

INFORMAL READING GROUPS

SPRING 2023

Featured Books

After Lives.....	Moderated by Imelda Aldava
A House Between Earth and the Moon.....	Moderated by Rebecca Sherm
And Then There Were None.....	Moderated by Crystal Hollen
Babel:An Arcane History.....	Moderated by Allison McClung
Blink:The Power of Thinking Without Thinking.....	Moderated by Rajita Singh
Emma.....	Moderated by Emily Pope
Fahrenheit 451.....	Moderated by Tanya Miller-Eager
Killers of the Flower Moon.....	Moderated by Lucy Westemeyer
If We Were Villians.....	Moderated by Allison Byrd
Infectious Fear.....	Moderated by Cass Condray
In the Time of Butterflies.....	Moderated by Kilie Goins
My Immortal.....	Moderated by Aidan Sudler & Keane Hauck
Parachutes, by Kelly Yang.....	Moderated by Jeanette Hoang
The Birth of a Tragedy.....	Moderated by Ana Spradley & Charis Forbes
The Humans.....	Moderated by Wesley Russell & Julianne Li
Twilight.....	Moderated by Taylor Broadbent
Without You There Is No Us.....	Moderated by Audrey Fowler

About the Program

Each semester, the Honors College sponsors the Informal Reading Program. The groups, composed of 10 to 15 participants and a moderator from the Honors College faculty, staff or student body, meet once a week to discuss their chosen book. The books cover a wide range of topics, and most have been recommended by Honors College students. This is a great chance to meet and connect with other students that share similar interests. **The groups are open to all OU students**, not just Honors College members.

To participate, the only commitment is that each student make a good-faith effort to do the reading and come to the group meeting as often as possible. The goal of the program is to offer participants "maximum

information and enjoyment, without stress which is why the program features no quizzes, no fees and no grades. All books will be provided free of charge.

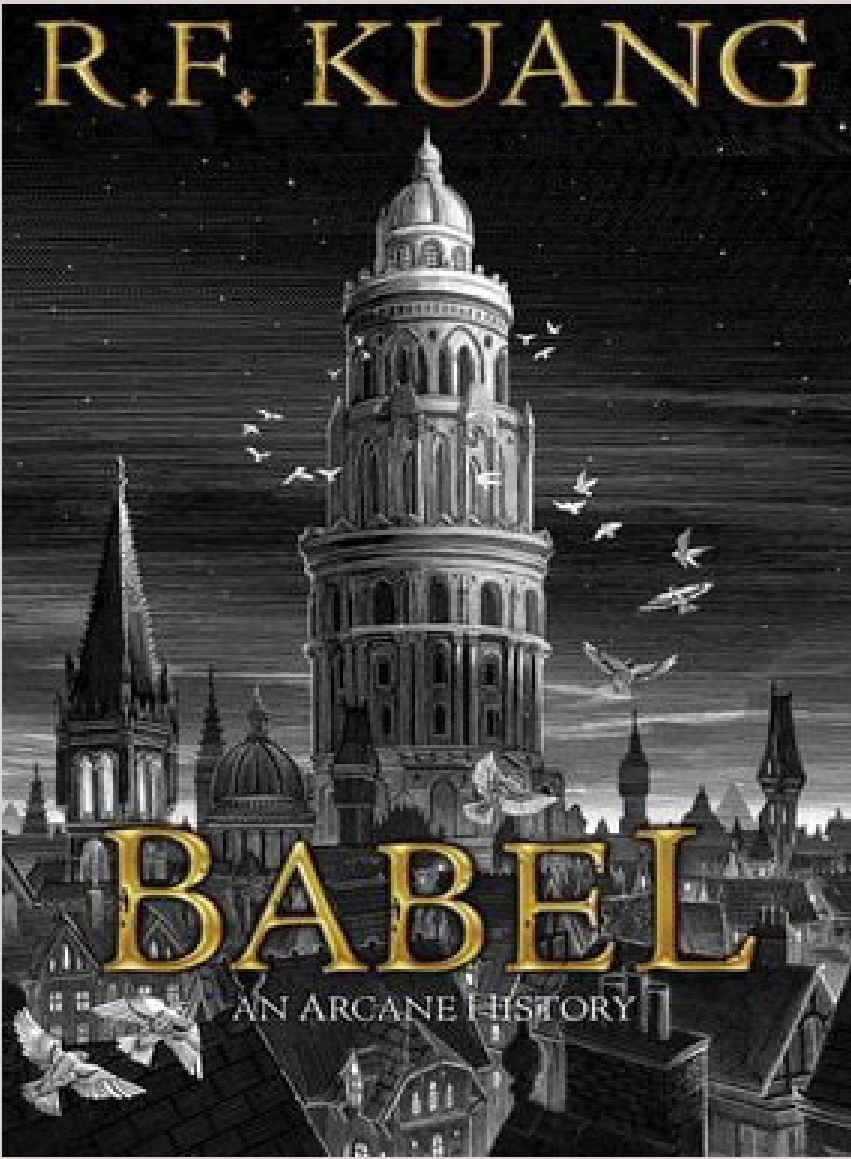
To sign up for a reading group visit scan the QR code below. Groups are limited to 15 people, and sign-ups are made on a first-come basis.

Spring 2023 reading groups will be conducted in person and will begin meeting the week of January 23rd-January 27th. 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 honorsreading@ou.edu.



