

THE UNIVERSITY OF
OKLAHOMA
HONORS COLLEGE
**INFORMAL
READING GROUPS**
FALL 2017
SEMESTER



Table of Contents

Alanna: The First Adventure	24	Neutrino Hunters	6
The Alchemist	20	Norse Mythology	27
All the Light We Cannot See	26	The Old Man and the Sea	24
And the Mountains Echoed.....	11	Orange is the New Black: My Year in a Women's Prison	17
The Andromeda Strain.....	14	Oryx and Crake	19
Annie on My Mind	16	Playing to the Edge: American Intelligence in the Age of Terror	7
Big Little Lies	22	The Poisonwood Bible.....	10
Born a Crime.....	7, 21	Revolution for Dummies: Laughing Through the Arab Spring.....	12
The Catcher in the Rye.....	14	The Righteous Mind: Why Good People Are Divided by Politics and Religion	15
The Color of Law.....	10	Seconds	8
The Death and Life of Great American Cities ..	19	Shrinks: The Untold Story of Psychiatry.....	20
The Death of Expertise	5	The Swerve.....	18
The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test	22	The Song of Achilles.....	16
The End of Days.....	26	The Tipping Point	8
A Farewell to Arms	24	A Tree Grows in Brooklyn.....	13
Ficciones	23	The Unbearable Lightness of Being.....	25
First Test	24	Understanding Comics	8
The Foundation Trilogy	11	Valley of the Dolls	21
The Glass Castle	9	The Vanishing American Corporation.....	6
The Great Convergence.....	9	When Breath Becomes Air.....	12
The Handmaid's Tale	27	Word by Word.....	17
If on a Winter's Night a Traveler.....	23		
In the Long Run We Are All Dead	5		
The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks	15		
The Invention of Russia: From Gorbachev's Freedom to Putin's War	25		
The Misadventures of Cameron Post.....	16		
Misery	13		
Monstrous Regiment	23		
Moral Politics: How Liberals and Conservatives Think	15		
Mountains Beyond Mountains.....	18		
The Nature of Things	18		



To sign up for a group, visit bit.ly/OUReadingGroups or scan the QR code.

All books will be distributed at the first meeting during the week of Aug 28-Sept 1.

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Frequently Asked Questions

How do I sign up for a group?

Please visit bit.ly/OUReadingGroups or scan the QR code on page 2 to access the online sign-up form. Everybody from OU (students, faculty, staff) is welcome to sign up. Participants will be limited to three groups each.

When/how do I pick up my book?

Books will be distributed at the first meeting. **Groups start the second week of classes (August 28-September 1).** Meeting days/times can be found in this catalog. If you are unable to attend the first meeting but would still like to participate in future meetings, please notify the group's moderator.

I signed up for a reading group, but my scheduled changed, and I can no longer attend the group. What do I do?

That's fine! We understand that academics come first. To cancel your order, email honorsreading@ou.edu and let us know that you will not be able to attend your group meetings. Please give us your name, student ID number, and the names of the group(s) you will no longer be able to attend.

So this really is free, huh?

Sure is! The only thing we ask from you is that you **make a good-faith effort to attend as many meetings as possible**, with the understanding that you may have to miss one or two. If you have to miss a meeting, please notify your moderator.

About the Program

Each semester, the Honors College sponsors the Reading Groups program. The groups, composed of ten to fifteen participants and a moderator from Honors College faculty, staff, or student body, meet one hour per week to discuss about fifty pages of reading from specific books. The books cover a wide range of topics, and most have been recommended by Honors College students. This is a great chance to meet other people at the University of Oklahoma with similar interests.

As one of the most popular, rewarding, and innovative programs offered by the Honors College, the Informal

Reading Groups program has its origins in the political science department, where over a decade ago, students and faculty began to meet to discuss a single book over the course of a semester. Beginning in 2009, the groups were organized and expanded by the Honors College and were open to all Honors College students. Generous donations from supporters of the Honors College have allowed the program to grow to forty groups during the fall 2015 semester. Starting in 2016, for the first time, the program includes the entire OU family, not just Honors College students.

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Auston Stiefer
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Evan Whitaker
Landon Wright
Katy Yut
Wesley Zhang

Letter to the Editor

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.

“ I’m feeling now the daily desire to read, the feeling that I *want* to read, something I have never felt before.

— Jordan Rogers

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 fifty pages required for both books each week.

Since my epiphany, if it can so be called, I have required myself to read fifty 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 ninety 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.

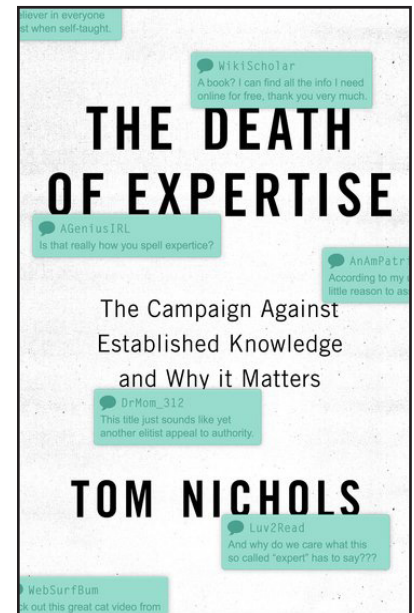
I want to emphasize that the books we read and the discussions we had among the students were great... and I left feeling energized about reading. My definition of education has drastically morphed, and I now challenge myself to pursue lifelong learning.

Jordan Rogers
engineering major and Honors College alumnus

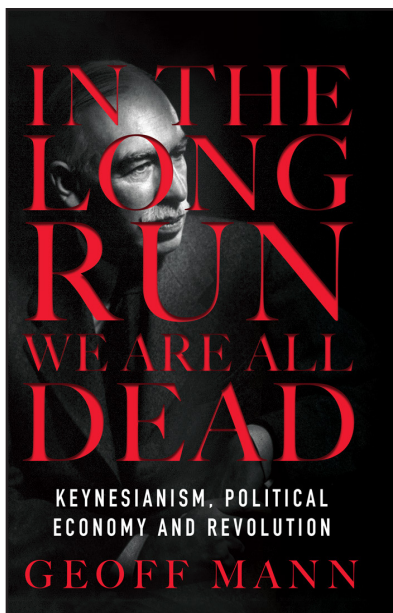


The Death of Expertise by Tom Nichols

Written by a professor of National Security Affairs at the US Naval War College, this book argues that the anti-intellectual strain in American culture first described by Richard Hofstadter has expanded enormously. One reviewer notes that “while the internet has allowed more people more access to more information than ever before, it has also given them the illusion of knowledge when in fact they are drowning in data and cherry-picking what they choose to read.” Given an inexhaustible buffet of facts, rumors, lies, serious analysis, crackpot speculation and outright propaganda to browse online, it becomes easy for one to succumb to “confirmation bias” — the tendency, as the author puts it, “to look for information that only confirms what we believe, to accept facts that only strengthen our preferred explanations, and to dismiss data that challenge what we accept as truth.” Perhaps most interesting, this book argues that higher education in the US has contributed to the decline of respect for factual knowledge, by being too protective of students.



Meeting Time M 1:30-2:20
for 5 weeks
Location CCD1 217
Moderator(s): Prof. David Ray

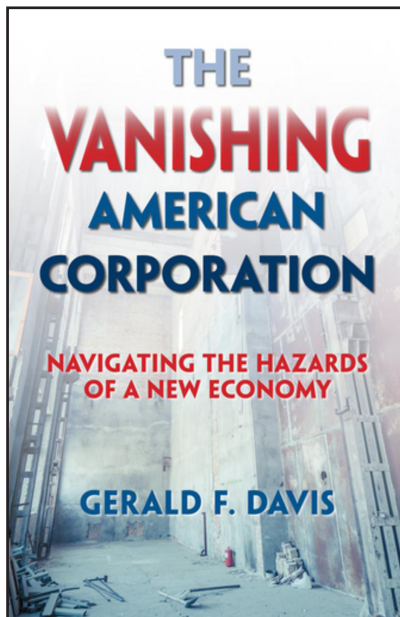


In the Long Run We Are All Dead by Geoff Mann

This new book is extremely important but also challenging. The author argues that there is an identifiable set of views about capitalist economies and appropriate government policy that can be called “Keynesianism.” Surprisingly, he argues that the British economist John Maynard Keynes was not the first Keynesian (meaning someone who advocated these views), nor was he the last, and asserts there will be more yet. The set of views is associated with Keynes only because he has presented them most clearly and in a time close to our own. The author associates these views with the beginning of classical liberalism and market capitalism, and traces it back to Hegel’s response to the French Revolution. The book includes a close reading of Keynes’ most important work, *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money* (1936). This group should be of special interest to those who have read Thomas Piketty’s major book, *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*. The author discusses Piketty as a Keynesian for our time, confronting the obvious problems of 21st century market capitalism: rapidly growing inequality and the increasing underemployment of the working and middle classes.

Meeting Time W 3:30-4:20
for 12 weeks
Location DLBH 182
Moderator(s): Prof. David Ray

Featured



The Vanishing American Corporation by Gerald Davis

It's hard to believe in an era of Walmart, *Citizens United*, and the Koch brothers, but corporations are on the decline. The number of American companies listed on the stock market dropped by half between 1996 and 2012. In recent years we've seen some of the most storied corporations go bankrupt (General Motors, Chrysler, Eastman Kodak) or disappear entirely (Bethlehem Steel, Lehman Brothers, Borders).

Gerald Davis argues this is a root cause of the income inequality and social instability we face today. Corporations were once an integral part of building the middle class. He points out that in their heyday they offered millions of people lifetime employment, a stable career path, health insurance, and retirement pensions. They were like small private welfare states. The businesses that are replacing them will not fill the same role. For one thing, they employ far fewer people—the combined global workforces of Facebook, Yelp, Zynga, LinkedIn, Zillow, Tableau, Zulily, and Box are smaller than the number of people who lost their jobs when Circuit City was liquidated in 2009. And in the “sharing economy,” companies have no obligation to most of the people who work for them.

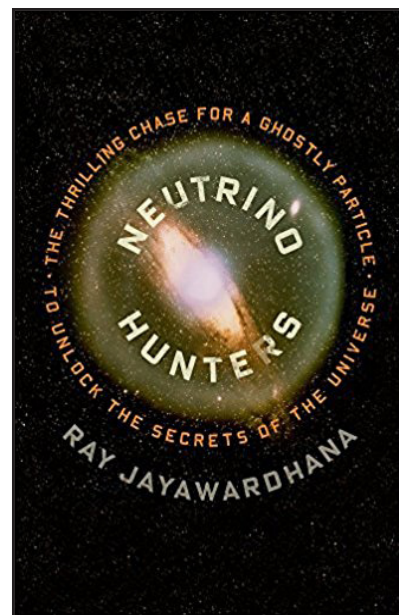
Davis tracks the rise of the large American corporation and the economic, social, and technological developments that have led to its decline. The future could see either increasing economic polarization, as careers turn into jobs and jobs turn into tasks, or a more democratic economy built from the grass roots.

