

**MAINE
HUMANITIES
COUNCIL**

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#MaineHumanities



WINTER
2020-21

JOIN THE DISCUSSION



AGENCY & Engagement

Perhaps it goes without saying that we live in a time marked by divides. Politically, culturally, economically, it can seem like the differences that push us apart count for more than all the subtle ties which hold us together.

The work of the Maine Humanities Council involves inviting Mainers to talk with one another in ways that help us see and understand our differences and draw out our commonalities. We gather not in the hope of plastering over disagreements, but with the intention to practice taking the time to talk with one another about the things that matter most.

Throughout 2021 and beyond, our work is to create meaningful connections across difference, to foster individual and community agency, and to inspire increased civic engagement. The humanities provide a unique and powerful toolkit for transformation, and we invite you to join us!

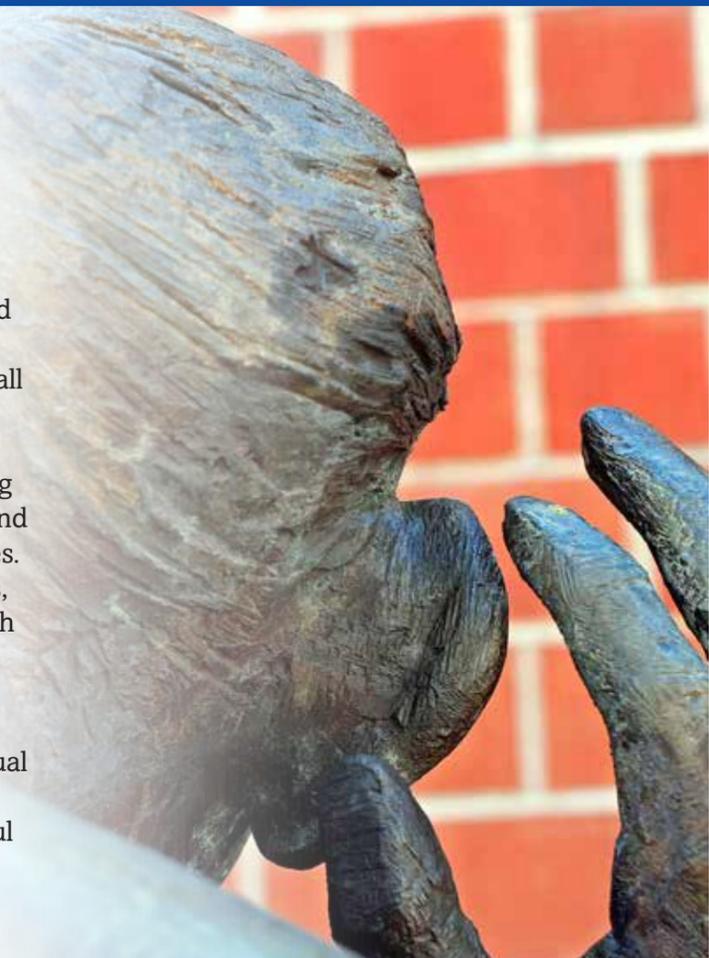
DISCUSSIONS THAT MATTER BY THE NUMBERS

86 Communities and organizations **1,070** Books in people's hands

In recent months, more groups than ever have told us they want to gather to discuss really difficult topics. Groups have read and talked about aging, mindful patient care, domestic violence, mutual aid, and – in record numbers – systemic racism. The Discussion Project offers a clear, flexible framework for discussions like these. Each group decides on an issue to discuss and chooses texts to read.

Our facilitators enter the room not as experts on the topic, but as people committed to fostering curiosity and close attention – no matter how difficult the issue.

This is one way we get a little closer to our vision of Maine's communities transformed by the power and pleasure of ideas.



EVERY GIFT MATTERS

Online: mainehumanities.org.

A monthly gift: only \$15 each month results in a \$180 total gift; \$50 per month gives \$600 by the year's end; and \$85 ends up being a generous \$1,020.

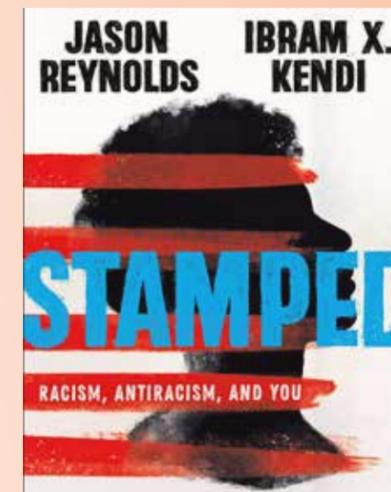
A qualified charitable distribution through your IRA, or give stock.

The Heart of our Work

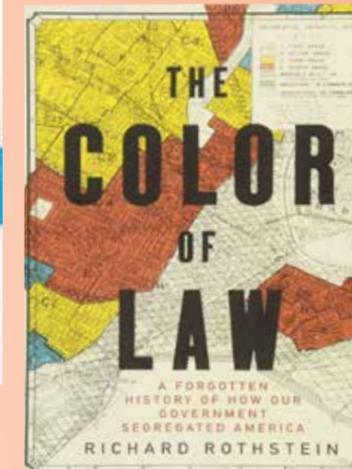
For so many reasons it can be difficult to find real opportunities to talk with – and listen to – other people, even people doing the same work or living in the same city. It can be easy to feel isolated and powerless. With the Discussion Project, we're working to support people and organizations in Maine who want to bring people together in ways that leave them feeling more connected to each other, foster their sense of their own agency, and inspire them to deeper engagement with their community.

The Discussion Project builds on years of work convening groups in libraries and hospitals and schools and jails, among Veterans and among folks working in hospice care and domestic violence prevention. We've honed the core elements that made those programs so successful: each Discussion Project is centered around a text; a facilitator helps foster genuinely reciprocal communication among the participants; and the host of the Project makes sure that the program is offered and convened in the way that's easiest for the people who will be joining the discussions. Best of all, the Discussion Project is flexible enough for anyone in Maine to apply to host a group.

The Discussion Project is the most exciting thing we do. We can't wait for you to join in.



Two of the many texts being read in Discussion Projects across Maine.



Each Discussion Project group chooses texts that touch on issues and questions that they and their community wrestle with – texts that will help them think and talk together about what is important to them.

CONNECTING Mainers with books & communities with ideas

Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You Jason Reynolds and Ibram X. Kendi

Things Fall Apart Chinua Achebe

Attending: Medicine, Mindfulness, and Humanity Ronald Epstein

The Round House Louise Erdrich

Zong! M. NourbeSe Philip

Magnificent Homespun Brown: A Celebration

Samara Coyle Doyon, illustrated by Kaylani Juanita

The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness

Michelle Alexander

Just a few of the many texts being read in Discussion Projects across Maine.

