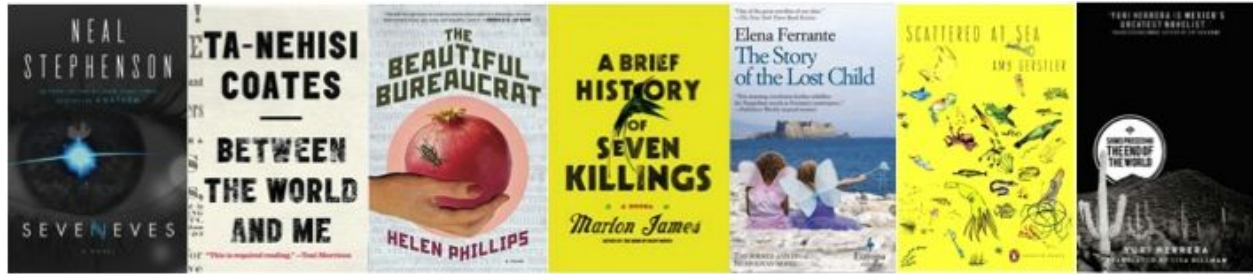


2016 Faculty Book Recommendations for FWT Reading



Barbara Alfano

- *The Silent Duchess* by Dacia Maraini

The story is set in 18th-century Sicily and narrates the life of a silent Duchess who, because of her inability to speak or hear, was granted more freedom than women usually were in her times, although she was fully a victim of the men who surrounded her. A historical novel written from a feminist point of view. Marianna Ucría was an ancestor of Maraini's. The author will be on campus next spring. She has been a major author in Italy since the 1960s.

Benjamin Anastas

- *Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates

Required reading for our troubled times and an open letter to the nation in the best tradition of James Baldwin.

- *Troubling Love* by Elena Ferrante and *My Brilliant Friend* by Elena Ferrante

Pairing Ferrante's first novel (published in Italian in 1993) with the first book in her Neapolitan Novels tetralogy shows how her urgency as a literary artist has only deepened with time. It's also excellent preparation for the class on Elena Ferrante that Barbara Alfano and I will be teaching in the spring!

- *The Selling of the President 1968* by Joe McGinniss

This underappreciated dissection of Nixon's election in 1968 tells us exactly how our political system has been debased by corporate money and the media's race to the bottom. McGinniss taught at Bennington only for a short time (1982-1984) but his influence on that generation of Bennington writers was enormous.

David Anderegg

- *Why Homer Matters* by Adam Nicolson

A little over the top in places, sort of like classical scholarship meets "Raiders of the Lost Ark." But what other book can make one desperate to read several different translations of the Iliad? Plus, Nicolson reveals the actual physical location of the mouth of Hell. The best book I read this year.

Doug Bauer

Three books of poetry:

- *Nothing to Declare* by Henri Cole
- *Scattered at Sea* by Amy Gerstler
- *Horse Medicine* by Doug Anderson

Josh Blackwell

- There seem to be quite a few students heading to New Orleans this winter and I've been recommending this to prepare them for Mardi Gras madness:
 - *Rabelais and His World* by Mikhail Bakhtin
- I'm excited to be offering my "Fashion and Modernism" course again in the spring and will be preparing for it by revisiting some old favorites as well as a couple of books I've been meaning to get to, including:
 - *The Restless Image: Sociology of Fashion* by Rene Konig
 - *The Lost Art of Dress: The Women Who Once Made America Stylish* by Linda Przybyszewski
- I promised Mary Lum I would read Hanya Yanigihara's *A Little Life*--trying to add more fiction to my reading diet!

David Bond

- *Plutopia: Nuclear Families, Atomic Cities, and the Great Soviet and American Plutonium Disasters* by Kate Brown
- *The Land of Open Graves: Living and Dying on the Migrant Trail* by Jason De Leon
- *The Many-Headed Hydra: The Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* by Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker
- *Capitalism in the Web of Life: Ecology and the Accumulation of Capital* by Jason Moore

Lydia Brassard

- *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination* by Robin D.G. Kelley
- *A Brief History of Seven Killings* by Marlon James

John Bullock

I've been binge-reading Graham Greene novels. His fascinating character studies are combined with political intrigue and vivid portrayals of life in post-colonial locales. I particularly recommend:

- *The Comedians* by Graham Greene. Haiti after the rise of Papa Doc Duvalier.
- *Our Man in Havana* by Graham Greene. A satiric look at Cuba before the revolution.