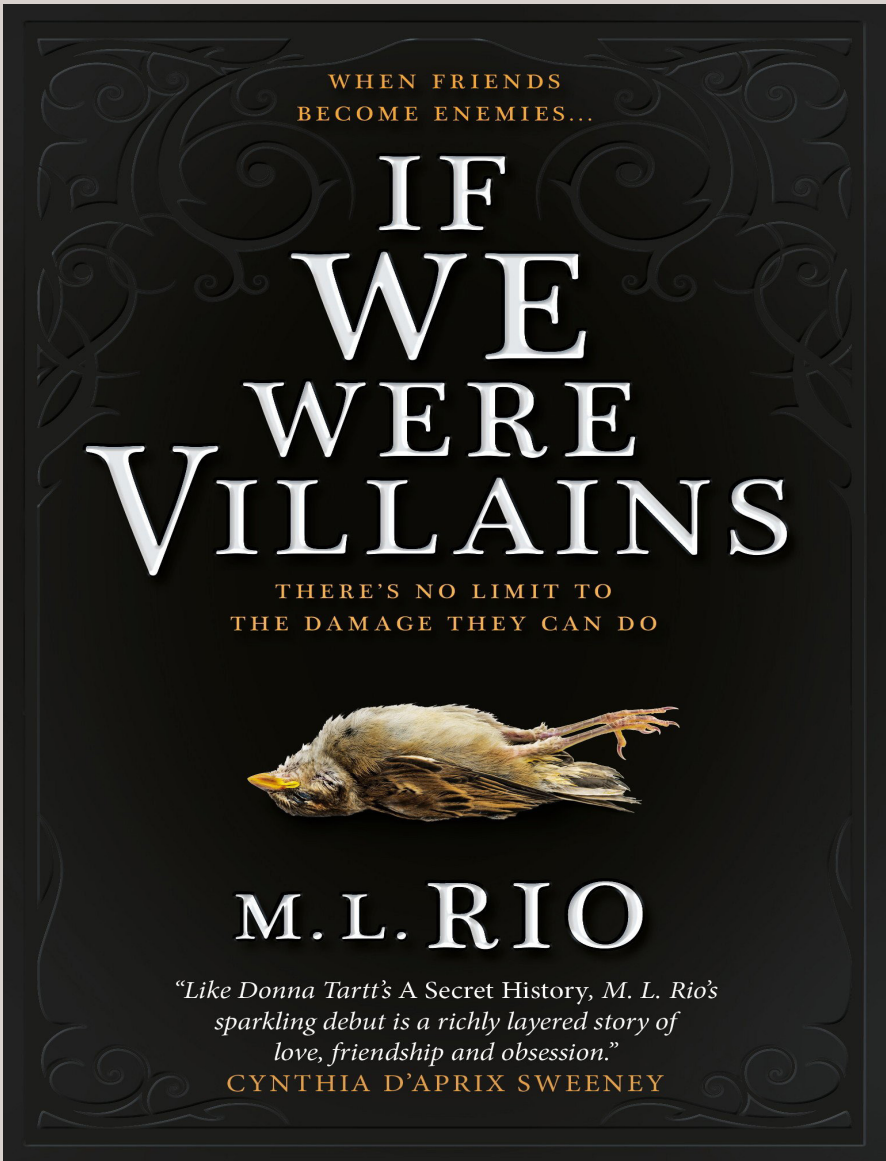
Monday Groups



12 P.M.

Moderator: Allison McClung
Meeting for: 11 weeks

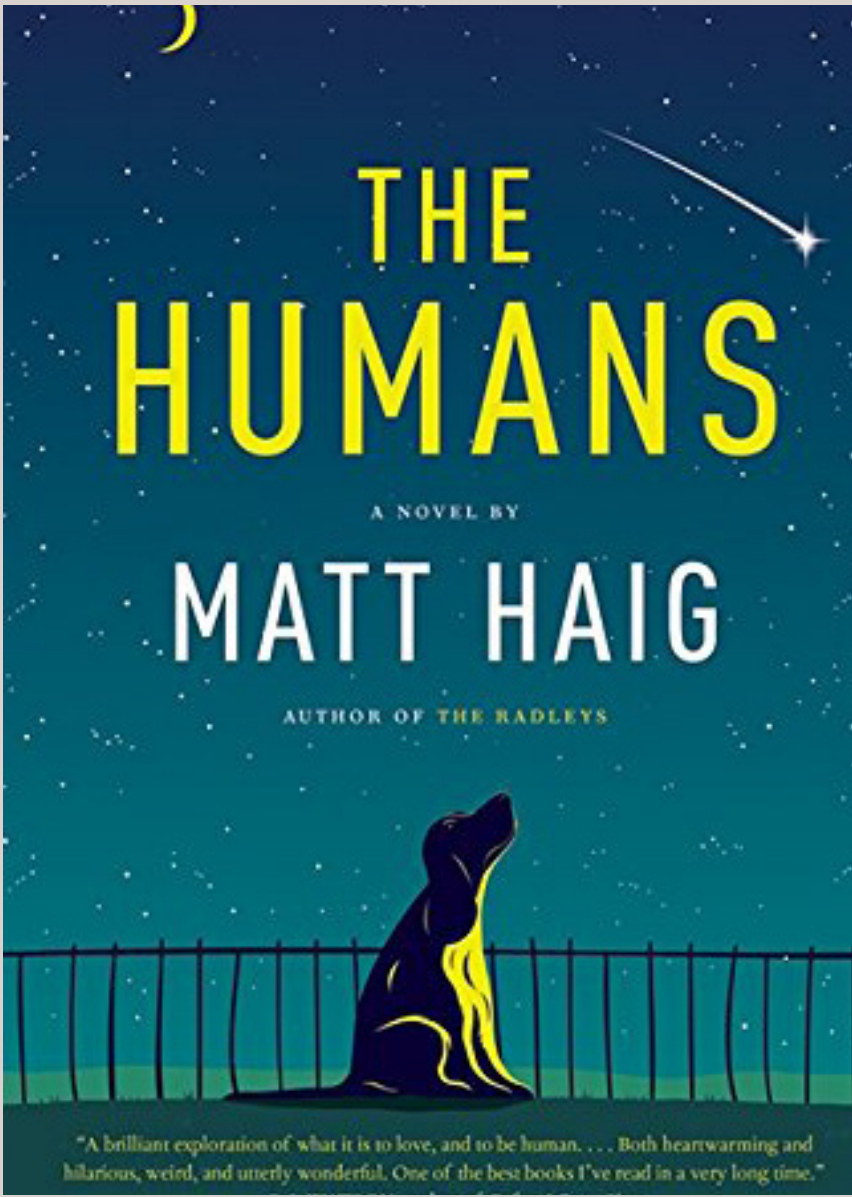
Set in the early 19th century, this historical fantasy-dark academia fusion follows a Chinese boy named Robin who dreams of being accepted into the Royal Institute of Transalation (called Babel) at Oxford. However, Babel which is the world's leading location for magical "silver-working," involving magically revealing meanings lost in translation, is often used for imperial conquest, and Robin begins to question wheather he should continue to chase his dream or pursue another goal. Babel has secret societies, mystery, and fascinating characters. It simultaneously holds your attention through a fascinating plot and asks questions about important social issues such as imperialism, school revolutions, and classism. It is often marketed as a combination of Donna Tartt's The Secret History and Susanna Clarke's Jonathan Strange and Mr. Norell. If you like msterful plot , dark academia settings, and interesting fantasy worlds, join us as we read R.F. Kuang's most recent novel after her wildly successful series, The Poppy War.



3 P.M.

Moderator: Allison Byrd
Meeting for: 8 weeks

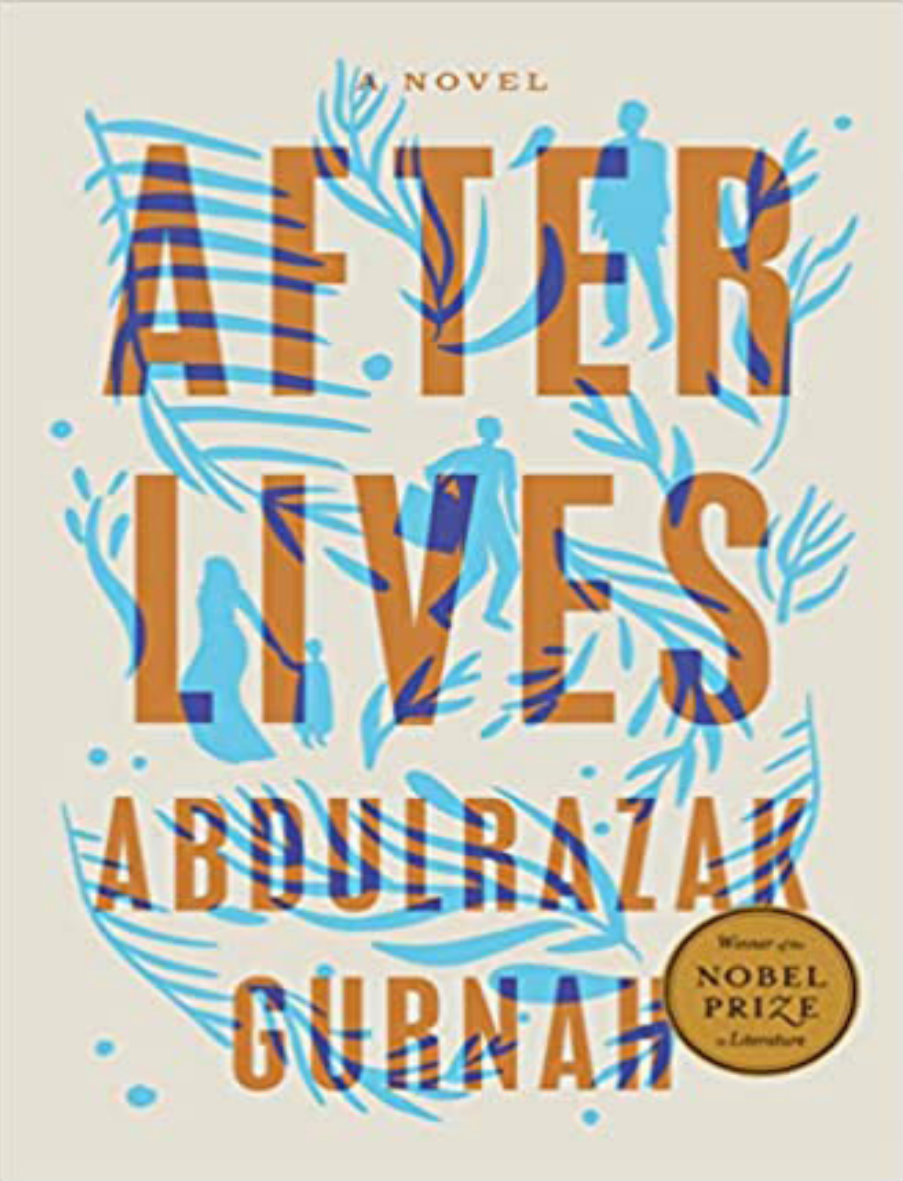
Oliver Marks has just served ten years in jail for a murder he may or may not have committed. On the day he's released, he's greeted by the man who put him in prison. Detective Colborne is retiring but before he does, he wants to know what really happened a decade ago. As one of seven young actors studying Shakespeare at an elite arts college, Oliver and his friends play the same roles onstage and off: hero, villian, tyrant, temptress, ingenue, extra. But when the casting changes, and the secondary characters usurp the stars, the play spills dangerously over into life, and one of them is found dead. The rest face their greatest challenge yet: convincing the police, and themselves, that they are blameless.



