



COMMON  
QUESTION

What is the common good?

2020 -21  
YEAR IN REVIEW



STUDENT LIFE

# Aims of Education Address 2001—Danielle S. Allen



Thread

**JHU Common Question** @jhu\_cq

Welcome back to the classroom! Wondering what learning means in "these times?" Now's the moment to read Danielle Allen's Aims of Education Address to the incoming class at the University of Chicago, just after 9/11. One of [#commongood](#) core sources!

**Aims of Education Address 2001—Danielle S. Allen**  
She delivered this address on September 20, 2001, just after the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in N...  
[college.uchicago.edu](#)

8:59 AM · Aug 31, 2020 · Twitter Web App

View Tweet activity

1 Retweet · 1 Quote Tweet · 2 Likes

**JHU Common Question** @jhu\_cq · Aug 31, 2020  
Replying to @jhu\_cq  
How can talking about Ancient Greek histories & literature restore our confidence as democratic citizens? In the midst of political crisis and national mourning, Allen demonstrates the connections between friendship & learning, democracy & education, paralysis & self-reflection.

**JHU Common Question** @jhu\_cq · Aug 31, 2020  
"Tuesday was a beautiful early fall day in Madison—crisp, cool, commending blue skies... But by 10:12 A.M. I know pretty much what has happened in New York and Washington to the people, the towers, and the Pentagon (or to the country's money and its gun)."

**JHU Common Question** @jhu\_cq · Aug 31, 2020  
"Everywhere people were saying that they found themselves unable to think. Minds were paralyzed, action brought to a standstill. Our inability to articulate anything beyond that was staggering."

**JHU Common Question** @jhu\_cq · Aug 31, 2020  
Thucydides was a critic of democracy and it is tempting to believe that his whole narrative is leading to the argument that democracy, too, would crack, descending into stasis and not finding a way out.... For an hour, in that Wisconsin classroom, we wandered off to Greece..."

**JHU Common Question** @jhu\_cq · Aug 31, 2020  
"What good were ancient books on a day like Tuesday, September 11?... Here was the power of education: it catapulted our minds outside of this particular place and moment, and its horrors, and thank god for that, because the flight gave us back our minds."

**JHU Common Question** @jhu\_cq · Aug 31, 2020  
I must stop! But I haven't spoiled anything. Take the whole journey, friends—with Danielle Allen in her address, and all of this year in your Zoom classrooms, homes, cities, books, screens, and minds. And with CQ. We're here, ready to think our way forward with you.

Add another Tweet

# New Student Orientation

## CQ Conversation Faculty Panels



“I went to college close to home because I had a band & didn’t want to break it up.”

*“I went to college because I wanted to be a human.”*

“In college I realized that I also had something to say.”

*“If pursuit of the common good disproportionately hurts minorities, you have to start the conversation over.”*

“When do you give and when do you take?”

*“Both my son and I are fourth-degree black belts in taekwondo.”*

“Writing is never finished, it’s just abandoned.”



Zoom Group Chat

From Me to Everyone:

Student: I read somewhere that the most effective way to spur the economy is give money to the poorest people because they put it directly back into the economy rather than in offshore accounts

Student: money given to the poor has a greater value than money given to the rich.

Student: pog

Student: pog

Student: But wouldn't that make them rich, thus perpetuating the cycle? Or am I misunderstanding the question?

Student: Just don't give them enough to become rich

Student: As far as I know, the purpose of giving money to the top is for capital formation, which promotes long-term growth, which the government believes is better for the general public than increasing consumption,

To: Everyone More

## First-Year Students Ask Deep Questions

Fall 2020

By Magazine Staff



- “ In their first days at Johns Hopkins, students start to develop connections and the ideas that can lead to world-changing discussions.
- “ This year’s question, “What is the common good?,” is linked to the COVID-19 pandemic, political uprisings, Black Lives Matter, and each student’s journey.
- “ “This question is involved in the kind of issues our students are wrestling with,” says [Rigoberto Hernandez]. “I want them to have an experience that will be transformative, even if they’re not here in person.”

