Take a look inside our Fall 2015 catalog, and you’re sure to find a number of books that’ll encourage lively and thought-provoking discussions for your book group. Dive into books with selections that address topics including utopia and dystopia, immigration, military service, civics, science, the seven deadly sins, work, money, sex, crime, and science fiction. Or turn your attention to more general anthologies of poetry, short stories, and other contemporary and classic selections. No matter which books you choose, the selections and their accompanying discussion questions will get your book group thinking and talking!

As an independent nonprofit educational organization, the Great Books Foundation is dedicated to promoting empathy, understanding, and community through civil and open discussions of the world’s enduring literature.

Our outreach efforts include keeping in touch with the many Great Books councils throughout the United States as well as conducting discussion groups for returning veterans and previously incarcerated men and women.

We hope you enjoy reading and discussing our books as much as we enjoy developing them for you!

Great Books Chicago 2016—Imperfect Ideal

Announcing the return of this weekend of discussions and cultural outings for Great Books enthusiasts! Great Books Chicago 2016—Imperfect Ideal will start at noon on Friday, April 29 and run through 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, May 1, 2016.

Please join us for three lively discussions centered on our new release Imperfect Ideal: Utopian and Dystopian Visions and George Orwell’s masterpiece, Nineteen Eighty-Four. You’ll also have the opportunity to enjoy some of the rich cultural opportunities Chicago has to offer.

We’re thrilled that Gary Schoepfle, founder of Great Books Chicago, has returned as program director. Gary and Great Books Foundation president Joseph Coulson will attend all Great Books Chicago events, and serve as two of our discussion leaders.

Visit greatbooks.org to register, or call 800.222.5870.

(Registration is limited to 60 participants.)

Great Books Chicago 2016 is underwritten in part by a generous grant from Harrison Middleton University.
The idea for the Tampa Bay Great Books Council was hatched nearly a dozen years ago after a casual conversation at a deli counter. Patrick DeMarco, Sara Cohen, Neil Harvey, and Sylvia Sorrentino are the core group who were responsible for the council’s first program in 2006.

This core group of four was augmented by the addition of seven more members who’ve helped the council create 30 full-day or multi-day conferences on subjects as diverse as “Love, Passion, and Snow in Japanese Literature” and “What is Justice and Where Can We Find It?” The very timely January 2016 conference topic is “Cuba: Seeing the Island through History, Memoir, and Fiction.” The council’s conferences often include visits to art exhibitions, live theater performances, or other cultural events relating to the subject matter.

Participants in the Tampa Bay Great Books Council’s programs represent a remarkable cross-section of the surrounding community. Lawyers, academics, artists, doctors, broadcast executives, business people, and military personnel are represented on the council, so debates are lively and inclusive.

The council is currently partnering with the National Endowment for the Arts and the Florida Humanities Council to participate in the Talking Service reading and discussion program that’s designed to help returning veterans transition from military to civilian life. In addition the council recently launched a quarterly newsletter, with council members writing articles and sharing personal experiences and literary reviews, and a new website is scheduled to debut in early 2016. With the support of its active participants and a growing cadre of skilled moderators, members of the Tampa Bay Great Books Council are confident that the best is yet to come!

“We’re featuring Great Books Councils and discussion groups in our catalogs, in eNewsletters, and on Great Books Connections. Don’t miss out on this chance to shine—send a photo and an overview of your council or group to agb@greatbooks.org!”

Questions? Call us at 800.222.5870
Counterparts

Counterparts presents pairs of contrasting texts that interact with one another in differing and surprising ways. These texts may take opposing views on issues or contend with ideas presented by other scholars. Together they offer a range of perspectives on topics such as art and war, love and fidelity, gender, aspiration, and death. We are excited to present such a strong combination of modern and classic literature for you to discuss.

Paired selections include:

• The Immoderation of Ifat, Sara Suleri
• Now We Are Five, David Sedaris
• The Little Mermaid, Hans Christian Andersen
• The Pangs of Love, Jane Gardam
• Ode 3.2, Horace
• Dulce et Decorum Est, Wilfred Owen
• In Which the Story Pauses a Little, George Eliot
• The Decay of Lying, Oscar Wilde
• An Arundel Tomb, Philip Larkin
• Love Is Not a Pie, Amy Bloom

Discussion questions include:

• According to Horace, why is it “sweet and fitting to die for one’s country”?
• Why does Suleri say Ifat’s story is about “the price a mind must pay when it lives in a beautiful body”?
• After the beach house trip, why does Sedaris agree with the woman who says that five siblings make “a big family”? 

