

**Book Groups: Available Books and Facilitators for July 2022 - June 2023**

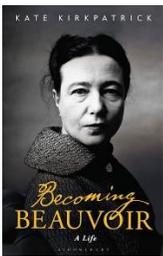
This list contains the current facilitators and the books available for New Hampshire Humanities' *Perspectives* book groups. Click on the links for information about each facilitator and book. See below for instructions about how to apply to host a book group.

More information is available on our website: <https://www.nhhumanities.org/bookgroups>

**Facilitator:** [Kiki Berk](#)

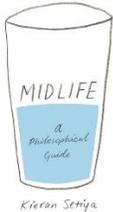
**PHILOSOPHY**

**Format Preference:** Online or In-Person



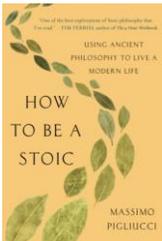
Kate Kirkpatrick, [Becoming Beauvoir](#)

A fascinating philosophical biography of one of the most important existentialists and feminists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.



Kieran Setiya, [Midlife: A Philosophical Guide](#)

A brilliant book that offers practical philosophical advice for coming to terms with regret, the feeling of missing out, our mortality, and other existential issues.



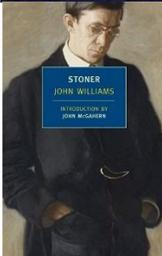
Massimo Pigliucci, [How to be a Stoic: Using Ancient Philosophy to Live a Modern Life](#)

Stoicism is an ancient yet extraordinarily relevant practical philosophy that is aimed at living a good life. This book explains what Stoicism as a way of life looks like and how it helps us flourish.



Mary Doria Russell, [The Sparrow](#)

The story of a charismatic Jesuit priest and linguist, Emilio Sandoz, who leads a twenty-first-century scientific mission to a newly discovered extraterrestrial culture



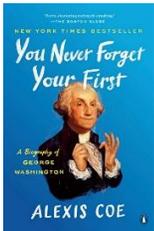
John Williams, [Stoner](#)

Stoner is "The Greatest American Novel You've Never Heard Of," according to *The New Yorker*. It's a painful yet thought-provoking read that raises the question of what constitutes a good life.

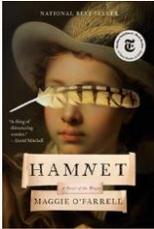
Facilitator: [Carrie Brown](#)

HISTORY and LITERATURE

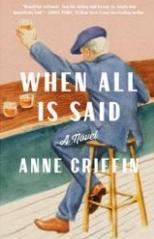
Format Preference: Online or In-Person



Alexis Coe, [You Never Forget Your First: A Biography of George Washington](#)  
Coe looks at the human being behind the hero and the myth and explores less known and seldom talked about aspects of his life.



Maggie O'Farrell, [Hamnet: A Novel of the Plague](#)  
In this imagined re-creation of the early life of Shakespeare, his wife Agnes is an extraordinary young woman, a gifted healer, and a central force in her husband's life. Tragedy occurs in the family just as the young husband's career in the London theatre is taking off.



Anne Griffin, [When All Is Said](#)  
Through the course of one evening, Maurice Hannigan sits on a bar stool in Ireland and offers five toasts to the people who have meant the most to him in his long life. These remembrances tell a story of guilt, regret, loss, love, and beauty, in the voice of a memorable and likeable narrator. Griffin's debut novel, published in 2019, was a best seller in Ireland and earned her acclaim as a new author.

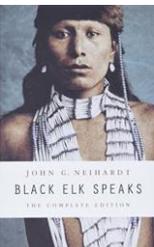


Katherine Sharp Landdeck, [The Women with Silver Wings](#)  
The inspiring true story about American women pilots in World War II.

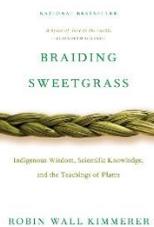
Facilitator: [Damian Costello](#)

HISTORY and LITERATURE

Format Preference: Online or In-Person

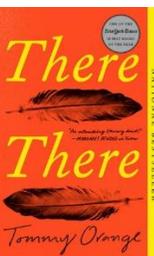


Nicholas Black Elk and John G. Neihardt, [Black Elk Speaks](#)  
The life story of Nicholas Black Elk (1863–1950), the Oglala Lakota visionary and healer.



Robin Wall Kimmerer, [Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teaching 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.

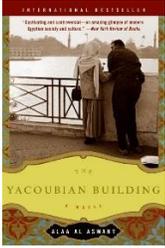


Tommy Orange, [There There](#)  
In *There There*, Cheyenne/Arapaho novelist Tommy Orange explores the challenges and rich texture of Native urban life. Set in Oakland, CA, the novel follows a wide range of characters on their way to the Big Oakland Powwow and deeper engagement with Indian identity.