Akiko Busch

Elena Ferrante's Neapolitan Novels:

- *My Brilliant Friend*
- *The Story of a New Name*
- *Those Who Leave and Those Who Stay*
- *The Story of the Lost Child*

Noah Coburn

Books I'm reading (or re-reading) while on sabbatical in Kathmandu and Tblisi:

- *Base Nation: How U.S. Military Bases Abroad Harm America and the World* by David Vine.
A scholarly study of U.S. military expansion that almost reads like a travel memoir.
- *Slowly Down the Ganges* by Eric Newby.
A travel memoir that almost reads like an anti-travel memoir in which Newby's wife is the true hero.
- *Anna Karenina* by Leo Tolstoy. Sprawling, elegant, and entertaining.
- *The Bazaar of Bad Dreams* by Stephen King. Sparse and just as elegant and entertaining.

Michael Cohen

- *Einstein's Rabbi: A Tale of Science and the Soul* by Michael Cohen
- *Refiner's Fire* by Mark Halperin
- *The Web and the Rock* by Thomas Wolfe
- *The Razor's Edge* by W. Somerset Maugham
- *The Drifters* by James Michener
- *Alexandria Quartet* by Lawrence Durrell
- *The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined* by Steven Pinker

Ron Cohen

- *Lila: A Novel* by Marilynne Robinson
- *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption* by Bryan Stevenson
- *The Mathematician's Shiva: A Novel* by Stuart Rojstaczer
- *The Return* by Roland Merullo
- *Hidden in Plain Sight: The Social Structure of Irrelevance* by Eviatar Zerubavel

Annabel Davis-Goff

- *Paradise of the Pacific: Approaching Hawaii* by Susanna Moore
- *Caught: The Prison State and the Lockdown of American Politics* by Marie Gottschalk
- *Paris Stories* by Mavis Gallant

Kathleen Dimmick

- *The Secret Scripture* by Sebastian Barry

Michael Dumanis

- *The Empathy Exams* by Leslie Jamison (essays)
- *The Animal Too Big to Kill* by Shane McCrae (poetry)
- *The Same-Different* by Hannah Sanghee Park (poetry)

Marguerite Feitlowitz

- *Signs Preceding the End of the World* by Yuri Herrera. Translated, from the Spanish, by Lisa Dillman.
- *Zone* by Guillaume Apollinaire. Translated, from the French, by Ron Padgett.
- *Desolation of the Chimera* by Luis Cernuda. Translated, from the Spanish, by Stephen Kessler.

Janet Foley

- *The Nightingale* by Kristen Hannah

Camille Guthrie

My brilliant friends had books come out this year—books that I had read in draft form, so I feel especially thrilled to see them out in the world.

- *Wilberforce: A Novel* by H.S. Cross.
If you like Harry Potter, but more sex, more violence, more religion.
- *The Beautiful Bureaucrat: A Novel* by Helen Phillips.
If you like Kafka, but from a contemporary woman's perspective.
- *The Great Medieval Yellows* by Emily Wilson.
If you like exquisite poems about flora and fauna and subject-object relations.
- *My Brilliant Friend* by Elena Ferrante.
Not my friend, but I, like many others, am also swept up by this series.

Sarah Harris

- *Graphic Women: Life Narrative and Contemporary Comics* by Hillary L. Chute.
This book offers an introduction to the subversive possibilities in women's autobiographical comics. She includes chapters on Phoebe Gloeckner, Aline Kominsky-Crumb, Lynda Barry, Marjane Satrapi, and Alison Bechdel. I'm also looking forward to reading Chute's upcoming book, *Disaster Drawn: Visual Witness, Comics, and Documentary Form*.

