

Summer Reading 2011 Noble and Greenough School

Each student is required to read **3** books this summer:

1. A community-wide selection, **Zeitoun** by Dave Eggers.
2. One attached to the History course you will take in Fall 2011 (see box below).
3. One title of your choice from the Faculty Recommendation List below.
4. If you are not taking a fall History course, select a second title from the Faculty Recommendation List below.

PLEASE NOTE: *Zeitoun* and the required History book may be ordered through www.classbook.com.



What are you reading? Current students are encouraged to share thoughts about their books via a password protected blog. Please login using your Nobles username and password. For login issues please contact andy_shumway@nobles.edu.

<https://sites.google.com/a/nobles.edu/summerreading/>

History Courses - Fall 2011 Required Reading

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| Geography (Class VI) <i>Haroun and the Sea of Stories</i> , Salman Rushdie | Macroeconomics <i>The World is Flat 3.0: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century</i> , Thomas Friedman |
| Civics (Class V) <i>The Perfect Shot</i> , Elaine Marie Alphin | Modern Middle East <i>No God But God</i> , Reza Aslan |
| HHC (Class IV) <i>Abraham: A Journey to the Heart of Three Faiths</i> , Bruce Feiler | Race & Ethnicity <i>The Name of War: King Phillip's War and the Origins of American Identity</i> , Jill Lepore |
| U.S. History (Class III) <i>Ragged Dick: Or, Street Life in New York With the Boot Blacks</i> , Horatio Alger | 20th Century World <i>All Quiet on the Western Front</i> , Erich Maria Remarque |
| European History <i>A World Lit Only by Fire: The Medieval Mind and the Renaissance: Portrait of an Age</i> , William Manchester | Vietnam War <i>War</i> , Sebastian Junger |

Faculty Recommendation List

Fiction

Ahab's Wife, or, The Star-Gazer, Sena Jeter Naslund. (Recommended by Kate Ramsdell.)

If you've been intrigued by Captain Ahab in *Moby Dick*, be sure to delve into the spellbinding tale of his wife Una whose full life is poetically told through themes of love, loyalty, exploration, friendships and heartbreak. The author gives Una as memorable an opening line as Melville gave Ishmael with her utterance, "Captain Ahab was neither my first husband nor my last." You're hooked from the start and mesmerized by the end.

The Age of Innocence, Edith Wharton. (Recommended by Kate Ramsdell.)

Upper middle class New York society of the 1870s is reeling from the calamity of individual aspirations contradicting the fashionable, respectable, and self-righteous expectations of the social tribe. You can't live where you want, love whom you want, dream what you want.

All the King's Men, Robert Penn Warren. (Recommended by Tim Carey.)

A political novel focusing on the rise to power of Willy Stark, the central character modeled after Huey Long, the Governor of Louisiana, who was assassinated in 1935. A powerful character study of both Stark and the narrator, Jack Burden whose life is similar to that of Stark. My favorite book in high school.

Aloft, Chang-Rae Lee. (Recommended by Sarah Snyder.)

This is a story about the redemption of a man in later life as he deals with a myriad of extended family issues – clear, strong writing.

Atonement, Ian McEwan. (Recommended by Dick Baker.)

The story of an imaginative girl whose testimony at a rape trial sends an innocent man to jail. The book traces the fortunes of that man and that girl through WWI and to the point where they finally meet.

The Beautiful Struggle: A Father, Two Sons, and an Unlikely Road to Manhood, Ta-Nehisi Coates. (Recommended by Jenny Carlson.)

I LOVED this book. It's like reading poetry and jazz music. His prose is like verse; his words are like dashes of paint on canvas. He sings, spits, stabs, and celebrates. His ink on paper is powerful.

Bless Me, Ultima, Rudolfo Anaya. (Recommended by Alden Mauck.)

A boy in rural New Mexico discovers the supernatural powers of his grandmother

as he works through the complications of family and school friends, curses, the threat of war, and the magic of the Golden Carp. It is the essential novel of Rudolfo Anaya, a founder of the Chicano literary movement.

The Bluest Eye, Toni Morrison. (Recommended by Sandi MacQuinn.)

A story of deeply intense, painful yearning, Pecola Breedlove, an African-American girl, prays for her eyes to turn blue so that she will fit in with America's blond, blue-eyed children.

Bread Givers, Anzia Yezierska. (Recommended by Kate Blake.)

Set in the Lower East Side of Manhattan in the 1920's, this book takes you to an essential immigrant experience. The coming-of-age story follows the youngest daughter of an Orthodox rabbi as she rebels against her father and seeks independence.

The Brothers K, Robert James Duncan. (Recommended by Sandi MacQuinn.)

Follow the poignant twists and tangles of family tensions that are humorously abundant in this American saga of the six Chance boys who grow up both during the 1950s while their dad plays minor league baseball and in the 1960s as brothers and friends endure Vietnam War trauma and tragedy. |

Captain Corelli's Mandolin, Louis De Bernieres. (Recommended by Kate Ramsdell.)

A lush story filled with surprises of wartime alliances made and broken, skepticism and compassion, and a love triangle set on the Greek Island of Cephallonia during 1941-1943 when Italy and Germany have conquered Greece. The captain really plays the mandolin.

City of Thieves, David Benioff. (Recommended by Bill Bussey.)

What do Jen Hamilton, Bill Bussey, Vicky Seelen and Andrew Inches have in common? They all loved this book. Impossible to put down. Set in Leningrad in 1945, the novel, based loosely on a true story, is told through the eyes of a young Russian man who is given one week to find a dozen eggs to be used for a wedding cake---or be executed.

The Color Purple, Alice Walker. (Recommended by Julia Russell.)

Fourteen year old Celie grapples with the very human question about why bad things happen to her, a good girl, in a series of letters to God. These letters written in a lilting, manner-of-fact style tell the story of Celie's loving kinship with her sister from whom she is brutally separated, the horror of being raped, and the tenderness of finding love in friendship. Love becomes prayer and affirmation giving Celie strength as she persists in overcoming the mysterious moments of

life's inhumanity. Boys and girls alike will be pulled into Celie's story thanks to her honest gumption.

