



Summer 2009

You've Gotta Read This: Summer Reading at Musselman Library (2009)

Musselman Library
Gettysburg College

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You've Gotta Read This: Summer Reading at Musselman Library (2009)

Abstract

Each year Musselman Library asks Gettysburg College faculty, staff, and administrators to help create a suggested summer reading list to inspire students and the rest of our campus community to take time in the summer to sit back, relax, and read. These summer reading picks are guaranteed to offer much adventure, drama, and fun!

Keywords

Musselman Library, summer reading, fiction, non-fiction, film

Disciplines

Library and Information Science

Comments

Found on Musselman Library's website at <http://www.gettysburg.edu/library/information/general/browsing/index.dot>.

You've gotta read this!!!

Summer Reading @ Musselman Library



Summer 2009

The days are finally getting warmer and summer is coming! After you finish taking finals (or grading finals), and before you head off to the beach, the woods, or just your backyard hammock, check out some fun titles that you haven't been able to get to this semester.

Need ideas? Look no further! Inside this booklet you'll find a range of recommendations from faculty, staff and administrators, from humorous novels about the economic downturn to nonfiction works on the history of sushi and the tower of Pisa. Regular readers of Musselman Library's annual summer reading list look forward to a wide array of suggestions catering to all interests! This year, you'll also find reading suggestions from the Class of 2009 and the Library's own Senior Stars (graduating seniors who worked at the library during their years here at Gettysburg College).

Enjoy a happy and safe summer. See you in the fall!

*From the staff of Musselman Library
May 2009*

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IMAGE LEGEND

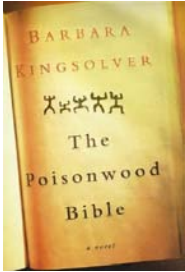


Class of 2009



Musselman Library Senior Star

FICTION



Rosemary Adams

Title: *The Poisonwood Bible* by Barbara Kingsolver

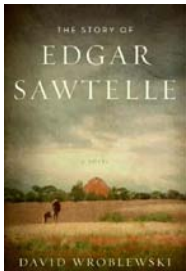


"The story lines that run through *The Poisonwood Bible* intertwine perfectly to create a captivating and touching novel. The themes of strength, sorrow, and perseverance speak to everyone's life experience making the book relatable. The combination of these features as well as the character Adah makes *The Poisonwood Bible* one of my all time favorite books."

Christine Benecke, Development, Alumni and Parent Relations

Title: *Gods in Alabama* by Joshilyn Jackson

"A satisfying summer/beach book with a touch of a mystery. I read it just after reading Alex Witchel's *The Spare Wife*, and the two were an interesting contrast in writer style. The latter is a small bit of good pate on Melba toast; the former, a thick chunk of home-baked bread, torn hot from the loaf and spread with butter."



Temma Berg, English and Women's Studies

Title: *The Story of Edgar Sawtelle* by David Wroblewski

"A compelling read - rich and layered, moving and subtle. I couldn't put it down. Its inventive use of *Hamlet* particularly intrigued me. Setting *Hamlet* in Wisconsin and focusing on a family that raises and trains dogs seems like an impossible task, but Wroblewski pulls it off with panache. His ghost scenes are especially powerful and his Laertes achingly pitiful."

Maressa Carneiro

Title: *Out of the Silent Planet* by C.S. Lewis

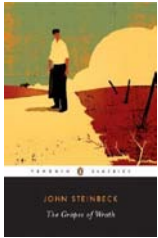
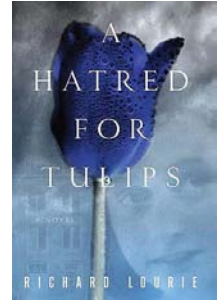


"C.S. Lewis introduces the reader to a whole new world. As the main character, Ransom, explores the new planet, C.S. Lewis explores the depth of human nature, allowing the reader to ask questions and come to terms with the ideals and desires of humanity versus its reality."

Pam Dalrymple, Civil War Institute

Title: *A Hatred for Tulips* by Richard Lourie

“Who betrayed Anne Frank? This is not a book about Anne Frank but a story about a boy (Joop), in a difficult place (Amsterdam), in a difficult time (Nazi occupation), and the unintended consequences of trying to do what looks like the right thing. The connection to Anne Frank allows the author to ask interesting questions about collaboration and guilt during the war. You will still be thinking about this story a long time after finishing the book.”



Roy Dawes, Political Science

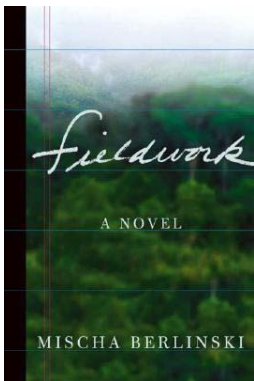
Title: *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck

“The economy now provides a good reason to re-read (or read) this book. A compelling read at any time, it helps to understand life in the 1930s Dust Bowl from our 21st century perch, and vice-versa.”

Dan DeNicola, Philosophy

Title: *The Book of Air and Shadows* by Michael Gruber

“Do you like literary mysteries—where the plot focuses on a rare book, ancient manuscript, or antique letters—like Byatt’s *Possession* or Eco’s *The Name of the Rose*? Gruber’s work is within this genre: an intelligent, tightly-plotted, escapist thriller that adds mathematical codes, intersecting stories of two centuries, and a dizzying number of twists and surprises. While it doesn’t quite reach the literary standard of Byatt or Eco, Gruber’s book offers interesting characters and a lively summer read about the greatest writer in the English language.”



