

2021 Community Summer Reads for Faculty

Title	Author	Description
Between The World and Me	Coates, Ta-Nehisi	<p>In a profound work that pivots from the biggest questions about American history and ideals to the most intimate concerns of a father for his son, Ta-Nehisi Coates offers a powerful new framework for understanding our nation’s history and current crisis. Americans have built an empire on the idea of “race,” a falsehood that damages us all but falls most heavily on the bodies of black women and men—bodies exploited through slavery and segregation, and, today, threatened, locked up, and murdered out of all proportion. What is it like to inhabit a black body and find a way to live within it? And how can we all honestly reckon with this fraught history and free ourselves from its burden?</p> <p><i>Between the World and Me</i> is Ta-Nehisi Coates’s attempt to answer these questions in a letter to his adolescent son. Coates shares with his son—and readers—the story of his awakening to the truth about his place in the world through a series of revelatory experiences, from Howard University to Civil War battlefields, from the South Side of Chicago to Paris, from his childhood home to the living rooms of mothers whose children’s lives were taken as American plunder. Beautifully woven from personal narrative, reimagined history, and fresh, emotionally charged reportage, <i>Between the World and Me</i> clearly illuminates the past, bravely confronts our present, and offers a transcendent vision for a way forward.</p>
The BreakBeat Poets: New American Poetry in the Age of Hip-Hop	Coval, Kevin	<p>Hip-Hop is the largest youth culture in the history of the planet rock. This is the first poetry anthology by and for the Hip-Hop generation.</p> <p>It has produced generations of artists who have revolutionized their genre(s) by applying the aesthetic innovations of the culture. The BreakBeat Poets features 78 poets, born somewhere between 1961-1999, All-City and Coast-to-Coast, who are creating the next and now movement(s) in American letters.</p>

		<p>The BreakBeat Poets is for people who love Hip-Hop, for fans of the culture, for people who've never read a poem, for people who thought poems were only something done by dead white dudes who got lost in a forest, and for poetry heads. This anthology is meant to expand the idea of who a poet is and what a poem is for.</p>
<p>Freedom Is a Constant Struggle: Ferguson, Palestine, and the Foundations of a Movement</p>	<p>Davis, Angela</p>	<p>In these newly collected essays, interviews, and speeches, world-renowned activist and scholar Angela Y. Davis illuminates the connections between struggles against state violence and oppression throughout history and around the world.</p> <p>Reflecting on the importance of black feminism, intersectionality, and prison abolitionism for today's struggles, Davis discusses the legacies of previous liberation struggles, from the Black Freedom Movement to the South African anti-Apartheid movement. She highlights connections and analyzes today's struggles against state terror, from Ferguson to Palestine.</p> <p>Facing a world of outrageous injustice, Davis challenges us to imagine and build the movement for human liberation. And in doing so, she reminds us that "Freedom is a constant struggle."</p>
<p>White Fragility: Why It's So Hard For White People To Talk About Racism</p>	<p>DiAngelo, Robin</p>	<p>In this "vital, necessary, and beautiful book" (Michael Eric Dyson), antiracist educator Robin DiAngelo deftly illuminates the phenomenon of white fragility and "allows us to understand racism as a practice not restricted to 'bad people' (Claudia Rankine). Referring to the defensive moves that white people make when challenged racially, white fragility is characterized by emotions such as anger, fear, and guilt, and by behaviors including argumentation and silence. These behaviors, in turn, function to reinstate white racial equilibrium and prevent any meaningful cross-racial dialogue. In this in-depth exploration, DiAngelo examines how white fragility develops, how it protects racial inequality, and what we can do to engage more constructively.</p>
<p>Invisible Man</p>	<p>Ellison, Ralph</p>	<p>A first novel by an unknown writer, it remained on the bestseller list for sixteen weeks, won the National Book Award for fiction, and established Ralph Ellison as one of the key writers of the century. The nameless narrator of the novel describes growing up in a black community in the South, attending a Negro college from which he is expelled, moving to New York and becoming the chief spokesman of the Harlem branch of "the Brotherhood", and retreating amid violence and confusion to the basement lair of the Invisible Man he imagines</p>

