

2012 Common Reading Program College-Based Discussion Guide

The Dressmaker of Khair Khana by Gayle Tzemach Lemmon

These questions have been created by the 2012 University of Florida Preview Staff. You will find the name of the Preview Staffer next to each question they created.

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INTRODUCTION

Using this discussion guide, you'll find questions related to the 2012 Common Reading Program selection and each undergraduate college here at the University of Florida. The guide is organized by college, with some questions repeated as they fall under multiple colleges. The hope is that this guide will be useful as you incorporate this book into your classes or discussions. All first-year students were provided with a copy of *The Dressmaker of Khair Khana* at Preview and are expected to read it prior to the start of their college career. Thank you for your partnership in promoting campus-wide conversations about this inspirational story and globally significant topic.

This guide can always be updated. If you develop additional questions, please send them to New Student and Family Programs (newstudentinfo@dso.ufl.edu) and we will update the guide.

College of Agricultural and Life Sciences

College	Preview Staffer	Major/Minor	Question
CALS	Heather Esford	Family, Youth, and Community Sciences	Compared to the women of Kabul, how would the stripping of women's rights affect American women in a family infrastructure?
CALS	Heather Esford	Family, Youth, and Community Sciences	Detail how the rule of the Taliban negatively affected the community as a whole for Khair Khana citizens. Explain how the characters in the book, in spite of Taliban's oppression, preserved their sense of community.
CALS	Jose Torres		Kamila was an amazing entrepreneur, is there any way that you can apply her work ethic to your agriculture and life sciences discipline?
CALS	Jose Torres		In Afghanistan, having a thriving business from your living room was a new experience for most. What do you believe would be some skills to take away from this book that will help you become innovative in your field?
CALS	Jose Torres		With such diversity among CALS majors, do you feel that you can relate to the work ethic and dedication that Kamila and her sisters put into their business? How so?
CALS	Committee		How does political oppression affect agricultural processes? What examples from the book can you list?
CALS	Jose Torres		Agricultural research is a very important issue in society; how do you think the world would be impacted with a better understanding of agriculture?
CALS	Justin Soloman		What are some ways that the people of Kabul could have maintained healthy nutrition practices during the Taliban rule?
CALS	Justin Soloman		A women's ability to travel was limited during the Taliban rule. How did possessing knowledge of the layout and practices of Khair Khana assist the women with their daily lives?

Warrington College of Business Administration

College	Preview Staffer	Question
Accounting	Megan Wicks	Kamila is a true entrepreneur. Using examples from the book, discuss the initial implications that come with starting your own company.
Accounting	Megan Wicks	From an accounting standpoint, reflect on the financial arch of Kamila's company. Using examples from the book, consider the costs of sewing machines and generators, the distribution of salaries, and the money needed to keep the girls nourished.
Accounting	Megan Wicks	UN Habitat closely tracked the \$9900 that provided funds to new community forums. Kamila was in charge of detailing the use of each of those dollars and how they were spent. In terms of budgeting, how is this a challenge? What sort of things should be considered when spending the small amount of money they had?
Accounting	Megan Wicks	Afghanistan faced monumental economic downfall upon the arrival of the Taliban. How do you expect your chosen career path to assist you in times of economic crisis, such as those similar to the war-torn Taliban rule?
Accounting	Megan Wicks	Kamila never turned away anyone who was willing to learn how to sew. How was Kamila's open door policy beneficial to her family's profits and to the community?
Accounting	Aimee Dolan	In the story, some of Kamila's sisters had to begin working under the newly appointed supervisor, Sara. Sara had never held a job before, but had dedication and natural talent for the role. How would you handle being Sara in this situation? Do you think this could relate to your future in terms of internships or careers?
Accounting	Aimee Dolan	Who do you think served as Kamila's advisor in this story? How was their relationship and what did she learn from them (besides physical skills)? What similar lessons could you learn from your advisors?
BA	Max Fin	What skills do you think helped Kamila run and operate her business? What skills do you think Kamila developed while running her business? What skills would have been helpful to Kamila from the start?
BA	Max Fin	How do you think you can apply the information you gained from reading this book to your intended career path in business? What do you believe is the most important business lesson of the book?
BA	Max Fin	How does education in business help entrepreneurs succeed and why do you think Kamila wanted to help women in Afghanistan gain such skills?
BA	Max Fin	In an increasingly globalized world, how do local entrepreneurs with less capital, such as Kamila, compete with larger businesses?
BA	Ricardo Lewin	What was one of the best marketing techniques used by Kamila to promote her dresses?
BA	Mark Blackwell	Was it easy to understand the household issues and the government decisions in regards to resource allocation in Afghanistan?
BA	Mark Blackwell	Entrepreneurship is a major theme in the story. How does this discussion of entrepreneurship motivate you towards your future goals in the business setting?
BA	Mark Blackwell	Women were at a major disadvantage during the Taliban rule. Is this similar in the business world?
BA/AC	Committee	Kamila started a teaching practice when interest surrounding her business grew. Why is it important to go through training prior to starting your own business?

