



Summer 2007

You've Gotta Read This: Summer Reading at Musselman Library (2007)

Musselman Library
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You've Gotta Read This: Summer Reading at Musselman Library (2007)

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

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You've gotta read this!!!



*Now
including
films!*

Summer Reading @ Musselman Library

“There is no mistaking a real book when one meets it.
It is like falling in love.”

- Christopher Morley

• **Summer 2007** •



Summer is finally here! Classes are over, the days are longer, and the time is right to unwind. Heading off to your summer destination? Make sure to stock up on that “must read” list you’ve been adding to all year!

Need help choosing a title? Musselman Library scoured the campus asking faculty, staff and administrators for their favorite summer reads. This year we have gone a step further and also asked for film recommendations. Inside, you’ll find a range of films from academy award winning dramas to the best of foreign cinema. Alongside these films, you’ll also find suggestions for books on topics ranging from German poetry and vampires to “clumsy Europeans” and a traveling circus. Whether it’s thumbing your way through a new book on the beach or curling up for an evening in with a good movie, enjoy a happy and safe summer. See you in the fall!

*From the staff at Musselman Library
May 2007*

Organized alphabetically by faculty/administrator/staff member:

John Barnett, Musselman Library

Title: *Suite Française* by Irene Némirovsky

“Definitely not your summer ‘beach trash,’ but an altogether enjoyable read. *Suite Française* is a beautiful, unfinished novel Némirovsky wrote while living through the invasion and occupation of France during the early years of World War II. The story follows several characters in both urban and rural areas as they try to deal with rapidly changing events and alliances while living alongside of and under German military forces. Némirovsky, who died at Auschwitz in 1942, never finished the novel; the story goes that her daughters kept the manuscript for years without reading it, assuming it was a journal of the events that would be too painful to read. The novel was only published in the original French in 2004, and then released in the U.S. in English in 2006.

Despite the grim back story, it is a lovely, poetic work, chronicling the events of the time with humor, pathos, and generosity. Némirovsky humanizes all sides of the struggle, offering a nuanced portrait of citizens, soldiers, survivors, and collaborators of all classes and calibers. Such a pity that the author didn’t live to finish her work; such a joy that what she did finish survives to this day.” - John Barnett

Michael Birkner, History

Title: *The River of Doubt: Theodore Roosevelt’s Darkest Journey* by Candice Millard

“I am happy to recommend Candice Millard’s *The River of Doubt: Theodore Roosevelt’s Darkest Journey*. I’ve read a good deal about TR over the years, but Millard’s riveting account of his near-fatal journey in 1913 through Amazonian waters is fresh and distinctive. Millard brilliantly depicts the terrain, the task and the troubles that TR faced. She captures his courage and humanity under the most trying of circumstances, enhancing my appreciation for this remarkable human being. *River of Doubt* is a must-read for TR fans, but I recommend it for anyone interested in a great adventure tale. *River of Doubt* begs translation to the big screen. Hollywood movie or no, this book will entertain and enlighten you.” - Michael Birkner

Deborah Larsen Cowan, English

Title: *Jesus: Uncovering the Life, Teachings, and Relevance of a Religious Revolutionary* by Marcus Borg

“*Jesus* offers new, powerful insights in clear prose. Chaplain Joseph Donnell brought this book to my attention and some of us used it as the basis for lively discussions this past semester. Marcus Borg is Hundere Distinguished Professor of Religion and Culture at Oregon State University and is a famous contemporary Jesus scholar. His D.Phil. is from Oxford University.” - Deborah Larsen Cowan

Pamela Dalrymple, Civil War Institute

Title: *Water for Elephants* by Sara Gruen

“*Water for Elephants* by Sara Gruen is my recommendation for a great summer read. Jacob Jankowski is a 90 year old man remembering his days with a circus during The Great Depression. The novel opens with a day of disaster at the circus and Jacob admitting he kept a secret from that day for over 70 years. It then moves to the ninety-something year old Jacob in a nursing home. As the older Jacob fights to survive the indignities of old age he recounts the story of his life with the Benzini Brothers Most Spectacular Show On Earth. Gruen draws you into this touching story with her rich descriptions of characters and events. I did not want to put this book down and was sorry when it ended.” ~ Pamela Dalrymple

Ruth de Jesus, Intercultural Advancement

Title: *White Like Me* by Tim Wise

“Tim Wise is a white anti-racist activist whose book uncovers the well-established but ignored phenomenon of white privilege in America. He flips the debate on affirmative action by exposing every day affirmative action for whites by exploring his own history and that of whites generally in the US.

