

AAUW Afternoon Book Club Selections 2018-2019

All meetings will be held on the 4th Monday of the month at 3 pm at The Reader's Loft unless otherwise noted.

7/23/2018 - Girls of Atomic City by Denise Kiernan

Leader: Carolyn Reedy

The incredible story of the young women of Oak Ridge, Tennessee, who unwittingly played a crucial role in one of the most significant moments in U.S. history. The Tennessee town of Oak Ridge was created from scratch in 1942. One of the Manhattan Project's secret cities, it didn't appear on any maps until 1949, and yet at the height of World War II it was using more electricity than New York City and was home to more than 75,000 people, many of them young women recruited from small towns across the South. Their jobs were shrouded in mystery, but they were buoyed by a sense of shared purpose, close friendships--and a surplus of handsome scientists and Army men! Denise Kiernan traces the astonishing story of these unsung WWII workers through interviews with dozens of surviving women and other Oak Ridge residents

8/27/2018 - The Lemon Tree: An Arab, A Jew and the Heart of the Middle East by Sandy Tolan

Leader:

In 1967, Bashir Al-Khayri, a Palestinian twenty-five-year-old, journeyed to Israel, with the goal of seeing the beloved old stone house, with the lemon tree behind it, that he and his family had fled nineteen years earlier. To his surprise, when he found the house he was greeted by Dalia Ashkenazi Landau, a nineteen-year-old Israeli college student, whose family fled Europe for Israel following the Holocaust. On the stoop of their shared home, Dalia and Bashir began a rare friendship, forged in the aftermath of war and tested over the next thirty-five years in ways that neither could imagine on that summer day in 1967. Based on extensive research, the book brings the Israeli-Palestinian conflict down to its most human level, suggesting that even amid the bleakest political realities there exist stories of hope and reconciliation.

9/24/2018 - A Gentleman in Moscow by Amor Towles

Leader: Lisa Ubbelodhe

In 1922, Count Alexander Rostov is deemed an unrepentant aristocrat by a Bolshevik tribunal, and is sentenced to house arrest in the Metropol, a grand hotel across the street from the Kremlin. Rostov, an indomitable man of erudition and wit, has never worked a day in his life, and must now live in an attic room while some of the most tumultuous decades in Russian history are unfolding outside the hotel's doors. Unexpectedly, his reduced circumstances provide him entry into a much larger world of emotional discovery.

10/22/2018 - I Look Just Fine When You're Not Around by Ann Garvin

Leader: Joanne Rathburn

Everything is falling apart in psychologist Tig Monahan's life. Her mother's dementia is wearing her out; her boyfriend takes off for Hawaii without her; and her sister inexplicably disappears, leaving her newborn behind. When a therapy session goes horribly wrong, Tig finds herself unemployed and part of the sandwich generation trying to take care of everyone and failing miserably. Just when she thinks she can redefine herself on the radio as an arbiter of fairness, she discovers a family secret that nobody saw coming. It will take everything plus a sense of humor to see her way clear to a better life, but none of that will happen if she can't let go of her past.

11/26/2018 - Becoming Nicole: The Transformation of an American Family by Amy Ellis Nutt

Leader: Linda Birder

When Wayne and Kelly Maines adopted identical twin boys, they thought their lives were complete. But it wasn't long before they noticed a marked difference between Jonas and his brother, Wyatt. Jonas preferred sports and trucks and many of the things little boys were "supposed" to like; but Wyatt liked princess dolls and dress-up and playing Little Mermaid. By the time the twins were toddlers, confusion over Wyatt's insistence that he was female began to tear the family apart. In the years that followed, the Maineses came to question their long-held views on gender and identity, to accept and embrace Wyatt's transition to Nicole, and to undergo an

emotionally wrenching transformation of their own that would change all their lives forever.

December 2018 - No meeting

1/28/2019 - Pachinko by Min Jin Lee

Leader:

In the early 1900s, teenaged Sunja, the adored daughter of a crippled fisherman, falls for a wealthy stranger at the seashore near her home in Korea. He promises her the world, but when she discovers she is pregnant--and that her lover is married--she refuses to be bought. Instead, she accepts an offer of marriage from a gentle, sickly minister passing through on his way to Japan. But her decision to abandon her home, and to reject her son's powerful father, sets off a dramatic saga that will echo down through the generations.

2/25/2018 - The Color of Water by James McBride

Leader: Sue Hendricks ??

