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Featured Bookshelf: 2019 Staff Favorite Reads

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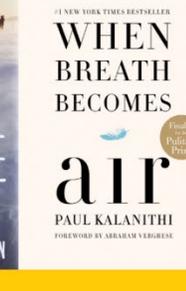
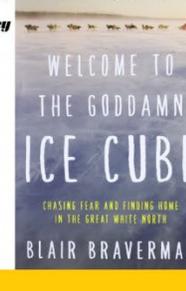
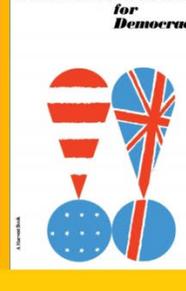
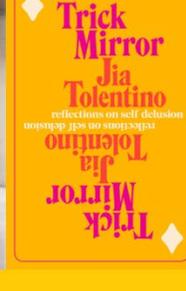
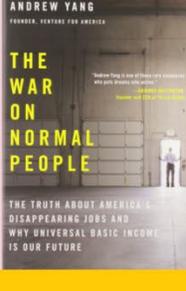
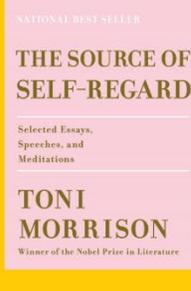
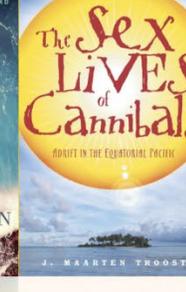
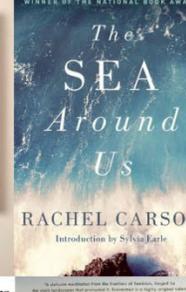
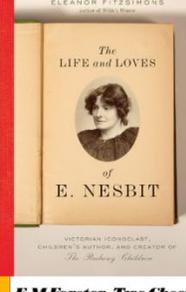
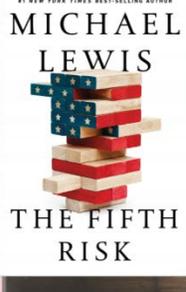
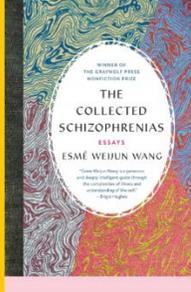
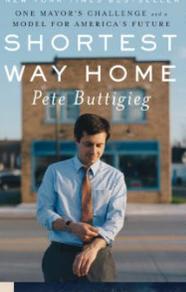
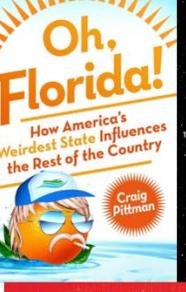
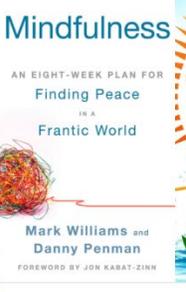
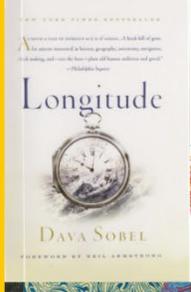
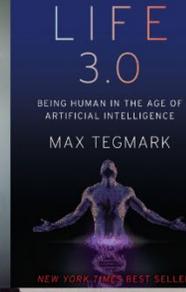
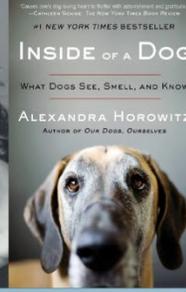
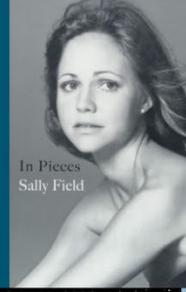
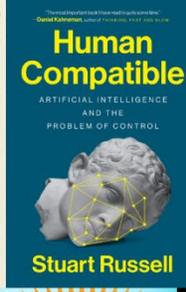
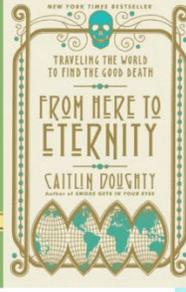
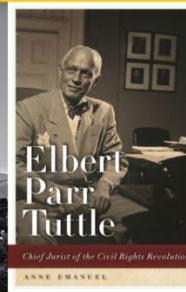
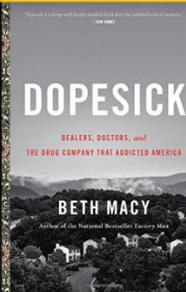
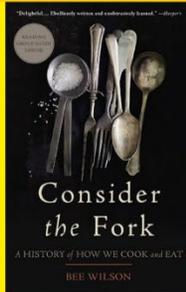
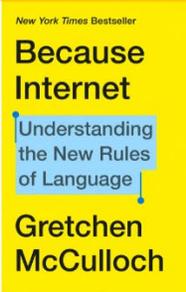
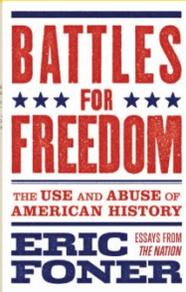
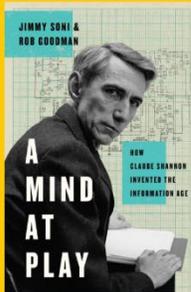
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2019 Staff Favorite Non-Fiction Featured Bookshelf



