

Durham Tech Faculty & Staff's Best Summer Reads of 2017

Book Title	Author	Blurb	Call Number
<i>A Gentleman in Moscow</i>	Amor Towles	Delightful.	Available through ILL
<i>Rules of Civility</i>	Amor Towles	If there was such a thing as "literary beach read," this book would be a prime example. Fun and quick, but not so indulgent that you would hide it from your friends. Plus, 1930s New York is an awesome backdrop.	Available through ILL
<i>The Hate U Give</i>	Angie Thomas	Deals with a currently relevant topic in an honest and direct way. I especially liked how the author used different characters to address different racial stereotypes, turn some of them on their head, but also reveal some uncomfortable truths.	PZ 7.1 .T448 Hat 2017 (Main)
<i>Commonwealth</i>	Ann Patchett	The latest from Ann Patchett has me riveted	PS 3566 .A7756 C66 2016 (Main)
<i>The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down: A Hmong Child, Her American Doctors, and the Collision of Two Cultures</i>	Anne Fadiman	It is also a non-fiction, about the culture clash between Hmong refugees and American doctors, as they try to save the life of a little Hmong girl. Provides some interesting background on the Vietnam war and the Hmong people.	RA 418.5.T73 F33 1997 (Main)
<i>Flight Behavior</i>	Barbara Kingsolver		PS 3561 .I496 F55 2013 (Main)
<i>A Closed and Common Orbit</i>	Becky Chambers	Excellent character-driven science fiction novel. The world building and characters are so well fleshed out that it feels like a real world. This is the second in a series but it's not necessary to read the first book to understand this one (even though it is also very good).	Available through ILL
<i>The Honors Class: Hilbert's Problems and their Solvers</i>	Ben Yandell	A poet and former undergraduate math major describes the later history of the problems David Hilbert posed in his famous 1900 Paris address to the International Congress of Mathematicians. For many problems, enough information is provided so that a mathematically mature reader can get a feel for the chase; but the neophyte can easily skip such the mathematical details and enjoy the notable wealth of biographical anecdotes about various great 20th century mathematicians.	Available through OCLC ILL
<i>Tell the Wolves I'm Home</i>	Carol Rifka Brunt	An interesting coming-of-age story about a teenager who loses her favorite uncle to AIDS in the 80s. Also a story about figuring out sibling relationships as you grow up (on several levels).	PS 3602 .R867 T45 2013 (Main)
<i>Reckless: My Life As a Pretender</i>	Chrissy Hynde	Don't be fooled: this is not the story of the rock band The Pretenders. This is Chrissy's story of sex, drugs, and rock n' roll, and how she miraculously came out on the other side with the rock n' roll intact. The story ends shortly after the Pretenders' second record, Pretenders II.	Available through ILL