College of Design, Construction and Planning

College	Preview Staffer	Question
DCP	Sabrina Viola	Kamila's journey in this novel depicts motivation at its best. What are the things that keep you motivated, even under times of great stress and anxiety?
DCP	Sabrina Viola	How does Kamila's seamstress business compare to construction management?
DCP	Vincent Pierino	In war-torn Afghanistan, some city infrastructure was destroyed. How might this destruction present opportunities in the area of Design, Construction and Planning, particularly in the areas of change and recovery?
DCP	Vincent Pierino	One of the problems in the book was limited access to energy. In what ways are buildings currently being made to be more energy efficient?
DCP	Vincent Pierino	Afghani culture, before, during, and after Taliban rule is based on a culture very different than we have in America. How do you feel that the interior design of a building is dependent on the culture of the community that houses the building?
DCP	Jayce Victor	In chapter two, the book discusses many families that went without a home. How would you use the skills you learned in building construction or architecture to help benefit those in less fortunate situations without homes?
DCP	Jayce Victor	Kamila used her teaching skills to impact others and her sewing skills to support her family. How can you as a student use the skills you gain in building construction, architecture, interior design, or landscape architecture as a tool to educate others in your community?
DCP	Jayce Victor	During the time when Kamila was forced to continue to work and support her family, the economy was at its worst. As a building construction, architecture, interior design, or landscape architecture major, in what way is it possible to still use your skills and excel during a downfall of the economy?

College of Education

College	Preview Staffer	Question
Education	Bryan Stroud	The feeling that Kamila Jan experienced when receiving her teaching certificate is one that many hopeful teachers aspire to gain. Describe how you think you would feel if you were in her shoes at that moment.
Education	Bryan Stroud	As future teachers, you know the importance of an education to students, but in the book these children sometimes did not have that luxury. How does this make you feel in regards to your own teaching?
Education	Bryan Stroud	The women of Khair Khana were introduced to the new changes of the Taliban, specifically the banning of women from all employment and opportunity. How does Kamila's tenacity and determination inspire you to grow in your own profession?
Education	Bryan Stroud	How do you feel the education of the city changed prior to the Taliban entering the city, during their takeover, and after their departure?
Education	Bryan Stroud	To Mr.Sidiqi, his highest obligation and duty of his faith was to educate his children, so that they could serve their communities. Parents will hold you accountable for their child's success (or failure) in addition to their teachings. Do you think parents who take the education of their children so seriously are an asset to you as a future educator? Why or why not?
Education	Corissa Premo	How was Kamila challenged as a teacher and how did she overcome her challenges?
Education	Corissa Premo	How is the job of a teacher different in the United States as opposed to other countries such as Afghanistan?
Education	Corissa Premo	Kamila had to teach others how to sew. How do you think her training as a teacher helped the process? Do you think she was patient and motivated because of her teaching background?
Education	Corissa Premo	Does Kamila's passion about teaching and helping others relate to you? How so?
Education	Committee	Kamila had to feed her employees to maintain their productivity. When you find a student in your classroom suffering from malnutrition, how will you respond?

College of Engineering

College	Preview Staffer	Question
Engineering	Victoria Powell	How do you believe the design and construction of dresses parallels some of the roles to be fulfilled in the different branches of engineering (whether that branch is material, mechanical, civil, etc)?
Engineering	Victoria Powell	As a future engineer, between planned program and risk taking, which do you believe is more beneficial and why?
Engineering	Victoria Powell	Just as Kamila and her family came under much pressure and stress with their businesses, the job of an engineer can be very stressful. What are some of the lessons learned from this book which you could implement now as a student that will also lead to making you a successful engineer in the future?
Engineering	Victoria Powell	At one point in the novel, it is mentioned that mistakes were inevitable when teaching numerous girls to sew in a small area. How could design, material, and time constraints present challenge to an engineer?
Engineering	Sarah Frick	Men are statistically more likely to pursue careers in the field of engineering. How does this book illustrate differences and inequalities? What lessons does it offer that could be applied to the field of engineering?
Engineering	Sarah Frick	The women featured in the story were vital individuals that held the families, as well as the society of Kabul, together. How do you view engineers as holding our society together, and what necessary skills do engineers provide for the public?
Engineering	Sarah Frick	Which events in this book's plot sparked your interests as they related to engineering?
Engineering	Sarah Frick	Kamila demonstrates strong determination and the inspiration to achieve her goals, while facing an uncertain future. What goals do you have as an engineering major, and what are some of the uncertainties you may face while pursuing your degree? How do you plan to handle these trials?
Engineering	Khalil Quinan	What systematic approach would you have taken in the production of the dresses?

