
by Joseph Heller

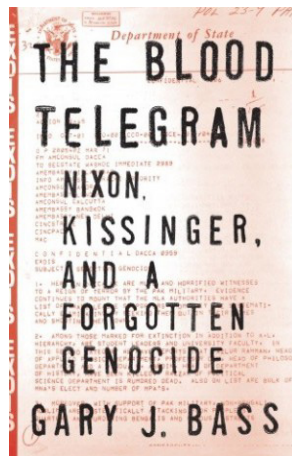
Thursdays 3:00-3:50
CCD1 201
10 weeks

Published in 1961, *Catch-22* was both a novel and a form of therapy for Joseph Heller after his service in WWII.

Interweaving hilarity, absurdity, and profound melancholy, the novel follows the exploits of Yossarian, an Allied fighter pilot during WWII who discovers the infamous Catch-22: to be sent home he must be insane, but asking to be sent home is something only a sane man would do. Aside from adding its title to the American lexicon, the novel uses its circular and repetitive prose to examine PTSD, treatment of veterans, and the point of war, gathering a cult following among the anti-war protestors of the 1960s.

Catch-22 is an American classic, conveying Heller's disillusionment, exasperation, and trauma through unceasingly logical irrationality and dry wit.

Moderators: Daniel Holland and Ben Kannenberg



THE BLOOD TELEGRAM
by Gary J. Bass

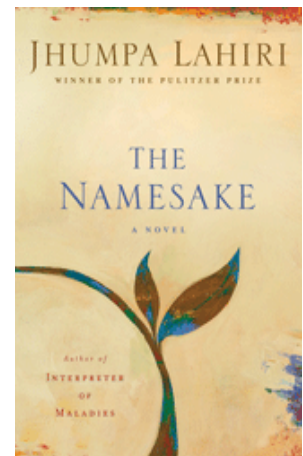
Fridays 11:30-12:20
DLBH 182
11 weeks

Henry Kissinger and Richard Nixon's foreign policy is the subject of much debate and controversy for its effectiveness and morality.

The *Blood Telegram* offers an account of this foreign policy team through the events of the 1971 Bangladesh Independence War and by doing so exposes the moral, historical, and political debates over foreign policy and governance in vivid clarity. This Pulitzer Prize-nominated book touches on key issues that are as old as history, yet remain intensely relevant today, by analyzing the actions of human beings as they respond to the realities of governance, power, life and death.

Whether you're passionate about these topics or are just looking for a historical look at modern American diplomacy, this is the book for you.

Moderators: Adam Brobson, Travis Donohue, and Julianna Pianelli



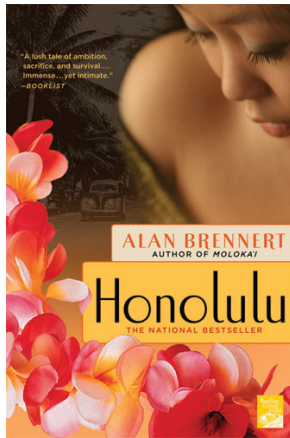
THE NAMESAKE
by Jhumpa Lahiri

Wednesdays 6:00-6:50
DLBH 182
8 weeks

The Namesake is a poignant novel that recounts the story of Bengali immigrants and their son's struggle to reconcile his Indian heritage with his American identity.

With her simple prose but rich descriptions of Bengali traditions, Lahiri delivers a nuanced account of the immigrant experience that will resonate greatly with second generation immigrants or anyone who has ever wished to reinvent themselves out of fear that they may not belong.

Moderators: Ankitha Gangarapu and Joanne Lee



HONOLULU

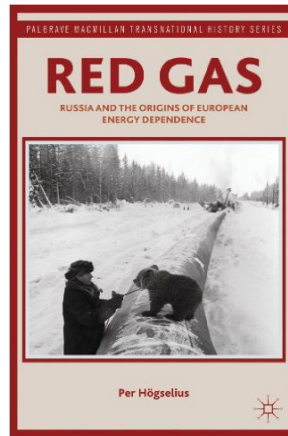
by Alan Brennert

Mondays 12:30-1:20
DLBH 180
10 weeks

Honolulu is a unique piece of historical fiction that takes readers to early 20th century Hawaii with Jin, a young Korean picture bride. Readers explore the suffering of the Korean people under Japanese occupation, gender and race relations in early 20th century Hawaii, and the complexities of the Asian American immigrant experience. *Honolulu* combines well-researched historical detail with engaging drama, which is sure to please lovers of both fiction and nonfiction.

We will cover a number of social issues through the lens of Jin's adventures. Each session will feature lively discussion of timely issues covered in the novel, including the ethics of prostitution, race relations in the justice system, and domestic violence.

Moderator: Amy Freeman



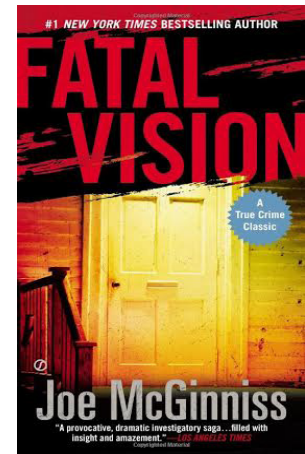
RED GAS: Russia and the Origins of European Energy Dependence

Fridays 2:00-2:50
DLBH 182
4 weeks

Russian gas exports have come to decisively influence EU-Russia relations, and there is nowadays hardly any aspect of these relations that can be discussed without, directly or indirectly, taking into account natural gas. But despite the central importance of Russian natural gas exports in present-day European and Russian affairs, little attention has been paid to the political and economic decisions that—starting in the late 1960s—paved the way for large-scale imports of Russian gas.

Applying a systems and risk perspective on international energy relations, author Per Högselius investigates how and why governments, businesses, engineers and other actors sought to promote and oppose the establishment of an extensive East-West natural gas regime that seemed to overthrow the fundamental logic of the Cold War.

