

Honors College

Spring 2024 Reading Groups

Groups will begin third week of classes.
January 30th-February 3rd

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, scan the QR code below or click the link in this program. Groups are limited to 15 people, and sign-ups are made on a first-come basis.

Spring 2024 reading groups will be conducted in person and will begin meeting the week of January 30- February 3rd, 2024. 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



Featured Books

Beach Read by Emily Henry
Moderated by Evan Jones

Brave New World by Aldous Huxley
Moderated by Daniel Shamsee & Lena Jurik

Cat's Cradle by Kurt Vonnegut
Moderated by Sam Hunt

Crime and Punishment by Fyodor Doestoyevsky
Moderated by Justice Neasbitt

Flatland: A Romance of Many Dimensions by Edwin A. Abboy
Moderated by: Bria Farmer & Chloe Prazinko

Hallowe'en Party by Agatha Christie
Moderated by Crystal Hollen

Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy by Douglas Adams
Moderated by Robel Tesfaselassie

Persuasion by Jane Austen
Moderated by Danielle Crutcfeld, Alexa Dringus, Xotchil Hidalgo

Prophet Song by Paul Lynch
Moderated by Brian Johnson

Six of Crows by Leigh Bardugo
Moderated by Alexandria Wilson

The Gulag Archipelago Vol. I by Alexsandr I. Solhenitsyn
Moderated by Caleb Xan Anagnos

The Gunslinger by Stephen King
Moderated by Evan Jones

The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe by C.S Lewis
Moderated by Preston Vitosh and Teddy Winter

The Rabbit Hutch by Tess Gunty
Moderated by Imelda Aldava

The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down by Anne Fadiman
Moderated by Vignesh Anand

Unmasking AI by Joy Buolamwini
Moderated by Julianna Kershen

Hallowe'en Party by Agatha Christie

Moderator: Crystal Hollen

Mondays at 10 am for 8 weeks

Hallowe'en Party, also published under the name "A Murder in Venice", is an intriguing novel written by one of the most brilliant mystery fiction writers of the last century. The novel includes one of her most famous characters, detective Hercule Poirot, who must figure out if the mysterious goings on in the ancient city of Venice are the sinister plots of a killer, or if something more ethereal is at play. Join us as we immerse ourselves in this chilling story of murder and