Sunni DeNicola, Musselman Library

Title: *Fieldwork: A Novel* by Mischa Berlinski

“This story had me in its grip on so many levels. First, it is a murder mystery, set up and then unraveled in a very interesting way. Through the protagonist, the reader becomes an anthropologist and pieces together the characters’ lives and motivations.

Secondly, the book made me think about what it would mean to ‘observe’ a culture and how far an anthropologist might become personally entrenched...where is the line between observing and judging? I also had never thought about some of the frustrations, such as being unable to determine how certain traditions or rituals started. What happens if you choose a research location and really hate it? What must it be like when you find no one shares your passion for a place and its people...except, perhaps, for missionaries? I've always been a bit prejudiced against

missionaries; this story both confirmed and challenged my feelings. What must the re-entry from a different culture back into your ‘normal life’ be like?

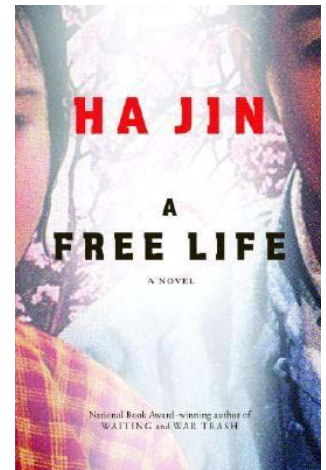
Finally, I was entranced by the amazing descriptions of Thailand...the kind that makes you hungry for what the characters are eating, or repulsed by the heat and smells.

I am curious whether anthropologists think the book is hokey or liked the depiction of the behind-the-scenes issues presented to those of us outside their field. I can see where some aspects might be distorted and overly fictionalized but, for me, this was one of those books where fiction has led me to want to explore the nonfiction.”

Suhua Dong, Institutional Analysis

Title: *A Free Life* by Ha Jin

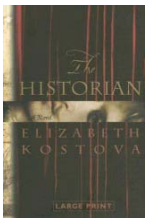
“A novel by Ha Jin, the award- winning author of *Waiting* and *War Trash*. It ‘creates a moving, realistic, but always hopeful narrative’ of the Wu family father Nan who was a graduate student in political science at Brandeis University, mother Pingping, and son Taotao) as they sever their ties with their old country--China--in the aftermath of the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre and start a new life in America. ‘Ha Jin’s prodigious talents are evident in this powerful book’, which brilliantly brings to life the struggles, pains, frustrations, griefs, hopes, and the sustaining power of beliefs in their new country--America. A good read for those who want to have an in-depth and authentic understanding of contemporary immigrant experience.”



Mary Evangeliste, Musselman Library

Title: *Lush Life* by Richard Price

“This is the newest novel by acclaimed ‘urban crime’ writer Richard Price. He wrote what I consider to be the best novel of 1993, *Clockers*, which was turned into a movie by director Spike Lee. I will read any novel by Price, and this is his first novel in five years and I have been counting. His characters are not always the most friendly or likable bunch, but he paints them with such complexity that you cannot help but be drawn in and care deeply for them. He was also a recurring writer on the acclaimed HBO series *The Wire*.”



Ann Harper Fender, Economics

Title: *The Historian* by Elizabeth Kostova

“A book about the search for Dracula usually wouldn't hold my attention; this one is fascinatingly different.”

Title: *The Reaper* by Peter Lovesey

“Lovesey writes wickedly gentile murder mysteries involving people who excel in valuing form over substance.”

Kaitlyn Garman

Title: *Harry Potter & the Deathly Hallows* by J.K. Rowling



“Great books take you to great places, and J. K. Rowling’s powerful imagination inspired millions of people to actually want to READ and be transported into her world of magic. I know there are greater and more respected pieces of literature, but it is this book I always return to, to be reminded of the ‘real life’ magic of love and loyalty, and, of course, friendship.”



**The Brief
Wondrous
Life of
Oscar Wao**
Junot Díaz
Author of Drown

Darren Glass, Mathematics

Title: *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* by Junot Díaz

"You don't win this many awards (Pulitzer, National Book Critics, the coveted Rooster) without being a really great read. It's the story of a Dominican family living in New Jersey whose son Oscar is simultaneously one of the most endearing and the most pathetic characters I have come across. The book is similarly complicated, as it is also a history of the Dominican Republic, a portrayal of nerd culture (any book that references Uatu the Watcher and D&D is good by me!), the story of complicated family relationships, and a love story, all while being funny, touching, and sexy."

David P. Hadley

Title: *Mother Night* by Kurt Vonnegut



"Vonnegut is able to combine both absurd humor and deep tragedy to create this deeply affecting work. The story of a U.S. spy in World War Two, Vonnegut shows how the double life he had to lead robbed him of his ideals and home. It carries the strong warning to be careful who we pretend to be."



