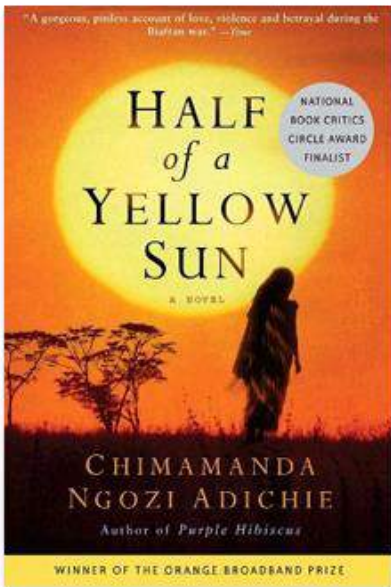


Suggested Summer Reading List for High School and Faculty Saint Ann's School, 2015



Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi. ***Half of a Yellow Sun***

Adichie's novel tells the story of a moment in African history that few of us know much about: Nigeria's civil war. The story follows several characters over the course of a decade, including a houseboy, a university professor and the professor's beautiful mistress, whose sister is the object of an expatriate British writer's affection (we follow the two of them also). *Half of a Yellow Sun* is a novel rich in history and character, one that takes us through the war's origins and its devastating (and lasting) impact on the country and the family at the center of the story. Readers who loved *Americanah* are sure to devour this complex, haunting novel. (Melissa Kantor)

Al-Khalili, Jim. ***The House of Wisdom: How Arabic Science Saved Ancient Knowledge and Gave Us the Renaissance***

I assigned this book last year because it's the only book that tells the story of one of the great Golden Ages of Science in world history, from Baghdad in the 9th century to Toledo in the 11th-12th centuries—when Europe was medieval, China had no algebra, and the most advanced American science was Maya calendrical arithmetic. Because it is so clear, charming and readable, I'll be assigning it again next year. Jim Al-Khalili is a Baghdad-born physics teacher in England who knows his subject and, more importantly, knows how to present it both historically and entertainingly. (Bill Everdell)

Amis, Martin. ***The Zone of Interest***

Amis's best novel in more than a decade. A black comedy set in a Nazi death camp. (Mike Donohue)

Andrews, Arin. ***Some Assembly Required***

Puberty is awkward for everyone, but it is especially difficult for people whose bodies betray their gender identities. *Some Assembly Required* is the honest and compelling memoir of an outdoorsy Oklahoma transgender teenage boy. Read with Katie Rain Hill's *Rethinking Normal*. (Hannah Mermelstein)

Atkinson, Kate. ***A God in Ruins***

If you read (and liked) Kate Atkinson's last book, *Life After Life* (featuring Ursula Todd), you absolutely must read this novel! Atkinson has described it as a companion piece rather than a sequel, as it explores the life of Teddy Todd, Ursula's younger brother. Atkinson moves back and forth from World War II to various times after the war as she tells the story of Teddy, a bomber pilot during the war, and his family, including his difficult, free-spirited daughter and his beloved grandchildren. *A God in Ruins* is a deceptively simple story that holds many, many surprises... (Stephanie Schragger)

Berry, Wendell. ***The Mad Farmer Poems***

If you want to be part of the food movement, read any Wendell Berry. Specifically, read this collection of poems. Wendell Berry's poetry will make you feel connected to the land, even if you're spending your summer on concrete. (Gretta Reed)

Use the Saint Ann's Digital Library all summer long!

Access the digital library at saintannsny.lib.overdrive.com
The easiest way to read our e-books is with a Kindle, Kindle app, or Overdrive app.
Logging In: Students and faculty need a library card number and PIN to download books. Look for an email from library@saintannsny.org containing yours (though you may have it already). For instructions and other digital library tips, see the last page of this list.

Shaded titles on this list indicate that it is available in the digital library.

Blaser, Martin. ***Missing Microbes: How the Overuse of Antibiotics Is Fueling Our Modern Plagues***

One of the most approachable and compelling science stories from a local researcher, on the alarming link between the decrease in biodiversity in our gut microbes and the rise of all manner of human diseases. Short version: antibiotic use may have contributed to everything from food allergies to the rise of obesity to Type II diabetes. Compelling, captivating, and easily readable with any level of scientific background (or none at all). (JP Connolly)

Bolick, Kate. ***Spinster: Making a Life of One's Own***

This started as an Atlantic cover story about Bolick's rejection of marriage. It turned into a much more complex and interesting book, part memoir about coming of age in 2000s New York, part biography of a series of mold-breaking women in the arts (Edna St. Vincent Millay, Maeve Brennan, and others). (Mike Donohue)

Brown, Daniel James. ***The Boys in the Boat: Nine Americans and Their Epic Quest for Gold at the 1936 Berlin Olympics***

Though I went into this book with little knowledge or interest in competitive rowing, I came out of it with a newfound fascination and deep respect for the sport. The descriptions of the races were so intensely vivid that my heart would be pounding by the finish. The characters were beautifully drawn and I became so attached to the nine members of the University of Washington crew team that I cried in public (more than once) while reading their stories. (Molly Sissors)

Brown, Ellen F. and John Wiley. ***Margaret Mitchell's Gone With the Wind: A Bestseller's Odyssey from Atlanta to Hollywood***