”

# Center for Talented Youth Speakers Series



[“Curiosity, Conversation, and the Intellectual Life of the University”](#)  
Anne-Elizabeth Brodsky, Expository Writing



[“Thinking and Seeing”](#)  
Steven Gross, Philosophy



[“Juggling, Robots, and the Brain”](#)  
Noah Cowen, Mechanical Engineering

"We learned so much from a single poem."

-Student

"It was a really honest discussion about racism in America."

-Student

## COMMON QUESTION CONVERSATIONS

43%  
of first year students



83  
conversations



64  
faculty



FALL 2020



"I enjoyed having the opportunity to reflect on why I disagreed with some of the arguments presented and share my thoughts with the group."

-Student

"I was an international studies major in a group of engineers and scientists, and I welcomed the change."

-Student



JACOB LAWRENCE  
*The Migration Series*

34. The black press urged the people to leave the south.



1940–41, Casein tempera on hardboard, 18 x 12 in. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Mrs. David M. Levy

← Tweet



Suhne Ahn  
@SuhneShine

...

Had two fabulous discussion groups of @jhu\_cq this evening. Open hearts and open minds - marvelous students in the Class of 2024.

9:04 PM · Sep 13, 2020 · Twitter Web App

1 Quote Tweet 1 Like



← Tweet

↳ You Retweeted



Justin Lorts  
@JustinLorts

...

Had a fabulous Common Question (@jhu\_cq) Conversation with 6 first year @JohnsHopkins students this afternoon. We discussed morality, political renewal, meritocracy, the obligations of citizenship, and the common good.

[#jointheconversation](#)

5:37 PM · Sep 10, 2020 · Twitter for iPhone

1 Retweet 1 Quote Tweet 18 Likes



# Common Question & Cocktails with the Alumni Council



Zoom Group Chat

From Me to [Everyone](#):

Cheree: Defining the common good takes on the shape of the group that is tasked with defining it.

Tony: @Cheree Powoerful statement!

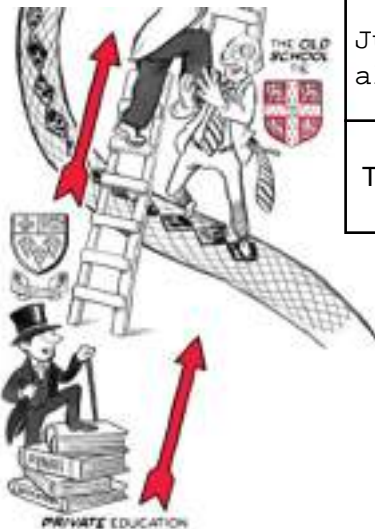
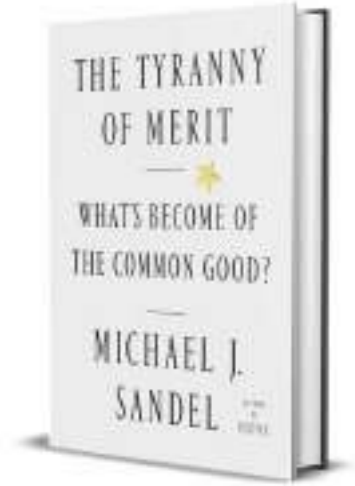
Elizabeth: It's about fear. Fear of vulberability, of being rejecgted.... Our ideas equate to our understanding of our own self-worth - that anything short of perfection impacts our ability to listen, to hear, and to reach out and connect.

Phuong: I think we've fallen into the trap of a divide and conquer system, splitting and splitting until we have no allies.

Mike: How do we get outside of our own echo chambers? I think we split and split until we only have allies.

Judie: Thanks so much. It was wonderful to hear from all of my Alumni Council colleagues.

