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## Featured Bookshelf: 2019 Black History Month

Megan M. Haught

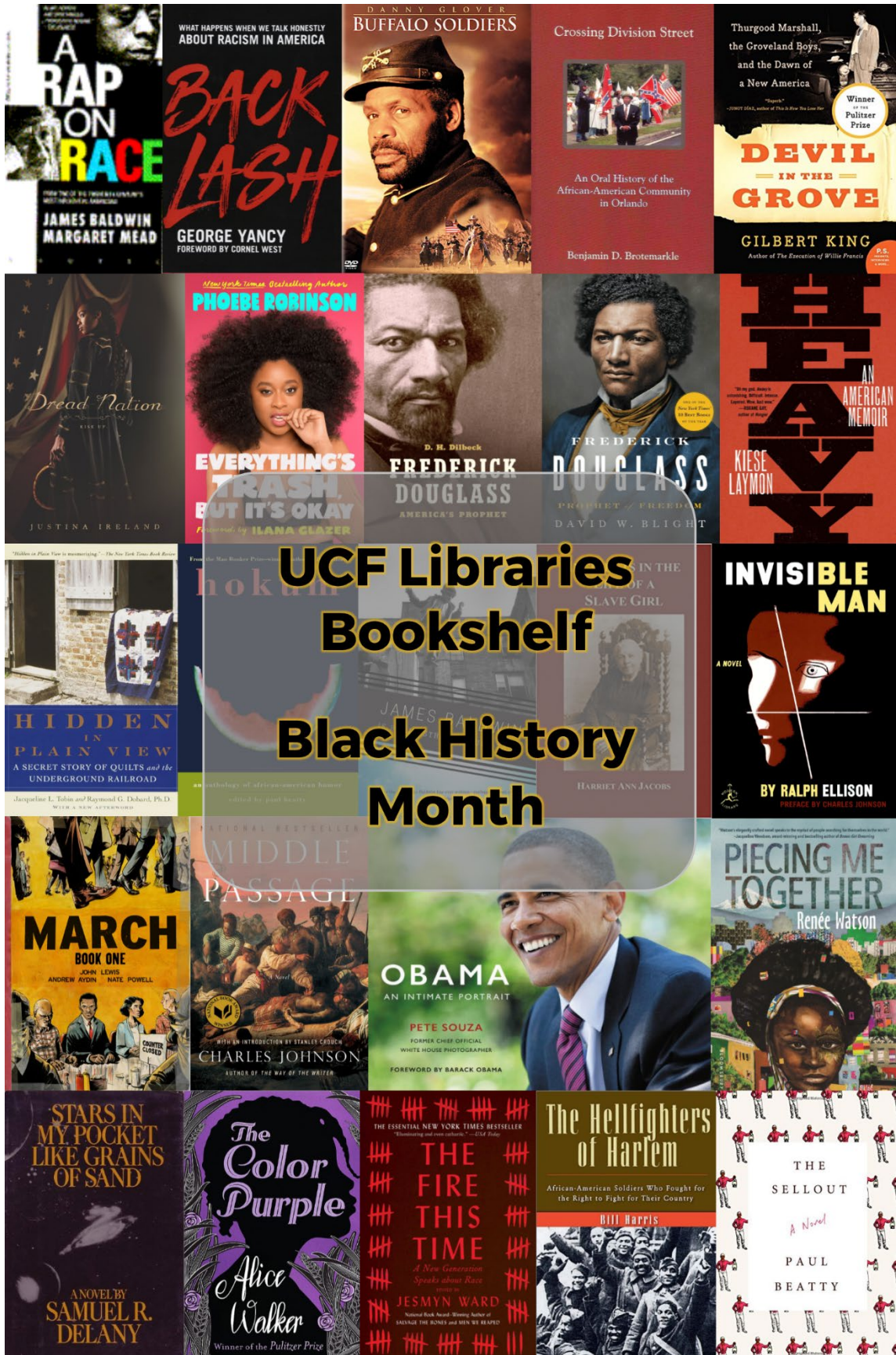
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**UCF Libraries  
Bookshelf  
Black History  
Month**

The national celebration of African American History was started by Carter G. Woodson, a Harvard-trained historian and the founder of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, and first celebrated as a weeklong event in February of 1926. After a half century of overwhelming popularity, the event was expanded to a full month in 1976 by President Gerald Ford.

Here at UCF Libraries we believe that knowledge is key to living a good life and that sharing information benefits everyone. This is why our featured bookshelf suggestions range from celebrating outstanding African Americans to having difficult conversations about racism and American History. We are proud to present our top 24 favorite books by, and/or about, African Americans.

