You’ve Gotta Read This!

Summer Reading @ Musselman Library
Cover photograph taken in Santa Monica, CA
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Dear Reader,

Books go with summertime like beach blankets, hot dogs, and fireworks. They remain the least expensive, most varied, most portable, yet richest form of imaginative entertainment there is, and the warm days and fresh air of summer are ideal for losing yourself in the pages of a great book. With this booklet, Musselman Library continues its tradition of offering detailed suggestions for a wide variety of summertime reading experiences, drawn from the personal recommendations of Gettysburg College faculty and staff.

For novel fans, among the suggestions are war stories and ghost stories, comedies and mysteries, psychological thrillers and science fiction adventures. If you’re into nonfiction, you can choose from an array of intimate memoirs and ambitious histories, analyses of global politics and military conflict, true-crime inquiries and social studies. Finally, our film recommendations, running the gamut of domestic and foreign fare, from the hilarious to the heartbreaking, challenging realism to pure escapism, are sure to alert you to treasures you didn’t know existed.

So browse the pages that follow, pick what suits your fancy, and start your summer off right – with a great book or film.

From the staff of Musselman Library

May 2013

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The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian by Sherman Alexie

This book is about a boy growing up on the Spokane Indian Reservation. He leaves his school on the reservation to attend the all-white high school nearby. You will fly through this book – laughing and maybe crying along the way. Perfect for summer reading!

Sarah Principato, Environmental Studies

Alif the Unseen by G. Willow Wilson

Previously, G. Willow Wilson has written several graphic novels as well as an acclaimed memoir of a year in Cairo. This novel reflects her love of both science fiction and the Middle East; it is a fantasy about a computer hacker known as “Alif” in a nameless Gulf Arab dictatorship. The plot draws heavily on Islamic philosophy and mythology and includes many memorable characters, ranging from Dina, the hacker’s childhood friend and a niqabi (a woman who fears a full-face veil), to a rambunctious djinn (genie). The core story revolves around Alif’s efforts to protect his clients and himself after his computer system is breached, but it draws on legends of an ancient book and resonates with themes of the Arab Spring. Although this description sounds more than a bit improbable, Wilson has turned these plot elements into a thought-provoking page-turner that will stay with you long after summer is over.

Kathy Cain, Psychology

The story centers on a young cyber brat hacker somewhere in the Middle East who is working to circumvent the government’s control of the Internet. This one keeps you guessing on many levels. A page turner, Alif the Unseen mixes code with conjury, folding a coming-of-age adventure with speculative fiction with a dollop of romance. It’s a rollicking good time as Arab Spring employs the Jinn of Arabian Nights to win his manhood, his freedom, and true love.

Cinda Gibbon, Musselman Library (retired)
The Art of Racing in the Rain by Garth Stein

I love this book every time I read it. I have many copies that I have sent to friends and family asking that they pass it on to someone else after they read it. It is one of those laugh-out-loud on one page and cry on the next type of books that you simply don’t want to put down.

Cathy Bain, Civil War Era Studies

Bad Boy Brawly Brown by Walter Mosley

Read it along with Mosley’s The Right Mistake and you get a great mix of crime and social philosophy.

Scott Hancock, History/Africana Studies

The Beach Street Knitting Society and Yarn Club by Gil McNeil

Jo McKenzie learns that her husband has played fast and loose with their money and his marriage vows, just before he’s killed in a motorway crash. She moves, with her two sons, to the seaside town and takes over her grandmother’s yarn shop. Sounds sappy, but it is really a delightful escapist read, with especially good dialog. I mean, how can you not love the shore with an actress in hiding and knitting thrown in? It’s definitely a chick novel; but the men – except for Jo’s late husband – are lovely, there is one who bakes like an angel and another who is actually good at fixing things. There is a sequel which is equally a good read.

Chris Benecke, Development

The Beach Trees by Karen White

This book, a great read, takes place in both Biloxi, MS, and New Orleans, LA, and is told alternately through the viewpoints of Aimee from the 1950s and Julie in the present. It also gives us a view of the two major hurricanes to hit that area, Camile and Katrina. It is a story of destruction, tragedy and survival and hope.

Jennifer Coale, Majestic Theater
Beautiful Ruins by Jess Walter

A great read spanning decades and continents. Walter is talented beyond words.

Paul Fairbanks, Communications and Marketing

Before You Suffocate Your Own Fool Self by Danielle Evans

Named as one of “the five young black authors you should be reading now” by The Root, Evans writes about the tensions surrounding race, sexuality and family. Her collection of short stories is about young interracial and African American women. She describes her work as “post-integrationist” and compares the multiracial experience to that of immigrants in terms of negotiating race, identity, and a sense of belonging.

Jennifer Bloomquist, Africana Studies

Billy Lynn’s Long Halftime Walk by Ben Fountain

Billy Lynn is a member of Bravo Company, one of a group of eight men who survived a firefight coincidentally caught on camera and shown on Fox News. They are brought back to the States for a goodwill tour, ending with a halftime tribute to them on Thanksgiving Day at Cowboys stadium. Billy is a very intelligent, highly uneducated young soldier whose perspective on the Iraq War and the people he is ostensibly fighting for is so funny and interesting that it is impossible to put this book down once you’ve started to read it.

Roy Dawes, Political Science
Billy Lynn’s Long Halftime Walk by Ben Fountain
The Yellow Birds by Kevin Powers

Both of these novels center on the Iraq War, which divided the country while providing ample material for our relentless news cycle, but take distinct approaches to the subject. Billy Lynn and his squad become television news heroes and Dallas Cowboy halftime quests. Fountain’s book is a protest novel that looks at how “America became a giant mall with a country attached.” The Yellow Birds is a combat novel that follows Private John Bartle through a horrific firefight in Al Tafar and the battle’s aftermath. Each book explores the distance between our soldiers and us.

Jack Ryan, Provost’s Office

Bloodchild and Other Stories by Octavia E. Butler

Octavia Butler is one of those authors who bring such a unique perspective to her genre that she almost redefines it. Writing during the “Golden Age” of science fiction dominated by a traditional white male perspective, Butler’s voice as a gay black woman really stands out. Her stories nearly always involve issues of race, gender and sexuality, but in unexpected ways that only a top-rate Sci-Fi writer could imagine.

Denise Weldon-Siviy, Musselman Library

Bridget Jones’s Diary and Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason by Helen Fielding

Well really, you’ve seen the movies but haven’t read the books? These are great summer therapy, full of the kind of laughter that does as much for your relaxation as a half hour in [the yoga pose] savasana. Fielding also wrote Cause Celeb, which was equally good, with an acerbic take on celebrity involvement with African NGOs. These are not intellectual books, but like the best of fun reads and good caricatures, they highlight the foibles we all have to one degree or another.

Chris Benecke, Development
**The Cat’s Table** by Michael Ondaatje

Wonderful tale of a boy’s journey from Sri Lanka to England on a steamer and his passage from innocence to its loss.

Gavin Foster, Information Technology

Imagine that you are an 11-year-old boy placed onboard an ocean liner, alone. It is 1954. He is leaving Colombo, Ceylon to live with his mother, who he barely knows, in England. He is placed for meals at a table in the back of the dining salon…far from the Captain’s table…and soon to be called “the Cat’s table,” with a motley gathering of fascinating characters. Among the other less important passengers, are two boys that quickly become his dearest friends. The boys have the run of the ship, quickly becoming “invisible” to the ships officers. This leads them into incredible adventures with each other and with the fascinating array of “adults” they encounter including thieves, con artists, washed-up musicians, acrobats and other often mysterious passengers. This is a terrific “coming of age” offering from a master storyteller who gives us marvelous images through the eyes of his narrator, also named Michael. Ondaatje’s books always pull you into the narrative and give great insights into people and places not found in our usual milieu.

Bill Jones, Counseling Services (retired)

**Cloud Atlas** by David Mitchell

I finished this novel – really this collection of nested, connected stories, taking place over a few centuries – and then immediately read it again in a different order. It’s a good combination of the thriller you can’t put down and the book you keep turning back pages to find connections. It’s funny and moving and thought-provoking, with sympathetic (and sometimes hilariously unsympathetic) characters and gripping plots.

Jocelyn Swigger, Sunderman Conservatory of Music
The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time by Mark Haddon

This is a quick “bubble-gum for the mind” reading with a unique twist. The entire book is written from the perspective of a first-person sleuth afflicted with Asperger’s syndrome. Having a friend actually living with Asperger’s, I was astounded with just how realistic the details are. While the mystery is fascinating in and of itself, the bigger draw is the view into the narrator’s mind – looking at just how he thinks and how that perspective frames his world.

Denise Weldon-Siviy, Musselman Library

The Dinner by Herman Koch

The Wall Street Journal has called Herman Koch’s The Dinner a European Gone Girl. But a comparison between this Dutch novel and Defending Jacob is equally appropriate for we find parents, in this case two brothers and their wives, trying to decide what to do about the horrendous act in which their respective sons collaborated. The narrative unfolds during the course of one tense restaurant meal, from aperitif to digestif, and the reader is caught up in what The New York Times called, in a none-too-positive review, “sheer voyeurism about the Lohmans’ capacity for ugliness.” I concur that this is not great literature, but I could not put the book down!

Elizabeth Richardson Viti, French/Johnson Center for Creative Teaching & Learning

The Dog Stars by Peter Heller

My teenage daughter has become very interested in dystopian literature so I thought I would read something in that genre. I’m happy to note that this is not your teenager’s dystopian novel (no zombies!). Set in Colorado a decade after a global pandemic leaves few survivors in its wake, the book focuses on Hig, his beloved dog Jasper, and his uneasy relationship with Bangley, another survivor. I’ve never read anything quite like this book, which may be part of the reason I found it as thought-provoking as I did.

Caroline Hartzell, Political Science/Globalization Studies
Don Quixote by Miguel de Cervantes

Classics are classic for a reason! Here’s a thought: why not make this the summer you introduce a child to this masterpiece of literature. My nine-year-old son and I are reading this out loud together and he is loving it. Knights, gallantry, battles, silliness – what could be more perfect for an elementary-school sensibility? We are reading the Edith Grossman translation.

Sarah Kotlinski, Admissions

Don’t Stop the Carnival by Herman Wouk

This is a great summer read that allows us to escape to another time and place. It may even inspire you to make a change in your life.

Mike Bishop, Dining Services

Exile According to Julia by Gisèle Pineau

A classic in Francophone Caribbean literature today, this novel – inspired from the life of Gisèle Pineau herself – describes a young Guadeloupian woman growing up in France amidst racism and oppression. She becomes close to her grandmother – herself forcefully displaced from Guadeloupe to France by her own son – as she tries to make sense of her roots. Both women will teach each other what they are missing while showing the reader the importance of the links between women. Very readable in French as well, it can be found under L’Exil selon Julia.

Florence Ramond Jurney, French

Fever 1793 by Laurie Halse Anderson

Though written for children, my book group found much to like about this riveting account of a yellow fever epidemic in the city of Philadelphia. A well-researched historical novel, it is both fascinating in its portrayal of late 18th-century Philadelphia and moving in its close look at 16-year-old Maddie and the fever’s impact on her family.

Emily Clarke, Development
**The Final Storm: A Novel of the War in the Pacific by Jeff Shaara**

Best known for his Civil War novels, Shaara is equally gifted as a storyteller of the Second World War. Shaara relates the story of the struggle for Okinawa through the eyes of combatants of both sides and gives the reader a gritty, hopeless, “you are there” experience. It’s Shaara’s poignant best.

*Cathy Bain, Civil War Era Studies*

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**The Friday Night Knitting Club by Kate Jacobs**

Georgia Walker starts a Friday night knitting club at her yarn shop. As these women meet for a few hours each week, they talk about the dramas in their lives and become friends. The unexpected tragedy at the end makes this book worth reading. *USA Today* wrote that this best seller was “*Steel Magnolias* set in Manhattan.”

*Lisa Becker, Data Systems*

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**Generosity: An Enhancement by Richard Powers**

*Generosity* by Richard Powers (no relation) is an extraordinary novel about college teaching, writing, counseling, media, genetics and the happiest woman in the world. She’s an Algerian refugee, who by all accounts should be traumatized and miserable, but she’s not. Instead, she makes everyone around her feel good and because she is a student in a writing class, incredible class dynamics emerge. But as might be expected these days, the media, social and otherwise, catch up with her, not with the best results – for society can’t seem to resist celebritizing (is that a word?) and arguing about science on TV talk shows. Is it possible that we have a gene for happiness? Read the novel and find out!