College of Fine Arts

College	Preview Staffer	Question
Fine Arts	Yesenia Gomez	How do the women in Kamila's house use music as an escape from the world?
Fine Arts	Yesenia Gomez	During the one wedding mentioned in the story, it states that the Taliban did not allow music to be played. Why do you believe the Taliban would prohibit music?
Fine Arts	Yesenia Gomez	How would you feel if our government placed a restriction on the types of music we could listen to and why?
Fine Arts	Stephanie Mandelblum	As a Fine Arts student who may have been told that your academic pursuit was not a legitimate one, do you find that, throughout the novel, Kamila successfully demonstrates that there are many triumphant ventures through art?
Fine Arts	Stephanie Mandelblum	Just as Kamila brought many together through art, as a Fine Arts student, you all probably belong to a certain community. From personal experience, how do you believe the arts can bring together people?
Fine Arts	Stephanie Mandelblum	How can creativity and peace be cultivated through times of adversity? Can you think of any other influential people in Fine Arts who may have accomplished that task?
Fine Arts	Jordan Mullings	One of the general themes of art describes reveling in the beauty of self-expression. Beyond dressmaking, how do the sisters in this story maintain and express themselves in such a restrictive situation?
Fine Arts	Jordan Mullings	Has this story, if at all, changed your perception of the aspects that may be involved in the art industry?
Fine Arts	Jordan Mullings	How was Kamila's desire to fulfill her dreams through education and helping others satisfied through the art of sewing?
Fine Arts	Jordan Mullings	After the Taliban arrive and limit access to all art and entertainment, life changed for those in Afghanistan. What would your life without art be like?
Fine Arts	Jordan Mullings	How often do the fields of art and business cross paths? What are some possible student organizations you may be interested in that contain both of these elements in abundance?

College of Health and Human Performance

College	Preview Staffer	Question
HHP	Kanetra Wright	How would having only one doctor in the community or limited access to clinics affect people's health throughout the world?
HHP	Reginald Warren	What other issues not mentioned in the book could have arisen that also would have affected the health of the residents of Kabul?
HHP	Reginald Warren	How do you perceive the quality of health education before, during, and after the Taliban Regime?
HHP	Reginald Warren	How do you perceive the quality of recreation in Kabul before, during, and after the Taliban Regime?
HHP	Reginald Warren	How could Kamila have incorporated health education into the education of the women who worked at the house?
HHP	Chrissy Mclarty	The College of Health and Human Performance at UF says you would be hard-pressed to find another college that can touch so many people in so many different ways. What are some of the characteristics that the book and the college have in common, when it comes to reaching out to and creating positive affect in others?
HHP	Chrissy Mclarty	HHP is proud that its students graduate with the tools, knowledge and confidence to fulfill their dreams - thereby becoming remarkable assets to their communities. Describe those in the book who became remarkable assets to their community? How so?
HHP	Chrissy Mclarty	Careers in the HHP College range from therapists, clinicians, scientists, recreation/event managers, tourism professionals and physicians. What track Kamila would chose and why?
HHP	Chrissy Mclarty	In 2005, the HHP college extended its Study Abroad Program. After reading "The Dressmaker of Khair Khana," why do you think cultural diversity is important?

