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## Zakiya Whatley, Visiting Assistant Professor of Biology

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## Zakiya Whatley, Visiting Assistant Professor of Biology

### **Abstract**

In our last Next Page column of the year, Zakiya Whatley, Visiting Assistant Professor of Biology, provides a recommended read for any budding geneticist; shares which books she's looking forward to reading next for her book group; and tells us what her students will be doing for class this Friday, April 24, 2015, in celebration of [National DNA Day](#).

### **Keywords**

Musselman Library, Gettysburg College, reading, books, interview

### **Disciplines**

English Language and Literature | Library and Information Science

# Next Page

## Zakiya Whatley Visiting Assistant Professor of Biology

*In our last Next Page column of the year, Zakiya Whatley, Visiting Assistant Professor of Biology, provides a recommended read for any budding geneticist; shares which books she's looking forward to reading next for her book group; and tells us what her students will be doing for class this Friday, April 24, 2015, in celebration of [National DNA Day](#).*

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### **What are you reading now (or have read recently) that you would recommend to a friend or colleague and why?**

Right now I'm reading [Missing Microbes: How the Overuse of Antibiotics is Fueling Our Modern Plagues](#) by Martin Blaser. I would recommend this to anyone who doesn't understand why we need to regulate our use of antibiotics. This book hits a lot of key points that the general public should consider! If you're too busy to read or want a very general introduction, the library carries [Resistance](#), a new documentary directed by Michael Graziano that covers similar topics.

*Zakiya Whatley, Visiting Assistant Professor of Biology, will help her students commemorate the discovery of DNA's double helix and the completion of the Human Genome Project this Friday on National DNA day.*

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

I recently recommended that one of my students read [Lean In](#) by Sheryl Sandberg. This book is written for working women, regardless of where you are in your career. While I have my own issues with the blanketed presentation of more nuanced issues, the student really enjoyed it. Actually, she never returned my copy. If you're reading this, return my book! :)

### **Your research area is in genetics. What book would you recommend to the novice scientist to learn more about genetics?**

For the novice scientist, I would recommend Francis Collins' [The Language of Life: DNA and the Revolution in Personalized Medicine](#). This book has something for everyone; it explains basic scientific concepts, highlights the advances in personal genomics, but it also provides context to engage non-scientists. It does a great job of showcasing the benefits of current technology while presenting limitations and future needs too!

**National DNA Day is on Friday, April 24. How are you going to celebrate and what activities do you have planned for your students? Any "must-read" articles or blogs to watch as activities commence?**

My students don't know it yet, but we will spend the day outside. I'm setting up a [Genome Cache](#). They will walk around campus, exploring a virtual chromosome using a special app on their phones.

**Where do you get your news? What is on rotation in your media "diet"? How does social media influence your reading life?**

I actually get most of my news from Twitter. This allows me to see a lot of headlines at once, and I can follow up on those that interest me. I follow the major news outlets, great curators of scientific writing, and other random accounts for laughs. So at any point my feed contains links to trends in science education, the latest microbiome paper, and a short clip from *Bob's Burgers*. There's a hodge-podge of stuff, and it's just how I like it!

**What is your favorite book to give as a gift?**

I don't have a single go-to book that I give as gifts. I usually try to tailor books to the recipient. The last book I gave as a gift was [Kansas City Lightning: The Rise and Times of Charlie Parker](#) by Stanley Crouch.

**Do you have a favorite book or literary character from your childhood?**

I don't have a favorite book, but I was obsessed with R. L. Stine's Goosebumps series as a kid. I read any book in that series that I could get my hands on. I eventually graduated to his Fear Street series, then moved on to other authors. The last two thrillers I read were by [Gone Girl](#) by Gillian Flynn and *Without Fail* by Lee Child.

**What do you like to read for fun?**

I consider anything that's not an academic paper or textbook to be a "fun read." I particularly enjoyed [Americanah](#) by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, [Where'd You Go, Bernadette](#) by Maria Semple, and [Boy, Snow, Bird](#) by Helen Oyeyemi. [Next](#) by Michael Crichton was my most recent fun read; it's part science-fiction, part current genetic technology, and overall entertaining!

**What are you planning to read next?**

My next book is [The People in the Trees](#) by Hanya Yanagihara. I'm also a member of a book club along with a couple other faculty members; we're reading [Siddhartha](#) and [The Yiddish Policemen's Union](#) next.

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