



Iranian-American Author Azar Nafisi to speak on “The Republic of the Imagination” at Principia College

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Elsah, Illinois: Principia’s Speaker Series will present professor and author Azar Nafisi as this academic year’s Ernie and Lucha Vogel Moral Courage Lecturer on Thursday, April 11 at 7:30 p.m. in Wanamaker Hall. Nafisi will speak on the topic “The Republic of the Imagination,” drawing from her much-acclaimed book *Reading Lolita in Tehran: A Memoir in Books* which has been heralded as an incisive exploration of the power of literature over politics.

Nafisi currently teaches aesthetics, culture, and literature as a visiting professor at Johns Hopkins University. She studied in the U.S. in the 1970s and then taught at the University of Tehran. In 1981, she was expelled from the University of Tehran for refusing to wear the mandatory Islamic veil and did not resume teaching until 1987. She taught at the Free Islamic University and held a fellowship at Oxford University, where she conducted a series of lectures on culture and the important role of Western literature and culture in Iran after the 1979 revolution. Nafisi returned to the United States in 1997, earning national respect and international recognition for advocating on behalf of Iran's intellectuals, youth, and especially young women.

Nafisi has conducted human rights workshops in Iran for women students. She has lectured and written extensively in English and Persian on the political implications of literature and culture as well as the human rights of Iranian women and girls and the role they play in creating a more open Iranian society. In 2011, she was awarded the Cristóbal Gabarrón Foundation International Thought and Humanities Award for her courageous defence of human values in Iran and her efforts to generate awareness about the situation women face in Islamic society.

Nafisi has written for *The New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and *The Wall Street Journal*. She is the author of *Anti-Terra: A Critical Study of Vladimir Nabokov’s*

Novels. She published a children's book, *Bibi and the Green Voice*, which was translated into Italian and Hebrew. In 2009 she wrote a memoir about her mother, *Things I've Been Silent About: Memories of a Prodigal Daughter*. She resides in Washington, D.C. and is currently working on a new book about the power of literature to liberate minds and people.

Admission is \$15, \$10 for alumni and Gold & Blue Athletic Club Members, and free for current Principia students, faculty, and staff. Books will not be sold at the event; however, Nafisi will sign your personal copies of her books after the presentation.