College of Journalism and Communications

College	Preview Staffer	Question
JM	Elsa Mota	Gayle (the author) knowingly entered a dangerous area in order to get the story she needed. Do you think the risk she took was worth it? How have you taken a chance by choosing a major in the College of Journalism? Do you think your "risk" will be worth it?
JM	Elsa Mota	What do you think of the media's portrayal of the political turmoil in the Middle East? Compare this to Gayle's approach.
JM	Elsa Mota	The Taliban took over Kabul just as Kamila completed her teaching degree. Kamila and her sisters thirsted for new books and began to grow restless. How can you take full advantage of the educational resources provided by the College of Journalism and the University?
JM	Allison Curran	In the book, the free speech of the citizens of Kabul was greatly hindered. If our society had this lack of freedom, what effect do you think that would have on the media?
JM	Allison Curran	What methods did Kamila use to appeal to the vendors she was selling her dresses to? How did these methods make the vendors want to take the risk of being caught doing business with a woman?
JM	Allison Curran	Kamila and her family regularly listened to BBC radio to stay connected with the outside world and remain aware of the constant changes made by the Taliban. Why do you think broadcasts like this are so important, and do you think they do more than provide information?
JM	Allison Curran	Despite the Taliban's efforts, the movie <i>Titanic</i> became a huge craze throughout Afghanistan. How did the popularity show through the people and products, and why do these techniques work for advertising products?
JM	Allison Curran	The author of "The Dressmaker of Khair Khana" writes about entrepreneurs around the world. In this book, she showcases the daily struggles that Kamila and her family faced. What challenges do you think one would face while reporting such a unique and inspirational story?
JM	Joselyn Rivas	How did the Taliban advertise the social rules they were implementing and was this effective?
JM	Joselyn Rivas	If you were Kamila, how would you have gone about establishing a system for improving your community's knowledge while being restricted by Taliban rule?

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

College	Preview Staffer	Major/Minor	Question
CLAS	Matthew Weider	Psychology	When Kamila is interacting with the Taliban during one of her trips to the Community Forum, how does she use psychology to make it out of the tough situation?
CLAS	Matthew Weider	Religion	Religion can be seen in all aspects of this book; from the chadri to the prayers they do in the morning, noon, and night. Do you think that Kamila and her sisters experienced any personal religious turmoil when they started this business?
CLAS	Matthew Weider	Women's Studies	How is it that women in one area tend to affect the women in society as a whole? At what times in history has this occurred in the U.S.?
CLAS	Brianna Aldridge		How did the economic plight of Kabul influence many citizens' (and Mr. Sadiqi's) decision to leave home?
CLAS	Brianna Aldridge		The brutal beatings that members of the Taliban performed on women were heinous. If this were to occur in America, how could women's rights groups ensure the elimination of such practices?
CLAS	Brianna Aldridge		The Taliban instilled fear into the lives of many Afghans. How does this fear affect the way in which citizens carry out their everyday lives? How does the mental framework of citizens change?
CLAS	Brianna Aldridge		Why would an understanding of Middle Eastern culture help people better grasp the concepts in "The Dressmaker of Khair Khana?"
CLAS	Alfredo Espinosa		In CLAS, women's studies is a popular major. What does this book tell you about the nature of women not from the United States? Is oppression a problem women face only in these areas that the book describes, or worldwide as well?
CLAS	Alfredo Espinosa		What role does the conflict in this area play in the global scheme of things? Do you think the UN could have done better in trying to fight the Taliban?
CLAS	Alfredo Espinosa		What does Kamila's story tell you about the economic market of the area? Would Kabul's economy be more efficient and productive if the Taliban hadn't forced women out of their jobs? What effect did the Taliban's invasion have on Kabul's economy?
CLAS	Alfredo Espinosa		What do you think causes the members of the Taliban to act the way they do? Is it a psychological issue or a larger sociological issue?
CLAS	Alfredo Espinosa		There was a lot of talk about political struggles in the area before the Taliban invaded. Where do politics come to play in the story? Although the Taliban claim their invasion as a religious conquest, what underlying political motives do you think the organization had?

College of Nursing

College	Preview Staffer	Question
Nursing	Andrew Lenz	How different would the world be if only men were allowed to attend nursing school?
Nursing	Andrew Lenz	What lessons does this book teach about the importance of gender equality in the medical field?
Nursing	Andrew Lenz	What are some of the major differences that the Taliban brought to the Afghanistan healthcare system?
Nursing	Melissa Charles	The University of Florida College of Nursing upholds the principles of "Care, Lead, Inspire." How did Kamila portray these principles throughout the novel?
Nursing	Melissa Charles	The College of Nursing prides itself in being a pioneer in nursing education (Florida's first nurse practitioner program and PhD in Nursing Science). How did Kamila serve as a pioneer in her community?
Nursing	Melissa Charles	Some research within the College of Nursing focuses on the interrelationships among biological, behavioral, psychological, social and spiritual factors that influence wellness and disease. "The Dressmaker" provides several situations in which someone has health issues, and also shows moments of health and happiness in characters. Discuss specific examples where you were able to see the factors above play a role in characters' lives.
Nursing	Jacob Cunningham	As a nursing student, how do you relate to Kamila in the aspect that she shows passion to assist the people in her community?
Nursing	Jacob Cunningham	What aspects of this book spoke to you as a nursing student? As a University of Florida student?
Nursing	Jacob Cunningham	Which character of the novel do you identify as being most closely associated with the role of a nurse? Least associated?

