

Book Discussions Moderated by Bill Schiavo

Below is a list of book discussions moderated by Bill Schiavo, from 2005 - Present Day

School for Scandal

By Richard Sheridan

Thursday, April 9, 2020

Lady Sneerwell, who was the target of slander in her long-ago youth, now meets regularly with a group of friends to destroy other women's reputations by creating and spreading malicious gossip. Called a "middle class morality play," the very popular *School for Scandal* was performed 261 times in eighteenth century London and revived hundreds of times since.

Joseph Andrews

By Henry Fielding

Thursday, March 12, 2020

Joseph, a handsome young footman in the household of Sir Thomas Booby, has attracted the erotic interest of his master's wife, Lady Booby. However, the parson, Mr. Adams, has become aware of Joseph's situation and wants to cultivate his moral and intellectual potential. A "comic-epic" tale which delves in to the vulnerability and power of goodness.

House of the Seven Gables

By Nathaniel Hawthorne

Thursday, February 6, 2020

In the 17th century, Matthew Marle placed a curse on Colonel Pyncheon out of revenge for stealing his land. The curse is still affecting members of both families a century later and is embodied inside the House of Seven Gables, the crumbling family mansion where Clifford Pyncheon returns after years of being imprisoned for a crime he didn't commit.

Dracula

By Bram Stoker

Thursday, January 9, 2020

This 1897 gothic horror novel introduced the character of Count Dracula and established the genre of vampire fantasy literature. It tells the story of Dracula's attempt to move from Transylvania to England to find new blood and spread the "undead curse."

Animal Farm

By George Orwell

Thursday, December 5, 2019

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An allegorical novel published in 1945, *Animal Farm* tells the story of a group of animals who rebel against their human farmer, hoping to create a society where animals are equal. Ultimately their rebellion is betrayed, and the question becomes how do the oppressed manage to keep from becoming like their oppressors? Orwell addresses combining power with ideals in this social satire that was ahead of its time.

Brideshead Revisited

By Evelyn Waugh

Thursday, November 14, 2019

Exploring themes of nostalgia for the English aristocracy, this novel, one of the “100 Best English Novels of the 20th Century,” follows the life and romances of Charles Ryder from his first year at Oxford University in 1922, through the early 1940s, including his friendship with a wealthy English Catholic family who live in Brideshead mansion.

The Jungle Book

By Rudyard Kipling

Thursday, October 10, 2019

These stories, inspired by ancient Indian fables, are set in a forest in India with animals teaching moral lessons. Through the animals' freedom of movement, the author shows the wild and lawless side of human nature while at the same time teaches respect for authority and one's place in the "law of the jungle."

Tarzan of the Apes

By Edgar Rice Burroughs

Thursday, September 12, 2019

The first in a series of books about the title character, this story follows Tarzan's adventures of being raised by apes in the jungle, to his becoming a fierce hunter and warrior, and to his eventual encounters with humans and Western society. The impacts of heredity and behavior, racial superiority and alternate civilizations are all evident as Tarzan struggles with his identity as a human.

Narcissus and Goldmund

By Hermann Hesse

Thursday, June 6, 2019

The conflict between the life of the spirit and the life of the flesh is explored in this moving novel of two medieval men who are diametrically opposite: Narcissus, an ascetic monk, and Goldmund, a romantic youth hungry for worldly experience.

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The Loved One: An Anglo-American Tragedy

By Evelyn Waugh

Thursday, May 2, 2019

This satirical novel about the Los Angeles funeral business, the British expatriate community in Hollywood, and the film industry is the result of the author's 1947 visit to Hollywood to negotiate a film adaption to his novel *Brideshead Revisited*.

Antic Hay

By Aldous Huxley

Thursday, March 7, 2019

This comic novel which takes place in London during the turbulent times after World War I, follows the lives of the self-absorbed cultural elite in artistic bohemian circles.

Sons and Lovers

By D.H. Lawrence

Thursday, February 7, 2019

The refined daughter of a "good old family" meets a miner at a Christmas dance and they fall into a whirlwind, passionate romance. The ensuing marriage later begins to drift apart as she realizes the difficulties of living on his meager salary. Written in 1913 and received with lukewarm critical reception, *Sons and Lovers* is today regarded as both a masterpiece and as Lawrence's finest achievement.

Alice in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass

By Lewis Carroll

Thursday, January 10, 2019

Carroll frames *Alice in Wonderland* as a dreamlike experience for Alice who drifts to sleep and dreams that she is following a white rabbit to *Wonderland*. *Through the Looking Glass* is also framed like a dream, but in this work, Alice is controlled by the rules of chess as she enters a geometrical landscape. Through them both, Carroll presents us with the ultimate question: *what is reality?*

The Immoralist

By Andre Gide

Thursday, December 6, 2018

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Considered a literary landmark, The Immoralist is the confessional account of a young anthropologist who journeys from sickness to health to debauchery in a rebellion against his Protestant upbringing. Seeking the truth to his own nature, he awakens both sexually and morally as he finds new freedom in living according to his own desires.

The Keys of the Kingdom

By A.J. Cronin

Thursday, November 8, 2018

Recognized as Cronin's best novel, this is an enthralling tale of a compassionate, humble priest sent to China to maintain a mission despite poverty, civil war and plague. In the face of constant danger and hardship, he finds the keys to the kingdom of heaven.

20,000 Leagues Under the Sea

By Jules Verne

Thursday, October 11, 2018

Verne's classic science fiction tale takes place in 1866, when ships from several nations spot a mysterious sea monster in the ocean. French Marine Biologist Pierre Aronnax and his two companions join an expedition to find and destroy it, only to discover that the "monster" is the high powered submarine *Nautilus*. Captured by its Captain, Captain Nemo, they are trapped aboard as it travels the world under the sea.

A Study in Scarlet

By Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

Thursday, September 6, 2018

Our Fall *World Literature Series* begins with this world renowned detective novel which marks the first appearance of Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson, who became two of the most famous characters in popular fiction. Written in 1887, *A Study in Scarlet* blends mystery, intrigue, and suspense as Holmes realizes that his investigation is a "scarlet thread of murder in the colorless skein of life" that he must unravel.

The Duel

By Anton Chekhov

Thursday, June 7, 2018

Set in a seaside town, Chekhov's novella is morality tale that pits a scientist, a government worker, his mistress, a deacon, and a physician against one another in a verbal battle of wits and ethics that explodes in a violent contest. Written in 1891, it was considered at the time to represent a "modern approach" to human behavior.

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The Citadel

By A.J. Cronin

Thursday, May 10, 2018

This National Book Award winning novel, published in 1937, was groundbreaking in its treatment of the contentious theme of medical ethics. The author, who wrote it as “an attack against the medical profession,” drew on his experiences of practicing medicine in the coal mining regions of South Wales, where he had researched the correlation between coal dust inhalation and lung disease.

The Castle of Otranto

By Horace Walpole

Thursday, April 5, 2018

The *Castle of Otranto*, widely thought of as the “first gothic novel,” merges both medievalism and terror in a literary style that has endured to this day. Written in 1764, it tells the story of Manfred, the Lord of the castle, whose sickly fifteen year old son has been crushed to death by a falling gigantic helmet on his wedding day.