For anyone who works in the arts or anyone who loves Mitchell's zeitgeisty novel, this is an absorbing look at the creation and management of one of the most influential pieces of intellectual property in the 20th century. The authors did a fantastic job researching and distilling what made Mitchell's personal process unique and also how *Gone with the Wind* helped shape the way blockbusters are created, marketed, and nurtured over time as they become part of pop culture. I'm not even a particular fan of the novel or movie and reading this made me go back and read/watch both. Fascinating. (Shawn Nacol)

Butterworth, Jez. ***Jerusalem*** (play)

Johnny "Rooster" Byron, an old hippie living in a caravan in the English woods, scandalizes the deadhead folks back in town by selling drugs to youth, hosting rowdy parties, and defying orders to shut up and hit the road. Is he a Blakeian rebel from a mythic past of giants and universal energy? A Falstaffian carouser? A sleazy, satanic corrupter of youth? Wily, upsetting, transgressive, riotous, the play delivers brilliant emotional whiplash and lit/cult double takes. (Ruth Chapman)

Catton, Eleanor. ***The Luminaries***

Man Booker Prize, 2013. Incredible literary quality, vivid and sympathetic character mood shifts, connections of secrets like gears in clockwork, defense of faith and love and emotion and decency. (Mike Roam)

Child, Lee. ***Personal*** (A Jack Reacher novel)

Action detective story: exciting and amusing fun in France and England, squaring off against a sniper threat. This is just the latest in the series. The first is *The Killing Floor*. (Mike Roam)

Churchwell, Sarah. ***Careless People: Murder, Mayhem, and the Invention of The Great Gatsby***

If you're a fan of Gatsby, you'll find this book full of gems about Fitzgerald and the 1920s. (Mike Donohue)

Clarke, Susanna. ***Jonathan Strange and Mr. Norrell***

One of the best reads I have ever encountered. For those who love Jane Austen and Harry Potter, or for those who have a penchant for the idea of magic in our everyday world (or rather, the world of 19th century England), you will find no better tale. Written with great detail, brilliant humor, and a vast array of winning characters, you will be captivated from start to finish. With the upcoming mini-series from the BBC around the corner, be the first to know the twists and turns in this beautiful, dark, and magical tale! (*Jonathan Strange* won the 2005 Hugo Award for Best Novel.) (Liann Herder)

Coetzee, J.M. ***Disgrace***

This novel is a harrowing, beautifully conceived comment on what it means to be human. The author practically leaves the reader gasping in the horrifying unfolding of the story of David Lurie, an obscure Byron scholar and university professor, a man who has increasingly separated himself from society. Through a willfully self-destructive series of actions, Lurie loses his position and must find his way amongst strangers, including a sojourn with his semi-estranged daughter that brings brutal tragedy upon them both. Set in violent South Africa, amidst tumultuous social and political change, Coetzee, the 2003 Nobel laureate, weaves a stunning plot cast with humans who are all disgraced one way or another. This is a novel about morality and yet it gives few answers, but like the greatest art, makes the mind reel with questions. (Jonathan Elliot)

Daum, Meghan. ***My Misspent Youth***

A wonderful collection from 2001 about lots of subjects that matter to all of us, and a few you never knew could be so interesting. The title essay, about loving and leaving New York (indebted to Joan Didion, I think) is fabulous. There's also a fascinating chapter on flight attendants. Who knew? I can't wait to read her newest book, just out last year. (Liz Fodaski)

De Courcy, Anne. ***The Fishing Fleet: Husband-Hunting in the Raj***

Like opening a window to a view of the landscape you'd never seen before, this book offers a fresh perspective on how history happens. A total period piece, totally entertaining. (Marty Skoble)

Dennis, Patrick. ***Genius***

A tart, caustic comic novel from the author of *Auntie Mame*. This is a roman à clef centered on the travails of Orson Welles as Hollywood shut him out and he entered his grim downward spiral of the 1960s. In this book, a film director on the rocks hightails it to Mexico to escape the IRS and unleashes chaos and melodrama in everyone he touches as he struggles to assemble an epic film south of the border. It's simultaneously a book about filmmaking, expatriot angst, bourgeois excess, cultural imperialism, and the impossibilities of art. A beautifully bitter, hilarious summer read. (Shawn Nacol)

De Waal, Edmund. ***The Hare with Amber Eyes***

A glowing memoir that tracks the history of a family's art collection through five generations. (Jane Avrich)

Dickens, Charles. ***Martin Chuzzlewit***

A sprawling, hilarious, generous, multi-limbed tale centering around a miser, his son and a corrupt and unctuous architect. Lots of collectible phrases. (Jane Avrich)

Doerr, Anthony. ***All the Light We Cannot See***

This is one of the most (if not the most) inventive, heartfelt, and compelling books that I've read all year (which did happen to win the Pulitzer Prize). It would be easy to call it another World War II historical novel, but it's much more than that. It tells the stories of two main characters: Marie-Laure, a blind teenager, flees Paris to a seaside town, where she gets drawn into the French Resistance, while Werner is recruited from an orphanage into the Hitler Youth movement, and then the German Army. Their two paths do collide eventually, but it's the journeys that they take and their experiences during World War II that make this an extraordinary read. (Stephanie Schragger)

