



Informal Reading Groups

Fall 2024



What are they?

The Informal Reading Groups are a fun, no-stress way to get together with like-minded students and read a new book. Though it is sponsored by the Honors College, anyone is welcome to join! To participate, the only commitment is that each student make an effort to do the reading and come to the group meeting as often as possible. All books will be provided free of charge.

To sign up for a reading group: <https://www.ou.edu/honors/community/informal-reading-groups>

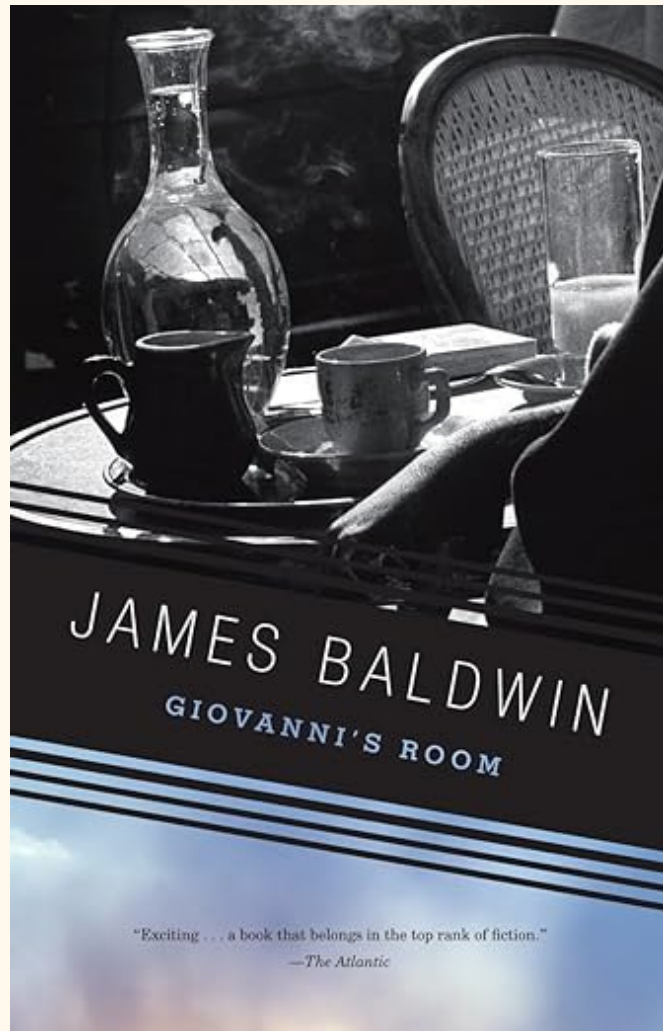
Sign Up Dates: September 4 - 13, 2024

Groups are limited to 15 people, and sign-ups are made on a first-come basis. Fall 2024 reading groups will be conducted in person and will begin meeting on September 4th. Participants and moderators can pick up their books during the first group meeting that week.

Forget the day, time, or meeting place of a group? Use this brochure to verify this information. If you are having trouble finding the information, or find any of the information to be incorrect, please send us an email at honors@ou.edu.

Featured Books

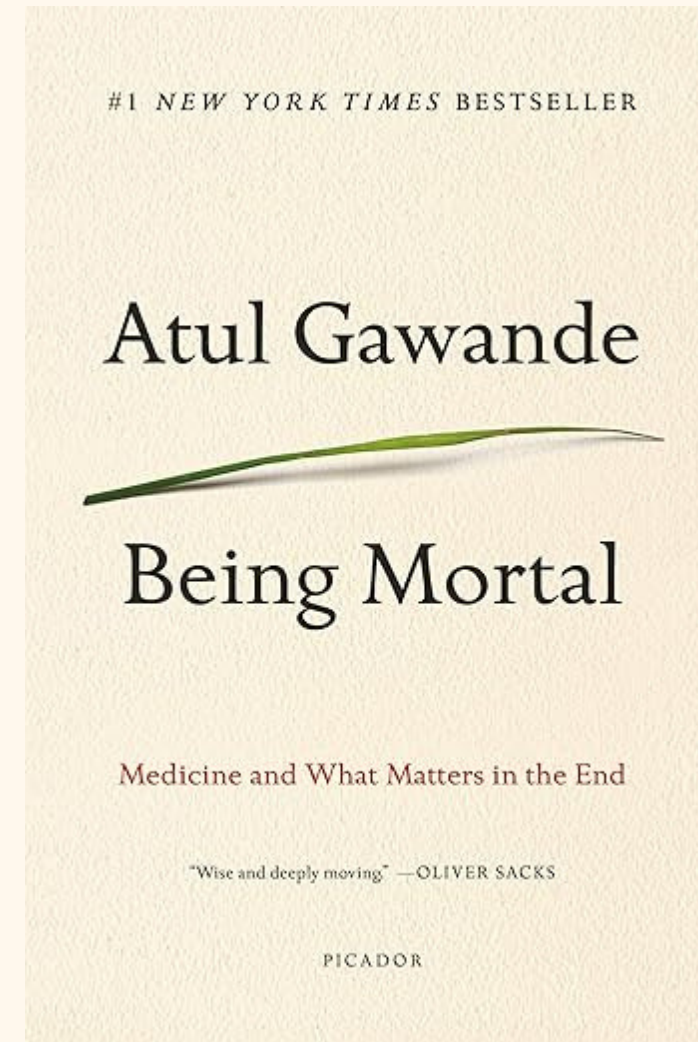
Monday



Giovanni's Room By James Baldwin

David is a young American expatriate who has just proposed marriage to his girlfriend, Hella. While she is away on a trip, David meets a bartender named Giovanni to whom he is drawn in spite of himself. Soon the two are spending the night in Giovanni's curtainless room, which he keeps dark to protect their privacy. But Hella's return to Paris brings the affair to a crisis, one that rapidly spirals into tragedy.