His website, www.timwise.org, gives reviews of his book, including one from the *Journal of Higher Education*.” ~ Ruth de Jesus

Ann Fender, Economics

Title: *Life of Pi* by Yann Martel

“Yann Martel’s *Life of Pi* can be read, I suspect, on many levels. Taken at the fantastical, literal level (my approach), it is an absorbing book, funny and also sad, about a boy and a tiger, afloat in the Pacific Ocean. Along the way are interesting parallel, perhaps even dominant, narratives about zoos, religion, and survival skills.” ~ Ann Fender

Vince Formica, Biology

Title: *A Fish Caught in Time: The Search for the Coelacanth* by Samantha Weinberg

“I thoroughly enjoyed this book. It is an easy read that takes the reader through the thrill and uncertainty of scientific discovery. The book is written for the lay person, but touches on important concepts in evolutionary biology. It also focuses the story around a young female naturalist/biologist; who made an extremely important addition to our knowledge of evolutionary biology early in the century.” ~ Vince Formica

Darren Glass, Mathematics

Title: *Special Topics in Calamity Physics* by Marisha Pessl

“Pessl’s debut novel (which actually has nothing to do with physics) came out last year and is partly about father-daughter relationships, partly a murder mystery, partly a naïve-girl-falls-in-with-the-cool-crowd-in-school-story, and partly a parody of academic writing chock-full of citations to imaginary books and course syllabi. The book begins when Blue Van Meer, a high school girl being raised by her single father and one of the more interesting main characters you will ever read a novel about, moves once again and starts her umpteenth new school and has to get used to the new social dynamics, and to say much more about the plot would give things away. Like Dave Eggers or Jonathan Safran Foer, the author at times teeters awfully close to the line of being too clever and gimmicky for her own good, but for my tastes she stayed on the right side of that line. The book garnered a lot of comparisons to Donna Tartt’s *Secret History* and Curtis Sittenfeld’s *Prep*, but I found it to be far more enjoyable to read than either of those as well as having more substance.” ~ Darren Glass

Tina Grim, Civil War Institute

Title: *Nineteen Minutes* by Jodi Picoult

“In this gripping novel about a shooting in a high school, you get to know the characters intimately—the victims, the shooter, their families—you feel the pain and anguish as they try to heal from this experience. This book evoked emotions that haunted me for days after reading it. I can honestly say the book made me more empathetic to how people react to their different life experiences. Anyone who has ever been a parent will surely identify with the characters in this book. It is a well written, fast paced book that I couldn’t wait to finish.” ~ Tina Grim

Scott Hill, Sociology/Anthropology

Title: *Geek Love* by Katherine Dunn

“A fellow anthropologist passed this book on to me at the Abidjan airport and I gleefully read it in Cameroon before passing it on to an unsuspecting missionary. A bizarre and freakish tale of a traveling circus run by a family of genetic mutants conceived in the natural laboratory of drugs, radiation, and other means to create offspring with unique characteristics. They keep a museum of their failures in formaldehyde-filled jars. Arturo the Aqua-Boy, complete with fins, develops a cult following, which he manipulates into a pyramid scheme for fame and fortune. Less exotic novels have never been the same for me.” ~ Scott Hill

Title: *Ordinary Decent Criminal* (film)