Meeting Time **Location**
W 12:30-1:20 DLBH 182
for 4 weeks

Moderator(s):
Alex Nongard
and Prof. David Ray

Neutrino Hunters by Ray Jayawardhana

Described as “a riveting mix of science and biography,” this small book’s subtitle is “The Thrilling Chase for a Ghostly Particle To Unlock the Secrets of the Universe.” First glimpsed as a conceptual possibility by theoretical pioneers Pauli and Fermi, neutrinos are subatomic elementary particles that offer a window into supernovas and may help answer questions about antimatter, dark matter, dark energy, and the early universe. With no electric charge and very little mass, neutrinos seldom interact with matter, for the most part passing untouched through the Earth itself. Detection requires looking for particles created in the wake of the scant interactions that do occur. Scientists seeking to verify the neutrino’s existence are repeatedly forced to redesign their observational technology and realign their paradigmatic models. Written with brevity and clarity, this book allows non-experts to “get a fascinating glimpse inside the labs and through the telescopes of the scientists whose research on neutrinos has shattered some of the prevailing theories in cosmology, physics, and even geology.”

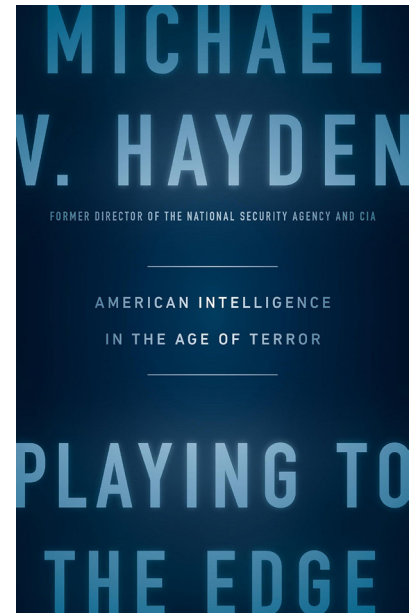


Meeting Time **Location**
M 3:30-4:20 DLBH 182
for 5 weeks

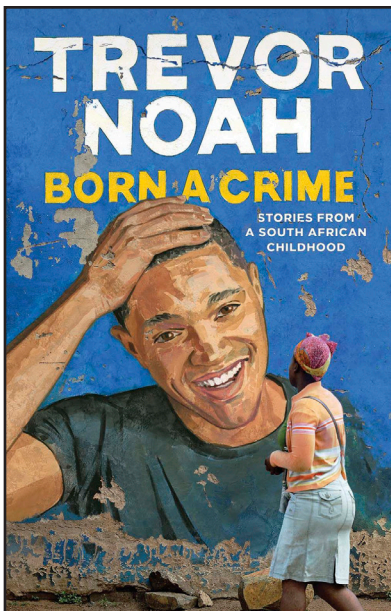
Moderator(s):
Prof. David Ray

Playing to the Edge by Michael Hayden

General Michael Hayden served as both director of the NSA (1999-2005) and CIA (2006-2009) during the Bush administration and was a key leader in American intelligence during the start of the War on Terror. Now retired, his new book *Playing to the Edge* explores in detail the development of U.S. intelligence community since 9/11, especially that of the NSA. His book covers his personal journey of growing up in working class Pittsburgh and rising to the rank of a four-star general in the Air Force but as well explains in detail the more technical aspects of the U.S. intelligence community's functions and operations. It tackles many of the controversial programs initiated under his tenure, including the widespread data collection programs by the NSA. The General accordingly gives his two-cents on the civil liberties-security debate surrounding the role of the intelligence community in American government and society. Hayden also provides his own criticisms and critiques of Bush and Obama era policies and their implications for American national security. *Playing to the Edge* is an excellent book for both those familiar with American foreign policy and intelligence as well as new-comers interested in learning about this sector of government. In addition, participants who make it to the end of this reading group will be treated to a screening of *Citizenfour*, the Oscar winning documentary exploring Edward Snowden's leaks. The documentary should prove to be an interesting counter-view to Hayden's book and serves as a great point for discussion.



Meeting Time M 5:00-5:50
for 8 weeks
Location CCD1 317
Moderator(s):
James Ratcliff
and Laura Trowbridge



Born a Crime by Trevor Noah

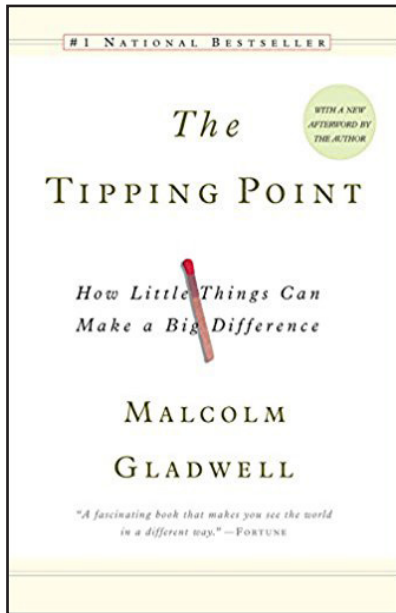
Trevor Noah, the new host of *The Daily Show*, has written a compelling, insightful, and often-funny memoir about his life growing up in South Africa. He weaves stories of his mother, his boyhood antics, and his education together with historical truths about apartheid-era South Africa. This book is ultimately a nuanced look at the final years of apartheid, told through the eyes of a perceptive, intelligent, and fearless young man. The hero of the story is Noah's mother, who suffered greatly at the hands of the apartheid state and her husbands.

Born a Crime has won numerous awards and critical acclaim, including by organizations such as the *New York Times* and NPR.

Meeting Time R 3:00-3:50
for 6 weeks
Location CCD1 317

Moderator(s):
Dr. Andreaana Prichard

Mondays



The Tipping Point by Malcolm Gladwell

People often fail to question conventional wisdom without proof because it appears so obviously true. However critical journalist Malcolm Gladwell, an author known for his outside-the-box way of thinking, use of extensive academic research, and unexpected application of sociology and psychology all delivered in an approachable, easy to understand style, confronts this in his debut book, *The Tipping Point*. Through a series of seemingly unrelated topics, Gladwell uncovers how conventional wisdom is often only reinforced by the guarantee of its acceptance, rather than its real merit, and shatters many unconsciously held beliefs by delving into examples deeply entrenched in our normal lives that contradict such concepts.

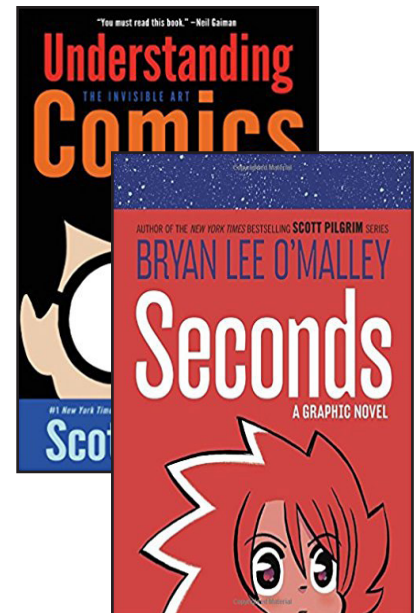
His use of the term ‘tipping point’ as the title refers to how the subjects covered in his book, ranging from anything as serious as city crime, suicide, and smoking, to topics as mundane as children television shows, favorite books, and even popular shoes, can change dramatically through the tiniest of influences. The ideas delivered in this book are challenging, counter intuitive, and often contradictory of the prevailing conventional wisdom we approach the world with, but will ultimately leave the reader with a true understanding of how little things can make a big difference.

Meeting Time Location
M 10:30-11:20 CCD1 217
for 10 weeks

Moderator(s):
Julianna Chen and Leanne Ho

Understanding Comics by Scott McCloud and Seconds by Bryan Lee O'Malley

In the last few decades the graphic novel has risen in consideration from pulp to high art and has gained its place as a standalone literary genre. Though many of us grew up with comics of one type or another, whether Sunday strips or superheroes, not many of us have taken the time to consider the meticulous planning and enormous work that goes into every panel. If you're interested in delving into the theory as well as the practice of the graphic novel, join us for a two part reading group that will do just that. First, we will read Scott McCloud's essential handbook, *Understanding Comics*, to gain a deeper understanding of the thought behind the speech bubbles. Then we will take a practical look at a recent best-seller, *Seconds*, by Bryan Lee O'Malley (creator of the Scott Pilgrim series) and use the tools we've learned to appreciate and interpret this as a long form example. Everyone--from full fledged comics nerds to newbies--is welcome to come and discover why and how the graphic novel made the leap from "fine for kids" to "fine art."



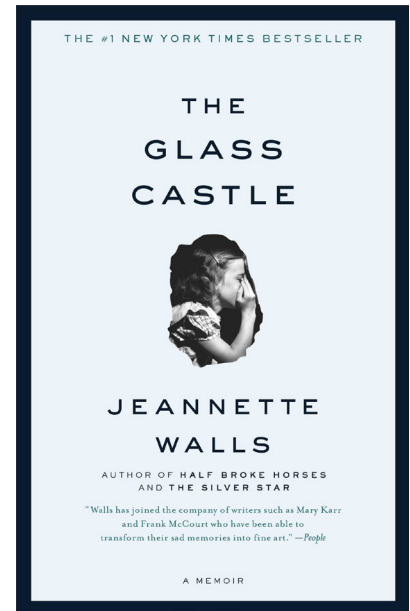
Meeting Time Location
M 3:00-3:50 CCD1 317
for 13 weeks

Moderator(s):
Linda Stack-Nelson
and Trayton Miller

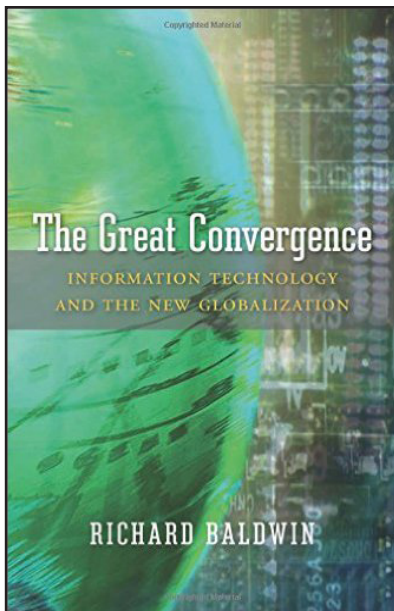
The Glass Castle by Jeannette Walls

The Glass Castle is an amusement park of human behavior with one woman having come of age while surviving a rickety emotional roller coaster ride-like childhood. An unbridled adventure in free-spirited living, Jeannette Walls bravely returns to her wild-hearted yet acutely troubled up-bringing in this well-written memoir. A now successful New York journalist, Walls battles the quashing truth of her erratic behaving parents' nomadic lifestyle and the toll it's taken on her [Walls] and her siblings. A highly intelligent father with talents of a skilled electrical engineer, Rex Walls is an alcohol dependent version of Peter Pan, refusing to conform to a [perceived] conspiratorial organized society and the all too restrictive responsibilities of fatherhood. Rebellious too is, Wall's college educated mother, Rose Mary, who digs in the dumpsters of New York City while being entirely comfortable with the bohemian artists lifestyle she's chosen to live; no doubt some would say at the expense of her children.

The Glass Castle is a study in ambivalence; in that we all have shame-cloaked skeletons in the closet that we're either running from or to in the attempt to make peace with where and who we come from. And, what, with great resilience, we've outlived to become the best possible version of ourselves – despite unconventional hardships otherwise disguised as another's thrilling adventure.