To:



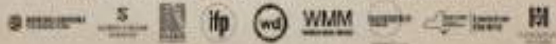




# PICTURE A SCIENTIST



IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE VENICE COLLABORATIVE | A FILM BY SARAH SHATTOCK AND PAI CEBET - PICTURE A SCIENTIST  
CREATIVE PRODUCER: AMY BRAND | EDITED BY ANDREA BERI | CO-PRODUCERS: BENY PUNZ AND TILMANSTEN BARBARA  
PRODUCED BY MARITTE FITZLE, PAI CEBET, SARAH SHATTOCK | DIRECTED BY PAI CEBET AND SARAH SHATTOCK



pictureascientist.com

Illustration: Anne Pridmore | Studio Design: Jay Gifford

← Tweet



JHU Common Question  
@jhu\_cq

...

Happy September! Register now to stream Picture a Scientist, a film that follows 3 scientists along their journeys as women in the field, at your leisure from 9/8 - 9/10, then tune in for an incredible panel for a discussion on 9/10.

\*JHU ID required\*

[docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAI...](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAI...)



👤 Karen Fleming and 9 others

*If art is to nourish the roots of our culture, society must set the artist free to follow his vision wherever it takes him.*

–John F. Kennedy

**Live lecture:**  
**Atsede Makonnen, MA**  
Doctoral Candidate in English

**Sir Andrew Motion**  
Homewood Professor of the Arts, Writing Seminars  
Krieger School of Arts and Sciences

**Setting the Artist Free:  
Arts, Humanities,  
and the Common Good**

Tuesday, January 19, 2021, at noon



[Watch here](#)

*The world does not deliver meaning to you. You have to make it meaningful. . . . It's a tough, unimaginably lonely and complicated way to be in the world. But that's the deal: you have to live; you can't live by slogans, dead ideas, clichés, or national flags.*

–Zadie Smith

Security of Electronic Voting

**Hopkins at Home**

Avi Rubin  
Whiting School of Engineering



Presented by SNF Agora Institute

ELECTION 2020 AND ITS MEANING FOR OUR DEMOCRACY: A CONVERSATION FOR THE JOHNS HOPKINS COMMUNITY

**Hopkins at Home**

Panel One:  
Steven Teles, PhD  
Vesla Weaver, PhD  
Moderated by Stephen L. Morgan, PhD

Panel Two:  
Ambassador Eric Edelman, PhD  
Nathan D. B. Connolly, PhD  
Moderated by Hahné Kan, PhD



Beyond the Booth: Politics as a Public Good

**Hopkins at Home**

Senator Barbara Mikulski  
Professor Lester Spence  
Krieger School of Arts and Sciences



Presented by SNF Agora Institute and the Peabody Institute

Scalia/Ginsburg/Wang: An Opera and Conversation about Forging Friendship across Ideological Divides

**Hopkins at Home**

Broadcast + Interactive Discussion with  
Professor Derrick Wang  
and Dean Fred Bronstein  
Peabody Institute

Arts and Health at Johns Hopkins

**Hopkins at Home**

Sarah Hoover, DMA  
Peabody Institute

The Death Penalty in America

**Hopkins at Home**

Steven M. Schneebaum, Esq.  
School of Advanced International Studies

Black Every Day:  
Medical Mistrust in Minority Communities

**Hopkins at Home**

Duryle Brooks, PhD  
Daniela Rodriguez, DrPH  
David Peters, MD, MPH, DrPH  
Bloomberg School of Public Health

Presented in partnership with Common Question

Setting the Artist Free:  
Arts, Humanities, and the Common Good

**Hopkins at Home**

Atesede Makonnen  
Andrew Motion  
Krieger School of Arts and Sciences

President's Frontier Award Lecture  
Featuring the 2020 Recipient

**Hopkins at Home**

Emily Riehl, PhD  
Department of Mathematics

Black Every Day:  
#ShutDownSTEM: Connecting Race  
and Policing to STEM Inequities