Melissa A. Heckel

Title: *The Italian* by Ann Radcliffe

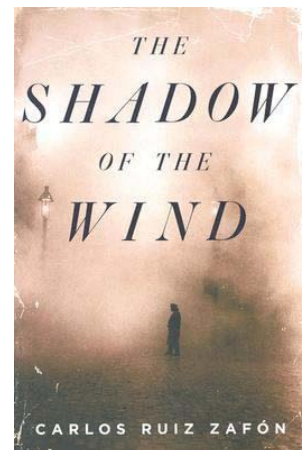


"I chose this book since it formed the initial basis of my English Honors Thesis. I would later expand my thesis to include three other authors, but Radcliffe remained an important part of the paper since she was a significant female writer in the Gothic genre."

Bill Jones, Counseling Services

Title: *The Shadow of the Wind* by Carlos Ruiz Zafón

"*Shadow* is a dream date for anyone who loves a terrific story. For me reading it was like my favorite rollercoaster ride, wild and scary with hairpin bends and breathtaking lurches with one thrill after another that leaves you breathless and wanting to ride again and again, almost hoping that there is no stopping. The writing is sometimes formal and often poetic, with memorable phrases and frequent unexpected offbeat humor. It is set in post WWII Barcelona and tells the story of Daniel Sempere, the son of a used book shop owner who becomes obsessed with a writer whose tragic and drama-filled story unfolds, interlaced with Daniel's own tragic and drama-filled life. It evolves into a masterful melodrama filled with doomed love, gruesome murders, tragedy and redemption. Lots of stuff to keep the pages turning."





Lauren Klein

Title: *Harry Potter & the Sorcerer's Stone*
by J.K. Rowling



"This book started the Harry Potter phenomenon and sparked a decade long reading experience. The magical world created makes you escape reality and almost feel as if you are a wizard as well."

Sarah Walter Kotlinski, Admissions

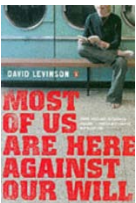
Title: *Red Bird* by Mary Oliver

"In *Red Bird*, Mary Oliver emerges from the deep grief which characterized *Thirst*. These poems have a buoyancy and joy which is infectious. Oliver's verse is spare and tightly written – every word is essential. Summer is the perfect time to read Mary Oliver; her ongoing themes of spirituality within and connection to the natural world will make you want to take a walk in the woods! If you're new to Oliver, also check out *American Primitive* which won the 1984 Pulitzer Prize for poetry."

Kayla Lenkner, Musselman Library

Title: *Neverwhere* by Neil Gaiman

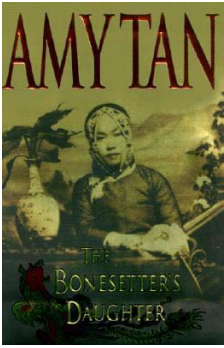
"*Neverwhere* is a novel set in the world of London Below, a strange universe that exists beneath the city of London but is invisible to its present day residents. Richard Meyhew is a businessman from London Above, who happens upon a wounded girl named Door, who is revealed to be a Lady from London Below. After rescuing her, Richard discovers that as a result of his interaction with London Below he too has become invisible-- his fiancé does not recognize him, his desk at work is cleared off, and he cannot even hail a cab. Determined to have his identity restored, Richard ventures into London Below to find the Lady Door, and becomes involved in her quest. There he encounters vampires, rat kings and even an angel. However, Richard cannot exist in both London Above and London Below-- he must choose between the two worlds. I chose this book because it is a dark and compelling fantasy that transports the reader to the complex and terrifying world of London Below, and it makes you consider the secret worlds that exist around us."



Sheila Mulligan, English

Title: *Most of Us Are Here Against Our Will* by David Levinson

"His characters haunt me even more than his metaphors. This book of stories, for me, is readable as an excellent novel. I loved it."



David W. Neagley

Title: *The Bonesetter's Daughter* by Amy Tan

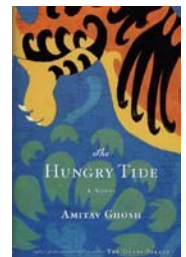


"I picked this book up at a book exchange in Iguazú Argentina for the bus, and it really had me spell-bound. I read 200 pages on a long bus ride and reserved the last 100 for my last week in Buenos Aires. Tan is a phenomenal author at developing characters that are easy to relate to. LuLing is Ruth's mother and immigrated from China to the US. We learn through Ruth during the first part that life has not always been easy for LuLing, and as she ages, Ruth has more burning questions about her past. Ruth, on the other hand, is a strong woman who is a provider for her family. She is caught between the abuse her mother and her partner's children give her. I fell in love with Ruth's character because I relate to her desire to hold her family together. At the same time I also relate to her grand emptiness that sometimes is experienced while doing everything for everyone else."

Monica Ogra, Environmental Studies and Globalization Studies

Title: *The Hungry Tide* by Amitav Ghosh

"What do man- (and woman-) eating tigers, crocodiles, rare dolphin research, flooding islands in the Bay of Bengal, the poet Rilke, and soul-searching 'fishes out of water' have in common? To find out, check out my 'must-read' for this year: *The Hungry Tide*."



Jonelle Pool, Education

Title: *Flower Net* by Lisa See

"I really liked this book for its insights into Chinese culture, the multi-layered suspenseful plot twists, and the engaging characters. It's definitely a good read."



Janet Powers, Interdisciplinary Studies & Women's Studies

Title: *The Fall of a Sparrow* by Robert Hellenga

"Although *The Fall of a Sparrow* by Robert Hellenga was published in 1998, I've just discovered this superbly written novel about a college professor who attends the trial in Bologna of Italian terrorists responsible for his daughter's death. Academically-inclined readers will also appreciate Hellenga's earlier novel, *Sixteen Pleasures* (1995) about one of the 'mud angels' who discovered an erotic manuscript while rescuing books from the 1966 flood in Florence."