- *Fear and Loathing in La Liga: Barcelona, Real Madrid, and the World's Greatest Sports Rivalry* by Sid Lowe.

For anyone with an interest in regional identity, European history, soccer, or sports in general, this is a very entertaining read. It shows that soccer is never really just about soccer.

- *The Back Room* by Carmen Martín Gaité. Translated by Helen Lane.

I have read this dreamlike and self-reflective novel many times over the years, and it never disappoints. It's a little hard to get into, but don't give up!

Stephen Higa

- *Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology* by Rosemary Radford Ruether
- *The Desert Fathers* by Helen Waddell
- *Struggle to be the Sun Again: Introducing Asian Women's Theology* by Chung Hyun Kyung
- *Music, Body, and Desire in Medieval Culture* by Bruce Holsinger
- *The Confessions* by Augustine of Hippo
- *The Mountains of California* by John Muir
- *Breaking Bread: Insurgent Black Intellectual Life* by Bell Hooks and Cornel West
- *Radical Presence: Teaching as Contemplative Practice* by Mary Rose O'Reilley

Dan Hofstadter

- *The Salutation* by Sylvia Townsend Warner
- *The Silence in the Garden* by William Trevor
- *Anti-Judaism: The Western Tradition* by David Nirenberg

Kirk Jackson

- *The Swerve: How the World Became Modern* by Stephen Greenblatt

Dina Janis

- *Wolf Winter* by Cecilia Ekbäck.
Well written, mystery folktale-like prose.
- *The Brothers Size* a play by Tarell Alvin McCraney.
A powerful and poetic look at two black men, brothers in their search for love.
- *The Cement Garden* by Ian McEwan.
Thrilling, disturbing, not easy to put down—by one of my favorite writers.

Sherry Kramer

- *Nonsense: The Power of Not Knowing* by Jamie Holmes.
It's about uncertainty...one of my favorite things to think about.

Mary Lum

- *A Little Life* by Hanya Yanagihara
- *Engine Empire: Poems* by Cathy Park Hong

Andrew McIntyre

- *Book I of Euclid's Elements* edited by Thomas Heath.
Really worth trying to read the original. Not that hard once you get the hang of it, and you can find many guides online. The joy of it is not the individual propositions, but how the whole thing fits together: there is narrative tension and plot development!
- *Secrets of the Blue Cliff Record: Zen Comments* by Hakuin and Tenkei. Translated by Thomas Cleary. Not many car chases or explosions but still pretty OK.
- *On Late Style: Music and Literature Against the Grain* by Edward Said.
The strangeness and difficulty of works of lateness.

Katie Montovan

- *Honeybee Democracy* by Thomas Seeley

Ann Pibal

For FWT reading, I recommend the following books I have read and loved recently:

- The Elena Ferrante novels — *My Brilliant Friend* is the best fiction I have read in a long time; Camille gave me a copy for my birthday and I am forever grateful to her! I'm planning to read the other three this winter.
- Two books about environmental issues, the first written by a Bennington alumna.
 - *The Oyster War: The True Story of a Small Farm, Big Politics, and the Future of Wilderness in America* by Summer Brennan, Bennington Class of '01
 - *Beyond Words: What Animals Think and Feel* by Carl Safina
- And—two memoirs:
 - *On the Move: A Life* by Oliver Sacks
 - *The Folded Clock: A Diary* by Heidi Julavits

Mirka Prazak

- *What is the What* by Dave Eggers
- *Dinner with Buddha* by Roland Merullo

Kate Purdie

- *Not the End of the World* by Kate Atkinson
- *MaddAddam Trilogy* by Margaret Atwood
- *NW* by Zadie Smith
- *1Q84* by Haruki Murakami

Jean Randich

- *Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates. It just won the National Book Award. Brief, searing, eye-opening.
- All four books of Elena Ferrante's Neapolitan Novels:
 - *My Brilliant Friend*
 - *The Story of a New Name*
 - *Those Who Leave and Those Who Stay*
 - *The Story of the Lost Child*

Ferrante tracks a fierce friendship of two imaginative girls, growing up in hardscrabble, post-war Naples through to today, and how they refuse to conform to docility, but struggle to find their freedom and power. Unforgettable page-turners.

