NYU Reads
NYU Reads brings the community together around a common reading that offers all incoming NYU students a shared intellectual experience. At NYU Steinhardt, you will discuss Educated in your New Student Seminar and will attend a Dean’s Convocation to discuss the theme of resilience. The University will also offer additional events and programming throughout the fall semester.

THE CLASS
The New Student Seminar is a semester-long required course for all new undergraduates enrolled in the Steinhardt School. The seminar is your orientation to the university and our school and will introduce you to the nature of higher education and your program of study. Using the new student reading theme, you will explore your role as a new member of our diverse and inclusive academic community.

THE BOOK
In Educated, Tara Westover recounts how the desire to learn, and the “patience to read things I could not yet understand,” helped her rise above the staggering challenges of her upbringing. Raised by an overbearing, survivalist father and a mother who found personal salvation in work as a midwife and herbalist, Tara spent her childhood cut off from society at large. Despite a meager homeschool education and psychological scarring from repeated bullying and physical abuse from an older brother, Tara manages to find her way to Brigham Young University, where she learns about the Holocaust, discovers a love of research, and succeeds academically in a way that exceeds her expectations. Education, for Tara, is not only curative, but gives her the freedom to discover her true identity and find the community that eluded her while growing up.

THE THEME
Resilience: Finding the Strength within Ourselves
The theme of NYU Steinhardt’s New Student Reading for 2019 is resilience, which the Oxford English Dictionary defines as “the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness.” Resilience is a quality that can help people build the skills they need to endure hardship. Like her family members, Tara seems to have an innate ability to bounce back from trauma and withstand physical pain. Though her first year of college is a struggle, Tara succeeds in overcoming the gaps in her education and adapting to a new social environment and the complex of challenges that she faces there. She ultimately becomes “educated” and writes a memoir that chronicles her struggles.

CONTINUED
How to get a copy of *Educated*

You can purchase or rent a copy through the NYU Bookstore or your local bookstore. Physical and ebook copies are also available to borrow through the NYU Library.

And please note...

*Educated* is an inspirational book, but it can also be tough to read. The book describes physical and emotional abuse, family neglect, mental health disorders, racism, and struggles with religious beliefs and identity. If you need emotional support while reading, or if you have concerns about reading a book in which such experiences are depicted, professional counselors are available to talk 24/7 through NYU’s Wellness Exchange hotline at 212-443-9999 or to chat through the Wellness Exchange app (available in the Apple App Store or Google Play).

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Each one of us has faced challenges in getting to where we are now. Some of us were helped by significant individuals in our lives and some of us found resilience within ourselves. Each of us has a story about resilience.

Here are some questions to think about while you are reading *Educated*:

1. When Tara goes to college, she struggles to reconcile her family’s strict beliefs with the beliefs she encounters in her new community. How do we internalize our family’s values? How does this impact our development and shape our identities? How do we, at NYU, remain respectful of others’ views as well as their cultural and religious beliefs?

2. Growing up in a conservative family, Tara has narrow views of how a woman should act. She first hears the word, “feminism” from college classmates who wear the title proudly. How does education help in expanding one’s vocabulary and help to shift and define one’s identity?

3. When Tara decides to make distance from her family, she creates a new family constellation with her aunt, brother, and partner. How will you find emotional support and community at NYU? How might these new relationships be different from the relationships you have with your family of origin?

4. After becoming “educated,” Tara writes a memoir about her life. How might you use your major to tell a chapter of your life story? What would your story be about and what form would it take?

5. How do the themes in *Educated* have resonance in your life? What is your own story of resilience? Do you know someone who has been heroic in the face of hardship? Who is your resilience hero?