WAKE UP ELECTRIFIED: BOOKS BANNED IN AMERICA

It is dangerous to write a book thirty years ahead of its audience and perhaps even more dangerous to write one that arrives right on time. Authors who write innovative books on controversial topics have often found their books banned or challenged by leaders and readers who dislike the content or its treatment. But what might be learned from banned books? Is the juice still on? Do they still shock us? Or have their lines gone dead?

This course will begin with a set of brief case studies to jump-start our conversation about the explosion of rhetoric that surrounds banned material. We will then read banned and challenged books by some authors on the list and discuss the powerful live current running through their work. Course themes include risk-taking, gender relations, American dystopia, the thrill of a good story, and the role of writers in our culture.

Keywords: Shocking Performances, Staying Grounded, Starry Dynamo

Margaret Atwood
Truman Capote
Allen Ginsberg
Ralph Ellison
David Henry Hwang
Ken Kesey
Tony Kushner
Madeleine L’Engle
Arthur Miller
Alice Sebold
J. D. Salinger
Mariko Tamaki

Raina Joines
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TR 9:30-10:50
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