Persuasion by Jane Austen

Moderators: Danielle Crutchfield, Alexa Dringus, Xochitl Hidalgo

Mondays at 1pm for 6 weeks

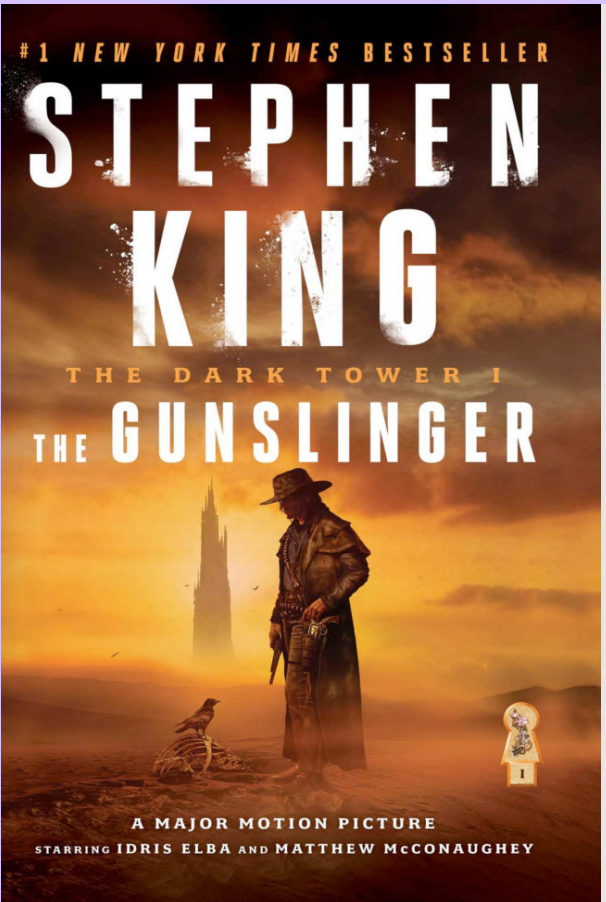
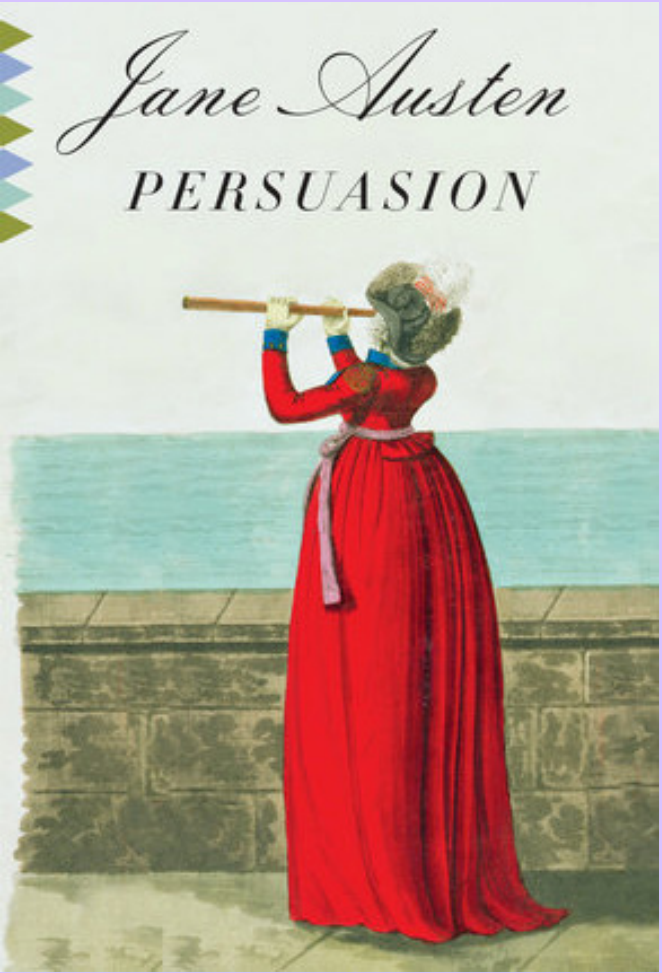
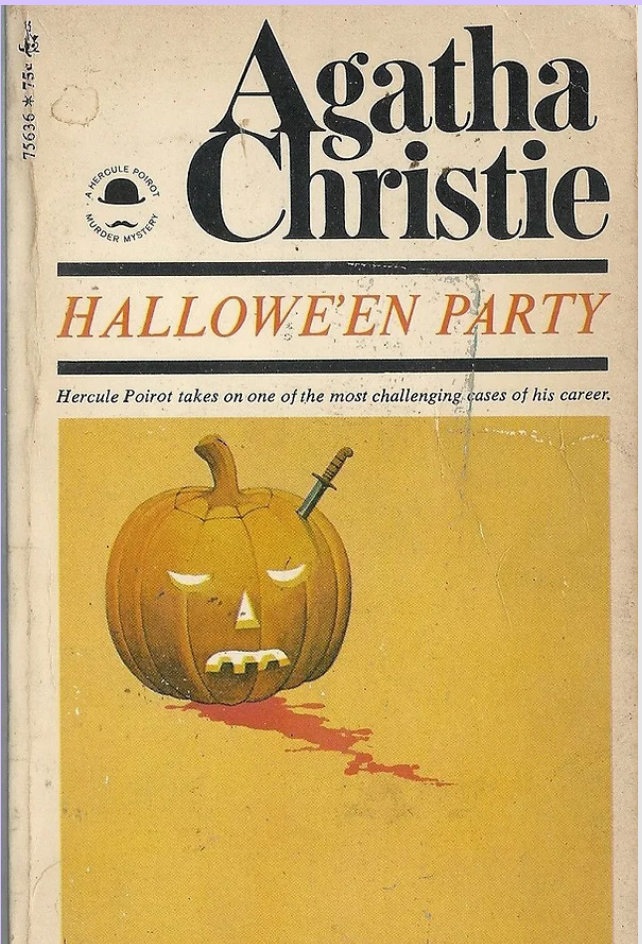
The story concerns Anne Elliot, a young Englishwoman of twenty-seven years, whose family moves to lower their expenses and reduce their debt by renting their home to an Admiral and his wife. The wife's brother, Navy Captain Frederick Wentworth, was engaged to Anne in 1806, but the engagement was broken when Anne was "persuaded" by her friends and family to end their relationship. Anne and Captain Wentworth, both single and unattached, meet again after a seven-year separation, setting the scene for many humorous encounters as well as a second, well-considered chance at love and marriage for Anne in her second "bloom".

The Gunslinger by Stephen King

Moderator: Evan Jones

Mondays at 3pm for 10 weeks

"The man in black fled across the desert, and the gunslinger followed." The Gunslinger is the first of seven books from the Dark Tower series, which follows the last gunslinger remaining from a world lost to time. To save his world, the gunslinger must seek out the Dark Tower and defend it from collapse. But first, he must catch the man in black who has been ahead of him at every turn. Driven nearly to madness, Roland of Gilead must balance his ardent obsession for the Tower with his quickly dwindling humanity. Can Roland of Gilead catch the man in black in time and save his world from collapse?



Flatland: A Romance of Many Dimensions by Edwin A. Abbot

Moderator: Bria Farmer & Chloe Prazinko

Tuesdays at 10 am for 4 weeks

Flatland: A Romance of Many Dimensions tells the tale of A. Square as he visits other dimensions. This short book is a masterwork of worldbuilding, describing the unique two-dimensional world of the main character, as well as worlds of one and zero dimensions. Famous for helping people grasp the mathematical concepts of different dimensions, this book has stood the test of time, still popular 140 years after its publication. While the book is famous for its math, it is also a satire of the class and gender roles present in England at the time of its publication.