<i>The Underground Railroad</i>	Colson Whitehead	A novel that has gotten tons of critical praise and literary awards over the last year...and deserves all the hype! This should be required reading in American Literature classes...and probably history classes too. Brilliant!	PS 3573 .H4768 U53 2016 (Main)
<i>Dorothy Must Die (series)</i>	Danielle Page	The author, Danielle Page, puts big twists on things we know and love about Oz, but uses a lot of characters and elements from the original books. [Read alongside the original Oz series]	Available through ILL
<i>The Thirteenth Tale</i>	Diane Setterfield		PS 3619 .E86 T48 2006 (Main & OCC)
<i>Death at La Fenice (Commissario Brunetti Series)</i>	Donna Leon	[Mystery series set in Venice.] I love books with a strong ambiance, and this series definitely has that.	Available through OCLC ILL
<i>My Favorite Thing is Monsters</i>	Emil Ferris	Breathtakingly awesome illustrations, engaging multi-layered story that takes place both in WW2-era Germany (the background of a murder that occurs) and 1960s Chicago (the coming-of-age portion). Horrible that the second one doesn't come out until February 2018.	PN 6727 .F4646 M9 2017 (OCC; New Book shelf)
<i>Station Eleven</i>	Emily St. John Mandel		PR 9199.4 .S727 S73 2015 (Main & OCC)
<i>Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine</i>	Gail Honeyman	Such a great read.	Available through ILL
<i>Sabriel</i>	Garth Nix	I listened to the audio book which was narrated by Tim Curry. His voice was perfect for the descriptions of the creepy necromancer and dead minions.	PZ 7 .N647 Sab 1995 (OCC)
<i>Lincoln in the Bardo</i>	George Saunders	This novel is truly unique, unsettling, and surprisingly hilarious. I read the book but I hear the audio book is amazing, features 166 different voices.	Available through ILL
<i>Kafka Goes to the Movies</i>	Hanns Zischler, translated by Susan Collins	A German actor/director investigates Franz Kafka's experience of early cinema. Well-illustrated with interesting historical detail	Available through ILL
<i>Brown Girl Dreaming</i>	Jacqueline Woodson	It brought me to tears after just a few pages because I was and am a brown girl dreaming. Her words painted pictures that reminded me of my own experiences.	PS 3573 .O64524 Z46 2014 (Main, Special Collection)
<i>Cross the Line</i>	James Patterson	The Alex Cross series is my second favorite book series (Hannibal Lecter's is #1), and the books never disappoint. And, this one ended with a pretty glorious surprise.	Available through ILL
<i>The Baseball Codes: Beanballs, Sign Stealing, and Bench-Clearing Brawls: The Unwritten Rules of America's Pastime</i>	Jason Turbow and Michael Duca		Available through ILL
<i>The Serpent King</i>	Jeff Zentner	Since I am from TN and these books were located in TN, the experiences the characters had intrigued me.	Available through ILL
<i>The Fire This Time: A New Generation Speaks about Race</i>	Jessamyn Ward, editor	This power and moving collection of voices by African American writers is essential reading. These essays, memoirs, and poems about race in our country's history, the present, and insights about the future are thoughtful and important.	E 185.615 .F526 2016 (Main)

<i>The Women in the Castle</i>	Jessica Shattuck	This is a page turner and a surprising fictional account of German women struggling in post war Germany. Historical perspective is well-researched and the characters are quite intriguing.	Available through ILL
<i>The Coming Jobs War</i>	Jim Clifton	I'd say that The Coming Jobs War and the Rise of the Robots were both interesting looks at how technology is likely to impact jobs in the future, and thus how community colleges may need to adapt.	Available through ILL
<i>Camino Island</i>	John Grisham	A different slant for him. (See the library blog post about this book!)	PS 3557 .R5355 C36 2017 (Main, New Books shelf)
<i>Design Like You Give a Damn: Building Change from the Ground Up</i>	Kate Stohr	[I'm interested in] helping to design and build small houses so that everyone can have a sense of place	Available through ILL
<i>The Marvelous Land of Oz</i>	L. Frank Baum	This is the book where Ozma is introduced...oh, and there's an all-girl Army of Revolt.	Available through ILL
<i>Gone Tomorrow (Jack Reacher)</i>	Lee Child	As a warning, in Gone Tomorrow, there is one part in this book about torture that could make you squeamish. As a whole, I could not put the book down. It is not the normal detective story, but the mystery is why a person committed suicide at the very beginning of the book. If this second book is as good as the first, I may try to read the rest of them in order, but don't worry, you don't need to read them in order.	Available through OCLC ILL
<i>The Tea Girl of Hummingbird Lane</i>	Lisa See	I read all of her other books and enjoy her writing. Become more of a tea expert too.	PS 3569 .E3334 T43 2017 (Main, New Books shelf)
<i>Outliers: The Story of Success</i>	Malcolm Gladwell		BF 637 .S8 G533 2008 (Main & OCC)
<i>The Handmaid's Tale</i>	Margaret Atwood	Beyond the obvious current connection (it's the most horrifying, dystopian, and unfortunately at times believable, science fiction television show on), I have two points of personal history that seem to collide with the telling of this story. I spent three years in "occupied" Berlin (1977 – 1980) growing up, so I was curious how Atwood's setting (she wrote the book in Berlin in 1984) influenced her work. I remember what East Berlin in 1980 looked like. Plus, I remember them filming the movie version at Duke Chapel when I had first moved to Durham. So, somehow the book was calling to me to be read. It's terrifying, by the way, and profoundly sad. I think men (especially) should be required to read this book. Check out : https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/10/books/review/margaret-atwood-handmaids-tale-age-of-trump.html	PR 9199.3 .A8 H3 1998 (Main & OCC)
<i>Rise of the Robots: Technology and the Threat of a Jobless Future</i>	Martin Ford	I'd say that The Coming Jobs War and the Rise of the Robots were both interesting looks at how technology is likely to impact jobs in the future, and thus how community colleges may need to adapt.	Available through ILL
<i>Girls Made of Snow and Glass</i>	Melissa Bashardoust	A retelling of Snow White. It lagged in the middle just a bit, and was of course predictable (as fairy tale retellings tend to be) but all in all a satisfying take on the classic tale.	Available through OCLC ILL