4 P.M.

Moderators: Wes Russel & Julianne Li
Meeting for: 6 weeks

In Matt Haig's book "The Humans," the main character (an extraterrestrial disguised as Professor Andrew Martin, a leading mathematician at Crambridge University) comes to Earth on a mission to stop human progress. Along the way Andrew is forced to challenge what he knows about his home planet, a utopian society of immortality and infinite knowledge. Humans were portrayed to him as primitive and repulsive, but as he lives among them and forms bonds he learns that maybe there is more to humanity than he thought. This book makes readers think about humanity and how it is personified. In a perfect blend of psychological concepts, Matt Haig leaves readers contemplating the complexities of being human.

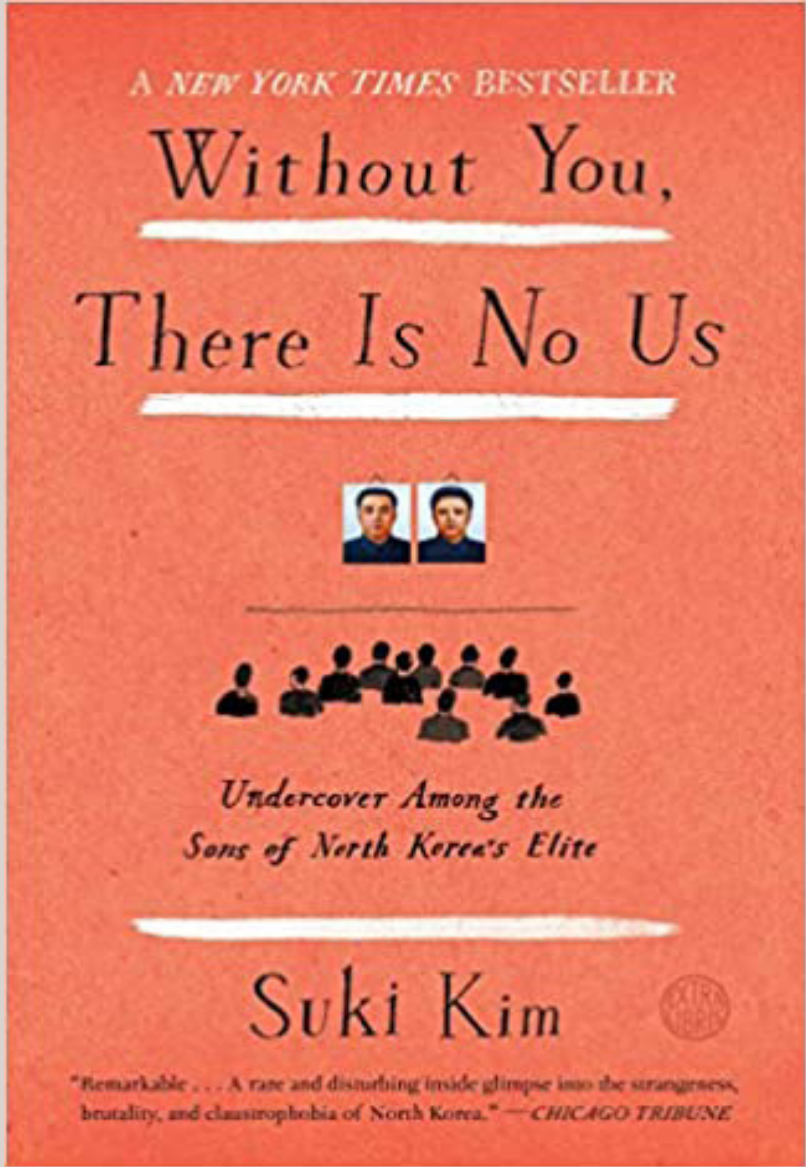


5 P.M.

Moderator: Imelda Aldava
Meeting for: 8 weeks

When he was just a boy, Ilyas was stolen from his parents on the coast of east Africa by German colonial troops. After years away, fighting against his own people, he returns home to find his parents gone and his sister, Afiya, abandoned into de facto slavery. Hamza, too returns home from the war, scarred in body and soul and with nothing but the clothes on his back--until he meets the beautiful, undaunted Afiya. As these young people live and work and fall in lve, their fates knotted ever more tightly together, the sahdow of a new war on another continent falls over them, threatening once again to carry them away. Winner of the 2021 Nobel Prize in Literature, a sweeping, multi-generational saga of displacement,loss, and love, set against the brutal colonization of East Africa.