Unmasking AI by Joy Buolamwini

Moderator: Julianna Kershen

Tuesdays at 11 am for 6 weeks

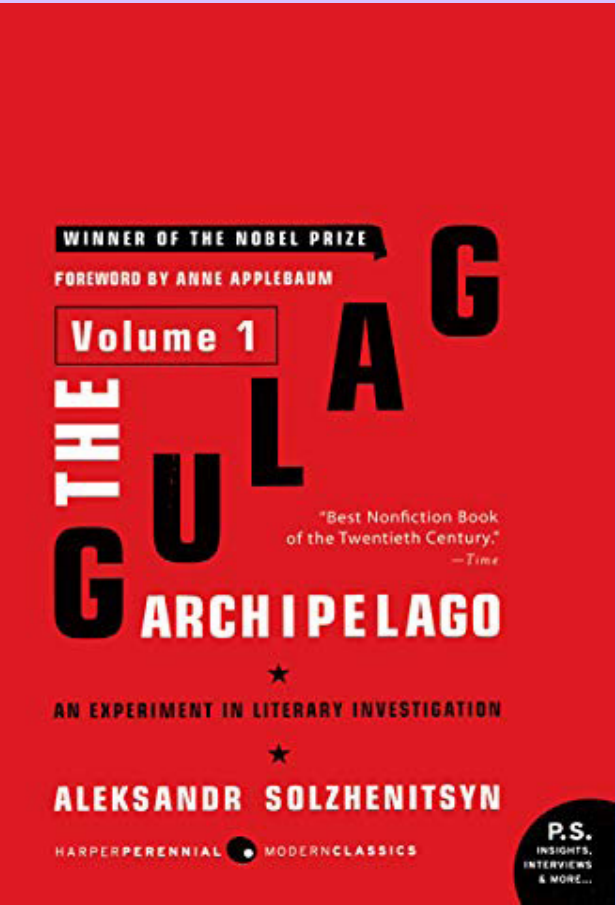
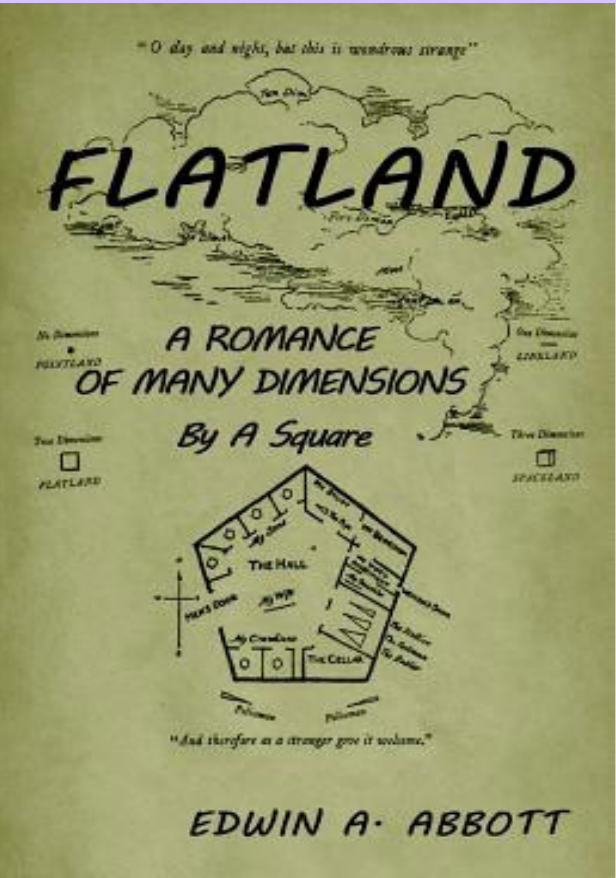
The emergence of artificial intelligence and related developing technologies has been both heralded as an incredible opportunity and derided as the potential source of our destruction. Dr. Buolamwini’s book focuses on analyzing the affordances and constraints that we face in an era of generative AI, especially as they relate to racial and gender biases in the technocratic world of Silicon Valley and AI technology development. Her book invites us to develop a curious and skeptical eye towards the datafiction of our professional, public, and private lives, and the ways in which we must place human flourishing at the center of our interactions with technologies

The Gulag Archipelago Vol. I by Aleksandr I. Solzhenitsyn

Moderator: Caleb Xan Anagnos

Tuesdays at 1pm for 16 weeks

Discover the harrowing masterpiece that unveils some of the darkest corners of the human experience, deep behind the Iron Curtain. Solzhenitsyn, a literary giant and former prisoner himself, weaves a semi-autobiographical, semi genealogical masterpiece which begins with :The Gulag Archipelago Volume 1: An Experiment in Literary Investigation.” The Gulag Archipelago stands as a testament to the enduring quest for Justice and Truth. This book is a perfect choice for anyone - Interested in Soviet or Russian History - who enjoys gripping narratives and a unique prose - Wants to know why Putin has said that “the entire thorny path of his life” would “remain for us an example of genuine devotion and selfless serving to the people, fatherland and the ideals of freedom, justice and humanism”.



