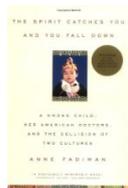


# Faculty & Staff

## Reading Recommendations for Winter Break

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### *Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*

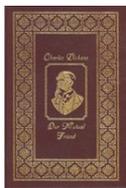


by Anne Fadiman

Recommended by  
Ms. Bradley

This is the kind of book that completely changes the way you think about cultural integration and communication. "The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down explores the clash between a small county hospital in California and a refugee family from Laos over the care of Lia Lee, a Hmong child diagnosed with severe epilepsy. Lia's parents and her doctors both wanted what was best for Lia, but the lack of understanding between them led to tragedy." - Farrar, Straus and Giroux

### *Our Mutual Friend*



by Charles Dickens

Recommended by  
Ms. Brewster

Sprawling, funny, in some ways the typical towering Victorian edifice and in others wholly unpredictable and subversive of those conventions.

### *Dreaming of the Bones*

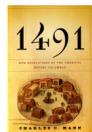


by Deborah Crombie

Recommended by  
Ms. Budding

"Crombie's English procedural series featuring Scotland Yard's Duncan Kincaid and Gemma James takes a giant leap forward with this haunting mystery set among Cambridge literary types . . . Crombie excels at investing her mysteries with rich characterization and a sophisticated wash of illuminating feminism." - *Publishers Weekly*. Ms. Budding notes that although this book from the middle of the series, it has a great introduction where everything you need explained is explained.

### *1491: New Revelations of the Americas Before Columbus*

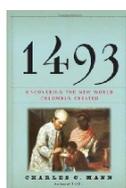


by Charles C. Mann

Recommended by  
Mr. Clifford

This book is an amazing and thorough look at the picture of the peopled Americas prior to significant European contact. Many myths, misunderstandings, and mistruths about the "noble savage" and his history.

### *1493: Uncovering the New World Columbus Created*

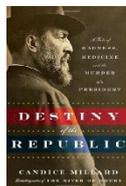


by Charles C. Mann

Recommended by  
Mr. Clifford

This is the sequel to *1491* and details the Columbian exchange: the single largest migration, epidemic, and economic upheaval in history.

### *Destiny of the Republic*



by Candice Millard

Recommended by  
Mr. Clifford

The assassination and untimely death of a great Ohioan is set against the backdrop of a politically-motivated madman and the folly of the nation's leading surgeons.

### *The Man Who Was Thursday*



by G.K. Chesterton

Recommended by  
Mr. Davis

"A political bad dream, a metaphysical thriller, a cosmic bad joke in the form of a spy novel... a hilarious extravaganza about a secret society of revolutionaries sworn to destroy the world... a nightmare of paradox and surprise." - Penguin Press

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The Commonwealth Faculty and Staff were asked to recommend a few books they enjoyed reading this year.

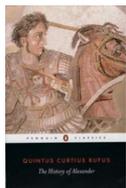
Copies of many of titles are available in the library to check out over Winter Break.

# Faculty & Staff

## Reading Recommendations for Winter Break

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### *A History of Alexander*

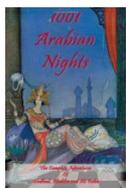


by Quintus Curtius Rufus

Recommended by  
Ms. Formichelli

Alexander of Macedon was the 4th century son of an ambitious father-king and a scheming mother. He studied with Aristotle, rose to power, and by the age of thirty had led a march of 20,000 miles during which he conquered most of the known world, from Greece through India to present-day Afghanistan. His march and conquests across the Persian empire united east and west, and left an enduring legacy of cultural exchange that remains alive today. At once dangerous and tender, rash and considerate, Alexander was a fierce friend and a dangerous enemy; he could be at once benevolent and cruel, moral and degraded. The charismatic conqueror was dead at 31 of a fever and never made it back home, but for everyone who is intrigued by the complex nature of power and ambition, courage and conquest, Alexander remains a man whose character deserves and rewards careful study.

### *A Thousand and One Arabian Nights*

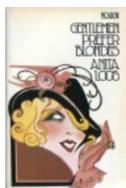


by Anonymous

Recommended by  
Ms. Formichelli

The brilliant, daring Scherezade cheated time, and found out that the true way to a man's heart is through bewitching his mind. The best bedtime reading the world has ever known, each of these stories opens a secret door to the complexities of human nature that, once ajar, never shuts again.