Pride and Prejudice

By Jane Austen

Thursday, March 8, 2018

Please join us as we discuss this classic romance, a work of “domestic realism,” and one of the most popular novels in English literature. Its comic elements lie in its depiction of manners, marriage, and money as it shows the reader that our search for self can occur during small talk in the drawing room as much as it can in a dramatic encounter.

An Artist of the Floating World

By Kazuo Ishiguro

Thursday, February 8, 2018

Nobel Prize winner Ishiguro presents an authentic look at post World War II Japan, a “floating world” of changing culture and society. Ono, a young bohemian artist who lives in the “pleasure era” of Japanese society, becomes a propagandist for Japanese Imperialism during the war, and must live with the guilt of his “patriotism” when the war is over.

The Moonstone

By Wilkie Collins

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Thursday, January 11, 2018

The Moonstone, considered to be the first detective novel in the English language, is a spellbinding tale of romance, theft, and murder. This page turner hinges on the theft of an enormous diamond stolen from an Indian shrine.

Love in a Fallen City

By Eileen Chang

Thursday, December 7, 2017

A collection of evocative stories set in China, bristling with passion and resentment! Tied together by relationship issues at a time when the concept of “true love” and “marrying well” were paramount, these stories depict young women who seek to escape the narrow paths of convention.

The True Story of Ah Q

By Lu Hsun

Thursday, November 9, 2017

This short story tells of Ah Q, an impoverished, homeless man in his late 20s who earns a living by working odd jobs around his village. His quiet, obscure life is turned around when he makes a proposition to Wu Ma, a maidservant, and the entire village rejects him.

When We Were Orphans

By Kazuo Ishiguro

Thursday, October 12, 2017

This novel by award-winning author Ishiguro tells of a young English boy who lives in Shanghai until his father, an opium businessman, and his mother disappear within a few weeks of each other. As an adult in England, he becomes a successful detective who hones his skills to solve the case of his parents' disappearance.

Short Stories: “An Unprotected Female at the Pyramids,” “John Bull at the Guadalquivir,” & “George Walker at Suez”

By Anthony Trollope

Thursday, September 14, 2017

Please join us as our World Literature Series resumes for the Fall with these three stories from Trollope's “Tourists and Colonials” collection which depict Victorian travelers' adventures and mishaps in exotic locations.

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Short Stories: “The Man that Corrupted Hadleyburg” & “The McWilliams Tales”

By Mark Twain

Thursday, June 8, 2017

The first story tells of the town of Hadleyburg, whose residents are proud that they don't give into temptation, thereby making their town “incorruptible,” but a passing stranger vows to get revenge by “corrupting” it after someone offends him. The “McWilliams Tales” are part of Twain's collection of merry tales... short, humorous pieces just for fun!

Short Stories: “An Unprotected Female at the Pyramids,” “John Bull on the Guadalquivir,” & “George Walker at Suez”

By Anthony Trollope

Thursday, May 11, 2017

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Nineteen Eighty-Four

By George Orwell

Thursday, April 6, 2017

Orwell's grim satire against totalitarian government was first published in 1949, when 1984 was well into the future. Depicting the main character's futile battle to survive in a system that he had helped to create, the author intended the book to be a warning about the dangers of conformity, mental coercion and verbal deception.

Civil Disobedience

By Henry David Thoreau

Thursday, March 2, 2017

“Civil Disobedience” was originally one of Thoreau's lectures, given after he spent a night in jail for protesting against slavery and the Mexican War. Please join us as we discuss this powerful essay as Thoreau emphasizes the need to prioritize one's conscience over the dictates of laws, and argues that government rarely proves itself useful.

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“An Unprotected Female at the Pyramids,” “John Bull on the Guadalquivir,” & “George Walker at Suez”

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Justine

By Lawrence Durrell

Thursday, January 12, 2017

Justine, the first volume of Durrell’s *Alexandria Quartet*, tells the story of passion and deception in the Egyptian city of Alexandria in the 1930’s and 1940’s.

The Virgin and the Gypsy

By D.H. Lawrence

Thursday, December 1, 2016

When Yvette meets a charismatic gypsy on a trip to the English countryside, it reinforces her dissatisfaction with her mundane life. With new desires awakened in her, she must decide if she can continue to lead her ordinary life, or have a romance with someone her family will not accept.

Selected stories on marriage and courtship:

“The Parson’s Daughter of Oxney Colne”

“The Courtship of Susan Bell”

“Malachi’s Cove”

By Anthony Trollope

Thursday, November 3, 2016

In these three stories, small details of English life enable the author to draw a fascinating picture of the magnetic power that brings two people together.

Antigone and Oedipus Rex

By Sophocles

Thursday, October 6, 2016

These Greek tragedies comprise two of the plays in the Theban trilogy, which revolve around the life of Oedipus, the king of Thebes.

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Two plays: Hippolytus and Medea

By Euripides

Thursday, September 15, 2016

Please join us for a lively discussion on these Ancient Greek tragedies based on the myths of *Hippolytus and Medea*.

Theseus

By Andre Gide

Thursday, June 9, 2016

Using characters of well-known myths, French author Andre Gide creates a contemporary tale of the timeless aspects of life. Theseus, the mystical hero of Athens, narrates his life story following the failure of his marriages and the death of his son, Hippolytus.

“The Blue Bouquet” & “My Life with the Wave”

By Octavio Paz

Thursday, May 12, 2016

One of Mexico’s most highly regarded writers and winner of the 1990 Nobel Prize for Literature, Octavio Paz reflects the dangerous world of the big city and the unpredictable nature of life and loss in his stories.

On Old Age

By Cicero

Thursday, April 28, 2016

Roman statesman and philosopher Cicero wrote his essay *On Old Age* in 44 B.C. when he was 62 years old, and “old age” began at age 45. Nevertheless, his analysis and observations on growing older are timeless.

The Persian Boy

By Mary Renault

Thursday, March 3, 2016

In this historical novel, a young Persian eunuch from an aristocratic family becomes the lover of Alexander the Great. The author’s blending of the tragic and the heroic provide an intimate look at how Alexander’s love influenced his desire to unite the Greek and Persian peoples.

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Julian

By Gore Vidal

Thursday, February 11, 2016

Beginning twenty years after Julian's death during the invasion of Persia, the novel reveals a series of letters between his two confidants who decide to publish Julian's memoir to show the world that he was attempting to stop the spread of Christianity. Vidal's first venture into historical fiction, he entertains as much as he adheres to historical accuracy.

Love in the Time of Cholera

By Gabriel Garcia-Marquez

Thursday, January 7, 2016

Nobel Prize winner Garcia Marquez's novel, set in South America from the late 1870s to the 1930s, is a celebration of life over death and love over despair as Florentino, rejected by the beautiful Fermina at a young age, keeps a silent vigil of unrequited love for 52 years until he meets her again at her husband's wake. At the same time, he devotes much of his adult life to carnal affairs as a desperate attempt to heal his broken heart. A traditional love story, it is both a novel of tradition and of its own time.

Island of Dr. Moreau

By H.G. Wells

Thursday, December 3, 2015

Shipwrecked Edward Prendrick is rescued by a passing boat and left on the island home of Dr. Moreau who created human-like hybrid beings from animals. The novel deals with several philosophical themes including moral responsibility, animal cruelty, and human interference with nature.

The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde

By Robert Louis Stevenson

Thursday, November 12, 2015

Limitless human ambition drives this gothic-science novel which depicts an educated man who conducts secret experiments that get out of control, resulting in the creation of a double who wreaks destruction on his life.

