Summer 2018

You've Gotta Read This: Summer Reading at Musselman Library (2018)

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You’ve Gotta Read This: Summer Reading at Musselman Library (2018)

Abstract
Each year, Musselman Library asks Gettysburg College faculty, staff, and administrators to help create a suggested summer reading list. We hope to inspire students and the rest of our community to take time in the summer to sit back, relax, and read; or watch a memorable film.

With the 2018 collection, 102 employees offer 178 recommendations of favorite books, films, and television programs. These selections touch on everything from politics to romance.

We include several special features this year. Two of our regular columnists return once again: James Udden with his latest recommendations for the best film and TV, and Allen Guelzo who reveals some of his favorite fiction. There are also columns recommending films about the importance of a free press, and outdoor adventurer Tucker Little offers ideas for reading and podcasts for a summer expedition.

Everyone is sure to find some treasures in these pages. Happy reading!

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

Disciplines
Library and Information Science

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You’ve Gotta Read This!

Summer Reading @ Musselman Library 2018
Photograph courtesy of Elizabeth Miller ’19. She took this picture during a wilderness training institute with the GRAB (Gettysburg Recreational Adventure Board) Staff in North Carolina’s coastal islands.
Dear Reader,

If you climb to the top of one of the many ridges surrounding Gettysburg and look to the west, you will see the line of the Blue Ridge summit, bending southerly in the great sweep of the Appalachian Mountains. From the ground, it is impossible to see past that craggy demarcation: our visual register of geographic space ends there, against a boundless expanse of sky.

What lies on the other side, far beyond what we can see? (Don’t say “Pittsburgh.”)

We who choose to spend much of our lives reading are forever re-asking and re-answering that question. We are held by intimacies, but we are thrilled by distances. For us, books are the impetus and excuse to imagine far-off lands, historical epochs, cosmic planes, mythical realms—states of existence and forms of reality far removed from wherever we happen to be. Part of the rapture and mystery of reading is that each of us, proceeding from a writer’s description, must conjure individually the look and feel of that distant place: literature, more than any other art form, requires us to will ourselves past the limits of our vision to that “other side.”

Drawn from the full span of the campus community, this year’s You’ve Gotta Read This! once again represents the cream of a year’s reading. Politics and history, detection and romance, comedy and tragedy, crisis and escape— it’s all here, personally recommended by your friends and colleagues. We also bring you the themed suggestions of campus experts: from two journalists (Sunni DeNicola and Thomas Barstow) come a variety of films demonstrating the democratic importance of a free press; from Tucker Little, Director of Experiential Education, what to read (and listen to) before and during your summertime expedition; from James Udden, a survey of last year’s highlights in film and television. Professor Allen C. Guelzo also confesses to what he reads when he’s not reading Civil War literature!

The variety offered here will carry you over the mountains and across the sea, in any direction you care to go. What lies on the other side? We who read will spend our lives asking the question. For there will always be another mountain to imagine ourselves beyond, another distance to travel in the mind—another book to read.

From the staff of Musselman Library

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The Alice Network by Kate Quinn

Along the lines of Kristin Hannah’s The Nightingale and Martha Hall Kelly’s Lilac Girls, The Alice Network is historical fiction that grips the reader and is impossible to put down. The story takes place post-World War II, but flashes back to WWI. Follow three unlikely friends on their journey to find Charlie St. Clair’s beloved cousin Rose... and learn more about themselves along the way.

Pam Eisenhart, President’s Office

Ancillary Justice by Ann Leckie

Ancillary Justice is the first novel in a trilogy that explores issues of technology, identity, politics, and gender from the perspective of Breq, the last piece of a destroyed military starship’s artificial intelligence. Despite the weighty issues at its heart, the book is enjoyable and reveals characters’ motivations and histories over time, keeping readers in suspense and encouraging them to continue.

Brent Harger, Sociology

Based on a True Story by Delphine de Vigan

This recently-translated international bestseller chronicles what is initially a benign friendship between the narrator, Delphine, a well-respected writer of literary fiction, and a woman, L., she meets in a friend’s home. L. slowly insinuates herself into the narrator’s life on the pretext of helping her with writer’s block, but the relationship becomes increasingly toxic as L. assumes the narrator’s identity. Because the narrator’s name is that of the novel’s author and numerous details in this work of fiction closely adhere to what is publicly known about Delphine de Vigan, readers must ask themselves what is truth and what is fiction in this literary thriller.

Elizabeth Richardson Viti, French (emerita)
**Behold the Dreamers by Imbolo Mbue**

This is an excellent novel that sheds an intriguing light on the dreams and everyday experiences of African immigrants in the United States in the wake of the 2008 recession. Another great example of “migritude” literature.

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**The Broken Earth Series by N.K. Jemisin**

The three books in this series: *The Fifth Season*, *The Obelisk Gate*, and *The Stone Sky* take place on a planet that could be Earth at the beginning of the end. As the story unfolds, you walk with a mother who mourns a son, searches for a daughter, and slowly reclaims powers she put aside years before. The stories in this series go beyond the typical coming-of-age novel to follow characters on the path of “becoming”—a dynamic and unending process that sprints, stalls, and circles back over the course of a lifespan.

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**Buried by C.J. Carmichael**

I really enjoy reading mysteries. I stumbled upon this book on the Amazon Kindle website. I gave it a shot and I was not disappointed. The character development was superb and the story was suspenseful and mysterious. I read the book in a few days. I enjoyed it so much that I purchased the other two books in the series. They were not as good as the first one, but I needed closure to the story so I finished them both.
**Class Mom by Laurie Gelman**

A light-hearted and fun read about the life of a kindergarten class mom. Jen Dixon has a unique gift for crafting parent emails. She also has no filter. Jen is relatable because she says what others would only dare to think. Discover what happens when the other kids’ moms are not fond of her approach.

Pam Eisenhart, President’s Office

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**The Commissario Guido Brunetti Mysteries by Donna Leon**

Irresistible. Characters: eternal companions to chat with or about. Brunetti, at heart a classical historian, and Paola, a professor and his wife, read for pleasure and insight; their children are people too; the kind, the noble, snobs and the mean, and the crafty (Signorina Elletra for ombudsperson?); the insufferable Patta only Brunetti could make us care about. Morals and murder; humor and social commentary. Everything you need for a good think in elegant prose. Been to Venice? You can go where Brunetti goes. If not, you will know the way. Where to eat? At Paola’s table, of course.

GailAnn Rickert, Classics / Academic Advising

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**Commonwealth by Ann Patchett**

A contemporary American family drama that moves back and forth between the 1960s and ’70s, the West Coast and the East Coast, when the main characters are children, and the 2010s, when they are adults who are spread around the country and the world. It’s the story of two families who distantly know each other and then become connected by divorce and remarriage, and all that happens after. Read: The children in each family are suddenly thrust together in awkward and unhappy situations, but they end up developing a fierce loyalty among themselves, even in the midst of (or perhaps because of) tragedy. This loyalty is tested when one of the children, as a young adult, tells the family’s story to a well-known writer, her much older lover. The stories of the four parents and the six siblings are carefully spun out and then resolved in some surprising and lovely ways. I loved this novel and highly recommend it.

Allison Singley, Parent Relations
**The Dark Flood Rises by Margaret Drabble**

Mystical and deeply felt, this perfect book is full of irony and chance, age and dying, but, even so, also full of life and beauty. Drabble brings together many worlds—art, history, politics, global warming, family, literature. “The dark flood” of the title is history, life as we live it and finally exit from it, the rising fears of actual floods, and consciousness itself. Drabble focuses on the unknowability of the past—all we are left with is a dark flood of events. But there is our human interconnectedness, a powerful phenomenon experienced in many ways, but especially every time we enter a classroom, as student or teacher: “Yet each brings to the room a hinterland, a history, a long sequence of events and decisions that have brought them here, together. [We] continue to be moved by the mystery of this communion.” And so should we be.

Temma Berg, English

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**Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine by Gail Honeyman**

It starts out slow—and Eleanor doesn’t endear herself to you right away—but as you continue to read and find out more about Eleanor’s past, and her relationship with Raymond develops, you will be hooked. It is a good story and an easy read.

Kristin Johnston Largen, Religious & Spiritual Life

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**Routine office job, Wednesday night phone calls with mother, a diet of frozen pizza and vodka on the weekend.**

Thirty-year-old Eleanor lives a lonely and regimented life: Routine office job, Wednesday night phone calls with mother, a diet of frozen pizza and vodka on the weekend. She has no friends and lacks ordinary social skills. She can be unpleasantly blunt and often clueless. Eleanor exists; but she doesn’t really know how to live. A chance encounter with a stranger sets her life on a different course. At the same time, her unhappy backstory is slowly revealed. Depressing? Not at all! The dialog is crisp and hilarious. It’s a beautifully-written story about the importance of friendship—charming and full of life.

Robin Wagner, Musselman Library
Exit West by Mohsin Hamid

At the heart of this compelling, disconcerting, and very unusual novel are questions like: Who are the people that become refugees before they become refugees? What is life like before it is interrupted by violence? And what constitutes refuge? Through the experience of a fleeing couple, the book shatters assumptions and stereotypes about the experiences of refugees, about normalcy and crisis, about cities and modernity. While much of the book is about displacement, much of it is also about care, connection, and the kind of empathy that good fiction can make us feel.

Radi Rangelova, Spanish

Another page-turner by the Pakistani author Mohsin Hamid, whose novels have explored the clashes of tradition and modernity for people living beyond and outside their cultures of origin. Exit West is arguably more urgent and yet dream-like than his other tales. The story begins in an unnamed but presumably Middle Eastern city that slowly devolves into the chaos and violence of civil war. Hamid shows how, in painstaking ordinariness, life changes, turn by turn, for the worse, as the main characters, a gentle young man named Saeed and a strong and independent young woman named Nadia, come together, fall in love, and learn to live in a world that is becoming unrecognizable to them through the horrors of civil war encroaching upon their homes. As they become squeezed out of their lives in their home city, they are transported by dream-scape portals and deposited into new worlds that are frightening yet full of possibilities for new relationships with other refugees and other cultures, reflecting the great chaos that is the underbelly of globalization.

Megan Adamson Sijapati, Religious Studies

Fortune Smiles by Adam Johnson

Johnson, the author of the wonderful novel about North Korea, The Orphan Master’s Son, has also written an amazing collection of five long short stories, each one of which will immerse you wholly.