### *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*

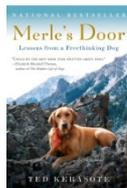


by Anita Loos

Recommended by  
Ms. Formichelli

Anita Loos was an aspiring brunette screenwriter when she noticed on a train that her intelligent friend, the journalist H.L. Mencken, went stupidly agape in the presence of attractive blondes. She wrote this book to show him up, and it remains one of the rare instances of a great American comic novel; it may even be the great American novel. It sold more than 20,000 copies in its first edition, beautifully illustrated by Ralph Barton, and remains a permanent monument to the curious topic of stupidity and to the intelligence and humor of a brilliant but now nearly forgotten woman. This book is not the movie. Be ready to laugh deeply, heartily and eternally.

### *Merle's Door*

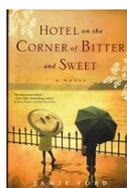


by Ted Kerasote

Recommended by  
Ms. Formichelli

One of the very best books on dogs and their relation to men. Ted, a nature writer, meets Merle, a young handsome and homeless lab, on a river-rafting trip in Utah. Somehow this handsome dog winds up going home with him to Wyoming, and eventually the two find a love that is tender, disturbing, and unadulterated by the mechanical, modern world. This description of a dog's life hanging between wilderness and domestication is never sentimental; there's no Marley and Me here. And, in the spirit of the best nature writing, it focusses flawlessly on the object of its attention. Ted and Merle's story becomes over time the best proof that what we truly love, we set free.

### *Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet*



by Jamie Ford

Recommended by  
Ms. Geffin

"Jamie Ford's first novel explores the age-old conflicts between father and son, the beauty and sadness of what happened to Japanese Americans in the Seattle area during World War II, and the depths and longing of deep-heart love. An impressive, bitter, and sweet debut." Lisa See, best-selling author of *Snow Flower and the Secret Fan*

### *More Than Just Race: Being Black and Poor in the Inner City*



by William Julius Wilson

Recommended by  
Ms. Haber

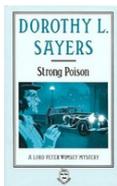
As a companion to *THE NEW JIM CROW* (the most important book I read last year), you might consider this quick but depressing read from Harvard sociologist William Julius Wilson. Wilson is one of America's foremost experts on poverty who had previously argued in *THE DECLINING SIGNIFICANCE OF RACE* that class was beginning to outweigh race in shaping the lives of African-Americans. In this new book, Wilson revised his previous stance to argue that racism continues to place a heavy burden on black Americans—especially poor men. He strives for a nuanced discussion of the persistent and devastating poverty of the inner city by integrating the explanations of both conservative and liberal scholars. Whether or not you agree with his conclusions, it's a good place to start thinking about a topic many Americans would like to ignore!

# Faculty & Staff

## Reading Recommendations for Winter Break

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### *Strong Poison*

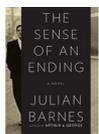


by Dorothy Sayers

Recommended by  
Ms. Jackman

In addition to *Strong Poison*, Ms. Jackman recommends the entire mystery series by Dorothy Sayers involving Harriet Vane and Lord Peter Wimsey. A quote from *Strong Poison*, "Nothing goes so well with a hot fire and buttered crumpets as a wet day without and a good dose of comfortable horrors within. The heavier the lashing of the rain and the ghastlier the details, the better the flavor seems to be." Dorothy L. Sayers, *Strong Poison*

### *The Sense of an Ending*

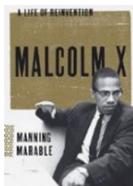


by Julian Barnes

Recommended by  
Ms. Kane

"Its effect is disturbing all the more so for being written with Barnes's habitual lucidity... Do not be misled by its brevity. Its mystery is as deeply embedded as the most archaic of memories." - Anita Brookner

### *Malcolm X: A Life of Reinvention*



by Marable Manning

Recommended by  
Mr. Limperis

Winner of the 2012 Pulitzer Prize for History. "Manning Marable is the exemplary black scholar of radical democracy and black freedom in our time. His long-awaited magisterial book on Malcolm X is the definitive treatment of the greatest black radical voice and figure of the mid-twentieth century. Glory Hallelujah!" - Cornel West, Princeton University

### *The Woman in White*



by Wilkie Collins

Recommended by  
Mr. Limperis

Gripping mystery novel of concealed identity, abduction, fraud and mental cruelty. - *The Guardian*, "The 100 Greatest Novels of all Time", Robert McCrum