*Janet Powers, Interdisciplinary Studies/Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies*
**Gilead by Marilynne Robinson**

A beautifully meditative and rewarding book, *Gilead* is a story told in the form of a long letter written by a dying Reverend John Ames, in rural Iowa in 1956, to his young son. Ames reflects humbly and delicately on the small moments of transcendent beauty that punctuate his long life and the world around him, and on the periods of deep questioning and loneliness he has faced. Every sentence is deftly crafted, and despite being one long letter there is enough action in the plot to move the story forward to the last page.

Megan Adamson Sijapati, Religious Studies

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**Gone Girl by Gillian Flynn**

Flynn masters the art of suspense in her psychological thriller, *Gone Girl*. Sharply written and captivating, it is the type of book that will keep you up late at night, simply because you’ll never want to set it down. When you get to the inevitable conclusion, you’ll wish you hadn’t, that there was more to read. It’s that good.

Abby Kallin, Admissions

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I picked this book out for the title (I feel like a gone girl sometimes) but as I started reading the book I was amazed how mad and how annoyed these characters made me. I love to hate a good book! After this book, try out *Sharp Objects* by Gillian Flynn, another good read.

Ginny Rinehart, Dining Services

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**The Green Man by Kingsley Amis**

After making his name with the academic satire *Lucky Jim*, Amis became known for hopping literary genres (comedy of manners, science fiction, spy story, alternate history) with varying degrees of success. *The Green Man*, his assay of the supernatural genre, focuses on Maurice Allingham, proprietor of a centuries-old inn near Oxford. Suffering from alcoholism and several varieties of existential despair, Allingham is lately bedeviled by ghosts, time-slips, and something bearing resemblance to the ancient forest demon that gives both the inn and the novel their names. This is among the finest and most anomalous novels of spooks and spirits I’ve ever read – anomalous because it is not only genuinely scary, but funny and sexy as well. (Most horror novels struggle to achieve merely the first of that trio.) And for archivists, librarians, and others with an interest in history and research, it’s fun to watch revelations sprung through the medium of ancient diaries and dusty papers.

Devin McKinney, Musselman Library
**Half of a Yellow Sun by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie**

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie has been described as the 21st century successor to Chinua Achebe and indeed, writes with the same grace and sense of historical obligation. *Half of a Yellow Sun* is the story of Biafra’s attempt to establish an independent republic in southeastern Nigeria in the late 1960s. The story is told through the perspectives of five very different characters, all of whom reveal the hope and ultimate disappointment of the Biafran war.

*Jennifer Bloomquist, Africana Studies*

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**Harmony by Project Itoh**

A sci-fi thriller by a Japanese writer with the first name Keikaku, which means “Project.” This short novel won the The Seiun Award (think Nebula) and the Japan SF Award. Writing anything more about it would spoil it!

*Eleanor Hogan, Asian Studies*

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**Harvard Yard by William Martin**

A fun mystery/suspense novel about the race to uncover clues to find a lost Shakespeare play in and around Harvard University and Cambridge, MA.

*Eleanor Hogan, Asian Studies*
**The House of Rumour by Jake Arnott**

Anyone fascinated by the history, both official and secret, of the 20th century will devour this, the seventh and most ambitious novel by an English writer who specializes in what some call “faction” – fiction constructed around real people and events, some world-famous, others obscure. While engrossing as a narrative, it’s also an education in the history you can’t believe you never knew. The established outline of World War II and the ensuing half-century is jarred by the infusion of hidden voices, the stories-within-the-story of nobodies whose split decisions and random acts turned the wheel of history. Arnott’s speculative web draws in wartime spy capers, pulp science fiction, UFOs, gender and sexuality, prophecy and the occult, the relationship between Satanism and early jet-propulsion science, the Cuban boat-lift of 1980, why Rudolf Hess flew to Ireland in 1941, and how Ian Fleming came to create James Bond. It’s a marvelous broad-canvas whodunit, with history itself as the crime scene, characters as both detectives and suspects.

Devin McKinney, Musselman Library

**Howards End by E. M. Forster**

“Only connect“ – the epigraph to this classic 1910 E. M. Forster novel – sums up the theme of the work perfectly. A story of three families from different social and economic classes whose lives become intertwined, *Howards End* is a moving story of reaching beyond narrow perceptions and self-satisfied comfort. It’s by far my favorite novel of the pre-World War I era.

Suzanne Flynn, English

I enjoyed the film with Emma Thompson and Anthony Hopkins but I enjoyed the book very much more. The book brings home the central theme of a social system so fractured by “modern pressures" that old comfort zones of moral behavior and old definitions of identity and personal success give way to the one clear standard of the power of wealth. The plot, which is not the great interest of the book, centers around two sisters, each of whom, in her own way, is determined to retain the values of her own identity while finding or forging bridges to the new world. The book is about patience, tolerance, courage and, above all, hope. There isn’t much laughter but there is a lot of food for thought. The book seems as relevant today as it was more than a hundred years ago when it was written.

Carol Small, Art and Art History
The Hydrogen Sonata by Iain M. Banks

It is the final days of the Gzilt civilization. They have decided to Sublime and move onto the next phase of their existence, and a variety of lesser races have begun vying to collect the scraps they will leave behind. An ancient civilization, the Gzilt have been blessed with the only provably true religion and so everything should go smoothly. Until, of course, it doesn’t. The Hydrogen Sonata follows a Gzilt musician, Vyr Cossont who had the fortune of meeting the oldest human in the universe many years ago. He might know the real truth of the Gzilt religion- or perhaps not. What follows is a sprawling search across the galaxy populated with fantastic settings and characters both absurd and compelling: mountains sculpted to amplify the sounds of the winds, a dirigible holding an endless End of Times party, an insect-like race that must perform the proper Ship Dances for each situation, a Mind that has returned from the Sublime profoundly changed. Over the past 25 years Banks has built the Culture into a fascinating backdrop: a profoundly pacifistic techno-utopia where any material possession is instantly available and you can live forever, yet one with a deeply dark streak in the form of its euphemistically named Special Circumstances group. The true center of both the Culture and Banks’ books are the Minds: Greek gods updated to the far future. Enormously powerful and endlessly squabbling, they enjoy meddling in the affairs of mere mortals because, well, they can. Like his earlier novel Excession, the Minds are the primary characters in The Hydrogen Sonata, and it is stronger than his recent Culture novels for it. Ranging from laugh out loud funny to deeply moving, it’s a reflection on both current politics and the nature of futility.

Eric Remy, Instructional Technology

The Inner Circle by Brad Meltzer
The Fifth Assassin by Brad Meltzer

I am a huge Brad Meltzer fan, and really loved both of these mysteries which are centered around Washington, D.C. and have enough twists and turns to keep the reader engaged. From the Brad Meltzer website: “His book The Inner Circle is based on the idea that George Washington’s personal spy ring still exists today. A young archivist in the National Archives finds out the spy ring is still around. He doesn’t know who they work for – but the greatest secret of the Presidency is about to be revealed. While researching the book, former President George H.W. Bush also gave Brad, for the very first time, the secret letter he left for Bill Clinton in the Oval Office desk. Oh, and yes, Brad was recruited by the Department of Homeland Security to brainstorm different ways that terrorists might attack the U.S. His newest book, The Fifth Assassin, is about a serial killer re-creating the crimes of all the Presidential assassins from John Wilkes Booth to Lee Harvey Oswald. Once again, President George H.W. Bush helped with the research. Inside, you’ll also see the hidden secret tunnels below Camp David and you’ll never look at the Lincoln Memorial the same way again.”

Maida Connor, Development
**Kind of Kin by Rilla Askew**

*Kind of Kin* is an intense personal take on the complexities of immigration. Set in a small town of Oklahoma, it gets at the heart of family, consequences, hope and fear. It’s a great read that surpasses the everyday rhetoric of immigration by connecting you with hard to forget characters who are coming from four different perspectives.

Kim Davidson, Center for Public Service

**The Last Dragonslayer by Jasper Fforde**

Jasper Fforde dives into the realm of children’s literature with *The Last Dragonslayer*. In this world, technology has superseded magic, relegating the few practicing magicians to employment agencies, where they use their powers to unclog drains, deliver packages, and rewire homes. After the mysterious disappearance of the head of one such agency, 15-year-old Jennifer Strange finds herself running Kazam Mystical Arts Management and trying to decipher a series of strange visions predicting the death of the last dragon and the rise of Big Magic. While not as intense as Fforde’s *Thursday Next* or *Nursery Crime* series, *The Last Dragonslayer* exhibits the same absurd humor, poking fun at politics, media, and human nature itself. Think Douglas Adams meets Harry Potter.

Carrie Szarko, Instructional Technology

**The Last Policeman by Ben H. Winters**

This is a detective novel with a twist: the policeman of the title has just received his long-desired promotion to detective, only to learn that a meteor is on a collision course with Earth, promising to end life as we know it. What is a gumshoe to do when the rest of society is going all bucket list, but there is still the murder of a local insurance executive to be solved? An engaging read for anyone who has contemplated the existential question, “If the world was ending to today, would I show up for work?”

Tim Shannon, History
**Life is Short but Wide by J. California Cooper**

This novel tells the story of two people in the shape of a Y. They spend part of life knowing each other and the rest finding themselves. Set during the reconstruction period, this book chronicles the life of a young black woman finding herself through her interactions with people.

*Monique Mathews-Gore, Student Activities & First-Year Programs*

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**Like Dandelion Dust by Karen Kingsbury**

This book is a powerful story of a parent’s love for their child and the lengths they will take to protect and keep him. There are times you are on the edge of your seat with anticipation of what will happen next and times you are in tears regarding the situation.

*Elaine McCauslin, President’s Office*

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**Long, Last, Happy: New and Selected Stories by Barry Hannah**

A collection of short stories from a great contemporary southern writer, and a nice entry point to his other work. Part poetic, part humorous, and two parts crazy.

*Zach Coble, Musselman Library*

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**Maisie Dobbs by Jacqueline Winspear**

*Maisie Dobbs*, a mystery novel, is the first in a series of 10 books. The main character, Maisie, is from a working class London background, but she was able to enroll at Girton College in Cambridge prior to the Great War. During the war, she served as a nurse in France, where she was exposed to new ideas but also wounded both physically and mentally. The series takes place in the 1930s, and the first book begins as Maisie opens a private practice as a “psychologist and investigator.” The books describe intriguing mysteries and at the same time chronicle the fascinating history of England between the wars. I would say that the first book, though very good, is the weakest in a series that gets better and better. Best of all though, is Maisie herself, who is likeable and complex at the beginning and grows tremendously as the books continue. Any one installment is a short and pleasant summer read, but you may find yourself wanting to while away your whole summer by drinking up the entire series.

*Kathy Cain, Psychology*
Mama Day by Gloria Naylor

Gloria Naylor’s *Mama Day* is a beautifully written novel with a fascinating storyline, masterfully weaving love, magic, and healing into a story about faith and survival. A culturally resonant text that addresses the complexities of black-woman centered identity, it is nevertheless a novel about humanity, and the beliefs that sustain us. It’s an amazing read! I wholeheartedly recommend it!

McKinley Melton, English

Mudwoman by Joyce Carol Oats

This is the story of a deeply troubled young woman and the psychological horrors of a past that she cannot fully repress. As a child she is abused, she is abandoned, she is adopted. Is she Merideth Rose or someone else? She is an earnest and brilliant student, she is a college professor, she has an older lover (married), she becomes the president of a prestigious Ivy League university. All along the way she is plagued by her personal “demons.” Her hard work and excellent teaching and research cannot fully shield her from her past. Her struggles with heading a major university place her almost at the edge of madness. Oates (who teaches at Princeton) keeps us in high levels of suspense trying to find out – is she M. R. the scholar/administrator? Or is she Mudwoman, the product of her long repressed past? This is an especially good read for people in an academic community.

Bill Jones, Counseling Services (retired)

Neverwhere by Neil Gaiman

After enjoying the first three books in George R.R. Martin’s *A Song of Ice and Fire* series (and giving up on the fourth) I was searching for something else in the fantasy genre. Neil Gaiman’s *Neverwhere* fit the bill. Set in “London Below” – a world that exists parallel to and sometimes overlapping the real London – *Neverwhere* features wonderful villains that make up for a somewhat unsympathetic protagonist.