Kathryn Rhett, English
Gaither Sisters Trilogy (One Crazy Summer, PS: Be Eleven, and Gone Crazy in Alabama) by Rita Williams-Garcia

Over the course of these three novels, the Gaither girls get to know their mother, an activist who abandoned them years earlier to join the Black Panthers movement in Oakland. Their story starts in 1968 when the three sisters head to California to spend the summer with their estranged mother. This is a young adult (YA) trilogy and a great read for a variety of audiences.

Jen Cole, Academic Advising

A Gentleman in Moscow by Amor Towles

When I think back over the books I have read this year, this novel stands head and shoulders above all the others. The only one that came close was Rules of Civility by the same author! You wouldn’t think that a novel about a Russian Count who is confined to living in an attic in a hotel for 30 years could be all that interesting, but the depth of relationships he forms with a variety of wonderful characters is absolutely stunning. The story has a brilliant arc and a beautiful ending. This is a magnificent read!

Julie Ramsey, College Life

The Girls by Emma Cline

When I was a teenager, I read the vivid news accounts of the murders committed by Charles Manson’s California “family.” I was both horrified and fascinated by Manson’s ability to attract “family” members and by the power he exerted over them—a fascination that surely relates to my life-long interest in social psychology. The Girls provides unsettling insight into how an unmoored teenager might find her way to a Manson-like family. Told by an adult narrator who was that teenager, we see how quickly and dramatically a life can shift as the result of social circumstance and decisions quickly made.

Janet Morgan Riggs, President’s Office
**Good Omens: The Nice and Accurate Prophecies of Agnes Nutter, Witch**

by Neil Gaiman & Terry Pratchett

The apocalypse is nigh and the end times approach! Unfortunately, the Antichrist has been misplaced by some confused satanic nuns, the demon leading the infernal forces did not fall so much as saunter vaguely downwards, and the last witch-hunter in England must deal with a witch guided by the perfectly accurate prophecies of her long-dead ancestor, replete with wisdom such as “Do Notte Buye Betamacks.” Viciously satirical, laugh-out-loud funny and occasionally deeply touching, *Good Omens* is the apocalypse we need, if not perhaps deserve.

Eric Remy, Information Technology

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**The Hate U Give by Angie Thomas**

I’m certain I won’t be the only person to recommend this book, so I’ll tell you why I read it. My brother is an assistant school superintendent in Katy ISD, a diverse district abutting Houston. At a board meeting, an incensed parent read aloud from the first chapter, provoking the superintendent to ban it. Subsequently, it was decided that rather than censoring an entire district, push notifications would be attached to such books, so that parents and their student could have a discussion about appropriateness. What better reason to read a book than its being banned for telling truth to power?

Marta Robertson, Sunderman Conservatory of Music

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**The Heart’s Invisible Furies by John Boyne**

I picked this book up for a cross-country flight and it did not disappoint! I was captivated and read the entire flight! The story follows the life of Cyril Avery, starting in 1940s Ireland through present day. It is bittersweet, filled with humor and traumatic moments, poignant and full of life’s magical connections. Pick it up, you won’t be disappointed!

Shawna Sherrell, Communications & Marketing
**The Hike by Drew Magary**

Ben, a happily married father of three, decides to go on brief hike through the beautiful Pennsylvania countryside while waiting for a business meeting.

He soon finds himself in an unfamiliar terrain and pursued by a horrible terror.

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He soon finds himself in an unfamiliar terrain and pursued by a horrible terror. As the hike turns into a fantastical journey for survival, Ben must endure multiple challenges and face unimaginable nightmares along the way; fueled only by his desire to see his family once again. Overall, this tale is an exciting and creative adventure filled with twists and turns—a genuinely fun blend of fantasy and adventure rooted in the modernly mundane.

**Miranda Wisor, Musselman Library**

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**Immortal Village by Kathryn Rhett**

A timely and timeless collection of poems that is at once meditative and bold, surprising and lyrical.

**Fred Leebron, English**

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**Into the Water by Paula Hawkins**

If you were a fan of Hawkins' *Girl on the Train*, you are likely to enjoy this book as well. It is full of suspense with many plot twists. I couldn't put it down—a quick summer read that keeps you guessing.

**Sarah Principato, Environmental Studies**
Jonathan Strange & Mr. Norrell by Susanna Clarke

To pin down a precise definition of the sort of novel Strange & Norrell is would likely do it a disservice, for fear of ignoring the genres it masterfully blends together. Outwardly a fantasy novel, it is grounded in historical realism while borrowing heavily from the era of Romantic literature. Parliamentary politics and the Peninsular War appear alongside the return of magic to England as the titular gentlemen who usher it forth wrestle with the snowballing effects of their magical ambitions, all the while contending with adversaries ranging from Napoleon to fairies from parallel worlds.

Ryan Nadeau, Musselman Library

The Leavers by Lisa Ko

Everything I love in a novel: Struggles with identity; stories of people living what arguably is the quintessential American experience, but one that is a radical departure from my own; and a compelling coming-of-age story. Born in NYC, Deming is the son of an undocumented Chinese worker. When he is 11, his mother disappears, and he is adopted by a well-meaning but clueless couple who live in upstate NY. Deming suddenly becomes Daniel, and his confusion about the loss of his mother, the surprise adoption, and his departure from the city affects his teenage years profoundly. When Deming’s “brother” from his childhood contacts him out of the blue, Deming begins to learn what happened to his mother and to his NY childhood, and he begins to search for what is most important to him. Fun fact: Deming, a musician, has synesthesia and sees color when he hears music.

Allison Singley, Parent Relations

A beautifully-written story about family and identity, about immigration and belonging, and about where we find home and, ultimately, ourselves. One of the few books I read this year that once started, I didn’t want to put down.

Kerri Odess-Harnish, Musselman Library
The Left Hand of Darkness by Ursula K. Le Guin

This book is a classic in the feminist science fiction tradition. It creates a fascinating alien world that challenges our conceptualizations of sex, gender and sexuality. Le Guin dives into a very compelling, if controversial, examination of the relationship between sex, gender, and culture that always makes me think deeply about our own culture. As both a kind of “what if” story as well as world-building novel, this is a wonderful and thought-provoking book. Well worth the read!

Alecea Standlee, Sociology

Little Fires Everywhere by Celeste Ng

You should read this novel not only because Reese Witherspoon and Kerry Washington are planning to bring a streaming version of it to Hulu, but also because Celeste Ng is an incredible writer with a knack for creating unforgettable characters and plot twists. This book is set in Shaker Heights, OH, during my senior year of high school in the late 1990s (yes, I went to school with the author). It masterfully explores the intersections of two families with powerful mothers as a starting point for discussing class, race, Chinese-American relationships; adoption, surrogacy, and abortion; teenage angst, arson, and photography.

Kerry Wallach, German Studies

Little fires—and one big fire—permeate this story set in 1990s Shaker Heights, OH. The worlds of two different families—one a “typical” Shaker Heights family, and the other, a mom and daughter, interlopers in this carefully constructed community—collide in a number of fascinating ways. The families’ lives become briefly intertwined when Mia and Pearl rent a townhouse owned by the Richardsons’. Mia suspects the truth about the biological mother of a baby that is soon to be adopted by the Richardsons’ friends, and she sets into motion events that cause Elena Richardson to begin her own investigation of Mia’s identity. As hidden truths are revealed, 14-year-old Izzy Richardson takes matters into her own hands and the relationship between the two families ends as abruptly as it begins. Although I work to minimize drama in my own life, I was absorbed by the dramatic tension in this novel!

Allison Singley, Parent Relations
**The Locals** by Jonathan Dee

A novel that somehow keeps expanding its universe while focusing on the oddly dangerous and deeply resonant political and economic machinations of a small town in contemporary America.

Fred Leebron, English

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**Lockdown: A Novel of Suspense** by Laurie R. King

I love a suspense novel that really keeps me guessing, and this one did. I’ve read Laurie King’s Kate Martinelli and Mary Rogers mysteries, but this one is all too modern and topical. I was probably four-fifths of the way through the book when light began to dawn, but even then, the ending—while logical—wasn’t fully clear. Multiple perspectives revealing characters a piece at a time.

Chris Benecke, Development / Research

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**Lucky Boy** by Shanthi Sekaran

*Lucky Boy* is the story of a Mexican woman who comes to America illegally and works as a nanny in California, even as she gets pregnant and has a baby of her own. It is also the story of a pair of immigrants from India working in Silicon Valley, who are desperate for a child. Because this is a novel, their stories intertwine in ways that are predictable but also are heartbreaking, thought-provoking, and a very, very good read. The book has deep thoughts about immigration and parenting and what it means to be in America in the 21st century.

Darren Glass, Mathematics

(continued)
Solimar is an undocumented immigrant from Mexico; Kavya is the daughter of immigrants from India. Both women live in Berkeley, CA, and both love a baby boy named Ignacio. The story of these women’s parallel lives, their distinctive immigration stories, and their longing for this child is moving, suspenseful, and thought-provoking. It’s also an old-fashioned good read that will stay with you long after you finish the last page.

Kathy Cain, Psychology

A Man Called Ove by Fredrik Backman

I read this book for the first time last summer, and when I think of my favorite books read last year, this one rises to the top of the list. Equal parts funny, sad, and heartwarming, this novel about a cranky old widower clashing with his boisterous new neighbors will stick with you long after reading. If you haven’t picked up this book yet, you definitely should.

Klara Shives, Musselman Library

The Midnight Plan of the Repo Man by W. Bruce Cameron

This title introduces us to Ruddy McCann, local repo man in snowy northern Michigan. Ruddy’s struggles include making a living in the repo business and keeping his family bar afloat with his sister, but things get even tougher when Ruddy starts hearing the voice of a murder victim—who wants vengeance—in his head. Hilarity, mystery, and romance ensue. And if you’re a fan of Cameron’s other books about dogs, don’t fret—Ruddy’s got a loveable buddy in basset hound Jake.

Alice Brawley, Management
**Missing Heaven by Caroline Wagner**

*Missing Heaven* had me hooked from the first page. I read the book a few years ago and recently pulled it back off my bookshelf to read again. As the reader will soon realize, Hannah Kirkland’s miraculous healing powers and visions are both a blessing and a curse. The story begins with 27-year-old Hannah driving to the site of a plane crash near Gettysburg, a crash that has not yet happened. Part of the story is told by six-year-old Hannah. As a bonus, the author is mom to our very own Cathy Bain of the Center for Career Development.

Joyce W. Sprague, Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

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**My Brilliant Friend by Elena Ferrante**

Set in a small town near Naples, this book follows the lives of two friends, Elena and Lila. Both poor and living in violent and volatile homes, they are also decidedly different from one another. Lila is the rebellious one, angry and combative. Elena is the good girl, who works hard at school and pleasing others. As their relationship evolves over the years, and as the dynamic of their intimacy pulls each of them in the other’s direction, we see that both girls depend on the “other” to serve as her secret sharer, the one who expresses what she represses. I also enjoyed the way the time frame of the novel neatly paralleled the history of my generation—the two girls are born during World War II and grow up in the 1950s, a time of dramatic change and renewal. This is the first book in a series of four. I look forward to reading the others.