Doerr, Anthony. ***All the Light We Cannot See***

This might be the perfect book. It was complex enough to make the reader work, but not so heady that one couldn't enjoy it in a hammock. Combining a vivid glimpse into World War II, a meet-cute on the zanier side of the spectrum, and a unique narrative structure, Doerr had his work cut out to make a believer of me. In the end you'll wish you had read the beginning more carefully, and the rest of it more slowly. (Eli Forsythe)

Dunham, Lena. ***Not That Kind of Girl: A Young Woman Tells You What She's "Learned"***

Honest, self-critical, fascinating, and hopeful. Some readers may find the sexual candor unnecessary. (Mike Roam)

Ferrante, Elena. ***My Brilliant Friend, The Story of a New Name, and Those Who Leave and Those Who Stay***
(Neapolitan Series)

Fascinating and addictive series of novels about growing up poor, bright, and female in a scary neighborhood of Naples, Italy in the 1950s. One cover blurb says, "Imagine if Jane Austen got angry." (Mike Roam)

Finn, Peter and Petra Couvèe. ***The Zhivago Affair: The Kremlin, the CIA, and the Battle Over a Forbidden Book***
This fascinating book offers proof that a book can have political and humanistic power. The global challenge and impact of publishing a banned book. The involvement of the CIA and the Kremlin and many others. The fronts in the publishing business. The life of writers in Soviet Russia. (Kate S. Hamilton)

Fuhrman, Joanna. ***The Year of Yellow Butterflies***
Magnificent poems; the title piece is a remarkably surreal sequence. The rest is just wonderful. In this, her fifth book of poems, Fuhrman (Saint Ann's '91) stakes a legitimate claim to greatness. Brava! (Marty Skoble)

Furst, Alan. ***Midnight in Europe***
Wonderful World War II spy story, tender and sad, as Spain's Republic dies, Germany's Reich comes to life, and amateur spies get in over their heads. (Mike Roam)

Gaffney, Elizabeth. ***When the World Was Young***
Wally's story starts on V-J Day when she is nine years old. She lives in Brooklyn Heights and the neighborhood looms large in the novel, almost like another character. Wally's great-grandfather helped build the Brooklyn Bridge and Wally herself plays along the riverside cliffs, reminding readers that there was a time before the BQE and Promenade were built. A precocious girl obsessed with ant colonies and Wonder Woman—and best friends with Ham, the son of her grandmother's maid, Wally isn't your average little girl. This is perhaps not surprising as Wally's imposing grandmother and beautiful mother are both doctors, certainly not typical occupations for women at the time. Wally is a fantastically imagined character who faces her fair share of heartbreaking challenges as she matures, despite her privileged background. A gem of a novel by a Saint Ann's parent. (Ragan O'Malley)

Galbraith, Robert. (aka J.K. Rowling). ***The Cuckoo's Calling***
The strong suit here, of course, is character. Galbraith (OK, Rowling) invests her main characters with real lives and tensions. The plot is as convoluted as you might expect, and London comes alive as you rush excitedly through the pages. Take this one on the plane or to the beach. (Marty Skoble)

Gawande, Atul. ***Being Mortal***
What do we want at the end of our lives? Gawande, a Boston-based surgeon, argues that most medical models do not truly consider this question as they focus primarily on the extension of life, sometimes at the expense of quality. Through a blend of factual information, anecdotes, and the author's personal experience, Gawande has created a remarkable book that asks the most basic and universal questions that our society is afraid to confront. (Hannah Mermelstein)

Gessen, Masha. ***Words Will Break Cement: The Passion of Pussy Riot***
About the Russian female punk protest band and art collective: those of them who were caught were given three years in hard labor camps for a few minutes of playing a punk prayer in a Moscow chapel. (Mike Roam)

Grass, Gunter. ***The Tin Drum***
A masterpiece! I cannot contain my excitement about this one—I envy those who will be discovering it. (Larissa Tokmakova)

Hagood, Caroline. ***Making Maxine's Baby***
In this brilliant book of poems, Hagood (Saint Ann's '00) channels a bag lady from her (abused) childhood through her education and breakdown to a kind of transcendence that is deeply moving and utterly authentic. (Marty Skoble)

Hamid, Mohsin. ***How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia***
Amazing, tender, thought-provoking, surprising story of poverty and wealth in countries around India. (Mike Roam)

Hamilton, Alfred Starr. ***A Dark Dreambox of Another Kind*** (poems)
The title says it all. (Ben Gantcher)

Hawkins, Paula. ***The Girl on the Train***
A finely-wrought mystery that raises voyeurism to an art form. It feels like Hitchcock might have written it; the character studies are graphic and the plot twists are completely unexpected. I couldn't put it down. (Richard Mann)

Hawkins, Paula. ***The Girl on the Train***

Read this book before it gets turned into a movie! If you liked *Gone Girl*, this thriller is for you. Told from a variety of perspectives, this novel tries to unravel several mysteries. Every day, Rachel sits on the train and watches a seemingly perfect couple out on their deck... until one day the wife isn't there anymore. Rachel can't stop herself from delving into this mystery, even if it brings her into contact with her failed marriage and the life she left behind. She also may be an incredibly unreliable narrator, which makes this story all the more intriguing! (Stephanie Schragger)

Hill, Katie Rain. ***Rethinking Normal***

Katie Rain Hill always knew she was a girl, and considered it a mistake that she had the body of a boy. This moving and candid memoir tells of her transition from suicidal eight-year-old to award-winning activist and college student. Read with Arin Andrews' *Some Assembly Required*. (Hannah Mermelstein)