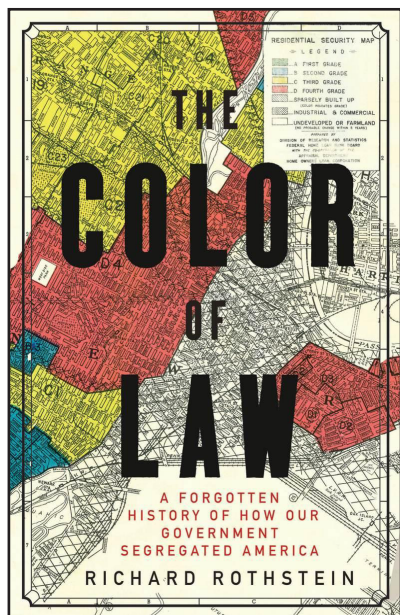
Meeting Time M 5:30-6:20
for 6 weeks
Location CCD1 217
Moderator(s):
Lisa Tucker



The Great Convergence by Richard Baldwin

To thrive in any political or economic discussion in 2017, a grasp of the concept of globalization is key. Get up to speed with international economics professor Richard Baldwin's book on just this subject. One of *The Economist's* 2016 books of the year, Richard Baldwin's *The Great Convergence: Information Technology and the New Globalization* discusses the recent changes in globalization made possible by technological advances. Where the first wave of globalization in the twentieth century saw competition between countries to manufacture whole products, decreased communication and transportation costs have wrought a second wave of globalization in which production processes are fragmented and supply chains are scattered around the world. Baldwin argues that this shift means that globalization's impact "is more sudden, more selective, more unpredictable, and more uncontrollable." Baldwin explores the historical developments of globalization, its current impacts, and potential future actions that both developed and developing countries can take to respond. We hope to lead this reading group from an economic and historical perspective, but will of course consider all discussion in the context of current events in politics and international public policy. Occasionally, articles from the *Wall Street Journal* or the *Financial Times* might be included as complements to the week's readings.

Meeting Time M 10:00-10:50
for 10 weeks
Location CCD1 317
Moderator(s):
Sean Christiansen
and Landon Wright



The Color of Law by Richard Rothstein

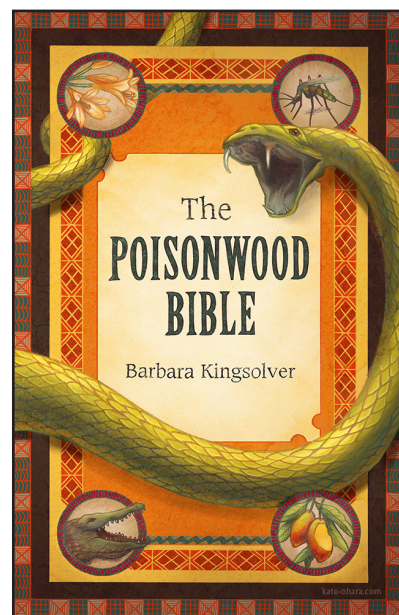
This new book from Richard Rothstein, a Senior Fellow at the University of California's Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society, traces the history of residential segregation in modern America. Rothstein argues that, far from merely reflecting individual choice, residential segregation reflects a series of government policies that have actively promoted that segregation. Residential segregation has, in turn, fostered de facto racial segregation in education, even more than half a century after de jure segregation in public schools was declared unconstitutional. And these forms of segregation in turn worsen other forms of racial division and animosity in the United States. Rothstein argues that this history of government policies promoting housing segregation has largely been obscured by the way we teach the history of segregation and desegregation. *The Color of Law* suggests that, if we are to respond effectively to events like those in Ferguson, Missouri, and finally tackle the problem of racial inequality in America, we must grapple with this history and pursue fundamentally different housing policies. The great sociologist William Julius Wilson describes *The Color of Law* as “one of those rare books that will be discussed and debated for many decades.”

Meeting Time **Location**
T 3:30-4:20 CCD1 217
for 6 weeks

Moderator(s):
Dr. Ben Alpers

The Poisonwood Bible by Barbara Kingsolver

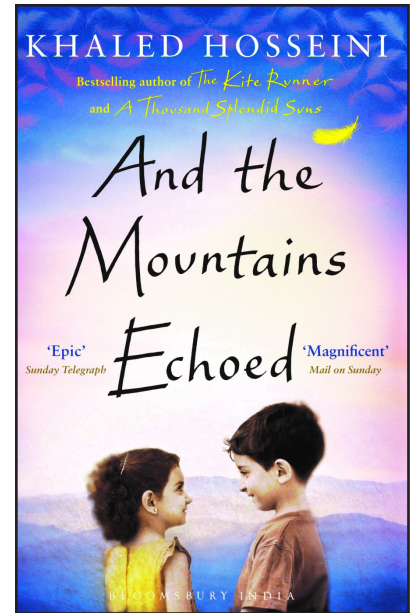
In *The Poisonwood Bible*, Barbara Kingsolver artfully tackles cultural, religious, social, and political themes to create a beautiful and heart-wrenching tale which describes the experiences of a missionary family in the Belgian Congo during the historical period leading up to and following Congolese independence. Kingsolver uses this historical context to support a story line centered on culture clash and unification despite differences in opinions and values. The four perspectives this story is told in, those of the mother and each of her four daughters, provide the reader with contrasting viewpoints and reveal the complexities behind all situations. There is never only one side to a story, and that's something Kingsolver won't let her readers forget as she discusses the difficulties the Price family encounters upon entering a culture completely different from their own. While Nathan Price believes the Congolese people are in desperate need of his preaching and salvation, it soon becomes clear that these native peoples have a very different view about what is important in life. This novel will not only keep you interested with its complex story line, but also with its profound insights on the nature of life and human interaction. If you enjoy looking deeper into human interactions and analyzing the complexities of cultural and religious differences, please consider joining us as we tackle these and many other powerful topics in this wonderful novel that connects us all under the umbrella of humanity while never neglecting to recognize the importance of our inherent and chosen differences.



Meeting Time **Location**
T 10:30-11:20 CCD1 217
for 10 weeks
Moderator(s):
Rachel Sharp

And the Mountains Echoed by Khaled Hosseini

While his first two best-selling novels focused on the Taliban in Afghanistan, Khaled Hosseini's third book departs from the political turmoil that's surrounded the country the last three decades and instead focuses on the themes of pain and the love shared between siblings. Each of the nine chapters in this book are told from the perspective of a different character as they witness the relationship between ten-year-old Abdullah and his three-year-old sister Pari and their father's decision to sell her to a childless couple in Kabul. As the two siblings grow up and live further and further apart, their familial bond remains strong. With each page, the author delves deeper into "the many ways in which families nurture, wound, betray, honor, and sacrifice for one another; and how often we are surprised by the actions of those closest to us, at the times that matter most."



Meeting Time **Location**
T 4:00-4:50 CCD1 317
for 6 weeks

Moderator(s):
Tram Le and Harper Stanfield

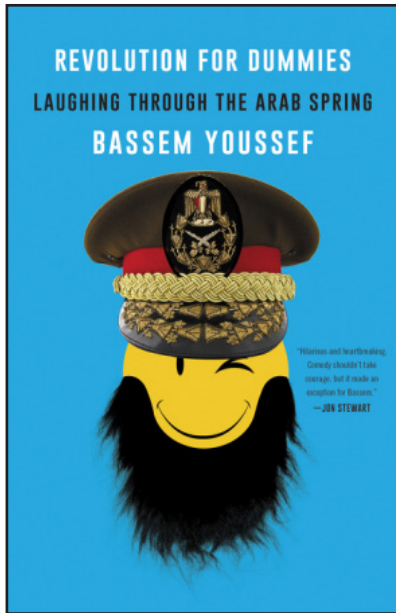


The Foundation Trilogy by Isaac Asimov

Widely considered one of Asimov's best works, *The Foundation Trilogy* is a mainstay in classic science fiction that features an expansive universe, impossibly connected stories, and masterful world-building. The books center around mathematician Hari Seldon's newly-developed psychohistory, a method of predicting the future by tracking the laws of mass action. After foreseeing that the current Galactic Empire is doomed to collapse and that humanity will fall into a period of barbarism and turmoil for 30,000 years, Seldon collects humanity's best scientists and scholars and send them to the edge of a galaxy to start a sanctuary that he names Foundation. By influencing important events in history and protecting humanity's knowledge and advancements, the Foundation would be able to reduce the period of dark ages from 30,000 years to just 1,000 years according to Seldon's psychohistory. However, as the Empire collapses, warlords and barbarians discover the Foundation, placing it and mankind's best hope in peril.

Meeting Time **Location**
T 4:30-5:20 CCD1 217
for 10 weeks

Moderator(s):
Wesley Zhang and Alex Mudd



Revolution for Dummies by Bassem Youssef

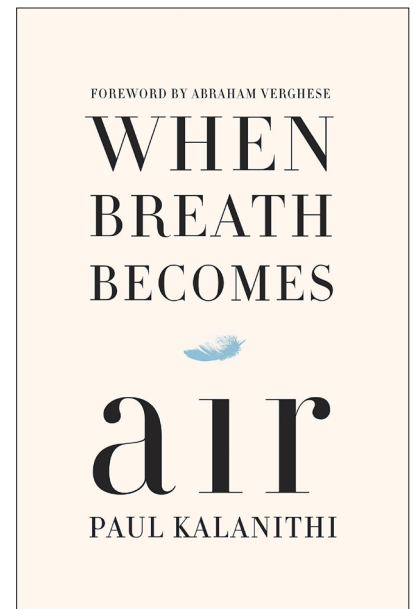
Bassem Youssef's incendiary satirical news program, *Al-Bernameg* (The Program), chronicled the events of the 2011 Egyptian Revolution, the fall of President Hosni Mubarak, and the rise of Mubarak's successor, Mohamed Morsi. Youssef not only captured his nation's dissent but stamped it with his own brand of humorous political criticism, in which the Egyptian government became the prime laughing stock. So potent were Youssef's skits, jokes, and commentary, the authoritarian government accused him of insulting the Egyptian presidency and Islam. After a six-hour long police interrogation, Youssef was released. While his case was eventually dismissed, his television show was terminated, and Youssef, fearful for his safety, fled his homeland. In *Revolution for Dummies*, Youssef recounts his life and offers hysterical riffs on the hypocrisy, instability, and corruption that has long animated Egyptian politics. From the attempted cover-up of the violent clashes in Tahrir Square to the government's announcement that it had created the world's first "AIDS cure" machine, to the conviction of officials that Youssef was a CIA operative—recruited by Jon Stewart—to bring down the country through sarcasm. There's much more—and it's all insanely true.

