

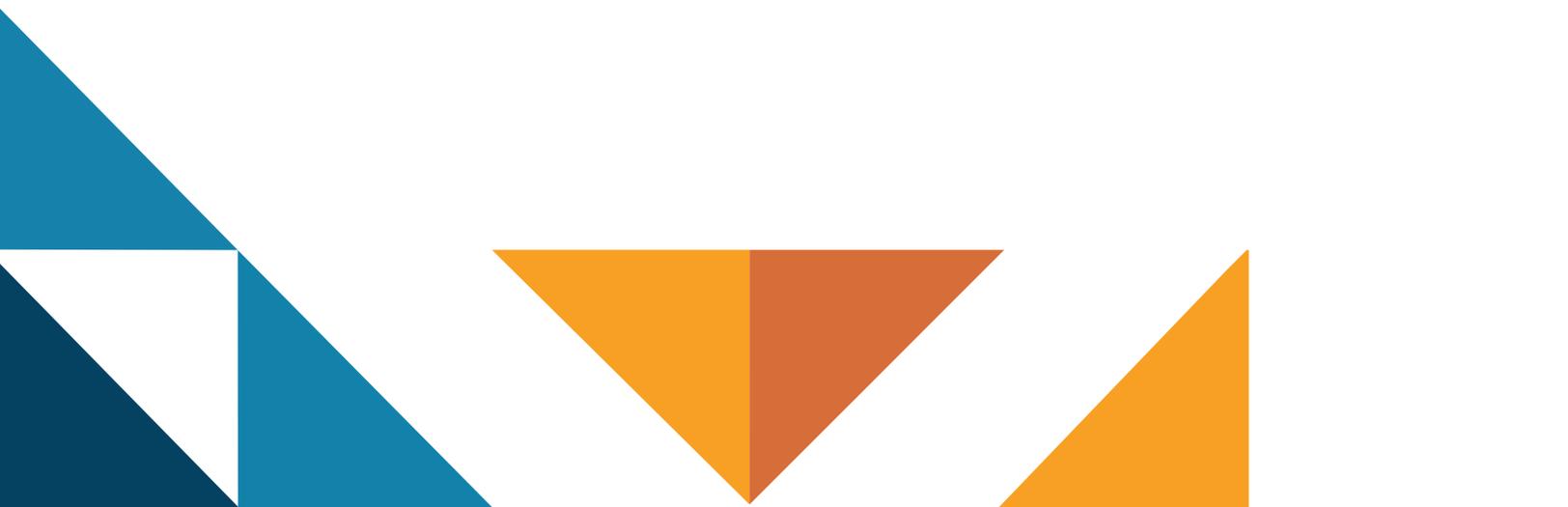
North Carolina
humanities

**NORTH CAROLINA
READS**

Program
Guide
2024

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WELCOME

I

Thank you for participating in **North Carolina Reads**, North Carolina Humanities' statewide book club in 2024!

The five selected books feature stories of American perseverance and diversity. These books were chosen by North Carolina Humanities because they explore issues of racial, social, and gender equity and the history and culture of North Carolina. The people, places, and events in the books also pose critical questions about how North Carolinians view their role in helping to form a more just and inclusive society. North Carolina Humanities hopes these stories encourage engaging, productive conversation among participants.

At the heart of North Carolina Reads is North Carolina Humanities' desire to connect communities through shared reading experiences. Reading is important because it helps us develop our critical-thinking skills; strengthens our minds, vocabulary, and mental health; and creates opportunities for us to empathize with others' stories and experiences.

As part of North Carolina Reads, North Carolina Humanities has distributed free books and resources across North Carolina, including to your group.

Beyond reading the books individually or communally, North Carolina Humanities strongly encourages groups to create a plan and host a reading program, book discussion, or other North Carolina Reads-related events in their community to further the impact of the book titles and create opportunities to come together to talk and listen.

In the pages ahead, you'll find a variety of ideas and suggestions to help guide you as you plan for a North Carolina Reads book discussion for your community!

Happy reading!

2024 PROGRAM

Throughout 2024, North Carolina Humanities is supporting groups across the state to read and create programs inspired by the North Carolina Reads book series.

Using the books and other resources provided by North Carolina Humanities (NC Humanities), your group will:

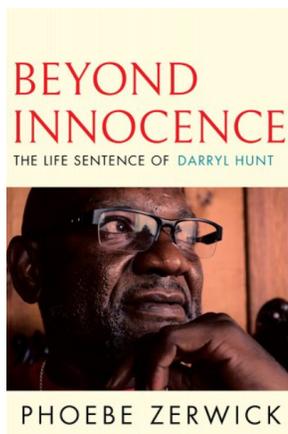
- Distribute the books received from NC Humanities to participants in your community.
- Implement a reading of one or more of the selected titles in their entirety. Participants may read the book individually or communally as is determined appropriate for your group.
- Implement one book discussion or one community book event. Please note, reading events can be held in virtual or in-person formats as best suits the needs of your community.