Moderator: Prof. Robert Lifset



FATAL VISION

A True-Crime Classic

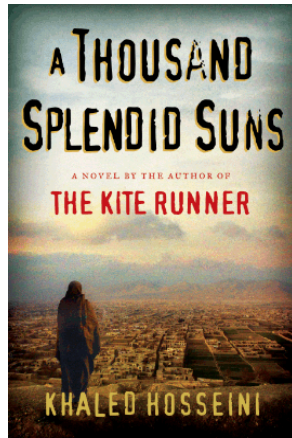
Wednesdays 5:00-5:50
DLBH 182
12 weeks

"Kill the pigs! Acid is groovy!" On the night of February 17, 1970, a roaming cult of drug-addled hippies broke into the MacDonald residence and murdered the pregnant woman and two children within... that is, if you believe Jeffrey MacDonald—the only one at the crime scene inexplicably left alive.

Fatal Vision follows MacDonald, a Princeton-educated officer of the Green Berets, as he is named the primary suspect in this dysfunctional, high-profile, decade-spanning investigation. Author Joe McGinniss, given complete access to MacDonald and his legal defense team under the guise of writing a puff piece, instead constructs his own indictment, (arguably) eschewing journalistic integrity in the process.

Fans of *In Cold Blood*, *Serial*, or the HBO series *The Jinx* will find either a victim or a villain in MacDonald. Charming and kind, abrasive and cold—does Jeff MacDonald fit the description of a man who is capable of committing such a grisly crime?

Moderator: Dylan Juby



**A THOUSAND
SPLENDID SUNS**
by Khaled Hosseini

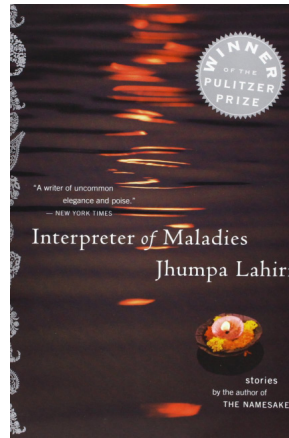
Tuesdays 5:00-5:50
DLBH 182
7 weeks

Many people have read Khaled Hosseini's novel *The Kite Runner*, but probably not as many have read his second novel, *A Thousand Splendid Suns*.

This book follows the lives and the friendship of two women, Mariam and Laila, in early 21st century Afghanistan and illustrates the hardships they must face as the Taliban rises to power. Faced with the loss of their families, Mariam and Laila are both forced to wed a cruel man for their survival. Time and time again, they must choose between the violence within their home due to their abusive husband, or the violence outside caused by the Taliban.

Students will gain a better understanding of the struggle for autonomy women still have in modern Afghanistan by reading this beautifully-written, yet terribly sad, novel.

Moderators: Cait Walsh and Victoria Bergman



**INTERPRETER OF
MALADIES**
by Jhumpa Lahiri

Tuesdays 5:00-5:50
CCD1 217
8 weeks

Interpreter of Maladies is a collection of nine stories about the lives of Indians and Indian American individuals. Jhumpa Lahiri, the author of this eloquent collection, won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 2000. Although *Interpreter of Maladies* was published more than fifteen years ago, it continues to prove relevant today as a result of each story's powerful theme, whether it be immigration or loss.

Lahiri demonstrates her truly exceptional skill through her ability to subtly reveal each character's deepest emotions, desires, and motivations. Each reader is able to relate to at least one of her amazing stories, and they will undoubtedly come away having learned more about Indian culture, immigration, loss, and most importantly, themselves.

Moderators: Holly Holmaas and Margaret Clark



CITIZEN:
An American Lyric
by Claudia Rankine

Mondays 5:00-5:50
DLBH 182
8 weeks

This group will read and discuss *Citizen*, a New York Times Notable Book of 2015. Written by poet Claudia Rankine, this volume includes poetry, prose poems, scripts, and artwork that document Rankine's experiences as an African American woman. The book covers such topics as microaggressions, police violence, racial stereotyping, and the everyday racism that Rankine experiences.

Because I am not an expert on poetry, the group will work together to mine meaning from Rankine's work, and to discuss who counts as an American citizen. The discussions will be participant-driven, and if there is enough interest, we may continue the group, reading a text that the participants select.

Moderator: Prof. Julia Ehrhardt



**EMMA,
LITTLE WOMEN,
and
WE HAVE ALWAYS LIVED IN THE
CASTLE**

*Mondays 5:30-6:20
CCD1 217
12 weeks*

These three novels explore similar subjects with their own distinct nuances. The authors scrutinize the development to maturity of six total female protagonists and the ways in which environments affect progress and perception.

Jane Austen alleges Emma is a "heroine whom no one but myself will much like," and her claim in a lot of ways rings true: Emma is spoiled, headstrong, and self-satisfied. At the same time, her stubbornness and vanity predicate her memorableness and complexity.

Little Women features four sisters and their diverging quests and romances. Each sister must balance filial duty with her own personal growth.

Finally, *We Have Always Lived in the Castle* follows the story of 18-year-old Merricat as she learns more about her family history filled with mystery, death, and obscurity. Her family functions as the "other" in her small town, dealing with persecution and isolation. The novel explores concepts of love, devotion, identity, and otherness.

Moderators: Amanda Ahadzadeh and Alice Barrett



**THE CURIOUS INCIDENT OF THE
DOG IN THE NIGHT-TIME
and
THE REASON I JUMP**

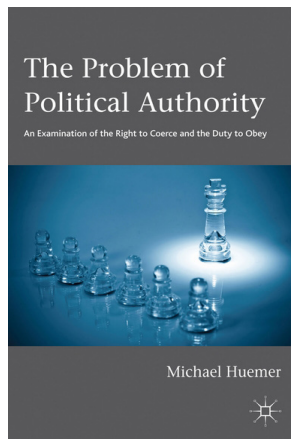
*Mondays 2:00-2:50
CCD1 201
8 weeks*

Time and time again, we have seen children with autism overcome incredible obstacles to achieve their dreams. We see articles titled "Autistic child shines as piano prodigy" and "Miss Montana: autism doesn't define me," but very few of us really know what people on the autism spectrum go through on a daily basis.