Temma Berg, English
**Neverwhere by Neil Gaiman**

*Neverwhere* is set in London above and London below. It takes the reader through seamless exchanges of dream and reality with an astonishing array of characters. If you have seen *American Gods* on TV, you’ll want to spend the summer immersing yourself in Neil Gaiman’s fictional worlds.

*Gavin Foster, Information Technology*

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**News of the World by Paulette Jiles**

This gem of a book tells the story of one Captain Kidd’s journey from Wichita Falls south to near San Antonio, TX, in 1870. Kidd is an itinerant news reader by profession, but he has been tasked with transporting a 10-year-old white girl back to her relatives in south Texas. The girl, Johanna or Cicada, was captured by the Kiowa four years earlier and remembers no other life. Over the course of their journey together, we learn about their lives (especially his, which at age 71 is so much longer) and the ties that bind them. Jiles’ descriptions of the many Texas cultures of the time period are both colorful and lyrically beautiful. I reread many a passage aloud just to savor the words.

*Janelle Wertzberger, Musselman Library*

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**The Perfect Nanny (Chanson Douce) by Leila Slimani**

A gripping psychological thriller, I read it without stopping. It is short, but does a great job at portraying social class differences and racial relations in subtle ways. The best for me, however, was the representation of internal conflicts, moments of doubt, and guilt, expressed by mothers and women in general in a society that seems bound to crush them. Even though it is now translated, keep in mind that it is still very French because of the many cultural references.

*Florence Ramond Jurney, French*
**The Peripheral by William Gibson**

The most recent novel from William Gibson (the man frequently credited with coining the term ‘cyberspace’ in the 1980s) paints a picture of two imagined near-futures, linked together (and exploiting one another) via a computer-age form of time travel. Gibson's fragmentary sentences and inventive language draw the reader into the mindset of these two complementary dystopias, each of which have only become more prescient since he wrote it in 2014.

*William O’Hara, Sunderman Conservatory of Music*

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**The Power by Naomi Alderman**

I read this book, set in a future in which women acquire a physical power that makes them threatening to men, a month after the #MeToo movement began to spread virally. If you want to read a book that imagines a world in which the current imbalance of power between men and women is turned on its head, this is the book for you.

*Caroline Hartzell, Political Science*

In this futuristic thriller, the “power” in the title is an electrostatic power that emerges in girls (and then all females) as a result of an environmental disaster, and it literally changes the balance of power between men and women. Alderman (who was mentored by literary genius Margaret Atwood) narrates her tale through six main characters around the world as the power begins to rapidly change society. Women use their power to fight patriarchy, but what emerges in its wake? I couldn’t stop reading. As a bonus, archival documents are sprinkled throughout the book to remind us that interpretation across the distance of centuries is difficult at best.

*Janelle Wertzberger, Musselman Library*
**Professor Schmoot Has Lost His Keys Again** by Christopher Morse

Funniest read in a long time about an unknown seminary.

Gabor S. Boritt, Civil War Institute (emeritus)

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**Regards From the Dead Princess: A Novel of Life (De la Part de la Princesse Morte)** by Kenizé Mourad

This is the story of a princess who left Turkey as a child when the Ottoman Empire collapsed in 1923. Her family moved to Lebanon and, after high school, her mother arranged for her to marry an Indian prince. In India she witnessed religious conflict, widespread poverty, and the country’s independence movement. Her marriage was a catastrophe and so she left for France in the midst of World War II. Unbeknownst to her, she was pregnant. There she met the love of her life, but he had to leave for the United States. When he returned after the war, he learned she had died but not before giving birth to a child—the author of this fantastic novel.

Emelio Betances, Sociology

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**Saturday Night and Sunday Morning** by Alan Sillitoe

Alan Sillitoe’s *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* was a classic of the “kitchen realism” phase of British fiction in the 1950s. It follows Arthur Seaton, a young worker from Nottingham, who daydreams through his job at a bicycle factory, drinks away most of his wages, and treats virtually everyone in his vicinity abysmally. Sillitoe highlights the challenges, boredom, and violence of everyday life in a changing British society. In 1960, the book, somewhat sanitized, was made into a movie starring a young Albert Finney.

William Bowman, History
**The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo** by Taylor Jenkins Reid

I’ve been struggling with a lot of books lately because I just don’t care about them or they come in many parts (part 1 through 3). I don’t care about the story. I don’t care about the characters. I thought it was all me, that I must have reader’s block or something. I thought this was literary fiction but it read more like chick lit. A deep chick lit if that can even be a thing. This book made me realize that it is absolutely not me but them! I cared for the flawed characters in this book. They seemed close for some reason like old friends. A great beach read!

*Ginny Rinehart, Dining Services*

**The Shadow Children Series (Among the Hidden, Among the Impostors, Among the Betrayed, Among the Barons, Among the Brave, Among the Enemy, Among the Free)** by Margaret Peterson Haddix

This young adult (YA) series explores a dystopian future where population control laws prohibit families from having more than two children. Secret third children are known as “Shadow Children.” They stay hidden (...Or do they? Would there really be a whole series devoted to children who stay hidden? Or do the Shadow Children find a way to organize and revolt?).

*Jen Cole, Academic Advising*

**Shoot Me, I’m Already Dead (Dispara, Yo Ya Estoy Muerto)** by Julia Navarro

One act of kindness by a Palestinian Arab toward a recent Jewish refugee from Russian pogroms launches a friendship bordering on familial closeness over three generations. Follow the complex characters as they scratch out a living and build a community from the dry earth before colonial powers after WWII metaphorically fertilize the land with gunpowder and strike a match on the way out.

*Brendan Cushing-Daniels, Economics*
Sing, Unburied, Sing by Jesmyn Ward

An engaging, intergenerational story about race and the weight of history in modern Mississippi told in an original voice. Winner of last year’s National Book Award for Fiction too!

Tim Shannon, History

A Slant of Light by Jeffrey Lent

Recommended by a friend who is always spot on. Once I picked it up, I could not stop reading. Set in post-Civil War upstate New York, the story is one I will not soon forget and the writing is magical.

Paul Fairbanks, Communications & Marketing

The Snowman by Jo Nesbø

As a fan of hard-boiled detective fiction, I have not encountered a protagonist quite like Detective Harry Hole. Nesbø’s style is a perfect match to Harry’s exploits. And it all takes place in Norway. There’s even a murder on a curling court!

Ralph Sorenson, Biology (emeritus)

Something Missing by Matthew Dicks

Ever feel like you could have sworn you had more Drano left last time you used it? This book follows the daily ongoings of Martin, the not-so-typical career criminal who does his “grocery shopping” by regularly stealing small things (a little sugar, a roll of paper towels) from his unwitting “clients.” The tension arises as Martin begins to feel like he should help one of his clients, but this requires major deviation from his methodical ways. Charming read, and meticulously written—answered all the questions I could think up about Martin’s methods.

Alice Brawley, Management
**Fiction**

*Sourdough* by Robin Sloan

*Sourdough* is a really fun book that on the surface is about baking and technology, but depending on your lens, could be about so many other things. This novel focuses on Lois, a techie living in San Francisco, who inherits a sourdough starter from the Clement Street Soup brothers. She has no baking experience, but finds herself enjoying the process and delving into the artisanal food underworld with plenty of fun twists and turns along the way. This was an easy listen (Audible) and I recommend it to anyone looking for a light read.

Zakiya Whatley, Biology

*Spoonbenders* by Daryl Gregory

This is one of the most heartwarming novels about a dysfunctional family that I have ever read. I came to love each of the members of the Amazing Telemachus Family who, scarred by an event in their past, are forced to draw on their (ostensibly psychic) powers in order to help one another move on.

Caroline Hartzell, Political Science

*Spy of the First Person* by Sam Shepard

Playwright Sam Shepard’s final published work, written from his deathbed, features an unnamed narrator trapped by a relentless illness. A collection of memories, Shepard’s book is complicated by an unnamed observer who spies on his protagonist. Informed by Samuel Beckett, evidenced by terse, poetic language, this book offers no answers about how to engage life. Shepard died of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, the same disease that claimed the life of Charles Mingus, father of his high school friend and first New York City roommate. In an age when people scream for attention, Shepard’s perplexing, artistic investigation of identity will be missed.

Jack Ryan, Provost’s Office
Still Life: A Chief Inspector Gamache Novel by Louise Penny

While Still Life is the first in the series, I would suggest any novel with Québécois Chief Inspector Gamache. French flair in North America and the landscape of Québec: what could be better?

Florence Ramond Jurney, French

South of Montreal is the quiet, off-the-grid village of Three Pines. Chief Inspector Gamache of the Sûreté du Québec arrives there with his forensic team to investigate what could be a hunting accident. And my favorite mystery series begins. Any of the books in this series by Canadian author Louise Penny is wonderful as both a mystery and as a story about a village filled with intriguing personalities. But I recommend starting with the first book, Still Life, since it introduces you to the complex, fiercely ethical Armand Gamache as he discovers life in Three Pines.

Lisa McNamee, Musselman Library

The Story of My Teeth (Historia de Mis Dientes) by Valeria Luiselli

The story behind the creation of this novel is as fascinating as the story that it tells, and it ends with a timeline like no other. Written in collaboration with factory workers in Mexico, where Luiselli is from, the book narrates the life of an auctioneer who sells objects by attributing to them value through stories that may or may not be true. A book about lying as storytelling, about storytelling as work, and about the value of collaborative stories.

Radi Rangelova, Spanish
The Truth: A Novel of Discworld by Terry Pratchett

In our “alternate facts” society, Terry Pratchett’s The Truth seems worth revisiting. Wrapped in the satirical comedy his books are known for, Pratchett digs into issues such as the eternal struggle of the investigative journalist against public apathy and meaningful journalism against tabloid headlines. Faced with these very challenges, Ankh-Morpork’s premier journalist, William de Word, nevertheless attempts to uncover and deliver only the truth. What’s more is that The Truth stands alone in Pratchett’s continuity, making it an excellent entry point to the fantastic, hilarious, and like this novel, remarkably clear-sighted Discworld.