Crime and Punishment or **The Brothers Karamazov**, Fyodor Dostoyevsky. (Recommended by Peter Raymond.)

Challenging language, plots with intertwined stories, both works are profound explorations of love, spirituality, and the range of human character; both are also detective stories.

Cry the Beloved Country, Alan Paton. (Recommended by Michael Denning.)
Written in the late 1940s, it is a touching, tragic story set in South Africa in the age of Apartheid.

East of Eden, John Steinbeck. (Recommended by Kate Ramsdell.)
Told as a gorgeous, vast memoir this novel spans the Civil War through World War I interweaving stories of two brothers whose rivalry seems to be a retelling of the Cain and Abel story in the *Book of Genesis*. For folks who like to live with big books, this is it.

Empire Falls, Richard Russo. (Recommended by Tim Carey.)
A novel that studies characters and life in a small New England town.

The End of the Affair, Graham Greene. (Recommended by Peter Raymond.)
An exceptional craftsman, Greene offers a love story complicated by war, beliefs, and infidelity.

Everything Is Illuminated, Jonathan Safran Foer. (Recommended by Peter Raymond.)
Unusual entry into a difficult personal and global history.

Family Matters, Rohinton Mistry. (Recommended by Tim Carey.)
A compelling story of a modern Indian family, one that mirrors Indian society and the pressures brought to bear on that family.

A Fine Balance, Rohinton Mistry. (Recommended by Tim Carey.)
This novel takes place in 1975 India and focuses on four people thrown together during a state of emergency. These characters come together to form a friendship that survives the difficulties they face.

Franny and Zooey, JD Salinger. (Recommended by Gia Batty.)
Franny and Zooey, a sister and brother both in their twenties, are the youngest members of the Glass family, which was a frequent focus of Salinger's writings.

The short story "Franny" takes place in an unnamed college town during the weekend of "the Yale game" and tells the story of an undergraduate who is becoming disenchanted with the selfishness and inauthenticity she perceives all around her. The novella, *Zooey*, follows Franny's brother, who comes to the aid of his sister when she has a spiritual and existential breakdown in her parents' living room in Manhattan. Zooey tries to offer brotherly love, understanding and sage advice. He is, after all, a "genius."*

Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistle Stop Cafe, Fannie Flagg. (Recommended by Michael Denning.)

Great coming-of-age story set in a small Southern town during the 20th Century. Flagg looks at issues of race and gender, bringing the Civil Rights Movement(s) alive.

The Free Frenchman, Piers Paul Read. (Recommended by Michael Denning.)

Interesting historical novel that deals with elements of French society from 1900-1945. A great read.

Giovanni's Room, James Baldwin. (Recommended by Dick Baker.)

A story of alienation as a gay, Black ex-patriot tries to adjust to the conflicts of life in Paris after WWII and to the issues of sexual identity that plague him.

God of Small Things, Arundhati Roy. (Recommended by Julia Russell.)

In a story that jumps through time and elements of magical realism, Rachel and her twin brother try to figure out the lives of the adults around them in the Indian province of Kerala. Their family story holds perplexing layers of universal themes about love, dysfunctional parents, mysterious relationships, power struggles and unexpected connections. On a hot summer day, find a hammock and gently swing to sentence after sentence of crisp imagery and tight prose.

The Handmaid's Tale, Margaret Atwood. (Recommended by Sandi MacQuinn.)

In the near future, the Republic of Gilead replaces the destroyed United States. Our gentle, main character, Offred, tells us how her life has been radically transformed from that of a woman free to be and do what she pleases to that of a woman free from choices by the ruling class who felt that society was "dying from too much choice." Like other women, she is not allowed to read or to be in control of her body. She serves the new society as one of the handmaids kept as concubines for reproductive purposes. There is chilling acceptance in Offred's tone as she is manipulated by the Commander's wife and is eventually taken away by men in a black van to an unknown fate.

The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter, Carson McCullers. (Recommended by Peter

Raymond.)

For thoughtful, patient readers.

High Fidelity, Nicholas Hornby (Recommended by Kate Blake)

For all lovers of music, particularly alternative pop found on vinyl, *High Fidelity* is the story of the record-store owner Rob Fleming as he tries to graduate from adult adolescence. Funny, sad, sweet – songs will be rattling around your head as you read.

Historical mysteries by Caleb Carr. (Recommended by Michael Denning.)

Set in NYC near the turn of the century, these novels bring forensics and psychological profiling to the 19th Century. These are really fun.

The Alienist

The Angel of Darkness

The History of Love, Nicole Krauss. (Recommended by Sarah Snyder.)

This a compelling love story told through three narrators, all of whom have strong, endearing voices. This is just clever, creative writing.

The History of Tom Jones: a Foundling, Henry Fielding. (Recommended by Kate Ramsdell.)

Young Tom takes readers on a roller coaster ride through 18th century British life, after his exploits get him into trouble with his adoptive family and force him to seek his fortune in the world as he pursues the love of beautiful Sophia and his sense of self-worth.

The Honorable Schoolboy, John Le Carre. (Recommended by Dick Baker.)

The best of the tales from Le Carre, the master of spy stories. Cold war espionage in various locales around the world. George Smiley is the thinking person's James Bond.

Housekeeping, Marilynne Robinson (Recommended by Kate Blake.)

A short book, but every page is to be treasured. I found myself reading and rereading lines for their profound beauty and thought. For readers and for writers.

The House of the Spirits, Isabel Allende. (Recommended by Michael Denning.)

A great read that has it all - family tragedy, coming of age, politics, revolution and ghosts.

In Cold Blood, Truman Capote (Recommended by Kate Blake.)

Writing for *The New Yorker*, Truman Capote traveled to Holcomb, Kansas in 1959 to research the botched robbery and brutal murder of a family. He couldn't leave

Holcomb, becoming nearly obsessed with the case and producing a haunting, brilliant, seminal work of creative nonfiction. You will want to stop reading at times – many of the details will stay with you in a not-so-nice way – but you won't be able to.