In the novels *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* and *The Reason I Jump*, we follow first-hand accounts of how children with autism interact with the world around them. Haddon writes as Christopher Boone, a "mathematician with some behavioral difficulties" who embarks on an unlikely adventure when he becomes engrossed in the murder of the neighborhood dog, while Higashida recounts his own feelings and experiences as a young boy with autism growing up in Japan.

As we analyze the issues associated with unreliable translators and societal stigmas, we seek to learn more about the vastly misunderstood mind of the autistic child.

Moderators: Justin Armer and Alec Armer



THE PROBLEM WITH POLITICAL AUTHORITY

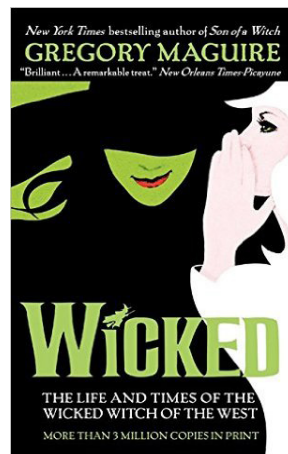
by Michael Huemer

Mondays 1:00-1:50
CCD1 101
14 weeks

On what basis is a governing state justified? Why should citizens obey its commands? In *The Problem of Political Authority*, philosophy professor Michael Huemer approaches these problems analytically and attacks the notion that a state could ever be justified. Appealing to commonly-held moral intuitions, the author makes a case for philosophical anarchism and outlines one possible model for a stateless society.

This book group will seek to critically evaluate Huemer's arguments and more broadly explore relevant topics within anarchism. Anyone interested in exploring politics outside of the conventional left/right spectrum should be interested in this discussion. Handouts will be provided.

Moderators: Cooper Williams and Wade Craig



WICKED: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West

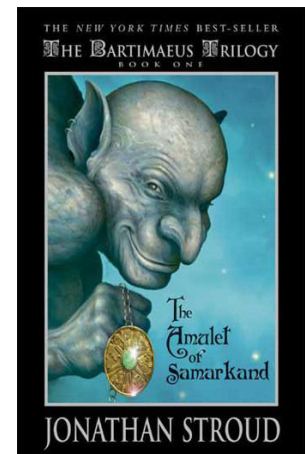
by Gregory Maguire

Thursdays 5:30-6:20
CCD1 217
5 weeks

Many are familiar with the popular, award-winning Broadway musical *Wicked*, but the book spins a darker retelling of Oz. *Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West* by Gregory Maguire is a political, social, and ethical commentary on the nature of good and evil that takes place in the undiscovered Land of Oz prior to Dorothy's unexpected arrival. The author creates a land where animals talk and strive to be treated like first-class citizens, Munchkinlanders seek the comfort of middle-class stability, and the Tin Man becomes a victim of domestic violence. And then there is the little green-skinned girl named Elphaba, who will grow up to become the infamous Wicked Witch of the West.

Wicked offers us a radical new evaluation of one of the most feared and hated characters in all of literature. As it turns out, she wasn't nearly as Wicked as we imagined.

Moderator: Tanya Miller



THE AMULET OF SAMARKAND

by Jonathan Stroud

Mondays 4:30-5:20
CCD1 217
10 weeks

Jonathan Stroud, a native of Bedford, England, was proclaimed a "genius" by the famous youth author Rick Riordan. When reading his book *The Amulet of Samarkand* it becomes apparent why. In his most prominent and bestselling work, Stroud masterfully builds an alternate modern day London infused with magic, deceit, sarcastic footnotes, and strange politics. Nathaniel is apprentice to a mediocre magician who is too blinded by shame and selfishness to notice his underling's great potential. Nathaniel, realizing his master's inability to help him achieve his goals, takes matters into his own hands. Summoning a fairly potent and sarcastic-beyond-compare djinni known as Bartimaeus, Nathaniel launches himself into the treacherous world of London's upper echelon of magicians and the spirits who serve them. Adventure, danger, and the biggest threat to safety London has ever known face Nathaniel and Bartimaeus in this exciting, magical ride.

Moderators: Matthew Carman and Patrick Lockwood



H IS FOR HAWK
by Helen Macdonald
and
MEN WE REAPED
by Jesmyn Ward

Mondays 10:00-10:50
CCD1 201
12 weeks

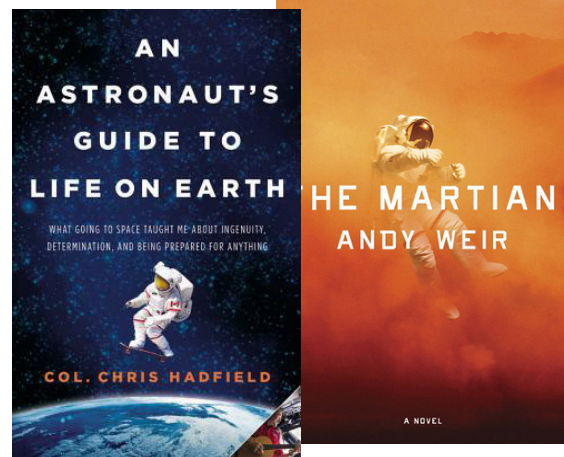
These are two critically acclaimed memoirs written by women from very different backgrounds. Both, however, explore loss and how people move beyond it.

Men We Reaped is written by Jesmyn Ward, an up-and-coming author in both fiction and non-fiction. In her memoir, she explores the deaths of five men in her life—all of them young black men growing up in the American South. This book is a way to honor their memories and reflect on her past in rural Mississippi.