For the month of December, the UCF Libraries Bookshelf celebrates the favorite books of employees of the UCF Libraries. And you know a major thing about librarians? They love talking about their favorite books. The books listed below are some of the favorite non-fiction books we read in 2019.

Keep reading below to see the full list, descriptions, and catalog links for the favorite non-fiction titles read in 2019 by UCF Library employees. These 30 books plus many, many more are also on display on the 2nd (main) floor of the John C. Hitt Library next to the bank of two elevators.

And if you find someone has checked the one you're interested in out before you had a chance, did you know you can place an interlibrary loan and have another copy sent here for you? [Click here for instructions on placing an interlibrary loan.](#)

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[A Mind at Play: how Claude Shannon invented the information age](#) by Jimmy Soni

In their second collaboration, biographers Jimmy Soni and Rob Goodman present the story of Claude Shannon—one of the foremost intellects of the twentieth century and the architect of the Information Age, whose insights stand behind every computer built, email sent, video streamed, and webpage loaded. Claude Shannon was a groundbreaking polymath, a brilliant tinkerer, and a digital pioneer. In this elegantly written, exhaustively researched biography, Soni and Goodman reveal Claude Shannon's full story for the first time.

Suggested by Sandy Avila, Research & Information Services

[Battles for Freedom: the use and abuse of American history](#) by Eric Foner

In this collection of polemical pieces, Foner expounds on the relevance of Abraham Lincoln's legacy in the age of Obama and on the need for another era of Reconstruction. In addition to articles in which Foner calls out politicians and the powerful for their abuse and misuse of American history, Foner assesses some of his fellow leading historians of the late 20th century, including Richard Hofstadter, Howard Zinn and Eric Hobsbawm.

Suggested by Richard Harrison, Research & Information Services

[Because Internet: understanding the new rules of language](#) by Gretchen McCulloch

Language is humanity's most spectacular open-source project, and the internet is making our language change faster and in more interesting ways than ever before. Internet conversations are structured by the shape of our apps and platforms, from the grammar of status updates to the protocols of comments and @replies. Linguistically inventive online communities spread new slang and jargon with dizzying speed. What's more, social media is a vast laboratory of unedited, unfiltered words where we can

watch language evolve in real time. Even the most absurd-looking slang has genuine patterns behind it. Internet linguist Gretchen McCulloch explores the deep forces that shape human language and influence the way we communicate with one another.

Suggested by Megan Haught, Teaching & Engagement/Research & Information Services

Consider the Fork: a history of how we cook and eat by Bee Wilson

Since prehistory, humans have braved sharp knives, fire, and grindstones to transform raw ingredients into something delicious—or at least edible. But these tools have also transformed how we consume, and how we think about, our food. Bee Wilson takes readers on a wonderful and witty tour of the evolution of cooking around the world, revealing the hidden history of objects we often take for granted. Blending history, science, and personal anecdotes, Wilson reveals how our culinary tools and tricks came to be and how their influence has shaped food culture today.