**Hopkins at Home**

Odis Johnson Jr., PhD  
Bloomberg Distinguished Professor

Presented in Partnership with Johns Hopkins CTY

Shaping the Curve: Maryam Mirzakhani's Influence  
on the Field of Mathematics

**Hopkins at Home**

Film Screening & Panel Discussion

The Next Normal: Reflections on Arts, Innovation,  
and Resilience in a Post-COVID World

**Hopkins at Home**

Dean Fred Bronstein, DMA  
Peabody Institute

# Democracy, Inclusion, and the Path to Empowerment

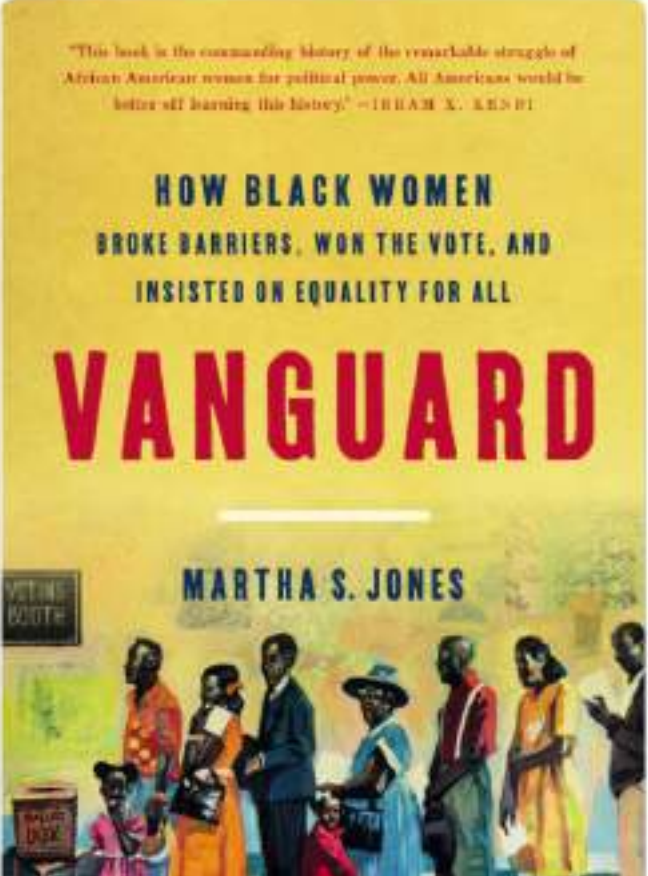
# The Woman's Hour: A Conversation with Elaine Weiss

JHU Common Question  
@jhu\_cq

We're so looking forward to tomorrow night's #JHUWomensVote100 @HopkinsatHome event with President Daniels and Martha S. Jones (@marthasjones\_), JHU Professor of History.

They've given each other "homework"....

[events.jhu.edu/form/HAHWomens...](https://events.jhu.edu/form/HAHWomens...)



JHU Common Question  
@jhu\_cq

Tonight, 8/19, at 7PM: catch the latest installment in @hopkinsathome's Women's Suffrage Series. Elaine Weiss, author of *The Woman's Hour*, will be interviewed by her husband, Hopkins professor of Physics and Astronomy, Julian Krolik. #JHUwomensvote100

[events.jhu.edu/form/HAHWomens...](https://events.jhu.edu/form/HAHWomens...)



Hopkins-at Home and 2 others



← **Tweet**

 **Justin Lorts**  
@JustinLorts

For this week's Common Question (@jhu.cq) Conversation, seven first year @JohnsHopkins students and I will discuss the idea of the Common Good by way of Michael Sandel's April NY Times Op-Ed, Are We All in This Together?