Moderator: Mack Krebs
12:00 PM
Cate 1, Room 214

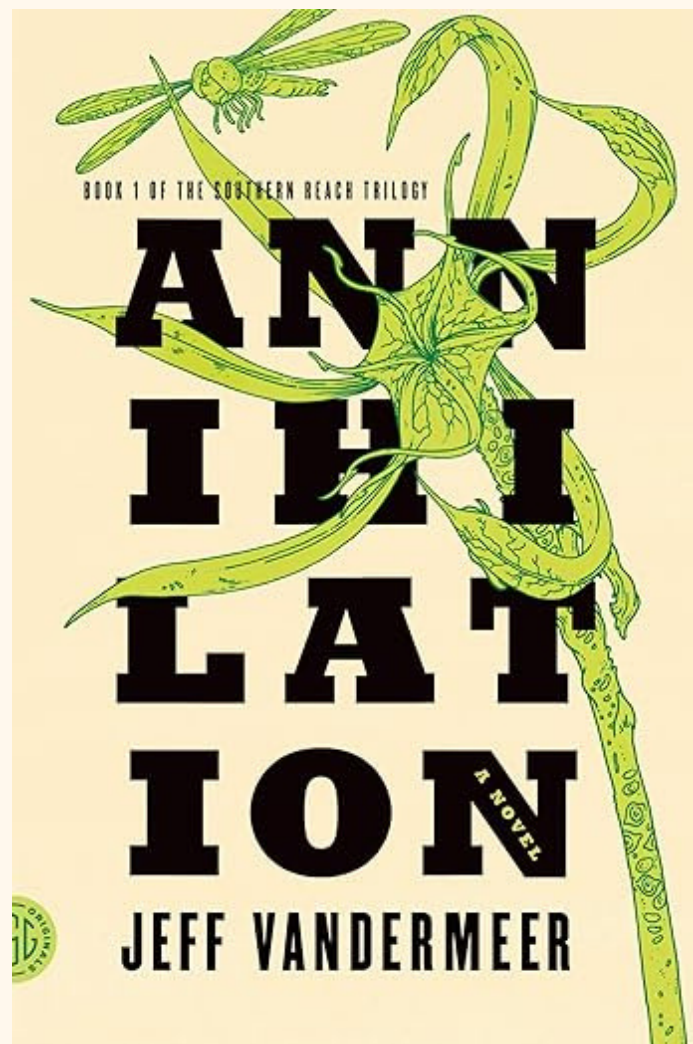


Being Mortal By Atul Gawande

Medicine has triumphed in modern times, transforming the dangers of childbirth, injury, and disease from harrowing to manageable. But when it comes to the inescapable realities of aging and death, what medicine can do often runs counter to what it should. Through eye-opening research and gripping stories of his own patients and family, Gawande reveals the suffering this dynamic has produced. Nursing homes, devoted above all to safety, battle with residents over the food they are allowed to eat and the choices they are allowed to make. Doctors, uncomfortable discussing patients' anxieties about death, fall back on false hopes and treatments that are actually shortening lives instead of improving them.

Moderator: Brady Sloat
2:00 PM
Cate 1, Room 217

Monday Continued



Annihilation

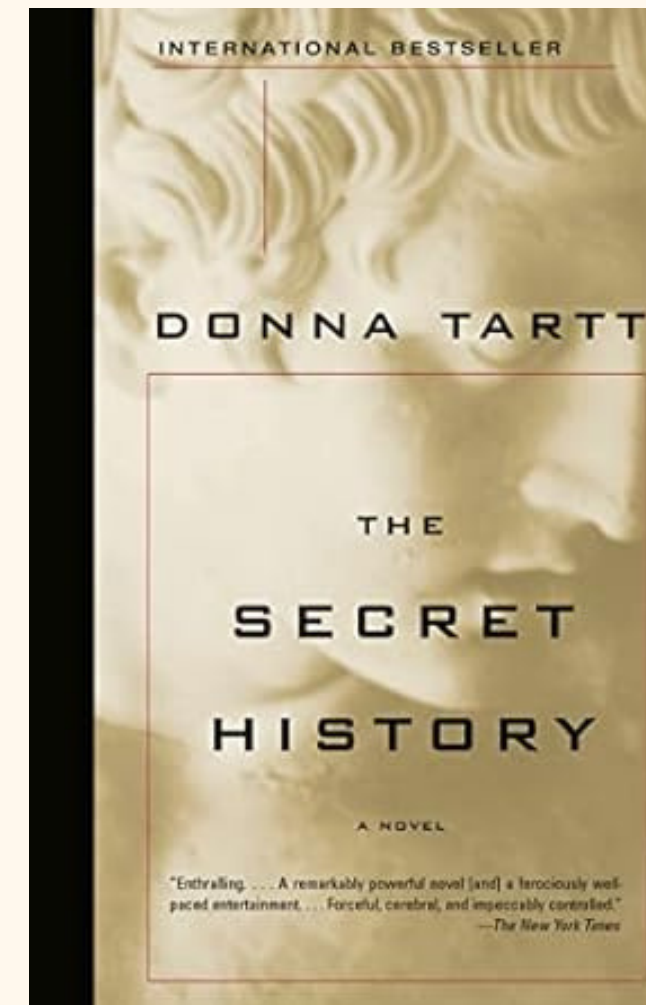
By Jeff VanderMeer

Area X has been cut off from the rest of the continent for decades. Nature has reclaimed the last vestiges of human civilization. The first expedition returned with reports of a pristine, Edenic landscape; the second expedition ended in mass suicide; the third expedition in a hail of gunfire as its members turned on one another. The members of the eleventh expedition returned as shadows of their former selves, and within weeks, all had died of cancer. In *Annihilation*, the first volume of Jeff VanderMeer's Southern Reach trilogy, we join the twelfth expedition. The group is made up of four women: an anthropologist; a surveyor; a psychologist, the de facto leader; and our narrator, a biologist. Their mission is to map the terrain, record all observations of their surroundings and of one another, and, above all, avoid being contaminated by Area X itself.

Moderator: Jessica Zimmerman

3:00 PM

Cate 1, Room 214



The Secret History

By Donna Tartt

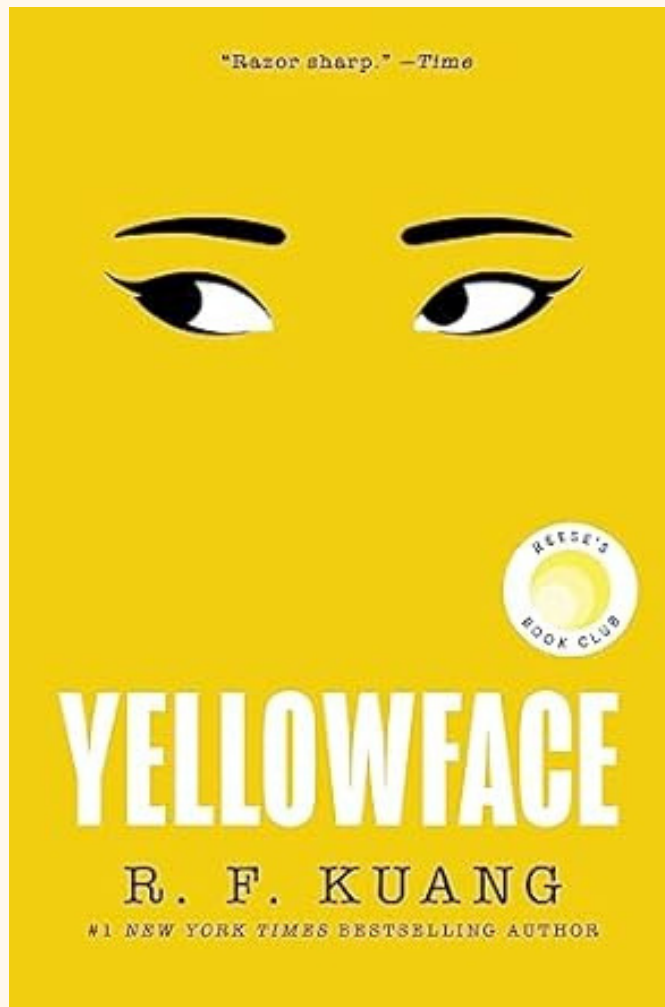
Under the influence of a charismatic classics professor, a group of clever, eccentric misfits at a New England college discover a way of thought and life a world away from their banal contemporaries. But their search for the transcendent leads them down a dangerous path, beyond human constructs of morality.