Interpreter of Maladies, Jhumpa Lahiri. (Recommended by Dick Baker.)

A short story collection that depicts the disruptions (maladies) of the emigrant experience as Indian families try to adjust to life in the United States (mainly Cambridge, MA).

Jayber Crow, Wendell Berry. (Recommended by Dan Matlack.)

Jayber, a bachelor and a barber, in an agrarian town along the Kentucky River tells the story of the townspeople as they deal with change and turmoil that is both global and personal. Take a look, too, at any of Berry's essay collections.

Johnny Got His Gun, Dalton Trumbo. (Recommended by Bill Bussey.)

Still one of the greatest anti-war novels ever written. To describe it would mean giving away a riveting and shocking moment regarding a wounded soldier's return to American soil.

The Joy Luck Club, Amy Tan. (Recommended by Ellyses Kuan.)

A story of four Chinese mothers in the 1950s and how they embraced their family tradition, culture, virtues and values in the raising of their daughters in America. Tan reveals the complex, bittersweet, painful but always tender relationship between the mother and the daughter facing cultural differences.

Killer Angels, Michael Shaara. (Recommended by Michael Denning.)

Pulitzer Prize-winning historical novel about the Battle of Gettysburg.

Kindred, Octavia Butler. (Recommended by Julia Russell.)

Without a choice, Dana is sent back in time to a plantation knowing in her bones that she cannot change history. Then why go back?

Kite Runner, Kahled Hosseini. (Recommended by Ellyses Kuan.)

A story between Amir, son of a wealthy businessman, and Hassan, son of Amir's father's servant. In childhood the two boys were inseparable. They spent days together flying kites and telling stories until betrayal changes the friendship, and guilt haunts Amir until years later when he returns to his home country and repairs the relationship in a heart-breaking way.

The Laramie Project, Moses Kaufman. (Recommended by Peter Raymond.)

A re-enactment of Laramie, WY's experience of the murder of citizen Matthew

Shepard.

The Last Unicorn, Peter Beagle. (Recommended by Peter Raymond.)

A nifty fantasy with memorable characters, imagery, and substance.

A Lesson Before Dying, Ernest Gaines. (Recommended by Tim Carey.)

The story of a man convicted erroneously for murder and his struggle to accept his fate.

Look Homeward, Angel, Thomas Wolfe. (Recommended by Peter Raymond.)

I loved this when I had to read it in high school.

Love Medicine, Louise Erdrich (Recommended by Kate Blake.)

Erdrich can do no wrong. Her prose is lyrical; her tales are magical. In this set of interrelated stories that together form a novel, Erdrich returns to the Chippewa tribe in North Dakota. Her scope is epic, spanning nearly a half-century and covering generations of relationships.

Masters of Rome Series, Colleen McCullough. (Recommended by Dan Matlack.)

The First Man in Rome

The Grass Crown

Fortune's Favorites

Caesar's Women

Caesar: Let the Dice Fly

The October Horse: a Novel of Caesar and Cleopatra

Antony and Cleopatra

Power struggles, conniving enemies, assassins, personal tragedies, love triangles, fate and fortune all factor into these well researched historical novels that retell the days of the Roman Republic.

The Mill on the Floss, George Eliot (Recommended by Kate Blake.)

Along with Eliot's *Middlemarch* (also a tome!), one of my favorites. I was drawn to Eliot's depiction of Maggie for her independence and strength, but also for the author's insight into sibling relationships. Eliot is brilliant; this is a novel you won't want to leave.

Monkeys, Susan Minot. (Recommended by Julia Russell.)

A short book packed with clues about the saga of the Vincents and their seven children, whom mom nicknames "monkeys," as Rosie, the mother, tries to do her best while masking her husband's alcoholism.

The Moons of Jupiter, Alice Munro (Recommended by Kate Blake.)

In the short story genre, Munro is a master. Let this be your entrance into her work.

The Name of the Rose, Umberto Eco. (Recommended by Michael Denning.)
An awesome murder mystery set in a medieval monastery during the Avignon Papacy. I would pay a lot of money to read this book for the first time again.

Namesake, Jhumpa Lahiri. (Recommended by Sarah Snyder.)
Lahiri is such a fine, unadulterated writer who unveils a family who straddles American and Indian cultures.

Native Son, Richard Wright. (Recommended by Dick Baker.)
Bigger Thomas, a controversial character in the racial politics of the late 1920s, commits a horrendous murder that results in one of the best trial sequences in literature.

Novels by Alan Furst. (Recommended by Michael Denning.)
For anyone who loves spy novels; set in the period from 1930 through World War II, these novels explore espionage in Europe during the age of Stalin and Fascism. Along with John Le Carre, Furst is probably the most respected and literary of espionage novelists living today.

Dark Star
The Polish Officer
The World at Night
Blood Victory
Dark Voyage

Novels by Chaim Potok. (Recommended by Michael Denning.)
Ditto what I said about Morrison; I am not sure that I have learned more from any one author than I have learned from Potok.

The Chosen
The Promise
My Name is Asher Lev
Davita's Harp

Novels by James Carroll. (Recommended by Michael Denning.)
One of my favorite authors, Carroll deals in his novels with culture, class, religion, politics, and inter-generational dialog.

Mortal Friends: A Novel
Fault Lines
Family Trade
Prince of Peace

Supply of Heroes
Memorial Bridge
The City Below

Novels by Stephen Pressfield. (Recommended by Dan Matlack.)
Tragic kings, fierce warriors, emboldened queens, bloody battlefields, Pressfield takes the stuff of myths and legends and crafts gripping stories.

Gates of Fire
Tides of War
The Last Amazon

Olive Kitteredge, Elizabeth Strout (Recommended by Kate Blake.)
A vivid collection of interrelated stories taking place on the Maine coast, all linked by the feisty, aging Olive Kitteredge, elements of tragedy, and rare moments of human connection. Strout's writing is distilled and lean, yet powerful.