This Side of Paradise

By F. Scott Fitzgerald

Thursday, October 29, 2015

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F. Scott Fitzgerald's debut novel examines the lives and morality of post-World War I youth, exploring the theme of love warped by greed and status seeking. Limitless human ambition drives this gothic-science novel which depicts an educated man who conducts secret experiments that get out of control, resulting in the creation of a double who wreaks destruction on his life.

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer

By Mark Twain

Thursday, September 10, 2015

Twain's 1876 classic novel about a young boy growing up along the Mississippi River is set in a fictional town that was inspired by Hannibal, Missouri, where Twain lived.

The Pearl

By John Steinbeck

Thursday, June 4, 2015

Published in 1947, this story of pearl diver Kino's discovery of a pearl as large as a seagull's egg and the effects it has on his life, explores the nature of good and evil, and remains one of Steinbeck's most popular works.

To Kill a Mockingbird

By Harper Lee

Thursday, May 7, 2015

The winner of the Pulitzer Prize for fiction in 1961, this classic work was based to a large degree on the author's childhood experiences growing up in Alabama.

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The Black Tulip

By Alexandre Dumas

Thursday, February 5, 2015

A historical novel set in the time of “Tulipmania” in the Netherlands, it begins with the 1672 lynching of the Prime Minister, and then follows the story of his godson Cornelius who has joined the competition among the nation’s best gardeners to grow a black tulip, but gets jailed just as he nears his goal.

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn

By Mark Twain

Thursday, January 8, 2015

Twain’s classic novel describes the exploits of young Huckleberry Finn as he escapes his hometown and travels down the Mississippi River on a raft with escaped slave Jim.

A Christmas Carol

By Charles Dickens

Thursday, December 4, 2014

A timeless classic first published in 1843, *A Christmas Carol* tells the story of bitter old miser Ebenezer Scrooge and his transformation after being visited by Jacob Marley and the Ghosts of Christmases Past, Present, and Future. Viewed by critics as an indictment of 19th century capitalism, it was met with instant success and has never been out of print.

The Man That Corrupted Hadleyburg and the Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County

By Mark Twain

Thursday, October 9, 2014

Mark Twain’s experiences of steamboat pilot, writer, lecturer, and traveler reflect in his writings. In “*The Man that Corrupted Hadleyburg*,” the town’s “incorruptible” reputation is challenged when a stranger vows to get revenge by “corrupting” it. In “*The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County*,” the work that represents Twain’s first great success as a writer, the narrator tells the story of a gambler and his frog named “Daniel Webster.”

The Seagull

By Anton Chekhov

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Thursday, September 11, 2014

Russian playwright Chekhov creates a realistic dramatization of an artist's life complete with romantic triangles, jealousy, and melodrama. The play, which is based on the true event of Chekhov's friend shooting a seagull and throwing it at the feet of the woman he loves, analyzes the romantic and artistic conflicts between its characters.

Benito Cereno

By Herman Melville

Monday, May 19, 2014

Known as one of American literature's finest novels, Melville's work closely follows the true events of a Spanish slave ship whose slaves overthrew its sailors in 1805.

The Girl with The Golden Eyes

By Honore de Balzac

Thursday, May 8, 2014

In this story set in early nineteenth century Paris, Balzac follows decadent heir Henri as he becomes enamored, disillusioned and finally disgusted with Paquita, and plans her murder.

Cannery Row

By John Steinbeck

Monday, April 28, 2014

Nobel Prize winner Steinbeck's youth in central California provided him with raw material for a lifetime of fiction about the area. *Cannery Row*, set during the Depression, depicts a group of folks who live on a street lined with sardine canneries, including "Doc," a friendly marine biologist for whom a group of vagabonds decide to give a party.

Planet of the Apes

By Pierre Boulle

Thursday, April 10, 2014

A French 1963 science fiction novel, *Planet of the Apes*, tells the tale of three human explorers from Earth who visit a planet where Great Apes are the dominant, intelligent and civilized species, and human beings live in a savage, animal – like state.

Carmen

Book Discussions Moderated by Bill Schiavo

By Prosper Merimee
Thursday, March 13, 2014

Merimee's novella *Carmen*, has been adapted into several dramatic works, including the famous opera by Bizet. Blending travelogue, adventure and romance with the clash of the European and Gypsy cultures, it is an enthralling story set in Spain of a young soldier who falls under the spell of the Gypsy femme fatale, Carmen.

The Bridge of San Luis Rey

By Thornton Wilder
Monday, March 31, 2014

Winner of the 1928 Pulitzer Prize, Thornton Wilder's second novel tells the story of five people who die when a century old rope bridge in Peru, woven by Incas, collapses as they are crossing it. Witnessed by a Franciscan monk, he struggles to find cosmic answer to their deaths.

Daisy Miller

By Henry James
Monday, February 24, 2014

Daisy Miller portrays the courtship of a beautiful American girl and a sophisticated American bachelor who meet in Switzerland. The work that established Henry James as a "notable author," it is an analysis of the traditional views of the time.

Short Stories: "The Queen of Spades," and "The Shot"

By A.S. Pushkin
Thursday, February 6, 2014

In these stories, Pushkin, considered to be the founder of Russian literature depicts two different men who are consumed by greed and revenge. Down to earth characters and use of everyday language portray a gritty picture of the culture of the time.

Right Ho, Jeeves

By P.G. Wodehouse
Monday, January 27, 2014

British humorist P.G. Wodehouse's novel features his popular characters Jeeves and Bertie. As Jeeves uses his keen intellect to solve domestic problems, Bertie's friends and relatives flock to him for counsel.

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Short Stories: “For a Night of Love,” and “Nantas”

By Emile Zola

Thursday, January 16, 2014

One of France’s greatest writers gives us two short stories that depict his recurring theme of young men and their desires for romance, fame and fortune, who will go to extraordinary lengths to attain them.

The Sun Also Rises

By Ernest Hemingway

Monday, December 16, 2013

Recognized as the most important American novel of the post WWI period, *The Sun Also Rises* perfectly captures the mood and style of the American artists and intellectuals who drank, loved and searched for meaning and fulfillment on the Paris Left Bank in the aftermath of the First World War

A Simple Heart

By Gustave Flaubert

Thursday, December 5, 2013

In this story of Felicite, a woman born into unfortunate circumstances who is transcended by love, courage and faith, Flaubert skillfully lays out the vignettes of daily life so they combine to form a complete portrait.

Billy Budd

By Herman Melville

Monday, November 25, 2013

A novella begun by Herman Melville in 1888 but published in 1924, this masterpiece follows Billy Budd, a seaman in the British Royal Navy in 1797 who is falsely accused of conspiracy to mutiny. A wonderful philosophical and historical story, it will elicit a lively discussion.

Father Sergius

By Leo Tolstoy

Thursday, November 7, 2013

Prince Stepan discovers on the eve of his wedding that his fiancée has had an affair with the Tsar. He retreats into Russian Orthodoxy, becoming a monk and transforming his life, but is still tortured by boredom, pride and lust.

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The Beast in the Jungle

By Henry James

Monday, October 28, 2013

Considered to be one of Henry James' finest short narratives, it treats the universal themes of loneliness, fate, love, and death. John Marcher has the belief that his life will be defined by some catastrophic or spectacular event – his “beast in the jungle.” This work will resonate with any of us who speculate on the worth and meaning of life.

