

Coming soon...



PHOTO COURTESY OF ARKANSAS MONEY & POLITICS

Downtown Jonesboro.

LAILA CASIANO

STAFF WRITER

2020 was a sad year as our city lost most of the Turtle Creek Mall to a tornado. Since the tragedy, Jonesboro's establishments have been lacking alongside others, with the loss of the mall and the pandemic causing even more places to shut down, it was already difficult to find locales in our city for the purpose of hanging out, until recently. In the new year, announcements were made declaring the return of a fan-favorite store, new establishments coming to a newly made village and as well as renovations for downtown Jonesboro.

Downtown Jonesboro has been exciting as of late, as the downtown area has recently hosted events for the public such as the recent JoyFest and as well as having great restaurants

coming to the scene, such as the addition of Scoops, an ice cream shop, and Shadrachs Underground. People are finally coming out to spend weekends or late weeknights to eat in the multiple restaurants offered or shop in the many boutiques and stores located there.

"I go downtown twice a week for my yoga class at Nirvana Hot Yoga Studio. I like that I have a place nearby to decompress away from campus. It's a nice place," said Riley West, a sophomore majoring in business.

Jan 17., Halsey Thrasher Harpole Real Estate Group shared news of their upcoming project, The Village Shoppes, to extend the growth of the Greensborough Village by the add-ons of the University Lofts, building of the five high-end condominiums, the arrivals of new unknown stores and fine-dining restaurants.

Jan 25., Haag Brown Commercial Real Estate and Development announced that Barnes and Nobles would return back to Jonesboro: "We have a leasing broker who was inspired to bring Barnes & Nobles back to our community. This team will make things happen that are good for the community," said Joshua Brown, principal of Haag Brown.

Wonderful news for those still mourning the destruction of Barnes & Nobles' that was formerly a part of Turtle Creek Mall. Although its date of arrival is still unknown, the store will be settled in the Crossroads Shopping Center.

With these new establishments coming to Jonesboro, hopefully our city can be a bit more fun with many options to choose from for entertainment and social gatherings

THIS WEEK'S POP PICK

LAILA CASIANO | STAFF WRITER

"BABEL" BY R. F. KUANG

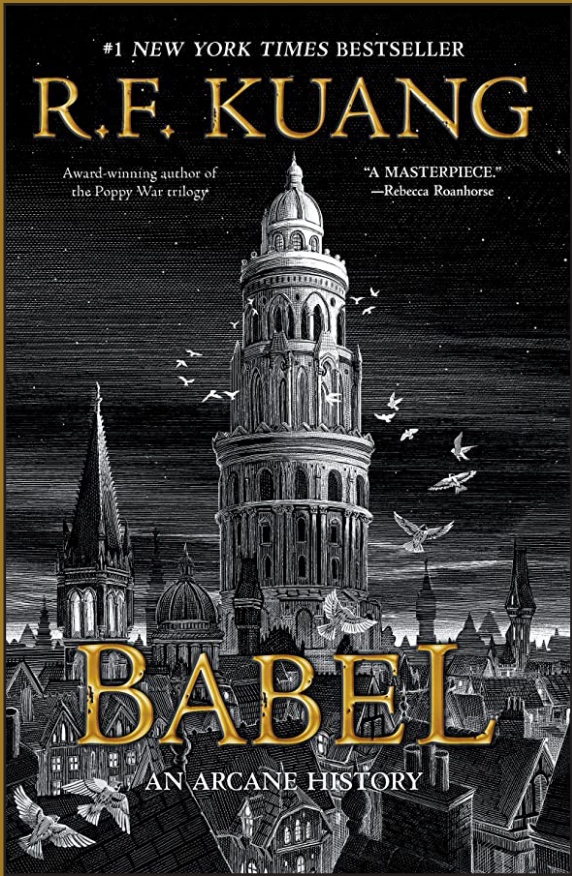


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I had recently read perhaps one of my favorite books of 2022 or, better yet, I had recently discovered one of my favorite books ever. And that is: "Babel, Or the Necessity of Violence: An Arcane History of the Oxford Translators' Revolution."

This book has been praised since its debut in November of last year and even had a subsequent hype and carried great expectation on social media (TikTok and YouTube) since R.F. Kuang, the book's author, announced her plan to soon release a new book.