Ryan Nadeau, Musselman Library

To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee

I picked this up recently, having somehow missed ever having read it before. I’m surprised this novel regularly gets assigned to high school students: a lot of the humor of the book arises delicately as you, the reader, tack between the narrator Scout’s wise naiveté and your developing grasp of the complexities of her surroundings. The wit reminded me a bit of (a much less apocalyptic) Flannery O’Connor. I also hadn’t realized that Lee is more interested in drawing a portrait of a certain slice of Southern life than in crafting a courtroom procedural. I really enjoyed it, and if you haven’t read it since being made to do so in middle or high school, I recommend revisiting it.

Joanne Myers, English
**Watergate: A Novel by Thomas Mallon**

Thomas Mallon’s *Watergate: A Novel* provides an intriguing and fast-paced glimpse into one of the nation’s best-known political scandals. Mallon’s signature blend of meticulous research and literary imagination brings his seven “narrators” to life, transforming them from stock characters known only for their particular role in the scandal to complicated human beings with their own backstories and vulnerabilities. Perfectly capturing the tension and chaos of the final days of the Nixon White House, the sense of events spiraling out of control, and the enormous human capacity for self-delusion . . .

Jill Ogline Titus, Civil War Institute

**We Were the Lucky Ones by Georgia Hunter**

The author, a young woman, discovered as a college student that a branch of her family survived the Holocaust in Poland. She spent several years tracking down her relatives’ stories and wrote this novel based on their experiences. The book is a gripping story, a stay-up-all-night read. The five siblings and their parents are interesting and likable, and their experiences are as diverse as their personalities. Ultimately, the novel asks what it means to be human under extraordinarily difficult circumstances. Somehow, despite the horrors of the time, the book manages to offer hope and love of life.

Kathy Cain, Psychology
This summer, join the Class of 2022 in reading *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption* by Bryan Stevenson

More information at: http://libguides.gettysburg.edu/readforfun/22reads
Questions? Contact orientation@gettysburg.edu
Whether you are gearing up for a major outdoor adventure this summer, or just dreaming of one from your arm chair, Tucker Little offers his advice on some mental preparation. Learn more about the College’s Experiential Education program at www.gettysburg.edu/about/offices/college_life/grab/.

Summer is a time to escape, to explore, and to revisit forgotten projects. I have suggestions for all three.

Heading to the woods for a break? **One Man’s Wilderness** by Richard Proenneke—a collection of diary entries and photographs from the early stages of the years Proenneke spent alone in the wilds of Alaska—is a personal favorite. Everyone considers “dropping out” after a stressful day, but this isn't the tragic depiction of depression and poor planning of Jon Krakauer's *Into the Wild*; it’s a story of competence, ingenuity, and “doing something right, and to completion,” and it’s incredibly satisfying.

Others that fit this bill nicely include **Desert Solitaire** by Edward Abbey—a fascinating, poetic look at the national parks of the American Southwest. **My Side of the Mountain** by Jean Craighead George—sure, it’s young adult fiction, but it has stuck with me and given me the incurable desire to own a pet falcon and build forts. There is also Willa Cather’s **Death Comes for the Archbishop**—an epic set against the backdrop of the religious and cultural intersection of the mid-19th century.

If you decide to drive to the Adirondacks, the Southwest, or Alaska, you're going to need some listening material. I’m breaking format here, but I strongly recommend the app “Libby”—a free download that uses your library card to grant access to all of the audiobooks your public library has to offer, free of charge. [Note: Not all public libraries offer this service. College staff and students can also use Overdrive to access about 40 audio titles.]

You can also listen to podcasts. **Invisibilia**, **Hidden Brain**, and **99% Invisible** each take a different angle, but are focused around the
unseen forces that drive the way we think and act. They’re great conversation starters for when you can’t stand the radio anymore.

Or if, like one of my good childhood friends, you’re fortunate enough to travel to Japan, you can ruin your friend’s self-conception by returning with a new concept instead. Tsundoku is the collecting of books without reading them—something I’m personally, and embarrassingly, guilty of. My final suggestion is this: instead of amassing new books, take a look at your own shelf. You don’t have to admit it publically, but we all know you’re sitting on a few dozen you had to have, but haven’t touched.

Whatever you choose and wherever you find yourself, happy reading, listening, and travels this summer!

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**Summer Reading on eBooks?**

Many libraries now offer a way to check out eBooks.

For College students and staff, you can find many of our Summer Reading selections in eBook format using OverDrive (https://musselmanlibrary.overdrive.com). This service is compatible with Kindle, iPad, and a variety of mobile and non-mobile devices. Here’s how to get started:

1. Download the free OverDrive app for your device.
2. Search for Gettysburg College to browse our OverDrive collection.
3. Select your title.
4. Sign in and borrow the book by using your College username and password.
5. Select your format and download to your device. You may be prompted for your Kindle or Adobe Digital Editions login.
6. Enjoy!

For non-campus readers, check with your public library to see if they offer OverDrive or similar services.
Andrew Wyeth: A Secret Life by Richard Meryman

I keep reading it again and again.

Gabor S. Boritt, Civil War Institute (emeritus)

The Art of Invisibility: The World’s Most Famous Hacker Teaches You How to Be Safe in the Age of Big Brother and Big Data by Kevin Mitnick

Arguing that “nothing to hide” is different from “nothing to protect,” hacker-turned-IT-security-consultant Kevin Mitnick describes the ways our personal data is at risk and how to protect it. An enjoyable, informative read written for a popular audience with plenty of practical advice. Pairs well with Orwell’s 1984 for maximum creep-out factor.

John Dettinger, Musselman Library

At Mama’s Knee: Mothers and Race in Black and White by April Ryan

April Ryan brings a conversation on race to the forefront by sharing personal stories on race through the voice of a mother. She believes that mothers are the backbone of our society and, according to T. D. Jakes, senior pastor at the Potter’s House of Dallas, “there are too many mothers crying.” Ryan writes to help us better understand how mothers transfer wisdom on race and race relations to their children. She talked with prominent political figures like Valerie Jarrett, Hilary Clinton and celebrities like Cindy Williams, plus Trayvon Martin’s mother. A thought-provoking and hopeful book.

Regina Campo, Human Resources & Risk Management
Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End by Atul Gawande

Granted, the title doesn’t exactly scream “lighthearted summer read!”, but I could not put this book down. In Being Mortal, surgeon Atul Gawande describes his steep learning curve as he attempts to understand how humans age with grace and dignity. An encouragement to take risks and live life fully rather than a dry treatise on how to stay “safe,” I recommend it to every student who considers a career in health care, and to colleagues who attempt to come to terms with a loved one’s—or their own—mortality.

Josef Brandauer, Health Sciences

The Best American Travel Writing 2016 edited by Bill Bryson

I fell in love with travel writing before I fell in love with traveling. Riding the Iron Rooster by Paul Theroux was a revelation to me. But over time the novelty of travel writing wore off and I lost interest. Enter Best American Travel Writing 2016, which I picked up from the scrap heap of a book giveaway. It turns out that travel writing (if you can still call it that) is still alive and well. The stories are quirky, insightful, engaging and blissfully short. And my old buddy Paul Theroux is in there too!

Rud Platt, Environmental Studies

Blood, Bone, and Marrow: A Biography of Harry Crews by Ted Geltner

Harry Crews’ name used to appear on Death Pool lists sandwiched in between Keith Richards and Hunter S. Thompson. He was in the right place. Crews wrote fiction and nonfiction, including the still extraordinary memoir A Childhood: The Biography of a Place, that captured the rough South. No fiction writer could have imagined a character like Crews. All of his work is both grim and hilarious. Crews was willing to write about outrageous things, not unlike William Faulkner and Flannery O’Connor, but Crews, once an undisciplined bodybuilder, added real gristle and blood to his tales of the American South.

Jack Ryan, Provost’s Office
**Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants** by Robin Wall Kimmerer

This is a definite read for anyone interested in the environment and the natural sciences. Kimmerer interlaces these pursuits with her background as a Potawatomi Nation citizen in a number of short essays to provide a view of human relations with the natural world that are both wise and full of beauty.

Salma Monani, Environmental Studies

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**The Brain-Dead Megaphone** by George Saunders

Prescient, funny, and serious, this collection takes on subjects ranging from the border to disinformation to belief in miracles.

Kathryn Rhett, English

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**The Circuit: Stories from the Life of a Migrant Child** by Francisco Jiménez

This is the first of four autobiographical books by the author, a successful professor at Santa Clara University. I loved all the books, but the first two in the series (the second one is titled *Breaking Through*) were my favorites. These books are great for all ages (my 12-year-old son has read the first two, so far). The books allow us to celebrate the joy of learning despite unbelievable obstacles, while also encouraging us to examine our own achievements and the environment that enables them. They are written without pretension in the authentic voice of a child who knows no other world.

Linda Fiscus, Mathematics
**Dark Money: The Hidden History of the Billionaires Behind the Rise of the Radical Right** by Jane Mayer

This is a riveting and dark account of the hidden and cynical complicity of all American institutions (including collegiate) with the manipulative doings of super-rich, oligarchical forces pulling the strings in this country.

*Dustin Smith, English*

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**Dear World: A Syrian Girl’s Story of War and Plea for Peace** by Bana Alabed

This book is a collection of tweets by a young Syrian girl concerning the atrocities she sees every day. It opens the eyes of those who only see what is happening based on selections from news feeds, and it inspires us as humans to reach out to each other. We are never too young (or too old), and nobody is powerless if we choose to stand up for what is right.

*Kelly Whitcomb, Multicultural Engagement / International Student Services*

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**The Doomsday Machine: Confessions of a Nuclear War Planner** by Daniel Ellsberg

This book, which focuses on the history of nuclear deterrence, is both fascinating and terrifying. Ellsberg provides us with powerful revelations about the prior management of our nuclear arsenal. This is a very important book for all citizens to read and contemplate.

*Chris Zappe, Provost’s Office*
Educated: A Memoir by Tara Westover

Tara Westover’s Educated is a gripping memoir from a young woman, born at home into an isolated, survivalist family in the mountains of Idaho. Until she was about 10, there was no official record that she, nor some of her siblings, existed. Her father espoused his own brand of Mormonism, forbidding his children from attending “government schools,” from having much contact with the outside world, from getting medical care, and using them for labor in the dangerous family junkyard. The family prepared for months for Y2K. Tara eventually made her way to Brigham Young University and went on to earn a Ph.D. from Cambridge University. Her reflections on the power of education to reshape one’s life are worth reading.