Rud Platt, Environmental Studies
The Orphan Master’s Son by Adam Johnson

Parts of this book read like a picaresque novel. Set in North Korea, the book tells the story of Jun Do, son of the head of an orphanage who is forced, because of a famine, to send the young boys in his charge to the army. From that point forward Jun Do’s adventures become increasingly bizarre. The story remains compelling, though, grounded as it is in the wealth of detail the author provides of life under the North Korean regime.

Caroline Hartzell, Political Science/Globalization Studies

The Panther by Nelson DeMille

Nelson DeMille does it again! If you have not been introduced to DeMille’s character of John Corey, former NYPD Homicide detective and special agent for the Anti-Terrorist Task Force, then go back and meet him in Plum Island. You’ll then want to read The Lions Game, Night Fall, Wildfire, The Lion, and the most recent novel, The Panther. Corey is witty and sarcastic, but he and his wife, FBI agent Kate Mayfield, make quite a team in the war on terror. The Panther, DeMille’s most recent John Corey novel, has John and Kate posted overseas in Sana’a, Yemen, where they are working to track down one of the masterminds behind the U.S.S. Cole bombing: a high-ranking Al-Qaeda operative known as The Panther. DeMille’s books are frequently long at 600-plus pages, but do not be deterred as chapters are short. You will not want to put this book down. It is fast-paced and you will want to find out what happens next to Corey and Mayfield.

Susan Fumagalli, Athletics

The Portrait of a Lady by Henry James

This is a package recommendation. When I think about books that have meant a lot to me, I am certain that some of them never would have had such an impact except that I read them as part of a class. Recently I have been able happily to approximate this experience by reading the two books listed above. Want another selling point? In a recent New York Times interview, Edward St. Aubyn (author of the Patrick Melrose novels, which I also recommend) said that the fictional character he’d most like to meet is Isabel Archer. What would he say to her? “I’d ask her to marry me.” To find out why this is actually a pretty clever answer, read the novel.

Fritz Gaenslen, Political Science
**Reamde by Neal Stephenson**

A great romp through the world of online gaming gone wild.

*Gavin Foster, Information Technology*

**The River Swimmer by Jim Harrison**

A collection of two novellas, *The River Swimmer* traces common Jim Harrison ground: food, drink, Eros, sport, and the landscape of Northern Michigan. In “The Land of Unlikeness,” Clive, a 60-year-old academic art historian, returns to his family’s Michigan farmhouse to care for his elderly mother. The land renews his appreciation for life – a high school love, his daughter, and painting, which he abandoned to become an academic. “The River Swimmer” features Thad, who swims Michigan’s rivers and lakes because that is where he feels “at home.”

*Jack Ryan, Provost’s Office*

**The Round House by Louise Erdrich**

Written in the unadorned language of daily life, Louise Erdrich’s latest novel, *The Round House*, is storytelling at its best – simple, beautiful, and heartbreaking – the sort of novel that sticks with you for weeks. *The Round House* is a coming-of-age-novel crossed with true crime fiction. Taking place on an Objibwe reservation in 1988, the novel focuses on 13-year-old Joe, a teenage son who attempts to make sense of his life following his mother’s rape by a white man. As the novel explores this central trauma, Erdrich paints an image of reservation life unknown to many of us. Erdrich tells her story against the backdrop of a very real issue, the difficulty in prosecuting rape cases amidst tangled tribal, state, and federal jurisdictions. Erdrich manages to avoid the polemic, however, and reality only makes her novel more compelling.

*Clint Baugess, Musselman Library*
St. Mawr by D.H. Lawrence

I recommend the novella *St. Mawr*, most of all for horse groom Lewis’s incantatory diatribe on the people of the moon. The description throughout is also a spell. And when the horse disappears from the narrative mid-book, the magic trick is complete. As the introduction states, “Metaphorically, *St. Mawr* may be at different times snake, fish, lizard, god, ‘bunch of flames,’ ‘summit of a fountain,’ but literally he is also a flesh and blood stallion, and a measure of the book...is that it allows him his natural destiny in that capacity instead of forcing him to conclude his role as a symbol in some human equation” (Lasdun xviii).

Sheila Mulligan, English

The Shadow of the Wind by Carlos Ruiz Zafón

WARNING: This book has the power to take over your life, so better to read it in the summer than during the school year, when I did. This is a book lover’s book. It begins with the Cemetery of Forgotten Books and takes the reader through tangled adventures of intrigue. One of the most interesting and vital “characters” in the book is the city of Barcelona itself. This book is a rich, delicious read – and it’s part of a trilogy!

Susan Russell, Theatre Arts

The Sisters Brothers by Patrick deWitt

I’ve never really thought of myself as a fan of the cowboy genre, but this book makes me want to be. It is the story of two brothers, Eli and Charlie Sisters, who work as hired killers in the old west of the 1850s and this book tells the story of what Eli hopes is going to be their last job before retirement. We’ve all seen enough movies to know that “last jobs” never go well, and this one doesn’t disappoint as they run into all sorts of problems and interesting characters. The book is very funny (if you like your humor dark) as well as being moving, violent, and incredibly readable.

Darren Glass, Mathematics
**Sold by Patricia McCormick**

A 13-year-old Nepali girl tells her story of growing up in her small mountain village and being sold into the sex slave trade. A National Book Award finalist.

*Ruth de Jesus, Intercultural Advancement*

**A Soldier of the Great War by Mark Helprin**

This novel will always make the list of my top 10 favorites. The story begins in 1964 with a journey that takes us back through the remarkable life of Alessandro Giuliani, soldier and professor of aesthetics. Through Alessandro and his story, we are asked again and again to consider the question of beauty and its importance. Helprin’s artistry in his prose is another layer that compels the reader to reflect upon the beauty and power of language. I found *A Soldier of the Great War* to be a work that will always stay with me.

*Catherine Perry, Musselman Library*

**The Snow Child by Eowyn Ivey**

This entrancing first novel is a retelling of the classic fairy tale set in 1920s Alaska. It is about a marriage, a family, what hope can build and what it can’t. I’ll admit I was attracted by the homesteading theme (early 20th century Alaska looked a lot like the mid-19th century did in the continental U.S.), but this story swept me away. If you enjoy magical realism at all, read this book. Is the snow child real? Is she a dream? Does it even matter? I contend that in a great story, it doesn’t.

*Janelle Wertzberger, Musselman Library*
**Snow Falling on Cedars by David Guterson**

I am recommending this terrific novel as a first read (if you missed it when it was published in 1995 and soon after became quite popular) or for a re-read, if it’s been a while since you've turned its pages. Set in a variety spots including an island in the Puget Sound, Seattle, a war zone in the Pacific, and an internment camp in California before, during, and after World War II, this novel skillfully transports us through top-notch writing to a place and a time that is critical to American history. As we move back and forth chronologically, readers become engaged in the life of a small island that is transformed by the war and then a few years later we witness a murder trial that may be rooted in injustices caused by the treatment of Japanese Americans (no spoilers here!). Love story, historical fiction, local color, social commentary, sympathetic characters – it’s all here. A great read no matter the time of year!

Allison Singley, Parent Relations

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**Stephanie Plum Mystery Series (Smokin’ Seventeen, Explosive Eighteen, Notorious Nineteen) by Janet Evanovich**

If you like tough-minded, no nonsense female protagonists from Jersey who solve mysteries with smarts and humor, this series is for you. I'm up to *Smokin’ Seventeen* now and plan to read *Explosive Eighteen* and *Notorious Nineteen* this summer. The first in the series is entitled *One for the Money* and it has been made into a movie.

Maureen Forrestal, Provost’s Office

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**Stone’s Fall by Iain Pears**

The *Boston Globe*’s review says this “may well be the best ‘historical mystery’ ever written.” If mystery is only our ignorance of the past, then the solution lies in coming to understand the past – and this is true even when that past itself becomes the mystery. Beginning with a reporter’s assignment, the intricate plot leads the reader through three, tightly interlaced mysteries that recede in time: London, 1909; Paris, 1890; Venice, 1867. The historical context is rich: it is neither simply the backdrop nor an occasional ornamental detail. Iain Pears, also the author of *An Instance of the Fingerpost*, conjures the fin-de-siècle world of European finance and international banking, the invention of the torpedo, the Confederate ship (the Alabama), the departure of the Austrians from Venice, and so much more. Pears gives us fiction in which history is the matrix of mystery. And when we persist, in the end, we understand. And then we must deal with the impact of that understanding.

Dan DeNicola, Philosophy
**Straight Man by Richard Russo**

Russo is a talented story teller and inventor of memorable characters (e.g., *Nobody’s Fool, Empire Falls*). For anyone who has spent time on a college campus – and

... it’s hard to beat *Straight Man* for a wry, witty and baring insight into college life.

especially for someone who works on one – it’s hard to beat *Straight Man* for a wry, witty and baring insight into college life. *Straight Man* (1998) celebrates its 15th Reunion this year as a great summer read.

Joe Lynch, Alumni Relations

**Summer Lies: Stories by Bernhard Schlink**

It may have taken Oprah’s Book Club and the inclusion there of *The Reader* in 1999 to bring Bernhard Schlink’s name to your attention. *Summer Lies*, in Carol Brown Janeway’s sure-handed translation, is his seventh book since then: a collection of seven stories in which people reflect on their lives, gain insights they missed in younger years, and strive to make a good impression – even if that involves telling “little lies of necessity,” guarding secrets, and living in fragile illusions.

Michael Ritterson, German (emeritus)

**The Sunshine When She’s Gone by Thea Goodman**

John takes his baby daughter out for breakfast, intending to let his sleep-deprived wife get some rest. Instead he boards a plane to Barbados with his child. Is this a kidnapping or a spontaneous lapse of judgment? The story unfolds with evidence of a troubled marriage, made worse by the strains of new parenthood. Goodman offers well-drawn characters and a plot that will keep you guessing.

Robin Wagner, Musselman Library
**Sweet Tooth by Ian McEwan**

Jonathan Yardley, *The Washington Post*’s brilliant book reviewer, put *Sweet Tooth* on his end of the year “top 10” books of 2012. In describing the author he writes “no one now writing fiction in the English language does it better than he (McEwan) does, and it may be that no one does it as well.” You might not like all of the characters in *Sweet Tooth*, especially the narcissistic narrator Serena Frome, who goes through books (and men) on the fast track. But the witty craftsmanship and the stories within the story will keep your interest in this tale set in England during the Cold War. There is a lot of fodder for would-be psychologists to chew on, as in most McEwan novels. One of the characters is a thinly veiled self caricature of the author himself.

Bill Jones, Counseling Services (retired)

**Tenth of December: Stories by George Saunders**

Saunders invents characters and situations that can be way out and wacky, and yet they seem so familiar. The characters make choices, sometimes admirable and sometimes abhorrent, that remind us about the complexity of each moment in our everyday lives. These stories are about today, written in a vernacular that will sound all too familiar to those of us on college campuses. A great summer read.

Barbara Sommer, History

**This is How You Lose Her by Junot Díaz**

The short stories in this exquisite collection by Junot Díaz, the Pulitzer Prize winning author of *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, focus on Yunior, a young Dominican man living in New Jersey. It is not easy to identify with Yunior – he is irresponsible, self-centered, a serial cheater and overall a mess, and by the end of the book he has done little to redeem himself. However, Díaz’s gripping, graceful prose, and his descriptions of the daily struggles and triumphs of the Dominican community, make this book difficult to put down. A compassionate, critical, and sometimes comical, look at the intersection of diaspora, masculinity and community.

Radost Rangelova, Spanish
A Thousand Pardons by Jonathan Dee

Dee follows his 2010 Pulitzer Prize Finalist The Privileges with an immensely entertaining and provocative story about ambition, betrayal, and public relations, set against a contemporary culture in which the idea of forthright apology might finally gain some traction. Slyly funny and always on target, this one is destined for the “best” lists of 2013.

Fred Leebron, English

Tiger Rag by Nicholas Christopher

Christopher’s newest novel takes the reader deep inside the gritty world of 1904 New Orleans and jazz innovator Buddy “King” Bolden. This is a compelling and magical story that leaps through many decades of the 20th-21st centuries as less than reputable characters search for the only remaining copy of Bolden’s Edison cylinder containing “Tiger Rag.”

Buzz Jones, Sunderman Conservatory of Music

A Trick of the Light by Louise Penny

Penny has written several mysteries set in Quebec, and her main protagonist, Chief Inspector Gamache, continues through the books with several other intriguing characters. I have enjoyed all of her books and prefer reading a series in order, but this entry was particularly strong. The art world is explored, as are many human emotions and motivations. Penny writes with humor and compassion and creates a sense of place.

