



NEW HAMPSHIRE
humanities



Book Groups: Available Books and Facilitators for November 2024 - October 2025

This list contains the current facilitators and the books available for New Hampshire Humanities' *Perspectives* book groups. Click on the links below for information about each facilitator and book. The following list is organized alphabetically by facilitator.

Books must be reserved through the Book Bag program with the Center for the Book at the NH State Library BEFORE submitting an application for *Perspectives* programming with New Hampshire Humanities. Book kits from the Book Bag program provide **15 copies** of each title. Some titles are also available in large print and are designated with an asterisk (*) below.

To reserve titles, please contact the Circulation section of the NH State Library at **603-271-2616** or email nhslill@dncr.nh.gov. Books will be sent via Interlibrary Loan Van (ILL) to your local library for pick up.

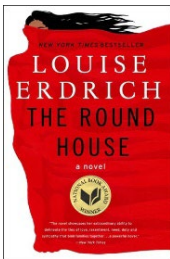
More information is available on our website:

<https://www.nhhumanities.org/programs/category/perspectives-book-groups>

Facilitator: Kiki Berk

PHILOSOPHY and LITERATURE

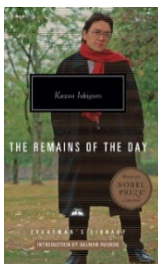
Format Preference: Online or in-person



Louise Erdrich, [*The Roundhouse*](#) *

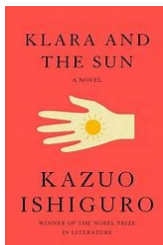
A Coming-of-Age novel about family, friendship, death, violence, and justice that raises many ethical questions.

***Also available in large print**



Kazuo Ishiguro, [*The Remains of the Day*](#)

Subtle, funny, and heartbreaking, *The Remains of the Day* is a story about what makes life worth living, told by a stiff (and unreliable!) English butler.



Kazuo Ishiguro, [*Klara and the Sun*](#) *

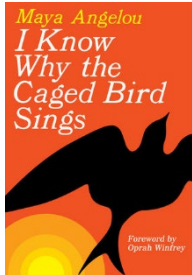
A deeply psychological science fiction novel that raises philosophical questions about love, friendship, death, AI, personal identity, and the human condition.

***Also available in large print**

Facilitator: **Carrie Brown**

Format Preference: Online or in-person, Online-only December through March.

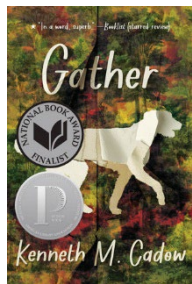
Maya Angelou, [*I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*](#)



“*I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* captures the longing of lonely children, the brute insult of bigotry, and the wonder of words that can make the world right. Maya Angelou’s debut memoir is a modern American classic beloved worldwide.” Penguin Random House description.

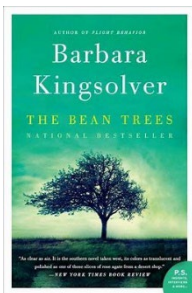
“*I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* liberates the reader into life simply because Maya Angelou confronts her own life with such a moving wonder, such a luminous dignity.”—James Baldwin

Kenneth M. Cadow, [*Gather*](#)



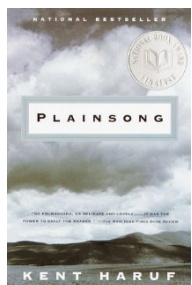
“Cadow’s debut novel portrays a challenging coming-of-age in rural Vermont with warmth, humor, and insight. Ian observes the turmoil that surrounds him with bewilderment and deadpan humor. . . . Cadow captures Ian’s engaging naïveté, which is tempered by a survivor’s unflappability and a blossoming sense of irony. . . . A heartfelt novel about the challenges of youth and the value of community.”—Kirkus Reviews

Barbara Kingsolver, [*The Bean Trees*](#)



The Bean Trees “is the charming, engrossing tale of rural Kentucky native Taylor Greer, who only wants to get away from her roots and avoid getting pregnant. She succeeds, but inherits a three-year-old Native American girl named Turtle along the way, and together, from Oklahoma to Arizona, half-Cherokee Taylor and her charge search for a new life in the West. Hers is a story about love and friendship, abandonment and belonging, and the discovery of surprising resources in seemingly empty places.” Harper Collins book description.

