

LP² STUDY GROUP PROPOSAL FOR FALL 2022

THE SMALL TOWN AND ITS SECRETS: A LITERARY SAMPLER

Coordinator: Sophie Balcoff

We delve into the secrets of those who live out their lives in villages, small towns or suburbs, from Chekhov's Russian villages to the 'burbs of Kansas City, to the Mississippi Delta, to small-town Ontario. We are transported there by the pens of classic authors: Eudora Welty, Alice Munro, Edith Wharton, Anton Chekhov, Evan Connell and Sherwood Anderson. These stories span the time period from the late 19th to the mid-20th century.

Sophie Balcoff joined LP2 (then IRP) in 2012. She is a retired high school history teacher. This study group will be the 22nd she has coordinated or co-coordinated—every spring and fall, plus two summers.

Type of Study Group: Mostly discussion

Readings and other Materials/Online Services:

Delta Wedding by Eudora Welty;

Ethan Frome by Edith Wharton;

Mrs. Bridge by Evan Connell;

Dear Life by Alice Munro;

Chekhov stories (to be sent by coordinator;)

Selections from *Winesburg, Ohio* by Sherwood Anderson (to be sent by coordinator).

Any edition of these classic works, including Kindle, is fine for this study group. All readings are available in many formats at low or moderate cost.

***** **SYLLABUS - A WORK IN PROGRESS** *****

WEEK 1

TOPIC: Chekhov's village and its people

READING: 2 selected stories by Chekhov set in villages

QUESTION: What makes Chekhov a master of the short story form?

WEEK 2

TOPIC: Chekhov's village and its people, continued

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READING: 2 selected stories by Chekhov set in villages

QUESTION: How do we feel about these characters?

WEEK 3

TOPIC: Sherwood Anderson's grotesques

READING: selections from *Winesburg, Ohio*

QUESTION: What makes Sherwood Anderson an influential portrayer of small-town life?

WEEK 4: *Ethan Frome*, Part I (Edith Wharton)

WEEK 5: *Ethan Frome*, Part 2

WEEK 6: *Mrs. Bridge*, Part 1 (Evan Connell)

WEEK 7: *Mrs. Bridge*, Part 2

WEEK 8: *Delta Wedding*, Part 1 (Eudora Welty)

WEEK 9: *Delta Wedding*, Part 2

WEEK 10: *Delta Wedding*, Part 3

WEEK 11: selected stories from *Dear Life* (Alice Munro)

WEEK 12: selected stories from *Dear Life*