### *A Confederacy of Dunces*



by John Kennedy Toole

Recommended by  
Anna Moss

"*A Confederacy of Dunces* is an American comic masterpiece. John Kennedy Toole's hero is one Ignatius J. Reilly, 'huge, obese, fractious, fastidious, and a latter-day Gargantua, a Don Quixote of the French Quarter. His story bursts with wholly original character, denizens of New Orleans' lower depths, incredibly true-to-life dialogue, and the zaniest series of high and low comic adventures" - Henry Kisor, *Chicago Sun Times*

### *Brave New World*

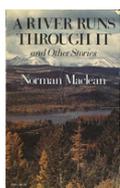


by Aldous Huxley

Recommended by  
Ms. Moss

"In a futuristic society based on pleasure without moral repercussions, Aldous Huxley places a few oddball characters to stir up the plot. With eugenics at its core, this novel hearkens back to Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, where Miranda says, 'O brave new world, that hath such people in it.'" - Esther Lombardi, *About.com Guide*

### *A River Runs Through It and Other Stories*



by Norman Maclean

Recommended by  
Fern Nesson

"[Maclean] would go to his grave secure in the knowledge that anyone who'd fished with a fly in the Rockies and read his novella on the how and why of it believed it to be the best such manual on the art ever written--a remarkable feat for a piece of prose that also stands as a masterwork in the art of tragic writing." - Philip Connors, *Nation*

### *The Lemon Tree*



by Sandy Tolan

Recommended by  
Jean Segaloff

The unsolvable Israeli-Palestinian conflict is told through the lives of two people closely involved in the history and in the moment.

# Faculty & Staff

## Reading Recommendations for Winter Break

### *Cider with Rosie*

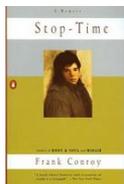


by Laurie Lee

Recommended by  
Ms. Siporin

“At all times wonderfully evocative and poignant, *Cider With Rosie* is a charming memoir of Laurie Lee's childhood in a remote Cotswold village, a world that is tangibly real and yet reminiscent of a now distant past. The sophisticated adult author's retrospective commentary on events is endearingly juxtaposed with that of the innocent, spotty youth, permanently prone to tears and self-absorption.” - Vintage Publishers

### *Stop Time*



by Frank Conroy

Recommended by  
Ms. Siporin

"Stop-Time is unique, an autobiography with the intimate unprotected candor of a novel. What makes it special, however, is the style, dry as an etching, sparse, elegant, modest, cheerful. Conroy has that subtle sense of the proportion of things which one usually finds only in established writers just after the mellowing of their career." Norman Mailer

### *Shadow of the Wind*

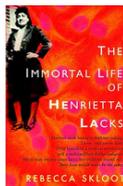


by Carlos Ruiz Zafon

Recommended by  
Ms. Thompson

“father to the Cemetery of Forgotten Books, a massive sanctuary where books are guarded from oblivion. Told to choose one book to protect, he selects *The Shadow of the Wind*, by Julian Carax. He reads it, loves it, and soon learns it is both very valuable and very much in danger because someone is determinedly burning every copy of every book written by the obscure Carax.” - Keir Graff for *Booklist*

### *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*

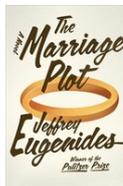


by Rebecca Skloot

Recommended by  
Ms. Thompson

“*The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* is a remarkable feat of investigative journalism and a moving work of narrative nonfiction that reads with the vividness and urgency of fiction. It also raises sometimes uncomfortable questions with no clear-cut answers about whether people should be remunerated for their physical, genetic contributions to research and about the role of profit in science.” - National Public Radio

### *The Marriage Plot*

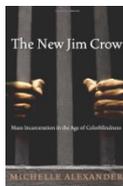


by Jeffery Eugenides

Recommended by  
Ms. Thompson

“Eugenides adeptly renders the patter of college intellectuals and the sweet banter of courtship, and is particularly astute on the uncertainties awaiting after graduation.” - *New York Times*

### *The New Jim Crow*



by Michelle Alexander

Recommended by  
Ms. Torres

“Now and then a book comes along that might in time touch the public and educate social commentators, policy makers, and politicians about a glaring wrong that we have been living with that we also somehow don't know how to face. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* by Michelle Alexander is such a work.” - *The New York Review of Books*, March 2011

### *Victory: The Triumphant Gay Revolution*



by Linda Hirshman

Recommended by  
Mr. Vollrath

“How does a movement get from there to here – from Hay to Blankfein? Linda Hirshman's *Victory: The Triumphant Gay Revolution* sets out to explain, tracing the history of gay rights from the early 20th century to the present.” - *The New York Times*, Rich Benjamin.