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Featured Bookshelf: 2020 Black History Month

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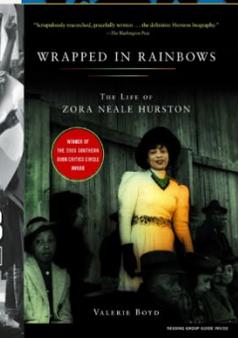
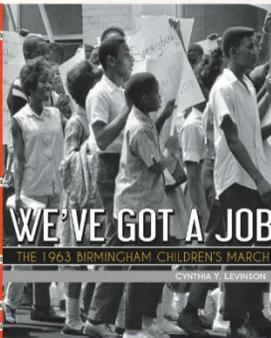
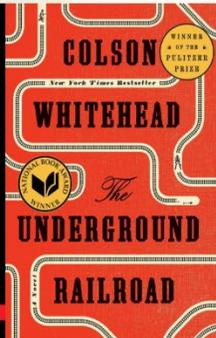
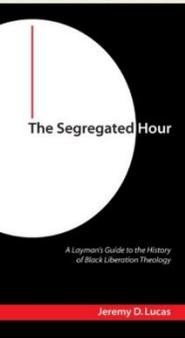
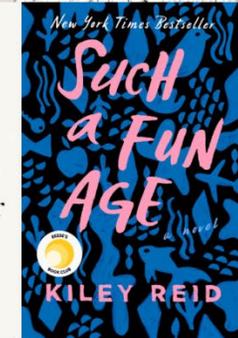
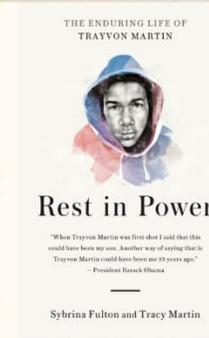
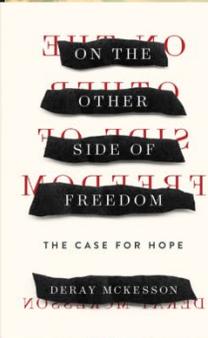
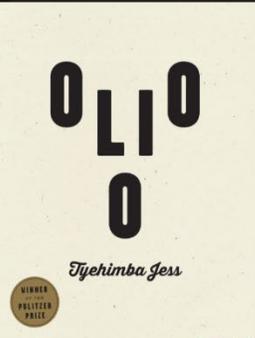
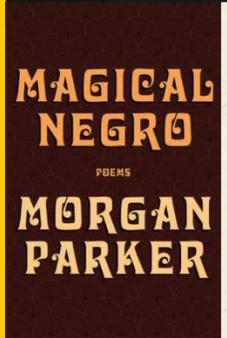
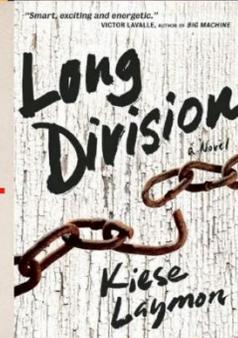
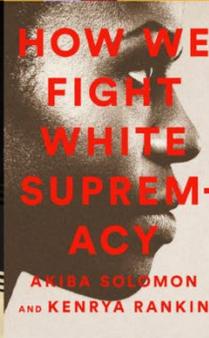
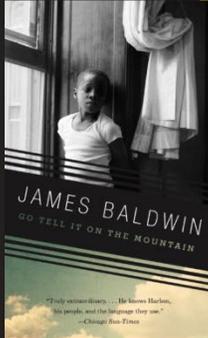
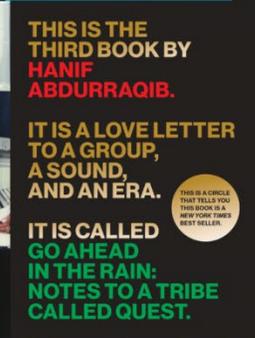
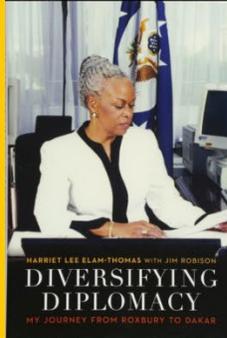
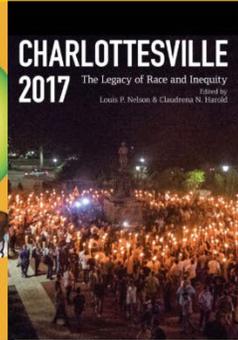
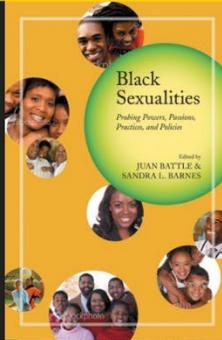
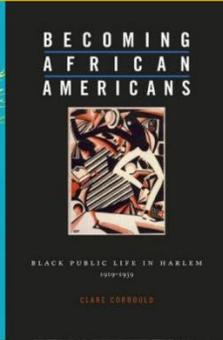
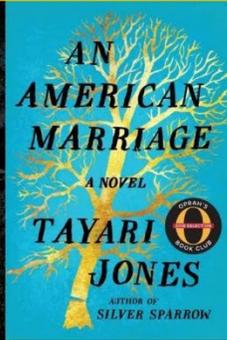
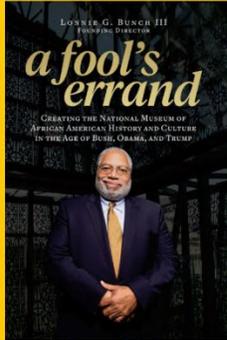
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Black History Featured Bookshelf