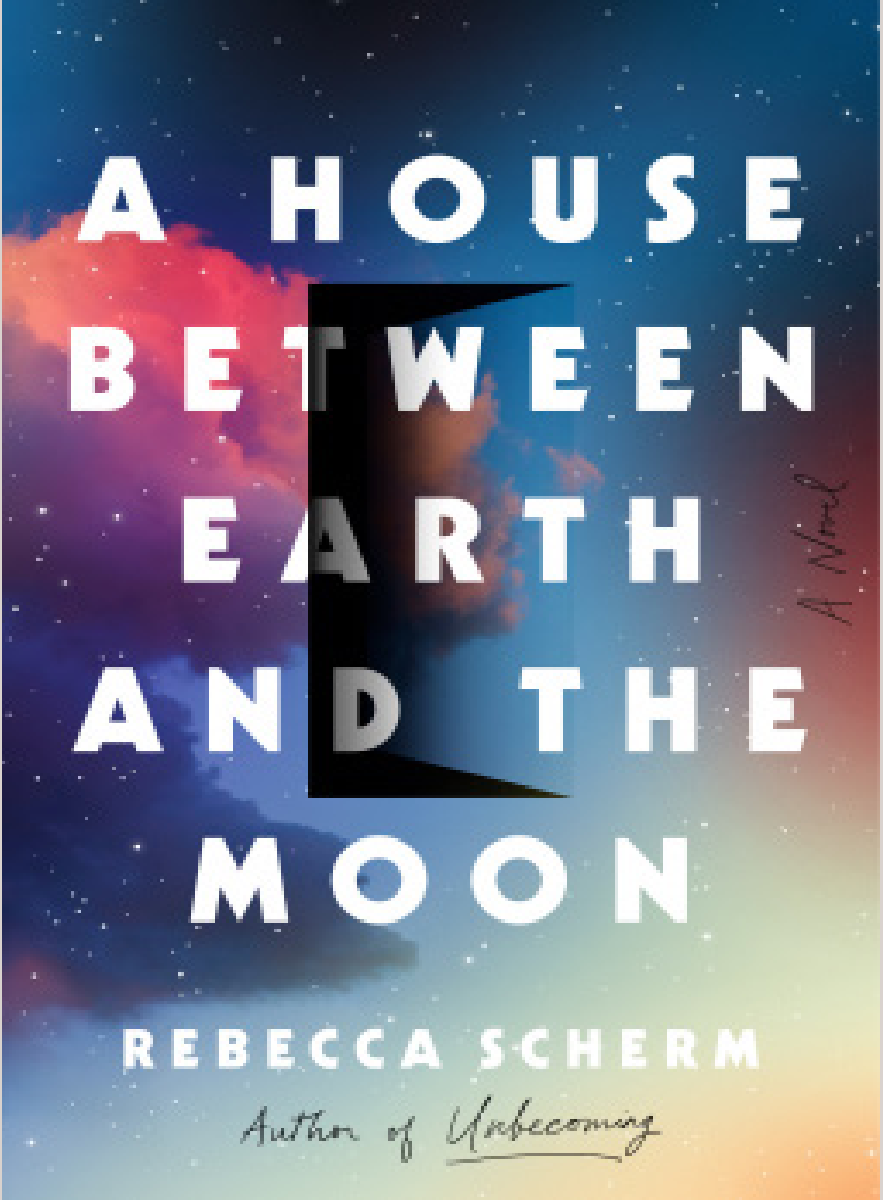
Tuesday Groups



12:30 P.M.

Moderator: Audrey Fowler
Meeting for: 7 weeks

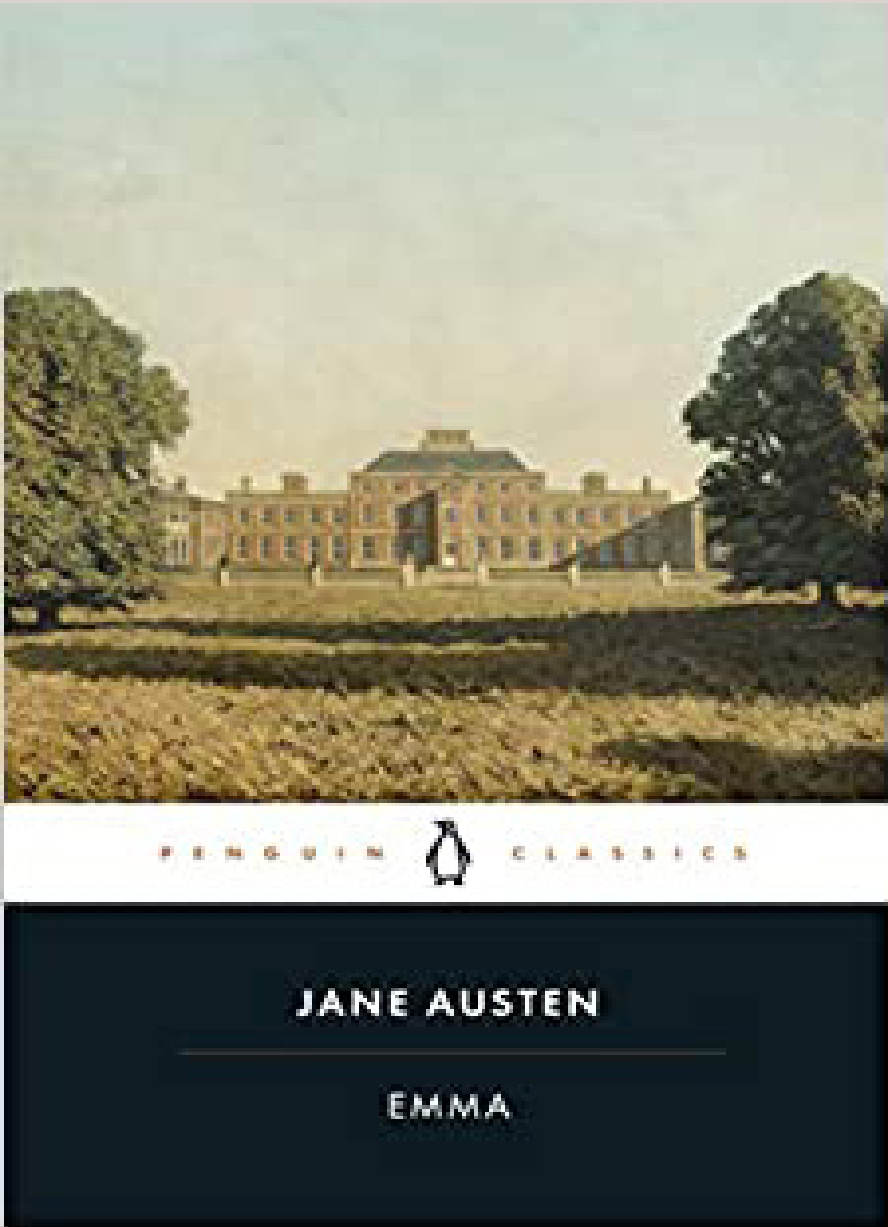
Today North Korea is a closed society in which very few people are able to enter, let alone see. This book is the story of Suki Kim, an American journalist who set foot into the country by posing as an English teacher, who recounts her astonishing experience and paints a very human picture of the country so few are privileged to see. Her memoir follows the routine she led teaching the sons of North Korea's elite families as she expresses each of their personalities and actions much like that of university students anywhere else, yet with a looming backdrop of authoritarianism. The title "Without You There Is No Us" comes from a patriotic hymn sung three times a day, every day by the author's students, expressing their devotion to the Great leader Kim-Jong-Il at the time. As most of the information known about life inside North Korea comes from defectors outside of the ruling upper class, Kim's memoir ofers a rare look into the lives of the elite in the world's "Hermit Kingdom" and their sons she called "soldiers and slaves."



2:00 P.M.

Moderator:Jillian Otero
Meeting for: 8 weeks

"Prescient and insightful, A House Between Earth and the Moon is at once a captivating epic about the machinations of big tech and a profoundly intimate mediation on the unmistakable human bonds that hold us together." Follow Alex, Tess, Mary Agnes, and the Son sisters as they try to save the world from the fallout of the climate crisis while navigating a hyper technological society. The story, set on Earth and on Parallexis (the first-ever luxury residential space station built for billionaires,) is rich with many memorable characters and really tests the reader's ability to remain optimistic in the face of impending doom.



4:30 P.M.

Moderator: Emily Pope
Meeting for: 7 weeks

Emma Woodhouse is stunning, intelligent, wealthy, and single. She is pleased with her existence and does not need love or marriage. But nothing makes her happier than meddling in other people's relationships. But when she tries to find a nice match for her protege Harriet Smith, despite the cautions of her close friend Mr. Knightly, her well crafted plans quickly fall apart and have unexpected results. With its imperfect heroin and its witty and subtle exploration of relationships, Emma is often seen as Jane Austen's most flawless work.



