



## LAWRENCE UNIVERSITY

711 E BOLDT WAY  
APPLETON WI 54911-5699

Summer 2021

I'm writing to welcome you to First Year Studies and to share the first work on this year's reading list: *Native Guard*, by Natasha Trethewey. For the last several years, Trethewey's book has made an ideal starting point for our signature program. Trethewey visited our campus in 2016, delivering a powerful convocation address, and she reconnected with Lawrence in the spring of 2020, when she received an honorary degree and spoke to the graduating class. We are proud and eager to share her work with you.

As you'll soon discover, this collection of poetry is both moving and thought-provoking. The theme of community is found in all the works for First Year Studies. *Native Guard* starts us off with reflection on what it means to be part of a family and a society, and in particular how memories shape our communities. These poems highlight the way communities work to maintain and preserve memories, and struggle against erasure.

I'd like to direct your attention to the opening lines of the first poem in the collection, "Theories of Time and Space." The poem begins with the following lines:

You can get there from here, though  
there's no going home.

Everywhere you go will be somewhere  
you've never been.

We hope those lines will set the tone for your experience of First Year Studies. In choosing works for First Year Studies, we are always looking for chances to discover fresh perspectives, so that "everywhere you go will be somewhere you've never been." That's why, in addition to *Native Guard*, the syllabus for the coming year includes a photograph of New York City, a classic jazz album, a book about honeybees, and a work on the topic of hate speech. And of course there is our First Year Studies mainstay, Plato's *Republic*. We know these books will stir your intellectual curiosity and ambition, but beyond that they will get us thinking together about the value of community and the role of individuals in creatively solving our largest problems.

Before closing, I'd like to make two other points.

- You should read *Native Guard*, in its entirety, before your first First Year Studies class on Monday, September 13.
- As soon as you can, you should order the rest of the books for Fall Term. I'm including a list of books for both terms in this mailing. Books are available through our online bookstore, at <http://www.lawrence.edu/academics/bookstore>. Whenever you order books, be sure to get the editions we've selected for you. Using the ISBN numbers included in the list should help to ensure that you're buying the right editions.

After a pandemic year that disrupted so many of our experiences of education and community, we are looking forward to starting off this year with a re-emphasis on the value of being together in the classroom and on campus. We'll be looking for ways to connect these works to your experience on campus, and you can be a part of that too this year by imagining the campus community that you want to be a part of and creative ways to make that community a reality. This process of building our community starts with First Year Studies. If you have any questions about the course or the works, please don't hesitate to get in touch with me.

Good luck with *Native Guard*, and enjoy the rest of your summer!

Martyn Smith

Director of First Year Studies and Associate Professor of Religious Studies

[martyn.smith@lawrence.edu](mailto:martyn.smith@lawrence.edu)

The List of First Year Studies Works:

Fall Term

- Berenice Abbott, *Tri-Boro Barber School* (photograph, to be distributed later)
- Plato. *The Republic*. Trans. Grube/Reeve. Hackett. ISBN 978-0872201361 (paperback)
- Amy Stanley, *Stranger in the Shogun's City*. Scribner. ISBN 978-1501188534 (paperback)
- Thomas Seeley. *Honeybee Democracy*. Princeton University Press. ISBN 978-0691147215 (hardcover)
- Natasha Trethewey. *Native Guard*. Mariner Books. ISBN 978-0618872657 (paperback)

Winter Term

- Jeremy Waldron, *The Harm in Hate Speech*. Harvard University Press. ISBN 978-0674416864 (paperback)
- Abhijit Banerjee and Esther Duflo. *Poor Economics: A Radical Rethinking of the Way to Fight Global Poverty*. Public Affairs. ISBN 978-1610390934 (paperback)
- Miles Davis. *Kind of Blue*. Columbia Records. (CD or vinyl)
- Tony Kushner. *Angels in America*, Part 1: Millennium Approaches, included in *Angels in America: A Gay Fantasia on National Themes*. Theater Communication Group. ISBN 978-1559363846 (paperback)
- Eric R. Scerri. *The Periodic Table: A Very Short Introduction*. 2nd edition. Oxford University Press. ISBN 978-0198842323 (paperback)