“A film based loosely on Martin Cahill, an Irish Robin Hood who was eventually killed by the Irish Republican Army whose life is detailed more thoroughly in *The General*. In this film, he is played by Kevin Spacey and is portrayed as an Irish thief with a sense of humor who follows his own code of ethics. His gang steals a Caravaggio painting worth millions, the IRA want a cut, and the police are tired of being made to look like fools. Meanwhile Spacey tries to keep his normally happy polygynous family (he married two sisters) and his gang together under all the stress of being watched 24/7 by the police. Hip sound track to boot.” ~ Scott Hill

Ian Isherwood, English

Title: *The Code of the Woosters* by P.G. Wodehouse

“I would say it’s a groundbreaking work, but it isn’t, it is just a good romp through the mind of a genius told through the voice of a nitwit. Meeting Bertie Wooster changed my life and now he’s like a best friend - a silly, extremely unreliable, and impeccably dressed best friend. If you can’t find a laugh in Wodehouse then you don’t have a sense of humor.” ~ Ian Isherwood

Nancy Johnson, Musselman Library

Title: *Silence of the Lambs* and *Mrs. Palfrey at the Claremont* (films)

“My all time favorite movie is *Silence of the Lambs*, winner of five academy awards in 1991. Even after all these years, Anthony Hopkins as Dr. Hannibal Lector can still make my skin crawl! If you are in the mood to be frightened, don’t miss this one! But, a more recent film (and dare I say quite different than my previous choice) that I thoroughly enjoyed was *Mrs. Palfrey at the Claremont* starring Joan Plowright. I watched it with my Mom and we laughed and we cried! Joan Plowright can do no wrong in my eyes. I just love her!” ~ Nancy Johnson

Matthew Kittelberger, Biology

Title: *An Unquiet Mind* by Kay Redfield Jamison

“A compelling ‘insider’s view’ of manic-depressive illness. What makes this book unique is that the author not only suffers from manic-depression, but is also a world-renowned clinical psychologist specializing in researching and treating mood disorders. She is thus able to seamlessly weave together her personal perspectives on what it’s like to suffer from this disorder with modern scientific and clinical perspectives on neurological mechanisms and treatments.” ~ Matthew Kittelberger

Larry Marschall, Physics

Title: *The Wild Trees: A Story of Passion and Daring* by Richard Preston

“Surprisingly, one of the few remaining unexplored habitats on earth is in the United States: the high forest canopy of the American Northwest. During the past 15 years, however, a group of athletic adventurers has adapted techniques first developed by tree surgeons, cavers, and climbers to scale the heights of tall redwoods and Douglas firs. Richard Preston, known for his best-selling book about Ebola virus, *The Hot Zone*, has climbed with these remarkable people and listened to their stories. His account of life hundreds of feet from the ground in the California forest, no less riveting than an adventure in the high Himalayas, reveals an aerial ecosystem as rich and exotic as any in the remotest depths of the Amazon.” ~ Larry Marschall

Brian Meier, Psychology

Title: *The End of Faith: Religion, Terror, and the Future of Reason* by Sam Harris

“Harris’ book systematically describes what he believes is the destructive power of organized religion. *The End of Faith* delineates the view of an atheist who insists in rational decision making. It is a provocative book both for the majority of Americans who believe in God and for the small minority of Americans who call themselves atheists.” ~ Brian Meier

Ken Mott, Political Science

Title: *Gettysburg College* by Michael Birkner and *To Waken Fond Memory: Moments in the History of Gettysburg College* by Anna Jane Moyer

“*Gettysburg College* by Michael Birkner and *To Waken Fond Memory* by Anna Jane Moyer, both published within the past year, are treasures for those who are in any way connected to our institution. These able writers, who are themselves an important part of Gettysburg’s fabric, take us to some fascinating corners of the College’s history. In the first book, professor of history Birkner provides a delightful pictorial review of our origins and development with the support of thoughtful commentary and insight. In the second, Librarian Emerita Moyer offers up some thirty nicely written vignettes of Gettysburg personalities, social life, and the physical maturation of the campus. Together, these works bring alive our rich and varied past and are well worth having on our bookshelves.” ~ Ken Mott

Sheila Mulligan, English

Title: *Up All Night* by Tom Scilipoti

“From the book jacket: ‘Baptized Catholic but lost in a culture driven by sex, drugs and superficiality, Chris Castile starts to try to find his way back to his religious roots . . . Manic depression runs in the Castile family, and, as Chris sobers up, his mental health ironically declines. As a result, he can no longer sleep, nor can he stop racing after Truth.’ Scilipoti proves that comedy is tragedy on speed, or, in some cases, serotonin.” ~ Sheila Mulligan

Rud Platt, Environmental Studies

Title: *Omnivore’s Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals* by Michael Pollan.