The Once and Future King, T.H. White. (Recommended by Peter Raymond.)
If you like H Potter, have a sense of humor and delight, ya oughta read this.

One Day, David Nicholls. (Recommended by Lisa Jacobson.)
This contemporary love story-- though not mushy and sentimental-- is organized by where the relationship is on July 15th over a course of many years. The book is thoughtful, funny, and personable.

Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit, Jeanette Winterson. (Recommended by Julia Russell.)
An unconventional, witty teenage girl moves steadily forward as she stays true to her desires, spirituality and heart while facing religious fervor, fanatic opinions and exorcisms.

Our Mutual Friend, Charles Dickens. (Recommended by Dick Baker.)
Dickens' finest novel, awash in various plots and sub-plots. Alternately a love story, a murder mystery, a comic tale of numerous eccentric London characters.

Passing, Nella Larsen. (Recommended by Julia Russell.)
Reconnecting after many years, two childhood friends, Clare and Irene, forge a tragic path as they confront each others' choices rooted in their racial identity. Clare, who is part-black, passes as a white woman keeping her blackness a secret from her white racist husband; Irene, who is black, purposefully seeks to rise above her lowly social beginnings and marries a black doctor. Universal themes about identity, class, and gender are strong undercurrents sweeping the plot's elements of friendship, secrecy, an alleged affair, and a mysterious death towards a

perplexing end.

Penelopiad: The Myth of Penelope and Odysseus, Margaret Atwood.

(Recommended by Sarah Snyder.)

If you liked the *Odyssey*, you will inhale this slim novella, unveiling Atwood's imaginative view of some characters in the original epic poem through Penelope's voice.

Pillars of the Earth, Ken Follett. (Recommended by Michael Denning.)

Murder mystery set in the age of cathedral building.

The Plot Against America, Philip Roth. (Recommended by Alden Mauck.)

What if Charles Lindbergh had run for president against FDR and won? What would this mean to the Jewish community when Lindbergh's appeasement of the Nazis and his anti-Semitism worked into the laws and cultural mores of America? Roth explores this possibility in the real and imagined historical time of the 1930's.

Possession, A.S. Byatt. (Recommended by Gia Batty.)

This novel follows the relationship between two fictional Victorian poets--Randolf Henry Ash and Christabel LaMotte, as two present day academics research them. Following a trail of clues from various letters and journals, the two scholars attempt to uncover the truth about Ash and LaMotte's relationship before their rival colleagues do. At the same time, the two of them enter into their own romantic relationship.*

A Prayer for Owen Meany, John Irving. (Recommended by Gia Batty.)

This is really the story of two friends--the narrator, John Wheelwright and his small-statured, good-natured friend, Owen Meany who is remarkable in many ways and believes himself to be God's instrument. John tells a complex tale of growing up in New Hampshire in the 1950s and 60s and weaves an incredible tapestry of friendship, class, religion and fate in this book.*

Pride and Prejudice, Jane Austen. (Recommended by Peter Raymond.)

One of the very great writers, Austen makes domestic issues of marriage and love a study of human strengths.

Ragtime, El Doctorow. (Recommended by Tim Carey.)

A novel that takes place at the turn of the 20th century, probes oppressed segments of American society and involves actual American figures, Houdini for one, in fictional roles.

Regeneration; Ghost Road, Pat Barker. (Recommended by Michael Denning.)

An anthropologist by training, Ms. Barker has a series set in and around World War I. Barker explores questions of PTSD and the impact of war on liberal societies.

The Reivers, William Faulkner. (Recommended by Peter Raymond.)
A sweet action, wonderful last novel of our most stunning dead white author.

Rubyfruit Jungle, Rita Mae Brown. (Recommended by Julia Russell.)
With candor and wit, Molly Bolt, makes her way as a lesbian through hostile challenges in the South and New York.

Run With the Horsemen; Whisper of the River, Ferroll Sams. (Recommended by Michael Denning.)
A southern doctor writes about his experiences growing up in the South during the 1920s and 30s. Sams is a beautiful writer.■

The Secret History, Donna Tartt. (Recommended by Michael Denning.)
Smart murder mystery set at a small New England college.

Snow Falling on Cedars, David Guterson. (Recommended by Sandi MacQuinn.)
A murder trial in a small town of San Pedro island in Puget Sound after WWII becomes a heart wrenching exploration of racism, presumption, the horrors of war and the tragedy of ill-fated love.

Sometimes a Great Notion, Ken Kesey. (Recommended by Dick Baker.)
Hank and Leland Stamper represent a family of independent loggers living in the Pacific Northwest who battle unions, townspeople and themselves in order to abide by their creed of "Never Give an Inch."

Song of Solomon, Toni Morrison. (Recommended by Michael Denning.)
Mind blowing; I still remember where I was when I first read this incredible work.

A Son of the Circus, John Irving. (Recommended by Gia Batty.)
This is a classic Irving story--it has a dizzyingly complicated plot that somehow all comes together in the end, the characters are bizarre but believable and I come away from it with an incredible picture of a place, in this case it's Bombay. This book tells the story of Dr. Farrokh Daruwall, a 59 year old orthopedic surgeon who periodically visits Bombay to see his crippled patients, mostly children and members of Bombay's circus culture. It's actually part murder mystery, part family history, part travelogue... More than anything else, it's a really good, really long story that I could not stop reading once I started.*

The Stories of Eva Luna, Isabel Allende. (Recommended by Kate Ramsdell.)

At the request of her lover for unusual stories, Eva Luna spins 24 tales about the unexpected connections and transformational moments in the lives of outlaws, schoolteachers, Indians, social climbers and international travelers.

Their Eyes Were Watching God, Zora Neale Hurston. (Recommended by Julia Russell.)

The plucky, southern Black, Janie Crawford who marries three men, at different times and for different reasons, discovers that her fierce sense of individual identity will take her past broken dreams and a murder trial to a real place of peace and self-realization.

This Side of Paradise, F. Scott Fitzgerald. (Recommended by Gia Batty.)