Suggested by Megan Haught, Teaching & Engagement/Research & Information Services

Dopesick: dealers, doctors, and the drug company that addicted America by Beth Macy

Through unsparing, compelling, and unforgettably humane portraits of families and first responders determined to ameliorate this epidemic, each facet of the crisis comes into focus. In these politically fragmented times, Beth Macy shows that one thing uniting Americans across geographic, partisan, and class lines is opioid drug abuse. But even in the midst of twin crises in drug abuse and healthcare, Macy finds reason to hope and ample signs of the spirit and tenacity that are helping the countless ordinary people ensnared by addiction build a better future for themselves, their families, and their communities.

Suggested by Jeremy Lucas, Research & Information

Elbert Parr Tuttle: chief jurist of the civil rights revolution by Anne Emanuel

This is the first—and the only authorized—biography of Elbert Parr Tuttle (1897–1996), the judge who led the federal court with jurisdiction over most of the Deep South through the most tumultuous years of the civil rights revolution. By the time Tuttle became chief judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, he had already led an exceptional life. He had cofounded a prestigious law firm, earned a Purple Heart in the battle for Okinawa in World War II, and led Republican Party efforts in the early 1950s to establish a viable presence in the South. But it was the inter-section of Tuttle’s judicial career with the civil rights movement that thrust him onto history’s stage.

Suggested by Richard Harrison, Research & Information Services

Ex Libris: confessions of a common reader by Anne Fadiman

This witty collection of essays recounts a lifelong love affair with books and language. For Fadiman, as for many passionate readers, the books she loves have become chapters in her own life story. Writing with remarkable grace, she revives the tradition of the well-crafted personal essay, moving easily from anecdotes about Coleridge and Orwell to tales of her own pathologically literary family. As someone who played at blocks with her father's 22-volume set of Trollope ("My Ancestral Castles") and who only really considered herself married when she and her husband had merged collections ("Marrying Libraries"), she is exquisitely well equipped to expand upon the art of inscriptions, the perverse pleasures of compulsive proof-reading, the allure of long words, and the satisfactions of reading out loud.

Suggested by Christina Wray, Teaching & Engagement

From Here to Eternity: traveling the world to find the good death by Caitlin

Doughty

Fascinated by our pervasive fear of dead bodies, mortician Caitlin Doughty set out to discover how other cultures care for the dead. In rural Indonesia, she watches a man clean and dress his grandfather's mummified body, which has resided in the family home for two years. In La Paz, she meets Bolivian natitas (cigarette-smoking, wish-granting human skulls), and in Tokyo she encounters the Japanese kotsuage ceremony, in which relatives use chopsticks to pluck their loved-ones' bones from cremation ashes. Doughty vividly describes decomposed bodies and investigates the world's funerary history. She introduces deathcare innovators researching body composting and green burial, and examines how varied traditions, from Mexico's Dias de los Muertos to Zoroastrian sky burial help us see our own death customs in a new light. Doughty contends that the American funeral industry sells a particular -- and, upon close inspection, peculiar -- set of 'respectful' rites: bodies are whisked to a mortuary, pumped full of chemicals, and entombed in concrete. She argues that our expensive, impersonal system fosters a corrosive fear of death that hinders our ability to cope and mourn. By comparing customs, she demonstrates that mourners everywhere respond best when they help care for the deceased and have space to participate in the process.

Suggested by Katy Miller, Textbook Affordability

Human Compatible: artificial intelligence and the problem of control by Stuart

Russell

Russell begins by exploring the idea of intelligence in humans and in machines. He describes the near-term benefits we can expect, from intelligent personal assistants to vastly accelerated scientific research, and outlines the AI breakthroughs that still have to happen before we reach superhuman AI. He also spells out the ways humans are already finding to misuse AI, from lethal autonomous weapons to viral sabotage.

Suggested by Sandy Avila, Research & Information Services

In Pieces by Sally Field

With raw honesty and the fresh, pitch-perfect prose of a natural-born writer, and with all the humility and authenticity her fans have come to expect, Field brings readers behind-the-scenes for not only the highs and lows of her star-studded early career in Hollywood, but deep into the truth of her lifelong relationships—including her complicated love for her own mother.