The Kreutzer Sonata

By Leo Tolstoy

Thursday, October 17, 2013

The Kreutzer Sonata was published in 1889 and immediately censored by Russian authorities. An argument for the ideal of sexual abstinence and a depiction of jealous rage, the work maintains that the main character kills his wife because of his “animal excesses.”

Pudd'nhead Wilson

By Mark Twain

Monday, May 20, 2013

Not understanding his eccentricity, townspeople call him “Pudd'nhead” until he brilliantly unravels a murder and proves that a slave and a free man were switched in infancy. Twain's masterpiece, a condemnation of a society that allows slavery, is an important contribution to the American identity.

A River Sutra

By Gita Mehta

Thursday, May 2, 2013

Set in India, *A River Sutra* is a moving, intriguing novel of delicate, tragic stories that depict tradition and desire along the banks of the holy Narmada River.

Frankenstein

By Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley

Monday, April 29, 2013

The novel that revolutionized the genres of gothic literature, science fiction and horror stories, it was written by the author when she was only nineteen years old and remains an undisputed fictional masterpiece.

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A River Sutra

By Gita Mehta

Thursday, April 4, 2013

A River Sutra, a sequence on interconnected delicate and tragic stories in India's society, is a moving, intriguing novel which evokes a profound presence of tradition and desire along the banks of the holy Narmada River.

Three Essays: Self Reliance, Beauty, & Character

By Waldo Emerson

Monday, March 25, 2013

Join us for a discussion on three essays by Ralph Waldo Emerson, American essayist, lecturer, and champion of individualism, whose philosophy of mysticism and practicality has left its mark on the American character.

Two Stories: The Overcoat and Nevsky Avenue

By Nikolai Gogol

Thursday, March 7, 2013

Considered to be one of the first masters of the short story along with Pushkin and Poe, Gogol's stories of surrealism reflect his vision of reality. These two gritty stories of St. Petersburg are sure to elicit a lively discussion.

The Way We Live Now

By Anthony Trollope

Monday, February 25, 2013

Considered to be Trollope's masterpiece, *The Way We Live Now* is a satire on the corruption of upper class British society where moral concerns seem to disappear and greed and ostentation prevail.

Two Plays: "The Birds," and "The Clouds"

By Aristophanes

Thursday, February 7, 2013

These two comedic master works by ancient Greek author Aristophanes are considered to be among the author's finest and best known dramatic works. Both are richly imaginative and full of "scintillating wit!"

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Tom Jones (second half)

By Henry Fielding

Thursday, January 24, 2013

Our *British and American Literature Series* continues this month with the classic work of Tom Jones, considered to be one of the best-plotted novels in the English language. A “pseudo-autobiography” of the author’s life, the novel moves through Tom Jones’ journey to London, and his transformation from innocence to experience.

Pale Fire

By Vladimir Nabokov

Thursday, January 10, 2013

A cornucopia of deceptive pleasures, this 1962 novel is widely considered a forerunner of postmodernism. A darkly comic novel of suspense, one-upmanship and political intrigue, it promises to elicit a spirited discussion.

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Red Sorghum

By Mo Yan

Thursday, November 1, 2012

Spanning three generations, this novel of family and myth is told through a series of flashbacks that are set against a landscape of gemlike beauty, as the Chinese battle both Japanese invaders and each other in the turbulent 1930’s. The book is a legend in China, where it won major literary awards and inspired an Oscar-nominated film.

Tom Jones (Part I)

By Henry Fielding

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Prometheus Bound

By Aeschylus

Thursday, October 11, 2012

This ancient tragedy, the first work in a trilogy and the only one to survive. Conflict between force and justice dominates this work; the supreme god Zeus has assumed tyrannical control of the universe from the Titans, and has bound Prometheus to a rock in a remote corner of the earth. This is a masterpiece to be savored by all.

Man and Superman

By George Bernard Shaw

Monday, September 24, 2012

Our *British and American Literature Series* resumes in September with a work by noted playwright George Bernard Shaw, who wrote it in response to those who wondered why he had never written a play based on a Don Juan theme! Shaw, who believed that “in all cultures women force men to marry them,” has written a play that was performed as a light comedy of manners, but is a deeper work centering around John Tanner, who is a confirmed bachelor despite the determined pursuits of “Anne.”

A Bend in the River

By V.S. Naipaul

Thursday, September 6, 2012

Our popular *World Literature Series* starts up again this month with *A Bend in the River*, written by Nobel Laureate V.S. Naipaul, and ranked as one of the best English language novels of the twentieth century. Set in the early 70’s in an African country right after its independence, it revolves around Salim, who examines his own life while he and the other characters try to define themselves in a world of wars, rapid change and increasing insecurity.

Barchester Towers

By Anthony Trollope

Monday, May 21, 2012

Barchester Towers, a social satire, revolves around the imaginary cathedral city of Barchester, whose much-loved Bishop has died and whose son is expected to take his office. Instead, a

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newcomer gets the position and a number of subplots and mock-heroic events, all related to ecclesiastical power struggles, ensue.

Death in Venice

By Thomas Mann

Thursday, May 10, 2012

Our discussion will be on this 1912 novella about a great writer suffering from writer's block who is liberated after visiting Venice, but becomes increasingly obsessed with a stunningly beautiful youth there. The connection between erotic love to wisdom and the contrast between restraint and excess reflect back to Plato, Apollo, and Dionysus.

The Age of Reason

By Thomas Paine

Monday, April 30, 2012

Our *Classics of British and American Literature Series* continues with *The Age of Reason*, the controversial pamphlet written by British radical and American revolutionary Thomas Paine, which criticizes institutionalized religion and challenges the legitimacy of the Bible. It is still published today, one of the few eighteenth-century texts to still be widely available.

Four "very" Short Stories

By selected Italian authors

Thursday, April 5, 2012

Our World Literature Discussion will be on some fine short selections of Italian literature.

Edward the Second

Christopher Marlowe

Monday, March 19, 2012

The last play written by Christopher Marlowe, *Edward the Second* takes place in fourteenth century England, and is regarded as his finest work, although it was originally attributed to William Shakespeare! Beginning with the return of Edward's lover from exile, it is an intense and swiftly moving account of a king controlled by his basest passions, a weak man who becomes a puppet of his lover, and pays a tragic price.

Tonio Kroger and Tristan

By Thomas Mann

Book Discussions Moderated by Bill Schiavo

Thursday, March 8, 2012

Please join us for the lively discussion on two short stories by German novelist, social critic and 1929 Nobel Prize Laureate Thomas Mann. Known for his symbolic, ironic writings that give insight into the psychology of the artist and the intellectual, Mann provokes and enthralls.

Playboy of the Western World

By J.M. Synge

Monday, February 27, 2012

Playboy of the Western World, John Millington Synge's last and greatest play, is a satire of Western myths and conventions, including the age-old habit of cheerfully welcoming fugitives who seek shelter. Greek myths are satirized as well, with parallels between the play's protagonist and Oedipus.

Bread and Wine

By Ignazio Silone

Thursday, February 9, 2012

Regarded as one of the major political novelists of the twentieth century, Silone depicts the enduring struggle between conscience and repression in his novel. Pietro Spina, the book's hero, refuses to surrender his mind or soul to Church or State, returns to his native Abruzzi after a fifteen year exile disguised as a priest, and dedicates his life to universal brotherhood.