Brave New World by Aldous Huxley

Moderators: Daniel Shamsee & Lena Jurik

Tuesdays at 6pm for 4 weeks

The futuristic World State is organized to ensure that everyone is happy and social stability is guaranteed. It is a world that has eliminated disease, old age, or war. It is devoid of passion, a place where the past has been abolished and the future cannot begin. Alpha plus psychologist Bernard Marx seems alone in harboring an ill-defined longing to break free from this world. The novel offers a satirical portrait of the measures that could be taken to protect mankind from its potential for self-destruction. Each day our society and technological progress marches forward, plunging us into a reality similar to the Brave New World. Published 17 years before Orwell’s 1984, Brave New World has been ranked the 5th best English Language Novel of the 20th century by Modern Library and one of the top 100 banned and challenged books by the American Library Association.

Scythe by Neal Schusterman

Moderator: Nolen Jackson

Wednesdays at 2:30 pm for 8 weeks

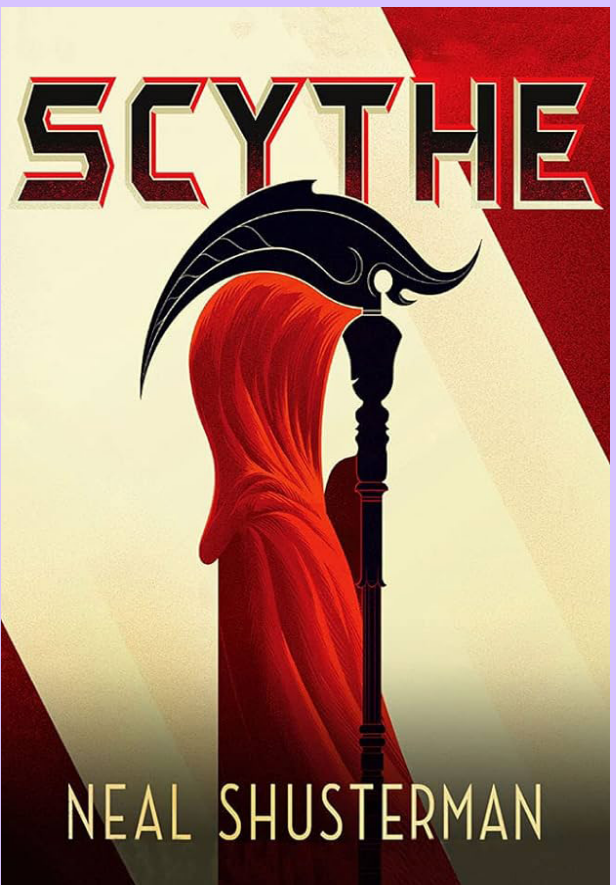
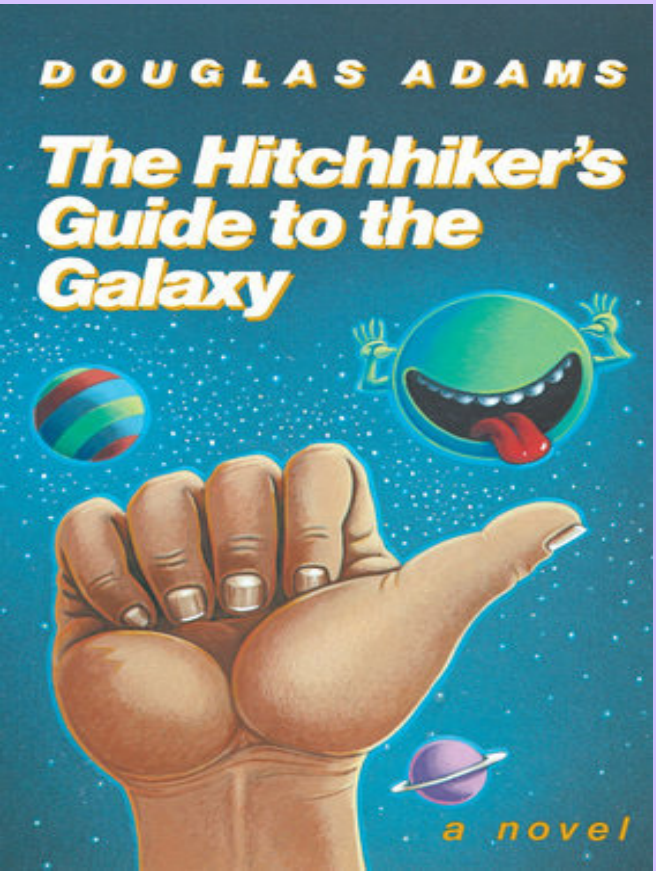
A world with no hunger, no disease, no war, no misery: humanity has conquered all those things, and has even conquered death. Now Scythes are the only ones who can end life_ and they are commanded to do so, in order to keep the size of the population under control. Citra and Rowan are chosen to be a scythe_a role that neither wants. These teens must master the “art” of taking life, knowing that the consequence of failure could meand losing their own. This is a young adult fiction book, meaning it has easy to read dialogue and younger characters, but the moral questions in this book are very thought-provoking.