Suggested by Katie Kirwan, Acquisitions & Collections

Inside of a Dog: what dogs see, smell, and know by Alexandra Horowitz

Although not a formal training guide, this book has practical application for dog lovers interested in understanding why their dogs do what they do. With a light touch and the weight of science behind her, Alexandra Horowitz examines the animal we think we know best but may actually understand the least. This book is as close as you can get to knowing about dogs without being a dog yourself.

Suggested by Kimberly Montgomery, Cataloging

Life 3.0: being human in the age of artificial intelligence by Max Tegmark

This book empowers you to join what may be the most important conversation of our time. It doesn't shy away from the full range of viewpoints or from the most controversial issues—from superintelligence to meaning, consciousness and the ultimate physical limits on life in the cosmos.

Suggested by Sandy Avila, Research & Information Services

Longitude: the true story of a lone genius who solved the greatest scientific problem of his time by Dava Sobel

Anyone alive in the eighteenth century would have known that "the longitude problem" was the thorniest scientific dilemma of the day—and had been for centuries. Lacking the ability to measure their longitude, sailors throughout the great ages of exploration had been literally lost at sea as soon as they lost sight of land. Thousands of lives and the increasing fortunes of nations hung on a resolution. One man, John Harrison, in complete opposition to the scientific community, dared to imagine a mechanical solution—a clock that would keep precise time at sea, something no clock had ever been able to do on land. This is the dramatic human story of an epic scientific quest and of Harrison's forty-year obsession with building his perfect timekeeper, known today as the chronometer.

Suggested by Larry Cooperman, Research & Information

Mindfulness: an eight-week plan for finding peace in a frantic world by Mark Williams and Danny Penman

The book is based on Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT). MBCT revolves around a straightforward form of mindfulness meditation which takes just a few minutes a day for the full benefits to be revealed. MBCT has been clinically proven to be at least

as effective as drugs for depression and is widely recommended by US physicians and the UK's National Institute for Health and Clinical.

Suggested by Tina Buck, Acquisitions & Collections

[Oh, Florida: How America's Weirdest State Influences the Rest of the Country](#) by Craig Pittman

Florida. That name. That combination of sounds. Three simple syllables packing mixed messages. To some people, it's a paradise. To others, it's a punch line. As award-winning journalist and New York Times bestselling author Craig Pittman shows, it's both of these and, more important, it's a Petri dish, producing trends that end up influencing the rest of the country. This book embraces those contradictions and shows how they fit together to make this the most interesting state.

Suggested by Richard Harrison, Research & Information Services

[Packing for Mars: the curious science of life in the void](#) by Mary Roach

The best-selling author of *Stiff* and *Bonk* explores the irresistibly strange universe of space travel and life without gravity. From the Space Shuttle training toilet to a crash test of NASA's new space capsule, Mary Roach takes us on the surreally entertaining trip into the science of life in space and space on Earth.

Suggested by Megan Haught, Teaching & Engagement/Research & Information Services

[Shortest Way Home: one mayor's challenge and a model for America's future](#) by Pete Buttigieg

Interweaving two narratives—that of a young man coming of age and a town regaining its economic vitality—Buttigieg recounts growing up in a Rust Belt city, amid decayed factory buildings and the steady soundtrack of rumbling freight trains passing through on their long journey to Chicagoland. Inspired by John F. Kennedy's legacy, Buttigieg first left northern Indiana for red bricked Harvard and then studied at Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar, before joining McKinsey, where he trained as a consultant—becoming, of all things, an expert in grocery pricing. Then, Buttigieg defied the expectations that came with his pedigree, choosing to return home to Indiana and responding to the ultimate challenge of how to revive a once great industrial city and help steer its future in the twenty first century.

Suggested by Jeremy Lucas, Research & Information

[Such a Lovely Little War: Saigon, 1961-63](#) by Marcelino Truong

This riveting, beautifully produced graphic memoir tells the story of the early years of the Vietnam war as seen through the eyes of a young boy named Marco, the son of a Vietnamese diplomat and his French wife. The book opens in America, where the boy's father works for the South Vietnam embassy; there the boy is made to feel self-conscious about his otherness thanks to schoolmates who play war games against the

so-called "Commies." The family is called back to Saigon in 1961, where the father becomes Prime Minister Ngo Dinh Diem's personal interpreter; as the growing conflict between North and South intensifies, so does turmoil within Marco's family, as his mother struggles to grapple with bipolar disorder.