Kay Etheridge, Biology
The Uncommon Reader by Alan Bennett

It is short, sweet and a fine royal read. Sometimes you simply have to set aside the duties of the day in order to finish a book that is simply too good to put down.

Carolyn Sautter, Musselman Library

120 pages made this way: Start with a chilled version of the current queen of England. Add a bookmobile, some noisy corgis, and a life-long refusal to read for pleasure. Stir until gently blended. Enjoy.

Sharon Stephenson, Physics

The Walk by Lee Goldberg

The Walk, written by two-time Edgar Award-nominee Lee Goldberg, is a story about a TV network executive, Marty Slack, who gets caught in the “Big One” Los Angeles earthquake. L.A. lies in ruins but Marty has been expecting this day all his life so he’s prepared. In his car are a pair of sturdy walking shoes and a backpack of food, water, and supplies. The only thing Marty can do is try to get back to his wife and home on the far edge of the San Fernando Valley. All he has to do is walk. He will quickly learn that it’s not that easy. His journey will test the limits of his endurance and his humanity, a trek from the man he was to the man he can be, if he can survive. The ending left me speechless. I have no idea how I missed the clues, but I plan to read the book again this summer, this time with a magnifying glass! (However, I plan to skip over the expletives that I found offensive the first time around).

Joyce Sprague, Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

World War Z: An Oral History of the Zombie War by Max Brooks

This book is an account of the near extermination of human beings at the dawn and aftermath of a zombie apocalypse.

Ruth de Jesus, Intercultural Advancement
The Yiddish Policemen’s Union by Michael Chabon

This is not a book for everyone, but was my favorite read this year. It is a noir detective story set in an alternate history where a large number of exiled Jewish refugees have settled in Sitka, Alaska. It manages to be a decent whodunit, but it works as well in exploring the meanings of home and of Jewish identity, with a little bit of chess and zippy one-liners along the way for interest. Finally, it is a novel where Chabon plays with words and language in a way that makes this feel like real literature and not a throwaway detective story. For someone like me who loves magical realism/alternate reality books, will endlessly watch the Maltese Falcon and all similar movies, and who is always interested in exploring his own Jewish heritage a little more, this was the perfect novel.

Kurt Andresen, Physics
The 22 Non-Negotiable Laws of Wellness by Greg Anderson

Everything we think, say, feel, and do has a direct impact on our physical and emotional health. And yet, we overlook this fundamental truth every day. A solution exists. *The 22 Non-Negotiable Laws of Wellness* advocates a no-nonsense approach to health and well being that is keenly sensitive to all facets of body, mind, and spirit. These 22 keys provide the definitive toolkit for achieving your own high-level wellness. It will encourage you to feel, think, and live better than you ever have before.

Leah Bernier, Athletics

The Adventures of an Ordinary Pilot by H.C. “Skip” Smith

Looking for a relaxing, fun, poolside read? Try *The Adventures of an Ordinary Pilot*, just published by H.C. “Skip” Smith, Gettysburg College class of 1952. It’s a delightful and unassuming paperback of Smith’s lifelong love affair with flying. It’s also an aviation history, covering the period from the late 1920s through today, including his experience aloft on 9/11.

Ed Cable, Development

Aging and the Art of Living by Jan Baars

In this book the author argues that, in today’s world, there has been an overall loss of respect for aging, to the point that understanding and “dealing with” aging people has become a process focused on the decline of potential and the advance of disease rather than on the accumulation of wisdom and the creation of new skills.

Lou Hammann, Religious Studies (emeritus)
Amish Grace: How Forgiveness Transcended Tragedy
by Donald B. Kraybill, Steven M. Nolt, David L. Weaver-Zercher

On October 2, 2006, Charles Carl Roberts IV entered the West Nickel Mines Amish School in nearby Lancaster County, where he bound and shot – execution style – 10 girls, ages seven to 13 years. Five girls died within 24 hours of the shooting, and five survived, although one of the survivors is permanently disabled. This book narrates the story of the horrific violence that was directed at a community known for its non-violence. But perhaps the most shocking aspect of this story is what happened almost immediately after the shootings. The story that gripped the world was the story of the Amish forgiving Charles Roberts and reaching out in love and compassion to his widow and his family. This book tells the tragic story of the West Nickel Mines School shootings but also the remarkable extension of Amish grace to the family of the one who had caused them so much pain and sorrow. This book explores the reasons why the Amish were so quick to forgive. This is a thought-provoking book that also gives insight into the little-known world of the Amish. This is the inspiring story of a people who take their Christian faith seriously and who live by Jesus’ radical command to “love your enemies” (Matthew 5:44).

Buz Myers, Religious Studies

The Apartisan American: Dealignment and Changing Electoral Politics
by Russell J. Dalton

If you’re interested in the current course of American politics, you should read The Apartisan American. Author Dalton’s basic theme is that the old days of strong party alignment are disappearing and being replaced by voters less dependent upon party cues, often passed down from their parents. Instead, because of growing access to political information, the growing role of government, and other factors, greater sophistication results in an ability to judge candidates and issues without reliance on habitual party loyalties. Ironically, although a more engaged and knowledgeable public can deepen the democratic process, a more fluid public, decoupled from traditional party roots, is subject to exploitation and demagoguery by political elites. In short, these trends have produced an electorate that is divided and less open to compromise. If you’re a political junkie and don’t mind being mildly depressed, you’ll find this a good read.

Ken Mott, Political Science
**The Art of Travel by Alain de Botton**

In this elegant, funny collection of essays, de Botton considers everything about traveling, from anticipation to return, from airport signage to Flaubert. Why do we dream of traveling, and what do we expect of it? A most intelligent beach book, this will entertain, inform, and set you to wondering all at once. This summer, I plan to start reading de Botton’s eight other books.

Kathryn Rhett, English

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**At Home: A Short History of Private Life by Bill Bryson**


Gail Jones, Sunderman Conservatory of Music

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**Bend, Not Break: A Life in Two Worlds by Ping Fu with MeiMei Fox**

This is a very personal story of an incredibly brave and forward-thinking innovator. Ping Fu shares her life story growing up in the Chinese Cultural Revolution, immigrating to the U.S. (forced to leave her family), and starting an incredible career as an entrepreneur. Her life gives you incredible insight into courage, vulnerability, and perseverance.

Andy Hughes, Garthwait Leadership Center

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**The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined by Steven Pinker**

In this fascinating and mind-altering book, esteemed Harvard psychologist Steven Pinker argues persuasively that violence among humans is in decline. While this conclusion seems nearly impossible to believe in light of recent acts of violence and armed conflict which have adversely impacted the lives of citizens here and abroad, Pinker skillfully presents powerful evidence that human beings are indeed becoming less violent with the passage of time. This is not an easy book, but one which will captivate you and challenge you to think differently about the long-term course of human civilization.

Chris Zappe, Provost
**Big Data: A Revolution That Will Transform How We Live, Work, and Think**
by Viktor Mayer-Schonberger and Kenneth Cukier

The book was a fascinating look at the future that is here today! It brings up several interesting points about big data, including: why bigger is better; looking for correlations rather than causes; and the inherent privacy risks that come with the possibility of data misuse and abuse. Happily, the book is not technologically challenging for us non-techies, and it raises a lot of food for thought!

Nancy Chambers, Parent Relations

**Bill and Hillary: The Politics of the Personal**
by William H. Chafe

I love Musselman Library’s Browsing Room. It’s a great place to search for new titles by first-time or favorite authors. I always head to the biography section first. That’s my favorite. In the past couple of years I’ve enjoyed Walter Isaacson’s biography on Steve Jobs, and *Dreaming in French: The Paris Years of Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy, Susan Sontag, and Angela Davis* by Alice Kaplan.

I just finished William H. Chafe’s book on Bill and Hillary Rodham Clinton, *Bill and Hillary: The Politics of the Personal*. A captivating read, especially their early years – separate and together – that helped to shape who they are today. Bill’s story about his single mom, and later abusive stepfather has gotten a lot of ink over the years, but I wasn’t aware of Hillary’s domineering and sadistic father (the section about Mr. Rodman throwing the white toothpaste cap out the window and into the snow and making Hillary or her brothers search for it as punishment was an eye opener). How they rise, fall, and rise again through political life in Arkansas and later Washington, D.C., is fascinating to read. You see their growth as individuals, politicians, and as a couple. Author William H. Chafe holds an endowed chair in the history department at Duke University and writes a fascinating and accessible tale with great insight into these political figures.

Patti Lawson, Government and Community Relations

**The Bird in Art**
by Caroline Bugler

People have been watching birds and crafting images of them since we all lived in dank caves. Bugler takes us on a marvelous journey through the ages and the art created in celebration of our avian friends. The text is brief and fascinating. The images are delightful. A real treat for birdwatchers who need something to do on rainy days.

Ellen Hathaway, Gettysburg Review
Bloods, an Oral History of the Vietnam War by Black Veterans
edited by Wallace Terry

It is the 25th anniversary of the publication of Bloods, compiled by noted black journalist Wallace Terry. By telling the stories of black Vietnam vets, Terry revealed a war experience that most white Americans – liberal or conservative – didn’t know. Though this book was in many top books of the year lists in 1984, I’d argue it still isn’t fully appreciated.

Scott Hancock, History/Africana Studies

Change Me Into Zeus’s Daughter by Barbara Robinette Moss

Moss grew up in staggering poverty in rural Alabama in the 1960s. Her father was an abusive alcoholic; her mother was unable to protect her eight children from his drunken rampages and unpredictable cruelty. This memoir reminds me a bit of Angela’s Ashes. Moss never asks for pity. As difficult as her circumstances are, her story is never without hope. Moss suffered through an absolutely hellish childhood and manages to write beautifully about it.

Robin Wagner, Musselman Library

Citizens of London: The Americans Who Stood with Britain in Its Darkest, Finest Hour by Lynne Olson

It is the fascinating account of the three key Americans in Britain during the Blitz who warned America how much helping Britain at this time of need was critical to the future of democracy. The three were Ambassador John Winant, Averell Harriman and Edward R. Murrow all of whom played a role in showing the perseverance of the British and played to America’s love of the Underdog. I was surprised by how extensive the German bombing campaign was in London.

Tom Dombrowsky, History
The Complete Idiot’s Guide to the Science of Everything by Steve Miller

This book covers every major science subject, is informative, entertaining, and has answers to all of those things you are curious about but too afraid to ask. One question I’ve wondered about since childhood is that if the acid in your stomach is so strong, why doesn’t the stomach dissolve? The answer to that question and many others is in this book!

Darryl Jones, Admissions

Conning Harvard: Adam Wheeler, the Con Artist Who Faked His Way into the Ivy League by Julie Zauzmer

Adam Wheeler is a consummate fraud. He gained admission to Bowdoin College and Harvard University through counterfeit transcripts, SAT scores, and letters of recommendation. Wheeler’s dishonesty knew no bounds as he plagiarized Harvard’s most distinguished literary scholars to win prestigious fellowships and travel grants. It was his hubris – he applied for the exalted Fulbright and Rhodes scholarships – that ultimately precipitated his undoing resulting in his expulsion, applications to Yale and Stanford, and federal charges. Zauzmer’s narrative is compelling and raises larger questions about the college admission process.

Jeremy Garskof, Musselman Library

The Country Under My Skin: A Memoir of Love and War by Gioconda Belli

I started reading this book during my trip to Nicaragua as a delegate on the 2013 spring break Immersion Trip. I was looking forward to gaining a first-hand account of the revolution in Nicaragua, as well as to hearing a woman's perspective. Full disclosure: Belli’s story doesn’t do a great job of conveying the economic realities that drove Nicaraguans to revolution, as she’s an upper-class poet who spends as much of her time divulging the details of her love life as she does describing her activity in the FSLN. The book does, however, touch upon the intellectual foundation of the movement, and her well-written account helps to provide a human dimension to many of the historical background pieces I read in preparation for my trip. I’d recommend it to anyone hoping to learn more about this time in Nicaragua.

Christine Shanaberger, Communications and Marketing
**Decision: How to Make Better Choices in Life and Work**
by Chip Heath and Dan Heath

Written in the same style as the Heath brothers’ first two best sellers, *Made to Stick* and *Switch*, the authors offer a four-step process for making better choices and counteracting our built-in biases. Not to mention that the reader finally learns why David Lee Roth, the lead singer for Van Halen, insisted in the band’s contract rider that there be NO brown M&Ms in the pre-concert backstage bowl of candy.