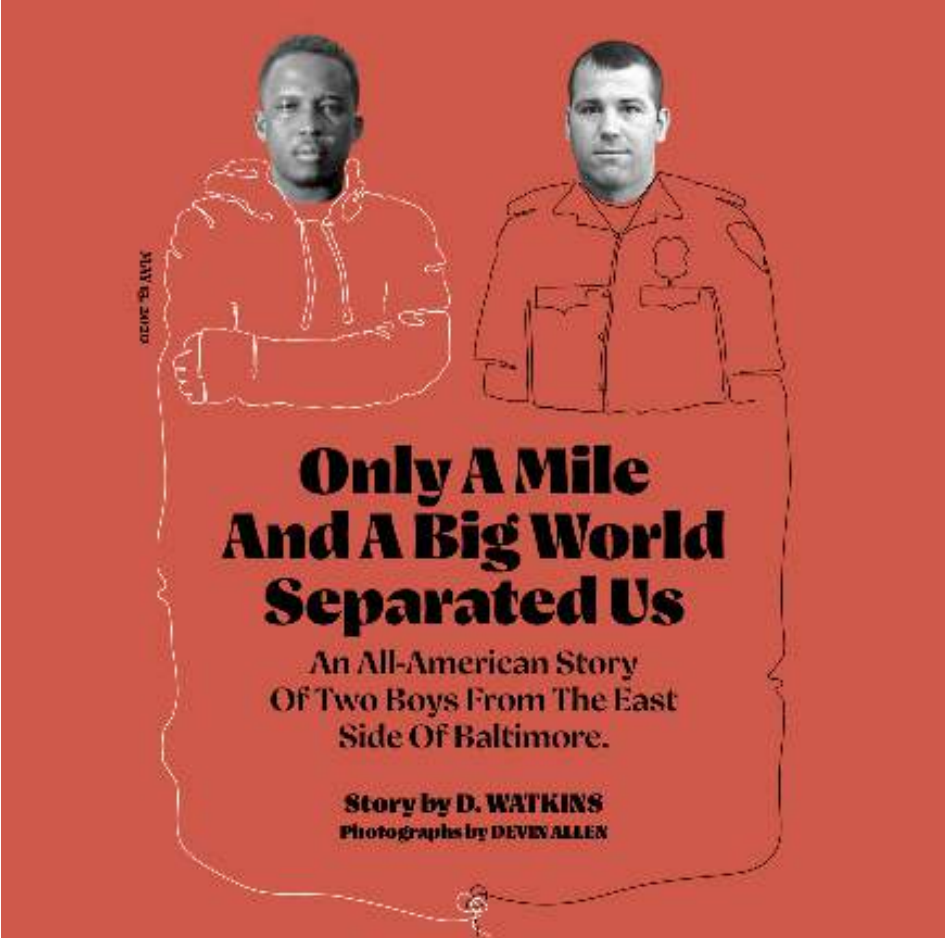
 **Published 2020**

Opinion | Are We All in This Together? (Published 2020)  
The pandemic has helpfully scrambled how we value everyone's economic and social roles.  
[nytimes.com](https://www.nytimes.com)

8:35 PM · Sep 7, 2020 · Twitter for iPhone

1 Quote Tweet 10 Likes



The book cover features a solid red background. At the top, two men are shown from the chest up. The man on the left is wearing a dark hoodie and has his arms crossed. The man on the right is wearing a light-colored, short-sleeved button-down shirt with a badge on his chest. Both men are looking directly at the camera. The title "Only A Mile And A Big World Separated Us" is written in a large, bold, black serif font. Below the title, the subtitle "An All-American Story Of Two Boys From The East Side Of Baltimore." is written in a smaller, black serif font. At the bottom, the author's name "Story by D. WATKINS" and the photographer's name "Photographs by DEVIN ALLEN" are listed in a black serif font. A small vertical credit "PHOTO BY ALLEN" is visible on the left side of the cover.