Meeting Time **Location**
T 12:00-12:50 CCD1 317
for 6 weeks

Moderator(s):
Zainab Sandhu
and Bailey Ashbaker

When Breath Becomes Air by Paul Kalanithi

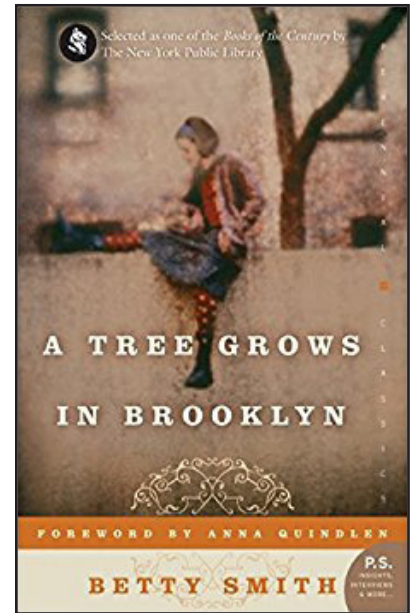
When Breath Becomes Air follows the narrative of a dying neurosurgeon as he navigates his relationship with death. It was a #1 New York Times Best Seller as well as a finalist for the 2017 Pulitzer Prize. The irony of Paul Kalanithi's story is that he started his journey with medicine in hopes of discovering the purpose of life and now, diagnosed with terminal lung cancer, he is forced to face that question on an incredibly intimate and immediate basis. He intertwines his love for his profession as well as his love for literature to attempt to untangle the mystery that is the meaning of life. In his memoir, Dr. Kalanithi discusses the internal conflict he faced as he struggled to relinquish his doctor-status for that of a patient's as well as the tough life-decisions he was forced to make. These would include recalibrating his values, deciding whether or not to continue to pursue a neurosurgeon/neuroscientist career, and if and when to start a family with his wife, all while faced with an uncertain amount of time left. This memoir was published posthumously as Dr. Kalanithi died before he was able to finish it, which adds yet more heartbreak to his beautiful journey.



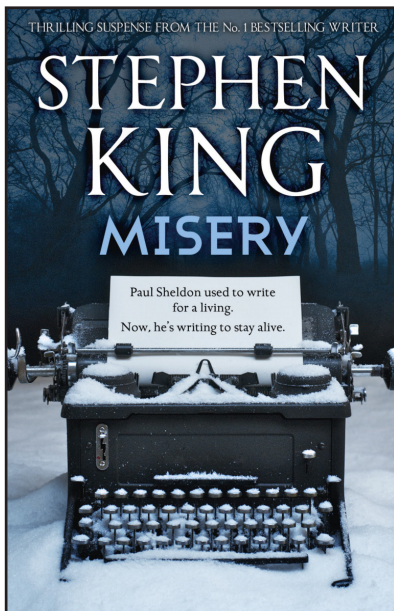
Meeting Time **Location**
T 3:00-3:50 CCD1 101
for 4 weeks
Moderator(s):
Rachel Tran

A Tree Grows in Brooklyn by Betty Smith

“The one tree in Francie’s yard... some people called it the Tree of Heaven. No matter where its seed fell, it made a tree which struggled to reach the sky. It grew in boarded-up lots and out of neglected rubbish heaps and it was the only tree that grew out of cement. It grew lushly, but only in the tenement districts.” Francie Nolan is born into the lower class, into Brooklyn, and into the 20th century. The only life she has ever known is full of need, and yet in her innocence she can’t help but see the beauty hidden all around her in the squalid tenements of New York City. The book follows Francie from childhood through adolescence and up to adulthood, showcasing the world through her eyes as her perspective changes with time, knowledge, and hardship. This beloved American classic is rich in observations about life, human nature, and the choices each of us makes. The reader must decide which of these observations are merely the rosy idealizations of a little girl, and which are truer than we’d like to admit. “A profoundly moving novel, and an honest and true one. It cuts right to the heart of life... If you miss *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* you will deny yourself a rich experience.” (New York Times)



Meeting Time **Location**
 T 3:00-3:50 CCD1 317
 for 10 weeks
Moderator(s):
 Davis Manshardt
 and Emma Greene

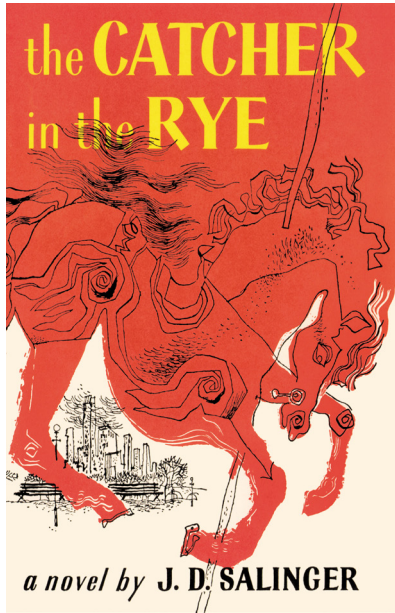


Misery by Stephen King

Misery is the title of the novel within this book famous writer Paul Sheldon has just finished when he finds himself in a terrible car accident during a storm in the mountains of Colorado. He is “rescued” by his biggest fan Annie Wilkes only to be taken to her house where he discovers he has two shattered legs and an addiction to the pain killers she serves him regularly. Annie becomes fanatically dismayed when she discovers Paul plans to kill off her favorite character and the novel’s namesake, *Misery*. But the author is her captive audience and she has nothing but time in her isolated dwelling. And though Paul may think his novel is just ending, his own horror story is just beginning. *Misery* is a New York Times Best Seller written by the master of the psychological horror thriller genre himself, Stephen King. It is a page turner from beginning to end and is well worth the read.

Meeting Time **Location**
 T 4:00-4:50 CCD1 101
 for 6 weeks
Moderator(s):
 Claire Crofford
 and Olivia Conway

Wednesdays



The Catcher in the Rye by J.D Salinger

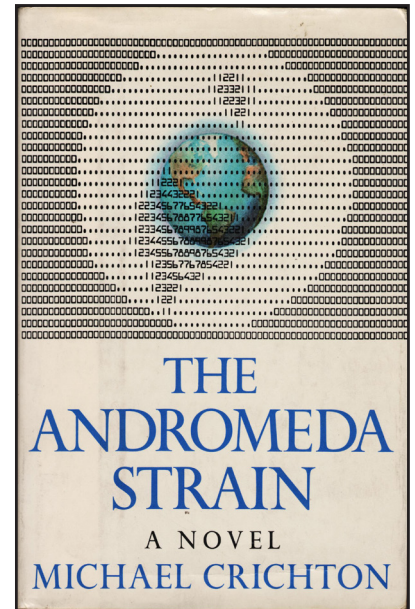
Despite being published in 1951, J.D. Salinger's novel *The Catcher in the Rye* is a timeless coming-of-age novel that every young adult must read. Readers are thrust into the life of Holden Caulfield, a 16-year-old junior who has just been expelled from yet another school, and will follow his eventful journey trying to get back home. Along the way, Holden tries to discover who he is and what his purpose in the world is through his string of misadventures. Told from the point of view from an angsty and sarcastic teenager who has an affinity of calling nearly every adult he knows a "phony", this book has an uncanny ability to connect with people of all backgrounds and generations. Salinger tastefully discusses ideas about innocence, loss, identity, and belonging through Holden as he transitions from childhood into the adult world. The Guardian book review describes *The Catcher in the Rye* as "a wake-up call to all teenagers and in a sense, is an inspiring read because it sends out the message that we should all remain hopeful and true to ourselves." If you would like to cross off one more name on your classical books to read list, please consider joining this group this semester.

Meeting Time **Location**
W 3:30-4:20 CCD1 217
for 8 weeks

Moderator(s):
Joy Li and Sarah Starks

The Andromeda Strain by Michael Crichton

Inadequate sterilization procedures for space probes have caused a mysterious extra-terrestrial microorganism to find it's way to the the wilds of Northern Arizona. The inhabitants of Piedmont, a town near the crash site, are all found dead, either from strokes or bizarre suicides, with the exception of an addict adult and a bawling infant. Realizing the likely source of the danger, governmental officials implement the Wildfire protocol, a means of dealing with extraterrestrial threats biological in nature. The scientists involved in Wildfire begin to research the otherworldly threat, hoping that the worst does not happen, hoping that humanity survives. *The Andromeda Strain* is an enthralling techno-thriller from the author of *Jurassic Park* and *Timeline* which thrusts the worlds of scientific research and military tactics together to create a truly captivating novel. The book explores themes of human arrogance, governmental missteps, self sacrifice, human psychology, and the struggle to survive. Combining intricate technical details with expertly crafted dialogue, Crichton creates a masterpiece of a novel which leaves the reader unable to put the book down. Filled with twists and turns, detailed science, and an enrapturing analysis of human action under pressure, *The Andromeda Strain* is sure to keep any reader engaged and coming back for more.

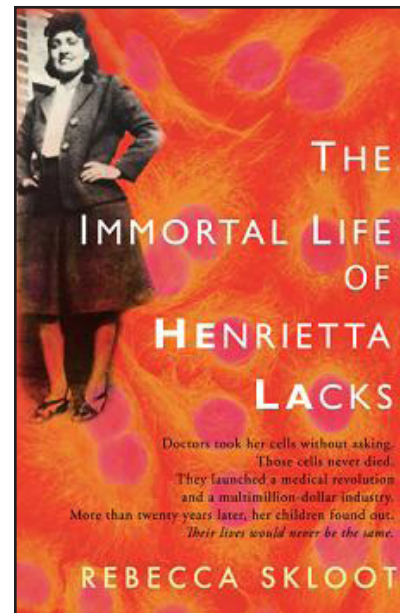


Meeting Time **Location**
W 1:30-2:20 CCD1 217
for 8 weeks

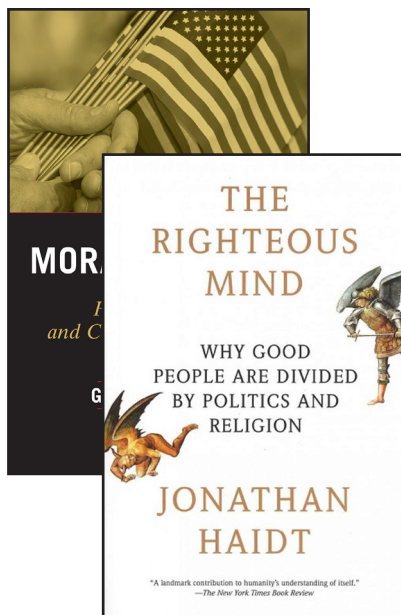
Moderator(s):
Matthew Carman
and Patrick Lockwood

The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks by Rebecca Skloot

Henrietta Lacks is arguably one of the most significant contributors to science and medicine since the mid-twentieth century, yet few people knew her name or her significance to science and medicine before Rebecca Skloot wrote *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*. Taken without her knowledge or consent, Henrietta's cancer cells were a crucial element in several breakthroughs in medicine, including gene mapping, cloning, and the polio vaccine. Bought, sold, and given away since 1951, the undying cells of Henrietta Lacks are one of the most important cell lines in science history. Fortunately, the success of *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* has catapulted Henrietta's story into the limelight, popularizing both her struggle and an increased awareness of the need to acknowledge the unspoken contributors to science and medicine. An unforgettable assembly of popular science, history, and the gripping story of a family looking to uncover the past, *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* has been featured on over 60 critics' best of the year lists and received numerous honors. Further, HBO recently adapted the book into a made-for-tv film which was produced by Alan Ball and Oprah Winfrey and sported an all-star cast.