Suggested by Sara Duff, Acquisitions & Collections

The Fifth Risk by Michael Lewis

Michael Lewis's brilliant narrative takes us into the engine rooms of a government under attack by its own leaders. In Agriculture the funding of vital programs like food stamps and school lunches is being slashed. The Commerce Department may not have enough staff to conduct the 2020 Census properly. Over at Energy, where international nuclear risk is managed, it's not clear there will be enough inspectors to track and locate black market uranium before terrorists do. Willful ignorance plays a role in these looming disasters. If your ambition is to maximize short-term gains without regard to the long-term cost, you are better off not knowing those costs. If you want to preserve your personal immunity to the hard problems, it's better never to really understand those problems.

Suggested by Brian Calhoun & Richard Harrison, Research & Information Services

The Library Book by Susan Orlean

On the morning of April 29, 1986, a fire alarm sounded in the Los Angeles Public Library. As the moments passed, the patrons and staff who had been cleared out of the building realized this was not the usual fire alarm. As one fireman recounted, "Once that first stack got going, it was 'Goodbye, Charlie.'" The fire was disastrous: it reached 2000 degrees and burned for more than seven hours. By the time it was extinguished, it had consumed four hundred thousand books and damaged seven hundred thousand more. Investigators descended on the scene, but more than thirty years later, the mystery remains: Did someone purposefully set fire to the library—and if so, who?

Suggested by Rachel Mulvihill, Downtown

The Life and Loves of E. Nesbit: Victorian iconoclast, children's author, and creator of The Railway Children by Eleanor Fitzsimons

Edith Nesbit (1858–1924) is considered the first modern writer for children and the inventor of the children's adventure story. Award-winning biographer Eleanor Fitzsimons uncovers the little-known details of her life, introducing readers to the Fabian Society cofounder and fabulous socialite who hosted legendary parties and had admirers by the dozen, including George Bernard Shaw. Through Nesbit's letters and archival research, Fitzsimons reveals "E." to have been a prolific lecturer and writer on socialism and shows how Nesbit incorporated these ideas into her writing, thereby influencing a generation of children—an aspect of her literary legacy never before examined.

Suggested by Megan Haught, Teaching & Engagement/Research & Information Services

The Sea Around Us by Rachel Carson

This classic work remains as fresh today as when it first appeared. Carson's writing teems with stunning, memorable images--the newly formed Earth cooling beneath an endlessly overcast sky; the centuries of nonstop rain that created the oceans; giant squids battling sperm whales hundreds of fathoms below the surface; and incredibly powerful tides moving 100 billion tons of water daily in the Bay of Fundy. Quite simply, she captures the mystery and allure of the ocean with a compelling blend of imagination and expertise.

Suggested by Christina Wray, Teaching & Engagement

The Sex Lives of Cannibals: adrift in the Equatorial Pacific by J. Maarten Troost

This book tells the hilarious story of what happens when Troost discovers that Tarawa is not the island paradise he dreamed of. Falling into one amusing misadventure after another, Troost struggles through relentless, stifling heat, a variety of deadly bacteria, polluted seas, toxic fish—all in a country where the only music to be heard for miles around is “La Macarena.” He and his stalwart girlfriend Sylvia spend the next two years battling incompetent government officials, alarmingly large critters, erratic electricity, and a paucity of food options (including the Great Beer Crisis); and contending with a bizarre cast of local characters, including “Half-Dead Fred” and the self-proclaimed Poet Laureate of Tarawa (a British drunkard who’s never written a poem in his life).