# BLUE JAY FAMILIES

## Hopkins Faculty Address This Year's Common Question

[Watch here](#)



Sharing your student's education:

Remote learning & beyond

Dr. Kelly Barry

Center for Student Success



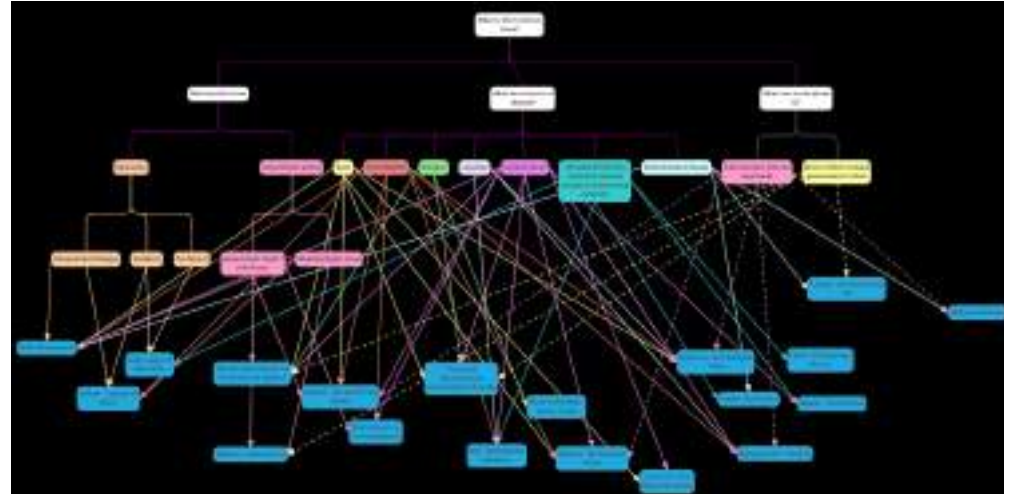
The Intellectual Life of the University  
Dr. Anne-Elizabeth Brodsky  
Expository Writing Program



“The State from Below: Urban Citizenship in Policed Communities”  
Vesla Weaver  
Bloomberg Distinguished Professor of Political Science & Sociology



Ryan Lessing, first-year student



John D'cruz, first-year student



What is the Common Good? A First-Year Seminar  
Dr. Aliza Hapgood Watters  
Expository Writing Program





# Self-Portrait

Afaa Michael Weaver

I see myself in the shadows of a leaf compressed to the green blades growing to a point like the shards of miles of mirrors falling and cracking to perfect gardens.

I never inspect the withered assumption of my face's petty dialogue in raindrops, the deceptive spreading of the words oozing from the skin to the edges of water etched on the ground by gravity and wishing.

Passing for the seriousness of my eye, platitudes of my white collar or the perfect posture of my lips, it skirts from the leaves of the plant hiding me and sits stoic like stone in my pupil, mute and unassuming, like Rashi.

To gether myself I will swim naked in the wind, bending my blind elbows in circles, stopping now to dance like the cherubic gold on the ark, and gather myself from the particles of this excitement another structure, one closely resembling the beginning.



Nicole Rivas, first-year student

# Dead Stars

On April 1 at 6PM visiting writer Ada Limón  
will appear in the Writing Seminars Reading Series.

Join Common Question

*for a reading before the reading.*

Bring a favorite poem to share.  
Some will read, all will listen.

RSVP  
*(click here)*



#poetry #astronomy #forthecommongood

# Dead Stars

Ada Limon



Out here, there's a bowing even the trees are doing.

Winter's icy hand at the back of all of us.

Black bark, slick yellow leaves, a kind of stillness that feels so mute it's almost in another year.

I am a hearth of spiders these days: a nest of trying.

We point out the stars that make Orion as we take out the trash, the rolling containers a song of suburban thunder.

It's almost romantic as we adjust the waxy blue recycling bin until you say, *Man, we should really learn some new constellations.*

And it's true. We keep forgetting about Antlia, Centaurus, Draco, Lacerta, Hydra, Lyra, Lynx.

But mostly we're forgetting we're dead stars too, my mouth is full of dust and I wish to reclaim the rising—

to lean in the spotlight of streetlight with you, toward what's larger within us, toward how we were born.

Look, we are not unspectacular things.

We've come this far, survived this much. What

would happen if we decided to survive more? To love harder?