Howard, Jules. ***Sex on Earth: A Celebration of Animal Reproduction***

With chapters titled "Land of the Sexless Zombie Time-travellers" and "The Cloaca Monologues," and index topics like "vaginas" (subtopics: "ducks," "hedgehogs") and "masturbation" (subtopics: "bonobos," "sea otters"), this is truly a celebration of sex on earth. Fascinating and highly entertaining. (Hannah Mermelstein)

Isaacson, Walter. ***The Innovators: How a Gang of Hackers, Geniuses, and Geeks Created the Digital Revolution***

Can't have Wikipedia and Facebook without the internet, can't have cell phones and video games and the internet without network chips and computers, can't have computers without transistors and computer languages, etc: lively stories of their inventors all the way back to Charles Babbage and Ada Lovelace. (Mike Roam)

Ishiguro, Kazuo. ***Never Let Me Go***

Ishiguro begins his anxious story in the insulated, self-referring world of Hailsham, a prep school where the students—elite orphans—are trained for a life of high service whose dimensions are partially and painfully revealed. Art and friendship are supposed to be important in their lives; so is the stuff that they make, trade, and forage for. Kathy the narrator speaks with blinkered understanding about her early training and about life and love. We listen and have to fill in the colors she can't see. (Ruth Chapman)

Jamison, Leslie. ***The Empathy Exams***

This is the best book of nonfiction I've read in a long time. Jamison is incisively smart, but also compassionate, poetic, and clear-sighted. These essays are gorgeous. They will make you think deeply, and, lofty as it might be to say, I'd venture that they will make you a better person. AND, she's coming to read to us next year. Read the book now and get her to sign it later! (Liz Fodaski)

Jamison, Leslie. ***The Empathy Exams***

This is one of the best books I've read this year. Jamison's essays are thoughtful, funny, sometimes a little gross, and always strikingly, breathtakingly honest. She gets right to heart of what it means to human by looking at some of the smallest slivers of being a human. Essay after essay, and I tore through it like a beach read. Read it—whether or not you're on the beach. (Sarah Moon)

Jansson, Tove. ***The Summer Book***

A little half-feral girl and her crusty grandmother spend the summer on an island in the Gulf of Norway. This is one of many adult books by the author of the Moomintroll series, which you might know from your early years. Her writing is direct and surprising; the story is clear and deep and a lot like a long summer, i.e., childhood. (Ben Gantcher)

Kaiser, David. ***How the Hippies Saved Physics: Science, Counterculture, and the Quantum Revival***

Not so long ago in the 60s and 70s, when Saint Ann's was very young, we were learning about quantum weirdness from popular books called *The Tao of Physics* and *The Dancing Wu Li Masters*. Those books were written by members of a movement of American physicists, many of them amateurs, who were disenchanted by the takeover of particle physics in American universities by wannabe defense strategists and the veterans of bomb-making at Los Alamos. Going back to a puzzling consequence derived from quantum physical theory by Einstein, Podolsky and Rosen (that information about the properties of subatomic particles can be known instantly at a great distance), and John Bell's inequalities hypothesis, they began experimenting. After conferences at Californian health spas they began proposing faster-than-light communication and other weird effects, ending by taking the thunder from the bomb-makers, inspiring the counterculture, and returning physics to questions that have no military consequences—yet. (Bill Everdell)

Kasischke, Laura. **Space, In Chains** (poems)

Lovely, anguished, metaphorical and evocative. She's invented a seemingly loose form that sometimes carries rhymes and chimes way out ahead, a kind of rubato for poetry. (Ben Gantcher)

Kline, Christina Baker. **Orphan Train**

A novel inspired by a fascinating phenomenon—one that I often try to persuade kids to write papers about because it's so fun to research. Starting in the 1850s, the so-called Orphan Trains ran between eastern cities and the farmlands of the Midwest. The orphans and abandoned children that the trains carried were offered for adoption; some wound up in loving homes, others were little more than slaves. This super-readable book weaves together the story of an Irish girl shipped west after her family is killed in a fire, with that of a disaffected teen living in modern-day Maine. (Denise Rinaldo)

Koch, Herman. **The Dinner**

An unreliable narrator is only the first disturbing element of this deeply disturbing tale. The entire story is folded into a dinner: each course another serving of surprising revelation. An ingeniously constructed novel full of brilliant satire and horrific truth. Are there limits to familial love? Find out for yourself. (Marty Skoble)

Koeppel, Gerard T. **Water for Gotham: A History**

New Yorkers take it for granted—we have possibly the most reliable supply of fresh, unfiltered water of any city in the world. This book tells the fascinating and somewhat foreboding story of how New York stopped getting water from little ponds in Manhattan and diverted the Croton River to the city in the 1840s. A short epilogue tells you how we built on that to enable us to drain an entire dedicated watershed south of the Mohawk River—but not about how to protect it from fracking waste. (Bill Everdell)

Krasznahorkai László. **Satantango**

Mysterious bells, mysterious spider webs, Biblical rain, human decay. If the web is the model of the novel's structure, it's a funnel web, a creepy Klein bottle of narrative stickiness. Dance to the accordion, smell the rot! (Ben Gantcher)