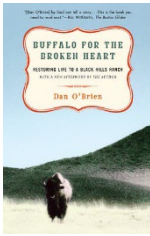
Kent Haruf, [*Plainsong*](#) *



Set in a small town on the high plains of Colorado, *Plainsong* weaves a story of abandonment, tenacity, compassion, hope, and finding the family you need. The main characters include a schoolteacher and his two young sons, a pregnant teenager with no place to go, and two old bachelor farmers, set in their ways and unused to social interaction. When chance and circumstance bring these characters together, their courage, curiosity, and need for connection bring them through to new and unexpected places.

***Also available in large print**

Format Preference: Online or in-person



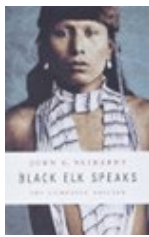
Dan O'Brien, [*Buffalo for the Broken Heart*](#)

For twenty years Dan O'Brien struggled to make ends meet on his cattle ranch in South Dakota. But when a neighbor invited him to lend a hand at the annual buffalo roundup, O'Brien was inspired to convert his own ranch, the Broken Heart, to buffalo. Starting with thirteen calves, "short-necked, golden balls of wool," O'Brien embarked on a journey that returned buffalo to his land for the first time in more than a century and a half.



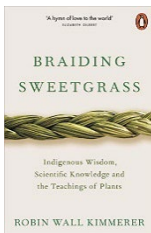
Mary Kronenwetter, [*Pauper Auction*](#)

A historical fiction examining a young woman's struggle to escape unexpected poverty and find autonomy and purpose in early New England.



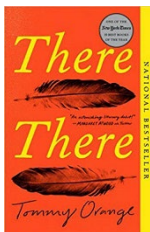
Nicholas Black Elk and John G. Neihardt, [*Black Elk Speaks*](#)

The life story of Nicholas Black Elk (1863–1950), the Oglala Lakota visionary and healer.



Robin Wall Kimmerer, [*Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants*](#)

Drawing on her life as an indigenous scientist, and as a woman, Kimmerer shows how other living beings—asters and goldenrod, strawberries and squash, salamanders, algae, and sweetgrass—offer us gifts and lessons, even if we've forgotten how to hear their voices.



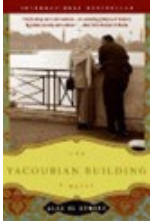
Tommy Orange, [*There There*](#) *

In *There There*, Cheyenne/Arapaho novelist Tommy Orange explores the challenges and rich texture of Native urban life. Set in Oakland, CA, the novel follows a wide range of characters on their way to the Big Oakland Powwow and deeper engagement with Indian identity.

***Also available in large print**

Facilitator: Mohamed Defaa

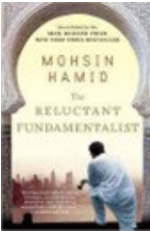
Format Preference: Online or in-person



Alaa Al Aswany, [*The Yacoubian Building*](#)

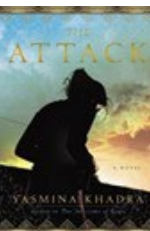
This controversial bestselling novel in the Arab world reveals the political corruption, sexual repression, religious extremism, and modern hopes of Egypt today. All manner of flawed and fragile humanity reside in the Yacoubian Building, a once-elegant temple of Art Deco splendor now slowly decaying in the smog and bustle of downtown Cairo: a fading aristocrat and self-proclaimed "scientist of women"; a sultry, voluptuous siren; a devout young student, feeling the irresistible pull toward fundamentalism; a newspaper editor helplessly in love with a policeman; a corrupt and corpulent politician, twisting the Koran to justify his desires. These disparate lives careen toward an explosive conclusion in Alaa Al Aswany's remarkable international bestseller. Teeming with frank sexuality and heartfelt compassion, this book is an important window on to the experience of loss and love in the Arab world.

