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10-2015

## Connections, October 2015

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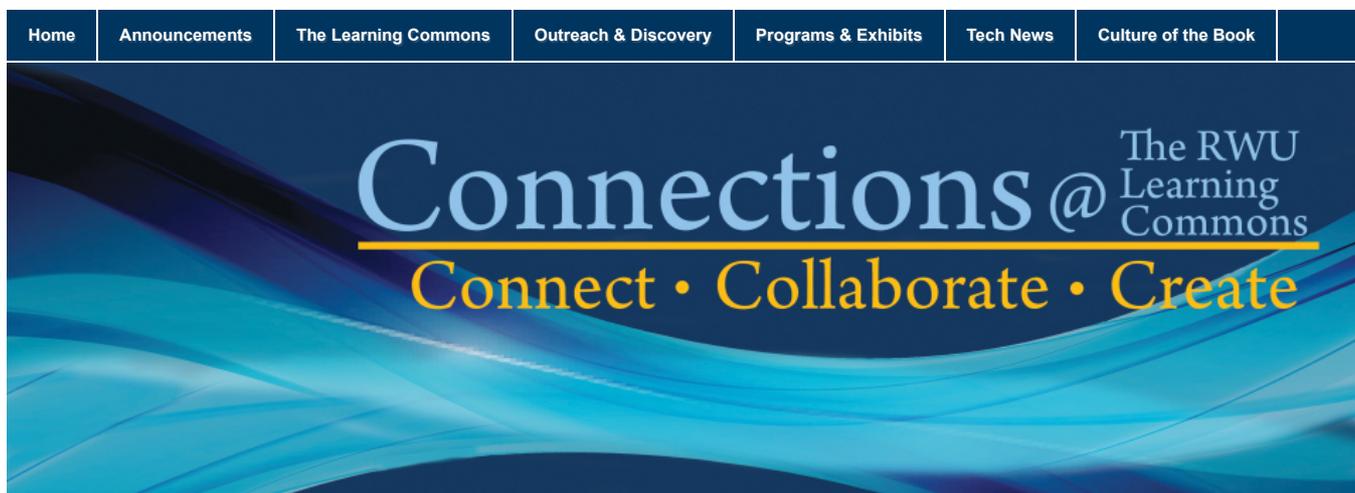
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HOME » 2015 » OCTOBER

## October 2015

### From the Ethiopian Classroom to Exile in America: A Rescued Scholar in Connecticut

OCTOBER 30, 2015 9:32 AM

By Allie Wojtanowski '15



It was his vision to improve human rights conditions in Ethiopia that motivated his open criticisms of the Ethiopian government. Dr. Semahagn Gashu Abebe would not be silenced, even when it came at great cost: exile from the country he loves. But with unflinching hope for Ethiopia, Abebe, now at the University of Connecticut, works to spread uncensored knowledge about the current state of his homeland. He trusts that “the price paid by freedom lovers will bring about a political transformation in Ethiopia.”

Equipped with a Ph.D. from the University of Goettingen in Germany and two LL.M.s from universities in the Netherlands and Germany, Abebe's primary focus is in human rights law, conflict studies, governance and development in Africa, federalism, traditional institutions and the law and African studies. He has published extensively in European, African, and American academic journals on international economic law, constitutional theory, and traditional institutions and human rights in Africa.

Before he became a member of UConn's Institute of Human Rights, where he works as a research scholar and assists with cases of scholars who are at risk, Abebe was, himself, an at-risk scholar. In 2003, Abebe had become a lecturer of law with the Ethiopian Civil Service University. As a former prosecutor and attorney, he was deeply concerned with human rights violations in Ethiopia, and he regularly raised this topic during class. Along with prompting discussion about the unfair treatment of suspected criminals—who are routinely subjected to torture and forced to provide self-incriminating statements—Abebe encouraged conversation about the lack of progress with Ethiopia's democratic process, the need for institutional independence of state institutions, and the constrained freedom of expression and assembly in the country.

