

Book Club Schedule 2022-2023

Title	Author	Suggested by	Category, No. of pages
The Four Winds	Kristin Hannah	Cindy Pullinger	Fiction, 450 pages
Monday July 11, 2022 7PM			
<p>Texas, 1921. A time of abundance. The Great War is over, the bounty of the land is plentiful, and America is on the brink of a new and optimistic era. But for Elsa Wolcott, deemed too old to marry in a time when marriage is a woman's only option, the future seems bleak. Until the night she meets Rafe Martinelli and decides to change the direction of her life. With her reputation in ruin, there is only one respectable choice: marriage to a man she barely knows. By 1934, the world has changed; millions are out of work and drought has devastated the Great Plains. Farmers are fighting to keep their land and their livelihoods as crops fail and water dries up and the earth cracks open. Dust storms roll relentlessly across the plains. Everything on the Martinelli farm is dying, including Elsa's tenuous marriage; each day is a desperate battle against nature and a fight to keep her children alive. In this uncertain and perilous time, Elsa—like so many of her neighbors—must make an agonizing choice: fight for the land she loves or leave it behind and go west, to California, in search of a better life for her family. <i>The Four Winds</i> is a rich, sweeping novel that stunningly brings to life the Great Depression and the people who lived through it—the harsh realities that divided us as a nation and the enduring battle between the haves and the have-nots. A testament to hope, resilience, and the strength of the human spirit to survive adversity, <i>The Four Winds</i> is an indelible portrait of America and the American dream, as seen through the eyes of one indomitable woman whose courage and sacrifice will come to define a generation.</p>			

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Title	Author	Suggested by	Category, No. of pages
Broken Horses	Brandi Carlisle	Ruth Chatlien	Non-Fiction, 336 pages
Monday August 1, 2022 7PM			
<p>Brandi Carlile was born into a musically gifted, impoverished family on the outskirts of Seattle and grew up in a constant state of change, moving from house to house, trailer to trailer, fourteen times in as many years. Though imperfect in every way, her dysfunctional childhood was as beautiful as it was strange, and as nurturing as it was difficult. At the age of five, Brandi contracted bacterial meningitis, which almost took her life, leaving an indelible mark on her formative years and altering her journey into young adulthood. As an openly gay teenager, Brandi grappled with the tension between her sexuality and her faith when her pastor publicly refused to baptize her on the day of the ceremony. Shockingly, her small town rallied around Brandi in support and set her on a path to salvation where the rest of the misfits and rejects find it: through twisted, joyful, weird, and wonderful music. In <i>Broken Horses</i>, Brandi Carlile takes readers through the events of her life that shaped her very raw art—from her start at a local singing competition where she performed Elton John’s “Honky Cat” in a bedazzled white polyester suit, to her first break opening for Dave Matthews Band, to many sleepless tours over fifteen years and six studio albums, all while raising two children with her wife, Catherine Shepherd. This hard-won success led her to collaborations with personal heroes like Elton John, Dolly Parton, Mavis Staples, Pearl Jam, Tanya Tucker, and Joni Mitchell, as well as her peers in the supergroup The Highwomen, and ultimately to the Grammy stage, where she converted millions of viewers into instant fans. Evocative and piercingly honest, <i>Broken Horses</i> is at once an examination of faith through the eyes of a person rejected by the church’s basic tenets and a meditation on the moments and lyrics that have shaped the life of a creative mind, a brilliant artist, and a genuine empath on a mission to give back.</p>			

