



PRESS RELEASE

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Iranian-American Author Azar Nafisi to Deliver McCreight Lecture in the Humanities

Charleston, WV – The West Virginia Humanities Council presents award-winning author Azar Nafisi, known for her bestseller *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, for its 2017 McCreight Lecture in the Humanities. Nafisi will deliver “The Humanities and the Future of Democracies” on Thursday, October 26, at 7:30 p.m. at the Culture Center in Charleston. The event is free and open to the public, and a book signing will follow the talk.

Born in Tehran as the daughter of the mayor, with a Ph.D. from the University of Oklahoma and a fellowship at Oxford, Nafisi was teaching literature at the University of Tehran just as the Iranian revolution was beginning. She was dismissed from the university in 1981 for refusing to wear the mandatory Islamic veil in her classroom. That experience was the basis for *Reading Lolita in Tehran: A Memoir in Books*, which subsequently spent two years on the U.S. bestseller lists and was translated into 32 languages. Her most recent book, *The Republic of Imagination: America in Three Books*, uses the novels *Huckleberry Finn*, *Babbitt*, and *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter* to make a powerful case for the vital role of fiction in America today.

In her Charleston talk she will draw upon her experiences in Iran and America to discuss how a democratic society gave birth to great American novels, and why we need the humanities today. She will explore how present economic and political challenges can be traced to the larger crisis of vision, and whether a democracy can thrive without democratic imagination.

Nafisi was a professor of aesthetics, culture, and literature at Johns Hopkins University’s School of Advanced International Studies in Washington. While at Oxford she lectured on culture and the important role of

Western literature and culture in Iran after the revolution in 1979. She has lived in the United States since 1997 and is a U.S. citizen.

The McCreight Lecture is a program of the West Virginia Humanities Council and also kicks off the 2017 West Virginia Book Festival, which continues October 27-28 at the Charleston Civic Center. The Humanities Council is a Charter Presenter of the Book Festival.

For more information contact the Humanities Council at 304-346-8500 or visit www.wvhumanities.org.

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