# PEOPLE AND STORIES: THE POWER OF WORDS

Inspired by the "People and Stories/Gente y Cuentos" program founded by Sarah Hirschman in 1972, this class will read and discuss different short stories each week. Selections will include works (in translation, as appropriate) by writers like Chinua Achebe, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Kate Chopin, Eugenia W. Collier, Louise Erdrich, Gish Jen, James Joyce, Jamaica Kincaid, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Tim O'Brien, Tillie Olsen, Harnando Tellez, Alice Walker, and others.

Each participant will receive (free) a copy of Hirschman's book, *People and Stories/Gente y Cuentos: Who Owns Literature?* Other relevant readings (e.g., "Pedagogy of the Oppressed" by Paulo Freire) will also be distributed free in class. The instructor will supply copies of each week's stories at the beginning of every class. Participants will be encouraged to examine the issues and themes; tensions and contrasts; shadows; poetics, and sounds of each story as we read them. No other preparation is necessary.

 "The great gift is the passion for reading," wrote Elizabeth Hardwick. "It is cheap, it consoles, it distracts, it excites. It gives you knowledge of the world and experience of a wide kind. It is moral illumination."

"The humanities interrogate us," wrote Brown Professor of Comparative Literature Arnold Weinstein in a recent NY Times Op Ed piece. "They challenge our sense of who we are, even of who our brothers and sisters might be." "'How much do you know about Shakespeare,'" Weinstein once asked a colleague who specialized in the Bard. "'Not as much as he knows about me,' she replied. Remember this the next time someone tells you literature is useless," suggests Weinstein.

**Leader:** Ellen Gilbert, who has a doctorate in library science, is a trained "People & Stories" coordinator. Previous Evergreen Forum courses include: Alice (in Wonderland) at 150, History of Children's Books, and History of Libraries.

**Thursdays:** 1:00 to 3:00 p.m., 8 weeks: March 1 through April 19

**Location:** Presbyterian Church of Lawrenceville