Harriet Marritz, Counseling Services

Empress of the East: How a European Slave Girl Became Queen of the Ottoman Empire by Leslie Peirce

Hurrem (aka Roxelana in the West) was a Russian girl who was kidnapped and sold as a slave to the Ottoman Gran Vizier, Ibrahim Pasha. Ibrahim gave her to Sultan Suleyman, the most powerful sovereign in the world during the 16th century. He fell in love with her, eventually emancipating and marrying her. Hurrem became one of his principal advisers, breaking court traditions and becoming one of the most powerful women in Ottoman history. The author gives a well-researched historical account of the politics, culture, foreign affairs and, most importantly, the Ottoman court and its harem. The book is a superbly written, rich in details about political intrigues, and the complexity of a woman who imposed herself in a male-dominated society.

Emelio Betances, Sociology
Essentialism: The Disciplined Pursuit of Less by Greg McKeown

Among the sea of leadership fads and self-help books, this is one you should actually pick up; it changed the way I approach my work! Challenging us to drastically rethink how we spend our time, McKeown shares helpful insights and useable tips to prioritize what is truly essential. Let’s be honest, we do a lot as Gettysburgians. Imagine the great work we could do if we focused purely on the things that really matter!

Andy Hughes, Garthwait Leadership Center

Free Speech on Campus by Sigal R. Ben-Porath

This book captures the challenge(s) of free speech on campus during a period where colleges and universities are developing efforts to create inclusive and diverse environments. The author does a good job breaking down a complex issue and providing insight into how we can foster intellectual discourse in a college setting during a period of time where society is increasingly polarizing.

Darrien Davenport, Multicultural Engagement

The Gatekeepers: How the White House Chiefs of Staff Define Every Presidency by Chris Whipple

The Gatekeepers allows the reader to see the presidency through the eyes of the White House chief of staff. Whipple does a fine job, through interviews with all of the living chiefs of staff, to explain the importance of the role and its influence on the presidency of the United States.

Jim Duffy, College Life
by Theodore M. Hesburgh

After attending a conference in NYC where the Theodore M. Hesburgh Award was given, I decided to learn more about Father Hesburgh, the former president of Notre Dame. His autobiography published in 1990 tells about a man who wanted to be a priest from the age of six. Father Hesburgh reflects on many areas of his life, from his Irish upbringing to his presidency at the most famous Catholic University, Notre Dame. He was counselor to seven presidents and several popes and founded the Peace Corps. The book also tells of his work on behalf of civil rights. It is amazing to read about the changes he affected at Notre Dame. Things were quite different in those days! I hope you enjoy reading it as much as I have.

Regina Campo, Human Resources & Risk Management

Harpo Speaks! by Harpo Marx with Rowland Barber

For being the “silent” Marx Brother, Harpo sure has a lot of interesting things to say. Whether the topic is growing up in New York, traveling the vaudeville circuit, making a legendary series of films (if you never have seen it before, watch Duck Soup!), or befriending Alexander Woollcott and the Algonquin Round Table, Harpo shares the events of his life in the kind of lively, humorous manner that only a natural comedian can achieve (with a tip of the hat to collaborator Rowland Barber). Along the way, you get to look into the first half of the 20th century through the eyes of one of its most outsized characters. While I will always be a Groucho guy at heart, after reading this book I cannot help having new appreciation and affection for the musical, manic force that was Harpo.

Joseph Radzevick, Management
**Hero of the Empire: The Boer War, a Daring Escape and the Making of Winston Churchill** by Candice Millard

Winston Churchill’s inspiring leadership during Britain’s “darkest hour” in 1940 is likely the first thing you’ll think of when this protean figure comes up in conversation. The Churchill you may not know much about was a 20-something swashbuckling journalist, convinced of his own destiny, during the Boer War (1898-1902). That story is told with panache by Candice Millard in *Hero of the Empire*. In these pages, Churchill emerges as insufferably self-centered and brash—but also astute, witty, and courageous. Millard’s account of Churchill’s escape from a Boer prison and his perilous journey through enemy territory back to British lines ranks as a page-turner along with her best-selling book focused on Teddy Roosevelt’s troubled journey down the Amazon—*River of Doubt*.

*Michael Birkner, History*

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**Hue 1968: A Turning Point of the American War in Vietnam** by Mark Bowden

Bowden, who also wrote *Black Hawk Down*, provides a thoughtful, detailed account of the struggle for Hue during the 1968 Tet Offensive. Bowden examines multiple perspectives of this brutal battle and humanizes actors on all sides of the conflict. In spite of individual bravery and some brilliant leadership by troops on the ground, this book exposes the misconceptions and duplicity of top American political and military leaders that eventually resulted in defeat in Vietnam.

*Rob Bohrer, Provost’s Office*
**I Am Error: The Nintendo Family Computer / Entertainment System Platform** by Nathan Altice

You “Played with Power,” but do you know from whence the power came? The Nintendo Entertainment System (NES) gets a comprehensive overview in Altice’s definitive study of the classic gaming system. Part history, part technical document, *I Am Error* never gets mired in nostalgia, but instead provides a critical analysis of the NES and the factors that have allowed it to endure to this day.

R.C. Miessler, Musselman Library

**Killers of the Flower Moon: The Osage Murders and the Birth of the FBI** by David Grann

Because of oil discovered on their land in 1894, members of the Osage Nation became wealthy. In *Killers of the Flower Moon*, David Grann recounts the murder of dozens of Osage in the early 1920s by individuals and groups wanting to inherit mineral rights. It is a shameful tale of powerful whites using their influence to steal and kill.

Chuck Wessell, Mathematics

**Lab Girl** by Hope Jahren

In the life science community, this book has been somewhat of a sensation: When’s the last time any autobiography of a scientist caused much excitement? *Lab Girl* offers much more than a play-by-play of a successful career of discovery, however: It provides an inside perspective into the life of a woman scientist in a field dominated by men, a moving description of the importance of trust and teamwork in science, and insight into nature surrounding us that will make you want to go for a hike in the woods and look at trees in a way you haven’t before. It’s thought-provoking and funny. You should read it.

Josef Brandauer, Health Sciences
The Long Shadow of Small Ghosts: Murder and Memory in an American City by Laura Tillman

I have become obsessed with true crime over the past couple of years, but it’s hard to pick out the quality stuff from the mass of over-sensationalized stuff. While listening to the true crime podcast Sword and Scale, I heard an interview with Laura Tillman that piqued my interest because of her remarkable sensitivity to so many aspects of the crime and the people involved. The book addresses the brutal murder of three young children by their own parents, which took place in Brownsville, TX, in 2003. It is beautifully written and peels back layers of complexity, showing how individuals’ choices and societal neglect can work together to produce monstrous behaviors. The book also addresses an intriguing question: do buildings where murder is committed absorb some of the evil of the act, and should we tear them down or allow them to stand as a memorial to the victims?

Amy Young Evrard, Anthropology

The Moth Snowstorm: Nature and Joy by Michael McCarthy

Michael McCarthy first observed true wilderness as a boy watching shorebirds on the western coast of his native Britain in the 1950s. He defines his reaction to the experience as profound joy, the sense of a bond with the natural world as old—some 50,000 generations—as the history of human evolution. Throughout his life he's been struck, had his breath taken away, by encounters with the forms, colors, sounds, and rhythms of nature and he recounts them here with authority, grace, reverence, and humor. This is not a feel-good book; the failures and shortfalls in environmental and wildlife protection are given ample attention and acknowledged with sadness. But for him, our ancient bond with nature, the experience of living in the natural world long before agriculture began and with it, civilization, is the greater source of hope for success. If you think you love the natural world—and McCarthy is sure that you do—this book offers a deeper understanding of why and how you do.

Michael Ritterson, German Studies (emeritus)
On Kindness by Adam Phillips and Barbara Taylor

In this short book, the authors puzzle over how kindness, once central to people’s conception of a life well-lived, has come to be perceived negatively. Today, they note, kindness can look like a form of wishy-washiness—as, in their words, “the saboteur of the successful life,” the enemy of the drive to succeed—or like a quietly manipulative form of pity. They explore how, despite having lost our grip on kindness’s moral force, we continue to long for and even demand it, sometimes petulantly, from others. As well as diagnosing our problems with kindness, they offer a meditation on how we can nourish this ‘minor virtue.’ At the heart of kindness, they argue, is the risky acceptance of vulnerability, ours and others. Once we venture such acceptance, the authors suggest, we can live a kind life—“the life lived in instinctive sympathetic identification with the vulnerabilities and attractions of others.” I found the book readable, intelligent, and a good way to encourage myself to live more kindly.

Joanne Myers, English

Option B: Facing Adversity, Building Resilience, and Finding Joy by Sheryl Sandberg and Adam Grant

The book’s subtitle is facing adversity, building resilience and finding joy. It gives an eye-opening perspective on dealing with sadness and loss—in one’s own life but also how one can help others who are dealing with some of life’s biggest disappointments. It is an absorbing, helpful and hopeful read and provides lessons that everyone absolutely needs to learn. Life is far from perfect and everyone lives some form of ‘Option B.’ The book helps to make the most of it.

Susan Fumagalli Mahoney, Athletics
**Out of Egypt: A Memoir by André Aciman**

This is the best book I read last summer, seven years after I bought it and 23 years after its initial publication. Aciman, who teaches Proust at NYU, was born in Alexandria, Egypt in 1951, the child of Sephardic Jews of Turkish and Italian origins whose families settled in Alexandria in 1905. (They felt compelled to leave in 1965.) The book is a loving re-creation of a world that no longer exits, populated by eccentric personalities communicating (or not) in half a dozen languages.

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**Prairie Fires: The American Dreams of Laura Ingalls Wilder by Caroline Fraser**

Hailed as the new, “definitive” biography of Laura Ingalls Wilder, this book takes you on a rollicking ride. Fraser starts with the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862 to provide much-needed context for the “frontier” as the Ingalls family encountered it, and then continues to place Wilder’s story within local, state, national, and global narratives. How was the Ingalls poverty tied to Gilded Age behavior and the world economy? How were grasshopper plagues, dust storms, and droughts provoked by human activities? Why was Wilder content to benefit from some government programs while deriding others? How and why did Rose Wilder Lane both plagiarize and fabricate her mother’s life story? You’ll experience 19th and early-20th century versions of #fakenews, #thoughtsandprayers, #climatechange, and more. This narrative reads more like a Netflix-original miniseries than the beloved series of children’s books. A truly American story, even if it’s not the one you thought it was.

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**Fritz Gaenslen, Political Science**

**Janelle Wertzberger, Musselman Library**
**Printer’s Error: Irreverent Stories from Book History** by J.P. Romney and Rebecca Romney

Bibliophiles can’t pass up a new title that sheds insight into their obsession, and one that is not dry, stuffy, and politically correct is doubly welcome. This truly irreverent, well-researched, and fully-documented survey of printing history is written for a generation raised in the era of electronic publications and is a welcome addition to the many classic studies of book history. The off-color and scatological writing only adds to its appeal.