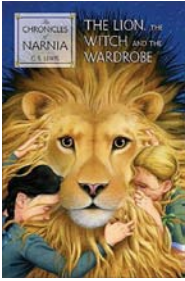
Kelly Rouleau

Title: *Freddy and Fredericka* by Mark Helprin



"I love Helprin's writing and this book kept me laughing as it follows the misadventures of the incompetent heirs to the British throne. I would definitely recommend it to anyone."





Andrew Royer

Title: *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis



"This was one of my favorite books growing up as a kid. When I found out they were making it into a movie, I decided to read it again. I realized the excitement of reading this book never really goes away and it is a good time at any age."

Timothy J. Shannon, History

Title: *Then We Came to the End* by Joshua Ferris

"A recommendation for these dark times: this book was described by reviewers as 'Kafka meets *The Office*.' With gallows humor, it tells the interlocking stories of employees at an advertising agency waiting to get the axe after the dot-com bubble burst in the late 1990s. In light of our current economic woes, it is more like *Mad Men* meets A.I.G."



Kate Sims

Title: *O Pioneers!* By Willa Cather

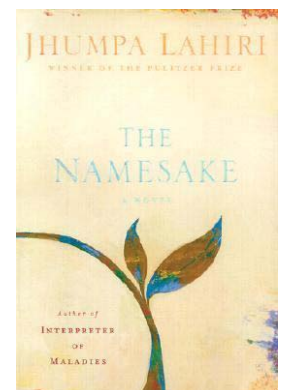


"[This was my] favorite book in middle school. I remember really liking it and relating to the main character Alexandra (a coming of age story)."

Allison Singley, Alumni and Parent Relations

Title: *The Namesake* by Jhumpa Lahiri

"This recent novel has many of the elements I love in a book: a wonderful family drama; a coming of age story; struggles with identity; specific questions about American identity and what it is to be 'American'; historical and cultural details that aren't American; and top-notch writing. From the opening page when the main character's mother goes into labor with him to the end when he is a grown man, I was enthralled. Gogol is an American with a Russian name who is born to Bengali parents. This is really good stuff! I place this novel among my favorite 21st-century American fiction reads, including *Middlesex*, *The Dive from Clausen's Pier*, and *Amy and Isabelle*."



Ralph Sorensen, Biology

Title: *The Tin Roof Blowdown* by James Lee Burke

"Fast-paced and action-packed crime novels have gotten me through many a long and lonely flight to the west coast. I expected more of the same when I picked up Burke's book - his latest in a series of Dave Robicheaux novels and my first encounter with his artistry. This man can write! Burke tells the story of the Katrina disaster in New Orleans with all the finesse of a graceful left hook. Consider this description of the immediate aftermath of the hurricane:

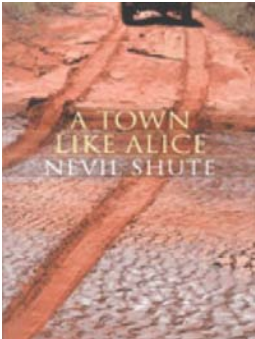
I saw a black baby hung in the branches of a tree, its tiny hands trailing in the current, its plastic diaper immaculate in the moonlight. I saw people eating from plastic packages of mustard and ketchup they had looted from a café, dividing what they had among themselves. Ten feet from them a dead cow matted with flies lay in the back of a wrecked pickup, a lead rope twisted around its neck. A gelatinous fat man wearing boxer trunks and mirrored sunglasses floated past us on a bed of inner tubes, a twelve pack of beer balanced on his stomach, one hand held high in a toast to a passing airboat.

Raymond Chandler and Dashielle Hammet would approve!"

Cheryl Vogel, Biology

Title: *The Road* by Cormac McCarthy

"You don't know what happened to get to this point, you don't know what will happen after the last page, but you are completely drawn in to this dark vision of a journey undertaken by a father and his young son."



Janelle Wertzberger, Musselman Library

Title: *A Town Like Alice* by Nevil Shute

"This novel by Englishman Nevil Shute was originally published in 1950. The first part, set in southeast Asia during World War II, is wrenching: kids die and leave their mothers behind, mothers die and leave their kids behind, there are rat bits and dysentery and all the horrors experienced by prisoners of war...but that is only a small part of the narrative arc. Persevere. Ahead is a lot to learn about the Australian outback in the mid-twentieth century. If you're a fan of the American pioneer narrative (as I am), this story may feel like a variation on that theme. I imbibed notes of *Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman*, as well. Remember how Jane Seymour's character swept into Colorado Springs, not unlike a colonialist, but in the end, everything really was better?"

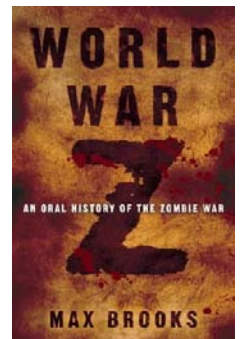
Great fodder for discussion. Because of that, and in spite of that, I was completely engaged by this story. It's not as highbrow as some of the other titles on this list, but it's a fine yarn. Isn't that what most readers seek, most of the time?"