The read in each community may look a little different depending on the book(s) selected and what format your book event takes!

NC Humanities encourages everyone to share their North Carolina Reads story! Please engage with us on social media @NCHumanities and complete the feedback and final survey, found at nchumanities.org.



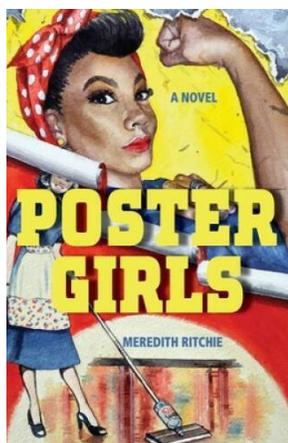
2024 North Carolina Reads Books



FEBRUARY 2024

BEYOND INNOCENCE
THE LIFE SENTENCE OF DARRYL HUNT
BY PHOEBE ZERWICK

Nonfiction. A young Black man falsely accused of murdering a white woman in Winston-Salem, North Carolina and sentenced to life in prison spent 19 years behind bars before his tireless attorneys were able to prove his innocence. Part true crime drama, part chronicle of a remarkable life cut short by systematic prejudice, Zerwick’s narrative powerfully illuminates the sustained catastrophe faced by an innocent person in prison and the difficulty all formerly incarcerated people face when they try to restart their lives.



MARCH 2024

POSTER GIRLS
BY MEREDITH RITCHIE

Historical Fiction. After an unwanted southern migration, an upside-down world in 1943 offers military wife and mother, Maggie Slone, a job at Charlotte’s largest wartime employer - the massive and dangerous Shell Assembly Plant. Meanwhile, military wife and Alabama native, Kora Bell’s steadfast determination enables her to navigate the challenges she faces as a Black woman seeking employment under Jim Crow. A shared love of literature spurs an unlikely friendship between Kora and Maggie, and the two work together to unify the plant’s workforce.



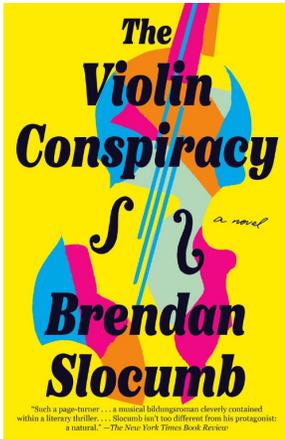
APRIL 2024

AMERICAN REFUGE: TRUE STORIES OF THE REFUGEE EXPERIENCE
BY DIYA ABDO

Nonfiction. In this intimate and eye-opening book, Diya Abdo – daughter of refugees, U.S. immigrant, English professor, and activist – shares the stories of seven refugees. Coming from around the world, they’re welcomed by Every Campus a Refuge (ECAR), an organization Diya founded to leverage existing

resources at colleges to provide temporary shelter to refugee families. We learn that these refugees from Burma, Burundi, Iraq, Palestine, Syria, and Uganda lived in homes they loved, left against their will, moved to countries without access or rights, and were among the 1% of the “lucky” few to resettle after a long wait, almost certain never to return to the homes they never wanted to leave. We learn that anybody, at any time, can become a refugee.

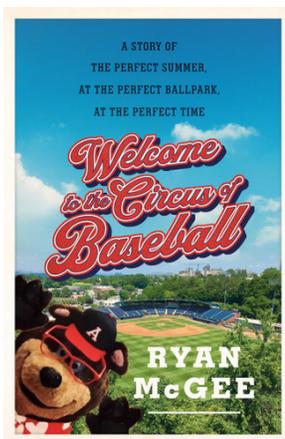
MAY 2024



THE VIOLIN CONSPIRACY
BY BRENDAN SLOCUMB

Fiction. The riveting story of a young Black musician who discovers that his old family fiddle is actually a priceless Stradivarius: when it's stolen on the eve of the world's most prestigious classical music competition, he risks everything to get it back. Growing up Black in North Carolina, Ray McMillan's life is already mapped out. But Ray has a gift and a dream – he's determined to become a world-class professional violinist, and nothing will stand in his way. Not his mother, who wants him to stop making such a racket; not the fact that he can't afford a violin suitable to his talents; not even the racism inherent in the world of classical music.