Bartleby the Scrivener and Cock-a-Doodle Doo!

By Herman Melville

Monday, January 30, 2012

Bartleby the Scrivener depicts the "mystery of despair," with a copyist in a law office who "prefers not to" do any of his tasks. *Cock-a-Doodle Doo* depicts explicitly Melville's attempt to challenge a culture of carnal repression and subjugation of women.

Zorba the Greek

By Nikos Kazantzakis

Thursday, January 5, 2012

Our first World Literature Discussion of the New Year is on this classic of Greek literature, the story of a Greek workman who travels to the island of Crete to work on a mine, and becomes the foreman's inspiration and friend. It is with wit, fantasy and the joy of life.

Women in Love

By D.H. Lawrence

Book Discussions Moderated by Bill Schiavo

Thursday, December 8, 2011

This month's World Literature Series will be on what has come to be considered D.H. Lawrence's most important novel.

Great Heroes Before the Trojan War

By Edith Hamilton

Monday, November 28, 2011

Excerpts from Edith Hamilton's *Mythology* on the great heroes before the Trojan War: Perseus, Theseus, Hercules and Atlanta.

The Bald Soprano and Rhinoceros

By Eugene Ionesco

Thursday, November 3, 2011

Our series continues with the two plays that established Romanian playwright Ionesco as a world famous dramatist. These plays, dwelling on the absurd nature of human existence while mocking conformity, promise to elicit a lively discussion.

How the World and Mankind were Created (from Edith Hamilton's Mythology)

By Edith Hamilton

Monday, October 24, 2011

Hamilton's landmark work *Mythology* contains stories of ancient mythology that are written to appeal to the twenty-first century mind. These myths about the "beginning of everything" promise to entertain, inform, and elicit much discussion.

A Doll's House

By Henrik Ibsen

Thursday, October 6, 2011

This play which catapulted Scandinavian playwright Henrik Ibsen to international fame, *A Doll's House* was controversial when first published as a sharp critique of 19th century marriage norms. A comedy of manners with intricate subplots on life in a middle class Scandinavian household, it promises to elicit a lively discussion.

Palace Walk

By Naguib Mahfouz

Book Discussions Moderated by Bill Schiavo

Thursday, September 8, 2011

Our World Literature Series continues with this epic novel by the 1988 Nobel Prize winner of literature. A panoramic history of Egypt depicted through the lives and fortunes of one family, it takes place in Cairo from 1917 to 1919. It powerfully illuminates Egyptian society as it changes from a culture untouched by modernity to colonialism brought on by British invasion.

“Two Great Gods of Earth,” from Mythology

By Edith Hamilton

Monday, May 23, 2011

Hamilton’s stories of ancient mythology are written to appeal to the twenty-first century mind. “Two Great Gods of Earth” discusses the relationship between Demeter, the goddess of harvest and nature, and Dionysis (Bacchae), the god of wine and revelry. “As best friends of humanity” they each knew deep pain as well as unbridled joy.

Plays by Henrik Ibsen: Master Builder and Enemy of the People

By Henrik Ibsen

Thursday, May 19, 2011

This month we will be discussing two plays by noted Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen, called “the founder of modern drama.” These groundbreaking plays portray the human soul and its struggle to rise above its own desires.

The Second Sex; Selected Readings

By Simone De Beauvoir

Monday, April 25, 2011

This landmark work is considered a major work of feminist literature, dealing with the treatment of women throughout history, a gender as an aspect of identity.

Comedies by Plautus: Pot of Gold and The Menaechmus Twins

By Plautus

Monday, April 7, 2011

Comedies by Roman playwright Plautus, whose plays are the earliest surviving works in Latin Literature.

The Dragons of Eden

By Carl Sagan

Monday, March 28, 2011

Book Discussions Moderated by Bill Schiavo

Pulitzer prize winning author Carl Sagan gives perspectives on the evolution of human intelligence in this highly regarded book. Combining the fields of anthropology, biology, psychology, and computer science, he shows how the “brain-to-body mass” ratio is a quantitative way to measure intelligence.

Children of the Alley

By Naguib Mahfouz

Thursday, March 10, 2011

Our March World Literature Discussion series continuous with *Children of the Alley* by Nobel Prize winner Naguib Mahfouz. Originally published in Arabic in 1959, and met with severe opposition from religious authorities, it is an allegorical expose of the injustices in Egypt, told through the history of three religions – Christianity, Judaism, and Islam – and set against the imaginary backdrop of 19th century Cairo, where families settled in different parts of the “alley.”

Coming of Age in Samoa

By Margaret Mead

Monday, February 28, 2011

This month’s discussion will be on anthropologist Margaret Mead’s 1924 study of adolescent girls in the Samoan islands to determine if their “disturbances” were due to the nature of adolescence, or to the civilization. Still the most widely read book in the field of anthropology, *Coming of Age in Samoa* has sparked years of research, debate and controversy about society, culture, science and the “nature vs. nurture debate.”

The Bacchae

By Euripides

Thursday, February 10, 2011

The Bacchae, one of Euripides’ most poetically beautiful dramas, is a psychological portrait of a young man who rejects the traditional Ancient Greek beliefs of moderation and balance, and irrationally adheres to the idea that reason is supreme over sensuality. In this last work of his life, Euripides depicts a vivid portrait of antiquity.

The Naked Ape: A Zoologist’s Study of the Human Animal

By Desmond Morris

Monday, January 31, 2011

Our non-fiction book series will take a hiatus for December and will continue in January with this 1967 classic book, which established the field of evolutionary anthropology.

Book Discussions Moderated by Bill Schiavo

The Golden Ass- Books 1, 3,4,5,6, and 11

By Lucius Apuleius

Thursday, January 6, 2011

The Golden Ass, a satirical romance by Apuleius, is an ancient work narrated by Lucius, a licentious young man with an insatiable curiosity about people and things who inadvertently takes the wrong “potion.” A robustly comical work, yet with serious sometimes outrageous elements.

***The Brothers Karamazov* (Part 2)**

By Fyodor Dostoyevsky

Thursday, December 9, 2010

This month’s World Literature Discussion will be the continuation of *The Brothers Karamazov*, Dostoyevsky’s last and “grandest” novel, takes place in mid-nineteenth century Russia.

The Professor and the Madman: A Tale of Murder, Insanity and the Making of the Oxford English Dictionary

By Simon Winchester

Monday, November 29, 2010

In this remarkable book, the author delves into the mysterious history of the creation of the great Oxford English Dictionary in the late 1800’s. The “Professor” is a former bank clerk and school teacher. The “Madman” is Dr. W.C. Minor, a retired US Army surgeon, who was imprisoned in a “lunatic asylum” in England. Together, they took on the momentous job of making the OED, accomplishing one of the greatest achievements of English literature.

***The Brothers Karamazov* (Part 1)**

By Fyodor Dostoyevsky

Thursday, November 4, 2010

The Brothers Karamazov, Dostoyevsky’s last and “grandest” novel, takes place in mid-nineteenth century Russia revolving around the Karamazov brothers and their contentious relationship with their “scoundrel” of a father. Intense and tragic, it is a “tale of immense emotional range and profound philosophical depth.”