Meeting Time **Location**
 W 5:00-5:50 CCD1 214
 for 9 weeks
Moderator(s):
 Jonathon Self
 and Evan Whitaker

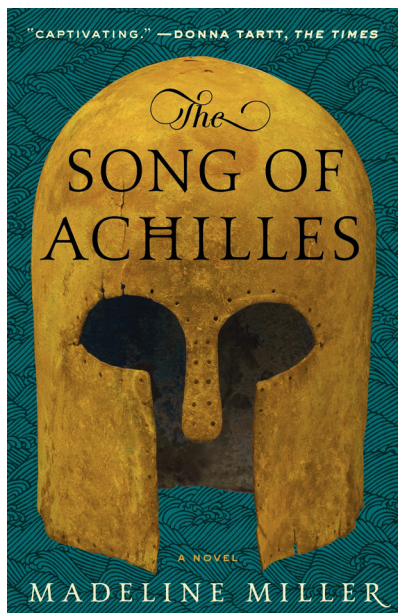


Meeting Time **Location**
 W 3:00-3:50 CCD1 317
 for 12 weeks
Moderator(s):
 Douglas Bryant

The Righteous Mind by Jonathan Haidt and Moral Politics by George Lakoff

Jonathan Haidt is a social psychologist and professor at the NYU Stern school of business. He is responsible for the moral foundations project, a research endeavor that explores the foundational differences in conservative and liberal moral outlooks. *The Righteous Mind* covers motivated reasoning and other thinking biases, the evolutionary origins of morality and religion as they pertain to the adaptation of our social species, and the different moral foundations held by liberals and conservatives. Haidt then uses these differences in core moral commitments to explain why well-intentioned people clash in moral practice. In short, Haidt argues that there are five foundations to conservative morality, each of which are equally valued. Presented with their antitheses, these are care/harm, fairness/cheating, loyalty/betrayal, authority/subversion, and sanctity/degradation. By contrast, Haidt argues that liberals primarily have two moral foundations, valuing care/harm and fairness/cheating alone or at least much more than the other foundations. These differences in values lead to inevitable clashes. The finding is not that one set of foundations is superior to the others, but that by understanding these differences we can better understand one another. Perhaps the most interesting research in this book covers our own thinking biases—specifically our illusory belief that we are rational thinkers about ethical matters when we are typically emotional actors who use our rational capacities to justify our moral sentiments after the fact.

Wednesdays



The Song of Achilles

by Madeline Miller

In Ancient Greece, Patroclus—a quiet and thoughtful prince—has been exiled to Phthia, where by chance, he meets Achilles—the child of a goddess and a Greek prince revered for his strength and beauty. Despite the disapproval of Achilles’s goddess mother Thetis and the difference between their social standings, Achilles and Patroclus grow into companions, then into friends, and then eventually into something more. When the Trojan War erupts and the men of Greece are called upon to avenge Helen, Achilles volunteers for the cause, and Patroclus follows him. Little do they know that in the years that follow, their love will be tested by Fate, war, and the gods themselves. Historians and literary critics have long discussed the relationship between Patroclus and Achilles in Homer’s *The Iliad*, but Madeline Miller’s retelling brings the characters to life for the contemporary reader. From their first awkward fumbblings as teenagers to their battlefield sacrifices as young men, Patroclus and Achilles represent one of the greatest love stories of all time. A major theme of this reading group will be queerness and its portrayal in classic literature, but Miller’s novel is approachable enough that reading group members do not need a background in either field.

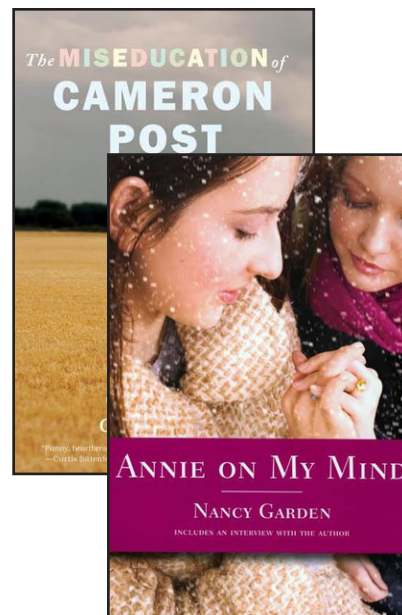
Meeting Time Location
W 11:30-12:20 CCD1 214
for 10 weeks

Moderator(s):
Leanne Ho and Noah Coen

Annie On My Mind by Nancy Garden and The Miseducation of Cameron Post by Emily Danforth

In *The Miseducation of Cameron Post*, an acclaimed YA novel set in 1990s Montana, Cameron is secretly relieved when her parents are killed in a car accident, because it means they’ll never know what she was doing while they were gone: kissing her female best friend. Cameron moves in with her grandmother and hyper-conservative aunt, and falls in love with another girl. When Cameron’s aunt discovers that Cameron is a lesbian, she sends her to a conversion therapy camp, where Cameron discovers the cost of hiding her identity.

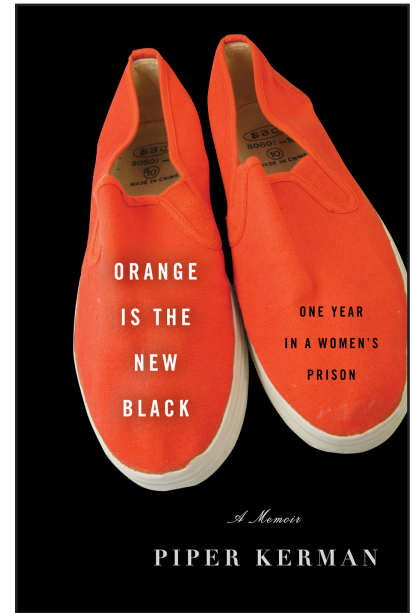
Annie on My Mind, a groundbreaking and controversial YA novel written and set in the early 1980s, focuses on Annie Kenyon and Liza Winthrop, two queer high schoolers living in New York City. As they discover their sexualities and fall in love, their relationship is discovered by administrators at Liza’s school, who call for her to be expelled, causing friction between the girls. Both books have been banned and challenged for their inclusion of queer subject matter aimed at young readers. In this reading group, we will discuss the differences between urban and rural queer experiences, the rights of LGBT youth, and how attitudes toward queerness have changed or stayed the same over the past few decades.



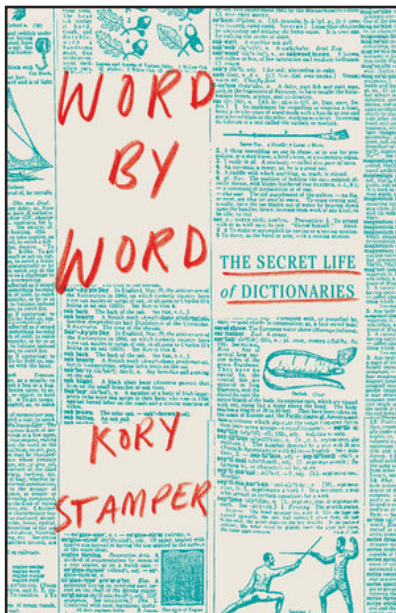
Meeting Time Location
W 5:00-5:50 CCD1 317
for 15 weeks
Moderator(s):
Kay Moran

Orange is the New Black by Piper Kerman

Orange is the New Black is a popular Netflix series about a women's prison. The idea behind the series comes from a book with the same title by Piper Kerman. Kerman went from private college to prison when her past caught up with her. The book the narrative of her experience behind bars. While incarcerated, she meets women from all walks of life, who surprise her with small tokens of generosity, hard words of wisdom, and simple acts of acceptance. Kerman recognizes her privilege and her voice becomes an activist for those around her. Her story offers a rare look into the lives of women in prison-why it is we lock so many away and what happens to them when they're there.



Meeting Time **Location**
W 5:00-5:50 CCD1 101
for 6 weeks
Moderator(s):
Tanya Eager-Miller

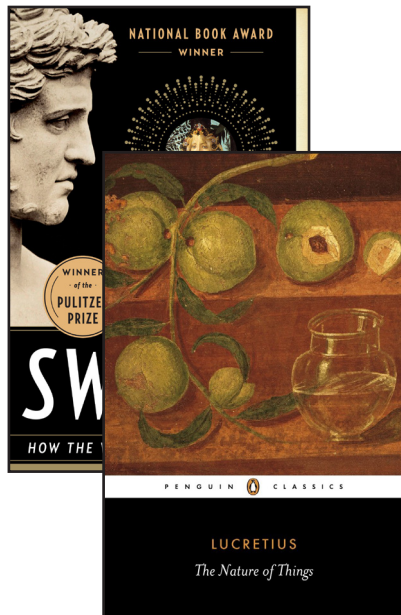


Word by Word by Kory Stamper

What do words mean? How are they defined, and how does meaning shift over time? Kory Stamper, a lexicographer and editor for the Merriam-Webster dictionary, tackles these and other big questions about language use in her new behind-the-scenes book, *Word by Word: The Secret Life of Dictionaries*. Ms. Stamper is a committed descriptivist when it comes to language, albeit one who, in a recent interview, admitted that she works hard to teach her own child the rules of “proper” language use. Join us as we explore Ms. Stamper’s funny, erudite, precise, and fascinating new book!

Meeting Time **Location**
W 11:30-12:20 CCD1 217
for 8 weeks
Moderator(s):
Dr. Brian Johnson

Wednesdays



The Swerve by Stephen Greenblatt and **The Nature of Things** by Lucretius

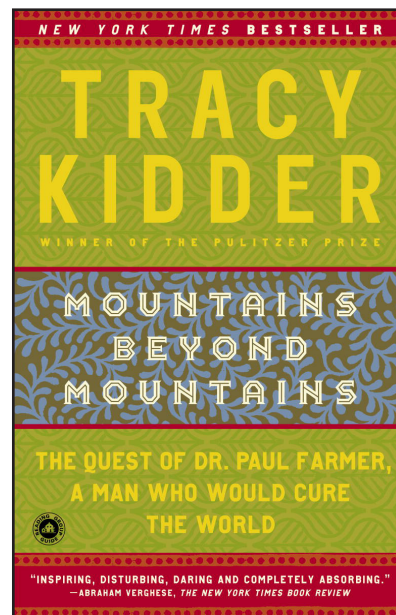
The Swerve focuses on the discovery of an obscure poem in a secluded monastery during the earliest beginnings of the Renaissance. *The Swerve* details the influence this poem had on the Renaissance, and its essential role in bringing the world to modernity. Stephen Greenblatt writes a captivating account of the harrowing history and miraculous recovery of one of the most important philosophical works of the Western world. The poem, *The Nature of Things*, was written by Lucretius around 50 B.C. and is an attempt to explain the ideals of the Greek philosopher Epicurus. In beautiful verse, akin to that of Virgil and Ovid, Lucretius discusses the ideas of matter made up of atoms, the subsequent freedom from fear of divine punishment, and the pursuit of happiness through pleasure. Though written over two millennia ago, the poem presents an essentially modern perspective. These works will provide insight into the importance of ideas, both new and old, and their power to change the course of history.