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Now Available!
Her Own Accord: American Women on Identity, Culture, and Community

The selections in Her Own Accord: American Women on Identity, Culture, and Community explore the experiences, challenges, and achievements of women from a contemporary point of view. Poetry, fiction, nonfiction, short stories, memoirs, and journalistic works are all included. Together, these selections and their accompanying discussion questions allow readers to explore how gender informs every aspect of a woman’s life—self and identity, family, sex and relationships, work and creativity, and activism and politics.

Selections include:

- Even the Queen, Connie Willis
- The Box House and the Snow, Cristina Henríquez
- Freedom Fighter, Perri Klass
- One Out of Twelve: Writers Who Are Women in Our Century, Tillie Olsen
- “Recitatif,” Toni Morrison
- Ways of Conquest, Denise Levertov

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Discussion questions include:

- For At Odds, an essay by Julia Serano: Why does Serano believe her sexual orientation and becoming female are conflicting desires?
- For Lowering Your Standards for Food Stamps, a poem by Sheryl Luna: Why does the speaker say that she is “unlearning America’s languages”?
Discussion questions for *Black Box*, a short story published initially as a series of tweets, by Jennifer Egan:

- Why does Egan envision a future where women’s bodies are recorders of data?
- Why are agents required to possess an “impossible combination of traits: ironclad scruples and a willingness to violate them”?

The selections in *Imperfect Ideal: Utopian and Dystopian Visions* illustrate the best and worst of what can happen when we attempt to mold the complex communities in which we live into our vision of a perfect state. All 23 selections in this anthology challenge readers to question how society should be structured and governed, as well as what kinds of communities are most conducive to human fulfillment, both privately and in the civic arena.

**Selections include:**
- *The Machine Stops*, E. M. Forster
- *Time*, Riichi Yokomitsu
- *Black Box*, Jennifer Egan
- Selection from *A New View of Society*, Robert Owen
- *Utopia*, Wislawa Szymborska
- Selection from *The City of God*, Saint Augustine
- *The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas*, Ursula K. Le Guin
- *On the Cannibals*, Michel de Montaigne
- *Jon*, George Saunders
- Selection from *Utopia*, Thomas More

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Bestselling Titles

Immigrant Voices: 21st Century Stories

A contemporary anthology of short stories written by immigrants to the United States, *Immigrant Voices: 21st Century Stories* engages readers with perennial questions about the relation of the individual to society. Eighteen short stories speak to the experiences, concerns, and aspirations of those who have left their homeland for a new life in the United States.

Including works by:
- Reese Okyong Kwon
- Aleksandar Hemon
- Porochista Khakpour
- Yiyun Li
- Daniel Alarcón
- Edwidge Danticat
- Junot Díaz
- Pablo Helguera

Standing Down: From Warrior to Civilian

This anthology was created for Talking Service, the Great Books Foundation’s initiative to develop reading and discussion programs for veterans of the United States Armed Forces and their families, friends, and caregivers. The book is essential for all readers interested in reflecting on the meaning and experience of war and military service. *Standing Down: From Warrior to Civilian* includes fiction, nonfiction, poetry, essays, and memoirs that speak to the experiences, concerns, and aspirations of those who have served in the military and made the often difficult transition back into civilian life.

Including works by:
- William Shakespeare
- Abraham Lincoln
- Anne Simon Auger
- Philip Caputo
- William Butler Yeats
- David Finkel
- Tim O’Brien
- Alexis de Tocqueville

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The Seven Deadly Sins
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Each of these popular books includes 14 short story masterpieces, selected for discussion and reflection. Both volumes are ideal for book groups and for courses in literature, creative writing, ethics, and religion. Forewords by Al Gini, author of *The Importance of Being Lazy* and *Why It's Hard to be Good.*

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Great Books Science Anthologies

*The Nature of Life, What's The Matter?, and Keeping Things Whole* encourage inquiry-based discussion of scientific writings that address universal questions about biology, physics, and environmental science. Popular in book groups as well as high school science classes, this series promotes a deeper understanding of the sciences.