<i>If I was your Girl</i>	Meredith Russo	Since I am from TN and these books were located in TN, the experiences the characters had intrigued me.	Available through ILL
<i>Dragon Teeth</i>	Michael Crichton	Digging for dinosaur bones in the wild West - published after he died. Jurassic Park would follow from this dinosaur theme.	Available through ILL
<i>Indefensible: The Missing Truth about Steven Avery, Teresa Halbach, and Making a Murderer</i>	Michael Griesbach	Like many, I was kinda obsessed with Making a Murderer. This book fills in a lot of blanks and has me reconsidering what I thought I knew to be true.	Available through OCLC ILL
<i>The Operators: The Wild and Terrifying Inside Story of America's War in Afghanistan</i>	Michael Hasting		Available through ILL
<i>The Esther Anointing: Becoming a Woman of Prayer, Courage, and Influence</i>	Michelle McClain-Walters	A spiritual book that examines the life of Esther as it aims to assist Women of God in their purpose and path in life.	
<i>The Fifth Season</i>	N. K. Jemisin	In a genre like epic fantasy, it's got to be difficult to come up with a world (and characters and narrative) that avoids following the well-traveled roads of J.R.R. Tolkien, George R.R. Martin, and all the other RR's that have come before. This novel is wildly, originally successful!	PS 3610 .E46 F54 2015 (OCC)
<i>Seveneves</i>	Neal Stephenson	Both entertaining and erudite, it touches on astrophysics, sociology, genetics, and politics, and is a gripping struggle-for-survival tale to boot.	Available through ILL
<i>The Lambretta Bible</i>	Peter Davies	I have a great interest in restoring and servicing classic motor scooters	
<i>Sam Phillips: The Man Who Invented Rock 'n' Roll</i>	Peter Guralnick	Visionary Sam Phillips, the founder of Sun Records, achieved his dream through hard work and determination. While far from a perfect person, Phillips is portrayed as someone to admire for his creativity and guts in the face of many obstacles. Sun Records of Memphis, as Guralick declares, truly "revolutionized the world!" Extremely well-written and well-researched book!!! Amazing. If you love rock music and its history, read this!! One of my favorite books of all time!!!	Available through ILL
<i>Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?</i>	Phillip Dick	Blade Runner is one of my favorite movies, and there's a sequel coming out this fall. So, I felt I needed to read the source material, which is this novelette, and is, of course, nothing much like the movie. However, my connection to the book is that I wrote a graduate paper on the term "empathy" and this novel asks the question if AI (robots) could develop empathy. Fascinating, but really an odd read. BTW, it's a status symbol to own an animal in this future, even if the animal is a robot. Thus, the protagonist owns a robot sheep, but wants to move up in life (and demonstrate his great empathy) by affording to own a real animal by killing robots that might be able to be empathic. Irony, anyone?	Available through ILL

