

Book Discussion Group - Winter
Virtual
Thursdays: 2 p.m.

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This student-led literature discussion class actively engages participants in constructively conversing about books we read. We discuss, dissect, analyze and react personally to four books guided by structured discussion questions.

Books (recent fiction or non-fiction) are announced a month in advance, so students have ample opportunity to get and read them. Each book is discussed for one to two weeks, as scheduled. This class runs during each of three Encore terms.

Students from diverse backgrounds and viewpoints are welcomed. The class members suggest books for future terms.

1. Class led, member participation, book discussion course, not a lecture course.
2. Class members volunteer to co-facilitate book discussions and all members actively participate.
3. Book Reading list: Will be sent out a month prior to start of the class.

Please order books well in advance and read the book ahead of class discussion. Keep in mind that some more popular or recent books take a while to get from library, if there are lots of holds and/or limited copies.

4. Each book is discussed for one to two weeks. Discussion questions for each will be emailed out the week of each class.
5. Submit your email address to marceya@att.net for my email list.

Book Discussion Group Book Schedule: Winter 2024 (Jan. 25 – Mar. 7)

Tom Lake by Ann Patchett, 320 pp. NANCY; Winter Jan 25/Feb 1

In the spring of 2020, Lara's three daughters return to the family's orchard in Northern Michigan. While picking cherries, they beg their mother to tell them the story of Peter Duke, a famous actor with whom she shared both a stage and a romance years before at a theater company called Tom Lake. As Lara recalls the past, her daughters examine their own lives and relationship with their mother and are forced to reconsider the world and everything they thought they knew. Both hopeful and elegiac, this meditation on youthful love, married love, and the lives parents have led before their children were born. explores what it means to be happy even when the world is falling apart. JH

The Last Thing He Told Me, by Laura Dave, 320 pp. SHARON P.; Winter Feb 8/15

Struggling to connect with her teenage stepdaughter, Hannah Hall's seemingly normal life comes crashing down the moment her beloved husband of one year, Owen Michaels, suddenly disappears without a trace. SP

My Grandmother Asked Me to Tell You She's Sorry, by Fredrik Bachman, 396 pp: MARGIE Winter Feb 22; 1-week book.

From the author of *A Man Called Ove*, this novel is about a young girl whose grandmother dies and leaves behind a series of letters, sending her on a journey that brings to life the world of her grandmother's fairy tales, and leading to the truth about a grandmother like no other. JQ

Lessons in Chemistry by Bonnie Garmus, 400 pp.

MARLENE: Winter Feb 29/ Mar7

In the early 1960's, Chemist Elizabeth Zott is the only woman in her team at Hastings Research Institute. The team members take a very unscientific view of equality, except for one man. Calvin Evans is a lonely, brilliant Nobel Prize-nominated man who falls in love with Elizabeth's mind. A few years later, as a single mother, Elizabeth has become the star of a beloved cooking show *Supper at Six*. She has an unusual approach to cooking which proves revolutionary. She has some critics too, because while teaching women to cook, she is also daring them to change the status quo. MR

Book Discussion Group Book Schedule: Spring 2024 (Mar. 28 – May 9)

The Museum of Failures by Thrity Umrigar, 368 pp.

MARCIA B. Spring Mar 28/ April 4

Remy Wadia left India for the United States long ago, carrying his resentment of his mother with him. He has now returned to Bombay to adopt a baby and to see his elderly mother for the first time in several years. Discovering that she is in the hospital, has stopped talking, and seems to have given up on life, he is struck with guilt for not realizing just how sick she has become. His unexpected appearance and assiduous attention revives her and enables her to return to her home. But when Remy finds an old photograph from his adoring late father, shocking long-held family secrets surface. This is a riveting story about uncovering family secrets and the power of forgiveness. JH, MR

Hello Beautiful, by Ann Napolitano, 416 pp.

PHYLLIS Spring Apr 11/18

By the author of *Dear Edward*, this is a novel about the relationship among four sisters, which she wrote as an homage to *Little Women*. The book follows the story of the four Padovano sisters, who live in Pilsen, a working-class neighborhood of Chicago. The girls' close-knit, rambunctious family is forever changed when the eldest, Julia, marries a young man with a tragic past that threatens their future together. PW

Our Missing Hearts by Celeste Ng, 286 pp.

JUDIE: Spring; Apr 25; One week book

Tells the story of Bird, a 12-year-old boy, on a quest to find his mother and the power of small acts of rebellion. Suspenseful novel of the unbreakable love between a mother and child in a society consumed by fear. MR

Demon Copperhead by Barbara Kingsolver, 546 pp.

CAROLE: Winter/Spring May 2/9

Inspired by Charles Dickens' *David Copperfield*, this is the story of a boy born in Appalachia to a teenage single mother. His only assets are his dead father's good looks and copper-colored hair, plus a caustic wit and talent for survival. He deals with foster care, child labor, derelict schools, athletic success, addiction, and crushing losses. In a popular culture where even superheroes have abandoned rural people, he deals with his own invisibility.

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