David Hedrick, Musselman Library (retired)

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**The Race Beat: The Press, the Civil Rights Struggle, and the Awakening of a Nation** by Gene Roberts and Hank Klibanoff

A gripping read by two journalists that follows the intersection of the growth of the mass media—from print news and radio to the dawning of the television era—and how that corresponded with the Civil Rights Movement. Detailed accounts of the coverage of civil rights and how the movement changed over time, excellent background on the role of news editors, with particular coverage of some of the best liberal Southern editors. The Emmett Till coverage, Little Rock, Oxford, and Montgomery/Selma points are particularly well done and it is apparent why this book won the 2007 Pulitzer Prize for History.

Rob Bohrer, Provost’s Office
**The Radium Girls: The Dark Story of America’s Shining Women**
by Kate Moore

Scores of young women in Orange, NJ and Ottawa, IL answered their country’s call during the Great War and took jobs as dial painters. Using a new luminous paint mixture containing the wonder element—radium—they meticulously painted glowing numbers on a variety of watches, gauges, and other dials used in war efforts. After the war, the glowing items became hot consumer items and more women entered the industry. The women loved the high pay, the friendly environment, and the shimmer and glow they had at the end of each day. But their work was fatally flawed. This is a fascinating study of early 20th-century labor law and workers’ rights, and how groups of working class women stood up against corrupt corporations.

**Jess Rudy, Majestic Theater**

Kate Moore’s narrative style makes what is a difficult topic easy and interesting to read. The story of the women who worked in America’s radium factories and who suffered tragic illnesses is an important part of women’s history in America. Linking science, capitalism, history, medicine, law and women’s rights, this book has something for everyone.

**Kelly Whitcomb, Multicultural Engagement / International Student Services**

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**The Red Prince: The Secret Lives of a Habsburg Archduke**
by Timothy Snyder

What to do when you are a Habsburg and your empire has ceased to exist? Wilhelm, the Red Prince, tried becoming ruler of Ukraine, working with interwar German neo-imperialists, and living an extravagant life as an exile in Paris. With the coming of the Second World War, he continued to reinvent himself as an ardent anti-Nazi and spy, first against Hitler and later, after the war ended, against Stalin. He managed to survive the Gestapo, but the Soviet secret policy eventually caught up with him. Timothy Snyder’s *The Red Prince* roams all over Europe and reads like a mystery novel.

**William Bowman, History**
Red Summer: The Summer of 1919 and the Awakening of Black America by Cameron McWhirter

Between April and November 1919 there were a large number of race riots and lynchings across the United States, both in the North and South. *Red Summer* recounts these months, examines the reasons behind this period of intense violence, and shows how the seeds were sown for the Civil Rights Movement.

Chuck Wessell, Mathematics

The Rise and Fall of Dodgertown: 60 Years of Baseball in Vero Beach by Rody Johnson

Like the swallows returning to Capistrano, so to were tens of thousands of fans each year returning to Vero Beach. For over 60 years, Vero Beach (just a few hours north of Miami) was the spring training home to the Dodgers. Johnson’s book is a tribute to the players, fans and that wonderful beach community. Take a step back in time to an era when the likes of Koufax, Robinson, Snider, Reese, and Campanella were shaking off the rust of winter in a town called Vero Beach.

Michael Kotlinski, Bookstore

The Rules Do Not Apply: A Memoir by Ariel Levy

This heart-wrenchingly beautiful memoir by Ariel Levy, a staff writer at *The New Yorker*, touches on a range of important and deeply personal subjects including gender (chapter two focuses on runner Caster Semenya), love, family, same-sex relationships, miscarriage (including Levy’s award-winning essay “Thanksgiving in Mongolia”), alcoholism, divorce, and bisexuality. This book is for anyone who strives to have it all, but encounters or anticipates obstacles along the way.

Kerry Wallach, German Studies
The Seabird’s Cry: The Lives and Loves of the Planet’s Great Ocean Voyagers by Adam Nicolson

Drawing on years of experience along the rocky coastline of the British Isles (where he actually owns several small islands!) and drawing from the latest scientific data on seabird physiology, behavior, and migration patterns,

On the pages of The Seabird’s Cry, 12 wondrous species have found an eloquent human voice.

Nicolson, the grandson of Vita Sackville-West, documents the daily lives of a dozen iconic seabirds. What carries this book beyond the matter-of-fact is the luminous imagery of its prose. Here is his observation of a kittiwake, “the body held there as if on wires above me, afloat, dancing, its whole being like a singer’s held note, not flickering or rag-like…but elastic, vibrant, investigative, delicate, the suggestion of a goddess momentarily present above me.” And his reaction to a sky darkened by a flock of puffins on a seasonal return to his islands: “…hundreds of thousands of birds, as if some kind of life-nozzle had been swiveled in this direction.” On the pages of The Seabird’s Cry, 12 wondrous species have found an eloquent human voice.

Larry Marschall, Physics (emeritus)

The Second Amendment: A Biography by Michael Waldman

Law professor Waldman provides a highly-readable summary of the constitutional origins of the Second Amendment and its judicial and political history, right up to the Supreme Court decision, District of Columbia vs Heller, that established an individual’s right to arms for self-defense. Waldman’s writing is concise and conversational, but his arguments exhibit a clarity and sensibility uncommon in the debate about gun control. The book was a response to Sandy Hook shootings, and sadly, it’s even more relevant today than when it was written.

Larry Marschall, Physics (emeritus)
Second Nature: Brain Science and Human Knowledge
by Gerald M. Edelman

One of the best (and discipline-inclusive) descriptions of “consciousness” that I’ve read this year. Written by a Nobel Prize-winning neuroscientist who understands the importance of the humanities.

Dustin Smith, English

Shooting Lincoln: Mathew Brady, Alexander Gardner, and the Race to Photograph the Story of the Century by Nicholas J.C. Pistor

It chronicles how photography, a new medium, got its start during the Civil War, and how Brady and Gardner were the early paparazzi. A great read for folks interested in history, photography, or the media. It really kept my interest.

Patti Lawson, Admissions

Soldiers in the Army of Freedom: The 1st Kansas Colored, the Civil War’s First African American Combat Unit by Ian Michael Spurgeon

It gives a unique depiction of how even so-called abolitionists viewed these troops, who were willing to fight, as inferior…it really is a book that I think sits at the intersection of race and war, and describes some of the evolving opinions of government officials regarding a debate on the capability and determination of blacks during the Civil War.

Darryl Jones, Admissions
Sorrow of the Earth: Buffalo Bill, Sitting Bull and the Tragedy of Show Business by Éric Vuillard

Neither a novel about the Wild West nor a biography of Buffalo Bill, Sorrow of the Earth is the first of Eric Vuillard’s books to be translated into English. It is perhaps best described as a story of how mass entertainment came to be; and Vuillard crafts a breathtaking, careful tale here, weaving two myths, that of Buffalo Bill Cody and his Wild West Show, and that of a history that conceals the memory of Native Americans, to reveal in the process the violence hidden under the glitter of the spectacle.

Caroline Ferraris-Besso, French

The Soul of an Octopus: A Joyful Exploration into the Wonder of Consciousness by Sy Montgomery

The octopus is an amazing animal, capable of a wide range of emotions, complex relationships with human beings, and endless creativity. This book introduces you to several different individuals and as you get to know them, you will find yourself surprisingly engaged and, I hope, moved by how much we still have to learn about all the incredible animals with which we share our home.

Kristin Johnston Largen, Center for Religious & Spiritual Life

The Subtle Art of Not Giving a F*ck: A Counterintuitive Approach to Living a Good Life by Mark Manson

I am not a self-help junkie, but I really liked this book. It’s not about not giving a (well, you know) about anything, it’s about carefully considering what is most important to you and then focusing your time and energy on those things. It also emphasizes the value of struggle and the appreciation of the everyday to become happier, better people.

Jennifer Collins Bloomquist, Provost’s Office / Africana Studies
**The Talmud and the Internet: A Journey between Worlds**

by Jonathan Rosen

A meditation on being Jewish, exploring the territory between doubt and belief, tragedy and prosperity, the world of the living and the world of the dead.

Louis J. Hammann, Religion (emeritus)

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**The Vanity Fair Diaries: 1983-1992**

by Tina Brown

On the surface, Brown’s diaries, covering 1983-1992, when she was editor of *Vanity Fair* magazine, can be viewed as a juicy smorgasbord of tantalizing gossip. There is indeed plenty of that, which is not surprising since Brown’s role at *VF* demanded relentless schmoozing with the rich, the famous, and the powerful. However, what really makes this a captivating read is the real-time, unfiltered (and apparently largely unedited) glimpse of life that Brown chronicles from her vantage point as a young Londoner trying to navigate the male-dominated publishing world in her newly-adopted home of NYC. Her anecdotes paint a vivid picture of the political, cultural and economic climate of the 1980s that was unfolding around her, and offer a poignant glimpse into her personal struggles to balance career with family. Look beyond the glitz and fluff for an inspirational story of a driven, determined and professionally courageous woman.

Betsy Diehl, Development, Alumni and Parent Relations

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**Waking Up White, and Finding Myself in the Story of Race**

by Debby Irving

This is a life-changing book that helped me to see my responsibility in the conversation of race and tune into my privilege in a deeper way than before.

Heidi Frye, Admissions
**The Way To Love: The Last Meditations of Anthony de Mello**  
by Anthony de Mello  

*The Way to Love* is a collection of 32 brief but life-changing meditations by Anthony de Mello, a Jesuit priest who used simple stories, parables and sayings from across cultures and religions—Chinese, Indian, American, Christian, Muslim, Buddhist—as an invitation to enlightenment. De Mello’s meditations will challenge your nattering ego’s attachments, fears, motives and beliefs. This pocketbook edition (3½” by 5”) contains the wisdom of the ages which are so simple, so sublime, so challenging. I first read it 20 years ago in the aftermath of simultaneously losing my partner, job and home. De Mello helped me regain my footing and set me on a new path inspired by grit, gratitude, and grace.

*Jeffrey Gabel, Majestic Theater*

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**When Breath Becomes Air by Paul Kalanithi and The Bright Hour: A Memoir of Living and Dying by Nina Riggs**

I recommend a pair of books and an article in *The Washington Post* to be read together. The first book is *When Breath Becomes Air* by Paul Kalanithi. This *New York Times* bestseller for many weeks is a memoir about life with metastatic lung cancer. It was published posthumously in January 2016 after Kalanithi died in March 2015 at the age of 37. He is survived by his spouse Lucy and their young daughter Cady. The second book is *The Bright Hour* by Nina Riggs. This memoir about life with metastatic breast cancer was published posthumously in June 2017 after Riggs died in February 2017 at the age of 39. She is survived by her spouse John and their young sons Freddy and Benny. *The Washington Post* article, “Two Dying Memoirists Wrote Bestsellers about Their Final Days. Then Their Spouses Fell in Love,” from January 3, 2018 tells the story of the two families coming together unexpectedly.

