

## Margaret Atwood's Grim Tales

Atwood writes: "Calling a piece of short fiction a *tale* removes it at least slightly from the realm of mundane works and days, as it evokes the world of the folk tale, the wonder tale, and the long-ago teller of tales. She might also add that her grim and often grimly funny tales provide a sort of cultural history of the last sixty years. So, in this discussion course for avid readers, we will explore wild and wily stories and poems from Margaret Atwood's long prolific career—all tales of women engaged in power struggles and culture-skirmishes with hairballs and husbands, stone mattresses and dusties. We will concentrate on story-telling techniques, recurring themes and social satire.

Textbooks are available as new and used paperbacks, and is available as well on Kindle through <http://www.amazon.com> and elsewhere. In the past students have found books much easier than using Kindles in class discussion. A detailed syllabus as well as additional stories, poems, essays and discussion suggestions will be provided both in a Xeroxed package and emailed to students as a Word document file.

1. Margaret Atwood, *Bluebeard's Egg*, Houghton Mifflin, 1986, paperback, \$12.93 new.
2. Margaret Atwood, *Stone Mattress*, Anchor Books, Random House, 2015, paperback, \$10.95 new.
3. Margaret Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, Anchor Books, Random House, 1998, paperback, \$10.95 new.
4. Margaret Atwood, *Wilderness Tips*, Anchor Books, 1989, paperback, \$12.00 new.

Date	Tentative Assignments
Sept 26	Introduction. No assignment, no need to read ahead, but bring the four books to the introductory session.
Oct 3	Reading Assignment: <b>Stone Mattress, 1-154</b>
October 10	Reading Assignment: <b>Wilderness Tips, selected stories</b>
October 17	Reading Assignment: <b>The Handmaid's Tale, 1-147</b>
October 24	Reading Assignment: <b>The Handmaid's Tale, 151-311</b>
October 31	Reading Assignment: <b>Bluebeard's Egg, 1-138</b>
November 7	Reading Assignment: <b>Bluebeard's Egg, 139-244</b>
November 14	Reading Assignment: <b>Stone Mattress, 155-287</b>

**Note:** We won't have time to discuss all the stories. The individual stories to be discussed are listed on the Thought-Starters for each session. Individual assignments for the stories will be distributed the week before in class and sent to you by email. If a particular story interests you, let me know: [lmharrod1@verizon.net](mailto:lmharrod1@verizon.net)

**Leader:** Lois M. Harrod

**Wednesdays:** 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m., 8 weeks: September 26 through November 14

**Location:** The Presbyterian Church of Lawrenceville