

Spotlight on: Russian Literature

A few years ago I mentioned to a friend that I was thinking of joining a book club but I wanted something a bit more serious and focused than a chit-chat gathering with the latest best-seller as an entry ticket. (Nothing wrong with that, of course! Just not what I was looking for.) ‘Come to U3A Russian Literature,’ she said. ‘They’re a friendly group, not intimidating, but they don’t meet to gossip: they talk seriously about the books.’

‘But I don’t know any Russian.’ ‘Not a problem. We read everything in English, and those who do know Russian give us pointers about the quality of the translations.’

Since 2009, under the wise and informative guidance of Russia expert Peter Walkley, the group has been exploring novels, poetry, and plays from the Russian ‘Golden Age’ classics — Pushkin, Gogol, Turgenev, Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, Chekhov, and others — through works by authors from the Revolution and the Soviet era, and up to contemporary writing. Not a single discussion passes without some new insight into, new information about, or new approach to the book we have just read.

The U3A Russian Literature discussion group meets on the second Wednesday of every month at 2:00 p.m. in Sunnyfield House.

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