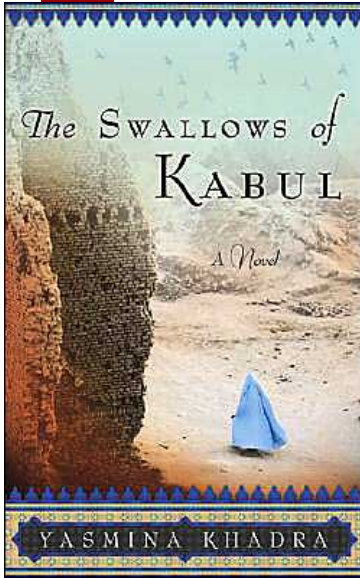


UAA and APU are pleased to announce their joint Books of the Year for 2007-08



The Swallows of Kabul, by Yasmina Khadra, is the story of two couples living in Afghanistan under Taliban rule.

The Handmaid's Tale, by Margaret Atwood, is the story of a Western dystopia, where politics and religion have become powerfully intertwined.

Together, these two books provide a strong set for teaching, and a nuanced perspective of religious extremism. Both are works of fiction. One deals with Islamic fundamentalism, the other with Christian fundamentalism. One is by a male author (writing under a female pseudonym), the other by a female. One's writing style is relatively lush (translated from the French), the other relatively spare. Both books are short, and accessible to students from many backgrounds.

Some of the themes in the books include

- The impacts of religious fundamentalism
- The types of love between couples
- The power of crowd behavior
- Power relationships (between men and women, and between women and women)
- Environmental collapse and response

The 2007-08 Books of the Year were recommended by a joint faculty committee from both universities who reviewed an extensive list of nominations on the theme of "religion and politics." The committee forwarded their recommendations to an implementation team consisting of faculty, library staff, student services representatives, and several administrators, who made the final selection of these two titles.

The theme was selected to complement a large-scale community education project called *Meeting Islam: Engaging Muslim Beliefs, Cultures, Politics*, which will run throughout the year, supported by a generous gift to APU's Cardinal Newman Foundation. This project will bring to Anchorage four nationally prominent Islamic scholars during the Spring 2008 semester.

UAA will appoint a Faculty Associate to develop and coordinate Books of the Year activities.

For more information about related activities, visit

www.uaa.alaska.edu/communitypartnerships