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*Consuming Interests: Great Ideas in Economics* is a comprehensive anthology for readers interested in developing a wider perspective on the economic interpretation of the world. Unlike an economics textbook, which is designed to teach the technical aspects of the field, the 20 selections in *Consuming Interests* help readers explore larger surrounding issues.

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Selections throughout the series include:

- *The Man Who Would Be King*, Rudyard Kipling
- Introduction to *The Second Sex*, Simone de Beauvoir
- *Distributive Justice*, John Rawls
- *Philosophy and Knowledge*, Bertrand Russell
- *Which New Era Would That Be?*, Nadine Gordimer
- *To Room Nineteen*, Doris Lessing
- *Hekabe*, Euripides
- *A Letter Concerning Toleration*, John Locke
- *R.U.R.*, Karel Čapek
- *Major Barbara*, George Bernard Shaw

Discussion questions throughout the series include:

- Do you agree with Sartre that a literary work can “find its fulfillment only in reading”?
- According to Niebuhr, how can the children of light arm themselves with the wisdom of the children of darkness but remain free from their malice?
- Why does Eliot have Mrs. Archer brought back from death to reveal Bertha’s plan to poison Latimer?
- Is it possible to live completely free of hypocrisy?
The Great Books Reading and Discussion Series

The Great Books Reading and Discussion series delivers the quality reading and discussion that the Great Books Foundation is known for. Composed of classics that make up the core of the Western tradition, this series provides a way of understanding our society and ourselves through selections that contain the great ideas that have shaped our thinking. Whether you are new to the great conversation or a veteran Great Books participant, every title in this series offers an ideal platform for launching or continuing your Shared Inquiry™ experience.

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Talking Service

Talking Service is a national reading and discussion program that helps veterans in their transition from military to civilian life. Moderated by a skilled facilitator, each discussion uses powerful selections from our anthology Standing Down: From Warrior to Civilian to help participants share their experiences, concerns, and ideas. The program is open to men and women of all ages who have served in the armed forces, as well as their families and friends.

In April 2014, the program was awarded a major grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to support these discussions nationwide. Talking Service is now active in 12 states. Please visit talkingservice.greatbooks.org for information about hosting a program or joining a discussion group.

Reading Between the Lines

After a successful pilot in 2014, Reading Between the Lines is now a regular program at St. Leonard’s Ministries, a transitional housing facility on Chicago’s west side for formerly incarcerated men and women. Participants meet once a week to discuss selections from Great Books anthologies under the direction of a skilled discussion leader.

“I have learned that your opinion is just as valuable as another’s, and that there is a message in everyone’s journey. Your ideas get better with the help of others, and we can all agree to disagree. We get to practice the art of compromise.”

–Paul, St. Leonard’s resident

For more information about either of these programs, contact:

Donald Whitfield
Director of National and Community Programs
whitfield@greatbooks.org • 312.646.7138
Creating a World of Readers and Thinkers

The Great Books Foundation is an independent nonprofit 501(c)(3) educational organization. For almost 70 years we have fostered respectful, open discussion that promotes civil discourse, civic engagement, and social justice.

We are committed to creating a world of readers and thinkers by fostering an inquiry-based approach to reading and discussion for students and adults in all walks of life. We believe that literacy and critical thinking help develop reflective and well-informed citizens. Our goal is to inspire people of all ages to become more knowledgeable and engaged.

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Our completely revised and updated Shared Inquiry™ Handbook will help your book group have more dynamic and rewarding discussions. It includes all the basics you need to get started with Shared Inquiry, as well as information about where to find additional resources to foster engaging Shared Inquiry discussions!

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Looking to start a Great Books Discussion Group? Visit greatbooks.org to find out how.

And remember, we’re featuring Great Books Councils and discussion groups in our catalogs, eNewsletters, and on Great Books Connections. So don’t miss out on this chance to shine—send a photo and an overview of your council or group to agb@greatbooks.org!
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