		himself to be. The book is a passionate and witty tour de force of style, strongly influenced by T.S. Eliot's <i>The Waste Land</i> , Joyce, and Dostoevsky.
The Game is Not a Game: The Power, Protest and Politics of American Sports	Jackson, Robert Scoop	Part play-by-play, part op-ed, <i>The Game Is Not a Game</i> is an illuminating and unflinching examination of the good and evil in the sports industry. Liberating and provocative, with sharp wit and generous humor, Jackson's essays explore the role that sports plays in American society and the hypocritical standards by which the athletes are often judged. <i>The Game Is Not a Game</i> is distinctly intended to challenge accepted ideology and to push the boundaries of mainstream sports media beyond the comfort zone. Chapters expose "Our Miseducation of LeBron James," "#ThemToo: The UnRespected Worth of the Woman Athlete," the duplicity of the NFL in its treatment of Colin Kaepernick and the anthem protests, the cultural bias of analytics, and the power of social activism versus the power and politics of professional sports ownership—all from the sharp, savvy, and self-critical perspective of one of the leading voices for social justice in sports media.
How Long 'Til Black Future Month	Jemisin, N.K.	Spirits haunt the flooded streets of New Orleans in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. In a parallel universe, a utopian society watches our world, trying to learn from our mistakes. A black mother in the Jim Crow South must save her daughter from a fey offering impossible promises. And in the Hugo award-nominated short story "The City Born Great," a young street kid fights to give birth to an old metropolis's soul.
How To Be An Antiracist	Kendi, Ibram X.	Antiracism is a transformative concept that reorients and reenergizes the conversation about racism—and, even more fundamentally, points us toward liberating new ways of thinking about ourselves and each other. At its core, racism is a powerful system that creates false hierarchies of human value; its warped logic extends beyond race, from the way we regard people of different ethnicities or skin colors to the way we treat people of different sexes, gender identities, and body types. Racism intersects with class and culture and geography and even changes the way we see and value ourselves. In <i>How to Be an Antiracist</i> , Kendi takes readers through a widening circle of antiracist ideas—from the most basic concepts to visionary possibilities—that will help readers see all forms of racism clearly, understand their poisonous consequences, and work to oppose them in our systems and in ourselves.

		Kendi weaves an electrifying combination of ethics, history, law, and science with his own personal story of awakening to antiracism. This is an essential work for anyone who wants to go beyond the awareness of racism to the next step: contributing to the formation of a just and equitable society.
Best Seat in the House	Lee, Spike	Best Seat in the House , Spike Lee's evocative and compelling basketball memoir, interweaves several journeys over a course of thirty years. The first is professional basketball's metamorphosis from a fringe sport to the big-money spectacle it is today, filled with outrageously inflated salaries and egos. The other journey is that of Shelton Jackson Lee himself, who has gone from a skinny kid playing ball on the streets of Brooklyn, sneaking into Madison Square Garden to watch his beloved Knicks, to a student at Morehouse College and NYU film school, to a world-renowned film director and hoops fan.
The Portable Harlem Renaissance Reader	Lewis, David Levering	Gathering a representative sampling of the New Negro Movement's most important figures, and providing substantial introductory essays, headnotes, and brief biographical notes, Lewis' volume—organized chronologically—includes the poetry and prose of Sterling Brown, Countee Cullen, W. E. B. Du Bois, Zora Neale Hurston, James Weldon Johnson, and others.
A Guide For White Women Who Teach Black Boys	Michael, Ali	Schools that routinely fail Black boys are not extraordinary. In fact, they are all too ordinary. If we are to succeed in positively shifting outcomes for Black boys and young men, we must first change the way school is "done." That's where the eight in ten teachers who are White women fit in . . . and this urgently needed resource is written specifically for them as a way to help them understand, respect and connect with <i>all</i> of their students.
Devil In A Blue Dress	Mosley, Walter	Set in the late 1940s, in the African-American community of Watts, Los Angeles, <i>Devil in a Blue Dress</i> follows Easy Rawlins, a black war veteran just fired from his job at a defense plant. Easy is drinking in a friend's bar, wondering how he'll meet his mortgage, when a white man in a linen suit walks in, offering good money if Easy will simply locate Miss Daphne Monet, a blonde beauty known to frequent black jazz clubs.
Born a Crime: Stories From a South African Childhood	Noah, Trevor	<i>Born a Crime</i> is the story of a mischievous young boy who grows into a restless young man as he struggles to find himself in a world where he was never