H is for Hawk, an American best-seller, explores the story of British author Helen Macdonald after she suddenly lost her father. As a way to cope, Macdonald tries to train a goshawk, one of the fiercest birds of prey. Although she started training the hawk to move past her grief, she starts to see herself in the wild bird. These two distinct stories have both resonated with large audiences around the world.

Stephanie will be co-moderating via Skype while she studies abroad in Gulu, Uganda.

Moderators: Stephanie Allred and Kate Bergum



**AN ASTRONAUT'S GUIDE TO
LIFE ON EARTH**
and
THE MARTIAN

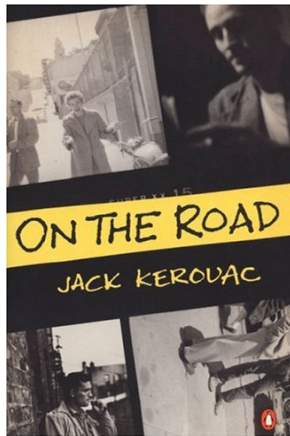
Thursdays 1:30-2:20
CCD1 101
14 weeks

Chris Hadfield takes a look at life from the vantage point of outer space. This book is just as much of a “guide to life on earth” as much as it is as a guide to life in space. By giving in-depth tours of the International Space Station and recounting tales of his time as the first Canadian commander, Hadfield turns “self-help” books upside down by giving life advice from an astronaut’s perspective. Hadfield shows how some of the smallest things in life – the things we can control – can sometimes be the most important, while emphasizing that the end goal is not always the most important. Hadfield’s book gives a fresh look at the new possibilities out on the last frontier.

The Martian by Andy Weir is an incredible look into the future of space travel and its limitless possibilities. The story focuses around a lone astronaut stranded on Mars, who must rely on science, history, and his gut instincts to get back to Earth. Weir’s incredibly accurate portrayal of the space technology and Martian geography, as well as the math and science behind it, bring this story to life and take it from fantasy to reality.

After this group's conclusion, come join us for a screening of the movie interpretation of *The Martian*.

Moderators: Emily Ratliff and William Ratliff



ON THE ROAD

by Jack Kerouac

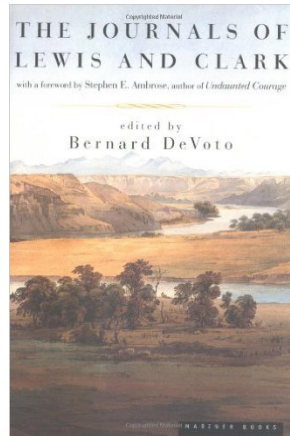
Thursdays 4:30-5:20
CCD1 217
7 weeks

On the Road is not only Jack Kerouac's most famous novel, it is one of the most important works of the Beat Generation literary canon, a collection that defined post-World War II counterculture in the United States.

This quasi-autobiographical travelogue follows the story of Sal Paradise (Kerouac) as he crisscrosses the U.S. and Mexico, weaving in and out of the lives of fellow Beats such as Dean Moriarty (Neal Cassady), Carlo Marx (Allen Ginsberg), and Old Bull Lee (William S. Burroughs).

No other book embodies their hedonistic attitudes toward life as famously as *On the Road*. Sal's adventures are part of a search for satisfaction and belonging that helped define what it meant to be a Beat.

Moderator: Jacob Waugh



THE JOURNALS OF LEWIS AND CLARK

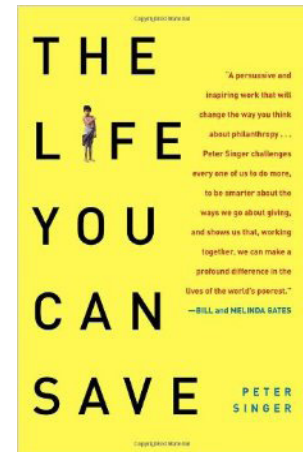
Thursdays 2:30-3:20
CCD1 217
12 weeks

Take a journey up the Missouri and out to the Pacific Coast with the most famous explorers in the United States' history. *The Journals of Lewis and Clark* recounts the famous exploration of the Louisiana Territory and the search for a Northwest Passage through the original daily logs of the famous duo.

Anthony Brandt has edited the journals into a compelling narrative, highlighting the bitter struggles the party faced against the harsh elements and rugged landscape of western North America along with the many encounters the expedition experienced with the native peoples and wildlife of the region.

The Journals of Lewis and Clark is a national treasure and an absolute must-read for any US history buff.

Moderators: Elijah Stafford and Harrison Morrow



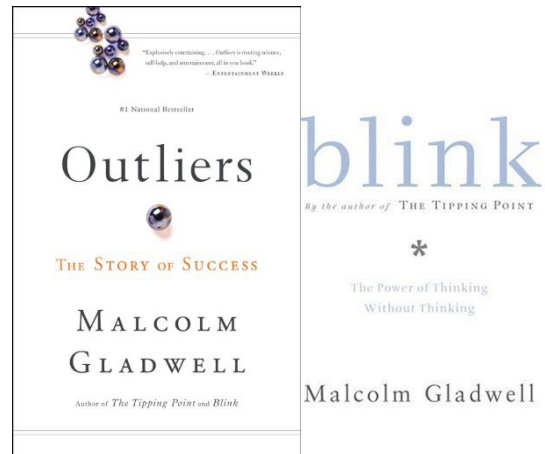
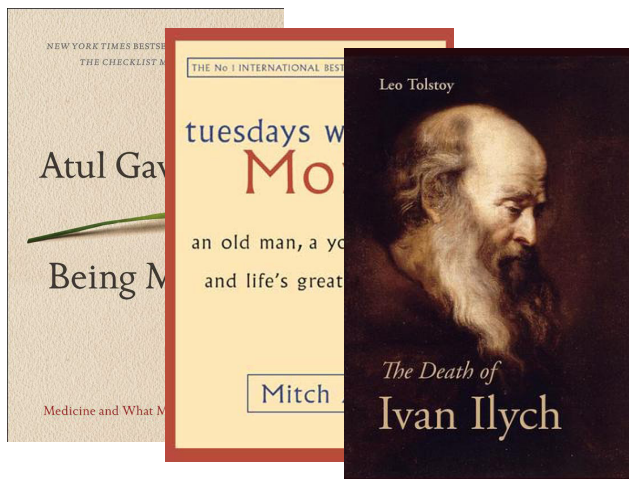
THE LIFE YOU CAN SAVE: How to Do Your Part to End World Poverty