The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy by Douglas Adams

Moderator: Robel Testaselassie

Wednesdays at 4pm for 5 weeks

DON’T PANIC!! Get a copy of Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy and you’ll be good wherever in the universe you may find yourself. Follow Arthur Dent and his fellow travelers as they careen through spacetime, become subjected to alien poetry, and puzzle over why 42 is the answer to Life, the Universe, and Everything. Interested in why 42 is the answer? Join us! And bring your towel (please don’t actually bring your towel it’s just a book reference).



Now Is Not the Time to Panic by Kevin Wilson

Moderator: Imelda Aldava

Wednesdays at 5pm for 5 weeks

Frankie Budge—aspiring writer, indifferent student, offbeat loner—is determined to make it through yet another summer in Coalfield, Tennessee, when she meets Zeke, a talented artist who has just moved into his grandmother’s house. Romantic and creative sparks begin to fly, and when the two jointly make an unsigned poster, shot through with an enigmatic phrase, it becomes unforgettable to anyone who sees it. The posters begin appearing everywhere, and people wonder who is behind them and start to panic. Satanists, kidnappers—the rumors won’t stop, and soon the mystery has dangerous repercussions that spread far beyond the town. Twenty years later, Frances Eleanor Budge gets a call that threatens to upend her carefully built life: a journalist named Mazzy Brower is writing a story about the Coalfield Panic of 1996. Might Frances know something about that?

Crime and Punishment by Fyodor Doestoyevsky

Moderator: Justice Neasbitt

Thursdays at 10am for 12 weeks

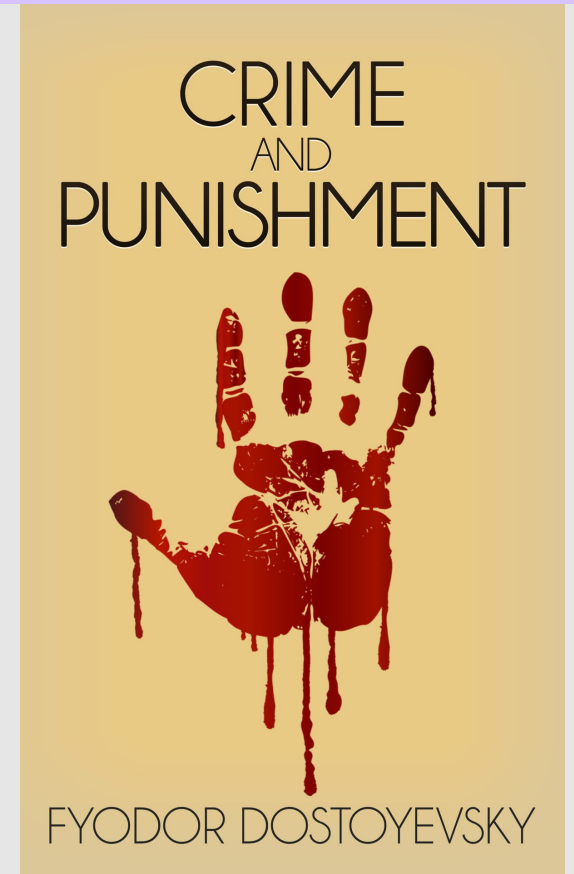
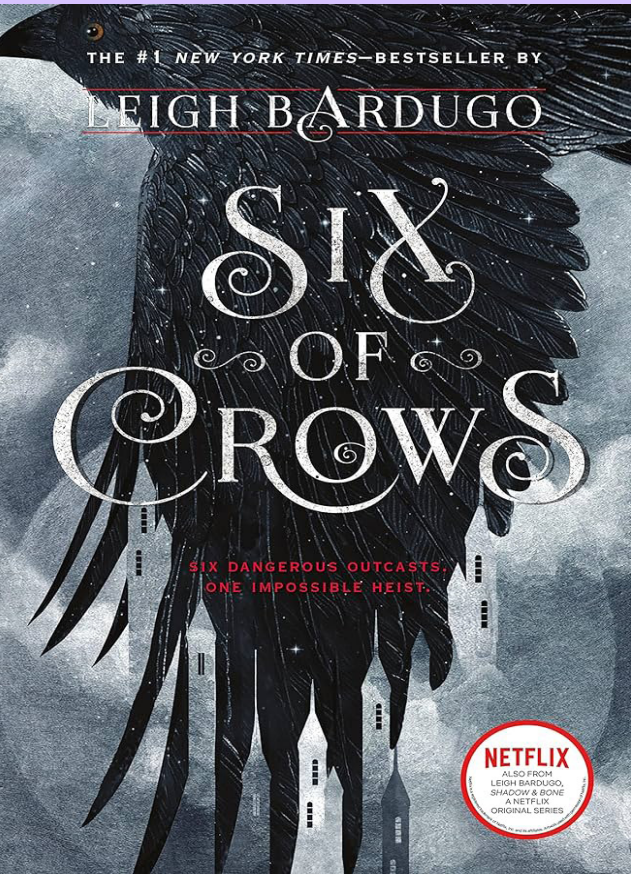
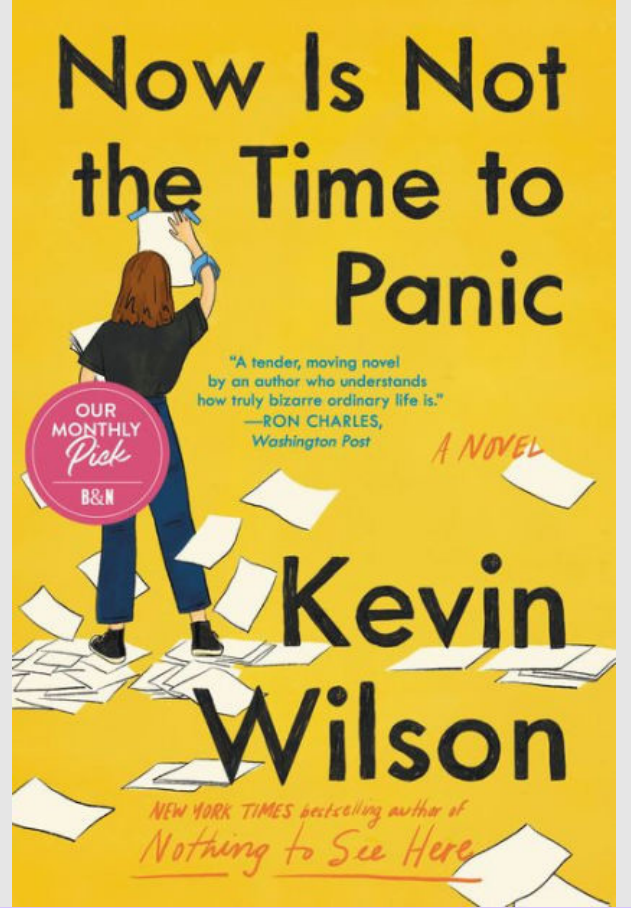
Raskolnikov is among the most miserable people in Moscow. He lives in a closet, his sister is marrying some rich guy who probably muded his last wife, and his new friend he met at the bar recently died. With all of this in mind, Raskolnikov decides to murder someone. The book follows him trying to navigate whether or not his muder was a bad thing to do, and the family of his friend trying to navigate losing a husband and father, that might also be a good thing? You’ll just have to come along and judge these situations for yourself.