Keep reading to see the full list, descriptions, and catalog links for the Black History Month titles suggested by UCF Library employees. These 24 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. Blu-rays and DVDs for documentaries and popular films are also included in the display.

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### **[A Rap on Race](#) by Margaret Mead and James Baldwin**

A black writer's emotional response to American racism is juxtaposed with the logical analyses of a social scientist.

*Suggested by Rebecca Hawk, Circulation*

### **[Backlash: what happens when we talk honestly about racism in America](#) by George Yancy**

When George Yancy penned a New York Times op-ed entitled “Dear White America” asking white Americans to confront the ways that they benefit from racism, he knew his article would be controversial. But he was unprepared for the flood of vitriol in response. The resulting blowback played out in the national media, with critics attacking Yancy in every form possible—including death threats—and supporters rallying to his side. Despite the rhetoric of a “post-race” America, Yancy quickly discovered that racism is still alive, crude, and vicious in its expression. In *Backlash*, Yancy expands upon the original article and chronicles the ensuing controversy as he seeks to understand what it was about the op-ed that created so much rage among so many white readers. He challenges white Americans to rise above the vitriol and to develop a new empathy for the African American experience.

*Suggested by Richard Harrison, Research & Information Services*

### **[Buffalo soldiers](#) directed by Charles Haid**

Danny Glover stars in this historical epic of former slaves turned United States Army recruits--the Buffalo Soldiers. Freed by the Emancipation Proclamation of 1862, many ex-slaves head west in search of a new life far from Southern oppression. In 1866, a year after the end of the Civil War, the U.S. Army enlists black men to fight Native

Americans on the Western frontier. Nicknamed "Buffalo Soldiers" by the Plains Indians, these African-American troops also string miles of telegraph wire, escort settlers, cattle and railroad crews through the hostile West and patrol the wild United States-Mexican border in this moving drama that chronicles an untold, exciting part of United States history.

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

**[Crossing Division Street: an oral history of the African-American community in Orlando](#) by Benjamin Brotemarkle**

This book includes an overview of the people, institutions, and events that shaped the establishment, growth and history of the African-American community in Orlando. We examine the creation of the neighborhood's educational centers, places of worship, and businesses, and the irony of how desegregation inadvertently led to the decline of the community. Significant instances of racial unrest in Orlando that are often overlooked are detailed in this manuscript.

*Suggested by Rich Gause, Research & Information Services*

**[Devil in the Grove: Thurgood Marshall, the Groveland Boys, and the dawn of a new America](#) by Gilbert King**

In 1949, Florida's orange industry was booming, and citrus barons got rich on the backs of cheap Jim Crow labor. To maintain order and profits, they turned to Willis V. McCall, a violent sheriff who ruled Lake County with murderous resolve. When a white seventeen-year-old Groveland girl cried rape, McCall was fast on the trail of four young blacks who dared to envision a future for themselves beyond the citrus groves. By day's end, the Ku Klux Klan had rolled into town, burning the homes of blacks to the ground and chasing hundreds into the swamps, hell-bent on lynching the young men who came to be known as "the Groveland Boys."

*Suggested by Richard Harrison, Research & Information Services*

**[Dread Nation](#) by Justina Ireland**

At once provocative, terrifying, and darkly subversive, *Dread Nation* is Justina Ireland's stunning vision of an America both foreign and familiar—a country on the brink, at the explosive crossroads where race, humanity, and survival meet.

*Suggested by Emma Gisclair, Curriculum Materials Center*

**[Everything's Trash but it's OK](#) by Phoebe Robinson**

Written in her trademark unfiltered and witty style, Robinson's latest collection is a call to arms. Outfitted with on-point pop culture references, these essays tackle a wide range of topics: giving feminism a tough-love talk on intersectionality, telling society's beauty standards to kick rocks, and calling foul on our culture's obsession with work. Robinson also gets personal, exploring money problems she's hidden from her parents, how dating is mainly a warmed-over bowl of hot mess, and definitely most important,

meeting Bono not once, but twice. She's struggled with being a woman with a political mind and a woman with an ever-changing jeans size. She knows about trash because she sees it every day--and because she's seen roughly one hundred thousand hours of reality TV and zero hours of Schindler's List.

*Suggested by Sara Duff, Acquisitions & Collections*

**Frederick Douglass: America's prophet by D.H. Dilbeck**

From his enslavement to freedom, Frederick Douglass was one of America's most extraordinary champions of liberty and equality. Throughout his long life, Douglass was also a man of profound religious conviction. In this concise and original biography, D. H. Dilbeck offers a provocative interpretation of Douglass's life through the lens of his faith. In an era when the role of religion in public life is as contentious as ever, Dilbeck provides essential new perspective on Douglass's place in American history.