by Peter Singer

Thursdays 10:30-11:20
CCD1 217
5 weeks

For the first time in history, eradicating world poverty is within our reach. Yet around the world, a billion people struggle to live each day on less than many of us pay for bottled water. In *The Life You Can Save*, Peter Singer shows that our current response to world poverty is not only insufficient, but morally indefensible. Part plea, part manifesto, part handbook, it sets out to answer two difficult questions: why people should donate money to fight global poverty and how much each should give. Singer dismantles the justifications people make for not giving and highlights the successes of such efforts as microfinance in Bangladesh, GiveWell's charitable giving and the 50% League, where members donate more than half their wealth. Singer pulls no punches in his arguments, resulting in a compelling, controversial book that consistently inspires high levels of debate, discussion, and self-reflection.

Moderator: Jaci Gandenberger



**THE DEATH OF IVAN ILYCH,
TUESDAYS WITH MORRIE,
and
BEING MORTAL**

Tuesdays 4:30-5:20
CCD1 101
10 weeks

Whether you aspire to work in healthcare, have family and friends, or are human, death is relevant. Our mortality may be difficult to conceptualize and discuss, but literature provides a route for its exploration. This group aims to better comprehend death and dying so that we may take better care of our dying loved ones, grieving friends, future patients, and finite lives.

Reviewers have hailed *The Death of Ivan Ilych* as “one of the world’s supreme masterpieces on the subject of death and dying.” Tolstoy puts readers in the mind of a dying man reflecting on life while disturbed by the pain of terminal illness.

“Full of eye-opening research and riveting storytelling,” Gawande’s *Being Mortal* argues that medicine must cease to “counter the interests of the human spirit” and examines solutions.

Albom’s *Tuesdays with Morrie* offers lessons from a dying professor, powerful because “you’re not only taking in his wisdom, you are experiencing his death.”

While each literary account and each participant hold a unique perspective of death, we hope this group will support discussion of the universality of human mortality and how to live with it.

Moderators: Jordan Larsen and Hannah Grip

**OUTLIERS
and
BLINK**
 by Malcolm Gladwell

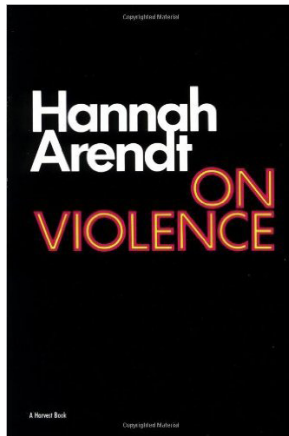
Mondays 6:00-6:50
DLBH 182
12 weeks

What sets those who achieve excellence and success (Steve Jobs, Bill Gates, Robert Oppenheimer, to name a few) apart from the general population? Is it IQ, education, social ranking, eccentricity or timing and luck that position them to reach the pinnacle?

Malcom Gladwell refers to these over-achievers as "Outliers," those truly exceptional individuals who are in their field of expertise so superior that they define their own category of success.

In response to recommendations by students and the Honors College Board of Visitors Chair (a top ten Oklahoma "Super Lawyer," international "Litigation Star," and engineer), this group will decode the outlier's success formula to discover what exactly are the true origins of these topmost achievers. A hint: social behavior, family background, intellect, and aptitude may (or may not) guarantee one's success.

Moderators: Lisa Tucker and Alena Buczkowski

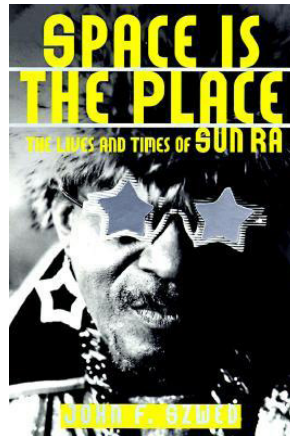


ON VIOLENCE
by Hannah Arendt

Mondays 12:30-1:20
CCD1 217
7 weeks

Hannah Arendt escaped from Nazi Germany and fled to the United States, where she became one of the most thought-provoking political philosophers of the 20th century with works such as *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*, and *On Revolution*. The year 1968 was notable for both protest and political violence: battles lost, civilians massacred, and over 16,000 American soldiers killed in Vietnam; student-led protests almost toppling the government of France; others attempting to disrupt the Democratic National Convention in Chicago; a civilian uprising in Czechoslovakia crushed by Soviet tanks; and the assassinations of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy. In early 1969 Hannah Arendt published a notable political essay, "On Violence" (later published as a book), interrogating the nature and limits of political violence. Arendt's insights continue to help us understand violence and power (which, she suggests, is the opposite of violence) as we confront the violence of our own times.

