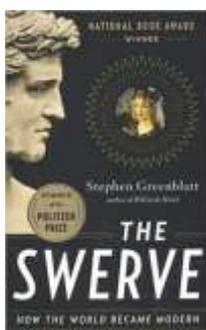




## BOOK CLUBS, Spring 2020

**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](mailto:adobso2@lsu.edu)) and tell her which club you want to join. Deadline to sign up is January 29. Books will be distributed at the first meeting; meeting schedules are below, or will be discussed at first meeting. Clubs meet 4-5 times and finish before Spring Break. 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.

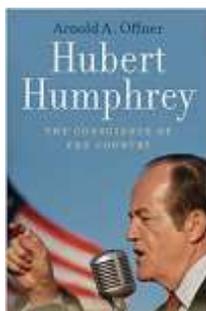


**Moderator: Professor Mary Sirridge, Philosophy**

**Meetings: Thursdays 2/13, 2/20, 2/27, 3/5, 3/12 at 4:30PM in 203 French House**

**Book: *The Swerve: How the World Became Modern* by Stephen Greenblatt**

In the winter of 1417, Lucretius' great Epicurean poem, *On the Nature of Things*, long thought to have been destroyed in the deadly eruption of Vesuvius in 79 CE, emerged to a world on the brink of becoming modern. *The Swerve* is Renaissance historian Stephen Greenblatt's dramatic account of the origins of Lucretius' work, its tenuous survival in a hostile world, the dramatic moment of its rediscovery—and its remarkable afterlife. Putting forward a radically human-oriented ethic, a theory of knowledge based squarely on perceptual experience, and an atomistic and mechanistic account of reality, in which individuals, species, institutions and worlds coalesce and disintegrate by turns, since its rediscovery *On the Nature of Things* has attracted the admiration of a disparate group of artists, historians, heretics, scientists and political theorists, among them Da Vinci, Botticelli, Giordano Bruno, Hume, Newton, Einstein, Jefferson—all convinced of having found an ancient source for their most important ideas.

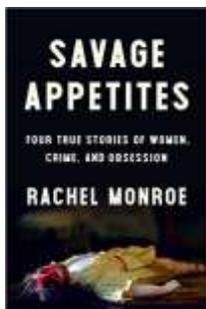


**Moderator: Professor Robert Mann, Mass Communications**

**Meetings: Mondays 2/10, 2/17, 3/2, 3/9, 3/16 at 5PM in 200 French House**

**Book: *Hubert Humphrey: The Conscience of the Country* by Arnold Offner**

LSU's most prominent graduate is not well known to many current LSU students. Hubert Humphrey, who earned his master's in political science from LSU in 1940, was one of the great liberal leaders of postwar American politics, yet because he never made it to the Oval Office he has been largely overlooked by biographers. His career encompassed three well-known high points: the civil rights speech at the 1948 Democratic Convention that risked his political future; his shepherding of the 1964 Civil Rights Act through the Senate; and his near-victory in the 1968 presidential election, one of the angriest and most divisive in the country's history. Historian Arnold Offner has explored archival records to recapture Humphrey's life, giving us previously unknown details of the vice president's fractious relationship with Lyndon Johnson, showing how Johnson colluded with Richard Nixon to deny Humphrey the presidency, and describing the most neglected aspect of Humphrey's career: his major legislative achievements after returning to the Senate in 1970. This definitive biography rediscovers one of America's great political figures.



**Moderator: Professor Alecia Long, History**

**Meetings: Mondays 2/11, 2/18, 3/3, 3/10, 3/17 at 4pm in French House 220**

**Book: *Savage Appetites: Four True Stories of Women, Crime, and Obsession* by Rachel Monroe**

In this illuminating exploration of women, violence, and obsession, Rachel Monroe interrogates the appeal of true crime through four narratives of fixation. Each woman Monroe investigates identifies with a particular archetype that provides an entryway into true crime. Through these four cases, she traces the history of American crime through the growth of forensic science, the evolving role of victims, the Satanic Panic, the rise of online detectives, and the long shadow of the Columbine shooting. In a combination of personal narrative, reportage, and a sociological examination of violence and media in the twentieth and twenty-first century, *Savage Appetites* scrupulously explores empathy, justice, and the persistent appeal of violence.