Kushner, Rachel. **The Flamethrowers**

Imagine motorcycle sounds (vroom-vroom!) while reading this story about art, protest, motorcycles, class, sex, and identity in New York City and Italy in the wild 1960s. (Mike Roam)

Kynaston, David. **Austerity Britain: 1945-51**

Don't let the title deceive you: this is a riveting account of what it was like in Britain just after the war. Kynaston draws on dozens of private diaries, so that you feel strangely immersed in the inner lives of postwar Britons. (Mike Donohue)

Lahiri, Jhumpa. **Unaccustomed Earth**

Reading Lahiri's writing is like listening to someone share secrets. You learn about the interior lives of characters who rarely give voice to their emotions and wishes, and you realize both how close and how far apart they stand from one another. Her writing is lush and enveloping, and this collection of stories is especially rewarding. This was the first book I had read by her, and now I am reading *Interpreter of Maladies*, which is also wonderful. (Alex Levin)

LeGuin, Ursula K. **City of Illusions**

In this spare and haunting book, LeGuin conjures up an Earth controlled by a mysterious people who keep the rest of humanity in a semi-barbaric state through their ability to read and control minds, all the while adhering to a strict refusal to take life. The protagonist arises from a primeval forest, full-grown, but lacking any memory or ability even to speak. His quest to discover his origins leads him to the lair of the enemy. Short and fast-moving, it is an entertaining sci-fi beach read. (Tom Hill)

Leigh, Julia. **Disquiet**

A short but haunting and definitely disquieting novella about a family gathering in France. (Marielle Vigourt)

Macdonald, Helen. ***H is for Hawk***

This is a strange but very beautiful book written by a Cambridge professor who is an experienced falconer. It is part memoir and part how to raise and train a goshawk by yourself. Finding herself absolutely at a loss when her father unexpectedly dies, the author retreats into the comforting but elusive idea that nature and wildness will help deal with her grief. She finds herself identifying more and more with her hawk rather than with friends, family and her old life. Eventually she realizes that getting lost in nature can be a seductive yet ultimately dangerous endeavor. And slowly she finds a way to return to life, back in the world without her father. A wonderful read for those interested in memoir writing and all the different strands that can be intertwined to make a life. (Deirdre Keogh-Anderson)

Mailer, Norman. ***The Naked and the Dead***

In the mood for a brilliant but bleak and unrelenting war novel? Then this is the book. Set in the Pacific theater, Mailer's novel is as incisive a portrait of military egoism and bureaucratic incompetence as one will find, as well as an unsparing portrait of the men who served at the "tip of the spear." Whatever romanticism about war that Hemingway left standing, Mailer demolishes. (Vince Tompkins)

Malcolm, Janet. ***In the Freud Archives***

The don of the Freudian Psychoanalytic Family, New York branch, has a dispute with his apostate protégé; other characters come in, including Freud himself, and it's fascinating—seriously! Malcolm does a kind of Freudian maneuver on them, letting them speak for themselves and about each other through letters, articles and interviews. The rivalries are funny; the writing is puzzle-smart and elegant. (Ben Gantcher)

Mandel, Emily St. John. ***Station Eleven***

I really enjoyed reading the interweaving storylines in this novel set pre- and post-Apocalypse. Great characters, really imaginative. (Nicholas Williams)

Mantel, Hilary. ***Wolf Hall***

Has everyone read this? It's worthwhile for the powerful characters and the rich tapestry of historical detail. It is also utterly littered with commas, few of them grammatical, which bugged me. But then I'm an English teacher. (Jane Avrich)

Marra, Anthony. ***A Constellation of Vital Phenomena***

One of my favorite novels in the last few years, this is set in war-torn Chechnya at the turn of the 21st century. (Mike Donohue)

McCloud, Scott. ***The Sculptor***

Illustrated story that includes debates about art for fame or money or something else entirely. (Mike Roam)

McEwan, Ian. ***The Children Act***

An English judge has to decide whether a child is a child and it's a matter of life and/or death. Meanwhile she is facing a more personal crisis. Suspenseful, brilliantly detailed, this superb novel is rich in character, profoundly ironic, and pleasantly filled with music. (Marty Skoble)

Messud, Claire. ***The Woman Upstairs***

This novel is about a third grade art teacher, and it is about choices, art, creativity, perception, happiness, love—it explores all sorts of uncomfortable areas of life, in a direct and thoughtful manner; stayed with me long after I finished it. (Marielle Vigourt)

Modiano, Patrick. ***Dora Bruder*** and ***Suspended Sentences***

Any and all books by Patrick Modiano. They are beautifully written testaments to what is felt and not seen and usually not understood. Time is during and after the occupation, and mostly set in Paris. Very beautiful. Very quiet. And he won the Nobel Prize in literature in 2014. (Kate S. Hamilton)

Munro, Alice. ***Open Secrets*** and ***Runaway***

It feels like the wrong kind of recycling to recommend in these pages books that I teach. It also feels strange to recommend books that I have not finished. I am making exceptions in both cases for these collections from Canadian Nobel-Prize winner and multi-instrumentalist Alice Munro, a writer whose dappled gray prose is often said to recall Chekhov but whose insistent location of knowledge in sin, and sin in sex, has more in common with Faulkner and Genesis. (Ben Rutter)