Moderator: Prof. Charles Kenney

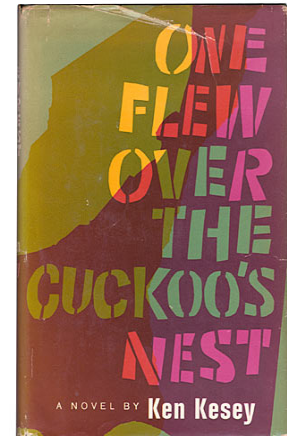


SPACE IS THE PLACE:
The Lives and Times of
Sun Ra

Wednesdays 3:00-3:50
CCD1 201
10 weeks

Space is the Place is author John Szwed's biography of Sun Ra (1914 - 1993), a jazz musician and band leader who recorded over 100 albums and played with musicians as varied as Pharaoh Sanders and MC5. It is a history of 20th century jazz, avant-garde music and art, American cities, and African-American culture. Beginning in the 1940s Sun Ra began telling people that aliens had taken him to the planet Saturn and encouraged him to use music to preach on a "cosmic stage". Sun Ra's music increasingly explored themes of space travel and afro-futurism. Born in Birmingham, Alabama he lived and played music with his "Arkestra" in Chicago, Philadelphia, and New York. In each city he was heavily involved in urban counterculture, and his life provides a fascinating perspective on the culture and politics of American cities during the 20th century. In addition to reading Sun Ra's biography this group will listen to Sun Ra's music and watch his film, *Space is the Place*.

Moderator: Prof. Daniel Mains



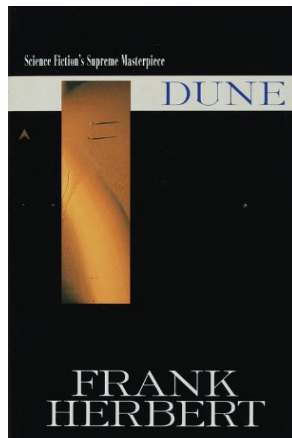
ONE FLEW OVER THE
CUCKOO'S NEST
by Ken Kesey

Thursdays 12:00-12:50
CCD1 101
7 weeks

One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest is the 1962 novel set in an Oregon psychiatric hospital. It examines the life of the patients and their relationships with each other and the staff. It offers an insight into the world of psychiatric treatment before deinstitutionalization and the many problems and difficulties that arose from the system of asylums and psychiatric hospitals.

As the topic of mental health care in the United States has once again become a hot topic, *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* paints a picture of a previous system that also failed, displaying important perspectives that aid readers in understanding mental health and the institutions surrounding it.

Moderator: Samantha Barclay



DUNE

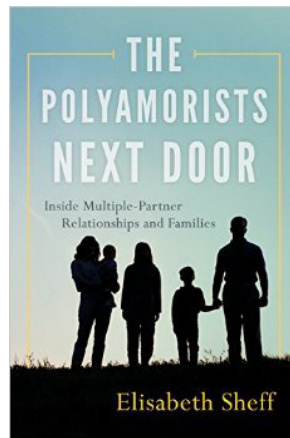
by Frank Herbert

Tuesdays 11:00-11:50
CCD1 217
9 weeks

Frank Herbert's *Dune*, frequently cited as the best-selling science fiction book of all time and winner of both the Nebula and Hugo Awards for Best Novel, is an exceptionally rich story that focuses on the social aspects and interactions between competing factions of people. Specifically, two Great Houses are both trying to control the desert planet of Dune in order to gain access to an incredibly rare substance supposed to lengthen the lives of those who consume it.

Between the hyper-arid and giant sandworm-infested deserts, the young Paul Atreides, a boy caught in the middle of the feud, must not only survive, but adapt and conquer.

Moderator: Gabriel Scott



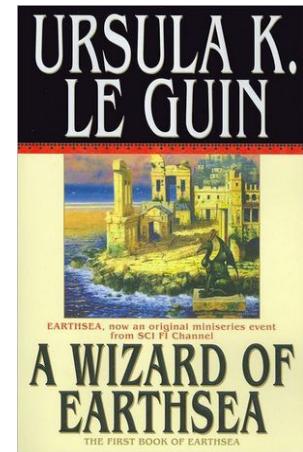
THE POLYAMORISTS NEXT DOOR: Inside Multiple-Partner Relationships and Families

Wednesdays 7:00-7:50
DLBH 182
8 weeks

Polyamory, or consensual non-exclusivity in romantic relationships, is a subculture in American society that has been misunderstood by a mainstream culture that promotes serial monogamy.

In The Polyamorists Next Door, Dr. Sheff presents the result of fifteen years of academic research on polyamorous relationships and families. From introductory definitions to anecdotes from people navigating polyamory, this book is a sociological study aimed at those interested in learning about the diverse ways people discard or reconstruct norms guiding romance, friendship, sex, emotional support, gender roles, and raising children.

Moderator: Lena Wilson



THE EARTHSEA CYCLE

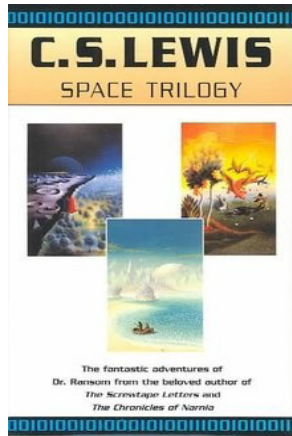
by Ursula K. Le Guin

Mondays 3:00-3:50
CCD1 201
10 weeks

Possibly Ursula K. Le Guin's most famous work, *The Earthsea Cycle* is an award-winning, movie-spawning fantasy classic that doubles as a biting social commentary of our own world. Le Guin draws on Taoist and feminist philosophy to weave a tightly plotted myth of self-discovery, and her incisive style makes for a highly accessible doorway to an archipelago where magic is commonplace and gods and demons watch over the lives of men.

The first three books of the cycle follow the wizard Ged as he struggles to overcome his past and save his future. Along the way, he learns that power can easily cause more problems than it solves. As a group, we will explore everything from Le Guin's style and use of mythic tropes to the continuing relevance of these books as studies of the nature of power, evil, and ultimately balance.

Moderators: Tuong-Phi Le and Kestrel St.Clair



THE SPACE TRILOGY

by C.S. Lewis

Tuesdays 3:00-3:50
CCD1 201
12 weeks

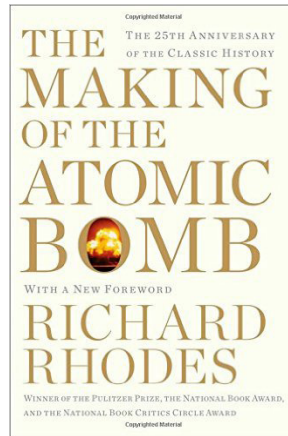
You knew C. S. Lewis wrote *The Chronicles of Narnia* and several influential Christian works, but did you know that he ventured into science fiction?