Robert Ransick

- *Owning Our Future: The Emerging Ownership Revolution* by Marjorie Kelly
- *Undermining: A Wild Ride Through Land Use, Politics, and Art in the Changing West* by Lucy Lippard

Sue Rees

- *Sevенеves: A Novel* by Neal Stephenson
- *A Brief History of Seven Killings* by Marlon James
- *Six Drawing Lessons* by William Kentridge

Isabel Roche

- *Changing the Subject: Art and Attention in the Internet Age* by Sven Birkerts

Noelle Rouxel-Cubberly

- *Meursault, contre-enquête / The Meursault Investigation* by Kamel Daoud.
A retelling of Albert Camus's 1942 novel, *L'Etranger/The Stranger*

Kerry Ryer-Park

- *H is for Hawk* by Helen MacDonald

Susan Sgorbati

- *The Brothers Karamazov* by Fyodor Dostoevsky
- *Eyes of a Blue Dog* by Gabriel Garcia Marquez
- *The Street of Crocodiles* by Bruno Schulz
- *Bats Sing, Mice Giggle* by Karen Shanor and Jagmeet Kanwal
- *Ecology of Mind* by Gregory Bateson
- *Owen & Mzee: The True Story of a Remarkable Friendship* by Isabella Hatkoff, Craig Hatkoff, Paula Kahumbu
- *Krik? Krak!* by Edwidge Danticat

Stephen Shapiro

- *A Little Life: A Novel* by Hanya Yanagihara
- *The Other Paris* by Luc Sante
- *Gay Berlin: Birthplace of a Modern Identity* by Robert Beachy
- *Submission: A Novel* by Michel Houellebecq
- *Dynasty: The Rise and Fall of the House of Caesar* by Tom Holland

Allen Shawn

Three books by Dr. Irvin Yalom:

- *Every Day Gets A Little Closer: A Twice-Told Therapy*
- *Momma and the Meaning Of Life: Tale of Psychotherapy*
- *Creatures of A Day: And Other Tale of Psychotherapy*

I admit that these are “light” reading, in a way, but they are books that touch on extremely meaningful subjects. Yalom is a psychiatrist, now in his eighties, who writes about his experiences with patients, disguising their identities, but dealing in some depth with the life issues their situations raised. He writes extremely well (he has also written novels and is literary by nature), has a lot of wisdom, and has thought long and hard about such things as Love, Loss, and Mortality, making the best of the life one has, and adjusting to whatever reality people happen to be facing (for example, the reality that they didn't have a great childhood, or are dealing with serious illness). The first book is co-written with a patient, alternating his accounts of each session with the patient's own written accounts of

each session. (There is a long story behind how this dual writing project originated, which I won't go into.) It is a long slog, but worth it. The other books tell tales of being a therapist/psychiatrist as gripping stories. Yalom also reveals himself in them to a refreshing degree (enough so that he can become annoying) and teaches you what it is like to try to help people cope with their lives. While not on the level of an Oliver Sacks (or a Freud), these are books that deal with universal issues and are quite fascinating and fun to read.

Donald Sherefkin

- *Memory Wall: Stories* by Anthony Doerr
- *Something Rich and Strange: Selected Stories* by Ron Rash

Betsy Sherman

- *The Book of Famous Iowans: A Novel* by Doug Bauer
- *The Fox's Walk* by Annabel Davis-Goff

Mariko Silver

- *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?* by Beverly Daniel Tatum

Liz White

- *Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates

Mark Wunderlich

- *The Wake* by Paul Kingsnorth
- *Ted Hughes: The Unauthorized Life* by Jonathan Bate
- *Letters* by Orlando White
- *Ivory Vikings: The Mystery of the Most Famous Chessmen in the World and the Woman Who Made Them* by Nancy Marie Brown
- *Walking Home: A Poet's Journey* by Simon Armitage
- *My Struggle* by Karl Ove Knausgaard
- *Isak Dinesen: The Life of a Storyteller* by Judith Thurman