5 P.M.

Moderator: Taylor Broadbent
Meeting for: 10 weeks

Twilight took over the world seemingly overnight in the late 2000's, but not without huge criticism. This reading group will seek to reexamine Twilight and allow readers to judge the novel from their own reading. This group will delve into the gothic themes and literary allusions that deepen the reading of the novel, as well as examine the impact this novel has on relationships, gender roles, and race. Sink your teeth into challenging traditional definitions of literary merit, and join us in reading Twilight this spring.

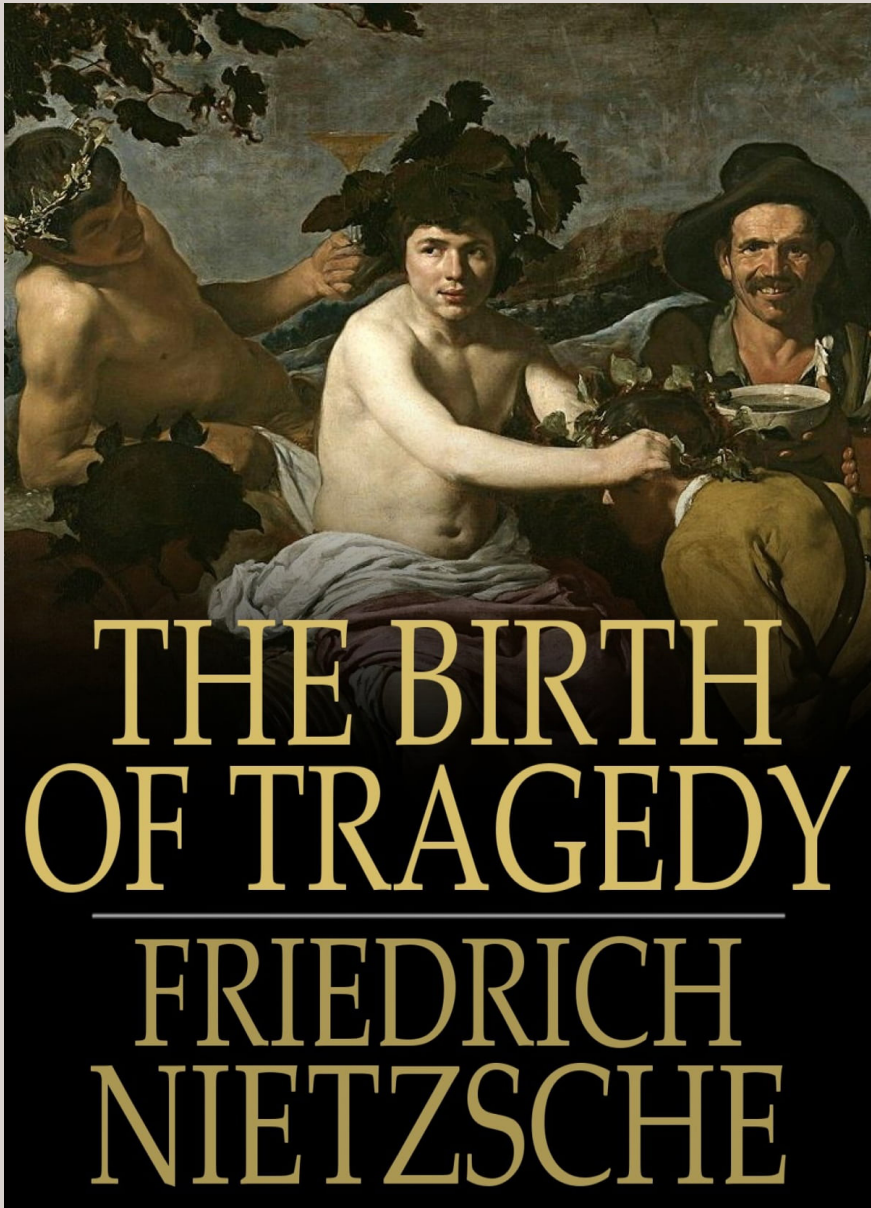
Wednesday Groups



10:30 A.M.

Moderator: Jeanette Hoang
Meeting for: 12 weeks

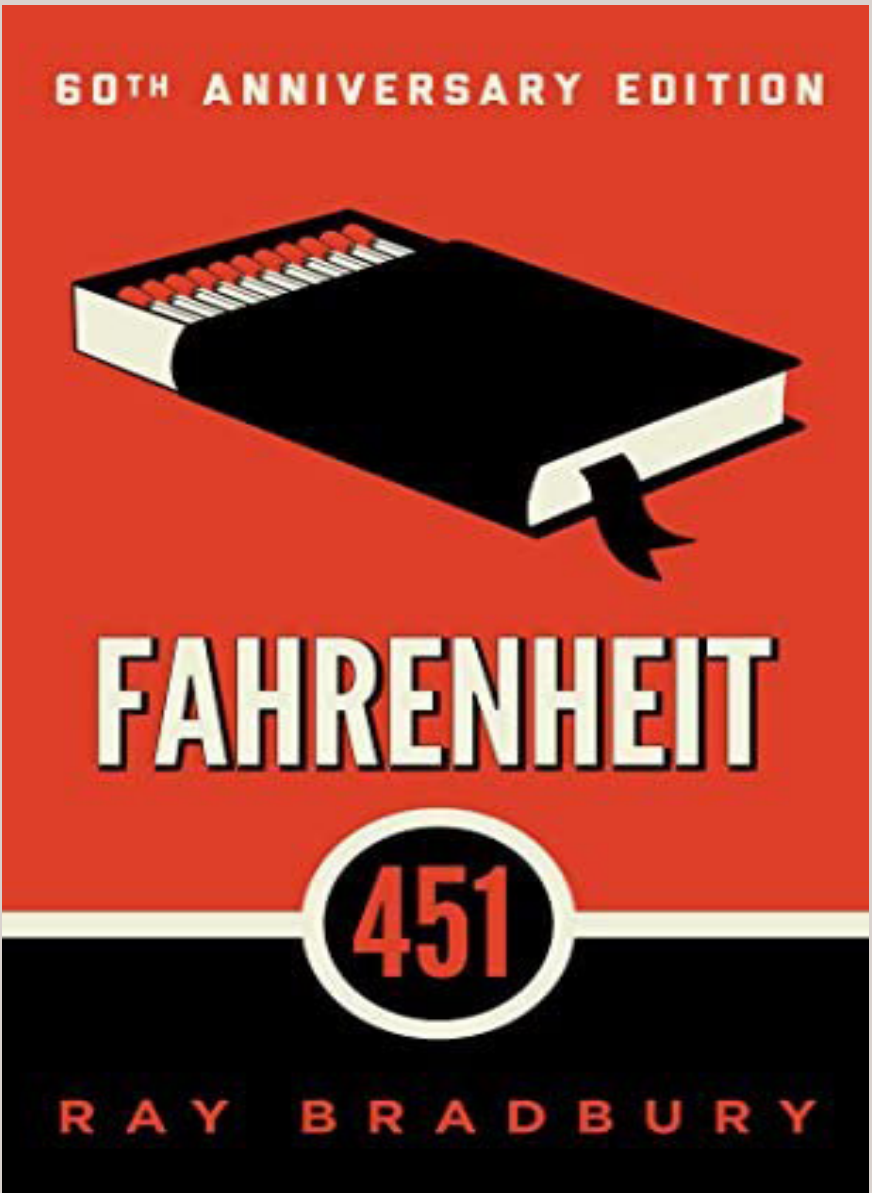
Drama, trauma, an elaborate saga!-XOXO
Gossip Girl takes an Asian-immigrant and Asian-American California high-school twist. They're called parachutes: teenagers dropped off to live in private homes and study in the United States while their wealthy parents remain in Asia. Through the eyes of Claire and Dani we learn the effects this experience can have on a person. The book covers a wide range of societally relevant topics - the complexity of "Asian-American", institutional betrayal, gender-based violence/race culture, classism, "fresh off the boat" vs Asian-American experiences, racism, romance friendship and more! **CW: themes of rape culture, SA, and grooming.**



2 P.M.

Moderator: Ana Spradling & Charis Forbes
Meeting for: 6 weeks

Want to read Nietzsche? Just enjoy philosophy? Feel the need to leave the solitude of your dorm and break down philosophical concepts with someone else? You're joining the right group. We will eat cookies (or other snacks if you hate cookies) and really get into the weeds talking about art and salvation and the human soul.
Nietzsche's first published book, The Birth of Tragedy is a compelling argument for the necessity of art in life. This landmark work of criticism is fueled by Nietzsche's enthusiasms for Greek tragedy, the philosophy of Schopenhauer and the music of Wagner.