“Where does our food come from? The short answer: much of it is derived from government-subsidized corn made possible by cheap oil. For the long answer, pick up this engrossing book. One part travelogue, one part investigative exposé, and one part Darwinian treatise, the *Omnivore’s Dilemma* will have you salivating, retching -- and wanting more.” ~ Rud Platt

Title: *Pan’s Labyrinth* and *The Lives of Others* (films)

“Like Martin Scorsese’s *The Departed* (winner of Best Picture), these two movies explore the themes of power, corruption, loyalty, and betrayal in authoritarian regimes. But while *The Departed* ends with a thud, these two movies soar to highly satisfying and profound conclusions.” ~ Rud Platt

Jonelle Pool, Education

Title: *Water for Elephants* by Sara Gruen

“I was drawn into Jacob Jankowski’s story from the first page. Family tragedy prevents Jacob from taking his final examination for veterinary school and a desperate decision frames the rest of his colorful life. One of the best reasons to read this book is for Gruen’s understanding and portrayal of our indomitable human spirit. Don’t miss this book!” ~ Jonelle Pool

Title: *Amazing Grace* (film)

“I was deeply moved by this beautiful film about the competing tensions surrounding the slave trade in Britain. William Wilberforce’s fight was legendary, his sacrifices significant, and his courage insurmountable. I hope the moral lessons of this movie will stay with us forever to remind us that the courage of a single individual to do the right thing can be the impetus for social change. This movie is inspirational and I highly recommend it!” ~ Jonelle Pool

Jean Potuchek, Sociology/Anthropology

Title: *The Lobster Coast: Rebels, Rusticators, and the Struggle for a Forgotten Frontier* by Colin Woodard

“This book is an unconventional social history of Maine from the perspective of the coastal lobster fisheries. Woodard’s account takes us from the first European landings to the present and puts the current challenges to coastal fisheries from environmental degradation and globalization in a larger socio-historical context. Informative and riveting.” ~ Jean Potuchek

Title: *Who Killed the Electric Car* (film)

“This documentary is structured as a classic whodunit, with lots of suspects in the murder of the electric car. Scenes of perfectly good leased EV-1s being taken away to be shredded over the protests of the people who had leased them are particularly compelling.” ~ Jean Potuchek

Janet Powers, English/Asian Studies

Title: *The Painted Drum* by Louise Erdrich

“This may be the finest novel that Erdrich has written, perhaps because it draws together Native Americans in New England with those in the Midwest, but also because it raises important questions about indigenous artifacts and where they belong, poverty and single mothers, and relationships of various kinds. It’s a mystery of sorts, a spiritual adventure and a compelling story.” ~ Janet Powers

Title: *The Inheritance of Loss* by Kiran Desai

“The daughter of a well known Indian novelist, Kiran Desai has far surpassed her mother in this post-colonial novel of an anglophile Indian family living out the fading dream of what was once their elite identity under the British Raj. Set in the hills of northern India, the story is defined by magnificent landscape description as well as nuances of human feeling. No surprise that it won this year’s Booker Prize (UK)!” ~ Janet Powers

Sarah Principato, Environmental Studies

Title: *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini

“I could not put this book down, as the author takes you to Afghanistan to America and back. I don’t want to give away too many details, but I highly recommend it.” ~ Sarah Principato

Kathryn Rhett, English

Title: *She’s Not There: A Life in Two Genders* by Jennifer Finney Boylan

“If I have one complaint about Jenny Boylan’s recent campus reading here, it is that she didn’t read enough of her wonderful memoir about the unusual experience of being born into a body of the wrong gender. Professor of English at Colby College since 1988, Boylan asked her Gettysburg audience, ‘What would you think if a faculty member here changed their sex?’ Her very funny memoir tells the serious story of a profound life change. The first chapter alone will keep you reading!” ~ Kathryn Rhett