What if we stood up with our synapses and flesh and said, No. No, to the rising tides.

Stood for the many mute mouths of the sea, of the land?

What would happen if we used our bodies to bargain

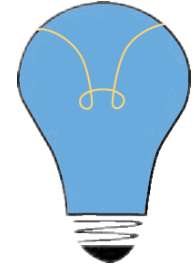
for the safety of others, for earth, if we declared a clean night, if we stopped being terrified,

if we launched our demands into the sky, made ourselves so big people could point to us with the arrows they make in their minds,

rolling their trash bins out, after all of this is over?



# THE TRIPLE HELIX & COMMON QUESTION



*present*

## Science Writing in the Public Sphere




a discussion with **Ross Andersen**,  
Deputy Editor at *The Atlantic*

**FEBRUARY 21** 6PM EST

Register [here](#)



← Thread

 JHU Common Question  
@jhu\_cq

As we get closer to the introduction of COVID-19 vaccines, Eula Biss's 2014 essay gets evermore relevant. She charts an astute, troubling—and, yes, at times raucous—history of vaccination from medical, social, and personal perspectives.

[harpers.org/archive/2013/0...](https://harpers.org/archive/2013/0...)



← Thread

 JHU Common Question  
@jhu\_cq

Wondering about those wonkily shaped districts you watched Steve Kornacki wave his hands around last week?

This week, listen to Moon Duchin on her journey from women's studies major to theoretical mathematician to electoral redistricting expert.



**Moon Duchin on Fair Voting and Random Walks**

Can geometry save democracy from gerrymandering? Mathematician Moon Duchin discusses the possibilities with host Steven Strogatz.

[quantamagazine.org](https://quantamagazine.org)

## Cue the New Normal

Spring 2021  
By Brennen Jensen



Students in Aliza Watters' first-year seminar, What is the Common Good?, examined sources ranging from the Bible to Korean cinema.

“ First-Year Seminars are not just about developing foundational analytical and critical thinking skills, but also about meeting students wherever they are, building their confidence in the classroom, and creating the space for them to practice respectful dialogue and exchange.



**Spike Lee, *Do the Right Thing* (1989)**  
“Are we gonna live together? Together, are we gonna live?”



**Story of Noah in the Bible, Quran, & Torah**  
“My Lord, let me land at a blessed landing place” (Quran).



**Jhumpa Lahiri, “A Temporary Matter” (1999)**  
“Tonight, with no lights, they would have to eat together.”

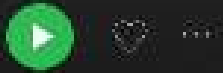
”














PLAYLIST

# What is the Common Good?

Music for 1 of 100+ 70 songs, 4:10:00



#	TITLE	ALBUM	DATE ADDED	
1	 <b>Bad Religion</b> Frank Ocean	When an ORANGE	Nov 7, 2020	3:05
▶	 <b>Everbody</b> Mac Miller	Circle	Nov 5, 2020	4:18  
2	 <b>Dream On</b> Ariana Grande	When an	Nov 7, 2020	4:20
4	 <b>In a Wayz (feat. Karan Aujla)</b> Harris, Karan Aujla	When an (Expanded version)	Nov 5, 2020	5:18
5	 <b>Ain't No Need for the Wicked</b> Cage The Elephant (Expanded Edition)	Cage The Elephant (Expanded Edition)	Nov 5, 2020	4:59
6	 <b>Goodbye Yellow Brick Road - Remastered 2014</b> Elton John	Goodbye Yellow Brick Road (Remastered)	Nov 7, 2020	7:18
7	 <b>Lean on Me</b> Bill Withers	STREET	Nov 5, 2020	4:18
8	 <b>I'm Not Back</b> Joey Lucas	I'm Not Back	Nov 7, 2020	5:49
9	 <b>Everbody (feat. Kendrick Lamar)</b>			

[Listen here.](#)

# Alumni Weekend 2021

## JHU Asks: What is the Common Good?



Jean McGarry, M.A. The Writing Seminars 1983



Mollie Cueva-Dabkoski, B.A. Krieger 2017



Zane Forshee, M.M., G.P.D., D.M.A. Peabody Conservatory

How do we define what is good for society as a whole?