Meeting Time **Location**
W 10:30-11:20 CCD1 217
for 11 weeks

Moderator(s):
Cody Totten

Mountains Beyond Mountains by Tracy Kidder

“Paul Farmer is a 44-year-old specialist in infectious diseases and an attending physician at the Brigham and Women’s Hospital in Boston. His biographer, Tracy Kidder, read his book on the connections between poverty and disease -- Infections and Inequalities -- and wrote to him, ‘I’m reading your oeuvre.’ ‘Ah, but that’s not my oeuvre,’ Farmer replied. ‘To see my oeuvre you have to come to Haiti.’”
- The New England Journal of Medicine Paul Farmer, one of the co-founders of global health organization Partners in Health, represents a new kind of physician. Cross-trained in medicine and anthropology, Farmer traveled to Haiti, Peru, and Russia, while integrating humanitarian work, social activism, and the art of healing. Years later, he is now also the chair of the Harvard Medical School Department of Global Health and Social Medicine and an international authority on medical ethics and humanitarian relief efforts. His biography originally published in 2003 provides insight into the life of a man, whose work has a legacy vitally important to the global issues faced by contemporary medicine. Infectious disease, international relations, and imbalances of power have come to form major axes influencing the practice of medicine in globalizing economies and academia. Paul Farmer was just at the forefront of this movement to bring these social issues into the scope of medical attention.

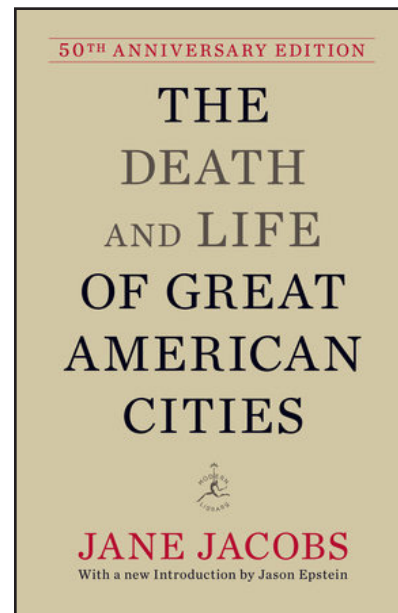


Meeting Time **Location**
W 4:00-4:50 CCD1 317
for 7 weeks

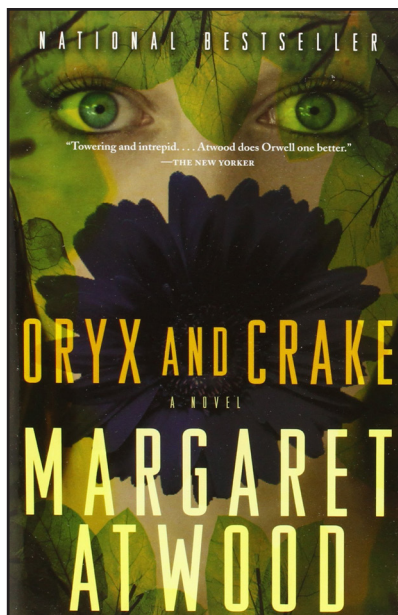
Moderator(s):
Auston Stiefer
and Ben Kannenberg

The Death and Life of Great American Cities by Jane Jacobs

Originally published in 1961, this cornerstone work on city use and design remains highly relevant to the circumstances and challenges surrounding today's modern cities. Jane Jacobs, a truly grass-roots reformist and activist, confronts the conventional notions of city design, and sheds light on the complexities that allow a city to function as a complex organism. In a style that is at times caustic and always immediate and detailed, anyone interested in why certain areas of cities succeed and others fail, what constitutes a neighborhood, what makes a street safe or dangerous, how subsidization in cities can help and harm, or the importance of diversity may find this reading group thought-provoking. Jacobs uses her first-hand knowledge to reveal the perspective that all who live in a city have the ability to shape and impact the ways and means by which a city functions. As she has stated, "Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody." This perspective should allow the readers to feel comfortable in their examination of how a city works, and remove the barriers set up by traditional planners that so often impede ordinary people from taking an active part in a city's form and function.



Meeting Time **Location**
W 12:00-12:50 CCD1 317
for 10 weeks
Moderator(s):
Jonathon Fincher

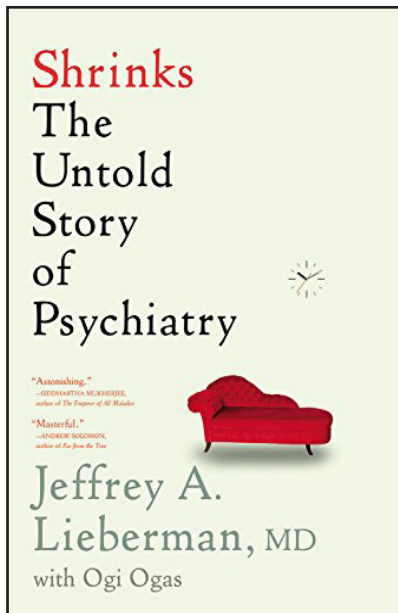


Oryx and Crake by Margaret Atwood

Margaret Atwood is one of the most compelling authors in American literary history. Atwood is most well-known for her 1985 dystopian novel, *The Handmaid's Tale*. However, Atwood received equal critical acclaim for a novel she published almost twenty years later, *Oryx and Crake* (2003). In the novel, a lone survivor of a devastating plague embarks on a journey while mourning his best friend, only to find himself in a frightening, post-apocalyptic world where genetic engineering has become the norm. While the novel has been categorized as science fiction, Atwood herself considers it an adventure-romance which makes the book even more tantalizing to read.

Meeting Time **Location**
W 11:30-12:20 CCD1 201
for 8 weeks
Moderator(s):
Ellie Holder

Thursdays



Shrinks

by Jeffrey Lieberman

Psychiatry has come a long way since the days of chaining “lunatics” in cold cells and parading them as freakish marvels before a gaping public. But, as Jeffrey Lieberman, MD, reveals in his extraordinary and eye-opening book, the path to legitimacy for “the black sheep of medicine” has been anything but smooth. In *Shrinks*, Dr. Lieberman traces the field from its birth as a mystic pseudo-science through its adolescence as a cult of “shrinks” to its late blooming maturity -- beginning after World War II -- as a science-driven profession that saves lives. With fascinating case studies and portraits of the luminaries of the field - from Sigmund Freud to Eric Kandel -- *Shrinks* is a gripping and illuminating read, and an urgent call-to- arms to dispel the stigma of mental illnesses by treating them as diseases rather than unfortunate states of mind.

Meeting Time **Location**
R 12:30-1:20 CCD1 217
for 9 weeks

Moderator(s):
Zachary Simpson

The Alchemist

by Michael Scott

Nicholas Flamel was introduced to a new generation through Harry Potter as a six-hundred sixty-five year old wizard and only known maker of the Philosopher’s (Sorcerer’s) Stone. But did you know that he was real?

Fact: Nicholas and Perenelle Flamel lived in fourteenth century Paris.

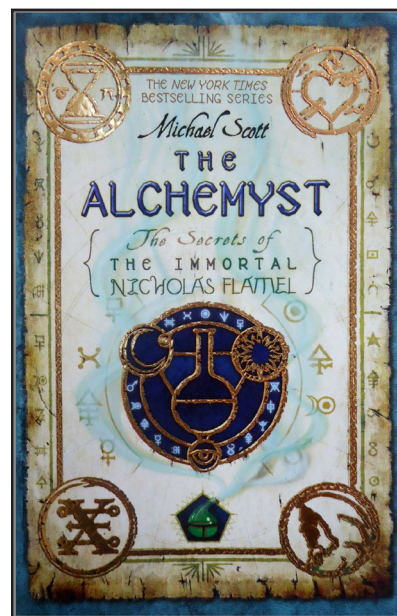
Legend: Nicholas received the Book of Abraham the Mage -- the most powerful book in existence -- from the divine. With it, he was able to create the philosopher’s stone and the elixir of life.

Fact: After Nicholas and Perenelle died, graverobbers found their tombs empty. Weaving truth with magic, Scott creates a tale in which the fate of the world is at stake, and the Flamels have dedicated themselves to protect it.

At the center are the twins of legend, Sophie and Josh Newman. One destined to save the world. The other destined to destroy it.

With the famous alchemist and his wife to guide them, the twins seem to be in good hands. However, malicious forces and beings older than time have designs to mold the earth anew and will do anything to control the twins and steal the Book of Abraham. Heroes and villains from history and myth clash to determine what fate has in store.

As Michael Scott reminds his readers, “At the heart of every legend is a grain of truth.” And Josh and Sophie are about to get experience first hand how legends are made.



Meeting Time **Location**
R 5:00-5:50 CCD1 317
for 9 weeks

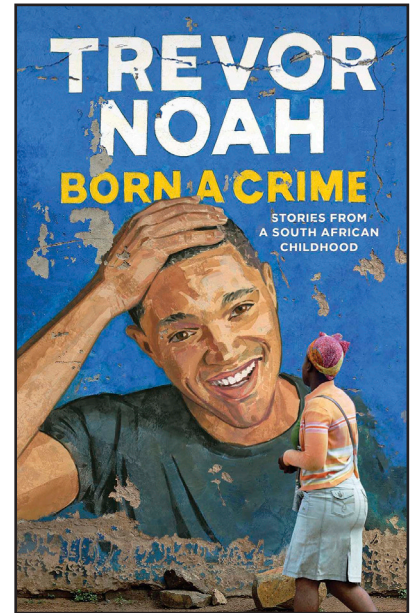
Moderator(s):
Lauren Lusk and Anne Delong

Born a Crime by Trevor Noah

We've all enjoyed Trevor Noah's comedy, political commentary, and social critiques on *The Daily Show*, but his life story reveals a narrative that isn't all about being an informed professional funny-man.

In this memoir, Trevor Noah details his experiences growing up in Apartheid-era South Africa as a mixed-race child, the product of an illegal marriage. He recounts stories of dealing with the racism surrounding his existence as a mixed-race child, his shifting spiritual identity, and how humor helped him cope with stresses of life, among a multitude of other vignettes. Through these snapshots of his life, Noah elucidates the experiences that developed his capability to approach serious, often tragic issues with empathy, humanity, and lighthearted humor. Through reading the memoir, we grow alongside Noah and can learn from his diversity of life experiences.

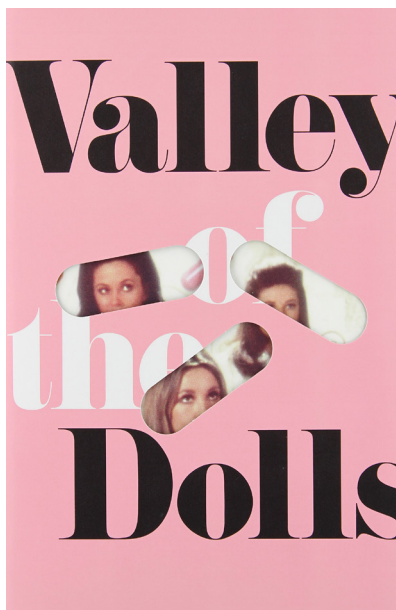
Join us in reading his straightforward and relatable memoir as we discover all that shaped Trevor Noah into the multi-talented, quick-witted, and level-headed man we know him as today!



