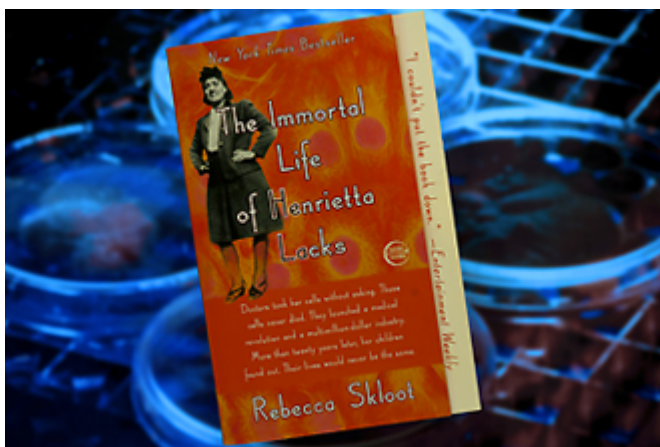


Students Bond Through Summer Read

June 20, 2011 12:15 PM Alicia Duplessis Jasmin
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First-year students are in for an emotional read for the 2011 Reading Project. This summer's novel for incoming students is based on the compelling story of a black tobacco farmer whose cancerous cells were extracted without her permission or knowledge and used for research decades after her death.



The 2011 Tulane Reading Project book for first-year students offers a mix of medical ethics, spirituality, race and history. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

From science to psychology, the 2011 Reading Project selection has something for a wide range of interests.

[*The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*](#) by Rebecca Skloot is being distributed to first-year students during summer orientation, and book discussions will commence almost immediately after the students arrive on campus this fall.

Trina Beck, director of Newcomb-Tulane College programs, says the Reading Project book is selected with students in mind and creates a class bond that is recognizable when literary discussions arise.

“For the [Reading Project](#), we look for a book that's going to get students talking and inspire conversation,” says Beck. “We want something that's going to stir up controversies and create some debates.”

Students also are encouraged to enter an [essay contest](#), which has a grand prize of \$500.

To help students in their understanding of the book, [Michael Cunningham](#), associate professor of psychology and African and African Diaspora studies at Tulane, will lecture about its themes on Sunday, Aug. 28, at 5:30 p.m. in McAlister Auditorium.

In October, a different perspective will be offered through a discussion with [Ruth Faden](#), executive director of the Phoebe R. Berman Bioethics Institute at Johns Hopkins University. Faden's keynote address takes place on Tuesday, Oct. 4 at 7 p.m. in Dixon Auditorium.

Both events are free and open to the public.