

CLASSIC NOVELLAS AND LONG SHORT STORIES

Coordinator: Sophie Balcoff

“A classic is a book that has never finished saying what it has to say,” said Italo Calvino. In this study group, we explore some of the best-loved and most profound short works of 19th and 20th century masters: true classics that will never finish saying what they have to say. We read long short stories, short novels and novellas by Anton Chekhov, Albert Camus, George Eliot, Leo Tolstoy, Henry James, Thomas Mann and others. These works give us tentative answers to the perennial question, “What is it to be a human being?”

We will probably* read:

1. *Silas Marner* by George Eliot, {Penguin Books, 2012, ISBN 041389451}.
2. *The Death of Ivan Ilyich* by Leo Tolstoy, translated by Peter Carson, {Liveright, ISBN 0871402998}.
3. *The Kreutzer Sonata* by Leo Tolstoy, translated by Pevear and Volokhonsky, {Modern Library, 2003, ISBN 0812968239}.
4. *Washington Square* by Henry James, {Penguin Classics, 2007, ISBN 9780140432268}.
5. *Enemies* by Anton Chekhov. (Edition has not been chosen)
6. "Little Herr Friedemann," *Tristan*, *The Blood of the Walsungs*, and *Death in Venice* by Thomas Mann, in *Death in Venice and Other Tales*, translated by Joachim Neugroschel, {Penguin Classics, ISBN 9780141181738}.
7. *The Stranger* by Albert Camus, translated by Matthew Ward, {Vintage International, ISBN0679720200}.

***Participants should not purchase any titles until Sophie has contacted the members of the study group with the final reading list.**

Sophie Balcoff joined the IRP in Fall 2012. Since then, she has led eight study groups, including the Fall 2016 study group on the impact of European explorations of the Americas. She is a former high school history teacher.

***** Syllabus - A Work in Progress *****

Weeks 1-2

Reading: *Silas Marner* (Eliot)

Questions to consider: How does Silas Marner change over the course of the book? How does his society change in its view of him? And how do we as readers change in our attitude towards both Silas and his society?

Week 3

Reading: *The Death of Ivan Ilyich* (Tolstoy)

Questions to consider: How can we characterize the life of Ivan Ilyich? What changes happen as he understands that he is dying? How do we, as readers, react to each stage in Ivan Ilyich's mental and emotional evolution?

Week 4	<i>The Kreutzer Sonata</i> (Tolstoy)
Weeks 5-6	<i>Washington Square</i> (James)
Week 7	<i>Enemies</i> (Chekhov)
Week 8	"Little Herr Friedemann" and <i>Tristan</i> (Mann)
Week 9	<i>The Blood of the Walsungs</i> (Mann)
Week 10	<i>Death in Venice</i> (Mann)
Weeks 11-12	<i>The Stranger</i> (Camus)