Facilitator: [Mohamed Defaa](#)

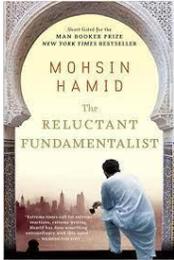
LITERATURE and RELIGION

Format Preference: Online or In-Person



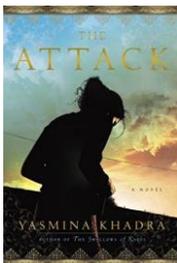
Alaa al-Aswany, [The Yacoubian Building](#)

This controversial bestselling novel in the Arab world reveals the political corruption, sexual repression, religious extremism, and modern hopes of Egypt today.



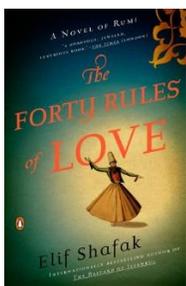
Mohsin Hamid, [The Reluctant Fundamentalist](#)

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.



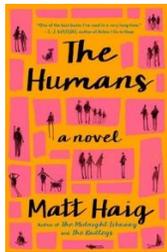
Yasmina Khadra, [The Attack](#)

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.



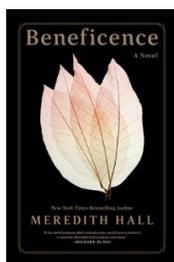
Elif Shafak, [The Forty Rules of Love](#)

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.



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....



Meredith Hall, [Beneficence](#)

This profound, lyrical book leads us through what happens to a close family's connections with each other and themselves when tragedy befalls them, the different ways their grief-stricken spirits try to relieve their suffering, and how in time they return to their lives and each other. Which do you think is true: that God "doesn't allow suffering. He provides it. It is a vital part of the great gift" or that we don't necessarily find "one thing better coming from suffering than from happiness"? Beautifully rooted in the unrelenting but affirming seasonal rhythms of a farm in Maine, *Beneficence* immerses us in achingly knowable characters that bring us insight into who we ourselves are, as we experience with them the other natural movements of life: love and loss, guilt and forgiveness, loneliness and renewal.



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.



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.



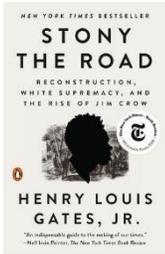
Claudia Rankine, [Just Us: An American Conversation](#)

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

Facilitator: [Mary C. Kelly](#)

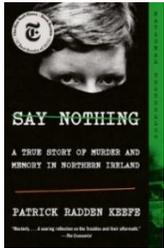
## HISTORY

Format Preference: Online or In-Person (Locally)



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

A challenging and unsettling account of Reconstruction-era racial history, with much to inform us about today's cultural and political divides.



Patrick Radden Keefe, [Say Nothing: A True Story of Murder and Memory in Northern Ireland](#)

A bestselling account of a murder in Northern Ireland that serves as a lens to explore Northern Ireland's political culture and the legacy of The Troubles.



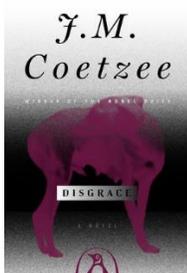
Cian T. McMahon, [The Coffin Ship: Life and Death at Sea during the Great Irish Famine](#)

The oceangoing voyage endured by two million Irish escaping the country's Great Famine of the mid-1800s endures as a cornerstone of the modern Irish and Irish American historical narrative. This book traces the epic journey undertaken by destitute Irish smallholders across the Atlantic to Boston and New York and other North American safe-harbors. Famine emigrants fleeing Ireland strengthened their chances of survival aboard ship in proactive ways, but ongoing dangers persisted on the voyage and subsequently within the urban immigrant enclaves established by the survivors. This stirring account transports the reader from destitute fields, ports of departure and seafaring rituals to eventual settlement in American cities for the fortunate survivors. The Atlantic crossing that represented a last hope for so many, and imprinted the Irish immigrant community in North America so powerfully, provides a compelling focus in this accessible historical narrative.

Facilitator: [Ann McClellan](#)

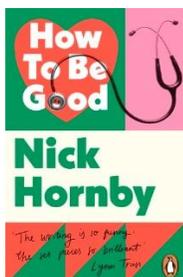
## HISTORY and LITERATURE

Format Preference: Online or In-Person



John Maxwell Coetzee, [Disgrace](#)

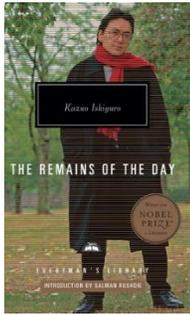
Against a backdrop of racial complexities of post-apartheid South Africa, a violent incident occurs and "disgrace" takes on another meaning for an aging and outcast professor.