Munro, Alice. **Hateship, Friendship, Courtship, Loveship, Marriage**

This is the book that made me realize how great Alice Munro is. (Mike Donohue)

Murray, Paul. **Skippy Dies**

A sweeping coming-of-age epic set in an Irish prep school. What's not to love? Prepare to laugh, cringe, and consider your motivations carefully after you read this one. Step into a world that is different than ours but easy enough to adapt to. When you come out the other side you'll wish there was another 672 pages in which to get lost. (Eli Forsythe)

O'Connor, Flannery and Sally Fitzgerald. **The Habit of Being: Letters of Flannery O'Connor**

This was given to me as a gift my first year out of college and has kept me company ever since. A fun challenge: Every time she mentions a book in one of her letters, read it. That's what I tried to do. (Laurie Duchovny)

O'Hara, Frank. **Lunch Poems**

A beautiful reissue of the City Lights original includes copies of O'Hara's correspondence with Ferlinghetti, thus adding historical depth to the work and an insight into the nature of these two lions. From this re-reading the jocular image of O'Hara striding down Fifth Avenue composing cheerful celebrations of New York City is replaced by a much more somber, anxious, and sometimes troubled and seriously literary poet. (Marty Skoble)

Owuor, Yvonne Adhiambo. **Dust**

This book brings Nairobi and the northern dry landscape to life; it is brimming with beautiful writing that immerses us in Kenya and its history since the 50s. "Her words were like soldiers" is just one of the descriptive sentences that has remained with me. (Vivian Swain)

Oyeyemi, Helen. **Boy, Snow, Bird**

Creepy and engrossing, I read this in one cold evening last winter and needed an extra blanket to make it to morning. (Shalewa Mackall)

Packer, George. **The Unwinding: An Inner History of the New America**

Nonfiction account of an assortment of American lives in the 21st century. Not to be dramatic, but this is kind of a must-read if you're an American in 2015. (Mike Donohue)

Pearlman, Edith. **Honeydew**

Every one of these striking stories left me breathless, wanting to go back and reread it. Deftly drawn characters, ingeniously simple plots, and the utterly unexpected twist that is perfectly timed. (Marty Skoble)

Petterson, Per. **I Curse the River of Time**

This is a beautiful book written in clean, compulsively readable prose. Translated from the Norwegian with assistance from the author, who one gets the sense had a lot of control. Really gorgeous. Petterson's books are proof that not all Norwegian novelists require six volumes to say what they want to say. (Liz Fodaski)

Portis, Charles. **True Grit**

A delightful, fast-paced read for any age. I have to admit, before I read *True Grit* (and saw the John Wayne movie) I didn't think I'd like the Western genre – I was wrong. The plucky narrator, 14-year old Mattie Ross, goes into wild country with one-eyed deputy marshal Rooster Cogburn to avenge the death of her father. Everything you would want and expect from a Western classic. (Eva Zasloff)

Rachman, Tom. **The Imperfectionists**

This book really surprised me. It sounds so simple: a novel about a small English-language newspaper in Rome. It ends up being strangely complex, original, humane, and ultimately kind of heartbreaking. (Mike Donohue)

Rahman, Zia Haider. **In the Light of What We Know**

Though initially suspicious about the lengthy epigraphs in this novel, I quickly found its central story, about two college friends who are reunited after some eventful years, completely engrossing. The book is just as much about class, race, geopolitics and history as it is about their complicated friendship; it is set against the backdrop of the war in Afghanistan. Once I got started, I couldn't put it down. (Rosalie Fisher)

Ripley, Amanda. ***The Smartest Kids in the World: And How They Got That Way***

About the kind of teaching that happens in the countries with some of the best teenage students, as measured by the PISA tests which are more about thinking than about memorization. In some US colleges you have to have a higher grade point average (Saint Ann's students might not know what that is) to qualify for the college football team than to qualify for the teacher training program. In some countries, though, such as South Korea, the government is trying to cut back on the crazy (multi-year, seven-days-a-week, 18-hours-a-day) competition among students to prepare for the college entrance exams. (Mike Roam)

Robinson, Marilynne. ***Housekeeping***

This novel was the best thing that happened to me all year. Read it in a pair of soft flannel trousers while listening to Arthur Russell's *World of Echo*. (Ben Rutter)

Ronson, Jon. ***So You've Been Publicly Shamed***

Public shaming went out with the 18th century because it was deemed to be too brutal, and now the internet has brought it back. Jon Ronson's wry wit always makes for excellent reading, and in this book he tackles a peculiarly modern problem with eminently readable flair. (Jascha Narveson)

Rowell, Rainbow. ***Landline***

Perhaps better known for her YA novels (including *Eleanor and Park*), Rainbow Rowell has written a lively and logic-defying novel about the chance to fix a life that has gone astray. Georgie McCool writes for a TV show and is about to get her big break, but feels like her family life is falling apart. And then she finds a telephone that seems to let her talk to her past...this is a perfect beach read! (Stephanie Schragger)

Ruhl, Sarah. ***100 Essays I Don't Have Time to Write***

A really interesting little book of ideas from a renowned playwright (who happened to visit us in April). These are short, terse pieces on theater, motherhood, and life in general. You can chomp on these bite-sized pieces a few at a time or all at once. (Liz Fodaski)