Bob Kallin, Development

**The Emperor of All Maladies: A Biography of Cancer**
by Siddhartha Mukherjee

Who would believe a “biography of cancer” could be a page-turner? Focused on the history of cancer chemotherapy, Mukherjee’s deft use of language makes unforgettable heroes of those who suffered to advance a cure.

Ralph Sorensen, Biology

**Engineers of Victory: The Problem Solvers Who Turned the Tide in the Second World War**
by Paul Kennedy

As an Italianist who specializes in World War II culture and literature, I’m always drawn to good studies of the broader conflict. Kennedy has received very positive reviews. He doesn’t study tactics but rather the incredible organizational and industrial power the Allies employed to defeat Germany, Japan and Italy.

Alan Perry, Italian

**Farm City: The Education of an Urban Farmer**
by Novella Carpenter

Despite loving fresh produce and locally-produced food, I am (at best) an occasional gardener. So it was with quite a bit of awe that I read Novella Carpenter’s book about living off the products planted or raised in her inner-city backyard in Oakland, California. Carpenter is not a vegetarian and her livestock was raised to be dinner and her memoir deals with these challenges honestly. It is also compassionate, endearing, and very funny. I hated when this book was finished!

Lisa McNamee, Musselman Library
**The First World War by Hew Strachan**

Recently, I have been asked by several people for a good single volume history of the First World War. I attribute this optimistically to the upcoming WWI centennial, but it might just be because people are into *Downton Abbey*. Regardless, I recommend Strachan’s history because it departs from traditional western-front centered histories by demonstrating the many different theatres of this truly global war. Moreover, it is well written and engaging – the type of history one emerges from with a changed perspective. So if you’re looking for a good one-volume on the Great War, you will find few better.

Ian Isherwood, Civil War Institute

**Fordlandia: The Rise and Fall of Henry Ford’s Forgotten Jungle City by Greg Grandin**

Almost everyone who knows anything about 20th century American history knows that Henry Ford produced the Model T and thereby transformed the USA into a car culture. Equally noteworthy, he pioneered the $5 day, providing his employees with an entrée into middle class lifestyles (including car ownership), in exchange for his control of their time in his factories. The crackpot side of Henry Ford is less well known. For those interested in learning more about this strange character’s passions, Greg Grandin’s remarkable book is a must-read.

Fordlandia was Ford’s effort to build a massive rubber plantation on the Amazon in northern Brazil, beginning in the late 1920s. On first blush the plan had logic to it, though it was not just about providing a reliable source of rubber for American industry. Ford wanted nothing less than to create a world that embraced his values. Like other notables since, he was confident that the rest of the world should want nothing more than to be like white, middle-class Americans with rural backgrounds. This was hubris, and in Fordlandia it proved disastrous on many levels, including the millions of dollars that Ford lost in this enterprise. (Among other pitfalls, nature proved more resilient and vindictive than Ford or his minions anticipated.)

In this masterful telling the story has an almost mesmerizing appeal. Grandin lays out the context for Ford’s initiative, describes the key players on Ford’s team and the Brazilians who worked for them. Read this book and you will encounter the Henry Ford you didn’t previously know. You will learn the ins and outs of the rubber business – and how not to pursue it. You will also get a better understanding of why Americans’ ethnocentrism has often come back to bite them in the conduct of international affairs.

Michael Birkner, History
Gettysburg: The Last Invasion by Allen C. Guelzo

With the anniversary of the Battle, you have to read his account.

This book has received superb reviews. Guelzo is simply an excellent storyteller, a wonderful writer, and, of course, a great scholar. With the anniversary of the Battle, you have to read his account.

Alan Perry, Italian

The Glorious Art of Peace: From the Iliad to Iraq by John Gittings

This wonderful book, recommended to me by Professor Bill Bowman of the History Department, is an intellectual history of Western thinking about peace. Examining perspectives from the ancient Greeks, medieval Christians, Renaissance humanists, Enlightenment philosophers, and modern and contemporary activists, Gittings both traces the evolution of peace views and recommends taking them more seriously than we’re wont to do in our own war-torn times.

Kerry Walters, Philosophy

Go Like Hell: Ford, Ferrari and Their Battle for Speed and Glory at Le Mans by A.J. Baime

Turn back the clock to the early 1960s. Henry Ford II’s failed attempt to purchase Ferrari created a long-standing feud between Henry Ford and Enzo Ferrari. Unfortunately, Ford could never best Ferrari on the European auto racing circuit. Enter a young Lee Iacocca (creator of Ford’s Mustang) and noted racing driver Carroll Shelby to reinvent the Ford Motor Company. Together, they will go on to create the highly successful Ford GT40, the first American car to win the 24 Hours of Le Mans.

Michael Kotlinski, College Bookstore
The Great Railway Bazaar: By Train Through Asia by Paul Theroux

To recommend a travel book written in 1975 about lands that were then and remain today quite contentious is a perilous undertaking. To do so when the greater part of one’s familiarity – I can’t call it knowledge – of the area is based largely on Western novels of the last century and a few Eastern authors is particularly fraught. But even when one knows little, it is possible to judge something about the quality of the observations by how the author places himself in regard to his subject. Since true objectivity is impossible, the best travel writers try to keep to the middle ground, without being constantly charmed, patronizing, world-weary, or curmudgeonly.

I found myself comparing the book with Michael Palin’s PBS travelogue, but then, I’ve always liked Michael Palin.

What fascinated me about the book is how this area has changed and hasn’t. Written a few short years before the Iranian revolution and more than a quarter century before the Iraq war, his descriptions of traveling through Turkey, Iran and Iraq have a certain irony, especially his description of Texas and Oklahoma oil drilling crews in Iran. His journey is a loop from London, across the Middle East, Far East, and then back through Russia and northern Europe to his family in London. The book can be read episodically, which helps as a summer read.

Christine Benecke, Research

The Guns at Last Light: The War in Western Europe, 1944-1945 by Rick Atkinson

This is the author’s final book in his trilogy covering the American Army in the European Theatre of operations. Atkinson is a marvelous writer and a Pulitzer Prize winner.

Alan Perry, Italian

The Hare with Amber Eyes: A Hidden Inheritance by Edmund de Waal

A world-renowned ceramicist, de Waal, traces his family history, and much of the cultural history of the modern world, by following and investigating Japanese wood and ivory carvings he has inherited. Well written and intensely personal, the book engages the reader historically, philosophically, and aesthetically. This book was recommended and given to me by one of our students, Shaw Bridges.

Bill Bowman, History
Having Faith by Sandra Steingraber

Sandra Steingraber takes us on an interesting, easy-to-read, important tour of all the environmental toxins that we have been exposed to since our own conceptions. What can we do to change this experience for the next generation?

Irene Hawkins, Environmental Studies

The Hour of Peril: The Secret Plot to Murder Lincoln before the Civil War by Daniel Stashower

The story of Lincoln’s perilous journey from Springfield Illinois to Washington, D.C. is quite intriguing. I found the story of Allen Pinkerton’s (yes, of the Pinkerton Detective Agency fame) involvement particularly interesting, especially when his interpretation of the danger the newly-elected but not yet installed president was in, clashed with some of Mr. Lincoln’s closest advisors. Not to mention the political tensions created with the Confederacy as Lincoln approached Washington.

Peter North, Auxiliary Services

How To Be Black by Baratunde Thurston

[Description excerpted from the book’s back cover:] “Raised by a pro-black, Pan-Afrikan single mother during the crack years of 1980s Washington, DC, and educated at Sidwell Friends School and Harvard University, Baratunde Thurston has more than over 30 years’ experience being black. Now, through stories of his politically inspired Nigerian name, the heroics of his hippie mother, the murder of his drug-abusing father, and other revelatory black details, he shares with readers of all colors his wisdom and expertise in how to be black. Beyond memoir, this guidebook offers practical advice on everything from ‘how to be the black friend’ to ‘how to be the (next) black president’ to ‘how to celebrate Black History Month.’”

Cassie Hays, Sociology
**How to Create a Mind: The Secret of Human Thought Revealed**

*How to Create a Mind: The Secret of Human Thought Revealed* by Ray Kurzweil

Catch up on recent research about how the mind works, and what the future holds for us as technology and knowledge increase exponentially. A fascinating read, with hopeful and believable predictions for the future for cheap and virtually unlimited energy sources, for health, for long life. No math, no physics required. The author was recently hired as the chief engineer at Google. Learn what his interests are and you’ll get an idea of where Google is going. Also get an idea of where the President’s newly announced initiative for understanding the brain will be going, and IBM’s Joshua Blue project, (follow up to Watson) and others.

Dave Moore, Musselman Library

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**I Want My MTV: The Uncensored Story of the Music Video Revolution**

*I Want My MTV: The Uncensored Story of the Music Video Revolution* by Craig Marks and Rob Tannenbaum

Remember when MTV was all about videos? Ever wonder about the behind-the-scenes antics at the station or in the making of the videos themselves? Enjoy first-person accounts of events and history? Possess an unhealthy urge to know more about pop culture? Then read this book! As someone who came of age in the Eighties, possessing this book was a must! I relished every page. A short summary begins each chapter, but first-person quotations constitute the bulk of the book. I laughed out loud many times, mostly due to the careful juxtaposition of quotes, which provided a lot of “he said, she said” commentary on how or why certain things happened. This format engaged me because it was not someone translating or transposing words: it was exactly what the person thought about the incident. Adam Curry, former MTV VJ, confirmed in a blog post that his quotes are “precisely as I recall saying them, so I assume the same is true for all participants.” Sometimes we just crave a little fluff in our lives; this book provides it. It’s somewhat mindless entertainment in a convenient, take-along package. This hefty tome (572 pages) is also now available in both Kindle and Nook formats, making it travel-friendly!

Wendee Dunlap, Development

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**In the Garden of Beasts: Love, Terror, and an American Family in Hitler’s Berlin**

*In the Garden of Beasts: Love, Terror, and an American Family in Hitler’s Berlin* by Erik Larson

American ambassador to Germany after Hitler’s ascension but pre-war. Wonderful and chilling.

Peter Stitt, English
**In the Grip of Grace by Max Lucado**

I enjoyed this book as the focus is being love-driven by the grace of God instead of being self-propelled on a whirlwind trip through life. Being at one in peace with God instead of trying to impress and re-pay God. Highly recommend this reading while in the summer sun and lying on a hammock to enjoy a oneness with God and His creation!

Kelly Jones, Athletics

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**The Invisible Line: Three American Families and the Secret Journey from Black to White by Daniel J. Sharfstein**

One of the most persistent of the myths that Americans tell themselves about race is that the line between black and white is rooted in science and genetics rather than cultural construction. But new scholarship is chipping away at this assumption, revealing how men and women, and sometimes entire families, have reinvented their racial identity in response to specific historical circumstances. Sharfstein's book outlines the dramatic stories of three black families who responded to times of great societal upheaval by seizing opportunities to reinvent themselves as white, and the convoluted and contested legacies these decisions have bequeathed to their descendants.

Jill Ogline Titus, Civil War Institute

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**Iran Awakening: From Prison to Peace Prize: One Woman’s Struggle at the Crossroads of History by Shirin Ebadi with Adazeh Moaveni**

This book is a fascinating political memoir of life during the Iranian Revolution and its aftermath, written by Shirin Ebadi, a women's rights lawyer who recently won the Nobel Peace Prize. It's at once a firsthand account of one of the 20th century's most important revolutions as well as a testimony to courage, determination, and hope. Her exploration of democracy, equality, Islam, and peace is essential reading. [Note: Released in U.S. under the title *Iran Awakening: A Memoir of Revolution and Hope.*]

Aaron Cavin, History
John Adams by David G. McCullough

I spent much of the Christmas break this year totally absorbed in David McCullough’s biography of John Adams; I couldn’t put it down, and it was all I could talk about when I was with others. Having grown up in Massachusetts, I was well aware of Adams and had always considered his one-term presidency a source of shame – for him and for all residents of his home state. McCullough helped me to see what an odd man out the plain-living Adams was among the slave-holding Virginia aristocrats who dominated the early years of the republic and brought me to a new appreciation of this founding father who both thrived on political achievement and disliked political intrigue. The portrait of Adams in this book is a wonderfully complex study of an intriguing character and an amazing life.

