

NARRATIVE NONFICTION

Coordinators: Barbara Collins, Robert Sholiton

The growing popularity of documentaries in the film world has been paralleled by the increasing prominence of narrative non-fiction in the literary world. This fascinating genre (sometimes called creative nonfiction or literary nonfiction) combines fact-based storytelling with stylistic features of literary fiction. We read and discuss novel-length works by established masters of the genre Jon Krakauer and Erik Larson, *New York Times* best selling author Bryan Stevenson and 2015 Nobel laureate in literature Svetlana Alexievich. Readings have been chosen to illustrate the variety and scope of the illuminating genre. There are no duplications from the Spring 2012 study group reading list.

Readings and other Required Materials:

Bryan Stevenson, *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption*

Jon Krakauer, *Under the Banner of Heaven: A Story of Violent Faith*

Svetlana Alexievich, *Voices from Chernobyl: The Oral History of a Nuclear Disaster*

Erik Larson, *Dead Wake: The Last Crossing of the Lusitania* (available in paper-back 3/10/16)

Barbara Collins has been partially responsible for over twenty study groups, with subjects as varied as Byzantine history, espionage fiction, the poetry of Robert Frost and the films of the Coen brothers.

Robert Sholiton has coordinated study groups on documentary film, short stories and narrative nonfiction. He also is one of the leaders of the Theater in Performance SIG and writes a theater blog.

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Weeks 1-3 *Just Mercy*

In this inspiring memoir, the founder of the Equal Justice Initiative describes his ongoing fight against unequal access to justice for minorities and minors, with the focus on his decades-long struggle to prevent the execution of a black man accused of murdering a white woman in Harper Lee's hometown.

Weeks 4-6 *Under the Banner of Heaven*

Around the faith-inspired murder of a Mormon woman and her baby daughter, Jon Krakauer constructs a bone-chilling narrative of the violence, polygamy and delusion that beset many unorthodox off-shoots of Mormonism in the United States.

Weeks 7-9 *Voices from Chernobyl*

Through this collage of interviews with people touched by the 1986 nuclear disaster in the Ukraine, we piece together a vivid picture of life during the chaotic years preceding and following the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Weeks 9-12 *Dead Wake*

This gripping account of the last voyage of the Lusitania offers evocative portraits of colorful characters aboard both the liner and the U-boat that sank her, and captures the drama and emotional power of a disaster whose details have been obscured by the passage of time.