You’ve Gotta Read This! Connecting with Readers at an Academic Library

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You’ve Gotta Read This! Connecting with Readers at an Academic Library

Abstract
At our small, liberal arts college, the library has developed a vibrant browsing collection of popular fiction and nonfiction titles in both print and ebook formats. Additionally, we have developed extensive outreach and programming initiatives to support the recreational reading habits and intellectual engagement of our students and faculty outside of the classroom. Some of these efforts include an annual summer reading booklet, an online featured reader column, and first year and other thematic reading and discussion groups. Learn how librarians on our campus continue to successfully promote recreational reading in support of lifelong learning.

Keywords
recreational reading, leisure reading, summer reading, reading programs, reading promotion, book discussions, outreach services, academic libraries, recreational materials, popular reading collection, academic libraries, college libraries

Disciplines
Information Literacy | Library and Information Science

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Musselman Library empowers our community of learners to discover and engage with the world’s collected knowledge, to explore creative and intellectual pursuits, and to actively participate in research and scholarship. We are dedicated to encouraging critical and imaginative thinking, promoting lifelong learning, and supporting teaching and learning through partnerships and collaboration.

Musselman Library Mission Statement

You’ve Gotta Read This! Annual Summer Reading Booklet

Started in spring 2003, the summer reading booklet features recommendations for books (fiction and nonfiction) and DVDs by faculty, staff, and administrators of Gettysburg College.

Published each May, the summer reading booklet inspires students and the rest of our campus community to take time in the summer to sit back, relax, and read.

2003
2005
2007
2009
2011
2013
2014

Quick Facts for Summer Reading 2003-2014

12 Booklets completed
1,246 total submissions since 2003
189 films/TV Shows
1,057 Books
12 Featured Columns
A new life! 6,375 total Cupola downloads since Nov. 2012
152 submitters
3 Lectures
1 Film Screening
1 Author Visit

One Room, Three Collections

McNaughton Rental Collection - 384 Titles
A rental collection of approximately 500 titles. Includes popular and genre fiction, multiple copies of popular titles, and New York Times bestsellers.

Browsing Collection - 1,057 titles
Purchased titles that are part of our permanent book collection. Includes fiction, poetry, young adult literature, graphic novels, and nonfiction judged to be of enduring value to the collection.

OverDrive (as of 2013) - 301 Titles (as of 9/18/2014)
Supplementing our academic ebook collections, OverDrive now includes popular fiction, nonfiction, and a small number of audiobooks.

First-Year Student Reading Discussions

Using titles recommended in You’ve Gotta Read This!, in fall 2013 the library launched a student reading discussion series as a way to provide intellectually engaging opportunities for students.

All participants receive a free copy of the book (funded by Friends of Musselman Library) and attend the book discussion, which is led by a faculty member and/or librarian.

2013-2014
3 discussions with 21 participants
2014-2015
2 planned discussions (Fall/Spring)

2013-2014 Selections

The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian
by Sherman Alexie

Moonwalking with Einstein: The Art and Science of Remembering Everything
by Joshua Foer

All the Unseen
by G. Willow Wilson

2014-2015 Selections

The Book Thief
by Markus Zusak (Fall) / To Be Determined (Spring)

Browsing Room

Opened in spring 2003 and housed in a glass and brick enclosed space on the main floor of Musselman Library, the Browsing Room contains contemporary and award-winning works of fiction and popular nonfiction, poetry, and short stories from the library’s collection.

The Browsing Room encourages recreational reading for personal discovery and lifelong learning.

One Room, Three Collections

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OverDrive (as of 2013) - 301 Titles (as of 9/18/2014)
Supplementing our academic ebook collections, OverDrive now includes popular fiction, nonfiction, and a small number of audiobooks.

An enclosed quiet space on a noisy main floor, the Browsing Room features comfortable seating, study space, and exhibits.

Browsing Room Users

Staff/administrators were the number one user of the Browsing and McNaughton Collections.

Faculty checked out more items from the McNaughton Collection than the Browsing Collection.

Students checked out more items from the Browsing Collection than the McNaughton Collection.

Rate of Circulation for Browsing Collections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collection</th>
<th>Total # of Titles</th>
<th>Total # of Checkouts</th>
<th>Circulation Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>McNaughton Rental</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>1,012</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Browsing Collection</td>
<td>1,057</td>
<td>1,092</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Collection</td>
<td>312,776</td>
<td>16,074</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VOD Collection</td>
<td>11,727</td>
<td>11,004</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Collection size and checkouts cover the period August 2013 to September 2014. Rate of circulation is determined by total number of checkouts divided by collection size.

OverDrive

Launched in 2013, OverDrive has grown to include 301 titles. For the 2014 You’ve Gotta Read This! issue, we purchased 97 (of the 208 recommended books) on OverDrive. Of those 97 titles, they circulated 182 times from May to September 2014.

Overall, OverDrive use has grown over the course of Summer 2014, in part to You’ve Gotta Read This! Issue and ‘Bring Your Own Device’ OverDrive training party.

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Events and Programming

Sponsoring lectures, exhibits, film screenings and book discussions, provide opportunities for the library to connect with the College and greater-Gettysburg community. Faculty partnerships have contributed to the success of these programs. Securing co-sponsors and grant funding has been key to making these learning opportunities affordable and sustainable.

Read Green: A Gettysburg Environmental Series

Spring 2009

528 total participants
3 Book Discussions
Including Avant, Vegetable, Alaskan; Field Notes from a Catastrophic; Deep Economy
2 Film Viewings
1 Author Visit
Bill McKibben

Conflict and Resistance in the Middle East

Fall 2011 - Spring 2012

804 total participants
15 events related to life during conflict in regions with heavy American involvement, Iraq and Palestine.

5 Book Discussions
Including Alligators in Asia, Iraq: The Year the Piper Yog (2011)
5 Film Viewings
5 Lectures

Iron: Beyond the Headlines

Fall 2014 - Spring 2015

11 scheduled events to explore the history, art, culture, and everyday life of Iranians.

4 Book Discussions
Including Righteous of Shirin, Persian, and The Exterminators of Shirin
3 Film Viewings
3 Lectures
2 Author Visits
Dalia Sofer

Next Page

In September 2013, the library launched Next Page, a new online column featuring guest readers from the Gettysburg College community.

The column provides a way to highlight different perspectives and disciplines on campus, to stimulate ideas and inspire conversation, and to model intellectual engagement in a liberal arts setting.

Since Next Page’s launch...

14 individual reader profiles
4,053 page views (as of 9/17/2014)

Available at http://nextpagegettysburg.blogspot.com/