<i>Invisible Man</i>	Ralph Ellison		PS 3555 .L625 I5 (Main, Northern Durham, OCC)
<i>The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks</i>	Rebecca Skloot	I liked it because the author wove together the personal history of Henrietta and her family and the history of her famous HeLa cells and the scientists who use them. It was equal parts engaging human interest story and accessible explanation of some of the most important medical discoveries of the last 100 years. Highly recommend. They just made it into a movie, starring Oprah.	RC 265.6 .L24 S55 2010 (Durham & OCC)
<i>In Farleigh Field</i>	Rhys Bowen	Newly released WW2 cozy mystery	Available through ILL
<i>The New Urban Crisis: How Our Cities Are Increasing Inequality, Deepening Segregation, and Failing the Middle Class and What We Can Do About It</i>	Richard Florida		Available through OCLC ILL
<i>Hominids & Humans (2 books in the Neanderthal Parallax series)</i>	Robert J. Sawyer	They are science fiction novels based around the idea that there is a parallel Earth where Neanderthals won out, rather than modern humans, some 10,000+ years ago, and through quantum technology, people begin being able to travel between the two Earths. So, it's a bit of science fiction, mixed with science, with a hint of fish-out-of-water discovery. A nice blend 😊	Available through OCLC ILL
<i>The Unbeatable Squirrel Girl</i>	Ryan North (Author), Erica Henderson (Illustrator)	My kids and I just started reading it and are cracking up at all of the dry humor.	Available through ILL
<i>The Gene: An Intimate History</i>	Siddhartha Mukherjee	It is EXCELLENT. The author does a superb job of re-telling the stories of the most significant developments in biology (that we all learned about in high school) in an engaging, narrative way, and really humanizes the science. He makes explicit the connections that science has to history, to world events, to cultural movements, and even examines what implications it can have on our own live. This ought to be required reading. Not many authors can make genetics this accessible, accurate, and engaging.	RB 155 .M85 2016 (Main)
<i>The Roots of My Obsession: Thirty Great Gardeners Reveal Why they Garden</i>	Thomas Cooper, editor	I really enjoyed this fun book of short essays by gardeners around the world. I definitely relate well to plant enthusiasts and folks who live to dig in the dirt!	Available through ILL
<i>The Worst Hard Time: The Untold Story of Those Who Survived the Great American Dust Bowl</i>	Timothy Egan	I had heard the author interviewed some years ago, and it was on my "wish list" because my parents lived through that era. They were in eastern Oklahoma, near the regions affected by the dust storms, but I do not recall them mentioning these events. (They did tell me about the Depression and the emigration from that region to California.) Recently my daughter was studying the dust bowl in an environmental science class, and this spurred me to find the book at the Durham Tech Library.	F 595 .E38 2006 (Main)

<i>Life on Mars: Poems</i>	Tracy K. Smith (current US Poet Laureate)	Check out the upcoming Poetry Hour for Tracy K. Smith hosted by Shaunecey Johnson and Lea Bingham on Tues., September 19 from 3pm – 4pm in the Phillips Building, room 3-125	PS 3619 .M5955 L54 2011 (Main)
<i>Born A Crime: Stories from a South African Childhood</i>	Trevor Noah	Originally I picked this up because I knew him to be funny and witty, but I loved it for its wisdom and the solemnity of his personal story and his insights into race and South Africa.	PN 2287 .N557 A3 2016 (Main)
<i>Love and Venom</i>	W.P. Bossing	This may not be the best Young Adult fantasy novel I've ever read (that would probably be Maggie Stiefvater's "Scorpio Races"), but it's the best one I've written...so far. It just came out this summer on Amazon and after reading it again...not too bad!	Not available at the library, but you can find it here: https://www.amazon.com/Love-Venom-Death-Girl-Book-ebook/dp/B071J7623C/
<i>Jungle of Stone: The True Story of Two Men, Their Extraordinary Journey, and the Discovery of the Lost Civilization of the Maya</i>	William Carlsen	I traveled to Mexico this summer to see Mayan ruins, and this book provided me a lot of context regarding not just the times of the Mayans, but also the times during which the ruins were discovered. It'll leave you wondering how they did all of this without the wheel! And who knew that the Mayan ruins would challenge the story of Creation?	Available through ILL
<i>Homegoing</i>	Yaa Gyasi	I thoroughly enjoyed this novel as it began in Ghana, West Africa and provided a vibrant retelling of Ghanaian history and culture and the impact the Transatlantic slave trade had on the people and their descendants. It's fictional but infused with actual historical elements.	PS 3607 .Y37 H66 2016 (Main)