Mohsin Hamid, [*The Reluctant Fundamentalist*](#) *



At a café table in Lahore, a bearded Pakistani man converses with an uneasy American stranger. As dusk deepens to night, he begins the tale that has brought them to this fateful encounter. Changez is living an immigrant's dream of America. At the top of his class at Princeton, he is snapped up by an elite valuation firm. He thrives on the energy of New York, and his budding romance with elegant, beautiful Erica promises entry into Manhattan society at the same exalted level once occupied by his own family back in Lahore. But in the wake of September 11, Changez finds his position in his adopted city suddenly overturned, and his relationship with Erica shifting. And Changez's own identity is in seismic shift as well, unearthing allegiances more fundamental than money, power, and maybe even love.

****Also available in large print***



Yasmina Khadra, [*The Attack*](#)

From the graphic, beautifully rendered description of the bombing that opens the novel to the searing conclusion, *The Attack* portrays the reality of terrorism and its incalculable spiritual costs. Intense and humane, devoid of political bias, hatred, and polemics, it probes deep inside the Muslim world and gives readers a profound understanding of what seems impossible to understand.

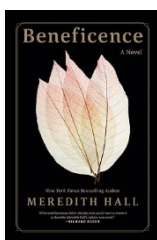


Elif Shafak, [*The Forty Rules of Love*](#)

Ella Rubenstein is forty years old and unhappily married when she takes a job as a reader for a literary agent. Her first assignment is to read and report on *Sweet Blasphemy*, a novel written by a man named Aziz Zahara. Ella is mesmerized by his tale of Shams's search for Rumi and the dervish's role in transforming the successful but unhappy cleric into a committed mystic, passionate poet, and advocate of love. She is also taken with Shams's lessons, or rules, that offer insight into an ancient philosophy based on the unity of all people and religions, and the presence of love in each and every one of us. As she reads on, she realizes that Rumi's story mirrors her own and that Zahara—like Shams—has come to set her free.

Facilitator: [Alice Fogel](#)

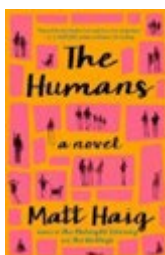
Format Preference: Online or in-person



Meredith Hall, [Beneficence](#)

In the midst of a nearly perfect life, Doris Senter is thankful but wary. “We can’t ever know what will come,” she says. When an unimaginable tragedy turns the family of five into a family of four, everything the Senters held faith in is shattered. The family is consumed by sorrow and guilt. Slowly, the surviving family members find their way to forgiveness—of themselves and of each other.

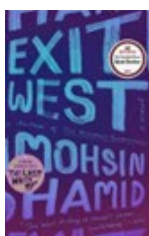
Matt Haig, [The Humans](#) *



This little novel contains a huge heart, a hilarious sense of humor, a portal between sci-fi and psychology, and a mission to prove that life is worth it despite its abundance of misery. The premise: An extraterrestrial arrives on Earth, taking the form of mathematician Andrew Martin, who has just discovered the formula that will allow humans to travel great distances through space in an instant. Since no other being in the Universe wants anything to do with those despicable Earthlings, Martin and anyone associated with him must be destroyed. The visitor is eager to complete this simple task and hurry home to his own utopian planet, but as he begins to discover certain complicating aspects of human life—such as love, music, and poetry—at great risk to his mission, and to himself, he hesitates....

***Also available in large print**

Mohsin Hamid, [Exit West](#) *



In this rich and bittersweet love story born out of our literally unsettling times and yet for all times, the main characters meet in an unidentified city on the verge of war. As new political fugitives, they follow the global underground network helping refugees flee through a series of doors—or “exits”—that balance between metaphor and symbolism: while desperate people escape one kind of danger through them, they have no way of knowing in what alien city, on what unwelcoming street, in whose strange house, they will find themselves. This book is about upheaval and migration, about the need for connection and security, the human right to make our own choices, and the fears of both those who believe they are losing their stability to intruders, and those who want nothing more than to find a safe home.