*Suggested by Christina Wray, Teaching & Engagement*

**Frederick Douglass: prophet of freedom by David W. Blight**

The definitive, dramatic biography of the most important African American of the nineteenth century: Frederick Douglass, the escaped slave who became the greatest orator of his day and one of the leading abolitionists and writers of the era.

*Suggested by Christina Wray, Teaching & Engagement*

**Heavy: an American memoir by Kiese Laymon**

In this powerful and provocative memoir, genre-bending essayist and novelist Kiese Laymon explores what the weight of a lifetime of secrets, lies, and deception does to a black body, a black family, and a nation teetering on the brink of moral collapse.

*Suggested by Sara Duff, Acquisitions & Collections*

**Hidden in Plain View: the secret story of quilts and the underground railroad by Jacqueline L. Tobin and Raymond G. Dobard**

The fascinating story of a friendship, a lost tradition, and an incredible discovery, revealing how enslaved men and women made encoded quilts and then used them to navigate their escape on the Underground Railroad. In *Hidden in Plain View*, historian Jacqueline Tobin and scholar Raymond Dobard offer the first proof that certain quilt patterns, including a prominent one called the Charleston Code, were, in fact, essential tools for escape along the Underground Railroad. In 1993, historian Jacqueline Tobin met African American quilter Ozella Williams amid piles of beautiful handmade quilts in the Old Market Building of Charleston, South Carolina. With the admonition to "write this down," Williams began to describe how slaves made coded quilts and used them to navigate their escape on the Underground Railroad. But just as quickly as she started, Williams stopped, informing Tobin that she would learn the rest when she was "ready." During the three years it took for Williams's narrative to unfold—and as the friendship and trust between the two women grew—Tobin enlisted Raymond Dobard, Ph.D., an art

history professor and well-known African American quilter, to help unravel the mystery.  
*Suggested by Jacqueline Johnson, Cataloging*

**Hokum: an anthology of African-American humor edited by Paul Beatty**

This book is less a comprehensive collection than it is a mix-tape narrative dubbed by a trusted friend—a sampler of underground classics, rare grooves, and timeless summer jams, poetry and prose juxtaposed with the blues, hip-hop, political speeches, and the world's funniest radio sermon. Groundbreaking, fierce, and hilarious, this is a necessary anthology for any fan or student of American writing, with a huge range and a smart, political grasp of the uses of humor.

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

**If Beale Street Could Talk by James Baldwin**

Told through the eyes of Tish, a nineteen-year-old girl, in love with Fonny, a young sculptor who is the father of her child, Baldwin's story mixes the sweet and the sad. Tish and Fonny have pledged to get married, but Fonny is falsely accused of a terrible crime and imprisoned. Their families set out to clear his name, and as they face an uncertain future, the young lovers experience a kaleidoscope of emotions—affection, despair, and hope. In a love story that evokes the blues, where passion and sadness are inevitably intertwined, Baldwin has created two characters so alive and profoundly realized that they are unforgettably ingrained in the American psyche.

*Suggested by Rachel Mulvihill, Teaching & Engagement*

**Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl by Harriet A. Jacobs**

*Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* is an autobiography by a young mother and fugitive slave published in 1861 by L. Maria Child, who edited the book for its author, Harriet Ann Jacobs. Jacobs used the pseudonym Linda Brent

*Suggested by Sandy Avila, Research & Information Services*

**Invisible Man by Ralph Ellison**

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 himself to be.

*Suggested by Athena Hoepfner, Acquisitions & Collections*

### **March. Book One. by John Lewis**

This graphic novel is Congressman John Lewis' first-hand account of his lifelong struggle for civil and human rights, meditating in the modern age on the distance traveled since the days of Jim Crow and segregation. Rooted in Lewis' personal story, it also reflects on the highs and lows of the broader civil rights movement. Book One spans Lewis' youth in rural Alabama, his life-changing meeting with Martin Luther King, Jr., the birth of the Nashville Student Movement, and their battle to tear down segregation through nonviolent lunch counter sit-ins, building to a climax on the steps of City Hall. His commitment to justice and nonviolence has taken him from an Alabama sharecropper's farm to the halls of Congress, from a segregated schoolroom to the 1963 March on Washington D.C., and from receiving beatings from state troopers, to receiving the Medal of Freedom awarded to him by Barack Obama, the first African-American president. ([Book Two](#) and [Book Three](#) are also available at the UCF Curriculum Materials Center in the Education complex)

*Suggested by Emma Gisclair, Curriculum Materials Center*

### **Middle Passage by Charles Johnson**

It is 1830. Rutherford Calhoun, a newly freed slave and irrepressible rogue, is desperate to escape unscrupulous bill collectors and an impending marriage to a priggish schoolteacher. He jumps aboard the first boat leaving New Orleans, the Republic, a slave ship en route to collect members of a legendary African tribe, the Allmuseri. Thus begins a daring voyage of horror and self-discovery.