Nick Hornby, [How to Be Good](#)

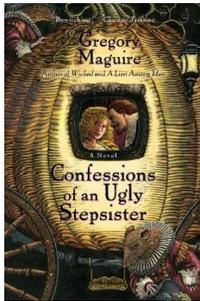
The book is the story of Katie Carr, a doctor who is disillusioned with both marriage and parenthood. Her husband has a rather snide streak, but when he undergoes a personality change, she learns to long for her old husband.

Facilitator: [Ann McClellan](#) (CONTINUED)



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

A compelling portrait of Stevens, the perfect butler, and of his fading, insular world in post-World War II England.



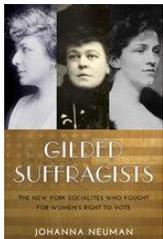
Gregory Maguire, [Confessions of an Ugly Stepsister](#)

An ingenious and provocative retelling of the timeless Cinderella fairy tale from the point of view of stepsister.

Facilitator: [Liz Tentarelli](#)

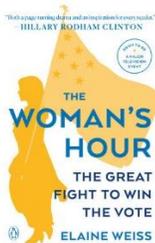
**HISTORY and LITERATURE**

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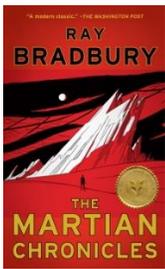
Johanna Neuman, [Gilded Suffragists](#)

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.



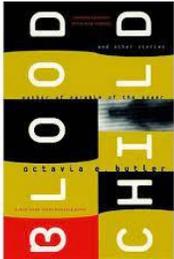
Elaine Weiss, [The Woman's Hour](#)

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



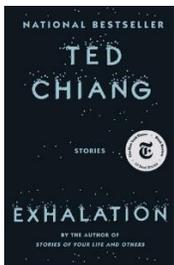
Ray Bradbury, [The Martian Chronicles](#)

Beautiful and haunting collection of short stories about the colonization of Mars.



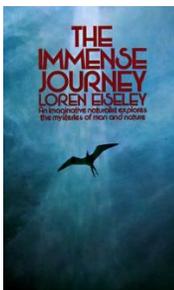
Octavia Butler, [Bloodchild and Other Stories](#)

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



Ted Chiang, [Exhalation](#)

A collection of science fiction short stories that will change the way you think, feel, and see the world.



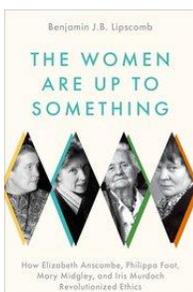
Loren Eiseley, [The Immense Journey](#)

Anthropologist and naturalist Loren Eiseley blends scientific knowledge and imaginative vision in this story of humankind.



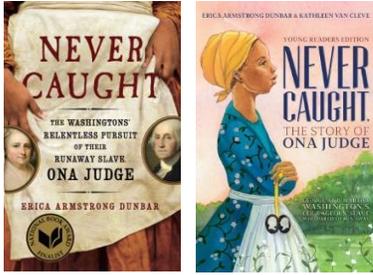
N. K. Jemisin, [How Long 'Til Black Future Month?](#)

These science fiction short stories challenge and delight readers with thought-provoking narratives of destruction, rebirth, and redemption that sharply examine modern society.



Benjamin J.B. Lipscomb, [The Women Are Up to Something](#)

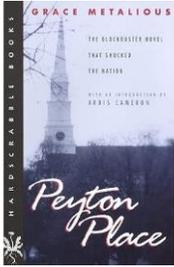
The story of four remarkable women who shaped the intellectual history of the 20th century: Elizabeth Anscombe, Philippa Foot, Mary Midgley, and Iris Murdoch.



Erica Armstrong Dunbar, [Never Caught: The Washingtons' Relentless Pursuit of Their Runaway Slave Ona Judge](#)

A startling and eye-opening look into America's First Family, *Never Caught* is the powerful story about a daring woman of "extraordinary grit." We will explore the facts about the escape to New Hampshire of Ona Judge, from the Washington presidential household, after reading this non-fiction book.

Available for facilitation in both adult and young adult editions.



Grace Metalious, [Peyton Place](#)

America's first blockbuster book, revealing the hypocrisy of post-war America in a small NH town. The book's "scandalous" storylines resulted in it being a bestseller, bizarre movie and TV adaptations, and the vilification of its author, Grace Metalious, leading to her early death.

### HOW TO APPLY

- 1.) To apply to host a book group, please download and review the host checklist [here](#).
- 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.) Once you have confirmed a book and facilitator, complete the **online application form** [here](#) *at least four weeks* prior to your event or email [bookgroups@nhhumanities.org](mailto:bookgroups@nhhumanities.org) with any questions.
- 4.) New Hampshire Humanities will process your application. This includes arranging payment for the book copies and facilitator's stipend.

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

(Email: [bookgroups@nhhumanities.org](mailto:bookgroups@nhhumanities.org) )