		<p>supposed to exist. It is also the story of that young man's relationship with his fearless, rebellious, and fervently religious mother—his teammate, a woman determined to save her son from the cycle of poverty, violence, and abuse that would ultimately threaten her own life.</p>
So You Want To Talk About Race	Oluo, Ijeoma	<p>Widespread reporting on aspects of white supremacy--from police brutality to the mass incarceration of Black Americans--has put a media spotlight on racism in our society. Still, it is a difficult subject to talk about. How do you tell your roommate her jokes are racist? Why did your sister-in-law take umbrage when you asked to touch her hair--and how do you make it right? How do you explain white privilege to your white, privileged friend?</p> <p>In <i>So You Want to Talk About Race</i>, Ijeoma Oluo guides readers of all races through subjects ranging from intersectionality and affirmative action to "model minorities" in an attempt to make the seemingly impossible possible: honest conversations about race and racism, and how they infect almost every aspect of American life.</p>
The History of White People	Painter, Nell Irvin	<p>Telling perhaps the most important forgotten story in American history, eminent historian Nell Irvin Painter guides us through more than two thousand years of Western civilization, illuminating not only the invention of race but also the frequent praise of "whiteness" for economic, scientific, and political ends. A story filled with towering historical figures, <i>The History of White People</i> closes a huge gap in literature that has long focused on the non-white and forcefully reminds us that the concept of "race" is an all-too-human invention whose meaning, importance, and reality have changed as it has been driven by a long and rich history of events. 70 black-and-white illustrations</p>
Lovecraft Country	Ruff, Matt	<p>The critically acclaimed cult novelist makes visceral the terrors of life in Jim Crow America and its lingering effects in this brilliant and wondrous work of the imagination that melds historical fiction, pulp noir, and Lovecraftian horror and fantasy.</p> <p>Chicago, 1954. When his father Montrose goes missing, 22-year-old Army</p>

		<p>veteran Atticus Turner embarks on a road trip to New England to find him, accompanied by his Uncle George—publisher of <i>The Safe Negro Travel Guide</i>—and his childhood friend Letitia. On their journey to the manor of Mr. Braithwhite—heir to the estate that owned one of Atticus’s ancestors—they encounter both mundane terrors of white America and malevolent spirits that seem straight out of the weird tales George devours.</p> <p>At the manor, Atticus discovers his father in chains, held prisoner by a secret cabal named the Order of the Ancient Dawn—led by Samuel Braithwhite and his son Caleb—which has gathered to orchestrate a ritual that shockingly centers on Atticus. And his one hope of salvation may be the seed of his—and the whole Turner clan’s—destruction.</p> <p>A chimerical blend of magic, power, hope, and freedom that stretches across time, touching diverse members of two black families, <i>Lovecraft Country</i> is a devastating kaleidoscopic portrait of racism—the terrifying specter that continues to haunt us today.</p>
Assata	Shakur, Assata	<p>On May 2, 1973, Black Panther Assata Shakur (aka JoAnne Chesimard) lay in a hospital, close to death, handcuffed to her bed, while local, state, and federal police attempted to question her about the shootout on the New Jersey Turnpike that had claimed the life of a white state trooper. Long a target of J. Edgar Hoover's campaign to defame, infiltrate, and criminalize Black nationalist organizations and their leaders, Shakur was incarcerated for four years prior to her conviction on flimsy evidence in 1977 as an accomplice to murder.</p> <p>This intensely personal and political autobiography belies the fearsome image of JoAnne Chesimard long projected by the media and the state. With wit and candor, Assata Shakur recounts the experiences that led her to a life of activism and portrays the strengths, weaknesses, and eventual demise of Black and White revolutionary groups at the hand of government officials. The result is a signal contribution to the literature about growing up Black in America that has already taken its place alongside <i>The Autobiography of Malcolm X</i> and the works of Maya Angelou.</p> <p>Two years after her conviction, Assata Shakur escaped from prison. She was</p>

