



Supplemental Summer Reading List

Below is a list of additional recommended summer reads that was compiled by the CRMS English and history faculty, academic dean, and head of school. We hope you'll kick your feet up and get lost in several of them, many of which have themes ranging from adventure to wellness, coming of age, and the American West. Several of these books contain graphic or explicit content that may be offensive or disturbing to some readers. If you are concerned, please thoroughly research the books in advance. Happy reading!

Angle of Repose by Wallace Stegner

In this classic of the American West, Wallace Stegner mines the 19th Century western imagination, drawing from historical inspiration to create beautiful and fully realized characters. Considering our location here at CRMS, nestled between two river valleys just over the Continental Divide from Leadville, one of the many western mountain settings of *Angle of Repose*, Stegner's novel seems an essential read. Susan Ward, Stegner's protagonist, relocates from the East Coast of the United States to the mountain west, following the demands of her husband's career as an engineer and surveyor of growing mine towns. The writing is gorgeous and riveting, worth savoring!

Animal Dreams by Barbara Kingsolver

When Codi Noline returns to her hometown of Grace, Arizona after many years away, she is forced to face a complex past and a brewing environmental catastrophe that is threatening her home. This novel showcases Kingsolver's unique narrative style while providing an entertaining account of the modern West and the challenges it faces.

The Baron in the Trees by Italo Calvino

When young Cosimo refuses to eat the snails that his noble family has cooked him for dinner, he climbs up a tree in protest and remains in the canopy of the forest for the rest of his life. Jumping from limb to limb across the Italian countryside, this novel reads like a fable that is actually a funny allegory of individuality, independence, and the pitfalls and benefits of society.

The Book Thief by Markus Zusak

This is the story of young Liesel Meminger, a nine-year-old German girl who is sent to live in Molching in 1939, following her younger brother's death and her mother's abandonment. One of Liesel's few possessions that she brings to her new home is a book that she stole from her brother's gravesite. She finds great comfort in this book, and it becomes something that helps build a strong relationship between her and her adoptive father as they read in the middle of the night to ease her nightmares. Throughout the story, Liesel steals more books and these continue to offer solace as she faces further challenges with the war escalating and air raids encroaching. Death is the unique narrator of this story, leaving readers wondering what will become of Liesel and those she has grown to love so dearly.

Ceremony by Leslie Marmon Silko

This story borrows Native American oral traditions to explore the plight of a Laguna Pueblo man struggling to come to terms with his time as a soldier and his place between White society and his native culture. This provocative and revealing tale takes the reader on a wild and unexpected ride that explores cultural traditions, survival, and the nature of man.

The House of Broken Angels by Luis Alberto Urrea

We had the pleasure of hearing the author speak on campus two years ago, and you could not help but leave that meeting wanting to pick this novel up if you hadn't done so already. It is a story of an aging patriarch and his connection to a wide variety of family members. Urrea is a very good storyteller and if you like some of his other work, then you will not be disappointed with this one.

I'll Give You the Sun by Jandy Nelson

Nelson's YA novel has a multifaceted plot that covers love stories, family struggles, death, and art. It is a fantastic coming-of-age tale that follows two teens through their realistic 21st Century lives. The story alone is engaging, but even more so as it jumps back and forth between its two sibling protagonists at different times in their lives. Noah and Jude are twins that, despite their incredibly different personalities, are inseparable. At thirteen, Noah is a shy, awkward, closeted gay boy, while Jude is confident, social, and in touch with her sexuality. Within three years, we learn of a series of events that have driven the two apart. They are now separately falling in love, trying to find meaning through their passions, and somehow forgiving themselves for tragic events of the past. Noah is heartbroken over losing his first love and Jude is trying her best to drive hers away. Each has abandoned his or her true joy- art for Noah and surfing for Jude. Eventually, the twins will piece together their story and come to better understand each other and the power of the roles that their family, mentors, and friends play in their lives.

Man's Search for Meaning by Viktor E. Frankl

This book is so thin that it is almost weightless when you hold it in your hands, but its portrayal of who survives and who perishes the WWII concentration camps is as deep and meaningful now as it was when he first wrote it. Frankl returns a few times to Nietzsche's, "He who has a Why to live for can bear almost any How" to explain the importance of having a purpose in life. Frankl sees in today the challenge of living in a "tensionless" society where an enormous increase in leisure hours has produced boredom. I love his urging that we "Live as if you were living already for a second time and as if you had acted the first time as wrongly as you are about to act now."

My Name Is Asher Lev by Chaim Potok

This is the story of a young Hasidic Jewish artist growing up in New York City during the 1950s. When he realizes that he has the talent to become a master painter, Asher is forced to choose between obeying the covenants of his religion and his community or exploring the expressive and indulgent world of art. This book has great descriptions of famous works in Western classical and modern art, and it provides an interesting dive into the Hasidic faith.

New and Selected Poems, Volume 1 by Mary Oliver

Upon her death, I sent out two of Mary Oliver's poems to our students because I believe she is worth their time and attention. As a starter, try this volume that was awarded the National Book Award.

One Hundred Years of Solitude by Gabriel Garcia Marquez

A literary classic - and regarded as one of South America's most acclaimed works of fiction - *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is famously regarded as "the first piece of literature since the Book of Genesis that should be required reading for the entire human race." Charting the brief and wild lives of the members of the Buendia family, this multi-generational story traces the history and trajectory of the development of a rural Colombian town set near the Caribbean coast. It is a tale that is breathtaking not only for its literary merit, but also for the sinuous and impossibly spontaneous lives of its characters.