Moderator: Kaitlyn Denton

4:00 PM

Cate 1, Room 217

Monday Continued



Yellowface

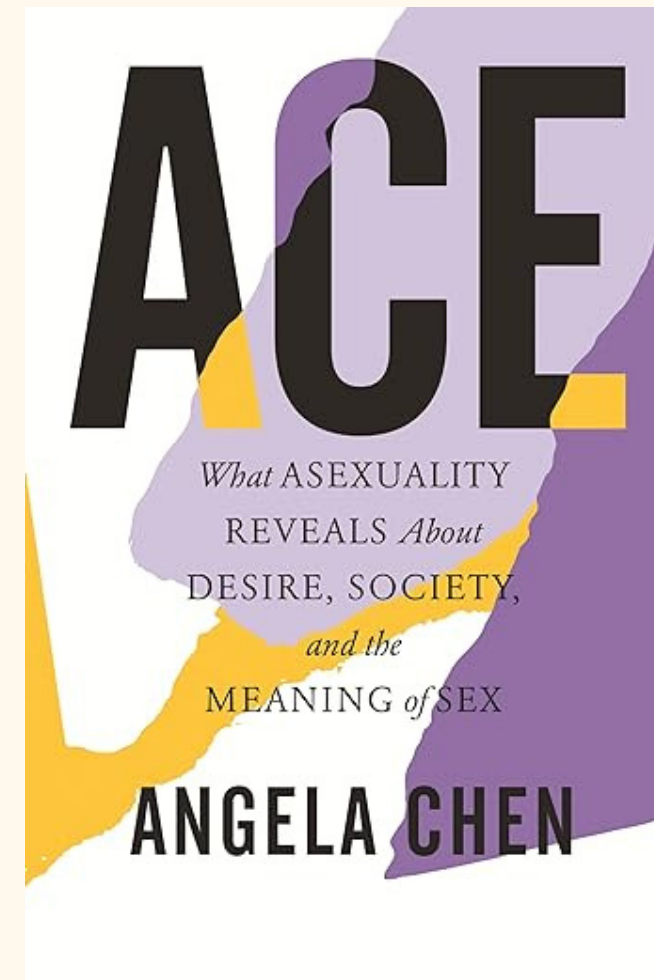
By R. F. Kuang

Authors June Hayward and Athena Liu were supposed to be twin rising stars. But Athena's a literary darling. June Hayward is literally nobody. Who wants stories about basic white girls, June thinks. So when June witnesses Athena's death in a freak accident, she acts on impulse: she steals Athena's just-finished masterpiece, an experimental novel about the unsung contributions of Chinese laborers during World War I. So what if June edits Athena's novel and sends it to her agent as her own work? So what if she lets her new publisher rebrand her as Juniper Song—complete with an ambiguously ethnic author photo? Doesn't this piece of history deserve to be told, whoever the teller? That's what June claims, and the New York Times bestseller list seems to agree. But June can't get away from Athena's shadow, and emerging evidence threatens to bring June's (stolen) success down around her. As June races to protect her secret, she discovers exactly how far she will go to keep what she thinks she deserves.

Moderator: Shelby Massey

5:00 PM

Cate 1, Room 217



Ace

By Angela Chen

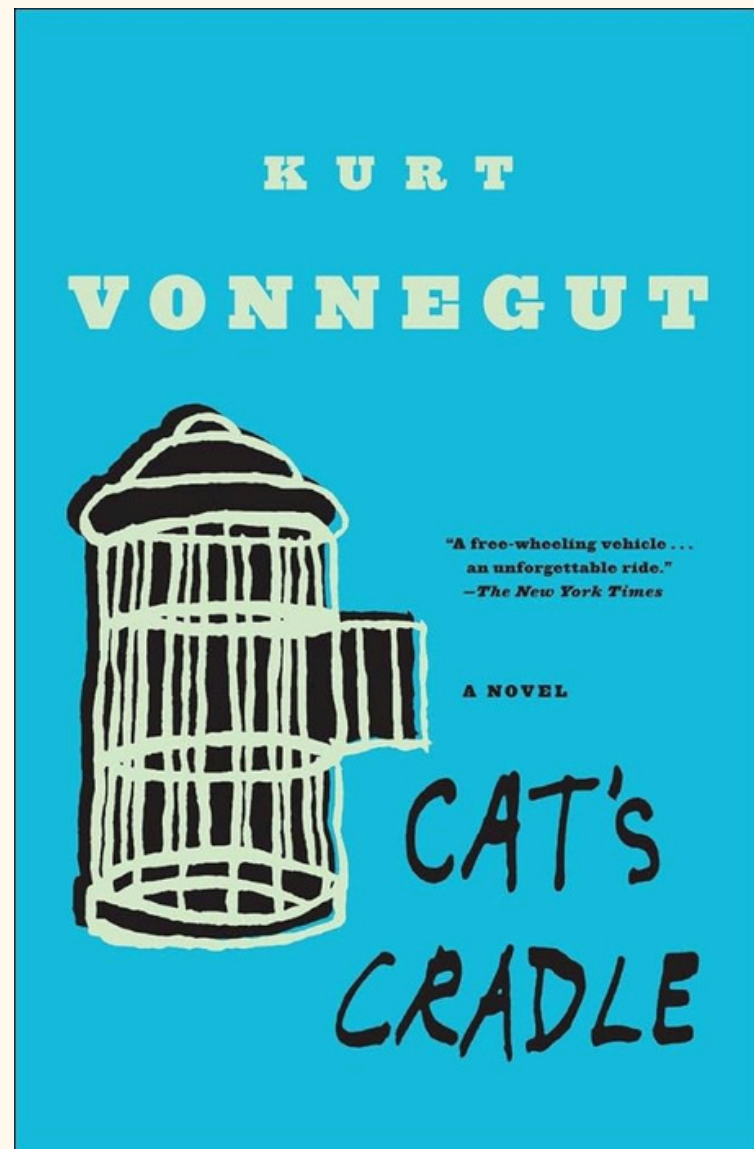
What exactly is sexual attraction and what is it like to go through life not experiencing it? What does asexuality reveal about gender roles, about romance and consent, and the pressures of society? This accessible examination of asexuality shows that the issues that aces face—confusion around sexual activity, the intersection of sexuality and identity, navigating different needs in relationships—are the same conflicts that nearly all of us will experience. Through a blend of reporting, cultural criticism, and memoir, Ace addresses the misconceptions around the “A” of LGBTQIA and invites everyone to rethink pleasure and intimacy.