JUNE 2024



WELCOME TO THE CIRCUS OF BASEBALL
BY RYAN MCGEE

Nonfiction. A gloriously funny, nostalgic memoir of a popular ESPN reporter, who in the summer of 1994, was a fresh-out-of-college intern for a minor league baseball team. Madness and charm ensue as Ryan McGee spends the season steeped in sweat, fertilizer, nacho cheese sauce, and pure, unadulterated joy in North Carolina with the Asheville Tourists. He has since risen the ESPN ranks to national TV, radio, and internet host, but his time in Asheville still looms large.

PLANNING AN EVENT

III

Consider planning book discussions with others to explore themes and share perspectives.

Timing

Plan between 60-90 minutes for the discussion. This will be just long enough to get into the book, but short enough to keep everyone's attention. Discussions on virtual platforms can be shorter in length than in-person discussions.

Sample Outline

Introductions: 5-10 minutes

Have all participants and the facilitator introduce themselves by saying their name. Keep introductions short so that you have ample time for discussion.

Discussion: 45-60 minutes

Plan to have 10-15 questions ready for discussion. Carefully consider your first question as it will set the tone for the discussion. Sample questions can be found on the following pages.

Break: 5-10 minutes

Typically used during an in-person discussion, allow participants 5-10 minutes to stretch, access bathrooms, or recharge with some refreshments.

Conclusion: 5-10 minutes

Thank the participants for talking with each other and for sharing their perspectives and considering new ones.

FACILITATING

Tips to help prepare for leading a discussion

Set Guidelines

It is important to set guidelines at the start of the discussion. Some important ones:

1. All perspectives are valued, and it's important to hear from everyone in the room.
2. Share personal experiences rather than general statements about groups of people.
3. It's okay to disagree respectfully.

Navigating Challenges

Consider the following:

- Help control interruptions by asking the participant to “hold that thought so we can hear it again once X is finished speaking.”
- Help ensure that each participant who wishes to speak is heard by saying, “That’s an interesting point. Did anyone else feel the same or differently?” or “Let’s hear from another reader.”
- Help defuse conversations by reminding participants to focus on content and ideas, not people. Defuse with a calm remark, and get back on track by saying, “Let’s get back to the end of chapter X. What did you think at this point?” or “I have a question about p. #. What is really going on here?”
- Help reluctant participants by asking what they may have liked or disliked about the book. If they were unable to finish the book, they could still participate in answering this question.
- Scan the room for verbal and nonverbal cues: Are people feeling comfortable? Are there shy people who look like they want to talk but just need to be asked?
- Avoid sharing what you think, even when people ask. Your role is to lead the conversation. Always turn the discussion back to the participants.



Asking Questions

Always ask open-ended questions that can be answered in a variety of ways. Use specific moments or quotes from the book to ground the discussion, but avoid questions that require a lot of background information.

Tie your first question to a major theme or idea you'll explore in the rest of the discussion, or start with a question based in the text. Pick an interesting quote or scene, read it together, then ask your question.

Ask a mix of interpretative and evaluative questions.

Interpretative: questions about the meaning of the text

- Why did this character do X?
- What did this character mean when they said Y?

Evaluative: questions that explore values and implications

- Is this character responsible for their actions?

Sample questions can be found on the following page.

Finding a Facilitator

Great discussions start with their facilitators. If feasible, consider having a professional facilitator for your book discussion.

Your facilitator should be a great listener who makes others feel comfortable talking about big ideas. Facilitators should understand your goals for the discussion and commit to using the guidelines in this program guide.

If you are not using an in-house facilitator, it is recommended to find a local humanities or literary expert to facilitate your discussion. You could also try contacting English department faculty at a nearby college or university or reaching out to your local librarians.

Since it's a good amount of work to read, plan, and lead a discussion, it is recommended to pay your facilitator. How much you want to pay your facilitator is up to you. Typically, a standard range for facilitation is \$100 to \$150 per book discussion session. If your facilitator forgoes payment, count what you would have paid them as an in-kind match using the form on page 13.

Sample Questions

These questions are the focal point of North Carolina Reads. You can shape your book discussion or book event around a few of these questions. The questions below do not have a “correct” answer but instead are large, overarching questions at the heart of the important issues raised by these books. Please find text-dependent questions for each book in our separate Reading Schedule and Discussion Questions Guide.

- How are people transformed through their relationships with others?
- How do people make decisions about their economic livelihood?
- What does it mean to make a living?
- Why is music an integral part of the human experience?
- How does society express gender expectations, and how are they met or challenged?
- How have gender and women’s roles changed over time and in relation to political and social events?
- What are the elements that build a strong friendship?
- What are the responsibilities of an individual regarding issues of social justice?
- How can literature serve as a vehicle for social change?
- How do sports, entertainment, and society interact?
- What does justice mean to you?





