

## Oliver Wolcott Library Non-Fiction Book Group 2023-24

Meets the second Thursday of the month at 2 pm (860) 567-8030 [www.owlibrary.org](http://www.owlibrary.org)

***New members welcome – join one or all discussions***

July 13, 2023	Fiery Trial: Abraham Lincoln and American Slavery	Eric Foner
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Written by a historian, this is a definitive account of Lincoln's lifelong engagement with the nation's critical issue: American slavery. Lincoln and the broader history of the period are drawn into balance. We see Lincoln, a pragmatic politician grounded in principle, deftly navigating the dynamic politics of antislavery, secession, and civil war. Lincoln's greatness emerges from his capacity for moral and political growth. *Moderated by Cindy*

August 10	About Time: A History of Civilization in Twelve Clocks	David Rooney
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Through the stories of 12 clocks, pivotal moments from the past are brought vividly to life. The book describes how time has been imagined, politicized, and weaponized over the centuries – and how it might bring peace. Ultimately the technical history of horology is only the start of the story. A history of clocks is a history of civilization. *Moderated by Margaret*

September 14	The Tender Bar <i>Movie to be discussed also</i>	J. R. Moehring
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This memoir is suspenseful, wrenching, and achingly funny. It's a classic American story of self-invention and escape and of the fierce love between a single mother and an only son. A moving portrait of one boy's struggle to become a man, the book co-stars the neighborhood bar and its denizens. *Moderated by Ben*

October 12	Bellevue: Three Centuries of Medicine and Mayhem at America's Most Storied Hospital <i>Pair with Fiction</i>	David Oshinsky
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Bellevue Hospital, on New York City's East Side, occupies a colorful and horrifying place in the public imagination. The author chronicles the history of America's oldest hospital and in so doing also charts the rise of New York to the nation's preeminent city and the path of American medicine from butchery and quackery to a professional and scientific endeavor. *Moderated by Jill*

November 9	10% Happier: How I Tamed the Voice in my Head...	Dan Harris
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Harris was a shooting star in television news, and the intense pressure resulted in an on-air breakdown. He found an answer, not to all his problems, but as he says, if you could be just 10% happier, wouldn't you want to? *10% Happier* ranges from the outer reaches of neuroscience to the inner sanctum of network news to the bizarre fringes of America's spiritual scene, with a takeaway that could actually change readers' lives. *Moderated by Nancy*

December 14	Killers of the Flower Moon: The Osage Murders and the Birth of the FBI <i>2023 movie to be discussed also</i>	David Grann
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The book investigates a series of murders of wealthy Osage people that took place in Oklahoma in the early 1920 after big oil deposits were discovered beneath their land. *Moderated by Cindy*

January 11, 2024	At the Existentialist Café: Freedom, Being, and Apricot Cocktails	Sarah Bakewell
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The author describes one of the twentieth century's major intellectual movements and the revolutionary thinkers who came to shape it. Three such thinkers met in Paris in 1933 over apricot cocktails. Interweaving biography and philosophy, the book features not only philosophers, but also playwrights, anthropologists, convicts, and revolutionaries. *Moderated by Corinne*

February 8	Putin Country: A Journey into the Real Russia	Ann Garrels
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The author portrays Russia's heartland. We meet ostentatious mafiosos, upwardly mobile professionals, impassioned activists, scheming taxi drivers, and beleaguered steel workers. Through these encounters, the author reveals why Putin commands the support and loyalty of so many Russians. Her portrait of Russia's silent majority is essential reading when tensions are high. *Moderated by Linda*

March 14	Susan, Linda, Nina & Cokie: The Extraordinary Story of the Founding Mothers of NPR	Lisa Napoli
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In the years after the Civil Rights Act of 1964, women in the workplace still found themselves relegated to secretarial positions or locked out of jobs entirely, especially in the news business. But when National Public Radio came along in the 1970s and the door to serious journalism opened a crack, four remarkable women came along and blew it off the hinges. *Moderated by Margaret*

April 11	The Bad-ass Librarians of Timbuktu: And Their Race to Save the World's Most Precious Manuscripts	Joshua Hammer
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In 2012, thousands of Al Qaeda militants seized control of most of Mali, including Timbuktu. A mild-mannered archivist and historian became one of the world's greatest and most brazen smugglers. As the militants tightened their control over Timbuktu, he organized a dangerous operation to sneak 350,000 volumes out of the city to the safety of southern Mali. *Moderated by Christine*

May 9	Caste: The Origin of our Discontents	Isabel Wilkerson
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Beyond race or class, a powerful caste system influences people's lives and the nation's fate. Linking the caste systems of America, India, and Nazi Germany, the author explores what underlies caste systems across civilizations, including divine will, bloodlines, and stigma. Using riveting stories about people, she shows the ways that the insidious undertow of caste is experienced every day. *Moderated by Laura*

June 14	War Is a Force that Gives Us Meaning	Chris Hedges
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Drawing on his own experience as a war correspondent and on the literature of combat from Homer to the present, the author shows how war seduces not just those on the front lines but entire societies. Mixing hard-nosed realism with profound moral and philosophical insight, this is a book whose truths have never been more necessary. *Moderated by Audrey*

July 11, 2024	Bailout: An Inside Account of How Washington Abandoned Main Street While Rescuing Wall Street <i>Pair with Fiction</i>	Neil Barofsky
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The \$700 billion Troubled Asset Relief Program bailouts in 2008 served Wall Street at the expense of the public. The book reveals how our political system is captive to Wall Street and why the too-big-to-fail banks are bigger and more dangerous in the wake of the crisis. The Dodd-Frank bill allowed banks to grow larger while retaining smaller capital cushions. *Moderated by Jeff as of June 9, 2023*