Race Matters

By Cornell West

Monday, October 25, 2010

Book Discussions Moderated by Bill Schiavo

One of the most important commentators on race relations in America, Cornell West has written a powerful book of essays dealing with some of the most controversial issues of past years in America – the LA riots, the Clarence Thomas proceedings, affirmative action, and many others.

The Sorrows of Young Werther

By Johann Goethe

Thursday, October 7, 2010

A sentimental and psychological novel of the joy and agony of romantic love.

Two Nations: Black and White, Separate, Hostile, Unequal

By Andrew Hacker

Monday, September 27, 2010

Our first title will be on *Two Nations*, an important and powerful work by the author of many books on race and class. He presents anecdotes, statistics and perceptions of the racial chasm that still persist in the country today.

The Burger's Daughter

By Nadine Gordimer

Thursday, September 16, 2010

Our World Literature series resumes with Nobel Prize winning author Nadine Gordimer's novel *The Burger's Daughter*, is the story of Rosa, a woman coping with her relationship to her father, a martyr to the anti-apartheid movement. A vision of contemporary manners, and dealing with moral and racial issues, *The Burger's Daughter* how's the devastating effects of a segregated society.

Uses of Enchantment

By Bruno Bettelheim

Monday, June 28, 2010

Our non-fiction series continues with this classic work on the meaning and importance of the great fairy tales and how they educate, support and liberate the emotions of young children in profound and beneficial ways.

Two Ancient Greek Plays: Alcestris

By Sophocles, Euripides and Philoctetes

Thursday, June 10, 2010

Please join us as SUNY Stony Brook's Adjunct Professor Bill

Book Discussions Moderated by Bill Schiavo

Schiavo leads the discussion on these ancient Greek plays written by the two great tragedians of Classical Athens, Euripides and Sophocles. Everyone is welcome to join us; copies of the works are available at the front desk.

Demon Haunted World

By Carl Sagan

Monday, April 26, 2010

Our non-fiction series continues with this work by the great astronomer and science writer Carl Sagan. Considered his most popular book, and “a classic for everyone who cares about living in a sane and safe world without superstition,” it presents, among other things, a set of tools for skeptical thinking which he calls the “baloney detection kit”. Explaining and challenging social phenomena like UFOs, alien abductions, recovered memories, witch crazes, and more, Sagan presents reasoned arguments and tools for recognizing fraudulence.

The River of Doubt

By Candice Millard

Thursday, April 15, 2010

A historical account of a little known period in Teddy Roosevelt’s life – his 1912 “vacation” on an uncharted treacherous river in the Amazon called the “River of Doubt.”

Selected Short Stories

By World Masters

Thursday, April 8, 2010

Please join us once again for a spirited World Literature discussion on selected stories by Balzac, Lagerkvist, Proust, Silone, and Akutagawa.

***The Power of Myth* (Chapters 5-8)**

By Joseph Campbell

Monday, March 29, 2010

This month’s discussion will be a continuation of *The Power of Myth*, Joseph Campbell’s monumental work on the universality and devolution of myths and their place in modern society.

Selected World Literature Short Stories

Thursday, March 4, 2010

Book Discussions Moderated by Bill Schiavo

Please join us for another lively World Literature Discussion on selected short stories by Chekhov, Dostoyevsky, Gorky, Tolstoy and others.

The Power of Myth

By Joseph Campbell

Monday, February 22, 2010

Joseph Campbell on the universality and evolution of myths, and their place in modern society. With stories from many cultures and civilizations, he presents the reader with his belief that new a global mythology will emerge.

Selected World Literature Short Stories

Thursday, February 11, 2010

Please join us for another lively World Literature Discussion on selected short stories by Chekhov, Dostoyevsky, Gorky, Tolstoy and others.

People of the Book

By Geraldine Brooks

Thursday, January 28, 2010

A fictional history of the precious *Sarajevo Haggadah* – one of the rarest volumes in the world dating from the fifteenth century. The novel opens in 1996 as the main character, Hanna, is about to examine it, and weaves together stories against a backdrop pf tumultuous historical events, alternating between the past and present.

Sex in History

By Reay Tannahill

Monday, January 25, 2010

We are continuing our successful non- fiction book discussion series this month with Reay Tannahill's brilliant and fascinating myth- di spelling history of sex from prehistory to present times. The author examines how socio political and economic concerns have influenced sexual mores throughout the ages.

Thus Spake Zarathustra

By Frederick Nietzsche

Thursday, January 14, 2010

Please join us for our first World Literature discussion of the New Year!

Book Discussions Moderated by Bill Schiavo

Thus Spake Zarathustra, Nietzsche's major work, is a parable boldly critiquing the culture of the 19th century Bourgeoisie. Considered essential reading for the understanding of Western thought since the late 19th century.

Nathan the Wise

By Gotthold Lessing

Thursday, December 3, 2009

Please join us for another World Literature Series on this dramatic work written by the "German Enlightenment's most outstanding figure." Although a theological controversy of 1778 was the author's inspiration for *Nathan the Wise*, Lessing was known for confronting fundamental issues in philosophy, literature and drama. His writings have always provoked debate, as surely this discussion will!

Great Books

By David Denby

Monday, November 30, 2009

Our next non-fiction discussion is on David Denby's *Great Books*, an engaging work presented with the author's infectious enthusiasm for reading great books of enduring value and the "controversy" surrounding them.

The Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans

By Plutarch

Thursday, November 12, 2009

Please join us for our next lively World Literature discussion on selections from Plutarch's *The Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans*. A series of biographies which alternates the life stories of eminent Greeks with the comparable life stories of eminent Romans, it delves into moral and ethical implications, personal anecdotes and curious incidents.

Bully for Brontosaurus

By Stephen Jay Gould

Monday, October 26, 2009

A collection of essays by renowned Harvard paleontologist Stephen Gould. Dealing with science, nature, and evolution and much more, it presents reflections on natural history with a series of adaptive arguments suitable for a great discussion.

Book Discussions Moderated by Bill Schiavo

The Cherry Orchard

By Anton Chekhov

Thursday, October 8, 2009

Our lively World literature discussion series continues this month with *The Cherry Orchard*, Anton Chekhov's best known play. Published in 1904, the year that he died, it was designed as a comedy, but depicts Russian society before the Communist revolution and shows the characters' anxiety in the face of their changing and uncertain world of the future.

Why We Love

By Helen Fisher

Monday, September 21, 2009

Explores not the metaphorical chemistry of romantic love, but its actual chemistry. The discussion will be spirited, so don't miss it!

Ancient Roman Authors – Selection

Thursday, September 10, 2009

Our popular World Literature Discussion series resumes this month with selected readings from ancient Roman authors including Ovid, Horace, Catullus and Pliny.

The Satyricon

By Petronius

Thursday, June 11, 2009

Once again, our lively World Literature Series led by SUNY Stony Brook's adjunct Professor Bill Schiavo will continue with *The Satyricon*, considered the most celebrated work of fiction to have survived from the ancient world. It recounts the sleazy progress of two scholars as they wander through the cities of the Mediterranean. A brilliant mix of prose and verse, it satirizes human absurdities as well as the spectacular failures of Roman society.

Cry the Beloved Country

By Alan Paton

Thursday, April 9, 2009

Alan Paton's landmark novel *Cry the Beloved Country* made a huge impact when it was published in 1948 as the first major book to graphically depict the cruelty and absurdity of apartheid. Through the story of Stephen Kumalo, a black Anglican priest from a rural town searching for his son in Johannesburg, it contrasts the radically different worlds of the Africans and Europeans and depicts the struggle for justice and power.