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Title	Author	Suggested by	Category, No. of pages
The Warmth of Other Suns	Isabel Wilkerson	Deb Modde	Non-Fiction, 640 pages
Monday September 12, 2022 7PM			
<p>NATIONAL BOOK CRITICS CIRCLE AWARD WINNER</p> <p>From 1915 to 1970, this exodus of almost six million people changed the face of America. Wilkerson compares this epic migration to the migrations of other peoples in history. She interviewed more than a thousand people, and gained access to new data and official records, to write this definitive and vividly dramatic account of how these American journeys unfolded, altering our cities, our country, and ourselves. With stunning historical detail, Wilkerson tells this story through the lives of three unique individuals: Ida Mae Gladney, who in 1937 left sharecropping and prejudice in Mississippi for Chicago, where she achieved quiet blue-collar success and, in old age, voted for Barack Obama when he ran for an Illinois Senate seat; sharp and quick-tempered George Starling, who in 1945 fled Florida for Harlem, where he endangered his job fighting for civil rights, saw his family fall, and finally found peace in God; and Robert Foster, who left Louisiana in 1953 to pursue a medical career, the personal physician to Ray Charles as part of a glitteringly successful medical career, which allowed him to purchase a grand home where he often threw exuberant parties.</p> <p>Wilkerson brilliantly captures their first treacherous and exhausting cross-country trips by car and train and their new lives in colonies that grew into ghettos, as well as how they changed these cities with southern food, faith, and culture and improved them with discipline, drive, and hard work. Both a riveting microcosm and a major assessment, <i>The Warmth of Other Suns</i> is a bold, remarkable, and riveting work, a superb account of an “unrecognized immigration” within our own land. Through the breadth of its narrative, the beauty of the writing, the depth of its research, and the fullness of the people and lives portrayed herein, this book is destined to become a classic.</p> <p>In 1916, at the height of World War I, brilliant Shakespeare expert Elizebeth Smith went to work for an eccentric tycoon on his estate outside Chicago. The tycoon had close ties to the U.S. government, and he soon asked Elizebeth to apply her language skills to an exciting new venture: code-breaking. There she met the man who would become her husband, groundbreaking cryptologist William Friedman. Though she and Friedman are in many ways the "Adam and Eve" of the NSA, Elizebeth's story, incredibly, has never been told.</p>			

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Title	Author	Suggested by	Category, No. of pages
The Plot	Jean Haff Korelitz	Clara Celebuski	Fiction, 317 pages
Monday October 3, 2022 7PM			
<p>Jacob Finch Bonner was once a promising young novelist with a respectably published first book. Today, he's teaching in a third-rate MFA program and struggling to maintain what's left of his self-respect; he hasn't written—let alone published—anything decent in years. When Evan Parker, his most arrogant student, announces he doesn't need Jake's help because the plot of his book in progress is a sure thing, Jake is prepared to dismiss the boast as typical amateur narcissism. But then . . . he hears the plot. Jake returns to the downward trajectory of his own career and braces himself for the supernova publication of Evan Parker's first novel: but it never comes. When he discovers that his former student has died, presumably without ever completing his book, Jake does what any self-respecting writer would do with a story like that—a story that absolutely needs to be told. In a few short years, all of Evan Parker's predictions have come true, but Jake is the author enjoying the wave. He is wealthy, famous, praised and read all over the world. But at the height of his glorious new life, an e-mail arrives, the first salvo in a terrifying, anonymous campaign: <i>You are a thief</i>, it says. As Jake struggles to understand his antagonist and hide the truth from his readers and his publishers, he begins to learn more about his late student, and what he discovers both amazes and terrifies him. Who was Evan Parker, and how did he get the idea for his "sure thing" of a novel? What is the real story behind the plot, and who stole it from whom?</p>			

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Title	Author	Suggested by	Category, No. of pages
The Things We Cannot Say	Kelly Rimmer	Cindy Pullinger, Cheri Johnson	Fiction, 466 pages
Monday November 7, 2022 7PM			
<p>In 1942, Europe remains in the relentless grip of war. Just beyond the tents of the Russian refugee camp she calls home, a young woman speaks her wedding vows. It's a decision that will alter her destiny...and it's a lie that will remain buried until the next century. Since she was nine years old, Alina Dziak knew she would marry her best friend, Tomasz. Now 15 and engaged, Alina is unconcerned by reports of Nazi soldiers at the Polish border, believing her neighbors that they pose no real threat, and dreams instead of the day Tomasz returns from college in Warsaw so they can be married. But little by little, injustice by brutal injustice, the Nazi occupation takes hold, and Alina's tiny rural village, its families, are divided by fear and hate. Then, as the fabric of their lives is slowly picked apart, Tomasz disappears. Where Alina used to measure time between visits from her beloved, now, she measures the spaces between hope and despair, waiting for word from Tomasz and avoiding the attentions of the soldiers who patrol her parents' farm. But for now, even deafening silence is preferable to grief. Slipping between Nazi-occupied Poland and the frenetic pace of modern life, Kelly Rimmer creates an emotional and finely wrought narrative. <i>The Things We Cannot Say</i> is an unshakable reminder of the devastation when truth is silenced...and how it can take a lifetime to find our voice before we learn to trust it.</p>			