***Also available in large print**



Claudia Rankine, [Citizen: An American Lyric](#)

A genre-bending meditation on race, racism, and citizenship in 21st-century America. Published in 2014, Citizen combines prose, poetry, and images to paint a provocative portrait of the African American experience and racism in the so-called “post-racial” United States.



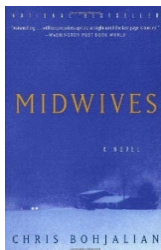
Claudia Rankine, [Just Us: An American Conversation](#)

Just Us: An American Conversation is a collection of essays and images exploring racism and white supremacy.

Facilitator: [Mary C. Kelly](#)

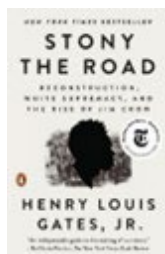
Format Preference: Online or in-person up to 40 miles from Keene (daytime) / 15-20 miles (evening)

Chris Bohjalian, [Midwives](#)



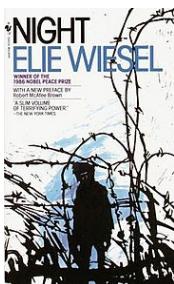
On an icy winter night in an isolated house in rural Vermont, a seasoned midwife named Sibyl Danforth takes desperate measures to save a baby's life. She performs an emergency cesarean section on a mother she believes has died of stroke. But what if—as Sibyl's assistant later charges—the patient wasn't already dead? The ensuing trial bears the earmarks of a witch hunt, forcing Sibyl to face the antagonism of the law, the hostility of traditional doctors, and the accusations of her own conscience. Exploring the complex and emotional decisions surrounding childbirth, *Midwives* engages, moves, and transfixes us as only the very best novels ever do

Henry Louis Gates, Jr. [Stony the Road: Reconstruction, White Supremacy, and the Rise of Jim Crow](#)



The Harvard historian and PBS *Finding Your Roots* host lays bare the mortal struggle for the soul of the nation between defenders of Jim Crow America and Black resisters to white supremacy. An essential tour through one of America's fundamental historical tragedies, *Stony the Road* is also a story of heroic resistance, as figures such as W. E. B. Du Bois and Ida B. Wells fought to create a counter-narrative, and culture, inside the lion's mouth. Gates's inspired telling exposes crucial years in American history, and offers much to inform us about today's cultural and political divides.

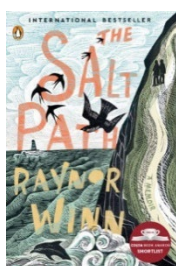
Elie Wiesel, [Night](#) *



Night is Elie Wiesel's masterpiece, a candid, horrific, and deeply poignant autobiographical account of his survival as a teenager in the Nazi death camps. *Night* offers much more than a litany of the daily terrors, everyday perversions, and rampant sadism at Auschwitz and Buchenwald; it also eloquently addresses many of the philosophical as well as personal questions implicit in any serious consideration of what the Holocaust was, what it meant, and what its legacy is and will be.

***Also available in large print**

Raynor Winn, [The Salt Path](#)

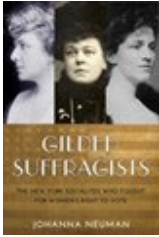


The true story of a couple who lost everything and embarked on a transformative journey walking the South West Coast Path in England. Just days after Raynor Winn learns that Moth, her husband of 32 years, is terminally ill, their house and farm are taken away, along with their livelihood. With nothing left and little time, they make the brave and impulsive decision to walk the 630 miles of the sea-swept South West Coast Path, from Somerset to Dorset, through Devon and Cornwall.

Carrying only the essentials for survival on their backs, they live wild in the ancient, weathered landscape of cliffs, sea, and sky. *The Salt Path* is ultimately a portrayal of home—how it can be lost, rebuilt, and rediscovered in the most unexpected ways.