*Suggested by Brian Calhoun, Research & Information Services*

### **Obama: An Intimate Portrait by Pete Souza**

*Obama: An Intimate Portrait* reproduces more than 300 of Souza's most iconic photographs with fine-art print quality in an oversize collectible format. Together they document the most consequential hours of the Presidency--including the historic image of President Obama and his advisors in the Situation Room during the bin Laden mission--alongside unguarded moments with the President's family, his encounters with children, interactions with world leaders and cultural figures, and more.

*Suggested by Richard Harrison, Research & Information Services*

### **Piecing Me Together by Renee Watson**

Jade believes she must get out of her poor neighborhood if she's ever going to succeed. Her mother tells her to take advantage of every opportunity that comes her way. And Jade has: every day she rides the bus away from her friends and to the private school where she feels like an outsider, but where she has plenty of opportunities. But some opportunities she doesn't really welcome, like an invitation to join Women to Women, a mentorship program for "at-risk" girls. Just because her mentor is black and graduated from the same high school doesn't mean she understands where Jade is coming from. She's tired of being singled out as someone who needs help, someone people want to fix. Jade wants to speak, to create, to express her joys and sorrows, her pain and her

hope. Maybe there are some things she could show other women about understanding the world and finding ways to be real, to make a difference.

*Suggested by Rebecca Hawk, Circulation*

**[Stars in My Pocket Like Grains of Sand](#) by Samuel R. Delany**

*Stars in My Pocket Like Grains of Sand* is a science fiction masterpiece, an essay on the inexplicability of sexual attractiveness, and an examination of interstellar politics among far-flung worlds. First published in 1984, the novel's central issues—technology, globalization, gender, sexuality, and multiculturalism—have only become more pressing with the passage of

*Suggested by Brian Calhoun, Research & Information Services*

**[The Color Purple](#) by Alice Walker**

Published to unprecedented acclaim, *The Color Purple* established Alice Walker as a major voice in modern fiction. This is the story of two sisters—one a missionary in Africa and the other a child wife living in the South—who sustain their loyalty to and trust in each other across time, distance, and silence.

*Suggested by Jacqueline Johnson, Cataloging*

**[The Fire this Time: a new generation speaks about race](#) edited by Jesmyn Ward**

National Book Award-winner Jesmyn Ward takes James Baldwin's 1963 examination of race in America, *The Fire Next Time*, as a jumping off point for this groundbreaking collection of essays and poems about race from the most important voices of her generation and our time. *The Fire This Time* is divided into three parts that shine a light on the darkest corners of our history, wrestle with our current predicament, and envision a better future. Of the eighteen pieces, ten were written specifically for this volume. In the fifty-odd years since Baldwin's essay was published, entire generations have dared everything and made significant progress. But the idea that we are living in the post-Civil Rights era, that we are a "post-racial" society is an inaccurate and harmful reflection of a truth the country must confront. Baldwin's "fire next time" is now upon us, and it needs to be talked about. Contributors include Carol Anderson, Jericho Brown, Garnette Cadogan, Edwidge Danticat, Rachel Kaadzi Ghansah, Mitchell S. Jackson, Honoree Jeffers, Kima Jones, Kiese

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

**[The Hellfighters of Harlem: African-American soldiers who fought for the right to fight for their country](#) by Bill Harris**

The author paints a lively portrait of the Hellfighters of Harlem--the Army's most celebrated all-black unit during World War I--chronicling their fierce struggle to be allowed to serve, their exploits in Europe, their influence on American culture, and their continuing contributions in World War II and in Iraq during the Gulf War.

*Suggested by Rich Gause, Research & Information Services*



**The Sellout by Paul Beatty**

A biting satire about a young man's isolated upbringing and the race trial that sends him to the Supreme Court, Paul Beatty's *The Sellout* showcases a comic genius at the top of his game. It challenges the sacred tenets of the United States Constitution, urban life, the civil rights movement, the father-son relationship, and the holy grail of racial equality: the black Chinese restaurant.

*Suggested by Sara Duff, Acquisitions & Collections*

Tumblr post: <https://ucflibrary.tumblr.com/post/182474596641/the-national-celebration-of-african-american>

Blog post: <https://library.ucf.edu/news/featured-bookshelf-black-history-month-2019/>