Initially Abebe's critical sentiments were grudgingly tolerated by the university administration, but after Ethiopia's 2005 general elections—which resulted in the death of at least 200 protesters and imprisonment of 30,000 demonstrators—it was no longer safe to question the government. As Ethiopia's ruling party restricted the country's freedom of expression by imprisoning opposition political members, journalists, civil society leaders, and scholars, the little academic freedom that had once existed now disappeared. Even though he was not involved in the activities of opposition parties, Abebe was viewed as sympathetic to them. He received direct threats for exercising his freedom of expression. Along with many other human rights activists, Abebe was forced to consider the likely consequence of his actions: exile.

Abebe left the country to pursue his PhD in Germany, and upon completion in 2012, found himself unable to return to Ethiopia. Scholars at Risk (SAR), a U.S. based international network of academic institutions and individuals organized to support and promote academic freedom, stepped in to connect Abebe with a higher education institution where he safely could continue his research and teachings. From 2012-2013, Abebe was a Bank of Ireland post-doctoral fellow at the Irish Centre for Human Rights, National University of

Ireland, and from 2013-2014, he was an O' Brien Fellow at the Center for Human Rights and Legal Pluralism, McGill University. In July 2014, the Human Rights Institute at the University of Connecticut, a member of SAR, decided to host Abebe as a visiting assistant professor.

Teaching has only been one of Abebe's responsibilities with the Human Rights Institute. Abebe published a book, *The Last Post-Cold War Socialist Federations: Ethnicity, Ideology and Democracy* (Ashgate 2014), addressing the complex relationship between ideological perceptions of the ruling regime and the ethnically modified federal system in Ethiopia, as well as the ways the regime has undermined democratization and the protection of human rights in Ethiopia. In November 2015, Abebe's work will also be published in *Putting Knowledge to Work: From Knowledge Transfer to Knowledge Exchange*. The book will be launched in December at the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) hall in Addis Ababa. Currently, Abebe is researching and writing articles concerning food security in Ethiopia, how the United Nations and western governments are addressing self-determination movements, and whether the Ethiopian government's developmental state model will worsen political repression.

Along with formal publications, Abebe regularly contributes to blogs and websites concerning advocacy of human rights in Ethiopia; he also gives interviews to radio and television services broadcast to Ethiopia. He continues to advocate for change in Ethiopia because living in freedom allows him to be the voice of all of the scholars who are currently imprisoned. Despite the fact that the Ethiopian ruling regime appears strong, Abebe strongly believes that the country will be changing in the near future. When asked if he thinks he will ever be able to return to or visit Ethiopia, Abebe said: "Definitely. I strongly believe that the winds of change that are affecting many parts of the world will finally reach Ethiopia. The political tsunami of the Arab Spring that has shaken the Middle East and North Africa show that authoritarian systems are not sustainable in the 21<sup>st</sup> century...When the political reforms are in place, I look forward to going back to my country and contributing to strengthen the democratization process and teach the young generation."

**Come hear Dr. Semahagn Gashu Abebe speak on November 17 at 4:30 p.m.  
in the Mary Tefft White Cultural Center at Roger Williams University Library  
Co-sponsored by the School of Justice Studies**

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## From the Nightstand: Hannah Goodall