Moderators: Mary Ann Livingood and Haidyn Peterson

6:00 PM

Cate 1, Room 214

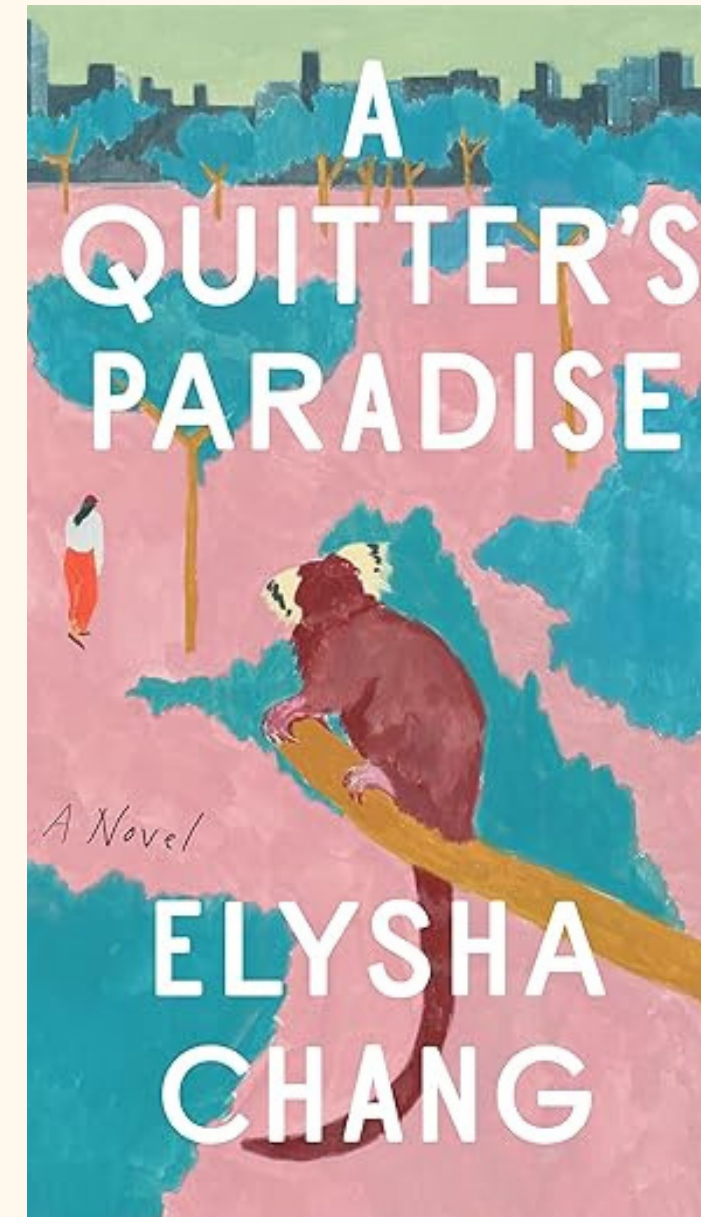
Tuesday



Cat's Cradle By Kurt Vonnegut

Cat's Cradle is Vonnegut's satirical commentary on modern man and his madness. An apocalyptic tale of this planet's ultimate fate, it features a little person as the protagonist; a complete, original theology created by a calypso singer; and a vision of the future that is at once blackly fatalistic and hilariously funny.

Moderator: Ethan Pigg
12:00 PM
Cate 1, Room 217

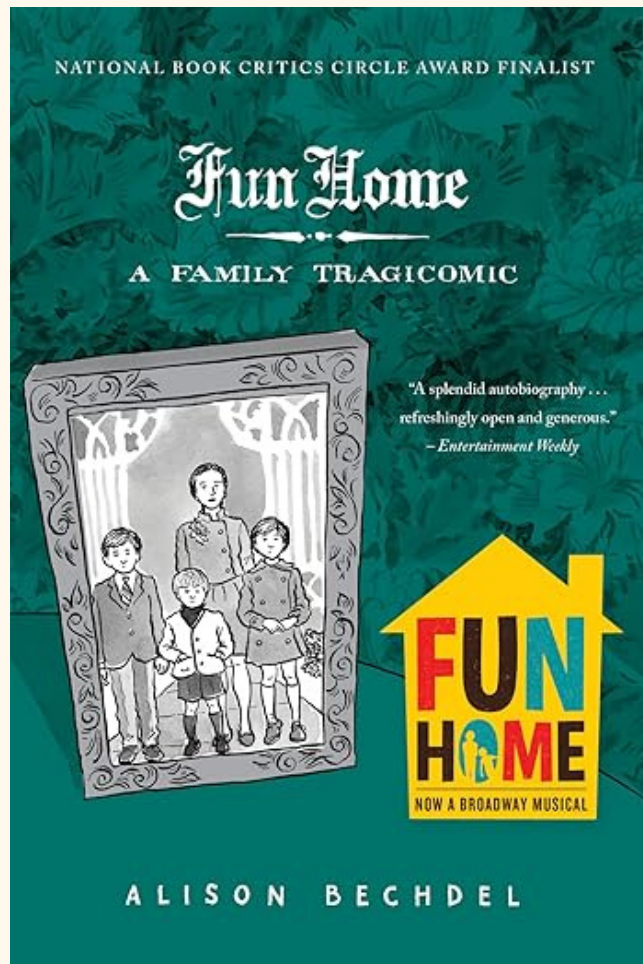


A Quitter's Paradise By Elysha Chang

Eleanor knows she's been acting strangely. She's dropped out of her PhD program and is ignoring calls from her husband. Lately, she finds herself walking circles in the park, leaving a trail of nuts and raisins in her wake. It's all, in some sense, a response to her mother's recent death. This she knows. But Eleanor can't understand how you are supposed to grieve a mother you never understood. How do you love a person who refused to make herself known? Resisting at every turn, Eleanor tumbles blindly down a path that will force her to confront her present. After a series of incidents—and some questionable choices—it becomes clear that no matter how hard Eleanor tries, she will never be able to escape her grief, or her family, despite her wildest attempts. But will she be brave enough to withstand the reckoning she's hurtling toward?