College of Pharmacy

College	Preview Staffer	Question
Pharmacy	Dekendrick Murray	Access to health care and medicine was limited during the Taliban rule. Imagine that we lived in a country with medication shortages - how do you think that would affect us?
Pharmacy	Dekendrick Murray	Malika had a problem with her twins' medicine being expensive. Is that a common problem in society today? If so, is there a way we can work on reducing those prices? How?
Pharmacy	Dekendrick Murray	Pharmacists do more than bottle pills. What are some of the roles that pharmacists perform in addition to filling prescriptions?
Pharmacy	Kristen Wasko	The book begins with Malika seeking help for her ill son. What do you think it might be like to live in a world without medicine at your disposal? (ie: over the counter drugs such as aspirin/acetaminophen/ibuprofen.)
Pharmacy	Kristen Wasko	More and more women are entering medical fields such as pharmacy. How do you feel this will affect the profession?
Pharmacy	Kristen Wasko	During Taliban rule, health care access was limited. Should healthcare be a luxury or a right?
Pharmacy	Kristen Wasko	How does your role as a future health professional affect the lives of people like Kamila who face daily struggles?
Pharmacy	Nancy Flores	What could have been done to possibly prevent and treat the cholera epidemic at the end of the summer of 1998?
Pharmacy	Nancy Flores	Discuss the reasons why women sought out Dr. Maryam under the Taliban Regime?

College of Public Health and Health Professions

College	Preview Staffer	Question
PHHP	Andrea Ramos	How does being kept in a house with little movement affect the lives of Abghani women?
PHHP	Andrea Ramos	In the book, education was limited for women. What impact might that have caused in the coming years for women in medicine?
PHHP	Andrea Ramos	What are some of the effects of malnutrition seen throughout this book?
PHHP	Johana Ballesteros	What issues did women face because of their limited access to health services and doctors? How did they adapt?
PHHP	Johana Ballesteros	Kamila's family diet consisted of only bread, rice, and tea. What are the repercussions of a limited diet?
PHHP	Maxwell Mattern	One major in the college of PHHP is Communication Studies. Review Kamila's conversation with the Taliban officer and how was she able to calm down the officer and avoid going to jail? What is the importance of communicating your point clear and concisely?
PHHP	Committee	In this book, children had limited access to outdoor activities and meaningful exercise. Compare and contrast how does the inactivity of American children compare to the forced inactivity of Abghani children under the Taliban. What are some potential health issues in either environment?

Pre-Professional Programs

College	Preview Staffer	Question
Pre-Health	Jeremy Scott	What are some of the risks pregnant women faced while Kabul was under Taliban control?
Pre-Health	Jeremy Scott	How did the practice of medicine change while the Taliban was in control? How did this affect the health of Kabul's citizens?
Pre-Health	Jeremy Scott	How did Taliban rule impact the infrastructure and sanitation system of the hospitals and clinics in Kabul?
Pre-Health	Jeremy Scott	What do you think were some of the causes of depression and malnutrition of the women in Kabul?
Pre-Health	Committee	How did the ability to treat health problems in Kabul differ from those in America?
Pre-Law	Meagan Reed	When the Taliban seized the city of Khair Khana, many citizens were arrested and thrown in jail for showing a wrist or walking alone. How does the treatment of criminals in "The Dressmaker" differ from that of the United States?
Pre-Law	Meagan Reed	How do the laws or lack thereof in Kabul differ from the laws that govern the United States?
Pre-Law	Meagan Reed	Kamila says that "this partnership between America and my country, it's a good and helpful beginning. Together, I believe that we can and will make more progress in building a more stable and successful Afghanistan." Do you agree with Kamila's statement? Has there been progress in Afghanistan?
Pre-Law	Meagan Reed	The Taliban enforced the strict Sharia law in Kabul. This law is based in faith. Do you think that faith has a place in Government or law making?
Pre-Law	Geraldine Fleurimond	In what ways did the people of Kabul work around the Taliban's rules?
Pre-Law	Geraldine Fleurimond	How did Kamila's work with the UN help the people of Afghanistan?
Pre-Law	Geraldine Fleurimond	Do you think the United States should interfere to help other nations in times such as these or should the U.S. just stand back and let countries fight their own battles?
Pre-Law	Geraldine Fleurimond	How are the Taliban rules similar to laws that have been a part of the United States' history?