Michael Ritterson, German

Title: *Twentieth-Century German Poetry: An Anthology*, ed. Michael Hofmann

“This collection holds marvelous discoveries, whether you’re a long-time reader of modern German verse or just beginning to explore it. Editor Michael Hofmann has assembled not only a remarkable collection of German poems by the famous and the obscure, but also a brilliant team of English translators, himself among them. Don’t skip his introduction, which is perceptive, witty, wise, and brief; the rest of the book can keep you occupied for the entire summer, even if you don’t read German – but you’ll be tempted to now.” ~ Michael Ritterson

Susan Russell, Theatre Arts

Title: *Call it Sleep* by Henry Roth

“Few books describe the terror and beauty of a child’s perspective with such authentic mystical intensity as this autobiographical novel of a Jewish immigrant boy at the beginning of the twentieth century. The poetic dialogue, vivid characters and poignant story combine to make this one of my all-time favorite books!” ~ Susan Russell

Title: *In Cold Blood* by Truman Capote

“After seeing *Capote* and *Infamous* (another terrific take on the Truman Capote story that I think is actually a little bit better than *Capote*), I read *In Cold Blood*. I was bowled over by the story itself and also by Capote’s prose. This summer, I’m going to try to read everything else he’s ever written, beginning with *Breakfast at Tiffany’s*.” ~ Susan Russell

Charlie Saltzman, English

Title: *The Lay of the Land* by Richard Ford

“It is poor practice to recommend a book that one has not finished, but I’ll do that anyway. I am halfway through Richard Ford’s novel, *The Lay of the Land*, and commend it. I hadn’t known about Ford before, for which ignorance, shame on me. He has a good eye and ear for the culture of these days, in this novel in coastal New Jersey, and he writes with a mix of the sardonic and sympathetic. Ford can turn a phrase, and a reader can enjoy his craft.” ~ Charlie Saltzman

Tim Shannon, History

Title: *The Clumsiest People in Europe: Or, Mrs. Mortimer’s Bad-Tempered Guide to the Victorian World* by Todd Pruzan

“Are you the kind of traveler who harbors the sneaking suspicion that people all around the world would be a lot better off if they were just more like you? If so, then this is the travel guide for you! Mrs. Mortimer was a nineteenth-century author of cautionary children’s literature who also dabbled in advice for those youngsters foolish enough to wonder what life was like in places other than England (most of her advice boiled down to ‘I told you to stay home.’) Trust in Mrs. Mortimer to tell you that Scottish food was lousy, the Spanish were in thrall to Catholic superstition, and the Portuguese were in fact the clumsiest people in Europe. This slender volume, edited by a modern reader who fell under her spell, offers a compilation of Mrs. Mortimer at her worst, which is to say, at her best.” ~ Tim Shannon

Allison Singley, Alumni and Parent Relations

Title: *Beloved* by Toni Morrison

“My recommendation for this year is *Beloved* by Toni Morrison. This masterpiece most likely needs no introduction, but ‘it has it all’: family drama; multiple love stories; unvarnished American history; a complicated murder; a ghost; redemption, and on and on. *Beloved* was published 20 years ago and most certainly is worth a re-read, or a first reading, in honor of this anniversary. The story has not lost any of its power or relevance, and I continue to savor Morrison’s exquisite style and to be moved by the brutality of her content. For summertime trips in the car, I HIGHLY recommend listening to Toni Morrison read this novel (available through Books on Tape)—it’s an experience you won’t soon forget. But be aware! *Beloved* is not for the faint of heart, nor is it a good idea for children to hear this riveting tale.” ~ Allison Singley