Book Discussions Moderated by Bill Schiavo

Chinese Love Poetry

Thursday, March 12, 2009

Once again our world literature series will continue with a spirited discussion on selected love poems from Chinese authors through the ages – from 600BC to the twentieth century.

Dream of the Red Chamber

By Tsao Hsueh-Chin

Thursday, February 5, 2009

Revolving around two households and five generations of the great Chia family in Peking, it is timeless in its treatment of the complexities of human nature. Chinese manners, crushed nobility, love, and politics are all interwoven to create a rich portrait of one of the world's great civilizations.

Dream of the Red Chamber

By Tsao Hsueh-Chin

Thursday, January 15, 2009

Please join us for another lively discussion with SUNY Stony Brook's Adjunct Professor Bill Schiavo on this classic eighteenth century work, considered to be the greatest of Chinese novels. Revolving around two households and five generations of the great Chia family in Peking, it is timeless in its treatment of the complexities of human nature. Chinese manners, crushed nobility, love, and politics are all interwoven to create a rich portrait of one of the world's great civilizations.

Moliere: Tartuffe

Thursday, December 11, 2008

Join us for a lively discussion on *Tartuffe*, a seventeenth century dramatic comedy. Tartuffe, a penniless scoundrel who was found praying in a church, is invited to live with a family. He immediately starts scheming to change this normal, happy household into a strict regimen, uprooting their life's plans. Through humor, Moliere condemns hypocrisy, exposes imposters and depicts lack of common sense as dangers to society.

Book Discussions Moderated by Bill Schiavo

Chinese Poetry

Thursday, November 13, 2008

Selections of Chinese poetry from ancient to modern times will be the focus of our spirited world literature discussion this month.

Confessions

By Jean Jacques Rousseau

Thursday, October 9, 2008

Our World Literature series will continue this month with selections from Jean Jacques Rousseau's *Confessions*. A personal account of the experiences of this great author, he writes of his literary triumphs, his early conversion, his romances, and his musical successes all of which are transformed by his own passionate perspective on his past.

Galileo

By Bertolt Brecht.

Thursday, September 11, 2008

Our World Literature Series led by SUNY Stony Brook's adjunct professor Bill Schiavo will continue this month with a discussion on the classic dramatic work *Galileo*, by Bertolt Brecht. A chronicle of the seventeenth century Italian professor of mathematics who created controversy when demonstrating his sun-centered theory of the solar system, it demonstrates the revolutionary implications of astronomy at that time.

The Decameron

By Giovanni Boccaccio

Thursday, June 12, 2008

The title "Decameron" refers to the time that the ten characters - three men and seven women – spend telling tales of passion and intellect to each another in the peaceful Tuscan countryside, away from plague-infested Florence.

The Red and the Black

By Marie-Henri Beyle Stendhal

Thursday, May 8, 2008

Once again, Adjunct Professor Bill Schiavo of SUNY Stony Brook will moderate a discussion on this classic piece of literature from early nineteenth century France. A chronicle of its time, it is a penetrating analysis of love and ambition.

Book Discussions Moderated by Bill Schiavo

Madame Bovary

By Gustave Flaubert

Thursday, April 3, 2008

Join us for a provoking discussion on this classic and timeless novel which was the first to come out of France of its type, shocking contemporary readers of the time. Condemned for picturing the life of a romantic adulteress on the one hand, but acclaimed for the honesty in which he handled the subject on the other, Flaubert makes Emma Bovary's struggle both universal and challenging.

Medea and Phaedra

By Seneca

Thursday, March 13, 2008

Join us for another lively World Literature discussion on these two powerful Roman tragedies. As with Euripides' Greek tragedies of the same names, they are impassioned works of love turned into vengeance, of burning betrayals and of human vulnerabilities. As part of our session, we will compare and contrast the Greek and Roman versions of the works.

***Anna Karenina* (Parts 5 -8)**

By Leo Tolstoy

Thursday, February 7, 2008

Please join us for another lively discussion on the second half of this classic Russian novel. A moving story of human emotional needs conflicting with the social mores of the time, this profound novel offers insight into an elemental conflict: the relationship between the individual and society.

***Anna Karenina* (Parts 1 - 4)**

By Leo Tolstoy

Thursday, January 10, 2008

Please join us for a lively discussion on this classic Russian novel. A moving story of human emotional needs conflicting with the social mores of the time, this profound novel offers insight into an elemental conflict: the relationship between the individual and society. NOTE: We will discuss the first half of the novel on January 10th; we will finish discussing the novel at the next session on February 7th.

Medea

Book Discussions Moderated by Bill Schiavo

By Euripides

Thursday, December 13, 2007

Please join us for another lively discussion on this powerful Greek tragedy, an impassioned study of love turned into vengeance. Regarded as Euripides' greatest work, this strong drama depicts human betrayal, vulnerability and honesty.

The Prophet

By Kahlil Gibran

Thursday, November 15, 2007

The Prophet, published in 1923, is comprised of twenty-six essays on various aspects of life, revealing the continuous circle of birth, death and rebirth.

First Love

By Ivan Turgenev

Thursday, October 11, 2007

Turgenev's best known novella, *First Love*, set in nineteenth century Russia, is the story of a young man's coming of age, the power and sacrifice of youthful love, and the bittersweet realities of life.

No Exit

By Sartre, Jean-Paul

Thursday, September 13, 2007

Our World Literature Series will start up again in September with two works of drama: *No Exit*, Sartre's masterpiece of existentialism, explores peoples' freedom of choice in an overwhelming universe. Revolving around three central characters, its abstract setting and ironic tone give it a timeless appeal.

Characters in Search of an Author

By Pirandello, Luigi

Thursday, September 13, 2007

In *Six Characters*, actors in a rehearsal are replaced by six unruly strangers who appear mysteriously and convince the Director that their story is more interesting than the play being rehearsed. The ensuing comedic farce raises philosophical questions about art, life, illusion and reality.

Book Discussions Moderated by Bill Schiavo

Herodotus: The Histories

Thursday, June 14, 2007

Our June World Literature series will start with a work that lets us delve into our roots as members of Western democratic civilization. In part, it is a gripping tale of the confrontation between the freedom loving Greek peoples and the seemingly unstoppable forces of the Persians. But in full, it has stood the test of time, especially with its descriptions of diverse cultures and the importance of myth as a shaper of civilizations. We will be reading selected excerpts from this powerful work which has been described as “remarkably detailed and just plain fun to read.”

Life is a Dream

By Pedro Calderon de la Barca

The Sheep Well

By Lope de Vega Carpio

Thursday, May 17, 2007

This discussion will be on dramatic works by two seventeenth century Spanish authors. Calderon’s “*Life is a Dream*,” one of the masterpieces of World Literature, contains a power and beauty of verse that make it as relevant today as when it was first performed in 1635. It has been called “romantic, philosophical, absurdist and tragic.” Vega Carpio’s “*The Sheep Well*,” referred to as the “first proletarian drama” because of its use of peasants as heroes and heroines, portrays realism through natural speech while mixing comedy with tragedy.