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Title	Author	Suggested by	Category, No. of pages
The Bend in Redwood Road	Danielle Stewart	Sue LaMagdelaine	Fiction, 298 pages
Monday December 5, 2022 7PM			
<p>Most days it's manageable. No more than a quiet wondering around the edges of her mind. What has become of the baby she left behind? Smiling through the pain and suffering in silence, Leslie Laudon marches forward. Embracing the life skillfully designed by her husband Paul. Living right could be penance for an impossible choice made with an uneasy heart. Dutiful and anchoring, Leslie poured herself into her other children. Nurturing them through infancy, protecting them as toddlers, guiding them as teens. As her youngest child heads off to college with her suitcases and coordinating dorm room accessories, so goes Leslie's identity. The chaotic life of a busy working mother threatens to become dangerously quiet. Quiet enough to hear the voices she's tried to silence for decades. Gwen Fox was adopted by two perfect people. Noel and Millie have always treated her the same as their two biological sons. Her parents love is strong and unwavering, yet a soul-deep ache still lingers. Plagued by an unnamed, hard to explain, longing Gwen could never shake. Riddled with doubt and dragged down by the undertow of unanswered questions, Leslie and Gwen both find their lives suddenly upended. One seeks the truth about the day she was born. The other seeks herself, the woman she was before motherhood. Before she made a choice to leave a piece of her heart lying asleep in the hospital nursery. In this complex journey for answers, blame is abundant. Guilt is thick enough to choke on. Marriages are brought to the brink of disaster. As the ripples of the past vibrate through their lives, Gwen and Leslie realize there is no turning back. What they have put into motion cannot be stopped. The road toward the truth will be littered with casualties.</p>			

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Title	Author	Suggested by	Category, No. of pages
Delicious	Ruth Reichl	Barb McNeill	Fiction, 418 pages
Monday January 2, 2023 7PM			
<p>In her best-selling memoirs, Ruth Reichl has long illuminated the theme of how food defines us, and never more so than in her dazzling fiction debut about sisters, family ties, and a young woman who must finally let go of guilt and grief to embrace her own true gifts. Billie Breslin has travelled far from her California home to take a job at <i>Delicious</i>, the most iconic food magazine in New York and, thus, the world. When the publication is suddenly shut down, the colourful staff, who have become an extended family for Billie, must pick up their lives and move on. Not Billie, though. She is offered a new job: Staying behind in the magazine's deserted downtown mansion offices to uphold the "Delicious Guarantee" - a public relations hotline for complaints and recipe inquiries - until further notice. What she doesn't know is that this boring, lonely job will be the portal to a life-changing discovery. <i>Delicious!</i> carries the listener to the colourful world of downtown New York restaurateurs and artisanal purveyors. And from the lively food shop in Little Italy where Billie works on weekends to a hidden room in the magazine's library where she discovers the letters of Lulu Swan, a plucky 12-year-old, who wrote to the legendary chef James Beard during World War II. Lulu's letters lead Billie to a deeper understanding of history (and the history of food), but most important, Lulu's courage in the face of loss inspires Billie to come to terms with her own issues - the panic attacks that occur every time she even thinks about cooking, the truth about the big sister she adored, and her ability to open her heart to love.</p>			

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Title	Author	Suggested by	Category, No. of pages
Katie, Bar the Door	Ruth Hull Chatlien	Book Club	Fiction, 320 pages
Monday February 6, 2023 7PM			
<p>A YOUNG WOMAN'S HARROWING EMOTIONAL JOURNEY TO SAVE HERSELF AND HER DREAMS.</p> <p>From a childhood of parental loss, religious repression, and sexual shaming, Katie Thompson suffers deep wounds and persistent self-doubt. Her desire to find meaning through education and a career is threatened by those who push her to conform to a more traditional path. In her desperate search for love, Katie makes disastrous choices about men, leading her to the brink of self-destruction. Her journey through <i>Katie, Bar the Door</i> is the universal quest for healing and hope as she struggles to save herself and her dreams.</p>			