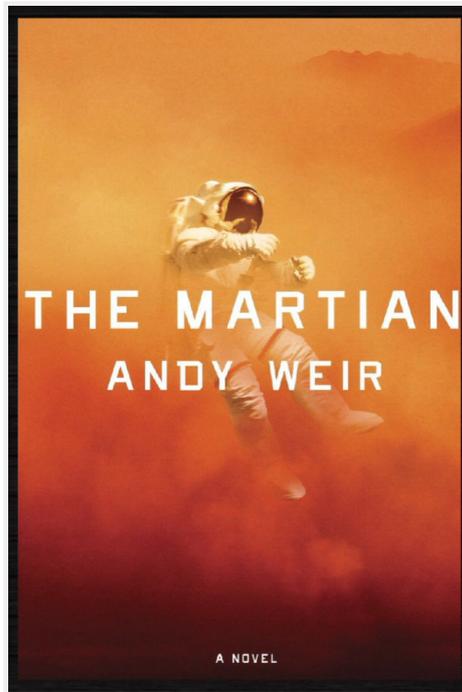
OCTOBER 27, 2015 10:00 AM

Interview conducted by Jacquelyn Voghel, Connections Intern



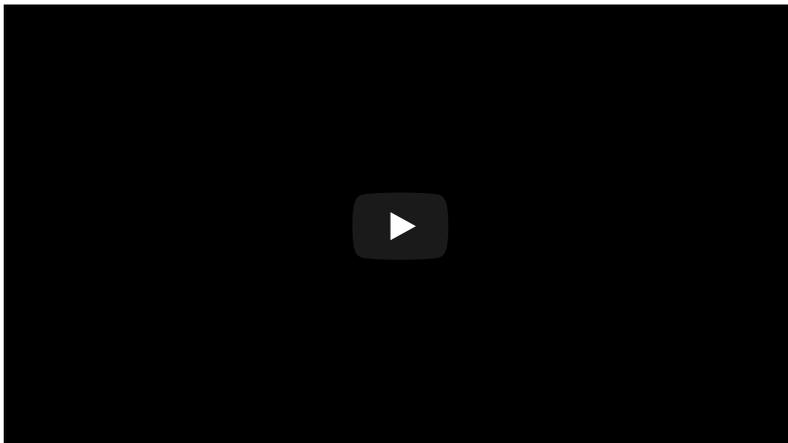
*Hannah Goodall is the Learning Commons Coordinator, and has been at RWU for 2 years.*

Current Read



Hannah is currently reading *The Martian* by Andy Weir, which tells the story of Mark Watney, an astronaut who becomes stranded on Mars after his crew, assuming he is dead, evacuates the planet without him. Alone in a hostile environment, Mark must use all of his resources and scientific knowledge to accomplish the daunting task of returning home.

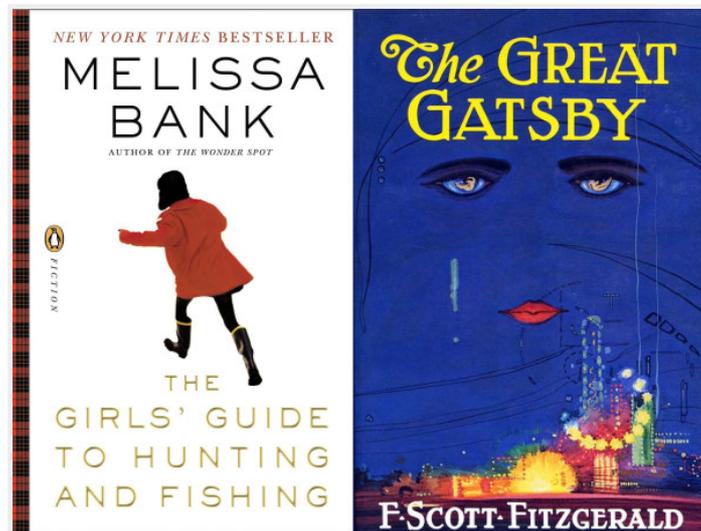
Hannah decided to read the novel after seeing a trailer for its movie adaptation, which was directed by Ridley Scott and stars Matt Damon. Hannah praised the novel for its use of humor, and expressed that while the movie looks impressive, she is confident that the book is even better.



#### Memorable Reads



Hannah regards J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series as among her favorite books. She was 11 years old when the first *Harry Potter* book was published, and she ardently followed the series as each new book came out, even taking two days off from work in order to have time to finish the final book without interruption. Although the series has now concluded, Hannah continues to reread books four through seven nearly every summer.



