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Amy Dailey, Assistant Professor of Health Sciences

Musselman Library
Gettysburg College

Amy B. Dailey
Gettysburg College

Authors

Musselman Library
Amy B. Dailey, Gettysburg College

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Amy Dailey, Assistant Professor of Health Sciences

Abstract

In this next edition of *Next Page*, Assistant Professor of Health Sciences Amy Dailey shares with us which article she recommends to students for a better understanding of the health care crisis in America along with her mild fascination with dystopian literature and books about mammograms.

Keywords

Musselman Library, Gettysburg College, reading, books, interview

Disciplines

English Language and Literature | Library and Information Science

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September 18, 2013

In this next edition of Next Page, Assistant Professor of Health Sciences Amy Dailey shares with us which article she recommends to students for a better understanding of the health care crisis in America along with her mild fascination with dystopian literature and books about mammograms.

What are you reading now (or have read recently) that you would recommend and why?

I recently read [*The Big Squeeze: A Social and Political History of the Controversial Mammogram*](#) by Handel Reynolds. Much of my research has focused on barriers to breast cancer screening, so I probably have a little more interest in reading about mammograms than the average reader. However, I would recommend this book to anyone (men included) interested in learning more about how medical guidelines are decided upon, how they are influenced by factors other than medical evidence, and how they become policy. This book tells the fascinating history of the “controversial” mammogram and the ever-changing recommendations. After reading this book I suspect many readers will begin to have conversations with their primary care providers about appropriate cancer screening intervals. Beyond relevance for individuals, this is also a very important topic considering the national dialogue on basic standards for health care and health reform.

What book/article/blog have you recently recommended for a student to read? Why?

“[Bitter Pill: Why Medical Bills are Killing Us](#)” by Steven Brill in the March 4th edition of *Time* magazine is an article I have recently recommended for many of my students to read. I find that many students haven’t had to think much about medical care costs yet—most students are still on their parents’ insurance and with the new provision of the Affordable Care Act, will be able to remain on their parents’ insurance until they are 26. Unless they (or a family member) have faced a major medical issue that has not been fully covered by insurance, many students haven’t had to think about the direct implications of the costs of our health care system and medical bills. Brill begins this article by describing a family that has limited insurance coverage faced with the 42-year father of two teenage children needing treatment for non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma. The hospital refused their “discount insurance” and before he could be treated the family had to pay nearly \$84,000 in advance to be evaluated and treated. Readers easily relate to this family’s story and many of us wonder what we would do if we were diagnosed with lymphoma and need to come up with \$84,000 before being treated. The article continues to discuss why the United States spends more on healthcare than the



Amy Dailey is Assistant Professor of Health Sciences at Gettysburg College.

ten next biggest spenders combined. I give this article to students to read hoping that they will become more interested in how our expensive, dysfunctional healthcare system results in dire consequences for everyday people. It is my hope that students get interested in the politics and economics of healthcare because these issues affect each and every one of us in very real ways.

How do you keep track of what you have already read, are reading currently, or want to read in the future?

To be honest, I have a pile of sticky notes that collect on my desk and print-outs of library call numbers tacked to a bulletin board—so nothing organized or high tech! For scholarly journal articles I have recently switched from Endnote to [Refworks](#) as my citation manager.

What book or article has inspired you to take action?

I assign the book [Mountains beyond Mountains](#) by Tracy Kidder in my Global Health class. The students find the story of Paul Farmer, an international leader in global health, incredibly inspirational. This book chronicles Paul Farmer's work improving access to health care in Haiti (pre-earthquake) and tackling worldwide multi-drug resistant tuberculosis. I have read the book so many times now that I find Paul Farmer to be inspiring, yet annoying all in one. However, personally I do have to say that this book has inspired me to take action in my personal and professional life. While reading this book makes me feel like I don't do nearly as much as I could, Paul Farmer's mantra "preferential option for the poor" has inspired me to make my primary research and advocacy work focused on improving access to health care, food, and education for underserved populations.

What are you planning to read next?

Thankfully I don't spend all of my time reading health-related material! This summer I finished reading *Wool Omnibus* and *Shift Omnibus* by Hugh Howey and I am looking forward to the next part of the series: *Dust*—due out August, 2013. I have a mild fascination with dystopian literature and this series has kept me captivated. The series begins by describing post-apocalyptic life many years in the future. People are living in a silo beneath a toxic earth. In *Wool* we learn about life in the silo, controlled by rules of mysterious origin designed to protect the population. *Shift* essentially is the prequel to *Wool* and tells the story of how the population got there in the first place and tells us more about silo-life, exploring issues such as individual versus population-level survival and who gets to make those decisions. Although I was not as thrilled by *Shift* as *Wool*, I am definitely looking forward to reading the conclusion of the series.

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