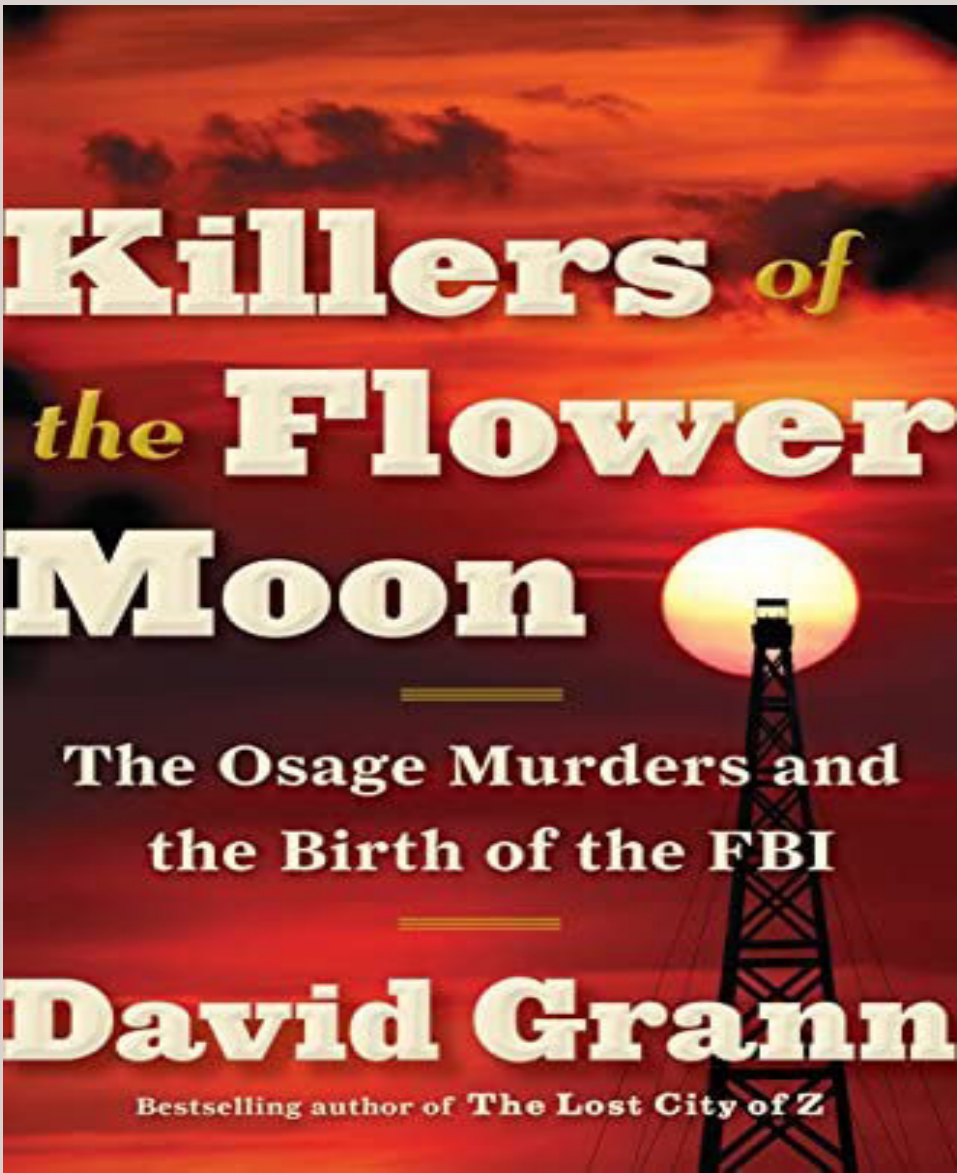


5:30 P.M.

Moderator: Tanya Miller-Eager
Meeting for: 5 weeks

Guy Montag is a fireman. His job is to destroy the most illegal of commodities, the printed book, along with the houses in which they are hidden. Montag never questions the destruction and ruin his actions produce, returning each day to his bland life and wife, Mildred, who spends all day with her television "family." But when he meets an eccentric young neighbor, Clarisse, who introduces him to a past where people didn't live in fear and to a present where one sees the world through the ideas in books instead of the mindless chatter of television, Montag begins to question everything he has ever known.

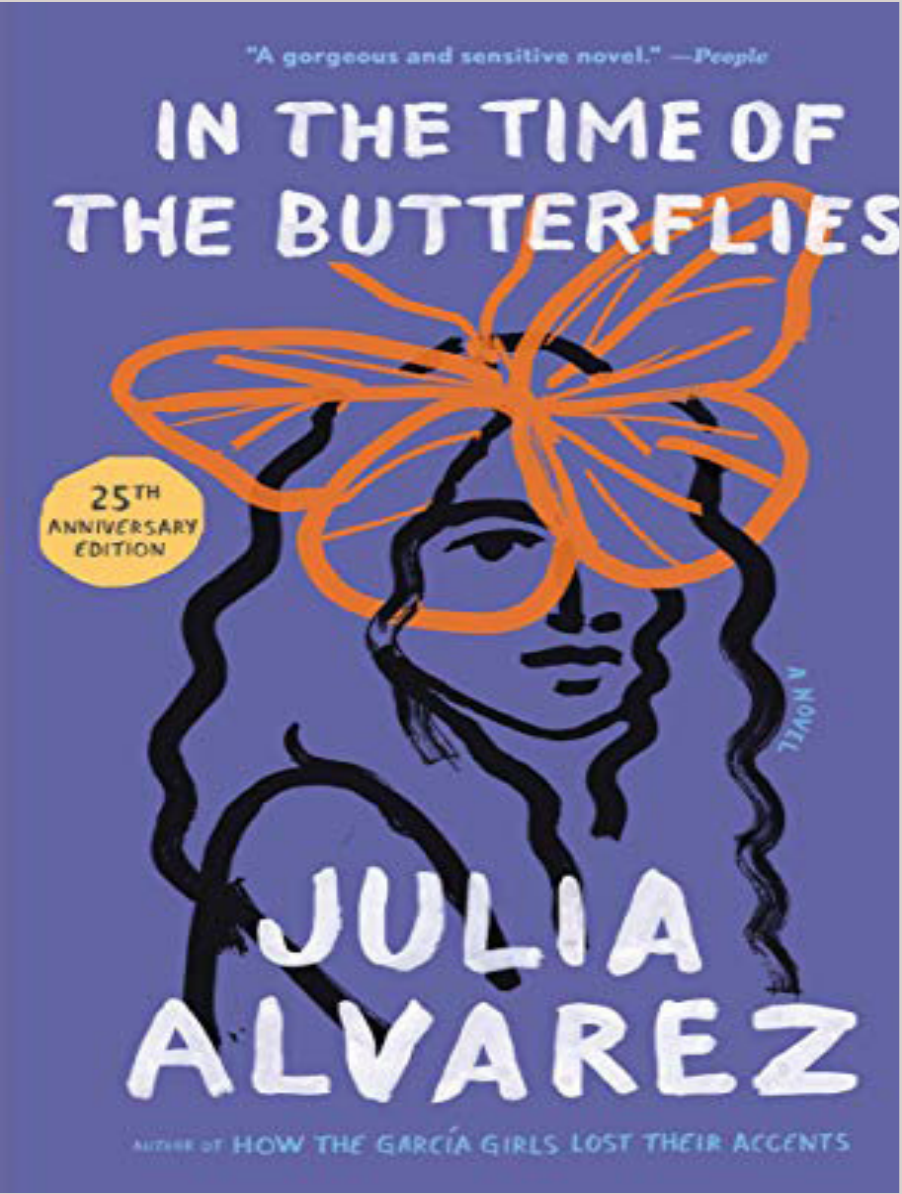
Thursday Groups



10:45 A.M.