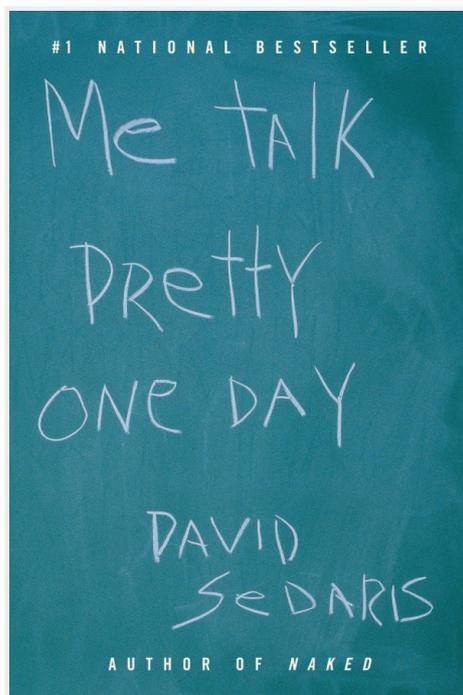
Aside from *Harry Potter*, Hannah also counts *The Girls' Guide to Hunting and Fishing* by Melissa Bank and *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald as among her most memorable reads. She read both books as a teenager, but has since revisited them. While Hannah was initially lukewarm toward *The Great Gatsby*, it has since taken on new meaning to her.

#### Upcoming Reads



For her next read, Hannah plans to pick up Aziz Ansari's *Modern Romance: An Investigation*. Ansari is an actor and comedian known for his work on shows such as *Parks and Recreation* as well as his stand-up comedy, and his book examines the interplay between technology and romance today.

#### Essential Read

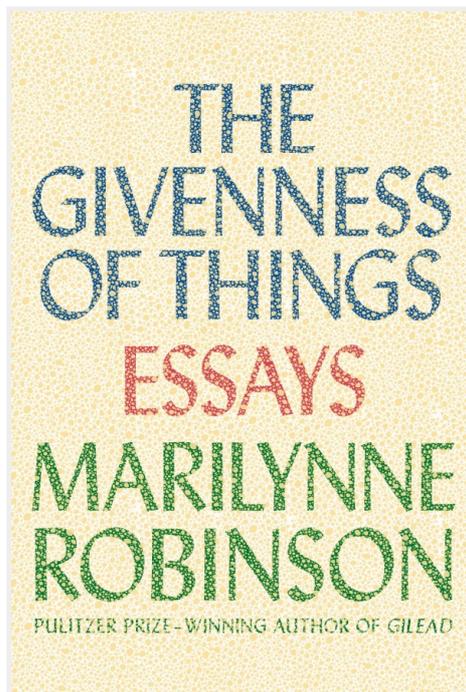


Hannah was introduced to the works of David Sedaris when she read his book *Me Talk Pretty One Day*, and would now recommend any of his works. She recalls that the book was so humorous that she laughed out loud while reading it in public, and now regards Sedaris as her favorite author. In addition to his books, Hannah also called Sedaris' personal essays "hilarious and also insightful and moving."



## SHORT TAKES: Upcoming Books

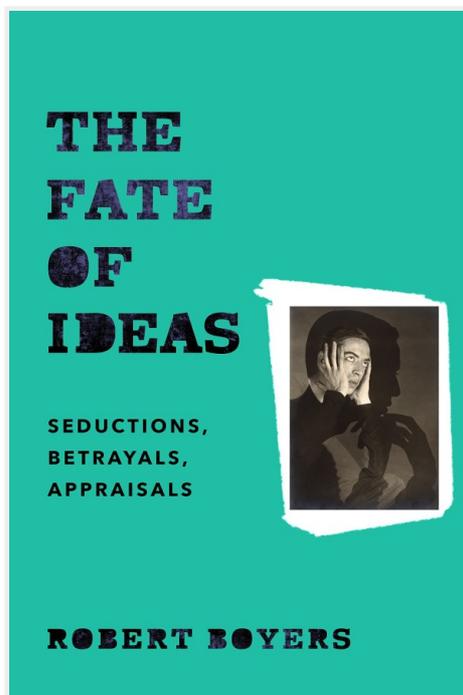
OCTOBER 26, 2015 10:00 AM



*The Givenness of Things*, by Marilynne Robinson  
Farrar, Straus and Giroux  
October 2015