Miranda Wisor, Musselman Library

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

"This book is a collection of multicultural, firsthand accounts of the great global zombie epidemic as collected through interviews by the author. If you're looking for page upon page of mindless zombie gore, then this book is not for you. There are no Hollywood zombies here. This is a tale of an international crisis and the ways that people reacted to it: there was panic, disbelief, retaliation, and finally people banded together to survive. Reactions from people of all walks of life are illustrated. You see people at their worst but unlike many apocalyptic stories you also see many, many people at their best and find a fair amount of levity tossed in for flavor. The collection of oral histories are laid out chronologically so that the reader can follow along with how the war began and progressed.

An amazing amount of detail makes the characters come alive and the war seem disturbingly plausible. Even if you don't normally enjoy zombie stories, you'll be absorbed by these first-hand accounts of the bravest souls to (n)ever walk the Earth."



NONFICTION

Michael Birkner, History

Title: *Land of Lincoln: Adventures in Abe's America* by Andrew Ferguson

"In this bicentennial year, are you looking for a book on Abraham Lincoln that a) will tell you things you didn't already know about the 16th president?; b) entertain you; and c) not do double duty as a doorstop? Look no further. Andrew Ferguson's compact and sprightly *Land of Lincoln: Adventures in Abe's America*, carries a reader to Lincoln sites from Richmond to Springfield, providing informed and sassy commentary on the way we understand Lincoln's life and his meaning for America. Along the way you will encounter Abe impersonators, neo-Cons who believe Lincoln was the nation's number one tyrant, artifact collectors, and leadership gurus who often visit Gettysburg to share Lincoln-style management lessons with members of the aspiring business class. If you like Bill Bryson's work, you'll like Andy Ferguson's *Land of Lincoln*. In the bargain you will leave the book a little more savvy about how 'getting right with Lincoln' also entails 'getting Lincoln right' in an age that has embraced history from the bottom up."



Justin Causey

Title: *Tell Me How This Ends: General David Petraeus and the Search for a Way Out of Iraq* by Linda Robinson



"[This book] is a description of the decision-making process behind major events and policies. It illustrates how clear objectives, goals, and actions can stave off disaster."

John Commito, Environmental Studies

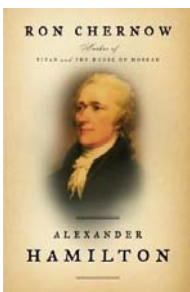
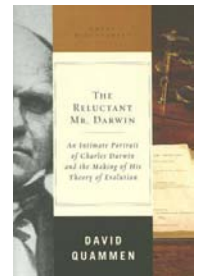
Title: *Tilt: A Skewed History of the Tower of Pisa* by Nicholas Shradly

"Gettysburg professor Jim Fink recommended this nicely written little book to me. I wish I had read it BEFORE my two sabbaticals at the University of Pisa! Shradly places the 'Torre Pendente' within the context of the incredible four-building complex called the 'Campo dei Miracoli,' the maritime republic of Pisa, and the Muslim-infused Mediterranean region before the rise of Florence. It's a quick, fun read, and you'll also find out why the Leaning Tower leans and how it was recently stabilized. Well, PROBABLY stabilized!"

Veronique Delesalle, Biology

Title: *The Reluctant Mr. Darwin* by David Quammen

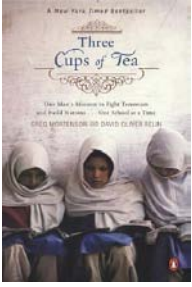
"For biologists, 2009 is the year of Darwin, when we celebrate both the 200th year of his birth and the 150th year since the publication of *The Origin of Species*. Quammen has written a page turner on one of the most studied biologists. The book explains why Darwin is still so important in Biology and why he delayed publishing his ideas for so many years."



Ann Harper Fender, Economics

Title: *Alexander Hamilton* by Ron Chernow

"This book makes modern politics seem tame and gentle. Chernow writes wonderful historians for the general reader interested in financial institutions and the personalities that built them. I also enjoyed his *House of Morgan*."



Bill Jones, Counseling Services

Title: *Three Cups of Tea* by Greg Mortenson

“...Greg Mortenson’s personal story of his crusade to build schools in northern Pakistan and Afghanistan is a testimony to one man’s way of changing the world by replacing guns and bombs with pencils, rhetoric and reading. It is the best non-fiction book I have enjoyed in a long time.”

Desiree Koser, Musselman Library

Title: *The Starving Artist’s Way* by Nava Lubelski

“This book is a collection of nifty, practical, yet low cost projects for the artistically minded. The cover exclaims, ‘Make it yourself. Make it cool. Make it cheap.’ Projects, which range from recipes to clothing to home décor, are juxtaposed with references to artists, art movements, and a solid sense of humor. There’s no bothersome plot to follow, so this book is ideal for those sporadic readers.”