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 empowers everyone in our community and that recognizing past inequities is the only way to prevent their continuation. This is why our featured bookshelf suggestions range from celebrating outstanding African Americans to having difficult conversations about racism in American history. We are proud to present our top 20 staff suggested books in honor of Black History Month.

Keep reading below to see the full list, descriptions, and catalog links for the Black History Month titles suggested by UCF Library employees. These 20 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.

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[A Fool's Errand: creating the National Museum of African American History and Culture in the age of Bush, Obama, and Trump](#) by Lonnie G. Bunch III

Founding Director Lonnie Bunch's deeply personal tale of the triumphs and challenges of bringing the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture to life. His story is by turns inspiring, funny, frustrating, quixotic, bittersweet, and above all, a compelling read.

Suggested by Richard Harrison, Research & Information Services

[An American Marriage: a novel](#) by Tayari Jones

Newlyweds Celestial and Roy are the embodiment of both the American Dream and the New South. He is a young executive, and she is an artist on the brink of an exciting career. But as they settle into the routine of their life together, they are ripped apart by circumstances neither could have imagined. Roy is arrested and sentenced to twelve years for a crime Celestial knows he didn't commit. Though fiercely independent, Celestial finds herself bereft and unmoored, taking comfort in Andre, her childhood friend, and best man at their wedding. As Roy's time in prison passes, she is unable to hold on to the love that has been her center. After five years, Roy's conviction is suddenly overturned, and he returns to Atlanta ready to resume their life together.

Suggested by Rebecca Hawk, Circulation Services

[Becoming African Americans: black public life in Harlem, 1919-1939](#) by Clare Corbould

Following the great migration of black southerners to northern cities after World War I, the search for roots and for meaningful affiliations became subjects of debate and display in a growing black public sphere. Throwing off the legacy of slavery and

segregation, black intellectuals, activists, and organizations sought a prouder past in ancient Egypt and forged links to contemporary Africa. Their consciousness of a dual identity anticipated the hyphenated identities of new immigrants in the years after World War II, and an emerging sense of what it means to be a modern American.

Suggested by Betsy Kaniecki, UCF Connect Libraries

[Black Sexualities: probing powers, passions, practices, and policies](#) edited by Juan Battle, Sandra L. Barnes

Why does society have difficulty discussing sexualities? Where does fear of Black sexualities emerge and how is it manifested? How can varied experiences of Black females and males who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT), or straight help inform dialogue and academic inquiry? From questioning forces that have constrained sexual choices to examining how Blacks have forged healthy sexual identities in an oppressive environment, *Black Sexualities* acknowledges the diversity of the Black experience and the shared legacy of racism.