Six of Crows by Leigh Bardugo

Moderator: Alexandria Wilson

Thursdays at 1pm for 9 weeks

Kaz Brekker, a mastermind and thief from Ketterdam, is tasked with infiltratring the Ice Court and freeing a Shu scientist from te Fierdan government. To accomplish this unthinkable mission and earn his promised sum of mone, Kaz puts together a crew of six unlikely companions, all of whom with unique backgrounds and skill sets that make them assets for this mission. Inej, the Wrath, and Jesper. the sharpshooter, are both members os the Dregs, the gang that Kaz effectively leads. Wylan is an outcast of high society with a talent for demolition. Nina is a Heartrender with dead-ly power, and Mathias is a Fierdan druskelle. The crew must fight inner tensions and hauntings from the past in order to successfully penetrate the Ice Court, make it out unscathed, and prevent disaster from befalling.



The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe

Moderators: Preston Vitosh & Teddy Winter

Thursdays at 2pm for 4 weeks

This fantasy novel follows four siblings who, avoiding war-torn parts of London, stay with a professor in the English countryside. While exploring the large estate, they venture through a wardrobe portal to find another world trapped in winter known as Narnia. Join us and follow along as the four explore this land and be prepared for some Turkish Delight!

The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down

Moderator: Vignesh Anand

Fridays at 10:30 am for 8 weeks

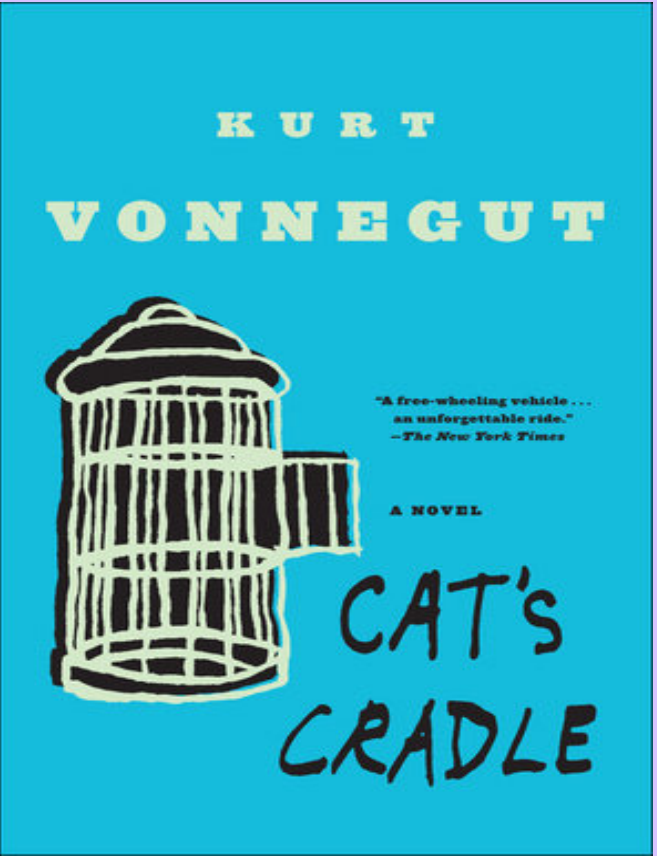
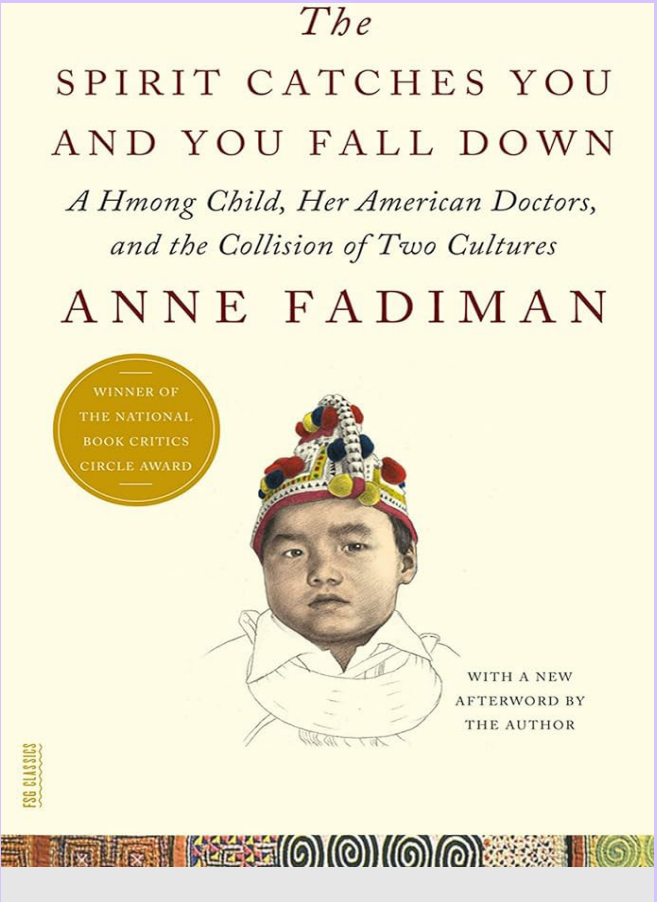
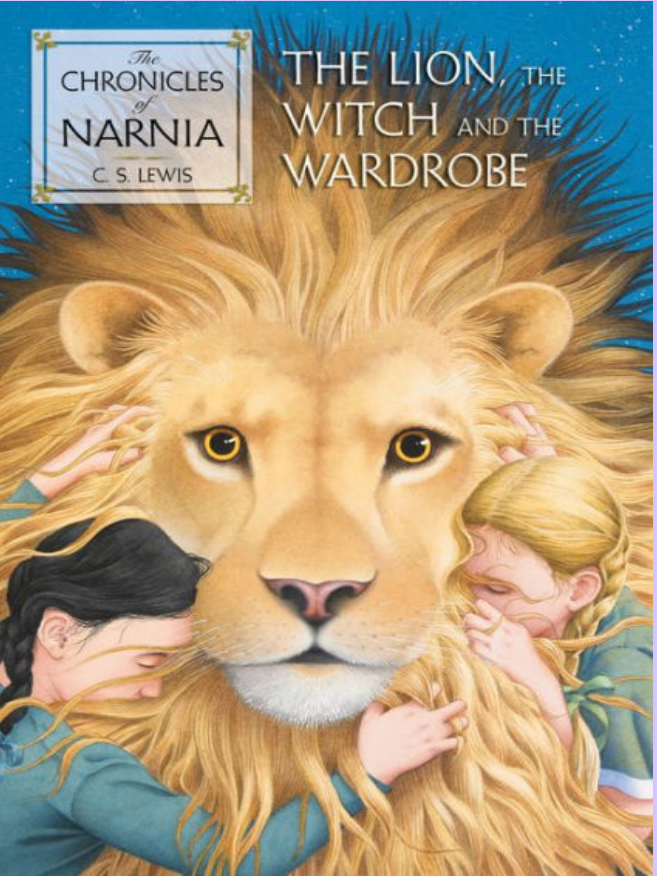
The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down tells the true story of a Hmong child's encounter with the American Healthcare system. At just three months old, Lia Lee went to the emergency room for epilepsy, leading to a series of cultural misunderstandings that gradually made her condition worse. Lia's family fled a war in Laos, struggled with finances, and had trouble navigating American medicine and culture. Despite this hardship, Lia's parents do everything they know to care for her as her health tragically gets worse and worse. At the same time, there is no hope and a physician, a social worker, and foster parents work to understand her Hmong culture. Throughout this gripping drama, Fadiman inserts important cultural insights and calls for readers to reflect on the importance of cultural competence in a multicultural country like America. Read this book to find out whether Lia's caretakers are able to save her from possible death while gaining a first-person perspective of Hmong-American culture.

