



9-7-2016

## Kenneth F. Mott, Professor of Political Science

Musselman Library  
Gettysburg College

Kenneth F. Mott  
Gettysburg College

Follow this and additional works at: <https://cupola.gettysburg.edu/nextpage>

 Part of the [English Language and Literature Commons](#), and the [Library and Information Science Commons](#)

**Share feedback about the accessibility of this item.**

---

Musselman Library and Mott, Kenneth F, "Kenneth F. Mott, Professor of Political Science" (2016). *Next Page*. 27.  
<https://cupola.gettysburg.edu/nextpage/27>

This is the publisher's version of the work. This publication appears in Gettysburg College's institutional repository by permission of the copyright owner for personal use, not for redistribution. Cupola permanent link: <https://cupola.gettysburg.edu/nextpage/27>

This open access blog post is brought to you by The Cupola: Scholarship at Gettysburg College. It has been accepted for inclusion by an authorized administrator of The Cupola. For more information, please contact [cupola@gettysburg.edu](mailto:cupola@gettysburg.edu).

---

## Kenneth F. Mott, Professor of Political Science

### **Abstract**

People like their politics like their eggs. Some like them hard boiled. Some like them over easy or sunny side up. In this new *Next Page* interview, Ken Mott, Professor of Political Science, offers an array of political reading recommendations to help us understand the current political scramble.

### **Keywords**

Musselman Library, Gettysburg College, reading, books, interview

### **Disciplines**

English Language and Literature | Library and Information Science

### **Comments**

This is the publisher's version of the work. This publication appears in Gettysburg College's institutional repository by permission of the copyright owner for personal use, not for redistribution.

# Next Page

## Kenneth F. Mott, Professor of Political Science

September 7, 2016

*People like their politics like their eggs. Some like them hard boiled. Some like them over easy or sunny side up. In this new **Next Page** interview, Ken Mott, Professor of Political Science, offers an array of political reading recommendations to help us understand the current political scramble.*

\*\*\*\*\*



*Kenneth F. Mott, Professor of Political Science*

*What are you reading now (or have read recently) that you would recommend? Why?*

I must say that my reading habits are somewhat eclectic. Others might label them just strange! Much of my summer reading time is consumed with current or recent detective or mystery books by such authors as Daniel Silva and James Patterson, and occasional forays into American history.

*If someone was just starting out in this genre, what Silva and Patterson titles should they begin with?*

A good starting point with Silva would be *The Heist*. With Patterson I'd recommend beginning with *Along Came a Spider*.

*What does your non-summer reading consist of?*

During the academic year, I pretty much confine my reading to course and professionally-related materials in the realm of constitutional law, the U.S. Supreme Court, and current politics. Until this year, I routinely offered a first year seminar on electoral politics and so keeping up with the latest happenings in that area was essential.

*Besides books in your field, how do you stay current?*

I regularly read four daily newspapers, the [\*New York Times\*](#), the [\*Washington Post\*](#), the [\*Boston Globe\*](#), and [\*USA Today\*](#). I also subscribe to the *Gettysburg Times* to keep abreast of local politics and to see who (unfortunately) among my acquaintances has died recently.

## *What should we read to help us make sense of the current political climate?*

There are some key authors and books which can help us better understand the current electoral mess, particularly the 2016 presidential campaign, in which we find ourselves. None of these fully explain Donald Trump, Hillary Clinton, or other leading actors on our political stage, but each serves to aid our understanding of the theater in which they are performing.

I would start with Jon Meacham, who often appears as a commentator on “Morning Joe” and who has contributed to our historical understanding with books on Andrew Jackson, FDR and Churchill, Jefferson, and Bush ’41. Particularly, I would recommend his 2007 work, [\*American Gospel: God, the Founding Fathers, and the Making of a Nation\*](#). It is a brief but wonderfully documented account of the role of religion in our political history and a joy to read. I assign it in my course on religion and politics.

Thomas Mann and Norm Ornstein are terrific political scientists who probably better understand the workings of Congress than any other writers. They provide an excellent explanation of our recent party divisiveness in their 2012 offering, [\*It's Even Worse Than It Looks: How the American Constitutional System Collided With the New Politics of Extremism\*](#).

Jane Mayer, a staff writer for the *New Yorker*, spent five years tracking the Koch brothers and carefully researched their lives in politics and, more importantly, their heavy financial investments in the Republican Party and in particular candidates who supported their causes. [\*Dark Money: The Hidden History of the Billionaires Behind the Rise of the Radical Right\*](#), written in 2016, is a wonderful read and has been a *New York Times* best seller for some time.

Charles Murray, a libertarian economist, is as thoughtful as he is well known. His recent book, [\*Coming Apart: The State of White America, 1960-2010\*](#) is a must read in the area of racial politics which are so prevalent today. Robert Putnam is a household name. His 1995 best-selling book, [\*Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of the American Community\*](#) provided an excellent snapshot of how our national community has evolved, or devolved, from one of strong personal interconnectedness to one of isolated individualism. His latest tome, [\*Our Kids: The American Dream in Crisis\*](#), gives us a good look at our growing inequality gap and the steady erosion of the American Dream.

Collectively, these authors offer well-documented insights into our political climate and the underpinnings of our anger, anxieties, and hopes.

## *This all sounds pretty grim? Do you have any uplifting suggestions? Anything that made you laugh?*

For fun, I would urge everyone to read American comedian and satirist [\*Andy Borowitz's New Yorker columns\*](#). He is a fantastic wit and is a great help in preventing depression.

## *What is your reading philosophy?*

I believe that a balance of reading is essential to one's peace of mind and overall good psychological health. Too much of anything can have a warping effect!

<http://nextpage.musselmanlibrary.org/faculty/buzz-jones-professor-of-music/>