Salter, James. ***Light Years***

Gorgeous, like haiku poetry sometimes. Love stories, moments, life going by. (Mike Roam)

Schulz, Bruno. ***The Street of Crocodiles***

If you thought the shtetl was gray, you couldn't be wronger. It's a jungle of overlush people and plants. Schulz's prose is like that, too: teeming but also precise, naturalistic and comic in a "Dang, people are weird" kind of way. Schulz has been compared to both Kafka and Proust. He's fleshier than Kafka and a heck of a lot shorter than Proust. (Ben Gantcher)

Seierstad, Asne. ***One of Us: The Story of Anders Breivik and the Massacre in Norway***

Well-written and researched. Disturbing true story of the young man in Norway who tried to start a war against what he thinks is an Islamic and multicultural invasion of Europe. His loner action in 2011, after years of seclusion playing video games in his mother's apartment, included building a bomb and home-made uniform, and then walking around a summer camp in Norway shooting unarmed teens. (Mike Roam)

Shields, David. ***Reality Hunger: A Manifesto***

Fascinating, brilliant, often infuriating book that argues—sort of—that fiction is dead, or should be. (Mike Donohue)

Smith, Anna Deavere. ***Fires in the Mirror***

In 1991, in racially-divided Crown Heights, a Jewish man drove his car onto the sidewalk, killing a seven-year old black boy. Protests and riots followed the event. Dozens were injured, more were arrested, and Yankel Rosenbaum, a doctoral student visiting from Australia, was stabbed to death. Deavere Smith interviewed residents of Crown Heights as well as civic leaders, politicians and family members of the dead. The result is a series of monologues that are the shocking, hilarious, unsettling play, *Fires in the Mirror*. (Melissa Kantor)

Smith, Betty. ***A Tree Grows in Brooklyn***

Heartbreaking and inspiring, the story follows Francie, a tenacious and strong-willed young woman and a third generation descendant of the Nolan and the Rommelly clans in the early decades of the 20th century. Set in a much different Williamsburg Brooklyn than today, it is a tremendous book. (Tom Hill)

Solomon, Asali. ***Disgruntled***

Asali Solomon's distinctive voice adds a new perspective to the independent school coming of age novel, a Black girl's voice. As a person who was once a preppy Black girl in the 80s I might quibble with a few details, but I laughed and cringed and recognized so much. (Shalewa Mackall)

Spencer-Fleming, Julia. ***In the Bleak Midwinter***

The unlikely pairing of an attractive Episcopal priest and a small town chief of police make for a second mystery even as they work together to solve the first. Will they or won't they? Well written, well designed, a fun read. (Marty Skoble)

Strayed, Cheryl. ***Tiny Beautiful Things: Advice on Love and Life from Dear Sugar***

I am recently a fan of the podcast Dear Sugar Radio, so I decided to read the book. It's a compilation of advice columns written by Cheryl Strayed as Sugar, posted on some blog. Varied and fascinating personal stories from advice-seekers and Strayed herself, at times quite an emotional read. I recommend both podcast and book! (Nicholas Williams)

Susann, Jacqueline. ***Valley of the Dolls***

Anne: the small town girl who moves to New York City to work at a talent agency. Neely: the budding starlet. Jennifer: the damaged beauty who no one seems to take seriously. While these women bear little resemblance to one another initially, their experiences in the 1960s show business industry eventually transform them into reckless individuals who heavily depend on substances to get through their daily lives. The book is not entirely dark, as Susann regularly folds humor, romance and the visual scenery of 1960s New York City and Hollywood into the plot. I recommend it to anyone who appreciates the mid-20th century and sassy one-liners! You won't be able to put it down. (Kayla Goodson)

Thornton, Sarah. ***33 Artists in 3 Acts***

Art is, in many ways, performance and presentation. Thornton's many brief chapters give us a variety of artists and media, often intersecting and interacting. Utterly fascinating. Saint Ann's is here too! (Marty Skoble)

Thorpe, Helen. ***Soldier Girls: The Battles of Three Women at Home and at War***

Three women in Indiana enlisted in the National Guard—one for the college tuition benefit, one on a dare, and the other because she wanted a place to belong. This was before 2001, and all assumed their service would consist of weekend drills and occasional emergency response. Then 9/11 happened. This book follows the women over 12 years, through their deployments in Afghanistan and Iraq, one leaving children behind in the U.S. An amazing book from a purely informational point of view—how many of us can really imagine day-to-day military service, let alone for women? And also a beautifully written exploration of relationships. (Denise Rinaldo)

Tóibín, Colm. ***Nora Webster***

Nora Webster is a young widow, the mother of two young boys. This quiet, rich, quiet novel begins not long after her husband has died. Nora struggles to recover from and make sense of her life after his death. We see the toll loss takes on her sons and on her, and we watch her find solace in music and work. Her husband was Nora's ticket out of an oppressive, judgmental world, and she struggles not to be pulled back into it after his death. Did I mention how quiet it is? If you can settle into the quiet, you will be washed in its luminous prose, its transcendent characters. You will be transformed. (Melissa Kantor)

Tóibín, Colm. ***Nora Webster***

A really absorbing novel about a recently widowed Irish woman in the late 1960s. (Mike Donohue)