Suggested by Katie Kirwan, Acquisitions & Collections

The Source of Self-Regard: selected essays, speeches, and meditations by Toni Morrison

The Source of Self-Regard is brimming with all the elegance of mind and style, the literary prowess and moral compass that are Toni Morrison's inimitable hallmark. It is divided into three parts: the first is introduced by a powerful prayer for the dead of 9/11; the second by a searching meditation on Martin Luther King Jr., and the last by a heart-wrenching eulogy for James Baldwin. In the writings and speeches included here, Morrison takes on contested social issues: the foreigner, female empowerment, the press, money, “black matter(s),” and human rights. She looks at enduring matters of culture: the role of the artist in society, the literary imagination, the Afro-American presence in American literature, and in her Nobel lecture, the power of language itself. And here too is piercing commentary on her own work and that of others, among them, painter and collagist Romare Bearden, author Toni Cade Bambara, and theater director Peter Sellars.

Suggested by Jada Reyes, Research & Information Services

The Collected Schizophrenias: essays by Esme Weijun Wang

An intimate, moving book written with the immediacy and directness of one who still struggles with the effects of mental and chronic illness, *The Collected Schizophrenias* cuts right to the core. Schizophrenia is not a single unifying diagnosis, and Esmé Weijun Wang writes not just to her fellow members of the “collected schizophrenias” but to

those who wish to understand it as well. Opening with the journey toward her diagnosis of schizoaffective disorder, Wang discusses the medical community's own disagreement about labels and procedures for diagnosing those with mental illness, and then follows an arc that examines the manifestations of schizophrenia in her life. In essays that range from using fashion to present as high-functioning to the depths of a rare form of psychosis, and from the failures of the higher education system and the dangers of institutionalization to the complexity of compounding factors such as PTSD and Lyme disease, Wang's analytical eye, honed as a former lab researcher at Stanford, allows her to balance research with personal narrative.

Suggested by Jada Reyes, Research & Information Services

[The War on Normal People: the truth about America's disappearing jobs and why universal basic income is our future](#) by Andrew Yang

Yang imagines a different future--one in which having a job is distinct from the capacity to prosper and seek fulfillment. At this vision's core is Universal Basic Income, the concept of providing all citizens with a guaranteed income--and one that is rapidly gaining popularity among forward-thinking politicians and economists. Yang proposes that UBI is an essential step toward a new, more durable kind of economy, one he calls "human capitalism."

Suggested by Jeremy Lucas, Research & Information

[Trick Mirror: reflections on self-delusion](#) by Jia Tolentino

Jia Tolentino is a peerless voice of her generation, tackling the conflicts, contradictions, and sea changes that define us and our time. Now, in this dazzling collection of nine entirely original essays, written with a rare combination of give and sharpness, wit and fearlessness, she delves into the forces that warp our vision, demonstrating an unparalleled stylistic potency and critical dexterity.

Suggested by Jada Reyes, Research & Information Services & Sara Duff, Acquisitions & Collections

[Two Cheers for Democracy](#) by E. M. Forster

Essays that applaud democracy's toleration of individual freedom and self-criticism and deplore its encouragement of mediocrity.

Suggested by Christina Wray, Teaching & Engagement

[Welcome to the Goddamn Ice Cube: chasing fear and finding home in the great white north](#) by Blair Braverman

By turns funny and sobering, bold and tender, this book brilliantly recounts Braverman's adventures in Norway and Alaska. Settling into her new surroundings, Braverman was often terrified that she would lose control of her dog team and crash her sled, or be attacked by a polar bear, or get lost on the tundra. Above all, she worried that, unlike the other, gutsier people alongside her, she wasn't cut out for life on the frontier. But no matter how out of place she felt, one thing was clear: she was hooked on the North. On

the brink of adulthood, Braverman was determined to prove that her fears did not define her—and so she resolved to embrace the wilderness and make it her own.

Suggested by Sara Duff, Acquisitions & Collections

When Breath Becomes Air by Paul Kalanithi

At the age of thirty-six, on the verge of completing a decade's worth of training as a neurosurgeon, Paul Kalanithi was diagnosed with stage IV lung cancer. One day he was a doctor treating the dying, and the next he was a patient struggling to live. And just like that, the future he and his wife had imagined evaporated. This book chronicles Kalanithi's transformation from a naïve medical student "possessed," as he wrote, "by the question of what, given that all organisms die, makes a virtuous and meaningful life" into a neurosurgeon at Stanford working in the brain, the most critical place for human identity, and finally into a patient and new father confronting his own mortality.

Suggested by Pat Tiberii, Interlibrary Loan & Document Delivery Services

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