Marilynne Robinson's new collection offers seventeen essays that probe the state of humanism, theology, and morality in our contemporary culture. Readers who know Robinson through her fiction (*Housekeeping*, the Pulitzer Prize winning *Gilead*) will not be surprised at the depth and intellect that Robinson brings to her essays (a thoughtfulness well on display in the November 5 issue of the *New York Review of Books*, in which Robinson is interviewed by President Obama on many of the issues addressed *The Givenness of Things*). In looking forward to the book, we will expect to find ourselves in states of contemplation, in states of rage, and in states of hope.

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*The Fate of Ideas: Seductions, Betrayals, Appraisals*, by Robert Boyers  
Columbia University Press  
September 2015

In his most current book, noted literary and cultural critic Robert Boyers brings us essays that are as much criticism as they are memoir. As someone who has been on the frontlines of much of the intellectual culture of the past half-century, Boyers is able to take his experiences with some of the great minds of the last century and fuse them into personal essays that address specific *ideas* that permeate our contemporary culture, asking why some fade into fashions of the time while others define us.

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## Bookbub: Free Books for All!

OCTOBER 23, 2015 10:00 AM

By Lindsey Gumb, *Instructional Technology Librarian*

### Farmstead Feast: Winter

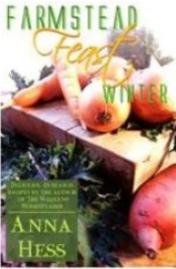
By Anna Hess

Eating seasonal and local crops is healthy, good for the environment, and very, very tasty! Learn how to make wonderful, mouthwatering meals for every season.

**Free!** *Originally: \$0.99*

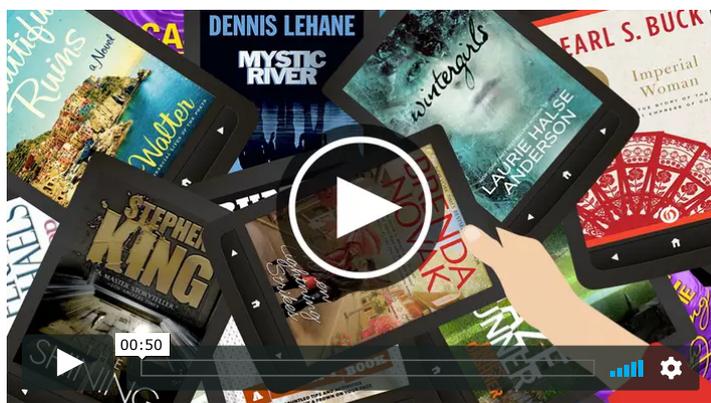
[Get Deal](#)

*Category: Cooking*



Hopefully by now you know that you can borrow books from the University Library (*you do know that, right!?*), but did you also know there's another great resource that provides free and discounted e-books for you to download directly to your e-reader? Introducing, BookBub, a service that will send you daily emails with either free or greatly discounted (\$.99-\$2.99) e-books that can be instantly downloaded to any device (think Kindle, Nook, iBooks, Android). The best part: even the free books are yours to keep! That's right, unlike borrowing titles from the library, these books are yours to enjoy forever. The expert editorial staff at Bookbub serves up bestsellers and noteworthy reads every single day, but don't hesitate if a book catches your eye! These deals are limited-time offers and usually expire within a few days. Bookbub is free to join, and you can edit your preferences to match the type of deals you're interested in receiving, with dozens of categories to choose from. Biographies? Check. Sci-fi? Check. Romance? Check. Cookbooks? Check!