Moderator: Lucy Westmeyer
Meeting for: 7 weeks

In the 1920's, the richest people per capita in the world were members of the Osage Indian nation in Oklahoma. After oil was discovered beneath their land, they rode in chauffeured automobiles, built mansions, and sent their children to study in Europe. Then one by one, the Osage began to be killed off . The family of an Osage woman, Mollie Burkhart, became a prime target. Her relatives were shot and poisoned. And it ws just the beginning, as more and more members of the tribe began to die under mysterious circumstances. As the death toll climbed to more than twenty-four, the FBI took up the case. It was one of the organization's first major homicide investigations and the bureau badly bungled the case. In desperation, the young director J.Edgar Hoover, turned to former Texas Ranger named Tom White to unravel the mystery.Together with the Osage they bagen to expose one of the most chilling conspiracies in American History. (Major motion picture adaptation starring Leonardo Dicaprio to be released in May 2023!)

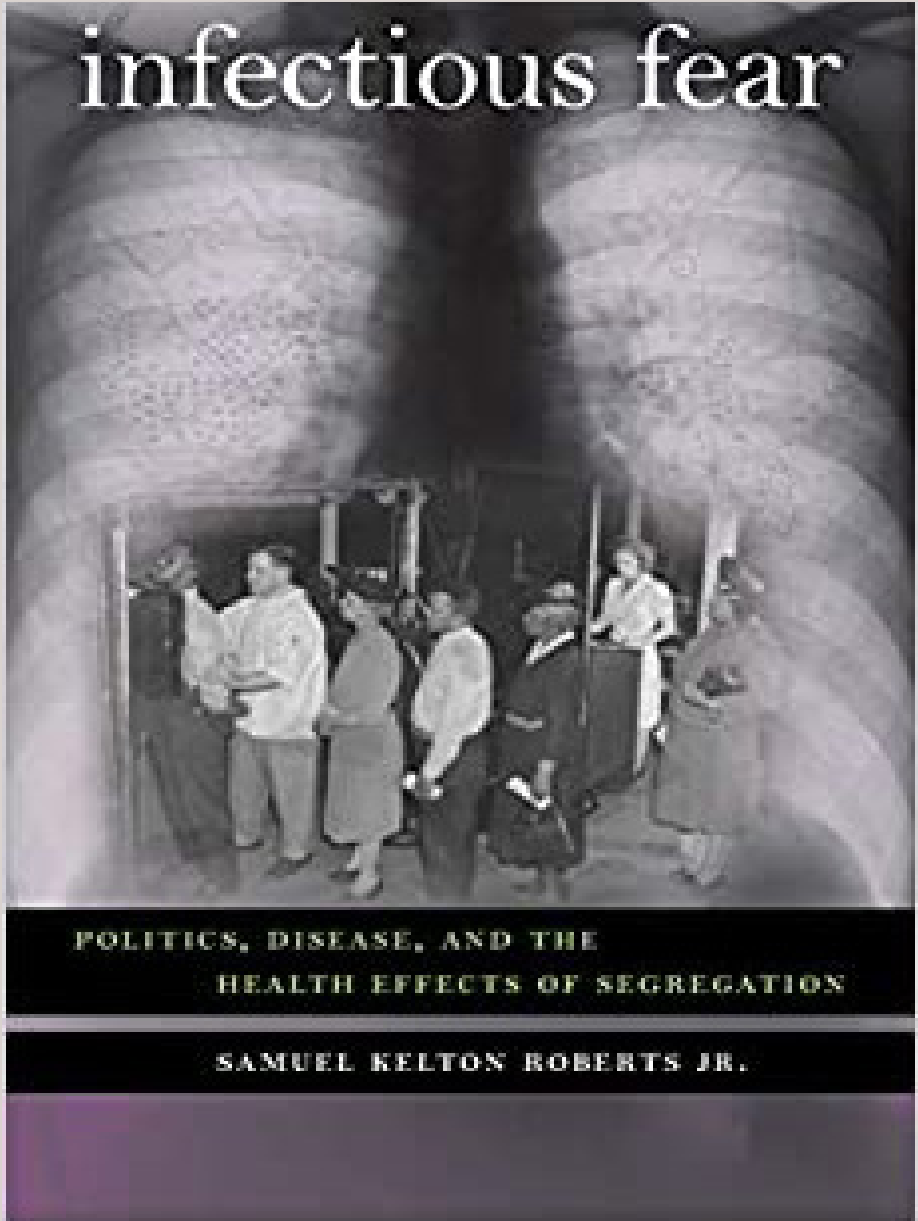


4:00 P.M.

Moderator: Kilie Goins
Meeting for: 6 weeks

Inspired by the true story of the lives and deaths of "Las Mariposas." It centers around the Mirabel sisters or "Las Mariposas," as they grow up during the Trujillo regime in the Dominican Republic, considered one of the darkest and bloodiest eras of Dominican History. The book follows the sisters as they learn to become their selves amid oppression, as they discover their passions, love, and a revolution that would eventually cost them their lives. The writing is beautiful, but there is no lack of fun and humor throughout the novel, even thouh the ending is ultimately tragic. Alvarez centers her story around family and, most importantly, the courage it takes to make hard choices, even if they might (or might not) cost you your life.