Kuang has had great success as such a young-rising author with her trilogy "The Poppy Wars," which was equally praised and lauded as one of the best fantasy novels in recent times. And though I hadn't necessarily began reading her previous books, if you are in the side of social media for book lovers, you'll come to understand that Kuang's books are rarely criticized and that her impeccable storytelling and unique ways of incorporating political and social commentary into

fantasy worlds, you'll see that the expectation for a book marketed along the rising genre dark academia was huge.

Dark academia is this niche genre in which can be understood as a meta-self critique of institutions, such as academia. Themes consist of classism, elitism, sexism, etc and the stories are set through an academic setting, such as a university under the guise of the characters studying language, history, science and much more. Well known popular 'dark academia' books are:

"The Secret History" by Donna Tart, "If We Were Villains" by M. L. Rio, "The Ninth House" by Leigh Bardugo and now, "Babel" by R.F. Kuang.

I have read what's considered to be (in specific to literature, rather than the whole identity of media) 'the dark academia's magnum opus' "The Secret History" by Donna Tart and though I had enjoyed reading Tart's book, it wasn't my favorite. Honestly, after reading that, I had thought that perhaps this specific genre wasn't a favorite of mine.

That was until the spreading wildfire that was Kuang's newest release.

I truly believe that this book stands firmly as the genre's magnum opus, doing a better job of critiquing academia than its peers (as the story itself is a whole commentary of critiquing said academia, and much more).

Babel begins its story with the introduction of a boy named Robin and a man named Professor Lovell set in the 18th century. They meet in Canton (or now well known as Guangzhou) when Professor Lovell heals him with a bar of silver and gives Robin the choice to either stay in Canton in which is ravished with a deadly disease that has killed his mother and hundreds more, or to move to England with Lovell where he would learn Greek and Latin alongside his Cantonese, Chinese and mandarin. Once he moves to England, everything that Robin has known completely shifts as his expectation from his new guardian is to attend England's best, Oxford and even more expectantly, attend Babel—the Royal Institute of Translation and the world's harbor of silver bars.

As Robin finally makes his way to attend Babel, he meets unlikely allies in which results in a beautiful story of one's faltering identity as the pressure and forceful submission of the growing unbalanced power of the British empire and of its imperialist and colonialist acts to his native country. Robin has to decide to either forget everything he's ever known and play subservient, being the perfect little translator that's only needed to aid Babel and its power OR to fight against the injustice institution and empire in which abuses its mass power of silver-working and start a revolution to end it all.

This historical and sci-fi novel had such an extraordinary way of crafting the world that though fictional, it is incredibly real and daunting. The author forces the readers to face the realities of the countries left conquered and defeated during the peak of the British empire.

Kuang's depiction of her characters are so beautiful and yet heartbreaking: from the guilt that Robin faces as he presumably lives a privileged life but feels so burdened by the memory of his origin, from the complicated (and honestly, favorite depiction of a character I've ever seen in a piece of literature, ever) self-victimization of Letty, the anger yet calm awaiting knight that was Ramy and the cruelty facing Victoire as the color of her skin and womanhood being the only marker for her existence (deemed in the eyes of her peers.)

And this story's amazing magical element of 'silver-working' that perfectly incorporates the practices of language and entomology makes it seem so effortless and practical. And Kuang's unique way of writing was easy and though wordy as long chapters were a constant, the use of footnotes for extra character analysis and brief summaries of accurate historical accounts and events made this story seem so easily forgetful that it's a fictional depiction.

This book will forever be timeless to me and I understand deeply the rooted excitement of many book readers when it comes to Babel. I strongly encourage anyone to read this book.

"Can powerful institutions be changed from within, or does revolution always require violence?" Babel, R.F. Kuang.

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Learning a foreign language at A-State



PHOTO COURTESY OF ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Dr. Vicente Moreno associate professor of Spanish. Moreno is from Valencia, Spain.

Learning a language is simply the act of understanding and truly appreciating the myriad cultures that are embodied and present in our world, not by your existent knowledge of linguistics. Learning a second language can provide employers to be seen as a desired applicant—being a bilingual or multilingual speaker can be a doorway for many opportunities.

Learning a second language can help people become a global citizen, to become adaptable, to become better socially and improve interpersonal skills.

Arkansas States University World Language and Culture Department offers Spanish, French and previously German to be taught for students to major or minor. A-State campus helps provide students the ability and means for students to learn a new language.

Here is what you'll need to know:

Vicent Moreno, the chair of the Department of English, Philosophy and World Languages, has been here at A-State for 10 years working also as a professor for Spanish (literature and culture). He began studying in his home

country in Spain where he got what's equivalent to a BA in English and later moving to the United States to teach Spanish, completing his PhD to further his teaching and research skills.