*Kristin Stuempfle, Provost’s Office*
White Like Her: My Family’s Story of Race and Racial Passing by Gail Lukasik

I read Lukasik’s essay, “My Mother Spent Her Life Passing as White. Discovering Her Secret Changed My View of Race—and Myself,” in The Washington Post (November 20, 2017), which made me put this book on my to-read list. I was in my teens when I learned about the “one-drop” rule in Show Boat where Steve Baker cuts his wife, Julie LaVerne (who is revealed to be of mixed race), and swallows her blood. The insanity of racial segregation laws has always confounded me, as has the subject of family secrets that shape generations, whether they know them or not.

Chris Benecke, Development / Research


Elizebeth Friedman is a name that should be more well known. Her husband, William, is one of the most prominent codebreakers of the 20th century, but Elizebeth was also incredibly influential as she used her cryptographic talents to bring down smugglers, fight spies, and help the Allied forces win WWII. Jason Fagone’s biography of Friedman gives her the credit that she was denied in her own lifetime, due in large part to J. Edgar Hoover’s ego and sexism. This story has it all: love, Nazis, sexism, spies, and quirky characters. Even a mediocre writer could turn her story into a great read, and in the hands of a writer as good as Fagone, the book is one that I could not put down.

Darren Glass, Mathematics
**A Woman’s Crusade: Alice Paul and the Battle for the Ballot**
by Mary Walton

From her Quaker upbringing to becoming a relentless force behind the passage of the 19th Amendment, Mary Walton’s biography of Alice Paul is an incredible journey into the breadth and depth of this unsung suffragist. Using non-violent protest methods that often resulted in arrest and imprisonment, Alice Paul and her “Silent Sentinels” resisted the status quo and forged their own way towards a future that demanded equal rights for women. This book will make you want to hug every woman who has fought, and is fighting for, equality.

Lynn Garskof, Human Resources

**Woody Guthrie and the Dust Bowl Ballads** by Nick Hayes

We’re living in troubled times, and no one ever spoke about troubled times with more clarity and urgency than Woody Guthrie. This beautifully-illustrated, sepia-toned “fictionalized biography” by illustrator and author Nick Hayes is a great way to get acquainted with Woody’s story and the events that led to his political awakening in the 1930s and ‘40s. You might even find yourself inspired by it—inspired to do more to see to it that the voices of those who can be the hardest to hear get heard. Is there a better way to spend a summer than that?

Dave Powell, Education
Academics sometimes have peculiar little secrets among their otherwise heavily-professional reading. One eminently respectable trauma surgeon I knew had a little-disclosed passion for the Western novels of Louis L’Amour. For my part, I will admit to a secret pleasure in mystery novels, although only for four very specific authors. The first of these is James Lee Burke—although again, I am very picky. It is Burke’s series of mystery novels about Dave Robicheaux, the sheriff’s deputy from New Iberia Parish in southwestern Louisiana. Robicheaux—a Vietnam vet with horrific memories of his service, an alcoholism problem which he heroically battles through AA, an adopted Salvadorian refugee daughter, and a perfect friend in the rowdy Cletus Purcell—inhabits a world of neo-tropical beauty along Bayou Teche, of Cajun food and accents, and of casual intrusions by powerful outsiders who imagine that money makes excuses for them. Burke’s newest installment in the series, Robicheaux, is the 21st. But for my money, In the Electric Mist with Confederate Dead may be the best of them all. This is mystery writing that ascends to the literary in eloquence.

Behind Burke, I fancy Sue Grafton’s alphabet-mysteries, built around the character of a street-wise California PI named Kinsey Millhone. Grafton’s latest release (number 25) is Y is for Yesterday, but, believe me, no single one of these novels follows the same plotline. I also love Robert Harris—but again, selectively. My two favorites date from the ‘90s—Fatherland and Archangel—but they are eminently worth hunting-up online from second-hand vendors.

Finally, there is John le Carré. For those of you old enough to remember The Spy Who Came in from the Cold (not to mention Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy), you will want to read this year’s A Legacy of Spies, a sequel of sorts for The Spy Who Came In From the Cold. Any of these will be great to take to the beach, the mountains, or the Caribbean. Just be careful they don’t have to send out a search party to find what’s become of you when you wander off to read these, because you won’t notice the passage of time.
The Big Sick directed by Michael Showalter (2017)

This film is an awkward, but heart-warming comedy perfect for summer viewing. Pakistan-born comedian Kumail Nanjiani meets and falls in love with Emily, a grad student in Chicago. When Emily becomes mysteriously ill, Kumail must deal with conflicting expectations from both her parents and his own, while figuring out his own place in life. Superb writing and stellar performances turn this solemn-sounding (and semi-autobiographical) story into a comical, yet heartfelt examination of culture clash and coming of age.

Klara Shives, Musselman Library

Blood Simple directed by Joel Coen (2001)

This 1984 crime thriller film by brothers Ethan and Joel Coen was released in 1985 and re-released theatrically in 2000. It was the vehicle to establish the brothers Coen in cinema as well as launch the careers of actress Frances McDormand and cinematographer Barry Sonnenfeld. Blood Simple is a gritty, suspense-driven thriller. More often the forgotten Coen Brothers classic.

Michael Kotlinski, Bookstore

Collateral directed by S.J. Clarkson (2018-)

Like his 2004 play “Stuff Happens,” David Hare’s Collateral, his first foray into television, is rich with characters, ripe with state-of-the-nation intrigue, and a relentless examination of immigration and modern England. Featuring a pregnant Carey Mulligan as an investigator on her first murder case, this Netflix/BBC production has a lot going for it, including a compelling investigation and characters who are fun to watch—mostly thanks to Hare’s propulsive dialogue. Despite the heavy nature of the investigation, there is humor here, which makes this series enjoyable, even though the story is deadly serious.

Jack Ryan, Provost’s Office
**Goodbye Christopher Robin directed by Simon Curtis (2017)**

Although this 2017 film got mixed reviews, I found it poignant and magical. Perhaps there are no stellar performances, but the terminally cute Will Tilston as the younger Christopher Robin (called Billy Moon by his family) embodies very well the problems of privacy and authenticity experienced by celebrities. Although A.A. Milne created the most beloved children’s book in the English language, Billy wanted his father Blue (as Alan Milne was called by his family) to write a story “for me, not about me,” and Billy never took any of the vast fortune created by the book, *Winnie the Pooh*. He opened a small bookshop in Devon.

*Charles F. Emmons, Sociology*

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**Mr. Holmes directed by Bill Condon (2015)**

The aging super-sleuth is entering the final chapter of his remarkable life and *Mr. Holmes* shows that it may be his finest hour. Sir Ian McKellen was a marvel playing the greatest detective as he comes to terms with his mortality, joy, regret, and being human (while solving one - or two - more cases).

*Miranda Wisor, Musselman Library*

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**Joan Didion: The Center Will Not Hold directed by Griffin Dunne (2017)**

This is a fascinating documentary of the influential American journalist/essayist/novelist Joan Didion as presented by her nephew, Griffin Dunne. The film charts her extraordinarily rich literary life in New York and California with her writer-husband John Gregory Dunne and daughter Quintana Roo. A woman whose small frame belies her great strength and fortitude, the film uncovers how she reported with clear, unwavering eyes both the political (such as the tumultuous 1960s) and the personal—particularly the grief and loss of her husband and daughter within the space of two back-to-back years.

*Kathryn Martin, Musselman Library*

I remember very clearly the moment I found out that I may be not the only one in the world who feels like this. I remember the excitement of the discovery despite the realization that it will not be easy from now on. And it wasn’t, but it was so comforting to know that I am not alone. When growing up, I did not have movies to watch like this. I so wish I had that. I can clearly see the progress over the years, but I also know better not to take this progress for granted. That is why I am out and loud: to stand at our Ferris wheel together. Love, Rim.

Rim Baltaduonis, Economics

Loving Vincent directed by Dorota Kobiela and Hugh Welchman (2017)

Loving Vincent is the first fully-painted animated feature film and tells a powerful story about the life of Vincent Van Gogh. The film provides the viewer with both an incredible story of this complex genius, but also a unique viewing experience. As anyone who is familiar with Van Gogh’s life would expect, it is a bit sad, but it provides some excellent insight into a profoundly interesting individual.

Alecea Standlee, Sociology

Maudie directed by Aisling Walsh (2016)

I love this film! It is based on the true story of Maud Lewis, a Canadian folk artist from Nova Scotia. She suffered from juvenile rheumatoid arthritis and personal problems. She answered an ad for a housekeeper and moved into the one-room house of a bad-tempered fish peddler. They eventually married and Maud found comfort in her paintings. Sally Hawkins not only plays Maud—she becomes Maud! You will enjoy every moment she is on the screen.

Nancy Bernardi, Musselman Library
**A Place to Call Home created by Bevan Lee (2013-)**

From the Land Down Under comes this wonderful drama set in the aftermath of WWII focusing on a well-heeled family suddenly involved with those out of their social class in the midst of post-war changes. Yes, I know, it’s like *Downton Abbey* but with a more down-to-earth Aussie flavor. Fabulous cast headed by Marta Dusseldorp, a powerful talent with the unflappable poise of Grace Kelly. She plays Sarah Adams, who returns to her native Australia after a 20-year absence to start a new life. A further nod must be given to Noni Hazlehurst as the domineering matriarch Elizabeth Bligh, ruling every aspect of life at the family estate “Ash Park.”

_Sunny DeNicola, Musselman Library_

**Shetland produced by ITV Studios (2013-)**

BBC Scotland has a great series in *Shetland*. Detective Inspector Jimmy Perez (played by Bafta-winner Douglas Henshall) lives on the remote Scottish archipelago, Shetland. Its treeless hills and rocky coast add to the mood as Perez and his team unravel well-crafted mysteries, based on the stories of Ann Cleeves. Perez, a recent widower, is a gentle, thoughtful character and yet intensely focused on his work. Lots of subplots and red herrings will keep you guessing. Tip: Although in English, turn on the subtitles; some of the accents are daunting.

_Sunny DeNicola, Musselman Library_

**Sing Street directed by John Carney (2016)**

This hit all the high notes for me: 1980s music, teen angst, unrequited love, sibling bonds, and a band of merry misfits. *Sing Street* played on my heart strings, made me laugh, made me cry, and never gets old on any re-watching.