Toll, Ian. ***Pacific Crucible: War at Sea in the Pacific, 1941-1942***

If you've been looking for a riveting account of the first year of naval operations in World War II, you have found it. The chapter on the Battle of Midway is worth the price of the book. (Mike Donohue)

Torres, Justin. ***We the Animals***

A wonderful slender first novel that is both a coming-of-age story and an exploration of poverty, danger and sexuality in upstate NY. It will not weigh you down and will read easily on ferry boats and trains. (G. Giraldo)

Tuchman, Barbara. ***The Guns of August***

Still in print, this is the history of the beginnings of World War I that President John Kennedy announced he was reading just before the Cuban Missile Crisis. Kennedy later cited the events, as Tuchman dramatically described them, as one reason why the United States decided against actions that might have provoked World War III in October, 1962. A good forward-looking way to take account of the centenary of the War To End Wars, if you did not take the Mellon-Meslow course. (Bill Everdell)

Vlautin, Willy. ***The Motel Life***

Fascinating quick-reading story of bad luck brothers in Reno, Nevada: one of them is a story teller and the other is a cartoonist. (Mike Roam)

Vonnegut, Kurt. ***The Sirens of Titan***

A classic journey through space travel, human nature, religious and social commentary, and grand perspectives on time, consciousness and the meaning of life. Only Vonnegut could write this masterpiece. (Justin Pelzer)

Ward, Jesmyn. ***Men We Reaped***

An emotionally wrenching look at the experience of losing six young men—just a few of the ones the NY Times tells us are missing. By far the saddest book I've read in many years, mostly because it is true. (Shalewa Mackall)

Waters, Sarah. ***Paying Guests***

A vivid account of small town life on the outskirts of London just after World War I. A lesbian love affair is tested by a brutal murder. The absolute split between private and public life is poignantly explored. (Richard Mann)

Weir, Andy. ***The Martian***

Terrific adventure of a Mars colonist. I couldn't put it down: it is clever, exciting, funny, and moving. The author was a researcher at Sandia National Labs and really knows his science and engineering—the rocket scenes felt as if they had been tested with Kerbal Space Program or other intense physics. (Mike Roam)

West, Rebecca. ***The Fountain Overflows*** (The Saga of the Century, Book 1)

Stunning prose. The portrait of an impoverished, eccentric, talented family in the late 19th century in The UK. (Savannah Roberts)

Whedon, Joss. ***Astonishing X-Men (Issues #1-24)***

I love these books. Whedon tells stories that lay bare what makes these X-Men all sad, funny and heroic. Special attention gets thrown to Kitty Pryde, who deserves it. (Michael Pershan)

Wilde, Oscar. ***The Picture of Dorian Gray***

If you like tales of self-indulgence and murder with a side order of homoerotic overtones, then *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is the book for you! Set in the upper societal echelons (and lower opium dens) of Victorian London, this short novel follows a calculating and impossibly vain young man on a journey of macabre self-discovery. Come for the pithy musings on the nature of art, stay for the grotesque views on the human condition! (Chloe Smith)

Wodehouse, P.G. ***Jeeves & the Tie That Binds***

A character remembers Bertie's Aunt Dahlia, "I wonder whether she ever sang lullabies to me in my cradle. If so, it must have scared me cross-eyed, giving me the illusion that the boiler had exploded." Later on, "She snorted. Her snorts are not the sniffing snorts snorted by Ma McCorkadale, they resemble more an explosion in the larger type of ammunition dump and they send strong men rocking back on their heels as if struck by lightning." (Mike Roam)

Zevin, Gabrielle. ***The Storied Life of A.J. Fikry***

A.J. Fikry lives on a small island off the coast of Rhode Island and runs Island Books—but not particularly well. He used to successfully and happily run the bookstore with his wife—unfortunately she died in a car crash and in her absence he has become an irritable drunk. One evening, when he is passed out from drinking, his beloved book of Edgar Allan Poe poetry gets stolen. Add a baby who gets abandoned in the bookstore, a pretty (but quirky) travelling salesperson, a crime-novel-reading detective friend, a whole lot of references to books and literature, and you've got yourself a very entertaining novel. (Ragan O'Malley)

Saint Ann's Digital Library at Overdrive

Remember, students and faculty can check out e-books all summer long. Access the digital library at saintannsny.lib.overdrive.com or locate it by Googling the phrase *Saint Ann's Digital Library*. The easiest way to read our e-books is with a Kindle, Kindle app, or Overdrive app.

Logging in: Students and faculty need a library card number and PIN to check out books. Look for an email from library@saintannsny.org with yours (though you may have it already). **FYI:** Your library card number is simply your Saint Ann's ID number with an "S" in front if you are a student and an FAC in front if you are a faculty member. For example, if your student ID number is 18840, your library card number is S18840. If your faculty ID is 18840 your library card number FAC18840. Your PIN is your first and last initials, lower case, followed by the same ID number. So, if your name is Eleanor Roosevelt and your ID number is 18840, your PIN is er18840. Got it, Eleanor? Now, go read some books!

Note: If you are a graduating senior or a departing faculty member, your library card number and PIN will work through the end of July. Please use the digital library!

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- You can check out a book from the digital library using a 3G or WiFi connection. But to actually download it to your device, **you must use WiFi**.
- Select the *Read in your Browser* option if you want to just read the title on your computer.
- For more information click "help" when you access the digital library.

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A big thanks to all the contributors!