Jean Potuchek, Sociology

Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead by Sheryl Sandberg

This book offers an important new perspective on the career/family conflict that all women face. Sandberg discusses the ways in which young women are socialized to modify their career goals before they even get started. She encourages women to “lean in” to leadership positions rather than taking themselves out in anticipation of family responsibilities. Sandberg’s argument is an important contribution to the “fourth wave” of feminism.

Kathy Iannello, Political Science

Learning to Flourish: A Philosophical Exploration of Liberal Education by Daniel R. DeNicola

Einstein’s Jewish Science: Physics at the Intersection of Politics and Religion by Steven Gimbel

These two wise and eminently readable books are the best recent recommendations of the liberal arts I know. DeNicola’s Learning to Flourish is an insightful and graceful reflection on the nature and aims of a liberal education. Gimbel’s Einstein’s Jewish Science is a robustly creative example of the independent thinking liberal education encourages. Read together, they nicely complement one another.

Kerry Walters, Philosophy
Lessons Learned: Reflections of a University President by William G. Bowen

Lessons Learned details the leadership experiences of former Princeton University provost and president, William G. Bowen. Calling upon his 16 years as president, Bowen describes the many issues he faced as a campus leader. His insights regarding priorities, decision-making and the ever-changing landscape of higher education make this an interesting read.

Jim Duffy, Registrar

Letters from a Nut by Ted L. Nancy

Ted Nancy is the brilliant inventor of “Six Day Underwear” AND the proud owner of the 36 year old cat named Charles who owes his long life to a pet food company AND a lover of paper bags AND a high-rolling gambler who wants to wear his lucky Shrimp Costume to Vegas AND so much more. This book is a collection of letters (and replies) that Nancy has sent. The premise is simple: Nancy writes seemingly serious, bizarre letters to various companies and individuals. Sometimes he gets a reply letter ignoring his original letter’s content. Sometimes they answer his letters seriously. Nancy is mischievous without being mean and part of the fun is just imagining the employee opening company mail to find a zany letter from Ted Nancy! There are several additional books in the “Letters” series and they are all wonderfully, incredibly nutty.

Miranda Wisor, Musselman Library

Love Goes to Buildings on Fire: Five Years in New York That Changed Music Forever by Will Hermes

New York’s downtown rock scene lies at the core of Will Hermes’s five year history of an essential period of music creativity, but his narrative is far more expansive than Patti Smith, Television, or The Talking Heads playing at CBGB on the Bowery. Hermes traces punk, hip-hop, disco, salsa, loft jazz, and minimalist composition to offer a citywide picture from 1973-1977, a period that did “change music forever.”

Jack Ryan, Provost’s Office
Making the Grades: My Misadventures in the Standardized Testing Industry by Todd Farley

In Making the Grades, Todd Farley offers an entertaining, and ultimately disturbing, look at the standardized testing industry that has found new legs (and a broad new profit base) thanks to our renewed national obsession with its products. Fair warning: if you read this book you’ll be a lot more upset the next time you ask your son or daughter what happened at school today and the answer is: “all we’ve done for two weeks is take practice PSSA tests!” If the movement to turn back the tide of standardization is ever going to gather steam, this book might well help get it started.

Dave Powell, Education

The Middle Place by Kelly Corrigan

I picked this book up because the author is a friend of a friend. My friend, Meg, recommended it after we spent the weekend with another friend celebrating the completion of her treatment for breast cancer. Kelly Corrigan tells about “the middle place” between being a child and an adult while battling her own cancer and dealing with a cancer diagnosis in her beloved father. Kelly is a mother and writer, and about my own age, so there was something in her voice that really resonated with me. This is an “I laughed, I cried” book. And literally, I did laugh out loud, sometimes while also finding a tear leaking out of one eye. Kelly finds tenderness and hilarity in so many moments past and present. She also describes the joy and pain of coping with family and friends who accompany you on the journey of facing a life-threatening illness. The Winston-Salem Journal says prepare to be “consumed” by Corrigan, and I felt that way. If you take it to the beach this summer, take a Kleenex and your big sunglasses too! I also recommend her later book Lift, a quick and easy read.

Ashlyn Sowell, Development

Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil by John Berendt

I really enjoyed this book. It’s a great blend of history, culture and a real life murder mystery. The movie does not do it justice. Read the book, then visit Savannah.

Duane Bernard, Management
Mr. Churchill’s Profession: The Statesman as Author and the Book That Defined the ‘Special Relationship’ by Peter Clarke

Winston Churchill’s life is the subject of books aplenty and there are literally hundreds of treatments on his time as an MP and as Prime Minister. For all the attention to Churchill the politico, few historians have delved into his profession as an author. Indeed, Churchill wrote books for publication for the entirety of his adulthood in order to support his upper class lifestyle and provide for his children.

Peter Clarke’s treatment offers a fresh take on Churchill’s life and labors to produce his History of the English Speaking Peoples. The Churchill we are treated to in this book is of a clever historian and gifted writer who managed to earn a relatively lavish living through his pen. This is a well researched, solidly conceptualized, and captivating new take on the traditional Churchill biography.

Ian Isherwood, Civil War Institute

Moonwalking with Einstein: The Art and Science of Remembering Everything by Joshua Foer

This terrific book reveals the bizarre subculture of competitive memorization. It recounts the author’s journey from York, PA to the United States Memory Championships. Students will be amazed to learn that there are some easy tricks to memorize nearly anything (especially the method of loci). Just don’t forget that creativity is more important!

Ryan Kerney, Biology
Nature’s Compass: The Mystery of Animal Navigation
by James L. Gould and Carol Grant Gould

Each year, as cold weather approaches, flocks of bar-tailed godwits take off from summer breeding grounds in Alaska and fly south, crossing thousands of miles of trackless ocean to nesting grounds in New Zealand. Hosts of other species perform similarly astonishing feats of navigation. How do they do it?

Many of the mysteries of animal navigation have been solved thanks to a variety of ingenious experiments on captive creatures and high-tech tracking observations in the wild. Animals, it turns out, use many of the tricks that human navigators employed before the advent of GPS. The most common method involves estimating one’s change of position from a judgment of time, speed, and direction.

Some air- or sea-borne migrators, no doubt, use cues from the ground or the shore, navigating as if following an internalized map. But just how that map is created, and how these birds conceive of the planet over which they travel remains an unsolved mystery. This lovely little book, consequently, is both an absorbing tale of biological discovery and a tantalizing scientific cliffhanger.

Larry Marschall, Physics

The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness
by Michelle Alexander

While Jim Crow laws no longer exist, the institutionalization of the sentiment still remains. This book looks at the systems of control that are in place in this new era of racial equality.

Monique Mathews-Gore, Student Activities & First-Year Programs

Next Stop: A Memoir of Family by Glen Finland

Next Stop is a heartfelt memoir about raising three sons – the youngest with autism. The book is a candid portrait of a differently-abled young man poised at the entry to adulthood. It recounts the complex relationship between a child with autism and his family, as he steps out into the real world alone for the first time, and how his autism affects everyone who loves him. It is a true story about how children grow up and how parents learn to let go. Look out for a mention of my sister, Kelly near the end of the book – she dates the middle Finland son!

Erin Stringer, Alumni Relations
Nothing to Envy: Ordinary Lives in North Korea by Barbara Demick

Piecéd together from extensive interviews following their escapes, journalist Barbara Demick takes us into the lives of six North Korean individuals and their families who endured the repressive regimes of Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il. The photo at the start says it all. The nighttime satellite view shows a large area, brilliantly lit except for the almost completely dark outline of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, a nation of 23 million people. Darkness seems a fitting metaphor for life in a country where, at that time, one of five died of starvation while the populace maintained a worshipful admiration for their head of state.

Amazing images abound: pairs of women tending fields by extending a rope between them, with a plow suspended from the middle; families prohibited from exhibiting pictures of loved ones in their homes, yet being regularly visited by soldiers checking to be sure they were dusting their obligatory framed photo of Kim Jong-il; teachers watching their students slowly starving to death. The stories expose us to the personal sides of the North Korea we never hear about…education, work, courtship, marriage, and family life. This powerful gem is not only a gripping read, but might also be the perfect stocking stuffer for Dennis Rodman.

Harriet Marritz, Counseling Services

The Pirate Organization: Lessons from the Fringes of Capitalism by Rodolphe Durand and Jean-Philippe Vergne

The Pirate Organization is a fascinating study of piracy from the 17th century to today. Sovereignty normalizes and piracy challenges the norms. Piracy cannot be separated from capitalism; it is, in fact, the Other of capitalism and follows as well as precedes it (depending on the situation). The democracy of pirate ships set a new path for sovereignty both on naval ships and on land. Concise and cogent and yet wide-ranging, this book celebrates piracy and its ability to release new energy. Written by two economists it is an exciting and provocative read.

Temma Berg, English

The Poorer Nations: A Possible History of the Global South by Vijay Prashad

As always, Prashad’s work provides a trenchant critique of the current world order and how committed individuals from the Global South have constantly attempted to change it. In a world where cynicism rules supreme, his insightful analysis always radiates with hope.

Abou B. Bamba, Africana Studies/History
**The Presidents Club: Inside the World’s Most Exclusive Fraternity**

by Nancy Gibbs and Michael Duffy

This is a great book for anyone interested in politics and the American Presidency.

Paul Redfern, Communications and Marketing

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**Proof of Heaven: A Neurosurgeon’s Journey into the Afterlife**

by Eben Alexander

Dr. Eben Alexander III has been an academic neurosurgeon for the last 25 years and during that time he has authored or co-authored over 150 chapters and papers in peer reviewed journals, and made over 200 presentations at conferences and medical centers around the world. It is Dr. Alexander’s background and expertise in what constitutes consciousness that make his Near Death Experience so fascinating. I found his technical background and skepticism prior to his NDE to be particularly compelling. Dr. Alexander does an excellent job of explaining neuroscience to non-neuroscientists so that the reader can understand what was happening to his brain during his meningitis-induced coma which resulted in a NDE independent of physical brain activity. The blending of spiritual and medical perspectives provides a foundation for a story of life after life that is equally approachable for the faithful or the faithfully scientific reader.

Miranda Wisor, Musselman Library

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**Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can’t Stop Talking**

by Susan Cain

This is not a one-sided book. The author summarizes extensive research to support her claim that both introverts and extroverts make important contributions to our civilization and our wellbeing. She also argues, convincingly to my mind, that contemporary U.S. society fails to appreciate the merits of introversion, and that our educational system reflects that lack of balance. For that reason alone, educators should read this book.

Kerr Thompson, Spanish
Rousseau’s Dog: Two Great Thinkers at War in the Age of Enlightenment
by David Edmonds and John Eidinow

The quarrel between two great philosophers, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and David Hume, originated in Hume's act of kindness when he invited the fugitive Rousseau to stay with him in England. The two friends were soon engaged in a highly acrimonious relationship, in which charges and countercharges were thrown about, characteristically by Rousseau and uncharacteristically by Hume. What of the Enlightenment, at whose pinnacle they both stood? What of Rousseau's dog? You'll have to read the book (or a Cliff's Notes version) to find out.

Don Tannenbaum, Political Science

The Shadow Scholar: How I Made A Living Helping College Kids Cheat
by Dave Tomar

The Shadow Scholar is the story of Dave Tomar's, a.k.a. Ed Dante of Chronicle of Higher Education fame, gainful employment as a professional research paper writer. Tomar claims to have ghostwritten thousands of research papers and at least a few dissertations for undergraduate and graduate students. His unrepentant attitude reflects students' discontent with higher education and is a powerful indictment of its perceived failures. The success of the paper mill industry raises important questions about academic honesty and integrity and underscores the pervasiveness of plagiarism and copyright infringement across college and university campuses. Tomar is by no means a scholar; however, his confession adds a unique perspective to the recent literature on higher education's existential crisis.

Jeremy Garskof, Musselman Library

Shaggy Muses: The Dogs Who Inspired Virginia Woolf, Emily Dickinson, Edith Wharton, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, and Emily Brontë by Maureen B. Adams

If you've ever loved a dog, you will love this poignant, amusing, and captivating glimpse of the powerful bonds that Virginia Woolf, Emily Dickinson, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Edith Wharton, and Emily Brontë felt with their canine companions and the influence that these beloved pets had on their famous mistresses. The book is an easy read, organized into “mini-biographies” of each writer that feature a variety of sources, including diary entries, personal letters, even sketches, that reveal the significance of the attachments these women had with their dogs. Even if you're not an accomplished literary figure or famous writer, you are sure to see a bit of yourself in these women by virtue of their emotional attachments to their dogs. Be prepared to laugh, cry, and hug your dog while reading.

