

From Foreign Lands To Our Own (to Delhi, and back, and again, and again)

Foreign, Albeit Familiar, Lands

Session I

9/19/17 SW 107 7:30-9pm

The Bomb Edition

Karan Mahajan *The Association of Small Bombs* | 288 pages
--Poetry: Patrick Rosal "Freddie"

We open our 2017 L&M season in Delhi, where a terrorist attack rattles a busy market. This 2016 National Book Award finalist takes a difficulty journey into the mind of the terrorist responsible for the bombing, giving us access to a perspective most of us would prefer to never entertain.

Session II

10/24/17 SW 107 7:30-9pm

The Storytelling Edition

Téa Obreht *The Tiger's Wife* | 337 pages
--Poetry: Li-Young Lee "Persimmons"

In our second session, we move slightly west to an unnamed Balkan country. This 2011 masterpiece (and my favorite book, maybe of all time,) is a National Book Award finalist and the winner of the Orange Prize for Fiction that traces the life of a medical student and her physician grandfather in a war-torn region. It's an intimate exploration of storytelling, folklore and the power of belief.

***Session III** – *Visiting Author—Anthony Marra*

11/27/17 (*Monday*) SW 107 6:30-8pm

The Vital Edition

Anthony Marra *A Constellation of Vital Phenomena* | 416 pages
--Poetry: Wendy Videlock "Nor what we mean"
--Poetry: Stephen Crane "In the desert"

In this session, we will move east across the Black Sea to Chechnya. Marra's novel chronicles the lives of people in the liminal spaces of conflict: both post-war and still at war. This powerful narrative explores the way in which people make meaning out of chaos and destruction, and the parts of life that people struggle to preserve even when everything else is already lost.

Session IV

1/16/18 SW 107 7:30-9pm

The Vital Edition

Arundhati Roy *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* | 444 pages
--Poetry: Denise Levertov "A Time Past"

We return to Delhi, where the story opens in a graveyard. Twenty years after the publication of *The God of Small Things*, Roy is back. With its dedicated—"To, The Unconsoled"—the novel makes clear that we are once again being asked to bear witness to the lives of people largely ignored by the world. In a 2011 interview, Roy said, "'I'll have to find a language to tell the story I want to tell... by language I don't mean English, Hindi, Urdu, Malayalam, of course. I mean something else. A way of binding together worlds that have been ripped apart.'" At 440 pages, this is our longest work of the year. But we have almost 2 months to do it.

Our, Albeit Still Foreign, Lands

Session V

2/13/18 SW 107 7:30-9pm

The Arctic Edition

Ian McGuire *The North Water* | 272 pages
--Poetry: Billy Collins "Traveling Alone"

As expected, begin our second half in Delhi during the siege of 1857, where an Irish surgeon named Patrick Sumner commits an unspeakable act of greed. Now back in England and alone, Sumner volunteers to join the expedition to the Arctic Circle aboard the *Volunteer*. Between *Moby Dick* and *Heart of Darkness*, we find this haunting narrative of worlds where ethics and morality no longer apply. (Oh wait, this world is familiar to us after all.)

Session VI

3/19/18 (*Monday*) Warwick Evans 7:30-9pm

The Rock & Roll Edition

Jennifer Egan *A Visit From the Goon Squad* | 352 pages
--Poetry: Joseph Mills "Turning"

This 2011 Pulitzer Prize-winning novel is worth all the hype. With its tremendous economy of language and uncanny ability to jump perspectives, Egan's novel is a meditation on time, aging, and the power of the internal. It's 2 parts heartbreak, 3 parts hope, 5 parts music, with a sprinkle of sex, drugs, and infidelity.

***Session VII – Visiting Author—Téa Obreht**

4/23/18 (Monday) Warwick Evans 7:30-9pm

The Deja Vu Edition

Téa Obreht *The Tiger's Wife*

| 337 pages

We revisit a book we read earlier this year to have one of our favorite authors join us for the Spring Author Series.

***Session VIII – Field Trip to the National Museum of African American History and Culture**

5/12/18 (Saturday) NMAAHC 11:30AM

Our Past Edition

Colson Whitehead *The Underground Railroad*

| 320 pages

--Poetry: Natasha Trethewey "History Lesson"

--Poetry: Langston Hughes "Remember"

This winner of the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award follows the lives of two runaway slaves, as they make their way north through the Underground Railroad. To quote the NYT review: "In its exploration of the foundational sins of America, it is a brave and necessary book."

We will convene outside the NMAAHC at 1130 AM.
You will need to sign up ahead of time as tickets are limited.

A celebratory end-of-the-year reception will follow. Location TBD.