PROGRAM CREDITS

Find a full list of general communication guidelines, tips, and more at [NCHumanities.org](https://www.nchumanities.org).

Description

When describing North Carolina Reads, please use the standard description:

North Carolina Humanities' North Carolina Reads is a statewide book club exploring issues of racial, social, and gender equity and the history and culture of North Carolina. North Carolina Humanities is a statewide nonprofit and affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Any views, findings, conclusions, opinions, or recommendations expressed do not necessarily represent those of NC Humanities or the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Crediting

North Carolina Humanities and the National Endowment for the Humanities must be acknowledged as sponsors.

Please use the following credit lines, the North Carolina Humanities logo, and the National Endowment for the Humanities logo on anything produced. Logos may be no smaller than 5 points and may be accessed at [nchumanities.org](https://www.nchumanities.org) or from the press kit on our website.

PRINT / SIGNAGE / WEBSITES

"This [program/book event/discussion] is supported by North Carolina Humanities, an affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, [nchumanities.org](https://www.nchumanities.org)."

PROGRAMS / PUBLIC GATHERINGS

"This [program/book event/discussion] is part of North Carolina Humanities' statewide book club, North Carolina Reads. North Carolina Reads was created by North Carolina Humanities and is funded in part by the National Endowment for the Humanities. Learn more at [nchumanities.org](https://www.nchumanities.org)."

BOOK TITLES

Book titles should always be italicized when talking about the actual book (unless in a press release which follows AP style). Book descriptions can be found on page 3.

RESOURCES

One-click access to additional information

Authors (In alphabetical order)

- Diya Abdo: everycampusarefuge.net
- Ryan McGee: penguinrandomhouse.com/authors/93899/ryan-mcgee/
- Meredith Ritchie: meredithritchie.com
- Brendan Slocumb: brendanslocumb.com
- Phoebe Zerwick: phoebezerwick.com

About North Carolina Humanities

North Carolina Humanities is a statewide nonprofit and affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Through public humanities programs and grantmaking, NC Humanities connects North Carolinians with cultural experiences that spur dialogue, deepen human connections, and inspire community. Learn more at nchumanities.org.

About National Endowment for the Humanities

Created in 1965 as an independent federal agency, the National Endowment for the Humanities is one of the largest funders of humanities programs in the United States. Additional information about the National Endowment for the Humanities and its grant programs is available at neh.gov.

About the NC Center for the Book

The North Carolina Center for the Book is a collection of North Carolina Humanities' literature and reading programs. Using a variety of formats and initiatives, North Carolina Center for the Book literary programs celebrate and promote the vital importance of books, reading, libraries, and North Carolina's literary heritage. The North Carolina Center for the Book, nchumanities.org, is the state affiliate of the National Center for the Book in the Library of Congress and is supported in part by the State Library of North Carolina, statelibrary.ncdcr.gov.



COST SHARE

Thank you for the time and effort you took to help host a North Carolina Reads book program!

North Carolina Humanities ensures free access to public humanities programs. We would not be able to do this without the generous contributions and documentation of cost share from our local program partners like you. Below, please see how to track these cost-share contributions.

In your final North Carolina Reads survey, you will be asked to show the expenses for this project as contributed by your group. Expenses can be contributed in two ways: cash and in-kind. Please capture the total for each expense type.

Expense Type	Cash	In-Kind
Value of Volunteer or Administrative Time	\$	\$
Value of Venue Space	\$	\$
Printing, Publicity, and Advertising	\$	\$
Refreshments	\$	\$
Facilitator Honorarium (book discussion event)	\$	\$
Other	\$	\$
Cash and In-Kind Totals	\$	\$
Total Amount Contributed	\$	\$

Host Coordinator or Authorized Personnel Signature

Date

On this form, “**Cash**” means a contribution by your group by paying for publicity, printing, refreshments, facilitator honorarium, paid staff time etc. Cash contributions are the “out-of-pocket” expenses. “**In-Kind**” means a contribution by your group in a form other than money or for a service that is donated. This can include, but is not limited to, the value of the space or venue provided; materials and equipment provided; and volunteer time spent distributing books, planning an event, and implementing an event. If you have questions, please call our office at (704) 687-1520.

North Carolina Humanities is a statewide nonprofit and affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). Any views, findings, conclusions, opinions, or recommendations expressed by our partners and participants do not necessarily represent those of North Carolina Humanities or the National Endowment for the Humanities. This Guide may be used with permission from North Carolina Humanities.

Please note that selected books are intended for readers 18 and over and may not be suitable for some audiences.

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