

UUSD Book Discussions for 2004

Jan 8th – **The Tao of Pooh** by Benjamin Hoff; Leader: Judy Hayes

Winnie-the-Pooh has a certain way about him, a way of doing things that has made him the world's most beloved bear, and Pooh's Way, as Benjamin Hoff brilliantly demonstrates, seems strangely close to the ancient Chinese principles of Taoism.

Follow the Pooh Way in this humorous and enlightening introduction to Taoism, with classic decorations by E.H. Shepard throughout.

Feb 5 – **A Gentleman from Moscow** by Amor Towles; Leader: John Hayes

A Gentleman in Moscow immerses us in another elegantly drawn era with the story of Count Alexander Rostov. When, in 1922, he is deemed an unrepentant aristocrat by a Bolshevik tribunal, the count 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 a doorway into a much larger world of emotional discovery.

Brimming with humor, a glittering cast of characters, and one beautifully rendered scene after another, this singular novel casts a spell as it relates the count's endeavor to gain a deeper understanding of what it means to be a man of purpose.

March 4 – **Mayflower: Voyage, Community, War** by Nathaniel Philbrick; Leader: Joyce Bramson

How did America begin? That simple question launches this acclaimed author on an extraordinary journey to understand the truth behind our most sacred national myth: the voyage of the *Mayflower* and the settlement of Plymouth Colony. This is a great read about the Pilgrims: where they came from, the trip made, their arrival and struggles to survive. The author has written the honest truth about the Pilgrims and Native Americans; an easy to read, exciting book full of real people.

April 1 – Mad Honey: A Novel by Jodi Picoult and Jennifer Finney Boylan; Leader: Judy Hayes

A best-selling, soul-stirring novel about what we choose to keep from our past, and what we choose to leave behind. This is a riveting novel of suspense, an unforgettable love story, and a moving and powerful exploration of the secrets we keep and the risks we take in order to become ourselves.

May 6 – **The Art of Gathering** by Priya Parker; Leader: Wendy Gladfelter

In this highly acclaimed best seller, Priya Parker argues that the gatherings in our lives are lackluster and unproductive — and they don't have to be. At a time when coming together is more important than ever, Parker sets forth a human-centered approach to gathering that will help everyone create meaningful, memorable experiences, large and small, for work and for play.

June 3 – **Apeirogon: A Novel** by Colum McCann; Leader: Sarah Raymond

A New York Times bestseller, this is based on the true-life friendship of two men whose daughters were killed in the Middle East. The story follows two real life figures: an Israeli graphic designer, and a Palestinian scholar and previous political prisoner. Consisting of 1001 short sections, the two central figures bond over the untimely deaths of their respective daughters. Improbably, the fathers on whom this book is based became close friends, supporting each other's protests and speaking across the world. Called quite an extraordinary novel.

July 1 – **A Place Called Home: A Memoir** by David Ambroz; Leader: Bobbi Dunham

A galvanizing, stirring memoir about growing up homeless and in foster care and rising to become a leading advocate for child welfare, recognized by President Obama as an American Champion of Change. “You will fall in love with David Ambroz, his beautifully-told, gut-wrenching story, and his great big heart.” (Jeanette Walls, author of *The Glass Castle*)

August 5 – **All the Beauty in the World: The Metropolitan Museum of Art and Me** by Patrick Bringley; Leader: Wendy Gladfelter

A fascinating, revelatory portrait of the Metropolitan Museum of Art and its treasures by a former *New Yorker* staffer who spent a decade as a museum guard. In the tradition of classic workplace memoirs, this is a surprising, inspiring portrait of a great museum, its hidden treasures, and the people who make it tick, by one of its most intimate observers. During 8-12 hour shifts spent rotating among the galleries in carefully choreographed assigned posts, he takes advantage of the gift of time to study the masterpieces he's been hired to protect — and to ponder the role of art throughout history.

September 9th (a week later due to Labor Day) – **Sacred Ground: Pluralism, Prejudice, and the Promise of America** by Eboo Patel; Leader: Bunny Guerrin

There is no better time to stand up for your values than when they are under attack.

Suspicion and animosity toward American Muslims have increased rather than subsided. Alarmist, hateful rhetoric once relegated to the fringes of political discourse has now become

frighteningly mainstream, with pundits and politicians routinely invoking the specter of Islam as a menacing, deeply anti-American force.

Here, author and renowned interfaith leader Eboo Patel says this prejudice is not just a problem for Muslims but a challenge to the very idea of America. Patel shows us that Americans from George Washington to Martin Luther King Jr. have been "interfaith leaders," illustrating how the forces of pluralism in America have time and again defeated the forces of prejudice. And now a new generation needs to rise up and confront the anti-Muslim prejudice of our era. To this end, Patel offers a primer in the art and science of interfaith work, bringing to life the growing body of research on how faith can be a bridge of cooperation rather than a barrier of division and sharing stories from the frontlines of interfaith activism.

October 7 – **Trust: A Novel** by Hernan Diaz; Leader: Bobbi Dunham

WINNER OF THE PULITZER PRIZE FOR FICTION

A *NEW YORK TIMES* BESTSELLER

ONE OF *THE NEW YORK TIMES* TOP TEN BOOKS OF 2022

ONE OF BARACK OBAMA'S FAVORITE BOOKS OF 2022

LONGLISTED FOR THE 2022 BOOKER PRIZE

"Buzzy and enthralling ...A glorious novel about empires and erasures, husbands and wives, staggering fortunes and unspeakable misery...Fun as hell to read." —Oprah Daily

"A genre-bending, time-skipping story about New York City's elite in the roaring '20s and Great Depression."—*Vanity Fair*

"A riveting story of class, capitalism, and greed." —*Esquire*

November 4 – **Heaven to Earth Grocery Store: A Novel** by James McBride; Leader: Karen Lunstead

A novel about small-town secrets and the people who keep them.

A *NEW YORK TIMES* NOTABLE BOOK

NAMED A BEST BOOK OF THE YEAR BY *NPR*, *WASHINGTON POST*, AND *TIME MAGAZINE*

"A murder mystery locked inside a Great American Novel . . . Charming, smart, heart-blistering, and heart-healing." —Danez Smith, *The New York Times Book Review*

"We all need—we all *deserve*—this vibrant, love-affirming novel that bounds over any difference that claims to separate us." —Ron Charles, *The Washington Post*

Also discussed:

Gilead by Mary Robinson

Chip Wars

Killers of the Flower Moon

Demon Copperhead by Barbara Kinsolving

We Must Not Think of Ourselves

Sacred Ground (UUA Common Read of 2012)

Prayers for the End of the World

Allies for Justice by Kathleen Doyle

Lincoln Highway