		given political asylum by Cuba, where she now resides.
Just Mercy	Stevenson, Bryan	<p>Bryan Stevenson was a young lawyer when he founded the Equal Justice Initiative, a legal practice dedicated to defending those most desperate and in need: the poor, the wrongly condemned, and women and children trapped in the farthest reaches of our criminal justice system. One of his first cases was that of Walter McMillian, a young man who was sentenced to die for a notorious murder he insisted he didn't commit. The case drew Bryan into a tangle of conspiracy, political machination, and legal brinkmanship—and transformed his understanding of mercy and justice forever.</p> <p><i>Just Mercy</i> is at once an unforgettable account of an idealistic, gifted young lawyer's coming of age, a moving window into the lives of those he has defended, and an inspiring argument for compassion in the pursuit of true justice.</p>
Why Are All The Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?	Tatum, Beverly Daniel	<p>Walk into any racially mixed high school and you will see Black, White, and Latino youth clustered in their own groups. Is this self-segregation a problem to address or a coping strategy? Beverly Daniel Tatum, a renowned authority on the psychology of racism, argues that straight talk about our racial identities is essential if we are serious about enabling communication across racial and ethnic divides. These topics have only become more urgent as the national conversation about race is increasingly acrimonious. This fully revised edition is essential reading for anyone seeking to understand the dynamics of race in America.</p>
From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation	Taylor, Keeanga-Yamahtta	<p>The eruption of mass protests in the wake of the police murders of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri and Eric Garner in New York City have challenged the impunity with which officers of the law carry out violence against Black people and punctured the illusion of a postracial America. The Black Lives Matter movement has awakened a new generation of activists.</p> <p>In this stirring and insightful analysis, activist and scholar Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor surveys the historical and contemporary ravages of racism and persistence of structural inequality such as mass incarceration and Black unemployment. In this</p>

		context, she argues that this new struggle against police violence holds the potential to reignite a broader push for Black liberation.
On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous	Vuong, Ocean	<i>On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous</i> is a letter from a son to a mother who cannot read. Written when the speaker, Little Dog, is in his late twenties, the letter unearths a family's history that began before he was born — a history whose epicenter is rooted in Vietnam — and serves as a doorway into parts of his life his mother has never known, all of it leading to an unforgettable revelation. At once a witness to the fraught yet undeniable love between a single mother and her son, it is also a brutally honest exploration of race, class, and masculinity. Asking questions central to our American moment, immersed as we are in addiction, violence, and trauma, but undergirded by compassion and tenderness, <i>On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous</i> is as much about the power of telling one's own story as it is about the obliterating silence of not being heard.
The Underground Railroad	Whitehead, Colson	Cora is a young slave on a cotton plantation in Georgia. An outcast even among her fellow Africans, she is on the cusp of womanhood—where greater pain awaits. And so when Caesar, a slave who has recently arrived from Virginia, urges her to join him on the Underground Railroad, she seizes the opportunity and escapes with him. In Colson Whitehead's ingenious conception, the Underground Railroad is no mere metaphor: engineers and conductors operate a secret network of actual tracks and tunnels beneath the Southern soil. Cora embarks on a harrowing flight from one state to the next, encountering, like Gulliver, strange yet familiar iterations of her own world at each stop. As Whitehead brilliantly re-creates the terrors of the antebellum era, he weaves in the saga of our nation, from the brutal abduction of Africans to the unfulfilled promises of the present day. <i>The Underground Railroad</i> is both the gripping tale of one woman's will to escape the horrors of bondage—and a powerful meditation on the history we all share.