Moderator: Emily Newby
4:30 PM
Cate 1, Room 217

Wednesday



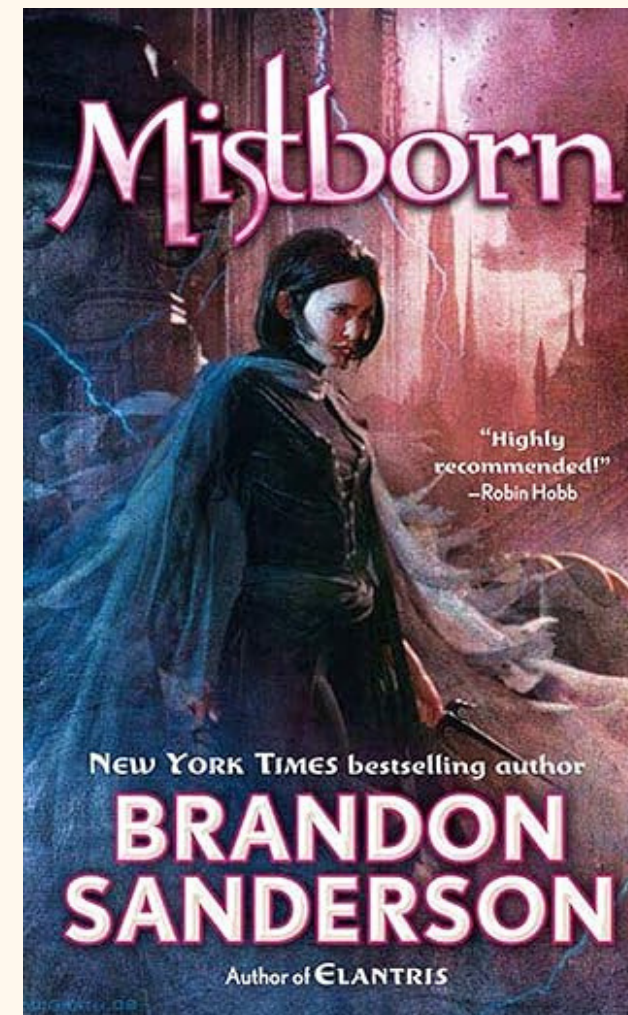
Fun Home By Alison Bechdel

Distant and exacting, Bruce Bechdel was an English teacher and director of the town funeral home, which Alison and her family referred to as the "Fun Home." It was not until college that Alison, who had recently come out as a lesbian, discovered that her father was also gay. A few weeks after this revelation, he was dead, leaving a legacy of mystery for his daughter to resolve.

Moderator: Dr. James Ziegler

12:00 PM

Cate 1, Room 214



Mistborn: The Final Empire

By Brandon Sanderson

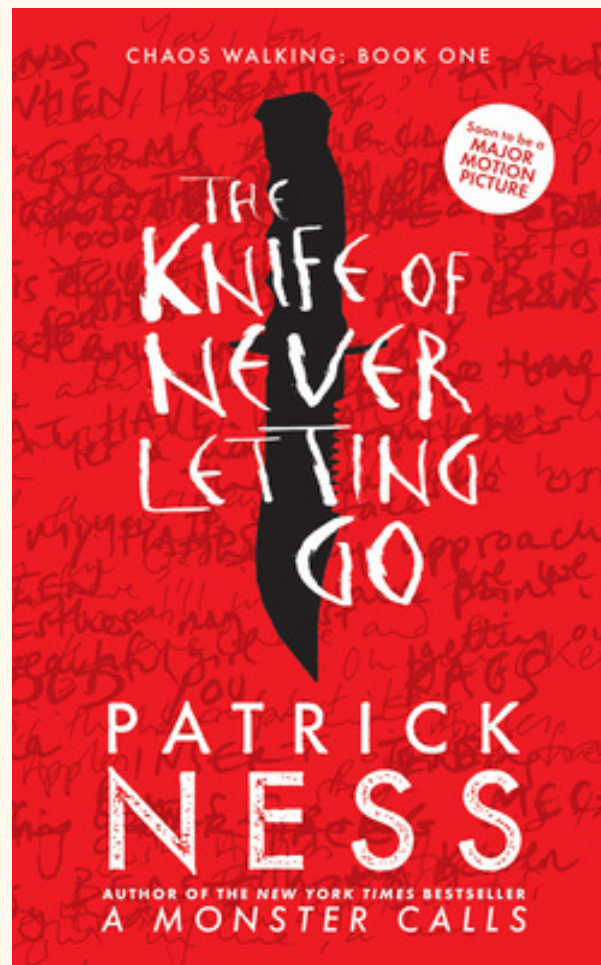
For a thousand years the ash fell and no flowers bloomed. For a thousand years the Skaa slaved in misery and lived in fear. For a thousand years the Lord Ruler, the "Sliver of Infinity," reigned with absolute power and ultimate terror, divinely invincible. Then, when hope was so long lost that not even its memory remained, a terribly scarred, heart-broken half-Skaa rediscovered it in the depths of the Lord Ruler's most hellish prison. Kelsier "snapped" and found in himself the powers of a Mistborn. A brilliant thief and natural leader, he turned his talents to the ultimate caper, with the Lord Ruler himself as the mark. Kelsier recruited the underworld's elite, the smartest and most trustworthy allomancers, each of whom shares one of his many powers, and all of whom relish a high-stakes challenge. Only then does he reveal his ultimate dream, not just the greatest heist in history, but the downfall of the divine despot. But even with the best criminal crew ever assembled, Kel's plan looks more like the ultimate long shot, until luck brings a ragged girl named Vin into his life. Like him, she's a half-Skaa orphan, but she's lived a much harsher life. Vin has learned to expect betrayal from everyone she meets, and gotten it. She will have to learn to trust, if Kel is to help her master powers of which she never dreamed. This saga dares to ask a simple question: What if the hero of prophecy fails?