Suggested by Sandy Avila, Research & Information Services

[Charlottesville 2017: the legacy of race and inequity](#) edited by Louis P. Nelson and Claudrena N. Harold

How should we respond to the moral and ethical challenges of our times? What are our individual and collective responsibilities in advancing the principles of democracy and justice? This book brings together the work of UVA faculty members catalyzed by last summer's events to examine their community's history more deeply and more broadly. Their essays—ranging from John Mason on the local legacy of the Lost Cause to Leslie Kendrick on free speech to Rachel Wahl on the paradoxes of activism—examine truth telling, engaged listening, and ethical responses, and aim to inspire individual reflection, as well as to provoke considered and responsible dialogue.

Suggested by Richard Harrison, Research & Information Services

[Diversifying Diplomacy: my journey from Roxbury to Dakar](#) by Harriet Elam-Thomas

This is the story of Harriet Lee Elam-Thomas, a young black woman who beat the odds and challenged the status quo. Inspired by the strong women in her life, she followed in the footsteps of the few women who had gone before her in her effort to make the Foreign Service reflect the diverse faces of the United States. The youngest child of parents who left the segregated Old South to raise their family in Massachusetts, Elam-Thomas distinguished herself with a diplomatic career at a time when few colleagues looked like her.

Suggested by Richard Harrison, Research & Information Services

[Go Ahead in the Rain: notes to A Tribe Called Quest](#) by Hanif Abdurraqib

How does one pay homage to A Tribe Called Quest? The seminal rap group brought

jazz into the genre, resurrecting timeless rhythms to create. Seventeen years after their last album, they resurrected themselves with an intense, socially conscious record which arrived when fans needed it most, in the aftermath of the 2016 election. Poet and essayist Hanif Abdurraqib digs into the group's history and draws from his own experience to reflect on how its distinctive sound resonated among fans like himself. The result is as ambitious and genre-bending as the rap group itself.

Suggested by Sara Duff, Acquisitions & Collections

[Go Tell It on the Mountain](#) by James Baldwin

Baldwin's first major work, a novel that has established itself as an American classic. With lyrical precision, psychological directness, resonating symbolic power, and a rage that is at once unrelenting and compassionate, Baldwin chronicles a fourteen-year-old boy's discovery of the terms of his identity as the stepson of the minister of a storefront Pentecostal church in Harlem one Saturday in March of 1935. Baldwin's rendering of his protagonist's spiritual, sexual, and moral struggle of self-invention opened new possibilities in the American language and in the way Americans understand themselves.

Suggested by Jada Reyes, Research & Information Services

[How We Fight White Supremacy: a field guide to Black resistance](#) edited by Akiba Solomon and Kenrya Rankin

Many of us are facing unprecedented attacks on our democracy, our privacy, and our hard-won civil rights. If you're Black in the US, this is not new. As *Colorlines* editors Akiba Solomon and Kenrya Rankin show, Black Americans subvert and resist life-threatening forces as a matter of course. In these pages, leading organizers, artists, journalists, comedians, and filmmakers offer wisdom on how they fight White supremacy. It's a must-read for anyone new to resistance work, and for the next generation of leaders building a better future.

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

[Long Division](#) by Kiese Laymon

Kiese Laymon's debut novel is a Twain-esque exploration of celebrity, authorship, violence, religion, and coming of age in Post-Katrina Mississippi, written in a voice that's alternately funny, lacerating, and wise. The book contains two interwoven stories.

Suggested by Sara Duff, Acquisitions & Collections

[Magical Negro](#) by Morgan Parker

Parker presents an archive of black everydayness; a catalog of contemporary folk heroes. Her poems are both elegy and jive, joke and declaration. She connects themes of loneliness, displacement, grief, ancestral trauma, and objectification while exploring

the troubling tropes and stereotypes of Black Americans.
Suggested by Jada Reyes, Research & Information Services

Olio by Tyehimba Jess

With ambitious manipulations of poetic forms, Tyehimba Jess presents the sweat and story behind America's blues, worksongs and church hymns. Part fact, part fiction, Jess's much anticipated second book weaves sonnet, song, and narrative to examine the lives of mostly unrecorded African American performers directly before and after the Civil War up to World War I. *Olio* is an effort to understand how they met, resisted, complicated, co-opted, and sometimes defeated attempts to minstrelize them.

Suggested by Jada Reyes, Research & Information Services

On the Other Side of Freedom: the case for hope by DeRay Mckesson

Drawing from his own experiences as an activist, organizer, educator, and public official, Mckesson exhorts all Americans to work to dismantle the legacy of racism and to imagine the best of what is possible. Honoring the voices of a new generation of activists, this is a visionary's call to take responsibility for imagining, and then building, the world we want to live in.