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Title	Author	Suggested by	Category, No. of pages
Lincoln Highway	Amor Towles	Deb Modde	Fiction, 588 pages
Monday March 6, 2023 7PM			
<p>In June, 1954, eighteen-year-old Emmett Watson is driven home to Nebraska by the warden of the juvenile work farm where he has just served fifteen months for involuntary manslaughter. His mother long gone, his father recently deceased, and the family farm foreclosed upon by the bank, Emmett's intention is to pick up his eight-year-old brother, Billy, and head to California where they can start their lives anew. But when the warden drives away, Emmett discovers that two friends from the work farm have hidden themselves in the trunk of the warden's car. Together, they have hatched an altogether different plan for Emmett's future, one that will take them all on a fateful journey in the opposite direction—to the City of New York. Spanning just ten days and told from multiple points of view, Towles's third novel will satisfy fans of his multi-layered literary styling while providing them an array of new and richly imagined settings, characters, and themes.</p>			

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Title	Author	Suggested by	Category, No. of pages
The Storied Life of A.J.Fikry	Gabrielle Zevin	Cheri Johnson	Fiction, 290 pages
Monday April 3, 2023 7PM			
<p>A. J. Fikry's life is not at all what he expected it to be. He lives alone, his bookstore is experiencing the worst sales in its history, and now his prized possession, a rare collection of Poe poems, has been stolen. But when a mysterious package appears at the bookstore, its unexpected arrival gives Fikry the chance to make his life over--and see everything anew.</p> <p>"Readers who delighted in The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society, The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry, and Letters from Skye will be equally captivated by this novel." —*Library Journal, starred review</p>			

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Title	Author	Suggested by	Category, No. of pages
The Hummingbird's Daughter	Luis Alberto Urrea	Barb McNeill	Fiction, 499 pages
Monday May 1, 2023 7PM			
<p>Discover an epic historical novel of a young saint escaping death from Pulitzer Prize finalist Luis Alberto Urrea, author of <i>The House of Broken Angels</i>.</p> <p>This historical novel is based on Urrea's real great-aunt Teresita, who had healing powers and was acclaimed as a saint. Urrea has researched historical accounts and family records for years to get an accurate story.</p>			

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Title	Author	Suggested by	Category, No. of pages
The Woman who Smashed Codes	Jason Fagone	Linda Piepenbrink	Non-Fiction, 464 pages
Monday June 5, 2023 7PM			
<p>“Not all superheroes wear capes, and Elizebeth Smith Friedman should be the subject of a future Wonder Woman movie.” —<i>The New York Times</i></p> <p>Joining the ranks of <i>Hidden Figures</i> and <i>In the Garden of Beasts</i>, the incredible true story of the greatest codebreaking duo that ever lived, an American woman and her husband who invented the modern science of cryptology together and used it to confront the evils of their time, solving puzzles that unmasked Nazi spies and helped win World War II.</p> <p>In <i>The Woman Who Smashed Codes</i>, Jason Fagone chronicles the life of this extraordinary woman, who played an integral role in our nation’s history for forty years. After World War I, Smith used her talents to catch gangsters and smugglers during Prohibition, then accepted a covert mission to discover and expose Nazi spy rings that were spreading like wildfire across South America, advancing ever closer to the United States. As World War II raged, Elizebeth fought a highly classified battle of wits against Hitler’s Reich, cracking multiple versions of the Enigma machine used by German spies. Meanwhile, inside an Army vault in Washington, William worked furiously to break Purple, the Japanese version of Enigma—and eventually succeeded, at a terrible cost to his personal life.</p> <p>In 1916, at the height of World War I, brilliant Shakespeare expert Elizebeth Smith went to work for an eccentric tycoon on his estate outside Chicago. The tycoon had close ties to the U.S. government, and he soon asked Elizebeth to apply her language skills to an exciting new venture: code-breaking. There she met the man who would become her husband, groundbreaking cryptologist William Friedman. Though she and Friedman are in many ways the "Adam and Eve" of the NSA, Elizebeth’s story, incredibly, has never been told.</p> <p>Fagone unveils America’s code-breaking history through the prism of Smith’s life, bringing into focus the unforgettable events and colorful personalities that would help shape modern intelligence. Blending the lively pace and compelling detail that are the hallmarks of Erik Larson’s bestsellers with the atmosphere and intensity of <i>The Imitation Game</i>, <i>The Woman Who Smashed Codes</i> is page-turning popular history at its finest.</p>			