Moderators: Nolen Jackson

1:30 PM

Cate 1, Room 214

Wednesday Continued



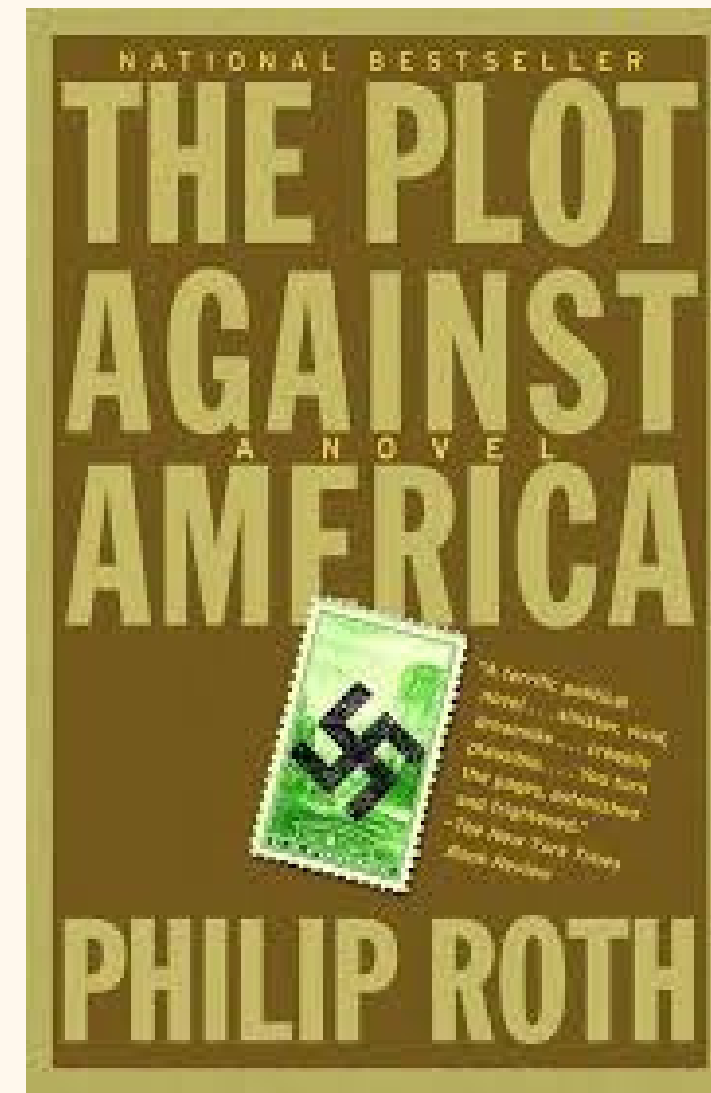
The Knife of Never Letting Go By Patrick Ness

Todd Hewitt is the only boy in a town of men. Ever since the settlers were infected with the Noise germ, Todd can hear everything the men think, and they hear everything he thinks. Todd is just a month away from becoming a man, but in the midst of the cacophony, he knows that the town is hiding something from him — something so awful Todd is forced to flee with only his dog, whose simple, loyal voice he hears too. With hostile men from the town in pursuit, the two stumble upon a strange and eerily silent creature: a girl. Who is she? Why wasn't she killed by the germ like all the females on New World? Propelled by Todd's gritty narration, readers are in for a white-knuckle journey in which a boy on the cusp of manhood must unlearn everything he knows in order to figure out who he truly is.

Moderator: Caleb Anagnos

1:30 PM

Cate 1, Room 214



The Plot Against America By Philip Roth

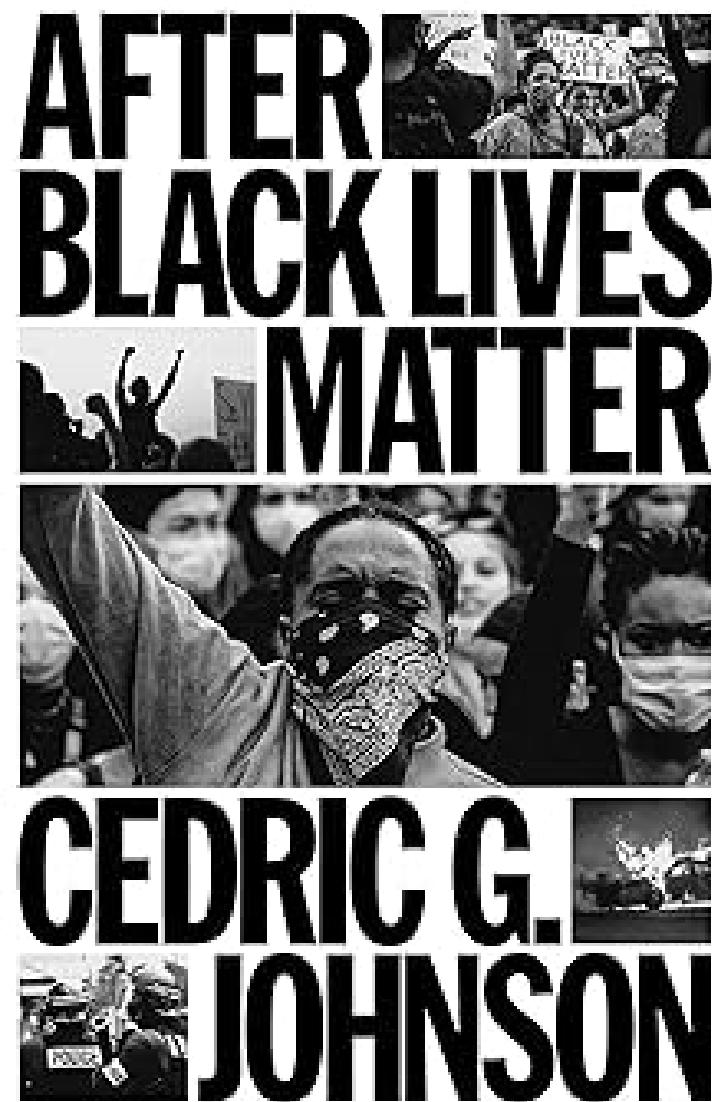
In 1940 Charles A. Lindbergh, heroic aviator and rabid isolationist, is elected president. Shortly thereafter, he negotiates a cordial "understanding" with Adolf Hitler while the new government embarks on a program of folksy anti-Semitism. For one boy growing up in Newark, Lindbergh's election is the first in a series of ruptures that threaten to destroy his small, safe corner of America - and with it his mother, his father, and his older brother.

