

BOOK CLUBS, Fall 2019

NO FEES. Just a free book. NO GRADES. Just a commitment to read and attend meetings.
NO PRESSURE. Just an opportunity to discuss and learn.

SIGN UP: Check the list below, and then email Alyssa Dobson (adobso2@lsu.edu) and tell her which club you want to join. Deadline to sign up is September 12. Books will be distributed at the first meeting; meeting schedules are below. Clubs meet 4-7 times and finish before Thanksgiving. OHC provides the book and the moderator; all we ask is that you make a good-faith effort to do the reading and attend the meetings.

Moderator: Dr. Stephen Finley, Religious Studies

Meetings: Wednesday 9/25, 10/2, 10/9, 10/23, 10/30 at 5PM in 203 French House

Book: *The Flip: Epiphanies of the Mind and the Future of Knowledge* by Jeffrey Kripal

Jeffrey J. Kripal's *The Flip* is a book about modern knowledge that cuts across science and religion by including knowledge and experience that have been excluded and deemed heretical by both. Yet, these experiences—call them the paranormal—happen all the time. The book is written to general audiences and, more specifically, scientists, engineers, computer scientists, and medical professionals. Kripal calls for closing the gap between the sciences and humanities by including these anomalous and extraordinary experiences that have happened to scientists, who have then "flipped," that is, changed their perspective on the nature of reality after having these first-person experiences, which do not fit in materialist-scientific modes of knowledge. We will be skyping with Kripal too.

Moderator: Dr. Catherine Jacquet, History

Meetings: Wednesday 9/25, 10/9, 10/23, 11/6, 11/20 at 5PM in 200 French House

Book: *A More Beautiful and Terrible History: The Uses and Misuses of Civil Rights History* by Jeanne Theoharis

Was MLK a beloved figure in 1965? Was Rosa Parks just a tired, little old lady? Why does it matter? In her powerful book, Jeanne Theoharis dissects the "national myth-making" on the civil rights movement and asks us to consider who tells our national narratives about the past, how are those narratives told, and what purposes do those narratives serve today? "The civil rights movement has become national legend, lauded by presidents from Reagan to Obama to Trump as proof of the power of American democracy. This fable, featuring dreamy heroes and accidental heroines, has shuttered the movement firmly in the past, whitewashed the forces that stood in its ways, and diminished its scope" (book jacket). Join us for a lively semester-long conversation about the civil rights movements, the political uses of the past, the histories that we create, and the histories that we ignore. As we read, we will consider why history and historical truths matter.

Moderator: Dr. Clint Willson, Civil & Environmental Engineering

Thursdays starting 9/26 at 7PM in Laville Faculty-in-Residence Apartment

Book: *The Source: How Rivers Made America and America Remade Its Rivers* by Martin Doyle

Doyle's book tells the story of how rivers shaped the United States. As the new nation expanded, the federal government began to play an essential role in regulating rivers that crossed state boundaries, building dams for flood control and water supply, and overseeing the hydroelectric power they provided. In the latter half of the 20th century, environmental concerns prompted all levels of government to change course. Doyle's historical perspective offers an important account of how financing the country's water and wastewater systems began at the local level, moved to the federal level, then, following the Reagan Revolution and the pulling back of federal funds, brought us to our

current situation, where Washington provides almost no help to cash-strapped states and cities to rehabilitate their water systems.

Moderator: Dr. Kodi Roberts, History

Meetings: Tuesday 9/24, 10/1, 10/8, 10/15, 10/22 at 4:30PM in Himes 250A

Book: *The Blood of Emmett Till* by Tim Tyson

In 1955, white men in the Mississippi Delta lynched a fourteen-year-old from Chicago named Emmett Till. His murder was part of a wave of white terrorism in the wake of the 1954 Supreme Court decision that declared public school segregation unconstitutional. Only weeks later, Rosa Parks thought about young Emmett as she refused to move to the back of a city bus in Montgomery, Alabama. Five years later, Black students who called themselves “the Emmett Till generation” launched sit-in campaigns that turned the struggle for civil rights into a mass movement. Till’s lynching became the most notorious hate crime in American history. But what actually happened to Emmett Till—not the icon of injustice, but the flesh-and-blood boy? Part detective story, part political history, *The Blood of Emmett Till* “unfolds like a movie” (*The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*), drawing on a wealth of new evidence, including a shocking admission of Till’s innocence from the woman in whose name he was killed.

Moderator: Dr. Bradley Storin, Religious Studies

Meetings: Thursday 9/26, 10/3, 10/10, 10/24, 10/31, 11/7, 11/14 at 4:30PM in 200 French House

Book: *Confessions* by Augustine

Augustine's *Confessions* is, simply put, a classic. It is the autobiography (one of the earliest in western literature) of the most influential Christian theologian of all time, written in the 390s, soon after its author became bishop of Hippo in North Africa. It tracks Augustine's psychological struggles, spiritual development, and (many) religious conversions. If you've never read anything by the greatest early Christian author, then this is an excellent point of entry into his works; if you have read some of his writings, then this is a wonderful opportunity to see a side of him that eludes his other writings. We will read the entire text and address important literary, historical, personal, and theological issues present in the book.

Moderator: Dr. Michael Henderson, Mass Communication

Meetings: Monday 9/23, 10/7, 10/21, 11/4, 11/18 at 7PM in 200 French House

Book: *Fault Lines: A History of the United States Since 1974* by Kevin Kruse and Julian Zelizer

Look at the news today and you are sure to see examples of America's polarized, uncivil, and downright smash-mouth politics. How did we get here? Two award-winning historians tell the story. They start with the dramatic events of 1974, amid riots, war, and a presidential resignation. Then they trace the lines of divisions in American society and show how those divisions exploded into chasms of disagreement over the next 45 years – right up to today. It is a history of our own time.