Who is Ruth McBride Jordan? A self-declared "light-skinned" woman evasive about her ethnicity, yet steadfast in her love for her twelve black children. James McBride, journalist, musician, and son, explores his mother's past, as well as his own upbringing and heritage.

3/25/2019 - The Other Einstein: A Novel by Marie Benedict

Leader: Wendy Schroeder

The book offers us a window into a brilliant, fascinating woman whose light was lost in Einstein's enormous shadow. It is the story of Einstein's wife, a brilliant physicist in her own right, whose contribution to the special theory of relativity is hotly debated and may have been inspired by her own profound and very personal insight. Mitza Maric has always been a little different from other girls. Most twenty-year-olds are wives by now, not studying physics at an elite Zurich university with only male students trying to outdo her clever calculations. But Mitza is smart enough to know that, for her, math is an easier path than marriage. And then fellow student Albert Einstein takes an interest in her, and the world turns sideways. Theirs

becomes a partnership of the mind and of the heart, but there might not be room for more than one genius in a marriage.

4/22/2019 - Dark Money: The Hidden History of the Billionaires Behind the Rise of the Radical Right by Jane Mayer

Leader: Dotty Juengst

Why is America living in an age of profound and widening economic inequality? Why have even modest attempts to address climate change been defeated again and again? Why do hedge-fund billionaires pay a far lower tax rate than middle-class workers? In a riveting and indelible feat of reporting, Jane Mayer illuminates the history of an elite cadre of plutocrats—headed by the Kochs, the Scaifes, the Olins, and the Bradleys—who have bankrolled a systematic plan to fundamentally alter the American political system. Mayer traces a byzantine trail of billions of dollars spent by the network, revealing a staggering conglomeration of think tanks, academic institutions, media groups, courthouses, and government allies that have fallen under their sphere of influence. Drawing from hundreds of exclusive interviews, as well as extensive scrutiny of public records, private papers, and court proceedings, Mayer provides vivid portraits of the secretive figures behind the new American oligarchy and a searing look at the carefully concealed agendas steering the nation.

5/28/2019 - The Hate U Give by Angie Thomas NOTE: Date change due to Memorial Day holiday

Leader: Katie Janosik

Sixteen-year-old Starr Carter moves between two worlds: the poor neighborhood where she lives and the fancy suburban prep school she attends. The uneasy balance between these worlds is shattered when Starr witnesses the fatal shooting of her childhood best friend Khalil at the hands of a police officer. Khalil was unarmed. Soon afterward, his death is a national headline. Some are calling him a thug, maybe even a drug dealer and a gangbanger. Protesters are taking to the streets in Khalil's name. Some cops and the local drug lord try to intimidate Starr and her family. What everyone wants to know is: what *really* went down that night? And the only person alive who can answer that is Starr. But what Starr does—or does not—say could upend her community. It could also endanger her life.

6/24/2019 - News of the World: A Novel by Paulette Jiles

Leader: Mary Schmidt

In the aftermath of the Civil War, an aging itinerant news reader agrees to transport a young captive of the Kiowa back to her people. In the wake of the Civil War, Captain Jefferson Kyle Kidd travels through northern Texas, giving live readings from newspapers to paying audiences hungry for news of the world. In Wichita Falls, he is offered a \$50 gold piece to deliver a young orphan to her relatives in San Antonio. Four years earlier, a band of Kiowa raiders killed Johanna's parents and sister; sparing the little girl, they raised her as one of their own. Recently rescued by the U.S. army, the ten-year-old has once again been torn away from the only home she knows. Yet as the miles pass, the two lonely survivors tentatively begin to trust each other, forming a bond that marks the difference between life and death in this treacherous land. Arriving in San Antonio, the reunion is neither happy nor welcome. The captain must hand Johanna over to an aunt and uncle she does not remember—strangers who regard her as an unwanted burden. A respectable man, Captain Kidd is faced with a terrible choice: abandon the girl to her fate or become—in the eyes of the law—a kidnapper himself.

7/22/2019 - Before We Were Yours by Lisa Wingate

Leader:

Aiken, South Carolina, present day. Born into wealth and privilege, Avery Stafford seems to have it all: a successful career as a federal prosecutor, a handsome fiancé, and a lavish wedding on the horizon. But when Avery returns home to help her father weather a health crisis, a chance encounter leaves her with uncomfortable questions and compels her to take a journey through her family's long-hidden history, on a path that will ultimately lead either to devastation or to redemption. The book is based on one of America's most notorious real-life scandals—in which Georgia Tann, director of a Memphis-based adoption organization, kidnapped and sold poor children to wealthy families all over the country.