In *Out of the Silent Planet*, Dr. Ransom, the main character and a renowned philologist, is abducted and taken to a planet known by its natives as Malachandra. There, he must learn to understand an alien culture while avoiding the other humans on the planet who are trying to hunt him down.

Perelandra follows Dr. Ransom as he travels to Perelandra and faces a new evil on a new world.

That Hideous Strength concludes the adventures with Dr. Ransom in Thulcandra. In a world of superior alien beings and scientific experiments run amok, he struggles with questions of ethics and morality in his quest for truth.

Moderators: Jessica Hastings and Taylor Niznik



THE MAKING OF THE ATOMIC BOMB

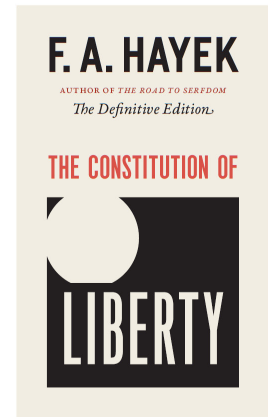
by Richard Rhodes

Mondays 4:00-4:50
CCD1 201
14 weeks

The Making of the Atomic Bomb is the seminal book on the history of the creation of the first nuclear weapon and its only use as an operational weapon on Hiroshima, 6 August 1945, and Nagasaki, 9 August 1945.

Richard Rhodes painstakingly describes what it was like to be a scientist at Los Alamos where the bomb was created, to witness the first atomic explosion at the Trinity site on 16 July 1945, and what it was like to survive—and die—when it was used in part to end World War II.

Moderator: Prof. Rich Hamerla



THE CONSTITUTION OF LIBERTY

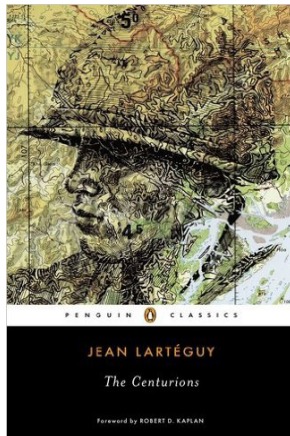
by F.A. Hayek

Fridays 1:00-1:50
DLBH 182
14 weeks

The Constitution of Liberty looms large as one of the greatest contributions to political thought in the 20th century. As one of Hayek's most significant works, it synthesizes much of his Nobel-prize winning research in economics and decades of philosophical thought into one volume. Despite many groups claiming his thought as their own, Hayek denied affiliation with any party, except that which promotes "free growth and spontaneous evolution" claiming he was "as different from true conservatism as socialism."

In this work he defends the ideal of freedom as a political value, worthwhile in itself as well as for its consequences. Hayek presents a case for a system in which individuals with differing values can live together in harmony without imposed order or ill-considered efforts at social engineering. Missing out on Hayek's insights would be a great loss for anyone interested in political values.

Moderators: Wade Craig and Cooper Williams



THE CENTURIONS

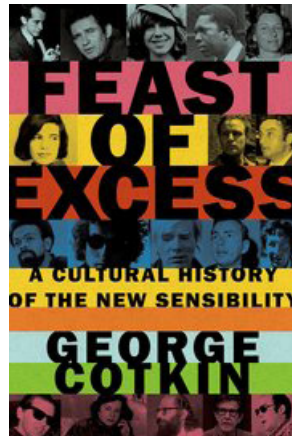
by Jean Lartéguy

Thursdays 1:30-2:20
CCD1 217
9 weeks

The Centurions follows several fictional French paratroopers in their captivity after the Battle of Dien Bien Phu, their repatriation to France, and finally their experiences in the Algerian War. The central theme of the book is how the French military must transform itself from a conventional army of the WWII era to an unconventional fighting force capable of fighting counter-insurgencies in the present day.

Though fictional, the book has been praised by Generals David Petraeus and Stanley McCrystal, who cite it as influencing their counter-insurgency (COIN) strategies in Afghanistan and Iraq. Originally published in 1960, *The Centurions* was written by Jean Lartéguy, a veteran of the WWII Free French Forces and subsequently a war correspondent in locations including Latin America (where he met Che Guevara), the Middle East, Algeria, and Indochina.

Moderator: Benjamin Acker



FEAST OF EXCESS

by George Cotkin

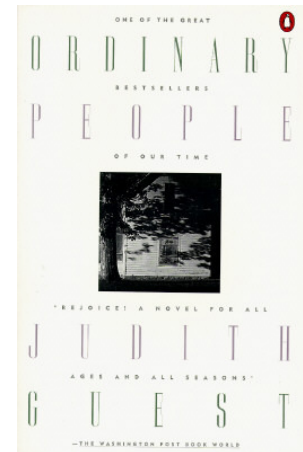
Tuesdays 3:30-4:20
CCD1 217
9 weeks

Feast of Excess is cultural historian George Cotkin's exploration of what he calls the New Sensibility, a transformation that took place in American culture during the second half the 20th century characterized by artists taking chances and going to extremes of both maximalism and minimalism.

The book explores more than twenty artists, writers, actors, and musicians who pushed the boundaries of culture, including Marlon Brando, Jerry Lee Lewis, Bob Dylan, Lenny Bruce, and Diane Arbus among many others.

My hope is that in this reading group we will explore the work of these artists as well as Cotkin's writing on them.