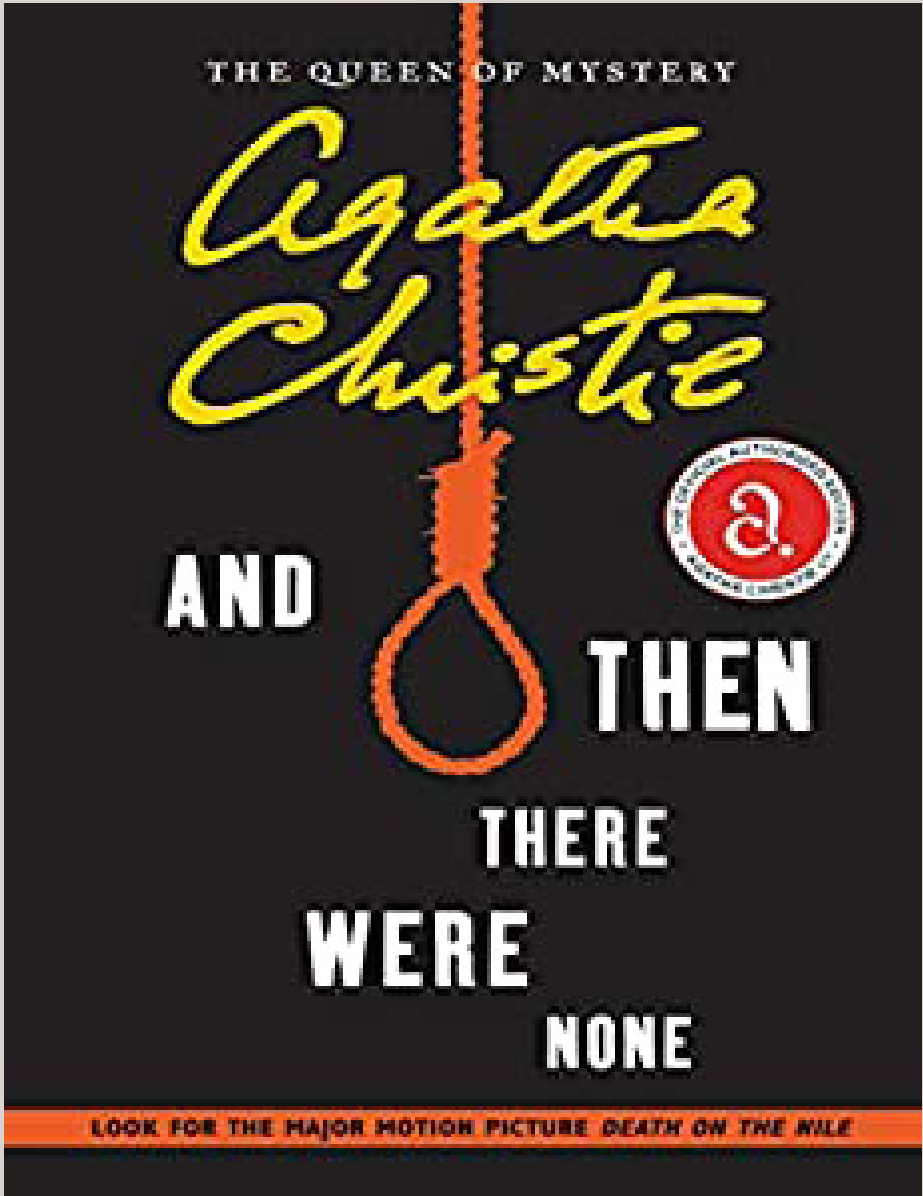
Friday Groups



12 P.M.

Moderator: Cass Condray
Meeting for: 9 weeks

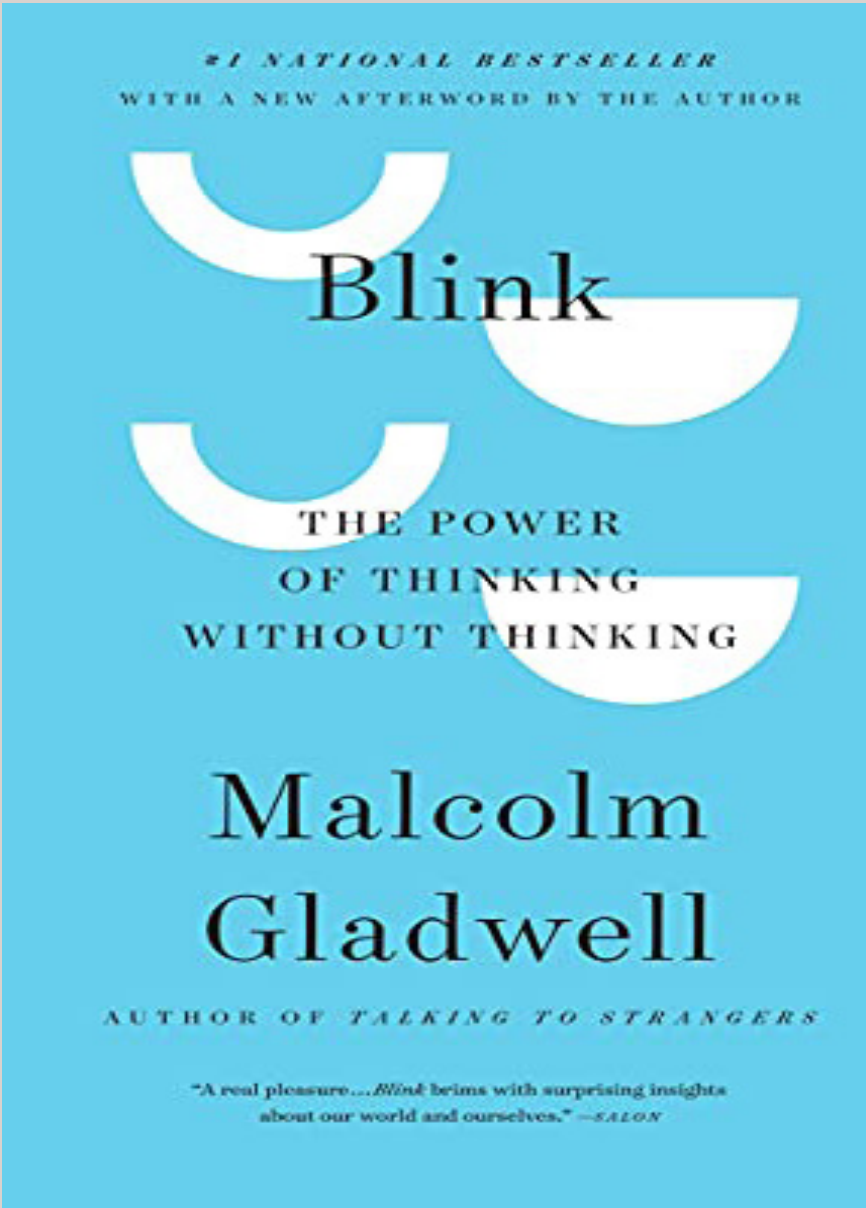
Infectious Fear is a book about a disease that is almost unheard of today, but was among the leading cause of death for African Americans in the first half of the 20th century- Tuberculosis. Often causing fatalities of whole neighborhoods, this book explores how segregation and medical racism perpetuated the idea of "racial hygiene" was prompted by both public and private institutions, reactionary white politicians and Jim Crow segregation laws. The true root of the problem was segregated, overcrowded housing. This book uses the Tuberculosis crisis to discuss the radicalized history of medicine and the roots of modern health disparities.



1 P.M.

Moderator: Crystal Hollen
Meeting for: 8 weeks

The book offers a haunting look into the lives of a dozen characters who all have enticing secrets and potentially deadly motives. As each person slowly gets picked off in ways following a cryptic child's nursery rhyme, will it be possible to find the killer before there is no one left? Join us as we search for the answer before it is too late, and we delve into what it means to be a hero or a villain. You may find that in this tale, there are only villains.



2:00P.M.

Moderator: Rajita Singh
Meeting for: 6 weeks

Have you ever had a gut feeling about a situation or person that turned out to be true? Would you like to know where those gut feelings come from? Malcolm Gladwell's book "Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking" may give you some answers! In this compelling book, Gladwell describes how both professionals and you make those split second decisions that often turn out to be correct, the decisions that can earn you a friend, help you avoid a person, or even save your life.If you want to learn about "thin-slicing" and discuss it as a concept, you should read this book!



3 P.M.

Moderator: Aiden Sudler & Keane Hauck
Meeting for: 8 weeks

Would you rather study the most mediocre novel of all time, or the absolute worst novel of all time?Infamous Harry Potter fanfiction My Immortal is widely considered to be a paragon of bad fanfiction writing, being only loosely based on the source material and including a variety of stereotypes and cliché plot devices. Still what literary conclusions can be drawn from such work? In this reading group, we plan to study My Immortal, drawing upon outside sources to situate it within the broader context of fanfiction as a whole. We plan to discuss the cultural phenomenom that is fanfiction, and analyze general thematic content of what makes literature worthy of study.What a work means to fans, how a novel serves its community, and the variety of individual perspectives on any given work provide a nuanced discussion of how My Immortal interprets its source material.