Meeting Time R 4:30-5:20
for 9 weeks

Location CCD1 214

Moderator(s):
Garrett Eakers
and Tyler Nunley



Valley of the Dolls by Jacqueline Susann

CW: Prescription drug abuse, Mental Health

Published in 1966, Jacqueline Susann's novel, *The Valley of the Dolls*, illustrates three young women's path to addiction as they strive for success and love in the mid twentieth century. Thought to be based off the lives of famous figures such as Judy Garland, Carole Landis, Dean Martin, and Ethel Merman, the novel examines the ease at which people can fall into addiction that quickly spirals out of control. Susann's novel examines gender roles, addiction, and sexuality in a way that was new and unheard of for her time. The novel also takes a look back into the way that addiction was handled and viewed sixty years ago, as it becomes a heated topic of discussion in our present society.

Meeting Time R 12:00-12:50
for 8 weeks

Location CCD1 317

Moderator(s):
Samantha Barclay

Thursdays



Big Little Lies by Liane Moriarty

The inner lives of modern-day Australian mothers are on display in this critically acclaimed novel by Liane Moriarty. *Big Little Lies* takes turns looking at Madeline, Jane and Celeste, women who are brought together because their children are all attending the same elementary school. As the women come together, their secrets take center stage of the novel, with everything spilling over at the school's Elvis Presley and Audrey Hepburn themed Trivia Night fundraiser.

The story is told with a shifting point of view among the women, showcasing the rich inner workings of women across ages, socioeconomic class and privilege. Even with the addition of very serious themes, the book balances social commentary with biting humor and in that balancing act, the characters take center stage. Each woman has incredible depths that are revealed as the story goes on. Moriarty's story manages to show readers both the internal side of the women and how they are perceived in their town by peers, as the story flashes forward to reveal the twisted mystery at the story's heart.

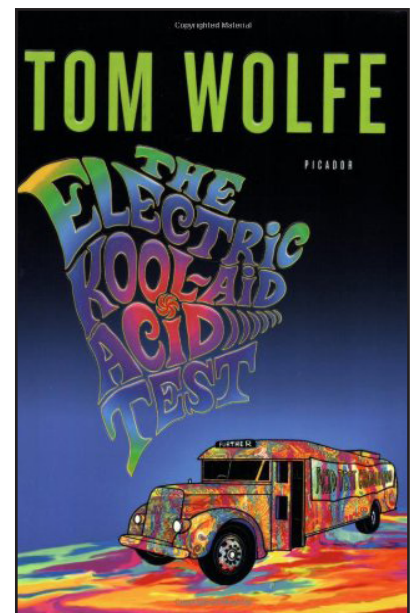
With a story that is at turns suspenseful and wickedly funny, it's easy to see why the HBO miniseries adapted from the novel was nominated for an Emmy. The book has received hundreds of accolades, making it to the top of the New York Times' Best Seller list. *Big Little Lies* will catch you from the opening lines and won't let you go until final sentence.

Meeting Time **Location**
R 4:30-5:20 CCD1 217
for 9 weeks

Moderator(s):
Daniel Cruikshank
and Allison Weintraub

The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test by Tom Wolfe

The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test is remembered today as an early, and arguably the most popular, example of the growing literary style called New Journalism. Wolfe presents an as-if-firsthand account of the experiences of Ken Kesey and his band of Merry Pranksters, who traveled across the country in a colorfully painted school bus named Further. Kesey and the Pranksters became famous for their use of LSD and other psychedelic drugs in hopes of achieving intersubjectivity. The book chronicles the Acid Tests, the group's encounters with famous figures of the time, and Kesey's exile to Mexico and his arrests. *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test* provides an unflinching portrait of Ken Kesey, his Merry Pranksters, LSD, and the 1960s.

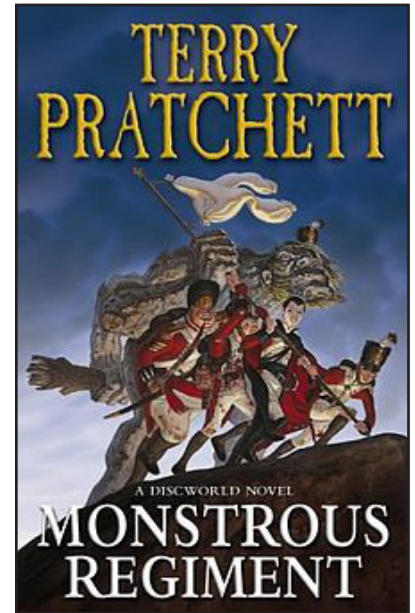


Meeting Time **Location**
R 3:00-3:50 CCD1 101
for 8 weeks

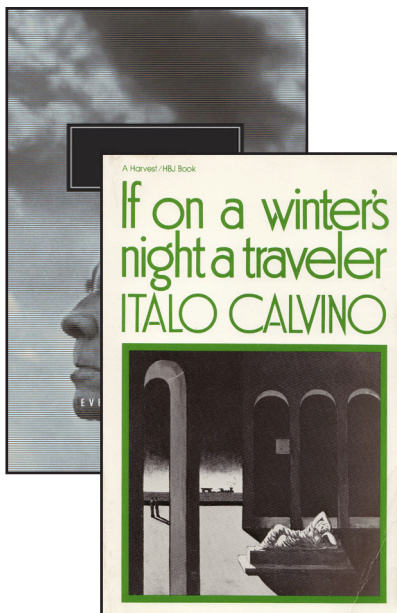
Moderator(s):
Dylan Rodolf and Jesse Hare

Monstrous Regiment by Terry Pratchett

Polly Perks had to become a boy in a hurry. Cutting off her hair and wearing trousers was easy. Learning to fart and belch in public and walk like an ape took more time... And now she's enlisted in the army, and searching for her lost brother. But there's a war on. There's always a war on. And Polly and her fellow recruits are suddenly in the thick of it, without any training, and the enemy is hunting them. All they have on their side is the most artful sergeant in the army and a vampire with a lust for coffee. Well... they have the Secret. And as they take the war to the heart of the enemy, they have to use all the resources of... the Monstrous Regiment. This is a story about the futility of religious war, the power of love in all its forms, and finding allies in unexpected places. It is funny, sad, and a favorite among Discworld fans worldwide. Monstrous Regiment is the 31st Discworld novel, but knowledge of the others is not necessary to reading and enjoying it.



Meeting Time R 1:30-2:20
for 8 weeks
Location CCD1 217
Moderator(s):
Lydia Phillips



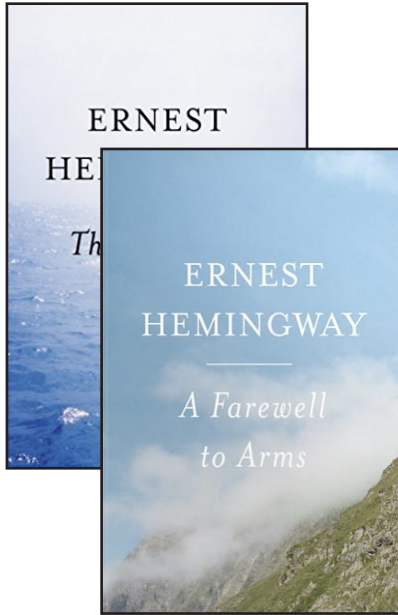
If on a Winter's Night a Traveler by Italo Calvino and **Ficciones** by JL Borges

We are going to read two books: Jorge Borges' collection of short stories, *Ficciones* (1956), and *If on a Winter's Night a Traveler* (1982) by Italo Calvino. Both works present and struggle with a driving tension at the heart of postmodern literature: how can we become otherwise within a reality that lies always in sight but never within reach? These are stories in which there are no straight lines, in which the narrative is not a rise and a fall, but an infinite labyrinth, lacking beginnings and ends, but infused with a constant drive to find meaning in that very drive. They are, in a sense, diagnoses – of us, of our time, of the authors, of the characters, but these are the diagnoses of a mad physician, which suspend us all in the delirium of imagination. These stories attempt to unleash that delirium to find a possibility of life within our time. The first book is a collection of 17 short stories, and serves as our introduction to postmodern literature. We hope to explore how the themes developed in these stories – across 30 years, across continents, and across languages – appear once again in Calvino's radically postmodern novel, composed of alternating sections of second and third person narratives. In them, hopefully, we can find a new language befitting, precisely in its resistance to fitting in, our contemporary reality.

Meeting Time R 3:00-3:50
for 8 weeks
Location DLBH 182

Moderator(s):
Jordan Crawford
and Evan Schleicher

Fridays



A Farewell to Arms and The Old Man and the Sea by Ernest Hemingway

Hemingway wrote *A Farewell to Arms* towards the beginning of his literary career, at the conclusion of his service in World War One. Like many stories of the time and contemporarily, “Farewell” features a protagonist intent on introspection but inexorably absorbed in the world. Though Hemingway had yet to win the Nobel, “Farewell” set the tone for his indelible impact upon American literature. The novel revolves around war, as several of his greatest works do, but its true epicenter is a relationship; further exploration of that relationship requires further exploration of the novel. *A Farewell to Arms* represents the beginning of Hemingway’s literary panache, his narrative terseness which many consider representative of life itself. It does not, however, represent the end. *The Old Man and the Sea*, published towards the end of Hemingway storied saga and meritorious of the Nobel prize, represents the end. The second of these novels is often classified as a “novella,” and not without cause. It is, perhaps, the essentialization of Hemingway’s prowess. Both shorter and more complete than “Farewell,” in some eyes, “Old Man” was, unquestionably, completely Hemingway. By examining two of Hemingway’s most renowned works, we aim to frame their contributions to the theatre of American literature in conversation with one another. Hemingway was one of the United States’s boldest, most eccentric personalities - his novels reflected such. We’d be delighted were you to join us in this endeavor.

Meeting Time Location
F 2:30-3:20 CCD1 217
for 8 weeks

Moderator(s):
Austin Coffey and Michael Lutter

Alanna: The First Adventure and First Test by Tamora Pierce

Beginning from the 1980s, Tamora Pierce made a name for herself for her fantasy adventure novels featuring strong, interesting female protagonists whose personal growth and coming-of-age take center stage. This group will read two such books from Pierce: *Alanna: The First Adventure* (1983), her debut novel, and *First Test* (1999), set in the same universe some twenty years later. Both books (each the opener of a 4-book series) are about young girls defying convention to train as knights, each in their own way: in *The First Adventure*, Alanna disguises herself as a boy, while in *First Test*, Kel is the first girl to openly train as a knight and encounters a completely different set of obstacles. Through the lens of Tamora Pierce’s fiction, readers will explore how the goals and issues tackled in feminist fiction have changed over time. The group will also tackle questions of craft, focusing on the rich worldbuilding and characterization that have made Pierce a bestseller and recipient of the Margaret A. Edwards Award. In addition to being an opportunity for those interested in learning about earlier feminist fantasy, *Alanna: The First Adventure* and *First Test* are also for those just looking for a good sword-and-sorcery tale



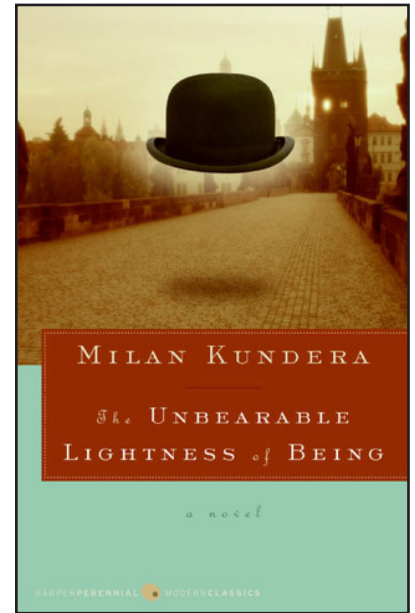
Meeting Time Location
F 1:30-2:20 CCD1 214
for 8 weeks