Moderator: Audrey Reese

5:30 PM

Cate 1, Room 217

Thursday



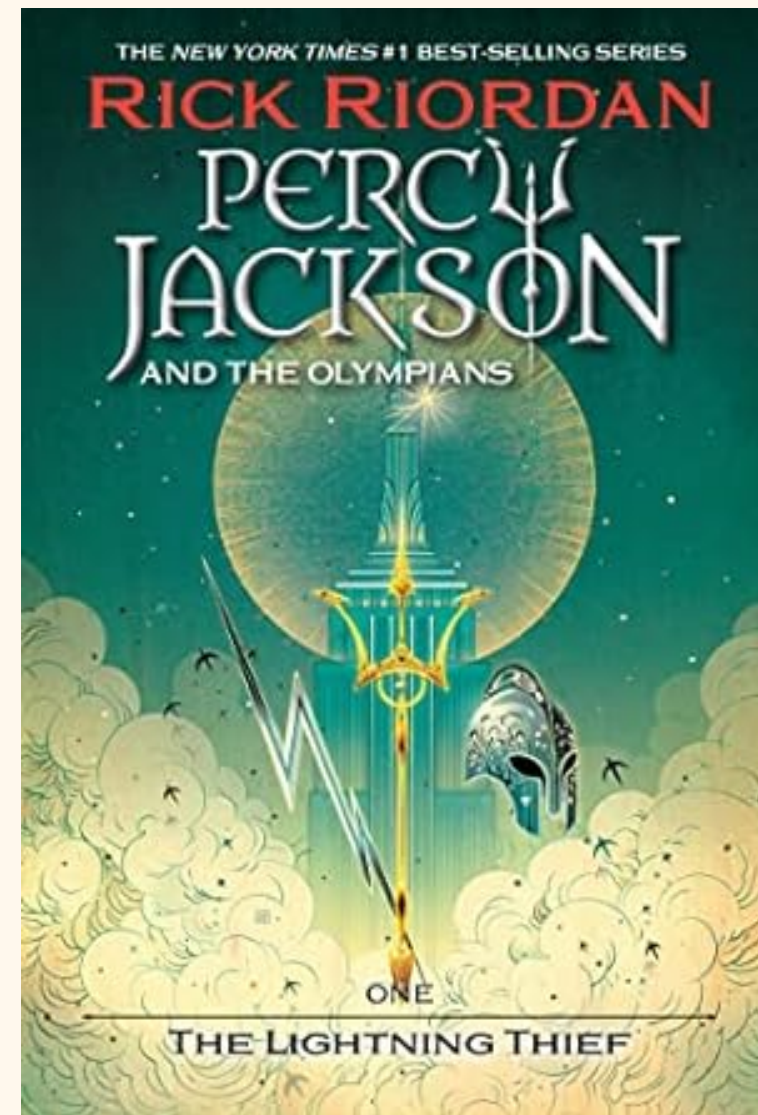
After Black Lives Matter

The historic uprising in the wake of the murder of George Floyd transformed the way we think about race and policing. Why did it achieve so little in the way of substantive reforms? After Black Lives Matter argues that the failure to leave an institutional residue was not simply due to the mercurial and reactive character of the protests. Rather, the core of the movement itself failed to locate the central racial injustice that underpins the crisis of policing: socio-economic inequality.

Moderator: Dr. David Song

4:00 PM

Cate 1, Room 214



Percy Jackson and the Olympians: The Lightning Thief By Rick Riordan

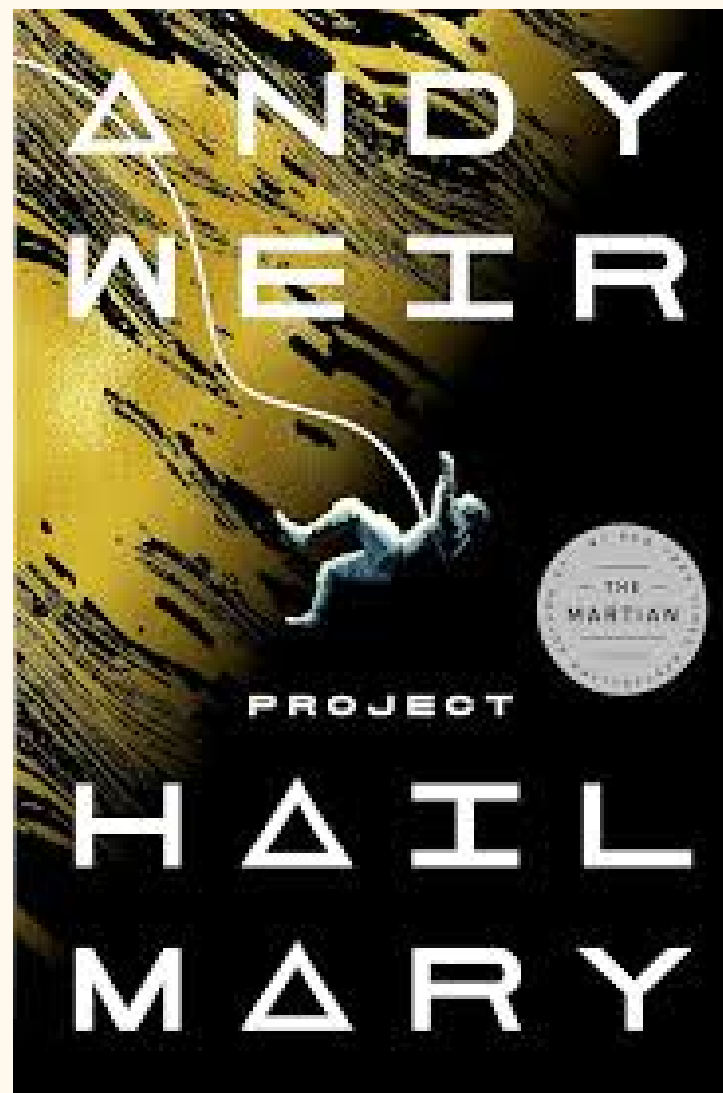
Percy Jackson is about to be kicked out of boarding school again—he can't seem to stay out of trouble. Is he supposed to stand by while a bully picks on his scrawny best friend? Or not defend himself when his teacher turns into a monster and tries to kill him? Mythical creatures seem to be walking straight out of the pages of Percy's Greek mythology textbook and into his life. What's worse, he's angered a few of them: Zeus's master lightning bolt has been stolen, and Percy is the prime suspect.