Larry Marschall, Physics

Title: *One Square Inch of Silence: One Man’s Search for Natural Silence in a Noisy World* by Gordon Hempton and John Grossmann

“Gordon Hempton, the principal author of this ear-opening book, documents nature with an audio recorder rather than a camera. He won an Emmy for a PBS documentary that followed the dawn chorus of birdsong around the globe, and his sound clips of our living planet have been featured on National Public Radio. Lately he’s become distressed by the man-made sounds he hears everywhere. ‘Natural quiet,’ he writes, ‘has become an endangered species.’ A few years ago Hempton piled his recording equipment into an aging VW minibus and embarked on a 10,000 -mile ‘pinball route’ from the Olympic Peninsula to Washington, D.C., meeting a host of colorful characters along the way. There are echoes here of Robert Pirsig’s *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, which described a quirky cross-country motorcycle journey by a father and son. Hempton, like Pirsig, starts his cross-country search for silence accompanied by his self-absorbed, iPod-addicted daughter, Abby. In this deeply personal call to action, Hempton, like Pirsig, seems to be sending a message to the next generation: Turn down the volume, shut off the engines, and simply listen, simply listen. ‘Silence is not the absence of something,’ he writes, ‘but the presence of everything.’”

Title: *Decoding the Heavens: A 2000-Year-Old Computer and the Century-Long Search to Discover its Secrets* by Jo Marchant

“In 1900, sponge divers salvaging a 2000-year-old shipwreck near the Greek island of Antikythera discovered the remains of what looked like a complex assembly of gears, dials, and pointers. It was as strange, writes science journalist Jo Marchant, as ‘finding a stem engine on the ancient, pitted surface of the Moon,’ since the first geared clockworks previously known did not appear in Europe until over a thousand years later. The puzzle was unraveled after the 1960’s, when a Cambridge historian, Derek de Solla Price, managed to obtain x-ray images of the mechanism and to develop a plausible idea of how it worked as a device for predicting the positions of the sun, moon, and planets. In recent decades, additional hi-tech imaging by other scholars has fleshed out Price’s original idea, and as a result our appreciation of the technological achievements of our ancient Greek ancestors has undergone a major revision.”

Daniel McCall, Psychology

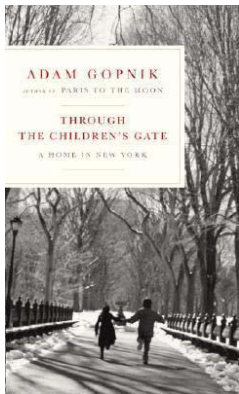
Title: *The Story of Sushi: An Unlikely Saga of Raw Fish and Rice* by Trevor Corson

“Any foodies who enjoy sushi should read this book. It is part drama, part food science, and part cultural history all (pardon the pun) ‘rolled’ into one. Everything you’d ever want to know about sushi is here - its fabrication, history, biology, and Westernization - interspersed within a personal narrative of a female sushi chef-in-training trying to break into a traditionally male-dominated profession. It will forever change the way you order and eat sushi.”

Dave Moore, Musselman Library

Title: *Three Cups of Tea* by Greg Mortenson

“Several fellow travelers on a recent trip out of the U.S. pounded the table for me to read this book, and for good reason! It is a page turner - starting with the author's unsuccessful attempt to climb K2, the mountain second in height only to Everest. Becoming lost on the way down, he finds himself near death in an unknown small village, and after the inhabitants nurse him to health he learns that there is no school there for the children. He resolves to return one day and build a school; eventually he does this and embarks on a life which leads to the establishment of many new schools in Pakistan and in the scariest parts of Afghanistan, with many hair-raising adventures along the way. He is an amazing person, who we all need to credit for his low-key and largely unsung approach to showing what we Americans care about. He has won many hearts and minds for us with his work. Should there be a Nobel Peace Prize for him in the future? Read the book; you'll vote yes - along with me.”



Jean Potuchek, Sociology

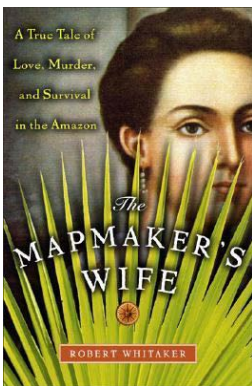
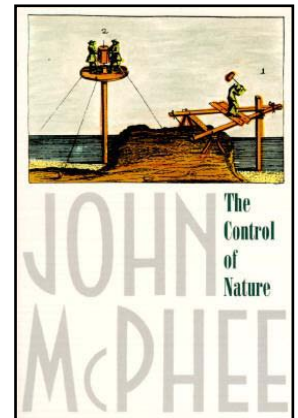
Title: *Through the Children's Gate* by Adam Gopnik

“This is a sequel of sorts to Gopnik's memoir of raising a child in Paris, *Paris to the Moon*. In 2000, the Gopniks moved with their son Luke and their new baby from Paris to a Manhattan apartment near Central Park. In this book, we see Luke learning to be American, but the second child, Olivia, is the star of the story. If Luke is a dreamy child of Paris, Olivia is a quintessential New Yorker. Where else would a three-year-old invent an imaginary friend who has a personal assistant and is too busy to play? When the Gopniks are eating lunch at a sidewalk cafe shortly after returning from a seashore vacation and one of the more colorful neighborhood characters goes by, screaming obscenities at no one in particular, it is Olivia who turns to her father, beaming, and says, ‘Daddy, aren't you happy to be back in New York?’ New York may be a very different place from Paris, but Gopnik's view of it is equally mesmerizing.”

Sarah Principato, Environmental Studies

Title: *The Control of Nature* by John McPhee

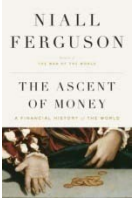
“I recently re-read McPhee's *The Control of Nature*, as I required it for my geologic disasters class. The students enjoyed the book so much that I thought I would recommend it for general summer reading to everyone. In McPhee's book, he discusses how humans have attempted to ‘control nature’. Three case studies are described in the book including humans spraying lava in Iceland to keep a harbor open; debris flows in California; and a discussion of the levee system adjacent to the Mississippi River. The book was written in 1989, and McPhee provides a chilling warning about the vulnerability of the New Orleans region to hurricane disasters.”