_Wendee Lewis Dunlap, Alumni Relations_
Tabula Rasa directed by Jonas Govaerts and Kaat Beels (2017-)

For a gripping, international, psychological thriller, watch this nine-part Belgian mini-series. The attempt to unravel a mysterious disappearance becomes a race or duel between an obsessed detective and an implicated woman, now confined to a psychiatric institution. Struggling with severe memory loss coupled with ailing short-term memory, Mie D’Haeze struggles to recover and fill in the “blank slate” of her recent past. Lauded in Europe and now available on Netflix, this is a first-rate production, not a formulaic mystery—from the artful opening graphics, through the surprising revelations, to the shocking conclusion.

Dan DeNicola, Philosophy

Two Trains Runnin’ directed by Samuel D. Pollard (2016)

This feature-length documentary directed by Sam Pollard, narrated by Common, and featuring the music of Gary Clarke Jr., was nominated for a Best Music Film Grammy in 2017. Combining the parallel narratives of the search for old blues musicians and the struggle for civil rights in America, Two Trains Runnin’ illustrates how passion for creativity and equal rights can rise above bigotry and hate.

Jack Ryan, Provost’s Office

Podcast: Kermode and Mayo’s Film Review

Every Friday, Mark Kermode, the UK’s leading film critic, joins host Simon Mayo for two hours of conversation and interviews with actors and directors. In an energetic, funny show that has developed a cult following among lovers of cinema, they cover the weekly UK Top 10, analyze new film releases, and read listeners’ reviews. A great BBC show that offers both profound analysis and unparalleled entertainment. http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00lvdrj

Radi Rangelova, Spanish
I was reminded recently that this year marks the 50th anniversary of the release of *2001: A Space Odyssey*. It is odd that I had not thought of this, because no single film probably had more of an impact on my life than this one. I did not see Stanley Kubrick’s science fiction masterpiece back in 1968, for I was much too young to appreciate it at that time. (How old do you think I am?) Instead I saw it nine years later when it was still being re-released annually in theaters in 70 mm. (What a format that was!) I did not sleep for two nights after seeing that film, so caught up in the mystery of what it meant, no longer trapped in the hidebound suburban world of my youth. *2001* is largely responsible for what I now do for a living (i.e. drone on incessantly about film and television to unsuspecting, eye-rolling listeners/readers), but it is also the film that first revealed to me what my world view ultimately is.

Simply put, I love mystery. Note, I am not saying I love a mystery of the whodunit type; I love mystery *period*, those things that ultimately I cannot answer, but only wonder about. Thus, when it comes to films and TV shows, the ones that stick with me the most are the ones that leave some mystery intact in the end, where the wonder does not cease even after it is all done. I now have what I consider the perfect television equivalent to films of this type.

But I leave that as a mystery for the end. First, some other recommendations.
Just to be clear, I am not just a fan of mystery—I also love to laugh. Of all the films I saw this past year, nothing made me laugh more than Greta Gerwig’s *Lady Bird*, which I saw with my 101 class last fall. Of all the TV shows I have seen this past year, none tickled my funny bone more frequently than Jerry Seinfeld’s oddball, unclassifiable *Comedians in Cars Getting Coffee*. (The episodes with Christoph Waltz, John Oliver, Sarah Silverman, and Barack Obama are my personal favorites.) Darkly funny is *The End of the F***king World*, where I have no idea how a second season can continue this fascinating show, given how unforgottably the first season ends.

I do like films/shows about serious issues. When it comes to race, nothing recently compares to *I Am Not Your Negro* (documentary), *Mudbound* (fictional feature) or *Seven Seconds* (TV series). Regarding gender, the mini-series *Alias Grace* is the most compelling by far. Among the grittier shows I enjoyed are *The Deuce* (about 1970s NYC, created in part by David Simon of *The Wire*), *Mindhunter* (about how the FBI first defined a “serial killer”) on Netflix and *Room 104* (by the ever-prolific Duplass brothers) on HBO.

Films that feature strong female leads include the French film by Olivier Assayas, *Personal Shopper*, and *Jackie*. (Note: I generally dislike biopics, but this latter example made the smart choice of only following Jackie Kennedy right after JFK’s assassination.) *The Red Turtle* was the most thought-provoking of any animated film I saw this past year, although the Japanese anime mega-hit, *Your Name*, is worth trying. A Chinese film, *Paths of the Soul*, offers a glimpse into what life is like during a grueling pilgrimage for Tibetan Buddhists.

Given my love for *2001*, however, it should not come as a surprise that I love sci-fi, at least the more thought-provoking kind. (I generally dislike fantasy and superheroes—too cut and dried for my taste.)

Among feature-length films from Hollywood, *Arrival* is one of the more thoughtful in recent years. Its director, Denis Villeneuve, went on to make
Blade Runner 2029, a film that looks fantastic, but will likely never recoup its exorbitant costs. (I may use it in my Global Media Industries course for that reason alone.) Amazon seems to be making a specialty of this genre with such offerings as The Living and the Dead (which may be horror, but also may be a sci-fi time warp), and two shows based on Philip K. Dick's The Man in the High Castle (an alternate-history, time travel sci-fi where the Nazis won WWII) and Electric Dreams (where the best episodes resemble Blade Runner).

Yet as I said at the beginning, mystery is what moves me most deeply. One example is the early works of Peter Weir, the Australian director who later moved to Hollywood (and who no longer makes films for mysterious reasons). While a young man, he made two films, Picnic at Hanging Rock (1975) and The Last Wave (1977) that both end with a profound sense of mystery that seems tied to the landscape of Australia itself. Images from those two films still haunt me.

I was reminded of these two films when I watched the third and final season of the HBO show, The Leftovers, which also ends in Australia. A major issue for a feature-length film is how to structure a work within a couple of hours. But for serialized television—now the predominant form on TV—the greater challenge is determining how many seasons a show should air. Too many shows stretch out for too long, thinning out what were once compelling narrative arcs. In my opinion, no show in history got its overall narrative arc more perfectly than the three seasons of The Leftovers. I have mentioned this show before and its wonderfully bizarre premise: without any explanation, suddenly two percent of the world’s population vanished into thin air. Yet the focus of the show was never the mystery of what happened—the focus is the variety of ways (some extreme) that the people left behind responded to an event since all certitudes have ceased. Thus, while the premise of the show was unbelievable, the behavior of the characters was utterly believable, complex, and purely human. Still, as I watched, I always believed there is no good way this show can end to my satisfaction, that somehow they will ruin the indelible mystery of it all. To my utter surprise—and delight—the show ended with only a partial explanation of what had happened to begin with, yet deepening the overall sense of mystery even more. For me this was one of the most profoundly moving experiences I ever had binge-watching a TV show; one I doubt could ever be replicated.

So what will I write about a year from now? As the lyrics of the title song used for seasons 2 and 3 of The Leftovers state, “I’ll just let the mystery be.”
The recent success of Steven Spielberg’s *The Post*—a drama about *The Washington Post*’s printing of the Pentagon Papers—is a timely reminder of the value of the freedom of the press. It also harkens back to a not-so-distant time when journalists often were considered heroes. Their mission, often undertaken at great personal sacrifice, was to save the public from those who were politically or morally corrupt. Even Superman was a newspaper reporter.

Journalism Instructor Thomas Barstow, a 32-year veteran of the industry, offers his favorite films on this subject:

“Two movies demonstrate the skills required to perform great journalism, and they are from two different generations. *All the President’s Men* (1976, directed by Alan J. Pakula) chronicles *The Washington Post* reporters who uncovered the Watergate debacle, and *Spotlight* (2015, directed by Tom McCarthy) shows what *Boston Globe* journalists endured to uncover the pedophile-priest scandal.

“The technology might change, but tenacity, intelligence and perseverance remain the mainstay skills. Both movies depict doors being slammed, reluctant interviewees, the drudgery of using documents and references to track trends, as well as pressure exerted from powerful people who want to derail the articles.

“In *Spotlight* in particular, reporters and editors must face the grim realizations that their own backgrounds and biases might have blinded them to truth. However, they manage to work through those issues, letting the facts reveal stories that needed to be told. Few people can put their biases aside, so the movies show what separates professional journalists from marketing or public relations, where the job is to tout one agenda over another.

“Even if you have seen these Academy Award winners, the heroics displayed can make you re-appreciate the Fourth Estate, especially in the current political and social climate.”

You can also check out these other titles in the library’s collection: 

*Continues*
Absence of Malice (1981 directed by Sydney Pollack) Sally Fields is an investigative reporter pursuing allegations of corruption by a powerful businessman, Paul Newman.

Frost/Nixon (2008 directed by Ron Howard) British television personality David Frost turns hard-hitting interviewer as he gets former President Richard Nixon to answer questions about his time in office and the Watergate scandal.

Good Night, and Good Luck (2005, directed by George Clooney) centers on broadcast journalist Edward R. Murrow’s efforts to stop Sen. Joseph McCarthy and his anti-Communist reign of terror.

The Insider (1999 directed by Michael Mann) Nominated for seven academy awards, this film is based on the true story of the 60 Minutes segment in which whistleblower Jeffrey Wigand (Russell Crowe) and producer Lowell Bergman (Al Pacino) took on the tobacco industry.

Page One: Inside the New York Times (2011 directed by Andrew Rossi) This documentary takes viewers into the New York Times newsroom to show how the industry is struggling to survive the Internet’s take over as the public’s news source. It follows journalists fighting to maintain quality reporting, and will make you want to buy a subscription.

The Year of Living Dangerously (1982 directed by Peter Weir) Mel Gibson portrays an Australian reporter assigned to Jakarta who, with the help of a well-connected photographer (a role for which actress Linda Hunt won an Academy Award), gains access to Indonesian Communist Party leaders during a coup to overthrow President Sukarno.

Zodiac (2007 directed by David Fincher) A newspaper cartoonist and an investigative journalist pursue Zodiac, a serial killer in 1960s San Francisco.
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JUNE 20
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JUNE 27
Hello Dolly (1969)

JULY 4 - No Movie
(Gettysburg College outdoor concert & fireworks)

JULY 11
Saturday Night Fever (1977)

JULY 18
From Here to Eternity (1953)

JULY 25
Blazing Saddles (1979)

AUGUST 1 - No Movie
(Mary Chapin Carpenter Show)

AUGUST 8
The Man Who Knew Too Much (1956)

AUGUST 15
AIRPLANE! (1980)

AUGUST 22
The Good, The Bad & The Ugly (1966)

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