What happens when collective benefit runs counter to individual benefit?

How are questions and assumptions about the common good built into academic inquiry, as well as our daily lives?





BEING

On Being with Krista Tippett

# Grace Lee Boggs

## A Century in the World

 Play Episode

 Download

 Play Unedited  
Grace Lee Boggs

The New York Times Magazine

## Safety Lessons From the Morgue



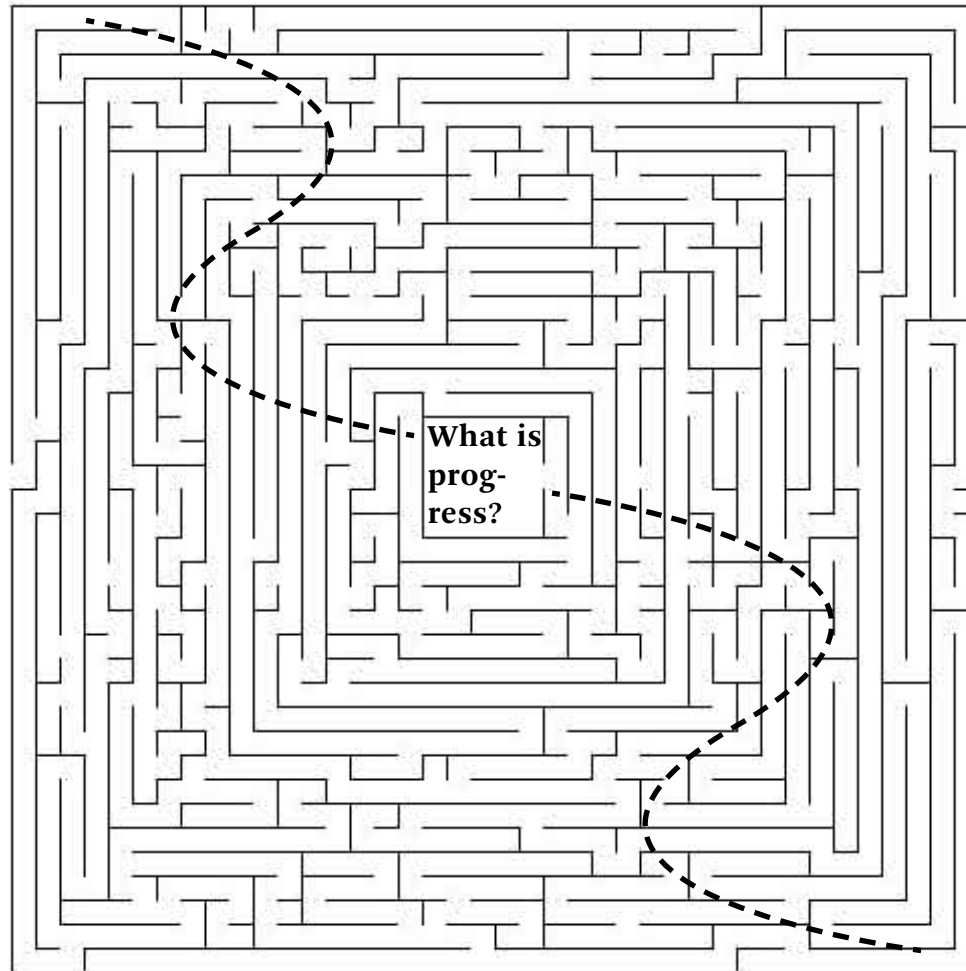
Susan P. Baker, an epidemiologist who has spent more than four decades trying to find out why people are dying and what could be done to stop it. Eric Ogden for The New York Times

By Robert W. Stock

Oct. 26, 2019

COMMON  
QUESTION

*Where will you*



*take the question?*

2021-  
2022