Moderators: Taylor Albin and Isabelle Kuriger

4:00 PM

Cate 1, Room 217

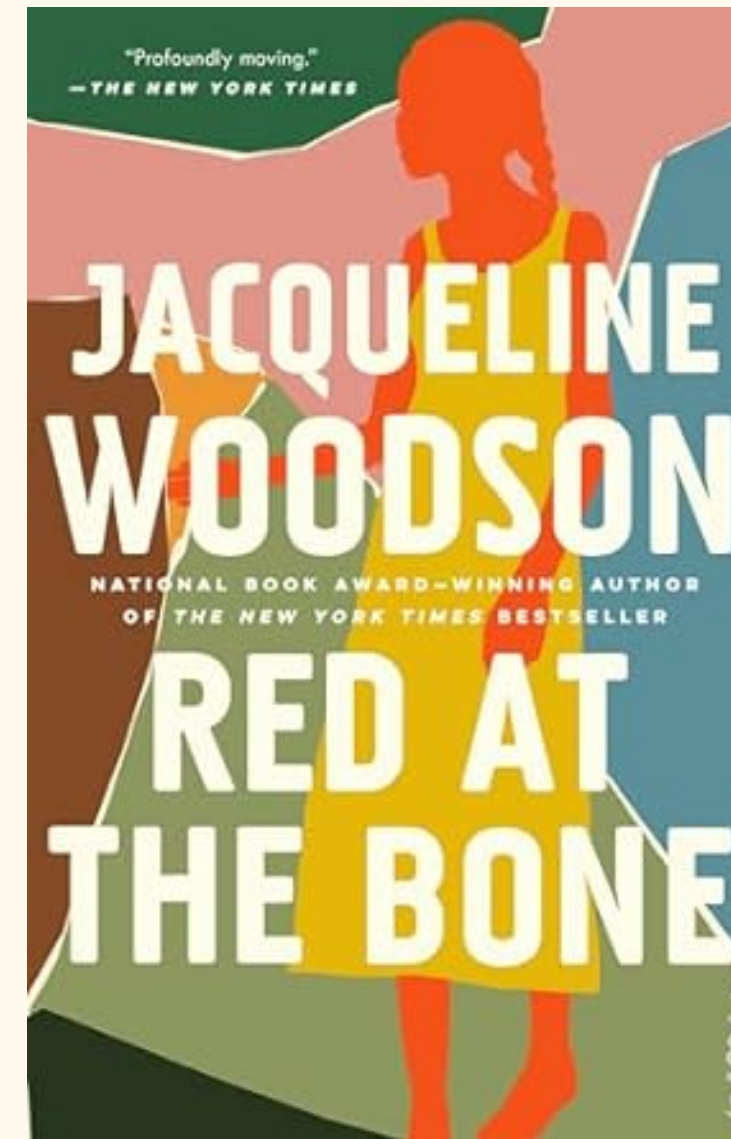
Friday



Project Hail Mary By Andy Weir

Ryland Grace is the sole survivor on a desperate, last-chance mission - and if he fails, humanity and the Earth itself will perish. Except that right now, he doesn't know that. He can't even remember his own name, let alone the nature of his assignment or how to complete it. All he knows is that he's been asleep for a very, very long time. And he's just been awakened to find himself millions of miles from home, with nothing but two corpses for company.

Moderator: Sam Hunt
11:00 AM
Cate 1, Room 214

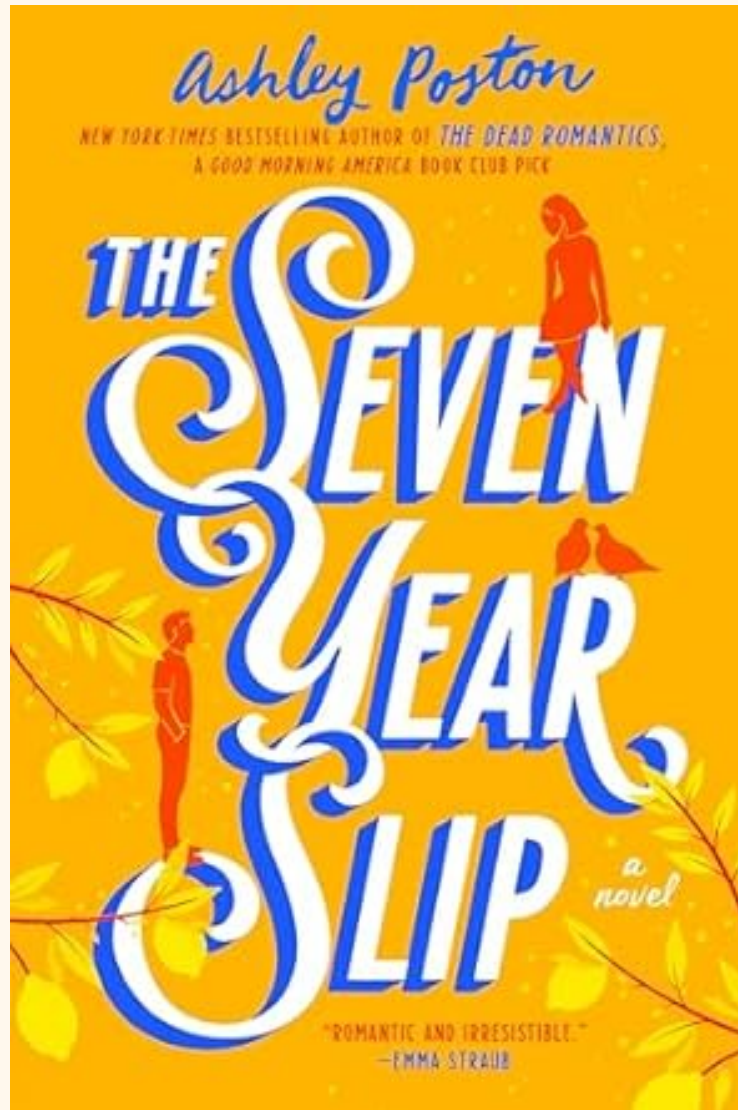


Red at the Bone By Jacqueline Woodson

An unexpected teenage pregnancy pulls together two families from different social classes and explores their histories - reaching back to the Tulsa race massacre of 1921 -- and exposes the private hopes, disappointments, and longings that can bind or divide us from each other, from the New York Times-bestselling and National Book Award-winning author of Another Brooklyn and Brown Girl Dreaming. Moving forward and backward in time, Jacqueline Woodson's taut and powerful new novel uncovers the role that history and community have played in the experiences, decisions, and relationships of these families, and in the life of the new child

Moderators: Dr. Trina Hope and
Lanessa Siggers
2:30 PM
Cate 1, Room 214

Friday Continued



The Seven Year Slip By Ashley Poston

An overworked book publicist with a perfectly planned future hits a snag when she falls in love with her temporary roommate... only to discover he lives seven years in the past, in this witty and wise new novel from the New York Times bestselling author of *The Dead Romantics*.

Moderator: Madeline Stout

4:00 PM

Cate 1, Room 214