This is one of Fitzgerald's lesser known books. It is said that he wrote and worked to publish this book in order to impress his then girlfriend Zelda Sayre (whom he eventually married). The book examines the life and morality of Amory Blaine, a young Midwesterner who, convinced he has an exceptionally promising future, attends boarding school and later Princeton. The book follows his romantic interests with an overarching theme of how love can be warped by greed and status seeking.*

A Thousand Acres, Jane Smiley. (Recommended by Tim Carey.)

This is the retelling of *King Lear* in the modern setting of a farm in the Midwest.

Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy, John LeCarre. (Recommended by Bill Bussey.)

Arguably the great spy writer's (and former real-life intelligence operator) finest work. Nobles grad and former CIA Inspector General Fred Hitz called this novel, along with Alan Furst's *Dark Star*, one of the two most realistic spy novels that he has ever read. With one of literature's most interesting fictional characters, British spy George Smiley, coming out of retirement to find a Soviet mole that has infiltrated the M16, the British Secret Intelligence Service.

Truth and Beauty: A Friendship, Ann Patchett (Recommended by Kate Blake.)

I find it fascinating to hear about author's lives, especially when they involve other authors. *Truth and Beauty* is Ann Patchett's beautifully rendered memoir of her friendship with Lucy Grealy, author of *Autobiography of a Face*. Ann Patchett usually works in the genre of fiction; this text reveals one of her most important and intimate relationships that served as a backdrop to her success.

Unless, Carol Shields. (Recommended by Sarah Snyder.)

This is a story about a mother's love for her daughters, one of whom is really struggling.

The View From Castle Rock, Alice Munro. (Recommended by Tim Carey.)

Another collection of magical stories from what I consider the best short story writer alive today.

Wuthering Heights, Emily Bronte (Recommended by Kate Blake)

One of the great must-reads of all time. Every time I revisit this gothic tale, I am taken to the stormy British moors. You will never forget Heathcliff and Catherine, or the power and torture of their love.

The Yiddish Policeman's Union, Michael Chabon. (Recommended by Alden Mauck.)

Michael Chabon may be the preeminent Jewish writer of the last decade; here he creates a detective story in the Post World War II community to which European Jewry has relocated - Sitka, Alaska. Chabon's novel takes on the language and atmosphere of the film noir tradition to imagine a world of troubled detectives, bad guys, and dolls.

Zorro, Isabelle Allende. (Recommended by Sarah Snyder.)

This is so full of adventure, fun, and love – Allende at her best.

Non-Fiction

Agent Zigzag: A True Story of Nazi Espionage, Love and Betrayal, Ben Macintyre. (Recommended by Michael Denning.)

Fun, bizarre espionage story from World War II.

American Requiem: God, My Father, and the War that Came Between Us, James Carroll. (Recommended by Michael Denning.)

Carroll's autobiography of his experiences as an anti-war protester who hailed from a family in which the patriarch was one of the military leaders responsible for prosecuting the Vietnam War; this is a book that I could not put down.

An Army at Dawn & Day of Battle, Rick Atkinson. (Recommended by Michael Denning.)

Pulitzer Prize-winning account of US Army's experience in the European Theatre in World War II. This guy is an amazing writer who is trying to do for World War II what Shelby Foote accomplished in his trilogy on the American Civil War.

Babe, Robert Creamer. (Recommended by Bill Bussey.)

"I swing big, with everything I got, I hit big or I miss big. I like to live as big as I can." This terrific read about Babe Ruth is one of the finest sport's biographies

written. A must-read for baseball aficionados.

Ballad of a Whiskey Robber, Julian Rubinstein. (Recommended by Bill Bussey.)

A tale so bizarre that Johnny Depp bought the movie rights to this story about Attila Ambrus, a horrific Hungarian goaltender (he once gave up 88 goals in six straight games), who found greater success when he decided to rob banks. Using poor disguises but still keeping his identity unknown, Ambrus often left roses after each robbery and never hurt a soul. As a result, he became a cult hero to the people of Hungary. Very funny and all the more so because it is true.

Books by the historian, Doris Kearns Goodwin. (Recommended by Michael Denning.)

DKG is one of my favorite authors. She brings to life historical figures better than most biographers. What I like most is the way in which DKG focuses on those qualities in her subjects she admires most, while never losing sight of their humanity.

No Ordinary Time
The Fitzgeralds and the Kennedys
Team of Rivals

Brunelleschi's Dome, Ross King. (Recommended by Alden Mauck.)

Ross King examines one of the great architectural triumphs of Italian Architecture, built in 1436, Brunelleschi's dome for the Cathedral of Sante Maria in Florence remains the dome with the greatest span. King looks at the dome and its architect in a concise text.

Coming of Age in Mississippi, Anne Moody. (Recommended by Michael Denning.)

This book is a must-read for anyone interested in race, gender, civil rights and the experience of those on the forefront of the Civil Rights Movement in this country in the 1950s and 60s.

Citizens of London, Lynne Olson. (Recommended by Michael Denning.)

Biographical treatment of how Edward R. Murrow, Averell Harriman, and John Gilbert Winant built the special Anglo-US Partnership that helped win World War II. If you like biography, this is great.

Colored People, Henry Louis Gates. (Recommended by Bill Bussey.)

Before he was busted for breaking into his own home, Harvard professor Henry Louis Gates was better known for his leadership in academia and for this wonderful autobiography of growing up in rural West Virginia in the 1950's.

The Control of Nature, by John McPhee. (Recommended by Peter Raymond.)

Accounts of four efforts to fight Ma Nature. You'll never forget it. And you'll never move to California, either. Or Iceland. Or Simmesport, LA.

Deep Play, Diane Ackerman. (Recommended by Katie Baxter.)

A book for reading when a fast-paced routine is feeling too ordinary or when it's time to celebrate the human spirit's capacity to problem-solve in creative, empathic ways. Ackerman covers the extraordinary meaning of play in nature, on the soccer field, in worship, in kindergarten, in art, in war, in the sacred and in the profane. It's a playfully heady book filled with fresh perspectives whose call number in Putnam is 128 Ack.