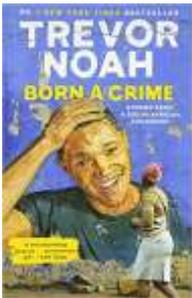


**Moderator: Professor Belinda Davis, Political Science**

**Meetings: First meeting is on Thursday 2/13 at 4PM in French House 200**

**Book: *The Yellow House* by Sarah Broom**

Winner of the 2019 National Book Award for Nonfiction and a bunch of other awards, including President Obama's best books of the year, Sarah Broom's memoir tells a hundred years of her family and their relationship to home in a neglected area of one of America's most mythologized cities. This is the story of a mother's struggle against a house's entropy, and that of a prodigal daughter who left home only to reckon with the pull that home exerts, even after the Yellow House was wiped off the map after Hurricane Katrina. *The Yellow House* expands the map of New Orleans to include the stories of its lesser known natives, guided deftly by one of its native daughters, to demonstrate how enduring drives of clan, pride, and familial love resist and defy erasure. Located in the gap between the "Big Easy" of tourist guides and the New Orleans in which Broom was raised, *The Yellow House* is a brilliant memoir of place, class, race, the seeping rot of inequality, and the internalized shame that often follows.

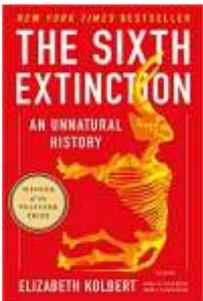


**Moderator: Professor Theda Daniels-Race, Electrical Engineering & Computer Science**

**Meetings: First meeting is on Wednesday 2/12 in French House 220**

**Book: *Born a Crime: Stories from a South African Childhood* by Trevor Noah**

In this bittersweet remembrance of growing up in South Africa, Trevor Noah, host of Comedy Central's Peabody and Emmy Award-winning *The Daily Show*, recounts life from infancy to young adulthood as an "outlaw" within the country of his birth. White, Black, Colored, and (East) Indian were all legal designations within the South African system of Apartheid. However, Noah, the son of a black Xhosa mother and Swiss emigrant father was born under the specific Apartheid statute that made social, let alone sexual, relationships between black and white South Africans categorically illegal and punishable by fines and imprisonment. In *Born a Crime*, Noah, with wit, sometimes anger, and an overarching grace that only the hindsight of adulthood can provide, shares a collection of his experiences as an illegal entity under South African law. Less an autobiography and more a collection of personal stories, ranging from the relatable to the truth-is-stranger-than-fiction, *Born a Crime* presents real-life events that may challenge Western interpretations of Apartheid, poverty, and even personal resilience.



**Moderator: Professor Clint Willson, Civil & Environmental Engineering**

**Meetings: First meeting on Thursday 2/13 in Laville FIR Apartment**

**Book: *The Sixth Extinction* by Elizabeth Kolbert**

Over the last half-billion years, there have been Five mass extinctions, when the diversity of life on earth suddenly and dramatically contracted. Scientists around the world are currently monitoring the sixth extinction, predicted to be the most devastating extinction event since the asteroid impact that wiped out the dinosaurs. This time around, the cataclysm is us. In prose that is at once frank, entertaining, and deeply informed, *New Yorker* writer Elizabeth Kolbert tells us why and how human beings have altered life on the planet in a way no species has before. Interweaving research in half a dozen disciplines, descriptions of the fascinating species that have already been lost, and the history of extinction as a concept, Kolbert provides a moving and comprehensive account of the disappearances occurring before our very eyes. She shows that the sixth extinction is likely to be mankind's most lasting legacy, compelling us to rethink the fundamental question of what it means to be human. Winner of the Pulitzer Prize for Nonfiction in 2015.