Cat's Cradle by Kurt Vonnegut

Moderator: Sam Hunt

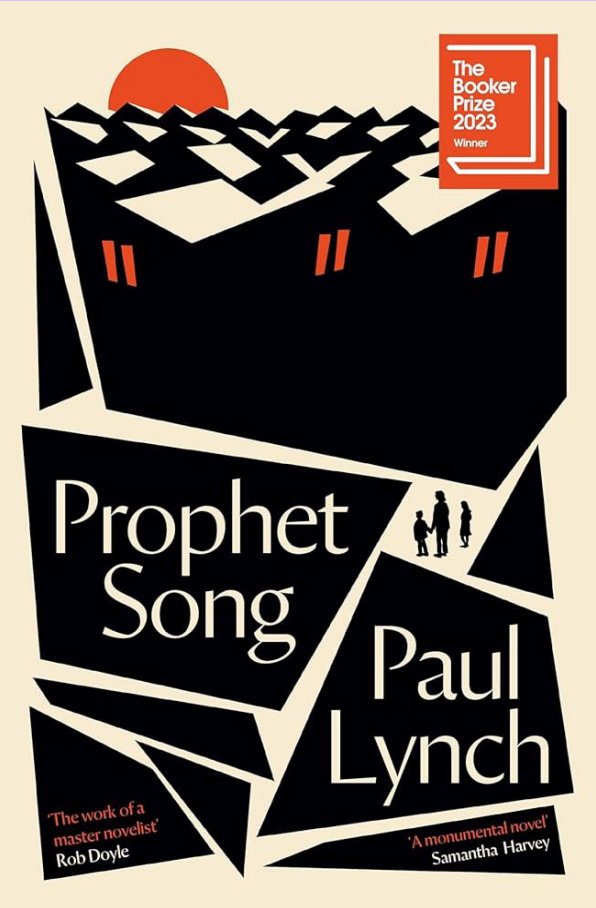
Thursdays at 4pm for 7 weeks

Written in the aftermath of the Cuban missile crisis, Cat's Cradle is an absurdist science-fiction satire on mad scientists, religion, and the apocalypse. It is considered one of the great novels by Kurt Vonnegut, a postmodern writer known for his ridiculous yet deeply meaningful commentaries on society. Set across the backdrop of Vonnegut's usual quirky mannerisms and style, Cat's Cradle investigates the meaning of life and the value of truth in a way that is both darkly amusing and emotionally touching. If you enjoyed works like Slaughterhouse 5, you'll love Cat's Cradle.



Prophet Song by Paul Lynch
Moderator: Prof. Brian Johnson
Tuesdays at 3pm for 8-9 weeks

On a dark, wet evening in Dublin, scientist and mother-of-four Eilish Stack answers her front door to find two officers from Ireland's newly formed secret police on her step. They have arrived to interrogate her husband, a trade unionist. Ireland is falling apart, caught in the grip of a government turning towards tyranny. As the life she knows and the ones she loves disappear before her eyes, Eilish must contend with the dystopian logic of her new, unraveling country. How far will she go to save her family? And what_ or who_ is she willing to leave behind? The winner of the Booker Prize 2023, Prophet Song presents a terrifying and shocking vision of a country sliding into authoritarianism and a depply human portrait of a mother’s fight to hold her family together.



Beach Read by Emily Henry
Moderator: Madeline Stout
Fridays at 1:30 for 8 weeks

In the novel “Beach Read,” January Adams, a spirited writer of chick lit, relocates to a lake house in an effort to produce a novel owed to her publisher. However, her optimistic perspective on happily-ever-after is shaken due to recent revelations about her parents’ marriage and a breakup with a boyfriend who couldn’t handle the resulting emotional upheaval. Due to this personal turmoil, it becomes increasingly challenging for January to write her upcoming romance novel. At the lake house, she discovers that her neighbor is Augustus “Gus” Everett, an attractive yet irritable novelist and a former college acquaintance, rival, and crush. Both working on their respective books, they reconnect and devise a bet: January will attempt a serious work of literary fiction, while Gus will endeavor to create something with a more positive tone. The plan is designed to reignite January’s creativity and broaden Gus’ horizons, with the possibility of a romantic connection unfolding in the process.