Susan Roach, Musselman Library

Title: *The Mapmaker's Wife* by Robert Whitaker

“Set in the Amazonian jungle in the 18th century, this is a true story of adventure and love. After a French expedition in South America to discover the exact shape of the earth, French scientist Jean Godin and his Peruvian wife, Isabel, become stranded at opposite ends of the Amazon. Isabel journeys alone through the torturous Amazon in an attempt to reunite with her husband. Romance, adventure, history, science, international intrigue--it's all here and it all happened!”



Charles McKinley Saltzman, English

Title: *The Ascent of Money: A Financial History of the World* by Niall Ferguson

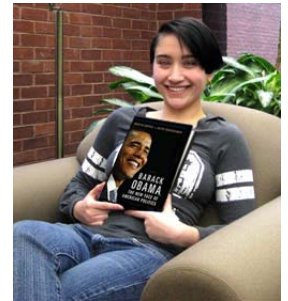
“Especially these days, money is on the minds of many. Ferguson's book is a nicely written history of this complex and pervasive topic.”

Jaimie N. Schock

Title: *Barack Obama, the New Face of American Politics*
by Martin Dupuis



“This book was essential to my academic career in the spring of 2008. It helped me to better understand Barack Obama and aided in my in-depth analysis of his personality and actions. I have read no better text on our new president.”



Aubrey Siebenaller

Title: *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle* by Barbara Kingsolver



“This book examines how our society has taken a wrong turn in its view of food production and eating for a healthy lifestyle, while giving suggestions on how to support a sustainable local food economy. Kingsolver’s entertaining and witty story of how she and her own family took on the challenge of eating sustainably raises an issue that will only increase in importance for our nation and world.”

FILM



Nancy Bernardi, Musselman Library

Title: *I've Loved You So Long* directed by Philippe Claudel

"A deeply moving film from France. It stars Kristin Scott Thomas who does an outstanding job as Juliette. Juliette has been in prison for 15 years for an unspeakable crime and now is living with her younger sister, Lea. She struggles with her past and tries to adjust to her new life. She slowly opens up and learns to forgive herself. This is a good example of why you should not limit your viewing to just American-made films! Wonderful!"

Title: *Doubt* directed by John Patrick Shanley

"I also enjoyed *Doubt*, starring Meryl Streep and Philip Seymour Hoffman. Father Flynn and Sister Aloysius Beauvier of St Nicholas School do not see eye to eye. She is the strong willed principal who wants the school to remain the same; he wishes to make changes. When Sister Aloysius is told that Father Flynn is paying a little too much attention to a student, she does her best to get rid of the priest. There is no 'doubt' in my mind that you should watch this movie. I thought Hannibal Lector (*Silence of the Lambs*) was scary---wait until you see Sister Aloysius Beauvier!"

Salma Monani, Environmental Studies

Title: *Sita Sings the Blues* by Nina Paley

"A Creative Commons animated film by Nina Paley that is available for free download on the internet, *Sita Sings the Blues* explores the meanings of local and global cultures. In its witty rendition of the famous Indian epic, the Ramayana, the film links past with present, America with India, and the author's own life with the female protagonist of the epic, Sita. In particular, the creative animation (three different styles) and the lyrical blues numbers provide refreshing and surprising commentary on intercultural connections. Worth a watch for anyone interested in Indian mythology, contemporary Indian culture, and more generally in issues of globalization."

Jack Ryan, Provost's Office

Title: *The Class* directed by Laurent Cantet and written by Cantet, Robin Campillo, and Francois Begaudeau

"Cantet's first two features, *Human Resources* (1999) and *Time Out* (2001) examine how individuals struggle with are crushed by institutions. *Human Resources* is about power relationships in the workplace, and *Time Out* is about a financial consultant who has been fired from his job but tells no one, not even his family. *The Class*, based on Begaudeau's novel *Entre les Murs*, revolves around the relationship between a teacher (played by Begaudeau) and his students, a multi-racial collection of inner-city teens. The film exposes the fault line between white and non-white culture. Like his other films, Cantet's *The Class* is vividly realistic in style and rich in social detail, but the film will pull you into the space between teacher and student."



Title: *Frozen River* directed and written by Courtney Hunt

“The hard reality of poverty in America occupies the core of Hunt’s film debut. Mellissa Leo, a familiar face for fans of *Homicide: Life on the Street*, portrays a working-class mother in northern New York. Because of her extreme financial problems, Leo’s character, Ray Eddy, who lives in a battered single-wide trailer, not far from the Canadian border and the St. Regis Mohawk reservation, ends up in an uneasy alliance with Lila (Misty Upham), a Mohawk single mother also in need of cash—they transport illegal aliens across the St. Lawrence River. Not cinematically ambitious, *Frozen River* is anchored by solid performances, especially Leo and Upham, and a solid story.”

