

ELIZABETH STROUT, AGAIN: FOUR NOVELS

This discussion course for avid readers explores four of Pulitzer Prize winner Elizabeth Strout's novels—including her first, *Amy and Isabelle*, and her most recent, *Oh William* (forthcoming October 19, 2021), plus *Abide with Me* and *The Burgess Boys*. Strout's work contemplates love, marriage, sex, infidelity, divorce, trauma, terrorism, aging, art, depression, poverty, class, religion, anger, and grief: e.g. modern life. Two of these novels are set in Strout's familiar Maine and two in New York City. All ardent readers are welcome, whether first-time readers of Strout or long-time fans. We will read and discuss 150 pages a week, starting with the first session.

Textbooks are available as new and used paperbacks as well as on Kindle through <http://www.amazon.com> and elsewhere. In the past, students have found books much easier than Kindles to access for class discussion. A detailed syllabus as well as additional discussion materials will be emailed to students as a Word document file.

Amy and Isabelle, Elizabeth Strout, Random House, 1998.

Abide with Me, Elizabeth Strout, Random House, 2007

The Burgess Boys, Elizabeth Strout, Random House, 2013

Oh, William, Elizabeth Strout, Random House, October 19, 2021. (You can order it now from Amazon so it arrives on the 19th.)

Course Leader: Lois Marie Harrod

Tentative Syllabus

Date	Assignments	Discussion Points
Class 1	<i>Amy and Isabelle</i> , 3-150	The relationship between setting (work and school) and power.
Class 2	<i>Amy and Isabelle</i> , 150-304	The problems of power and sex—mothers and daughters, teachers and students.
Class 3	<i>Abide with Me</i> , Book I, 3-148	Strout's narrator as village voice.
Class 4	<i>Abide with Me</i> , Book II, 149-294	Strout's take on religion, the role of the church in the village.
Class 5	<i>The Burgess Boys</i> , 3-154	Family ties: mother and "writer," sibling relationships. The nature of terrorism.
Class 6	<i>The Burgess Boys</i> , 154-320	Continuation of family ties; setting and happiness. Country mice and city mice: constant Strout theme.
Class 7	<i>Oh, William</i> 3-147	Connections with <i>I Am Lucy Barton</i> : discussion to be discovered after October 19 publication.
Class 8	<i>Oh, William</i> 148-289 Closing discussion and celebratory review.	Themes and connections to be discovered after October 19 publication of <i>Oh, William</i> .

LEADER: Lois Marie Harrod's eighteenth collection of poetry, *Spat*, appeared in May 2021; she is a life-long teacher and writer: see online work at www.loismarieharrod.org.

WEDNESDAYS: 1:00 to 3:00 p.m., 8 weeks beginning September 29 through November 17

MAXIMUM: 18