"Research shows that learning a second language helps to develop problem-solving skills, critical-thinking and listening skills; it also improves memory and concentration. A very important aspect, in my opinion, is that learning a second language also fosters cultural sensitivity and tolerance," said Moreno.

When discussing the trials and challenges of non-native speakers learning a foreign language, Moreno spoke about its long process and the natural frustration or impatience one would get when learning at first and the need to obtain a "somewhat good linguistic base."

Moreno explained later on his opinion on what motivates someone to want to learn a new language, explaining that it could be deemed down to one's interest in other countries or simply communicating with people from said other countries/backgrounds and or the notion that it could further

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- Dr. Vincent Moreno

advance their career—their professional development—or because of one's curiosity.

When asked about the possibility in the future of A-State for incorporating and or expanding its world language department in adding other foreign languages, Moreno said, "We're working to start offering Chinese and Arabic in the fall through some academic partnerships. This would be a great addition to our university and a big opportunity for students who want to study other languages."

How studying a foreign language impacted a student:

Leyandra Snyder, native from Boise, Idaho and alumni to A-State as she graduated with a Bachelors of Music in Violin Performance with a minor in French in 2022. Though at her time of being at A-State, there weren't as many students learning French alongside her, her prospects of educating herself never faltered as continued on this endeavor as she pursues a masters degree at Roosevelt University in Chicago.

"I've always loved learning about other cultures and languages. I started learning

French in middle school, and when I learned that I could pursue a minor in the language I went right for it," said Snyder.

French helped Snyder as a classical musician, loving the language itself—consuming French media and even with the learning of the language she able to subconsciously think and dream in French—and her admiration to many French composers that initially propelled her love for music, it eventually moved her to pursue a career surrounding it. Snyder has plans to join L'Alliance Francaise (an international organization which aims to further the progress and support the French language and boost French culture around the world).

When asked on whether people should learn a foreign language and on the benefits of doing so, Snyder said, "I believe that everyone should learn a foreign language! It's fun, it broadens your cultural horizons, you meet a lot of new friends in doing so, and schools and jobs are always impressed by a multicultural student."

Black History Month Events

Feb. 1

- Black History Month Kickoff Event, 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Reng Student Union Food Court
- Brother 2 Brother Barbershop talk, 6-8 p.m. Reng Student Union Executive Dining Room

Feb. 2

- Fish Fry and Spades Tournament 6-8 p.m. Reng Student Union Centennial Hall

Feb. 3

- KLEK and Centennial Bank Financial Seminar 6-8 p.m., KLEK Studio 1411 Franklin St.

Feb. 7

- A Virtual Roundtable Talk on Black Women's Wellness 3:30-4:20 p.m.
- The African American Experience at A-State: Yearbook Snapshots from 1956 - 2013 6-7 p.m. Museum

Feb. 12

- Phi Beta Sigma Church Service 11 a.m.-1 p.m. New Beginning Missionary Baptist Church

Feb. 13

- Phi Beta Sigma Community Service Event 1-3:30 p.m. Hilltop Tiny Tots Daycare and Learning Center
- Black Student Association: Black Business Expo 7-9 p.m. Reng Student Union Centennial Hall

Feb. 14

- Tribute to a Black Woman 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Reng Student Union Food Court
- BSA Brother 2 Brother, and Phi Beta Sigma - Cuffing Season 6-8 p.m. Reng Student Union Mockingbird Room

Feb. 15

- Heart Awareness Table 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Reng Student Union Food Court
- Black Excellence in Sports 7-9 p.m. Red W.O.L.F Center

Feb. 16

- Phi Beta Sigma Throwback Thursday (Social Media Challenge) All Day Virtual
- NAACP Townhall Meeting 6-8 p.m. via Zoom

Feb. 17

- Pie a Sigma 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Heritage Plaza Lawn
- Once on this Island Production 7 p.m. Pavilion

Feb. 18.

- Once on this Island Production 7 p.m. Pavilion

Feb. 19

- Once on this Island Production 7 p.m. Pavilion

Feb. 21

- All Voices to the Table Forum 6-8 p.m. Reng Student Union Mockingbird Room

Feb. 25

- 5th Annual Living Legends Awards Ceremony 10 a.m.-12 p.m. Reng Student Union Auditorium



PHOTO COURTESY OF ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Leyandra Snyder from Boise, Idaho minored in French when she attended Arkansas State University in 2022.