The Devil in the White City, by Erik Larsen. (Recommended by Tim Carey.)

The story of the Chicago World's Fair at the turn of the 20th century and a serial killer who preys on young women arriving to find work in the city. It might sound dull, the World's Fair part, but it is one of the best page-turners I have ever read!

A Flame of Pure Fire: Jack Dempsey and the Roaring '20s, Roger Kahn.

(Recommended by Alden Mauck.)

Jack Dempsey was one of the great boxers of the early Twentieth Century, but his fighting began before he became a champion. Roger Kahn accounts Dempsey's rough upbringing and how, despite the odds, Dempsey becomes one of the most famous and revered men of his generation.

Funny in Farsi: A Memoir of Growing Up Iranian in America & Laughing Without an Accent: Adventures of a Global Citizen, Firoozeh Dumas.

(Recommended by Tara Coccozza.)

Both of these memoirs are a collection of Dumas' experiences as an Iranian immigrant in the United States. She will have you laughing out loud while also developing empathy for the complex world of an immigrant.

Game Change, Mark Halperin and John Heilman. (Recommended by Bill Bussey.)

Generally accepted as the best book written on the 2008 presidential campaign. Terrific behind-the-scenes anecdotes allows us to see the true personalities of Obama, the Clinton's, McCain and Palin.

The Great Bridge: The Epic Story of the Building of the Brooklyn Bridge, David McCullough. (Recommended by Alden Mauck.)

The building of the Brooklyn Bridge, perhaps the first great American bridge, brings America from the Nineteenth Century into the Twentieth Century. However, it is not easy; there were complications in the construction of the bridge, both below and above the river that it crossed. Read the book, then go to NYC, and walk across the "Great Bridge."

The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks, Rebecca Skloot. (Recommended by Erin Twohig.)

Who was Henrietta Lacks? Even if you aren't into science this book is a fascinating account of HeLa, the cancer cells taken from a poor black woman without her consent. Now 60+ years after her death, her immortal cells live on and have helped science in so many ways. Be ready for a mystery that dives into the past, present, and future.

King Leopold's Ghost, Adam Hochschild. (Recommended by Michael Denning.)

This is a well-written book about a too little-known tragedy in human history--the genocide in the Congo.

King of the World: Muhammad Ali and Rise of an American Hero, David Remnick. (Recommended by Alden Mauck.)

There may be no boxer as well known, as admired and as discussed as Muhammad Ali. Cassius Clay from Kentucky, the fight with Sonny Liston, the Vietnam War, the "Thrilla in Manila," Joe Frazier, and ultimately, the "rope-a-dope" and the "Rumble in the Jungle" – all contribute to one of the most fascinating sports careers ever.

A Long Walk to Freedom, Nelson Mandela. (Recommended by Michael Denning.)

Nelson Mandela's autobiography; wonderful book by one of the most important, amazing leaders in history.

The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat, Oliver Sacks. (Recommended by Kelly Evans.)

Sacks, a clinical neurologist, shares fascinating tales of what life is like for his patients who have brain disorders.

Miracles on the Water: The Heroic Survivors of a World War II U-Boat Attack, by Tom Nagorski. (Recommended by Ross Henderson.)

A true survival tale of English children who are evacuated out of London to escape bombings are sent to Canada. Their boat gets hit by a German torpedo and sinks.

Neither Here Nor There, Bill Bryson. (Recommended by Dan Matlack.)

Another entertainingly funny Bill Bryson travelogue. This time, he journeys through modern Europe as he relives his 1970s backpacking days with *Walk in the Woods* pal, Stephen Katz.

Books by Peter Connolly (Recommended by Dan Matlack.)

Peter Connolly is a phenomenal artist and writer who has authored a number of

books on the ancient world. Most impressive to me are **Pompeii** and **The Ancient Greece of Odysseus**. The former is a brief but comprehensive look at the Roman town Pompeii. He elegantly relates the story of Pompeii's destruction and its much later discovery and excavation. The latter is a chronological telling of the Trojan War and Odysseus' trip home. It even includes the story of the Trojan horse in between those tales! Few know that the commonly known version of the Trojan horse episode comes largely from the Roman epic *The Aeneid* written centuries after Homer. In each book Connolly inserts background information on aspects of life in those times. His drawings are superb, colorful and accurate to the standards of recent finds. My favorite section on armor in Greece includes the boar's tooth helmet, which is mentioned by Homer in the Iliad. For many years scholars did not believe such a thing existed -- until one was found in an excavation! **Pompeii** is so rich and accurate that Ms. Cottrell has used it for years as an introduction to the site in her Latin I and Latin III classes. I can't put his books down when I pick them up. **Pompeii** is among Connolly's The Roman World series. For readers with interest in warfare other volumes include **The Cavalryman, The Legionary,** and **The Roman Fort.**

The Path Between the Seas: The Creation of the Panama Canal, 1870-1914, David McCullough. (Recommended by Alden Mauck.)

The Panama Canal is one of the great successes of American engineering, fortitude, and expansion. When the American take over the building of the Panama Canal from de Lessards and the French, they inherit a project of immense scale and many problems - geographic, scientific, mechanical, and medical. McCullough the author of many histories tells the tale of this path between the seas.

Playing the Enemy: Nelson Mandela and the Game That Made a Nation, John Carlin. (Recommended by Michael Denning.)

Awesome book on which the movie *Invictus* was based.

The Professor and the Madman: a Tale of Murder, Insanity, and the Making of the Oxford English Dictionary, Simon Winchester. (Recommended by Kate Ramsdell.)

Do you think it was easy to create this dictionary? Do you imagine people forging friendships as they worked together creating the hefty volumes? Here's the unexpected drama behind the making of the OED as we learn the real reason why Dr. William Charles Minor, who contributed 10,000 words to the volumes, never said yes to the editor's invitations to visit. This true story is a surprising page-turner.

A Rainbow in the Night, Dominique Lapierre. (Recommended by Michael Denning.)

Short, highly readable history of South Africa.