Moderator(s):
Tuong-Phi Le and Lindsay Jones

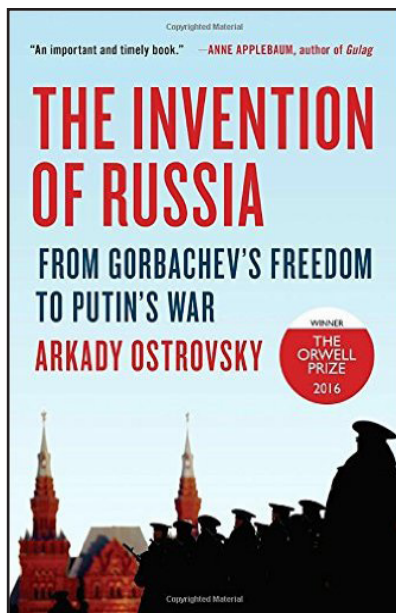
The Unbearable Lightness of Being by Milan Kundera

Published in 1984 and originally written in Czech, Milan Kundera's *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* is, in a single word, intriguing. The novel follows the lives of a serial cheater and womanizer, his wife, one of his main lovers, his lover's lover, and his son. Confused yet? There are a few obvious questions—why his repeat infidelity is tolerated, for example—but the novel also probes deep into the reasons people stay with or leave one another. As the title suggests, this is a novel that's part philosophy and part poetry. The writing is often simple, but almost always profound; you might end up bookmarking most of the pages for lines you want to reread because they're so lovely and deep. The backdrop to this beautifully-written and engaging story is Communist Czechoslovakia, including its harsh weather and harsher regulations. In a world of censorship and untrustworthy people everywhere, there is still room for romance and heartbreak.

Be warned: sex, adultery, and subtle misogyny are rampant in this text. *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* forces you to take the womanizing with the deep, philosophical insights, making it a perfect book for discussion. Was Kundera intentionally being sexist or rather simply reflecting the characters' and time period's views? Can love and sex really be as distinct and separated as they are in the main character's mind? No matter your view, you will have plenty to talk about—one moderator loves this book as much as the other moderator is irritated by it.



Meeting Time **Location**
F 11:30-12:20 CCD1 217
for 5 weeks
Moderator(s):
Anu Asokan and Olivia Robson

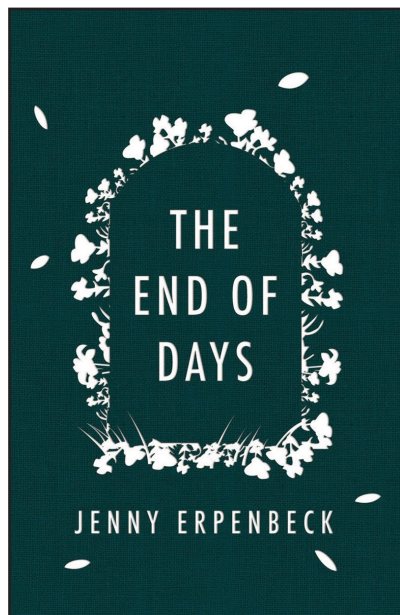


The Invention of Russia by Arkady Ostrovsky

The breakup of the Soviet Union was a time of optimism around the world, but Russia today is actively involved in subversive information warfare, manipulating the media to destabilize its enemies. How did a country that embraced freedom and market reform 25 years ago end up as an autocratic police state bent once again on confrontation with America? A winner of the Orwell Prize, *The Invention of Russia* reaches back to the darkest days of the cold war to tell the story of Russia's stealthy and largely unchronicled counter revolution. A highly regarded Moscow correspondent for the Economist, Arkady Ostrovsky comes to this story both as a participant and a foreign correspondent. His knowledge of many of the key players allows him to explain the phenomenon of Valdimir Putin - his rise and astonishing longevity, his use of hybrid warfare and the alarming crescendo of his military interventions. One of Putin's first acts was to reverse Gorbachev's decision to end media censorship and Ostrovsky argues that the Russian media has done more to shape the fate of the country than its politicians. Putin pioneered a new form of demagogic populism --oblivious to facts and aggressively nationalistic - that has now been embraced by Donald Trump.

Meeting Time **Location**
F 10:00-10:50 CCD1 317
for 6 weeks
Moderator(s):
Dr. Robert Lifset

Fridays



The End of Days by Jenny Erpenbeck

Next March, the German author Jenny Erpenbeck will visit OU as the prestigious Puterbaugh Fellow, sponsored by World Literature Today. Erpenbeck, who grew up in Communist East Germany and whose works have been translated into seventeen languages, has been described by the Guardian as, quite simply, “one of the finest, most exciting authors alive.” Erpenbeck’s epic, prize-winning novel *End of Days* successively imagines five different possible fates for the same protagonist, woven through the catastrophic events that engulfed Central and Eastern Europe in the twentieth century. Deborah Eisenberg, writing in the *New York Review of Books*, describes the book as “elegant and exhilarating, ferocious as well as virtuosic” as it scrutinizes “the elusive, shape-shifting enigmas of human experience, including the appetite that members of our species have for destroying one another.” Erpenbeck’s prose is superbly rendered by Susan Bernofsky, a professor at Columbia University and one of the most significant contemporary translators of German literature into English. Bernofsky will also visit OU as part of the Puterbaugh Festival. Thus students in this reading group can look forward to exciting interactions with both its author and translator next spring!

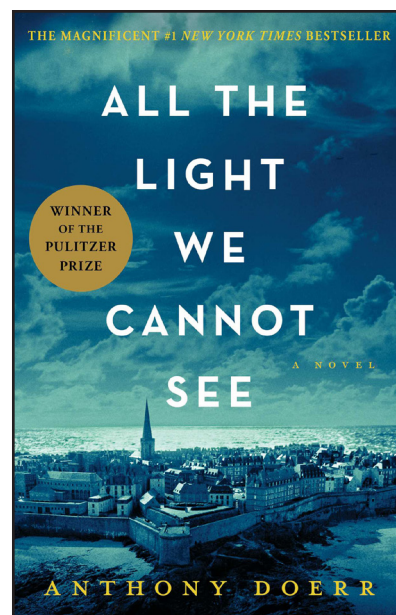
Meeting Time F 12:30-1:20
for 4 weeks

Location CCD1 217

Moderator(s):
Karin Schutjer

All the Light We Cannot See by Anthony Doerr

All the Light We Cannot See follows three subplots during World War II: that of a blind French girl, a German boy who gets recruited by the Hitler Youth, and a mysterious hunt for what could be the key to life. These stories collide and converge throughout the novel, brilliantly woven together by acclaimed author Anthony Doerr. Intelligence, war, and friendship come together to test the extent of human compassion.



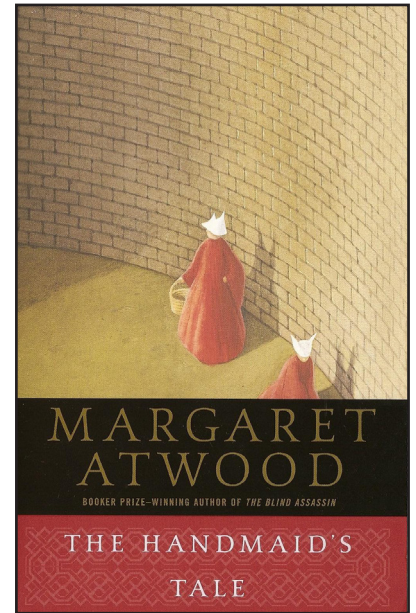
Meeting Time F 1:30-2:20
for 12 weeks

Location CCD1 217

Moderator(s):
Katy Yut and Tamiko Murphy

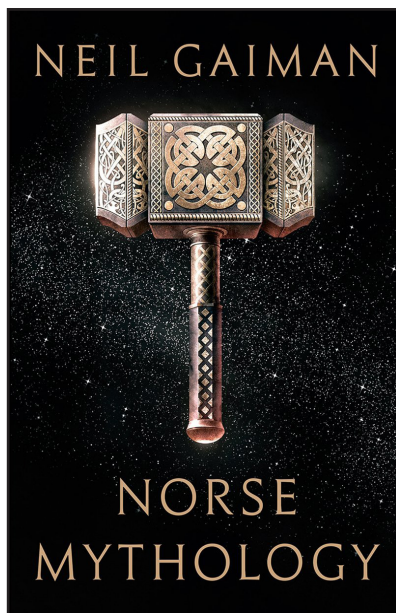
The Handmaid's Tale by Margaret Atwood

Imagine a world in which women cannot vote, learn to read, get a divorce, take contraceptives, dress immodestly...wait a minute. If any of this sounds familiar, it might be because Atwood used historical accounts and contemporary circumstances to craft the setting of *The Handmaid's Tale*: a near-future dystopia, in which a theocratic dictatorship has seized control of New England. Under the new regime's fundamentalist reading of the Bible, women are property of a husband, father, or head of household. Thus, women have no rights to themselves or their bodies. Furthermore, women are divided by castes, which include the high-ranking but childless Wives, the housekeeping Marthas, and the Handmaids, who are forced to bear children for men and their Wives. Published in 1985, *The Handmaid's Tale* takes the social, political, and religious trends of the 1980's and carries them to their logical conclusions. The result is part speculative fiction, part satire, and part warning that explores the intersections of gender, politics, and reproduction. In a recent *Time* interview, Atwood said, "The control of women and babies has been a part of every repressive regime in history. Not much has changed." In today's political climate, when women's rights—especially their reproductive rights—are threatened, Atwood's cautionary tale is as horrifyingly realistic as it was when it was first written.



Meeting Time **Location**
F 3:00-3:50 CCD1 317
for 7 weeks

Moderator(s):
Leanne Ho and Erika Moen



Norse Mythology by Neil Gaiman

Neil Gaiman has long been inspired by ancient mythology in creating the fantastical realms of his fiction. Now he turns his attention back to the source, presenting a bravura rendition of the great northern tales. In *Norse Mythology*, Gaiman stays true to the myths in envisioning the major Norse pantheon: Odin, the highest of the high, wise, daring, and cunning; Thor, Odin's son, incredibly strong yet not the wisest of gods; and Loki—son of a giant—blood brother to Odin and a trickster and unsurpassable manipulator. Gaiman fashions these primeval stories into a novelistic arc that begins with the genesis of the legendary nine worlds and delves into the exploits of deities, dwarfs, and giants. Once, when Thor's hammer is stolen, Thor must disguise himself as a woman—difficult with his beard and huge appetite—to steal it back. More poignant is the tale in which the blood of Kvasir—the most sagacious of gods—is turned into a mead that infuses drinkers with poetry. The work culminates in Ragnarok, the twilight of the gods and rebirth of a new time and people. Through Gaiman's deft and witty prose emerge these gods with their fiercely competitive natures, their susceptibility to being duped and to duping others, and their tendency to let passion ignite their actions, making these long-ago myths breathe pungent life again.

Meeting Time **Location**
F 2:00-2:50 CCD1 317
for 8 weeks

Moderator(s):
Hannah Harrell

