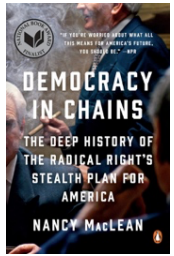


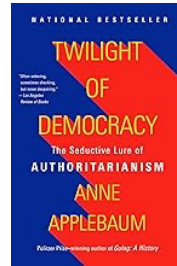
Possible books for League Book Club discussion, September 2025. Please vote your choice at our February “First Tuesday.”



Democracy in Chains. The Deep History of the Radical Right's Stealth Plan for America, Nancy MacLean 2017, \$10.99, 382 pp.

The capitalist radical right, funded by billionaires, has been working to change who rules, but also to alter the rules of democratic governance. But billionaires did not launch this movement; a white intellectual in the embattled Jim Crow South did. *Democracy in Chains* names its architect—the Nobel Prize-winning political economist James McGill Buchanan—and dissects the operation he and his colleagues designed over six decades to alter every branch of government to disempower the majority. The plan includes undermining unions; privatizing schools, health care, and Social Security; and keeping as many as possible from voting.

Nancy MacLean shows how Buchanan forged his ideas about government attempting to preserve the white elite's power in the wake of *Brown v. Board of Education*. In response to the widening of American democracy, he developed a plan to undermine the ability of the majority to use its numbers to level the playing field between the rich and powerful and the rest of us. The Koch brothers and others provided the money.



Twilight of Democracy: The Seductive Lure of Authoritarianism Anne Applebaum, 2020. \$8.66, 224 pp.

From the United States and Britain to continental Europe and beyond, liberal democracy is under siege, while authoritarianism is on the rise. In *Twilight of Democracy*, Anne Applebaum, an award-winning historian of Soviet atrocities who was one of the first American journalists to raise an alarm about antidemocratic trends in the West, explains the lure of nationalism and autocracy. In this captivating essay, she contends that political systems with radically simple beliefs are inherently appealing, especially when they benefit the loyal to the exclusion of everyone else. Elegantly written and urgently argued, *Twilight of Democracy* is a brilliant dissection of a world-shaking shift and a stirring glimpse of the road back to democratic values.

LIBERALISM AND ITS DISCONTENTS

FRANCIS FUKUYAMA

Author of The Origins of Political Order

Liberalism and Its Discontents Francis Fukuyama, 2022. \$12.35, 178 pp

Classical liberalism is in a state of crisis. Developed

in the wake of Europe's wars over religion and nationalism, liberalism is a system for governing diverse societies that is grounded in fundamental principles of equality and the rule of law. It emphasizes the rights of individuals to pursue their own forms of happiness free from encroachment by government.

Liberalism hasn't always lived up to its own ideals. In the United States, many have long been denied equality before the law. As the renowned political philosopher Francis Fukuyama shows, the principles of liberalism have also been pushed to new extremes by both the right and the left: neoliberals have made a cult of economic freedom, and progressives have focused on identity over human universality as central to their political vision. The result, Fukuyama argues, has been a fracturing of our civil society and increasing peril to our democracy.

In this succinct, clear account of our current political discontents, Fukuyama offers an essential defense of a revitalized liberalism for the twenty-first century.



The Kingdom, The Power, and the Glory. American Evangelicals in the Age of Extremism. Tim Alberta, 2023. \$18.99, 512 pp

An exploration of the changes in American evangelicalism through the past several decades.

Alberta, a staff writer for the *Atlantic* and author of *American Carnage*, describes the evangelical church as the product of changing times, with factions of American Protestantism “amalgamating under a shared label: ‘evangelicals,’” in the early 1970s.

The author recognizes two particular periods of cultural turmoil, each of which ushered in the leadership of an unlikely American president. First was the Carter administration, which caused many evangelicals to seriously engage in politics for the first time, resulting in the election of Reagan. Second was the Obama era, marked by expansive cultural changes that brought about “a sudden onset of dread” among the evangelical base. The result was the rise of Trump.

Alberta builds his study around interviews with a number of people central to changes in evangelicalism over time. “The crisis of American evangelicalism,” the author writes, “comes down to an obsession with...worldly identity.” The author sees this obsession as having weakened Christianity in the United States. *[from Kirkus Reviews]*