Ralph A. Sorensen, Biology

Title: *Drop City* by T. Coraghessan Boyle

“Boyle writes with remarkable ease and grace, propelling two stories in an intertwined narrative. The title refers to a group of hippies staggering through the early seventies within a dysfunctional commune, but the real heroes are a young couple eking out a life together in the Alaskan wilderness. The overarching moral is about the importance of committing to another person (other persons?) rather than an inchoate cause. This is a story I did not want to end.” ~ Ralph A. Sorensen

Miranda Speelman, Musselman Library

Title: *Crimson Kiss* by Trisha Baker

“Meghann O’Neill, a young woman living in 1940s’ is seduced and transformed into a vampire by the evil Simon Baldevar; a vicious vampire who makes the infamous Lestat of Anne Rice fame seem mild in comparison. The story soon turns into a decades long cat and mouse game with unique and original players in the game to fill in the story. You’ll be cheering for Meghann but just as excited to see Simon enter a scene. The top quality dictation and vivid character development turn a fun and exciting story into a brilliant page turner. *Crimson Kiss* is the first in a trilogy of books but can be read as a stand alone book, though after finding the surprise twist at the end you might be compelled to read all three.”

~ Miranda Speelman

Kerr Thompson, Spanish

Title: *Sepharad* by Antonio Muñoz Molina

“*Sepharad* is a ‘novel’ that weaves together various haunting narratives about real and fictional people ranging from victims of the Holocaust or Stalinism to people disoriented by the aging process or dying of AIDS. Not light in any sense of the word, it’s engaging and thought-provoking.” ~ Kerr Thompson

Title: *Volver*, directed by Pedro Almodóvar (film)

“For anyone who didn’t see it on the big screen, I highly recommend Pedro Almodóvar’s last film, *Volver*. Almodóvar at his best, this movie is touching and comic.” ~ Kerr Thompson

Isabel Valiela, Spanish

Title: *Monkey Hunting* by Cristina García

“I recommend the Cuban-American writer Cristina García’s latest novel, *Monkey Hunting*. It is a multi-generational family saga that takes place in China, Cuba, the United States, and Vietnam. The story begins in 1857 when Chen Pan is tricked into boarding a boat that will take him to Cuba as an indentured servant. In Cuba he will escape slavery in a sugar plantation and begin a new life. This is a wonderful narrative tapestry that explores the complexities of national and racial identities, at the same time depicting the universal need for belonging.” ~ Isabel Valiela

Amy Ward, Musselman Library

Title: *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* by Robert M. Pirsig

“A touching story of a father and son summer motorcycle trip, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* reveals the importance of how the simple pleasures in our lives can lead to revelations of purpose and existence. Basically, stop and smell the roses, there is time!

Title: *Donnie Darko* Director’s cut, written & directed by Richard Kelly (film)

A movie with many-many levels, themes in this cult classic touch upon destiny, public deception vs. private truths, sacrifice, and true love. *Donnie Darko* shows us that an individual does have the ability to make changes, for the better, in their local communities.” ~ Amy Ward

Janelle Wertzberger, Musselman Library

Title: *Schoolhouse Rock!* 30th Anniversary DVD (film)

“If you grew up in the 1970s, you’re probably already humming one of the *Schoolhouse Rock*’s songs. If you require a little more background information, *Schoolhouse Rock* presented animated, musical shorts on Saturday morning broadcast television back when I was in the target audience. They were educational (focusing on grammar, math, history, etc.) but decidedly fun! Who remembers ‘Conjunction Junction?’ How about ‘I’m Just a Bill’ or ‘We the People,’ which is why I can recite (most of) the U.S. Constitution today? A personal favorite is ‘Verb! That’s What’s Happening!’

I recently checked out this DVD and took it in the car on a 3,000-mile road trip to Texas. It was a huge hit with our whole family – the 4-year-old, the 2-year-old, and the thirtysomething set. As a bonus, my preschooler can now tell you what a noun is! Revisit your inner child by checking out this DVD.”

~ Janelle Wertzberger

Charles Zabrowski, Classics

Author: Terry Pratchett

“ANYTHING by Terry Pratchett. Alternate-world fantasy with a satiric bite, frequently hilarious, and sometimes with a serious message. Highly recommended.” ~ Charles Zabrowski