The Brothers

By Terence

The Twin Menaechmi

By Plautus

Thursday, April 26, 2007

Our World Literature series continues with two plays by the ancient Roman comic playwrights Terence and Plautus. Shakespeare and his Elizabethan literary colleagues got most of their plot conventions and literary techniques from the comedies of Plautus and Terence, so join us for another lively discussion on these dramatic works. All are welcome; copies of the book are available at the front desk

Two plays: “Lysistrata” and “The Frogs”

By Aristophanes

Thursday, March 8, 2007

Book Discussions Moderated by Bill Schiavo

Once again, we will have a lively world literature discussion on two plays by the ancient Greek author Aristophanes. "Lysistrata," his anti-war comedy written about the Peloponnesian War, gives an interesting portrayal of women's potential contributions to society and policy making. "The Frogs," also a comedy, tells the story of the god Dionysus who travels to Hades to bring Euripides back from the dead. Both plays provide unique and amusing perspectives for examining the political and historical background of the time.

The Misanthrope

By Moliere

Thursday, February 8, 2007

This month's discussion will be on Jean-Baptiste Moliere's seventeenth century play, *The Misanthrope*, which humorously depicts the frivolous society of the time. A comedy of manners, the characters deal with those timeless issues of deceit, false flatteries and hypocrisy.

Crime and Punishment

By Fyodor Dostoyevsky

Thursday, January 11, 2008

Our World Literature discussion series will be on the classic novel *Crime and Punishment*, the book that brought Dostoyevsky critical and popular acclaim. A complex story of man's turbulent inner life and his relationship to others and to society, it was written after the author's nine-year imprisonment for political crimes against the czar.

The Myth of Sisyphus

By Albert Camus

Thursday, December 14, 2006

Please join us for another lively discussion on this essay by the author of the *Plague* and the *Stranger*. Written in 1942, the title of the essay comes from the Greek myth of Sisyphus, who was condemned to perpetually push a giant boulder up a mountain, only to have it roll back. In this work, Camus discusses the question of suicide, the value of life, and the philosophy of the absurd in a futile world.

The Gambler

By Fyodor Dostoyevsky

Thursday, November 9, 2006

Join us for the continuation of our World literature discussion series, a lively discussion of Dostoyevsky's *The Gambler*, an exploration of frustrated love, compulsive gambling, and the

Book Discussions Moderated by Bill Schiavo

dynamics of self- destruction. Including a scheming cast of memorable characters that bristle with energy and portray a class-conscious casino society, it is considered the most personal and autobiographical of his works.

Atala / Rene

By Francois-Rene de Chateaubriand

Thursday, October 19, 2006

Francois-Rene de Chateaubriand's *Atala and Rene*, are powerful tales of love, isolation and loss, written during the emerging Romantic Movement in post-revolutionary France. *Atala's* tale is one of an Indian maiden's passionate but pure love set against a background of the primitive American wilderness; *Rene's* tale is the story of a young Frenchman separated from his family by early tragedy, who chooses to live a life of isolation on an Indian reservation in America. Once again, we will offer an additional nighttime session of this discussion to accommodate those of you who cannot attend in the afternoon.

Master and Man

By Leo Tolstoy

Thursday, September 14, 2006

Our popular world literature Classics series will continue this month with Tolstoy's *Master and Man*, a tale that depicts the conflicts of the Russian aristocracy and peasantry so realistically that we hang on to every twist of the plot. Please note: There is an additional nighttime session for this discussion for those of you who are unable to attend in the afternoon.

Metamorphosis

By Kafka

Thursday, June 8, 2006

Our world literature studies continue with *Metamorphosis*, the monumental psychological fantasy by Franz Kafka. A stellar achievement of expressionism, it begins with main character Gregor's transformation into a gigantic insect and the ensuing relations with his family, his colleagues and his own psyche.

The Stranger

By Albert Camus

Thursday, May 11, 2006

This month's classic, by 1957 Nobel Prize Winner Albert Camus, is the story of an ordinary man living quietly in Algiers who commits a pointless murder. Dealing with complex concepts of justice, reality and resignation in an absurd universe, the novel has universal appeal.

Book Discussions Moderated by Bill Schiavo

Symposium

By Plato

Thursday, April 6, 2006

Our World Literature discussion series continues with Plato's *Symposium*, one of the most famous studies on love, as discussed in a dramatic dialogue that takes place between some of Athens' most renowned leaders who meet for a drinking party ("symposium.")

Agamemnon

By Aeschylus

Thursday, March 9, 2006

Our World Literature discussion series continues with a play that is considered to be the greatest Athenian tragedy ever written. *Agamemnon*, one of only seven surviving plays of Aeschylus, is the first play of the Oresteia trilogy, and depicts the assassination of Agamemnon by his wife Clytemnestra and her lover after he returns from victory in the Trojan War. Within historical and political contexts, the characters grapple with age-old concepts of justice, honor and kinship.

Hippolytus

By Euripides

Thursday, February 9, 2006

Our World Literature Discussion series continues with this timeless Greek classic which dramatizes the rivalry between Aphrodite, the goddess of love, and Artemis, the goddess of chastity. The three major characters get caught up in this conflict, causing the ensuing struggle between uncontrolled passion and artificial restraint.

Oedipus Rex

By Sophocles

Thursday, January 12, 2006

Please join us in our discussion of this timeless Greek classic, which is considered to be the most famous tragedy ever written. Sophocles tells of the great King Oedipus who, while trying to defy the Gods' oracle that he will kill his father and marry his mother, only ends up fulfilling that ancient prophecy. A monumental dramatic work about the power of family and the penalty of exile.

Book Discussions Moderated by Bill Schiavo

Siddhartha

By Herman Hesse

Thursday, December 1, 2005

Continue our World Literature Discussion series with *Siddhartha* by Hermann Hesse. Hesse, winner of the 1946 Nobel Prize for Literature, has written a novel that parallels the life of Buddha. Siddhartha, the handsome and respected son of a Brahmin in ancient India, enjoys a nearly idyllic existence, but is dissatisfied with his life and undertakes a journey toward enlightenment. A monumental work that illustrates the universal struggles for harmony and truth.

On Old Age

By Cicero

Thursday, October 27, 2005

This month we will be reading and discussing the great ancient Roman philosopher and orator Cicero. His famous essay "On Old Age," a meditation on the plusses and minuses of growing older, is his most enduring and interesting treatise. It gives us a clear impression of the way in which an ancient Roman thought about some of the main problems of human life.

Death in Venice

By Thomas Mann

Thursday, September 29, 2005

We begin with *Death in Venice*, Nobel prize-winning author Thomas Mann's best-known novella which deals with the transformation of a man from the cerebral to the physical, from pure form to pure emotion. It is a complex, beautiful tale dealing with the European Bourgeois culture, and the eternal conflicts of sensuality and repression

Candide

By Francois Voltaire

Tuesday, June 14, 2005

Our newly formed world literature series continues with the classic *Candide*, a social satire set in Europe and South Africa of the eighteenth century.

Inferno

By Dante Alighieri

Book Discussions Moderated by Bill Schiavo

Tuesdays, April 26 and May 10, 2005

Our new book study series offers a chance to read, analyze and discuss the great titles of world literature. We will begin with the *Inferno*, Volume I of Dante Alighieri's masterpiece, *The Divine Comedy*. It is considered to be the greatest poem of the European Middle Ages. You do not have to attend the first session to join us for a lively mid- afternoon discussion!