The Sex Lives of Cannibals: Adrift in the Equatorial Pacific, J. Maarten Troost. (Recommended by Bill Bussey.)

Think living on a South Pacific island is about as good as it gets? Think again. Laugh- out-loud-funny and a genuine eye-opener, this true story follows the author and his wife's misadventures on the seemingly hedonistic island nation of Kirabati.

Silent Night, Stanley Weintraub. (Recommended by Michael Denning.)

Fascinating story about a cease-fire in December 1914 that temporarily halted hostilities in World War I.

Silent Spring, Rachel Carson. (Recommended by Kate Ramsdell.)

How many of us living so close to Cape Cod realize the impact this book had on generating the environmentalist movement? In 1958, Carson, a biologist and writer, received a letter from a friend about the massive bird deaths on the Cape after DDT sprayings. Since no one would hire her to write the journal story, Carson wrote this book causing a stir that led to the passing of laws banning DDT.

Stop-Time: A Memoir, Frank Conroy. (Recommended by Aaron LaDuke.)

Written in 1967, Conroy's memoir was ahead of its time in its use of traditional fiction techniques to mine the human psyche. The book lucidly covers Conroy's life from the age of twelve to his first day of college. Vividly rendered and deeply reflective, *Stop-Time* is particularly recognized for inspiring numerous young writers early in their careers.

Survivor in Auschwitz, Primo Levi. (Recommended by Bill Bussey.)

A forgotten classic from a Holocaust survivor. Criticized in some quarters for being dispassionate, this brief work covering ten months in Auschwitz and gives a detailed and wrenchingly compelling account on the day-to-day life in a Nazi concentration camp.

Troublesome Young Men, Lynne Olson. (Recommended by Michael Denning.)

Great story of how young, Tory backbenchers rebelled against Neville Chamberlain, bringing Churchill to power at the outset of World War II.

When Everything Changed: The Amazing Journey of American Women from 1960 to the Present, Gail Collins. (Recommended by Bill Bussey.)

This is an extremely readable and compelling look of how much has changed and stayed the same for American women over the last 50 years. Told primarily through vignettes, about the famous and the lesser known, this book has received rave reviews from every quarter. Witty, sharp and unflinching.

A Walk in the Woods: Rediscovering America on the Appalachian Trail, Bill Bryson. (Recommended by Dan Matlack.)

Chocolate bars, noodles, blisters, and bears. Oh my! A laugh out loud account of Bill Bryson's 2,000+ mile journey of hiking the Appalachian Trail with his similarly out-of-shape buddy, Stephen Katz. Fun travel entertainment at it's best.

Poetry

The Essential Neruda: Selected Poems, Pablo Neruda. (Recommended by Sarah Snyder.)

There are such lovely, rich images in all of Neruda's poetry.

Sailing Around the Room, Billy Collins. (Recommended by Sarah Snyder.)

This guy can write poems that make you smile because he's so clever and funny, along with poignant, powerful pieces.

Spring: Poems, Oni Buchanan (Recommended by Katie Baxter.)

This twenty-something who lives in Boston wowed me off my seat when I heard her voice becoming the paddle in the water as she read her poem "Maroon Canoe". Oni's is a fresh voice among emerging poets exploring multidimensional text in poem-making. The collection comes with a flash animation CD of her "Mandrake Vehicles."

The Summer of Black Widows, Sherman Alexie. (Recommended by Thomas Forteith.)

By the author of *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*, a powerful exploration of familial and cultural identity, Sherman Alexie writes with great eloquence and doesn't shy away from the hard issues.

Middle School Fiction

As Easy as Falling Off the Face of the Earth, Lynn Rae Perkins (Recommended by Katie Baxter.)

Archeology summer camp is cancelled. "Leaping and skidding" Ry tries to get back on the train but ends up stranded in Big Sky country Montana where all he can count on is luck.

The Book Thief, Markus Zusak. (Recommended by Aaron LaDuke.)

Zusak's novel is set in Nazi Germany and focuses on the experience of a young girl who steals books in an effort to teach herself to read as the events of World War II escalate. Narrated (with fascinating sensitivity) from the point of view of Death,

the book's unique style features interrupting announcements, fragmented lists of details, translations, plot spoilers and frequent illustrations drawn by the characters themselves. A very accessible work that is hard-hitting but full of pathos.

Boys of Summer, Roger Kahn. (Recommended by Dick Baker.)

The best baseball book I've read. Evokes the historical period of the 1930's and 40's, the marvels of the old Brooklyn Dodgers and their World Series battles in '52 and '53 with the Evil Empire.

Cry of the Kalahari, Mark James & Cordelia Dykes. (Recommended by Dick Baker.)

The authors spend years in the deserts of Botswana getting to know the animals (particularly the lions) of the region.

The Earthsea Trilogy, Ursula K. LeGuin. (Recommended by Sandi MacQuinn.)

A Wizard of Earthsea

The Tombs of Atuan

The Farthest Shore

LeGuin creates a world of wizards and priestesses dealing with struggles, curses and perilous journeys typical of these magical beings; but, the real magic happens inside the reader who begins an internal exploration of themes about creativity, tolerance, equality, and self-understanding. *Earthsea* is a fun world to enter again and again because each reading creates new perspective.

Ender's Game, Orson Scott Card. (Recommended by Sandi MacQuinn.)

At Battle School genius Ender Wiggins is being trained through simulated war games to defend earth from the aliens called Buggers. Ender has been at the school since age six; he misses his sister Valentine (but his older brother Peter, not so much.) Ender is on track to be a military leader but then he finds out Battle School hasn't filled him in on everything about his training.

A Gathering of Old Men, Ernest Gaines. (Recommended by Alden Mauck.)

An African American community is besieged with racism until they fight back and old men become heroes striving for equality.

I am the Cheese, Robert Cormier. (Recommended by Sandi MacQuinn.)

This chilling tale about a teenager named Adam has three narrative threads that take us on a bike ride to Vermont, to a visit with a psychiatrist and through a nightmare of being a victim of a witness protection program. Suspense and mystery keep the reader pedalling through the story of Adam's past and uncertain future. Cormier is a masterful storyteller who gives us courageous youth struggling to endure life's terrible moments.