Betsy Duncan Diehl, Development
This book is one that I read often. I would call it the best book on the people, places, and things that make up the history of type and publishing, a great read for anyone. As a designer, we are very conscious of what we are expressing in a piece with the many options of typefaces. One of my favorite takeaways from this book is the typeface "Caslon" was used for the printing of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States. Why does this matter? Because like fashion, typefaces also have a high point, then go out of style. So for a budding America the trendy European hand cut moveable lead typefaces of the day were too expensive, but Caslon was considered last year’s fashion in Europe and was put on the clearance rack.

Emily Wass, Communications and Marketing

It sure seemed like 2012 was the Year of Nate Silver. Silver had already made a name for himself by helping to develop statistical systems to analyze baseball games, Oscar predictions, and various things in politics, but in 2012 he became as close to a celebrity as a statistician possibly could due to his regular columns for The New York Times predicting the results of the election with uncanny accuracy. In fact, at one point before the election roughly 1/4 of the hits on the Times website was to Silver’s blog! And with good reason, as Silver is both incredibly smart and a very good writer. His book discusses the strengths as well as the weaknesses of a variety of mathematical models in areas ranging from sports to weather to finance to politics. I think he does a great job of explaining various statistical phenomenon in a fun, light way even for people with very little mathematical background. Silver’s book is the next step in a very important dialogue that our society should be involved in about how we choose who to trust and what the problems are of putting too much (or too little) faith in various kinds of models.

Darren Glass, Mathematics
**Taking the Piss: A Potted History of Pee by Adam Hart-Davis & Emily Troscianko**

I love social histories. There’s something almost voyeuristic about looking at our history through the lens of a random object or concept. This one is really random and strangely fascinating. It covers a strange collection of concepts from popular culture to economics. (Who knew that urine was actually a saleable commodity for different reasons at multiple points in history?) If you enjoy random historical trivia, this is short, engaging, and (not to be obvious) great bathroom reading.

Denise Weldon-Siviy, Musselman Library

**Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln by Doris Kearns Goodwin**

For anyone interested in the present, this detailed look at Lincoln’s Presidency and the politics of his time, are definitely instructive. Goodwin is a consummate writer, enabling one to ask on the eve of 150 years of the Gettysburg battle, “What lessons from the past can we apply to the divisive politics of today?”

Salma Monani, Environmental Studies

Used by Steven Spielberg as a basis for his film *Lincoln*. I am reading *Team of Rivals*; it is a long read – 754 pages – designed so that it can easily be put down and picked up later. Extensively researched, it is, however, engagingly and colorfully written with the effective use of detail that gives it a sense of intimacy and freshness. We discover a group portrait of Lincoln and the men who were his rivals for the 1860 Republican Presidential nomination. Lincoln, a backwoods lawyer who seemed to come from nowhere, took his unsuspecting rivals by surprise; after winning the Presidency he made an unprecedented decision to incorporate them into his cabinet. Together this team grappled with the devastating concerns of the conflict between North and South and the issue of slavery. My favorite aspect of the book is the glimpse of Lincoln: his extraordinary qualities as a leader, his face that would light up as he told a story, his insatiable love of learning from books, his singular way of walking, his thin high-pitched voice as he eloquently addressed a crowd.

Anna Jane Moyer, Musselman Library (emeritus)
Thanksgiving 1959: When One Last Corner of New York City Was Still Part of Small-Town America by Jay Price

A must read for anyone from Staten Island, NY or fans of high school football everywhere. Jay Price captures the romance and nostalgia of the biggest event on Staten Island in the 1950s and 60s – the New Dorp-Curtis Thanksgiving Day high school football game, and follows the lives and careers of legendary coaches Sal Somma and Andy Barberi as well as the players from that magical 1959 New Dorp team. A great book that those who remember and are nostalgic about small town America and a simpler time will enjoy reading.

John Campo, Athletics

Travels with Charley: In Search of America by John Steinbeck

Great writer and a light and meaningful read.

Robert Patierno, Art and Art History

The Truth About the National Debt: Five Myths and One Reality by Frances X. Cavanaugh

This is not the book to lighten your mood or share on a date, but reading it will make you much better informed about a compelling national economic issue. Impress your friends at FASH next Fall.

Brendan Cushing-Daniels, Economics
Unbroken: A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience, and Redemption by Laura Hillenbrand

This book lets you feel many emotions as you read through each chapter. How a young man with terrific athletic ability ended up in one of the worst POW camps in World War II. His personal journey through his life shows tremendous character, resiliency, and strength.

Kelly Jones, Athletics

I finished reading this book in three days! It is a fascinating biography of Louis Zamperini and the many amazing experiences he encountered in his life. The book made me laugh, cry, and reflect upon my own life. I was actually sad when I reached the end. You may question some of the stories, but you will certainly not regret reading this book.

Brian P. Meier, Psychology

An Unquiet Mind: A Memoir of Moods and Madness by Kay Redfield Jamison

Voluntary Madness: My Year Lost and Found in the Loony Bin by Norah Vincent

Two recommendations I have from reading outside of my counseling degree: An Unquiet Mind is the story of a woman with major depressive disorder. Eye opening experiential read. The second is Voluntary Madness, a biography of the author’s experiences in three different types of psychiatric institutes. Both are great reads, but may not be for the beach!

Courtney Wege, Admissions

Walkable City: How Downtown Can Save America, One Step at a Time by Jeff Speck

Did you ever read Jane Jacobs’s 1961 classic, The Death and Life of Great American Cities? You should have. And you should read this entertaining little book, too, if you give a damn about why we messed up our towns and cities so badly, what we are doing about it now, and how we can do better in the future. Speck will open your eyes and make you think differently about the American built environment, including the Borough of Gettysburg.

John Commoto, Environmental Studies
**Nonfiction**

*War Stories: Suffering and Sacrifice in the Civil War North* by Frances M. Clarke

In the bloody wake of battle, Civil War soldiers, like all people who have endured combat, struggled to find meaning in the killing of organized warfare. Frances Clarke explores how Northern soldiers drew deep cultural and political meaning from the carnage of war, and her findings show that suffering has a specific historic context, a reminder that post traumatic stress syndrome is not a timeless and inevitable phenomenon of war.

Peter Carmichael, History/Civil War Institute

*Who Stole the American Dream?* by Hedrick Smith

This is a lucid and judicious book about the perils of corporate malfeasance in cahoots with a feckless government.

Charles Saltzman, English

*Wild: From Lost to Found on the Pacific Crest Trail* by Cheryl Strayed

This memoir held me in its grip throughout; perhaps that was particularly true because I chose to read it shortly after my husband began a through hike of the Appalachian Trail (from Georgia to Maine). This story is about so much more than hiking, although the description of the hike itself is fascinating. The hike provides a context for a story about soul-searching, overcoming obstacles, coping with grief, and personal challenge. *Wild* is a great read and one that will stay with me for quite some time.

Janet Morgan Riggs, President

After her mother’s death and a divorce from a man whom she still loves, Cheryl Strayed, who has no experience as a long-distance hiker, makes an impulsive decision to hike the 1100 mile Pacific Crest Trail from the Mojave Desert through California and Oregon to Washington State—and to do it alone. This personal narrative was chosen by Amazon’s editors as a best book of the month and is an Oprah’s Book Club choice. I really liked the book, definitely enough to recommend it (although I did give it an “O” rating for offensive language).

Joyce Sprague, Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies
Jeffrey MacDonald, a surgeon and ex-Green Beret, was convicted in 1979 of killing his wife and two small daughters nine years before. I’d read two previous books about the case (Joe McGinniss’ *Fatal Vision*, Janet Malcolm’s *The Journalist and the Murderer*), and had never had serious doubts about MacDonald’s guilt. But this book—a reconstruction of the crime, the Army court-martial, and the criminal trial that ended in a life sentence—convinced me that he at least deserves a new trial. It also has me ready to believe that a man thousands of people have decided is a loathsome killer, who has been repeatedly convicted in court, print, and public opinion, is innocent. For the true-crime buff, this book is engrossing. For anyone interested in the vagaries of human perception and our compulsion to find “faces in the fire”—to form a satisfying, familiar picture out of uncooperative chaos, to create a logic that comforts us while having little or nothing to do with reality—this book, written by the world-famous documentarian (and former philosophy student and private investigator), is a sobering, even chilling experience.

**Devin McKinney, Musselman Library**

During the 1980s, I was the Director of Children’s Programming for PBS where I had the privilege and pleasure to work with Fred Rogers. We became close friends, and remained so until his untimely death in 2003. Fred was the most remarkable person I’ve ever known—courageous, loving and disciplined. This compendium of “important things to remember” is brief in length but ages long in its wisdom of what it means to be truly human.

**Jeffrey Gabel, Majestic Theater**

In this nonfiction jewel, we hear the voices of those who were growing up during the American Dust bowl. Cast against a multifaceted exploration of geographical, economic, political, and social factors to reveal the historical time period, the result is stunning. I cannot stop thinking about this book and what those folks endured. The retelling of this story brought me to the modern implications for policies in the name of progress and the importance for good stewardship of our natural resources. Don’t miss this book; it should be required reading! Note: The recent Ken Burns’ documentary about the Dust Bowl drew heavily from Egan’s work.

**Jonelle Pool, Education (emeritus)**
This past year marked several significant moments in the Sesquicentennial observances of the Civil War, especially the battle of Antietam and the issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation. Not surprisingly, both have been the subject of some truly magical writing. Glenn David Brasher’s *The Peninsula Campaign and the Necessity of Emancipation: African Americans and the Fight for Freedom* (2012) is one of the most innovative treatments of emancipation to appear in many years, emphasizing how the Confederacy’s use of black slaves to promote its war effort actually helped edge angered Northerners into an acceptance of emancipation as a tool for winning the war.


The battles of the 1862 Maryland Campaign have also generated wonderful books, starting with Richard Slotkin’s *The Long Road to Antietam: How the Civil War Became a Revolution* (2012), Scott Hartwig’s mammoth first volume of *To Antietam Creek: The Maryland Campaign of September 1862* (2012) and Gettysburg alumnus Brian M. Jordan’s *Unholy Sabbath: The Battle of South Mountain in History and Memory, September 14, 1862* (2012) give weight and heft to a campaign which foreshadowed the bloodletting a year later at Gettysburg.

Departures directed by Yojiro Takita (2008)

Humorous and emotionally beautiful film about an out-of-work cello player who moves back to his childhood home and takes a job as a funeral professional preparing bodies for the afterlife.

Ruth de Jesus, Intercultural Advancement

Dogtown and Z-boys directed by Stacy Peralta (2001)

This is the perfect summer movie; a documentary about the Zephyr skateboarding team who pushed the envelope and pioneered extreme skateboarding in mid-1970s southern California. Although gritty and sad at times, the mixture of original film (movie and still) footage with a phenomenal soundtrack just transports me to an oddly sentimental time and place. Throw in the sunshine, the ocean, the blond hair, and the decidedly un-idealized aesthetic and culture of 1970s Dogtown, and you’ve got a movie that has the power to mesmerize me again and again.

Jackie Milingo, Physics

Idiocracy directed by Mike Judge (2006)

The main character, Joe Bauers, is the U.S. military’s most average soldier. That is why he is picked for an experiment that accidently sends him 500 years into the future. He awakes to find human and social evolution have gone terribly, terribly wrong. Starbucks is a brothel and Costco is a one-stop shop for everything from light bulbs to a doctorate. That may explain why medical doctors diagnose people as “traded.” Idiocracy is a scathing satire about the future of a culture that produces Snooki, Springer, and Teen Mom. If you get this movie, you might be part of a dying breed but grab your Brawndo: The Thirst Mutilator, sit back, and laugh away the tears of that realization.

Miranda Wisor, Musselman Library
**Island at War directed by Peter Lydon (2004)**

This British series (six episodes) dramatizes life on the British Channel Islands during the Nazi occupation. It focuses on a few families of different classes, as well as the occupying soldiers, to illustrate the true story of those stranded on Jersey and Guernsey Islands during WWII – both the Brits who did not have time to escape, and the Nazis who suddenly find themselves assigned there. Being so isolated, and sharing common burdens like limited food and supplies, moves this film to a different place than if it were set in city like London. It seems much more intimate. These enemies come to really know and rely on each other, and share this small space. No one seems to know what to expect from each other or themselves. Beautifully filmed and acted.