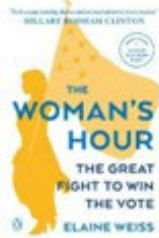
Facilitator: [Liz Tentarelli](#)

Format Preference: Online or in-person



Johanna Neuman, [Gilded Suffragists](#)

In the early twentieth century over two hundred of New York's most glamorous socialites joined the suffrage movement and turned a feminist cause into a fashionable revolution.



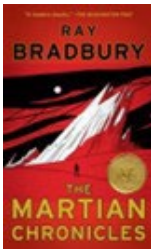
Elaine Weiss, [The Woman's Hour](#) *

The story of how American women won the right to vote, and the opening campaign in the great twentieth-century battles for civil rights.

****Also available in large print***

Facilitator: [Joshua Tepley](#)

Format Preference: Online or in-person



Ray Bradbury, [The Martian Chronicles](#)

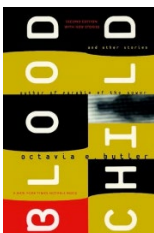
A beautiful and haunting collection of short stories about the colonization of Mars.

Ray Bradbury, [Fahrenheit 451](#) *



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.

****Also available in large print***

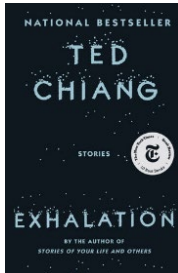


Octavia Butler, [Bloodchild and Other Stories](#)

Short stories by the incomparable Octavia Butler, these works of the imagination are parables of the contemporary world.

Facilitator: [Joshua Tepley](#) (CONTINUED)

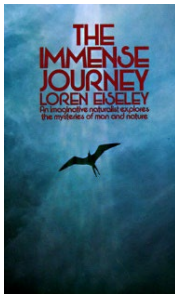
Ted Chiang, [Exhalation](#)



Tackling some of humanity's oldest questions along with new quandaries only he could imagine, these stories will change the way you think, feel, and see the world. They are Ted Chiang at his best: profound, sympathetic, revelatory. Ted Chiang tackles some of humanity's oldest questions along with new quandaries only he could imagine.

In "The Merchant and the Alchemist's Gate," a portal through time forces a fabric seller in ancient Baghdad to grapple with past mistakes and second chances. In "Exhalation," an alien scientist makes a shocking discovery with ramifications that are literally universal. In "Anxiety Is the Dizziness of Freedom," the ability to glimpse into alternate universes necessitates a radically new examination of the concepts of choice and free will.

****Also available in large print***



Loren Eiseley, [The Immense Journey](#)

Anthropologist and naturalist Loren Eiseley blends scientific knowledge and imaginative vision in these thought-provoking essays about life on our planet.

****Also available in large print***



Joe Haldeman, [The Forever War](#)

Inspired by the Vietnam War, this classic novel from 1974 chronicles a 1,000-year long interstellar war.



N. K. Jemisin, [How Long 'Til Black Future Month?](#)

Delightful short stories that run the gamut of speculative fiction, from steam punk to magical realism, from fantasy to science fiction.

****Also available in large print***

HOW TO APPLY

- 1.) To apply to host a book group, please download and review the “Host Checklist” from our [website](#).
- 2.) Contact the facilitator to arrange a time and date for your event. Use the list above for current facilitators and books available for discussion groups.
- 3.) Reserve your books through the Book Bag program with the Center for the Book at the NH State Library. To reserve titles, please contact the Circulation section of the NH State Library at **603-271-2616** or email nhsill@dncr.nh.gov. Books will be sent via Interlibrary Loan Van (ILL) to your local library for pick up.
- 4.) Once you have confirmed your book reservation with the Book Bag program and facilitator, complete the **online application form** [here](#) *at least four weeks* prior to your event or email bookgroups@nhhumanities.org with any questions.
- 5.) New Hampshire Humanities will process your application. This includes arranging payment for facilitator’s stipend.

Contact Sue Butman at New Hampshire Humanities with questions about setting up your program.

(Email: bookgroups@nhhumanities.org)

