

**Thematic Seminar:
“Reading Social Justice: The Anisfield-Wolf Book Awards”
\$1,000 Participation Award**

The Cleveland Humanities Collaborative will host a themed seminar titled *Reading Social Justice: The Anisfield-Wolf Book Awards* to be held from **June 10–June 14, 2019** on the campus of Case Western Reserve University. The seminar is sponsored jointly by the Cleveland Humanities Collaborative, the Anisfield-Wolf Book Awards, Writers House at CWRU, Cuyahoga Community College, and the Baker-Nord Center for the Humanities.

About the Anisfield-Wolf Book Awards

When Edith Anisfield Wolf (1889–1963) was twelve years old, her father, the wealthy garment manufacturer John Anisfield, summoned her to his office in downtown Cleveland. Anisfield had emigrated from Vienna in 1876 at the age of 16 and earned his fortune by working his way up from the shop floor in textile plants to owning his own company. He invited his only child to help him decide how to channel the family wealth into philanthropy. The year was 1901—19 years before the nation as a whole would give women the right to vote.

In 1935, Edith Anisfield Wolf established what she initially called the John Anisfield Book Award to honor nonfiction books that furthered the cause of “race relations” (as she later wrote in her will), deepened our understanding of racism, and enhanced our appreciation of the rich diversity of human cultures. At its founding, the prize took “race relations” to mean relations among black, white and Jewish Americans. Yet, the Award quickly broadened, recognizing books about immigrants and Native American histories.

Winners have included Nobel Laureates Ralph Bunche, Toni Morrison, Derek Walcott, Nadine Gordimer, Gunnar Myrdal and Wole Soyinka, along with other major literary figures such as Langston Hughes and Zora Neale Hurston. Nobel Peace Prize winner Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was recognized in 1959 for his book *Stride Toward Freedom: The Montgomery Story*, well before he became a national figure. Recent honorees have included Marlon James, Margot Lee Shetterly, the poets Marilyn Chin and Jericho Brown, and Lifetime Achievement winners Orlando Patterson, Isabel Allende and N. Scott Momaday. Now in its 84th year, the Anisfield-Wolf Book Awards have a distinguished history of honoring writers who expanded readers’ grasp not only of race, but the diversities of disability, religion, ethnicity and gender, drawing from a variety of disciplinary perspectives in the humanities.

The Seminar

This seminar uses the 2019 winning authors of the Anisfield-Wolf book awards as a platform for dialogue and developing strategies for using Anisfield-Wolf texts in pedagogy and educational outreach. In addition to discussing how these texts engage race/ethnicity and history, seminar participants will consider how different genres—poetry, fiction, and non-fiction—contribute to how we teach and have productive dialogue on our history and complex social issues.

The recipients for 2019 are:

- **Andrew Delbanco**, *The War Before the War: Fugitive Slaves and the Struggle for America’s Soul from the Revolution to the Civil War*, Nonfiction
- **Tommy Orange**, *There There*, Fiction
- **Tracy K. Smith**, *Wade in the Water*, Poetry
- **Sonia Sanchez**, Lifetime Achievement

Participants will fulfill three primary outcomes:

- 1) Each participant will select two texts, ranked in order of preference, and be responsible for presenting one. There will be four groups, one for each author, and every day a group will give a detailed overview and analysis of the text and facilitate discussion.
- 2) Each participant will use their text as the foundation for a sample class or discussion, including assignments, additional readings from the Anisfield-Wolf canon, and experiential learning. Each participant will share their project at the end of the seminar.
- 3) As the seminar is intended to enhance research, professional development, and build a community of scholars working on related questions, the group will reconvene in December 2019.

In order to receive the participation award, seminar participants must attend and participate in each of the daily meetings (approximately 4-5 hours), time to be determined by participants. Books and supplemental readings will be distributed in advance. Each participant will prepare their selected text before the seminar begins, and should familiarize themselves with the other books as well. Participants are encouraged to develop and suggest additional readings to supplement their discussion of the texts, which the administrators will help distribute. All participants will be required to submit an evaluation of their seminar experience upon completion.

Participants in the seminar are invited to attend the Anisfield-Wolf Book Awards and Cleveland Book Week events. Cleveland Book Week is September 23–27, and the Anisfield-Wolf Book Awards will be Thursday, September 26th, at the KeyBank State Theater in Playhouse Square. Please let the administrators know you intend to go to the ceremony at the conclusion of the seminar in order to secure tickets.

Eligibility:

- Faculty, staff, and Ph.D. students from a northeastern Ohio university.
- Full-time staff and faculty from regional educational, arts, and culture institutions.

Please submit a CV and a statement of interest (maximum 1000 words), to **Allison Morgan, CHC Program Manager (amm203@case.edu)**, by **Friday, April 26, 2019** for consideration. **Please also include your ranked list of preferred texts.** Space is limited to 20 participants. Applications will be reviewed by a committee and participants will be notified by Friday, May 10, 2019.