_Suni DeNicola, Musselman Library_

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**Jeeves & Wooster directed by Robert Young, Simon Langton, and Ferdinand Fairfax (1990-1993)**

The years 1990-1993 saw many monumental events. One such event was the TV adaptation of P.G. Wodehouse’s *Jeeves and Wooster* stories for television. Starring Hugh Laurie and Stephen Fry respectably as the bumbling upper-class nitwit Bertie Wooster and his indomitably loyal and extraordinarily clever valet Jeeves, the series has everything one could ever want in television: impossible social situations, suffocating awkwardness, hot jazz, cocktails, thievery of cow creamers, fun names like Gussy Fink-Nottle, Stilton Cheesewright, and Catsmeat Potter-Pirbright, moustaches (as a plot device and not just a fun facial accessory), and the sartorial splendor of fancy dinners and country houses in 1930s Britain. So if you’re looking for a tickety-boo good time on a Saturday night, settle in on the davenport and mix a full shaker of *Jeeves and Wooster*.

_Ian Isherwood, Civil War Institute_

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**Moonrise Kingdom directed by Wes Anderson (2012)**

Like many of Wes Anderson’s films, *Moonrise Kingdom* is a great mixture of whimsy, humor, and a touch of sadness. Anderson is skilled at evoking a specific place and time through his use of music and extremely detailed set design, and in this case he’s conjured up the fictional New England island of New Penzance in the summer of 1965. The film follows the adventures of two 12-year-olds as they fall in love and run away together, eventually enlisting the help of some especially crafty Boy Scouts along the way. This film transports you back to that magical time of first love.

_Kate Martin, Musselman Library_
**No directed by Pablo Larraín (2012)**

This finalist for the Academy Award for the Best Foreign Language Film is a docudrama about the 1988 plebiscite in which Chileans cast a yes-or-no vote on whether to continue the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet or to return to democratic government. In it, Gael García Bernal (*Y Tu Mamá También* and *Motorcycle Diaries*) portrays an advertising guru who leads the “No” campaign, which defeats Pinochet. The movie evokes a wide range of emotions ranging from compassion for the dictatorship’s victims to humor. It also raises questions about how far one can go to make a political argument persuasive without betraying principle.

**Searching for Sugar Man directed by Malik Bendjelloul (2012)**

This documentary is the true story of Sixto Rodriguez, a folk musician discovered in Detroit in the late 1960s by two record producers and signed to a recording deal. The album was not successful in the USA and he disappeared into obscurity. But a bootleg recording turned up in apartheid South Africa. Rodriguez became a music icon to South Africans and was not aware of his fame until two fans decided to find out whatever happened to him – more than two decades later! What a wonderful film! You can’t help smiling after watching it. And it won the 2012 Academy Award for Best Feature Documentary. A real winner!

**Shirley Valentine directed by Lewis Gilbert (1989)**

This is my “feel good” movie, a prescription often administered with a handful of flowers to a housebound friend or with a bottle of wine to one who is lovelorn. Shirley, a middle-aged Liverpool housewife (played brilliantly by Pauline Collins), is bored with her dreary life and unappreciated by her obtuse husband and self-absorbed daughter. Much to everyone’s shock, she decides to fulfill her dream to travel to Greece. There she finds adventure and romance, but most importantly, she finds Shirley. This movie is funny, warm, and you’ll come away buoyed by Shirley’s *joie de vivre*.

**Slings & Arrows directed by Peter Wellington (2003-2006)**

This Canadian TV show aired from 2003-2006 and follows the trials and tribulations of actor-turned-artistic director Geoffrey Tenant (played by Paul Gross) whose attempts at staging the New Burbage Shakespeare festival take on the contours of the Bard’s timeless plays. More comic than tragic, the series is smart and engaging.
We turned to British drama devotee (and professor of sociology) Charlie Emmons for a little help to get us all through Downton Abbey (DA) withdrawal.

**The Forsyte Saga produced by Donald Wilson (1967, B&W)**

This is the granddaddy of them all in the theme of British aristocracy versus a changing 19th-20th century world. Superb acting and more fun than the Galsworthy novels they’re based on. The 2002, seven-hour remake has higher production values and is in color, but a pale reflection.

**Upstairs, Downstairs created by Jean Marsh (1971-1975, 68 episodes)**

This is the most popular and longest-running series in this genre. The intertwined lives of aristocrats and their working-class servants are very like Downton Abbey (DA) but in an urban setting. Second only to The Forsyte Saga, it has unforgettable characters like Hudson the butler, and it’s less over-the-top than DA. The 2010 revival is also worth seeing.


Set in a Manchester, England hotel in the 1920s, the upstairs-downstairs connections are very much like those in DA. It’s just as much of a soap opera, but Susan Hampshire as the ex-madam makes it all worthwhile.

**Gosford Park directed by Robert Altman (2001)**

This film is a murder mystery set in a rural estate, but who cares about plot with Altman’s directing and gems like Maggie Smith, Michael Gambon, Helen Mirren, and Derek Jacobi in the cast. This was written by Julian Fellowes, who was asked to do DA in this style.

**Call the Midwife created by Heidi Thomas (2012 - , 6 episodes in season one)**

The elite are nearly absent here, but Miranda Hart as “Chummy” steals the show as a large, upper-class-origin midwife who sticks out like a sore thumb in the East End of London in the 1950s. If you can get past the squalor and pain, you’ll find compassion and humor, and delightful pop music. Season two started on PBS in March, 2013.
When this goes into print, we will only be halfway into 2013. Nevertheless, I am almost certain that in the future many film historians will look back and mark this year as the point of no return. I say this not because I saw the American remake of the British TV series, *House of Cards*, or the latest Michael Haneke film, *Amour* – both of which I highly recommend. It is rather how I saw them that indicate a brave new world.

We are lucky to have the Majestic Theater in Gettysburg; we are even luckier to have Jeffrey Gabel running it. Were it not for his impeccable fundraising skills, the Majestic Theater would by now have gone “dark.” The reason is simple economics. Due to the “Digital Cinema Initiative” imposed by the major distributors on the rest of the world, everyone now has to either conform to expensive digital projection standards or soon have nothing to project. Many smaller, independent theaters similar to the Majestic will be forced to close their doors since few can afford such financial outlays. Yet this affects not only theaters, it could affect everything from film festivals to what type of films will now get made, since there will be even less “art houses” than before to justify the smaller, more “independent” films. (To be clear, “Indie” films have always been dependent on the system.) Therefore, upon seeing *Amour*, the first film projected digitally at the Majestic, I was not only ambivalent about the crisp, clean, almost too perfect images that still cannot match the subtle richness of film stock, I worried about what the future actually holds for cinema around the world.

While I did enjoy *House of Cards* immensely, my feelings were no less ambivalent. In terms of content and style, this is not the most original TV series to ever grace the small screen. It is merely one of the most “delicious” due its fine acting and high production values. What is remarkable is that Netflix
financed and produced two seasons of the series for US$100 million. Most significantly, Netflix then chose to release the entire series at once, so people would watch whenever they wanted, (which for a media maven like myself, is not such a bad proposition). Thirteen episodes over the first two weekends after its release, we were anxiously wondering when the next season will materialize. Yet already many now predict this is the future of all TV – everyone will be releasing TV shows in one lump. Some even predict that of our current cable networks, even our beloved AMC, may be a thing of the past. (The good news is, predictions often are wrong.) If you don’t believe that Netflix’s humongous gamble is paying off, just look at how much its stock prices have gone up in the last year.

For now, at least, we can still see great television shows the “old fashioned” way – at least as we have doing for the last decade and a half. Season 3 of Louie is in my view the best yet of TV’s most unpredictable and unclassifiable show. Southland, on TNT, remains the only cop show I faithfully watch since The Wire went off the air. AMC continues to rarely disappoint. Indeed, Breaking Bad consistently remains the most riveting and innovative show on TV, and now it only has eight episodes left. That alone makes me nervous, because will this show know how to end as well as it has kept up its relenting intensity all these years?

Yet there are so many new shows to speak of that I hardly know where to begin. One notable new show for me is HBO’s Girls. What strikes me most about this gem is how little I laugh at one of the most intelligent comedies ever made. Sex and the City was pure fantasy, and ages very poorly, in my opinion. This show is the perfect antidote. Indeed, it makes the generation of the recent college graduates uneasy, according to many reports. I believe this is largely because Lena Dunham is unable to harbor any illusions about herself or her generation. Thus, while I understand why the show is funny, and I appreciate it, and even laugh at times, often it seems too painfully real. (Is this what becomes of our students after they graduate?) More surprising to me was the first season of American Horror Story. I am not a horror fan, but this was a compelling, thought-provoking show about a haunted house where it is hard to distinguish the living from the dead, largely because they all act pretty much the same way. (Who knew the afterlife could be so political?) Another gem that has not even completed its first season.

No doubt many are fans of the film, Argo (2012). I loved it in part because it got the period details so right. Yet even that film pales in comparison to the period details in a new series on FX called The Americans. This series is about two KGB agents posing as husband and wife in the DC area in 1981. What is so captivating is that on the one hand these are brutal people forced to do a brutal job, yet their fake marriage and family has become all too real. As far as their children know, their parents are merely travel agents working in Northern Virginia. Kerri Russell impeccably plays the female protagonist who is both dedicated to her work and yet deeply conflicted at the same time.
This is not to say there were not a lot of films over the past year also worth watching. However, this year I would like to go out on a limb a little more, either because some of these picks may be too peculiar to me, or still not available on DVD. The safest bet would be *Zero Dark Thirty* (2012), a film that surprised me when I finally saw it. At first I was not looking forward to this because of its inaccurate depiction of the role torture played in the capture of Bin Laden. (Those criticisms are deserved.) And while this was an unfortunate narrative shortcut taken by the creators, it is a very small part of an exceedingly complex yet deeply compelling film. The final raid on Abbottabad was simply a tour de force, as rare as any sequence of its kind. One other film that was surprisingly overlooked, if not outright denigrated, was *Cloud Atlas* (2012). Supposedly based on an unfilmable novel of the same name, I found this to be a cosmic-karmic adventure spanning past, present and future. Perhaps it only makes sense so long as one takes a more Asian perspective on it.

For now, at least, film festivals remain the heart and soul of cinema outside of Hollywood. This year I had the pleasure of attending the Festival des 3 Continents in Nantes, France. There I saw a number of premieres of films that are either from Africa, Asia (the Middle East included) or Latin America. Four films stood out from the competition.

*Beauty* (2012) was an Argentinean work helmed by Daniela Seggiaro. If anything, this film is a critique of Orientalism despite its intriguing ambiguities. A Korean entry, *Sleepless Night* (2012), was an ingenious look at a happy married couple wondering if they will remain happy if they have kids. The narrative structure is unpredictable, including two prolonged fights that unexpectedly turn out to something else. *It’s a Dream* (2012), by Mahmoud Ghaffari from Iran, and *I.D.* (2012), by K.M. Kamal from India, were arguably the two most intense films in the entire competition. The former was snuck out of Iran in a suitcase, and no wonder given its taboo themes of a rapacious underground economy, sexual exploitation and illegal abortion. *I.D.* involves a rich, young woman with a new marketing career in Mumbai. She feels compelled to find out the identity of a painter who had come to her apartment to work, only to suddenly have a stroke and die. This leads her into the labyrinthine underbelly of Mumbai.

Hopefully this summer you will all have a chance to see all of the above in some format. Hopefully, in the future both cinema and TV will still offer the diversity still found under present conditions. That still remains to be seen.
Movie Memories

WEDNESDAY NIGHTS

June 5, 2013
THE TEN COMMANDMENTS (1956)

June 12, 2013
Singin’ in the Rain (1952)

June 19, 2013
Lawrence of Arabia (1962)

June 26, 2013
His Gal Friday (1940)

July 3, 2013
Gettysburg (1992)

July 10, 2013
No Film – Road from Appomattox

July 17, 2013
No Film – Road from Appomattox

July 24, 2013
American in Paris (1951)

July 31, 2013
Fort Apache (1948)

August 7, 2013
SULLIVAN’S TRAVELS (1941)

August 14, 2013
The Red Shoes (1948)

August 21, 2013
North by Northwest (1959)

August 28, 2013
Guy & Dolls (1955)

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<td>The Orphan Master's Son</td>
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