Moderator: Prof. Ben Alpers



ORDINARY PEOPLE

by Judith Guest

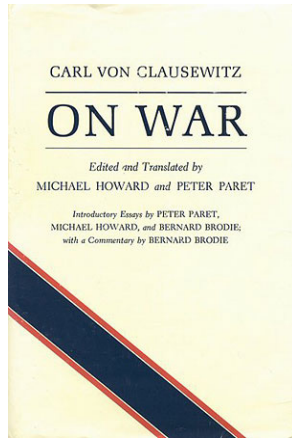
Tuesdays 12:00-12:50
CCD1 217
6 weeks

Originally intended to be written as a short story, Judith Guest's *Ordinary People* went on to win the Janet Heidinger Kafka Prize for best first novel by a new author, amongst other critical praise, and became the basis for the Academy Award winning film of the same name in 1980.

The novel centers on the Jarrett family as they struggle to return to ordinary life following the accidental death of the oldest son, Buck, and the attempted suicide of the younger Conrad. The three surviving Jarretts each attempt to cope with the aftermath of these events in very different ways.

Written in 1976, the novel continues to be relevant and is studied today by young adults for its moving depiction of human emotion and life after tragedy.

Moderator: Danielle Breedlove



ON WAR

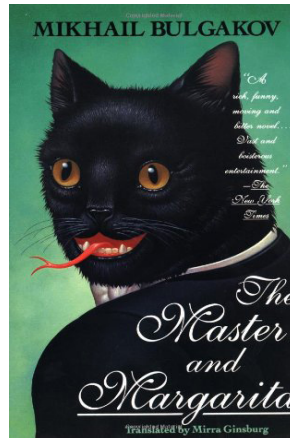
by Carl Von Clausewitz

Fridays 2:30-3:20
ROTC Armory 0021
9 weeks

On War is a core text for any study of modern warfare. The significance of this book lies not only in its influence of modern military doctrine, but also on its discussion of how war relates to the broader existence of the state and society. At a time when the line between war and peace is becoming increasingly blurred, it is more important than ever to understand what the purpose of war truly is and how that purpose affects the manner in which it is waged.

This book is a must-read for those who may be considering a career in the warfighting business, or for anyone interested in current affairs and the changing role of war in today's world.

Moderators: Adam Brobson and Travis Donohue



THE MASTER AND MARGARITA

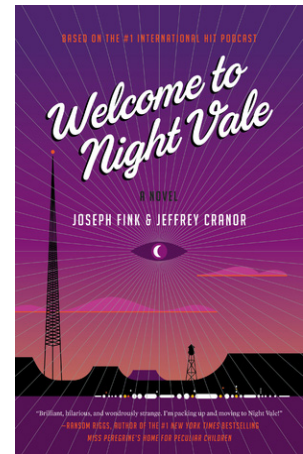
by Mikhail Bulgakov

Thursdays 5:00-5:50
DLBH 182
8 weeks

Called one of the best Soviet satires of the 20th century, Mikhail Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita* uses magical realism to explore the social structure of Soviet Russia as Satan and his crew wreak havoc in Moscow. Citizens are beheaded, turned to vampires, and sent to the mad house as Professor Woland prepares for his annual ball.

Bulgakov creates this light-hearted fictional story of chaos to satirically examine views about good and evil, courage and cowardice, and the power of true love. While entertaining, this novel also offers numerous insights and challenges to Soviet rule.

Moderator: Megan Gage



WELCOME TO NIGHT VALE

Mondays 3:30-4:20
CCD1 217
8 weeks

Located in #@!\$%()*? desert in the great American Southwest, Night Vale is a small town with a vague (yet menacing) government, homes that don't exist (but look like they should), and where all of the crazy conspiracy theories are parts of everyday life. Pawn shop owner Jackie Fierro is given a paper marked "KING CITY" by a mysterious man in a tan jacket holding a deer skin suitcase that no one can seem to remember. She is determined to uncover the mystery of King City and the man in the tan jacket before she...

Diane Crayton, single working mother, struggles to understand and communicate with her moody, shape-shifting, teenage son, Josh. As he begins to show more interest in his estranged father, Diane sees nothing but disaster ahead as she tries to protect her family. Diane's attempt to reconnect with her son and Jackie's desperation for her former routine life collide as they find themselves coming back to the words: "KING CITY".

Moderator: Hannah Harrell

Surprising Benefits of Informal Reading Groups at the OU Honors College

[Excerpts from a letter from Jordan Rogers, engineering major and Honors College alumnus]

I remember anticipating the reading group featuring *Other Colors* and commenting to a friend that I did not expect to enjoy myself. This was because of nothing more than the fact that I had, “no interest in Turkey, and no interest in literature.”

I soon found that I was completely in the wrong. As I engaged in the book as well as dialogue with a professor and with other students, especially the ones who had visited Turkey, I found myself thrilled and excited to learn more about Orhan Pamuk, Istanbul, the Ottoman Empire, and Turkey.

And then I understood what might be the most important lesson I’ve ever received: I AM interested in both Turkey and literature. This is something that I would have never anticipated for I have no personal connection or natural interest in either.

The implications of this discovery were astounding, for my lack of interest in Turkey was actually a presumed lack of interest, and it only took one book to prove otherwise.

But if this was true of Turkey and literature, what wouldn’t I find fascinating if I took the time to study? Suddenly, everything in the world was interesting. I was overwhelmed, but in a very positive way.

When I started the informal reading groups this semester I had to be very disciplined to finish the 50 pages required for both books each week.

Since my epiphany, if it can so be called, I have required myself to read 50 pages of any book every day. At first, this seemed like a chore, for my days were full already with school and clubs. But I pushed myself, and every day it seems less and less like a chore. I’m feeling now the daily desire to read, the feeling that I WANT to read, something I have never felt before.

You’ll be amazed to hear that I wake up about 90 minutes earlier now just so I can start the day right - with a book. By the time you read this I will have finished three books in as many weeks - all fiction classics.

I want to emphasize that the books we read and the discussions we had among the students were great... and I left feeling energized about reading. My definition of education has drastically morphed, and I now challenge myself to pursue lifelong learning.