Title: *Sugar* directed and written by Anna Boden and Ryan Fleck

“*Sugar*, the new film from the writing-directing team who brought you *Half Nelson*, is a baseball film, but it’s not like any baseball film you have ever seen. Like *Half Nelson*, *Sugar* contains a social-political subtext that makes it a potent addition to the sports film genre. The film has no name stars. At the center of the film is 20-year-old pitcher Miguel ‘Sugar’ Santos (Algenis Pérez Soto). Pulled into one of the Dominican Republic’s baseball academies, facilities used as Major League Baseball conduits, for his raw pitching ability, ‘Sugar’ masters the ‘knuckle curve,’ an unhittable pitch, at least for non-professional hitters. Most of the film’s dialogue is in Spanish. ‘Sugar,’ his family, and his friends all dream of Yankee Stadium stardom and of escaping poverty. *Half Nelson* lacked sentimentality, and so does *Sugar*. ‘Sugar’s’ story takes him from Boca Chica to Iowa and then beyond. Boden and Fleck are filmmakers who are not beholden to this year’s popular subject matter and they certainly do not believe that style makes a movie.”

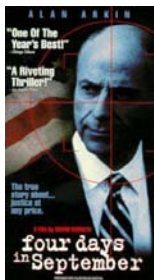
Title: *The Wrestler* directed by Darren Aronofsky and written by Robert D. Siegel

“Mickey Rourke appears in almost every frame of Darren Aronofsky’s *The Wrestler*. Rourke looks nothing like he did in *Diner*, *Body Heat*, or *Barfly*. He still manages to fuse toughness and tenderness, conflicting traits that made him an appealing screen presence, even when he was a Baltimore hairdresser, an arsonist, or the drunken Henry Chinaski. Rourke’s face is a damaged mask, battered during a bizarre journey from early Hollywood promise to boxer to self-destructive bodybuilder to a career in movies no one sees. Rourke portrays Randy ‘The Ram’ Robinson, a professional who regularly performed at the top of the card in places like Madison Square Garden throughout the 1980s. Now ‘The Ram’ works high school gymnasiums and American Legion halls in New Jersey. Hard times are all he knows. His sport transformed, his body breaking down, his fan base reduced, ‘The Ram’ refuses to give up. Aronofsky’s work is always hampered by conventional plots and an obvious desire to reach deep meaning. *The Wrestler* is not free from these flaws, but it is an emotional look into a life spent on a stage in front of adoring fans, that place where reality gives way to fantasy.”

Allison Singley, Alumni and Parent Relations

Title: *Slings & Arrows* (Canadian TV Series)

“This is a truly excellent Canadian tv series (Musselman Library owns it) about the off-stage shenanigans of a fictional Shakespeare Festival and so much more. The tagline is ‘a comedy about drama,’ and is it ever funny! For Shakespeare aficionados and novices alike (you’ll learn a lot!), this is an engaging, enlightening, impeccably-acted series that should not be missed.”



Barbara Sommer, History

Title: *Four Days in September* directed by Bruno Barreto

“Directed by Bruno Barreto, *Four Days in September* tells the story of the 1969 kidnapping of U.S. Ambassador Charles Elbrick (played by Alan Arkin) by the radical MR-8 group. Based on a book by journalist Fernando Gabeira and originally released in Brazil as *O que é isso companheiro* (1997), this film was nominated for a Best Foreign Language Film Oscar. While it provides insight into politics during the Brazilian dictatorship, it is a high tension drama.”

Title: *Break of Dawn (Rompe el Alba)* directed by Isaac Artenstein

“*Break of Dawn* (1988) is an independent film by a friend of mine, Isaac Artenstein. Also historical, it’s about the first Spanish-language radio star in 1920s-30s Los Angeles, Pedro J. Gonzales (played by Oscar Chavez, popular Mexican folk singer). When he got out the Hispanic vote, corrupt political opponents framed him and got him sent to San Quentin.”

Robin Wagner, Musselman Library

Title: *The True Meaning of Pictures: Shelby Lee Adams’ Appalachia* directed by Jennifer Baichwal

“Musselman Library has a documentary to fit every interest. One that I’d recommend is *The True Meaning of Pictures*, which introduced me to the work of Shelby Lee Adams. Adams has devoted more than 30 years of his life to visiting and making portraits of families living in Appalachia. His photography is astonishing, and the filmmaker does a great job in fleshing out the lives behind Adams’ lens. You get to know the families he’s photographed and experience their struggles and shared joys. The film also delves into the controversy that surrounds Adams, who is accused by some of exploiting his subjects and perpetuating stereotypes. The tale is provocative. You are left pondering the ‘true meaning’ of the pictures.”

Miranda Wisor, Musselman Library

Title: *Band of Brothers* directed by David Frankel and Tom Hanks

“This miniseries collection is guaranteed to keep you occupied for days or weeks to make it through the entire story line. *Band of Brothers* is a hallowing look at European combat during World War II; telling the epic tale of Easy Company. Easy Company is followed from boot camp through V E Day. Under the command of Lt. Richard Winters, Easy Company saw some of the most difficult battles of WWII. What makes this miniseries really special isn’t just the historical accuracy; it’s the strict attention to detail and the tribute to the ‘greatest generation.’ The directors’ fanatical attention to detail shines in every episode of the series. Also adding to the amazing depiction of events are cuts from interviews of the survivors from Easy Company – the actual men the actors are portraying. Anyone with interest in history, the military, or knowing more about the lives our fathers/grandfathers led, should not miss the opportunity to see this award winning production.”

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