Opened Ground: Selected Poems 1966-1996 by Seamus Heaney

Heaney burst onto the international scene with his translation of *Beowulf* (which I highly recommend), but even by then he was an incredibly accomplished poet.

The Orphan Master's Son by Adam Johnson

This Pulitzer Prize winner is by far one of my favorite reads over the last few months. Johnson's tale of a young man navigating his way through North Korea is superbly told. As one reviewer states, "Johnson's book is an audacious act of imagination: an intimate narrative about one of the most closed nations on Earth." Written in 2012, it is perhaps because of our renewed interest in North Korea that made this seem so immediately relevant and interesting.

Pachinko by Min Jin Lee

Pachinko: a term to describe a type of mechanical game from Japan, used as both a recreational arcade game and much more frequently as a gambling device, filling a Japanese gambling niche comparable to that of the slot machine in Western gaming. *Pachinko* the novel is equally gripping - a story set in Twentieth Century East Asia, charting the life and descendents of a south Korean hostel worker who moves to Japan just before World War II. Just as the bright lights and mesmerizing arc of a pinball soar through a pachinko arcade, so too do the lives and desires of the characters in this novel.

The Patch by John McPhee

Given to me by Diane Hackl, our Active Program Director (whose father is mentioned in the first half of the book), this book of relatively short stories, passages, and vignettes doesn't disappoint. McPhee is one of the best writers out there - and his prose is worth our time. We highly recommend anything written by McPhee.

Red Notice: A True Story of High Finance, Murder, and One Man's Fight for Justice by Bill Browder
A “red notice” is essentially an international arrest warrant issued by Interpol. A friend shared this book with me, and it did not disappoint. Given the political climate between the United States and Russia, this memoir provides insights into the Putin regime that a reader of the news is probably unaware of and may view as unsettling. This book reads like a thriller which makes its truths all the more troubling. Highly recommended.

Revolution by Jennifer Donnelly

This YA novel beautifully blends a variety of genres into one through its two main protagonists living over two centuries apart. Andi Alpers is an American teen living in Brooklyn, struggling through the loss of her younger brother and trying to scrape by at private school as she deals with this grief and all of its aftermath. Alexandrine Paradis lives in Paris during the French Revolution and becomes a caretaker for the sweet young prince, Louis-Charles. The two obviously never meet each other, but their lives seem to overlap as Andi, doing music research for her thesis and visiting Paris with her father, discovers Alex's diary. Here, the story jumps back and forth in time, blending historical and realistic fiction. Andi realizes that she has more in common with Alex than she ever could have imagined, as the two struggle with feelings of love, loss, and self-pity, and try to find meaning in all of this. Readers will be drawn into Alexandrine's story as they learn details of the French Revolution, and relate to Andi's struggles, her sarcasm, and the comfort that she finds in unexpected places and people.

Say Nothing: A True Story of Murder and Memory in Northern Ireland by Patrick Radden Keefe

This is a compelling nonfiction exploration of the violence of Northern Ireland and its long term psychological and emotional effects on both its victims and its perpetrators. Keefe's writing is an epic blend of strong investigative journalism and the cliff-hanging storytelling of a suspense novel.

Ship Breaker by Paolo Bacigalupi

This is an adventure tale that continues in CRMS alumnus Paolo's tradition of using science fiction to explore current themes and considerations in today's culture and test them in a distant future. His work has me more interested in science fiction than I ever was before, and this book made it deep into the National Book Award process being selected as a “Finalist.”

Sing, Unburied, Sing by Jesmyn Ward

The 2017 National Book Award winner, *Sing, Unburied, Sing*, is set in the modern, rural, fictional town of Bois Sauvage, Mississippi. A literary descendent of both Toni Morrison and William Faulkner, this story acts as a road trip narrative through the Deep South - chronicling the interactions between a drug-abusing mother, her recently incarcerated boyfriend, their biracial son Jojo, and a family ghost that haunts the trajectory of the story. It is both harsh and intimate, scaffolded by complex prose that reads as a page turner.

Tribe: On Homecoming and Belonging by Sebastian Junger

Hands down this is one of the most powerful books that I have recently read. Junger's relatively short book provides insights into the importance of community and belonging, and it has become one of my most gifted books. We don't want to say too much more other than that this book will not disappoint.

The Underground Railroad by Colson Whitehead

Colson Whitehead's recent New York Times bestseller examines the atrocities committed against African Americans in the name of slavery and oppression. Whitehead, somewhat surrealistically, incorporates Jim Crow Era cruelties (including a version of the Tuskegee Experiment) into his antebellum story of a runaway slave. The cruelties are distressing; this is not a light-hearted read and will require thoughtful consideration of the legacy of American racial injustice.

Why We Sleep: Unlocking the Power of Sleep and Dreams by Matthew Walker, PhD

This book goes above and beyond any previous knowledge I had on sleep. I found it to be thoroughly enjoyable, and I don't know of a more informative, more accessible book on this subject-- my only suggestion is to make sure there is someone nearby with whom you can share the information, because you are going to want to tell someone about all you have learned. The short version: sleep is a key ingredient -- maybe *the* key ingredient -- to living a healthy life.

Xenogenesis series by Octavia E. Butler

Dawn, *Adulthood Rites*, and *Imago* are available separately or collected in one volume. These novels tell the story of the human survivors of an apocalyptic war as they are joined and genetically altered by extraterrestrials who have an affinity for strangers. This series explores how gender identity and power affect individual and collective relationships.