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

Rest in Power: the enduring life of Trayvon Martin by Sybrina Fulton and Tracy Martin

Five years after his tragic death, Trayvon Martin's name is still evoked every day. He has become a symbol of social justice activism, as has his hauntingly familiar image: the photo of a child still in the process of becoming a young man, wearing a hoodie and gazing silently at the camera. But who was Trayvon Martin, before he became, in death, an icon? And how did one black child's death on a dark, rainy street in a small Florida town become the match that lit a civil rights crusade? Told through the compelling alternating narratives of Sybrina Fulton and Tracy Martin, this book answers those questions from the most intimate of sources. It's the story of the beautiful and complex child they lost, the cruel unresponsiveness of the police and the hostility of the legal system, and the inspiring journey they took from grief and pain to power, and from tragedy and senselessness to meaning.

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

Such a Fun Age by Kiley Reid

A striking and surprising debut novel from an exhilarating new voice, and a page-turning and big-hearted story about race and privilege, set around a young black babysitter, her well-intentioned employer, and a surprising connection that threatens to undo them

both.

Suggested by Sara Duff, Acquisitions & Collections

The Nickel Boys by Colson Whitehead

Based on the real story of a reform school in Florida that operated for one hundred and eleven years and warped the lives of thousands of children, this is a devastating, driven narrative that showcases a great American novelist writing at the height of his powers.

Suggested by Rachel Mulvihill, Teaching & Engagement

The Segregated Hour: a layman's guide to the history of Black Liberation theology by Jeremy D. Lucas

On March 18, 2008, as Barack Obama rose to the stage in Philadelphia, political commentators were on pins and needles over how he was going to address the fiery sermons of his long-time friend and mentor, the Reverend Jeremiah Wright. With an eye toward a more perfect union, the soon-to-be president offered his initial thoughts on the current state of race relations in America. "The fact that so many people are surprised to hear that anger in some of Reverend Wright's sermons simply reminds us of the old truism that the most segregated hour in American life occurs on Sunday morning." Soon after the Civil Rights Movement came to an end, James Cone had been the first to write of this "old truism" when he introduced the world to something he called Black Liberation Theology. For those still angered by past and present oppression, there was only one place of refuge where the government would not intrude: the black church. Cone became their primary theologian. Rarely seen in small towns and rural fellowships, black liberation has been relegated to the inner city neighborhoods where the poor reach out for anyone who will give them hope for a better tomorrow.

Suggested by Jeremy Lucas, Research & Information Services

Underground Railroad by Colson Whitehead

In Whitehead's ingenious conception, the Underground Railroad is no mere metaphor—engineers and conductors operate a secret network of tracks and tunnels beneath the Southern soil. Cora and Caesar's first stop is South Carolina, in a city that initially seems like a haven. But the city's placid surface masks an insidious scheme designed for its black denizens. And even worse: Ridgeway, the relentless slave catcher, is close on their heels.

Suggested by Rachel Mulvihill, Teaching & Engagement

We've Got a Job: the 1963 Birmingham Children's March by Cynthia Levinson

The 1963 Birmingham Children's March was a turning point in American history. In the streets of Birmingham, Alabama, the fight for civil rights lay in the hands of children like Audrey Hendricks, Wash Booker, James Stewart, and Arnetta Streeter. This is the little-known story of the 4,000 black elementary, middle, and high school students who voluntarily went to jail between May 2 and May 11, 1963. The children succeeded

—where adults had failed—in desegregating one of the most racially violent cities in America.

Suggested by Betsy Kaniecki, UCF Connect Libraries

[Wrapped in Rainbows: the life of Zora Neale Hurston](#) by Valerie Boyd

The first biography of Zora Neale Hurston in more than twenty-five years, this book illuminates the adventures, complexities, and sorrows of an extraordinary life.

Acclaimed journalist Valerie Boyd delves into Hurston's history—her youth in the country's first incorporated all-black town, her friendships with luminaries such as Langston Hughes, her sexuality and short-lived marriages, and her mysterious relationship with vodou.

Suggested by Sandy Avila, Research & Information Services

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