Jellicoe Road, Melina Marchetta. (Recommended by Erin Twohig.)

A boarding school in Australia, a manuscript, a disappearance, a relationship with the leader of another group (read: love), friendships, and war. Taylor, abandoned by her mother years earlier, pieces together clues to unlock her past and identify her future.

A Lesson Before Dying, Ernest Gaines. (Recommended by Alden Mauck.)

A young African American teacher realizes that dignity before dying can be achieved through teaching, and that this teaching is not futile or too late and is just as important as the education that he provides his younger students.

Lucas, Kevin Brooks. (Recommended by Erin Twohig.) One of my favorite young adult authors is Kevin Brooks. Even if some of his stories are a little sci-fiish, like **Being**, which is about a teenager who is trying to figure out his identity (part robot?) while he is on the run, they are certainly not fluffy but instead realistic and often don't have perfect endings. Usually the main character is a boy with a bit of an edge and typically lives life on the outskirts. Lucas is exactly that; he is an outsider on a island who always manages to appear when Caitlin is in danger. Caitlin, the only one who accepts Lucas, is drawn to his mysterious nature. This is a story of love and hate.

Moon Over Manifest, Clare Vanderpool (Recommended by Katie Baxter.)

The mystery about Manifest, Kansas unfolds when drifter Abilene, age 12, finds the Lucky Bill cigar box filled with keepsakes, newspaper clippings and World War I letters and gets caught up in a town's story that alternates between the Depression and WWI in surprising, page-turning ways.

Murder on the Orient Express, Agatha Christie. (Recommended by Alden Mauck.)

Perhaps the most famous of Agatha Christie's Hercule Poirot detective stories if not the first. Trapped by avalanche in the snowy mountains of Europe on board the Orient Express a murder has been committed. Can Hercule Poirot solve the case before the train (and the murderer) is freed from the snow? Of course! He is Hercule Poirot who uses the little gray cells.

A Northern Light, Jennifer Donnelly. (Recommended by Katie Baxter.)

In 1906, sixteen year old Mattie is determined to attend college in New York City and be a writer in spite of her father's and fiance's opposition. She thinks she's all set when she takes a summer job at a hotel, but then a drowned body complicates her plans and impressions about life, responsibilities and romance. The story is based on a drowning that took place in 1906 on Big Moose Lake in the Adirondacks.

On the Wings of Heroes, Richard Peck. (Recommended by Tim Carey.)
A novel exploring Middle America during WWII.

Ophelia: A Novel, Lisa Klein. (Recommended by Tim Carey.)
This novel is the retelling of Hamlet from Ophelia's point of view.

Speak, Laurie Halse Anderson. (Recommended by Tim Carey.)
The story of a young high school student who has a traumatic experience prior to entering high school and how she gains the courage to face the issue.

Twisted, Laurie Halse Anderson. (Recommended by Tim Carey.)
The story of high school life and a character's struggle to deal with a difficult home life and being picked on in school.

Winterkill, Craig Lesley. (Recommended by Sandi MacQuinn.)
Danny Kachiah is a struggling rodeo cowboy who suddenly becomes a single dad who takes hope and courage from the stories of his dead father Red Shirt.

Zel, Donna Jo Napoli (Recommended by Katie Baxter.)
Too old for fairytales? Not when you sit down with Donna Jo Napoli's meaty retelling of *Rapunzel*. Set in 15th century Switzerland this suspenseful version of Rapunzel explores the psychological motivations of Zel's mother who had made a pact with the devil and is now using lies and black magic to prevent her happy Zel from falling in love. In her novel **Beast** Napoli unravels the backstory of *Beauty and the Beast* as she focuses on the curse a seventeen-year-old Persian Prince named Orasmyn sets in motion which eventually takes him to India and then to France where he hides in an abandoned castle.

Middle School Non-Fiction

In These Girls, Hope is a Muscle, Madeline Blais. (Recommended by Sandi MacQuinn.)

A look at the trials and triumphs of high school girls' basketball team Lady Hurricanes of Amherst, Massachusetts as they bond into a championship team.

Into Thin Air, Jon Krakauer. (Recommended by Peter Raymond.)

An account of a catastrophic week on Mt. Everest, with a thorough examination of the mentality of elite climbers.

Isaac's Storm: The Drowning of Galveston, 8 September 1900, Erik Larson.
(Recommended by Peter Raymond.)

If you like extreme weather and disaster, this account of a hurricane's destructive force will affect your impulse to run to the beach to watch the waves...

The Poet Slave of Cuba: a Biography of Juan Francisco Manzano, Margarita Engle. (Recommended by Katie Baxter.)

A biography, told in verse, of grim living and lasting resilience of the poet who was born a slave in Cuba in 1797.

A Sense of Where you Are, John McPhee. (Recommended by Peter Raymond.)

One of the great profiles of an exceptional athlete (basketball player, now Senator, Bill Bradley), a study of his habits, talents, and commitment to excellence.

The Teammates (Ted Williams and friends), David Halberstam. (Recommended by Alden Mauck.)

In Red Sox lore, he is the "Splendid Splinter," one of the greatest hitters of all time and the last man to hit .400. But he was also a man with friends, and these friends: Bobby Doerr, Dom DiMaggio, and Johnny Pesky are loyal to the end, even as Williams faces the end of his life. This is a remarkable little book for Red Sox fans... or people with friends, told by the late great David Halberstam.

A Wind to Shake the World ('38 Hurricane), Everett Allen. (Recommended by Alden Mauck.)

Just as Everett Allen begins work as a young newspaper man, one of the greatest natural disasters ever to hit this country occurs as the famous unnamed 1938 Hurricane sweeps across Long Island and into New England destroying personal property, thousands of boats, and the railroad line from New York to Boston, flooding Providence, Rhode Island and other towns, and ultimately killing hundreds of folks who never saw it coming.

*Adapted from wikipedia.com and amazon.com