With your busy class schedules it may seem like pleasure reading is a thing of the past, but when things calm down, why not let Bookbub select and deliver your first free read; we think you'll be pleasantly surprised.



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## Meet the Learning Commons: Bob Shea, Associate Provost for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning

OCTOBER 22, 2015 10:00 AM



Bob Shea, Associate Provost for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning

Interviewed by Lindsey Gumb, *Instructional Technology Librarian*

### 1. You've worked at several other academic institutions before arriving here. What drew you to RWU?

A couple of things really drew me to RWU. First of all, it was very clear to me from the moment I read the job description that someone gave a lot of thought to the creation of this position of Associate Provost for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning, and that was exciting. Another very important draw for me was that I noticed RWU's values aligned very closely with my own, specifically with regard to engaged teaching and learning.

### 2. What is your long-term goal for Center for Student Academic Success?

My long-term goal for the Center for Student Academic Success has two main strands. The first is to develop an integrated student support hub, which is more than just one-stop shopping of services. I see CSAS as being aligned with the Center for Teaching and Learning to provide support for faculty development so that our faculty can best advise our students. The second is the need to establish an outcomes-based, developmental approach to student success.

### 3. The breadth of your position is challenging. What area(s) seems to be demanding the most attention?

I don't think there's an easy answer to this! Every area that I oversee requires a lot of my attention. I think that with all of the areas, there is work to be done building systems for digitizing and simplifying processes, as well as building a culture that focuses heavily on learning outcomes and student success.



#### 4. What is your vision for both a physical and virtual Center for Teaching and Learning?

I see the Center for Teaching and Learning as having the primary role of making time and space available for faculty to meet and talk to each other about their own teaching and student learning. There isn't a space like this currently on campus, and its development is high on my priority list. The physical center will reside on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the library, but it is still to be determined how big or what the space will look like. A virtual center is also under development in the form of a Bridges site.

#### 5. What role do you see the library playing when it comes to experiential learning and the Center for Teaching and Learning? Can you provide some examples of your interactions with librarians in your previous positions?

At every institution before arriving at RWU, I've always worked very closely with the library and librarians. At Pine Manor College, I revised the First-Year Experience Program that, in part, focused on the development of information literacy skills. At the University of Rhode Island, I worked with librarians on assessing information literacy skills, as well as on broader program assessment efforts. I made the deepest connections while at Bryant University, where I team-taught a course, *Citizenship in a Digital Age*, with Jenifer Bond, Associate Director of the library. This class focused a lot on helping students to develop strong information literacy skills, and I learned so much from working with Jenifer.

#### 6. Outside of RWU, what hobbies or activities do you enjoy?

I really enjoy traveling! When I was at Bryant University I oversaw the Study Abroad program, and I was lucky enough to also find myself chaperoning several international trips, including to Spain, Germany and South Africa.



## October is American Archives Month

OCTOBER 21, 2015 2:41 PM

by Heidi Benedict, *University Archivist*



Celebrate with Us!

From October 21-26 the University Archives will be exhibiting a sampling of historic Rhode Island newspapers, including a 1758 *Newport Mercury*, on loan from alumnus John Painter.

In 2016, Roger Williams University will be 60 years old! How much do you know about the history of your school?

- Schedule a visit to the Archives, Please visit the physical space on the second floor of the library and its webpages at <http://library.rwu.edu/lib/services/university-archives>.
- Test your knowledge of RWC/RWU history. Questions will be posted to the library's twitter page every Friday during the month of October. Participants will be eligible to win an artifact from the Archives.

The Library's Institutional Repository, DOCS@RWU, provides free Open Access publishing services to showcase and promote the research, scholarship, and creative works of Roger Williams University and Law School faculty, students, and staff.

- Visit DOCS@RWU.EDU. Browse the collections and see the new video about what DOCS can do for you.
- Look for the [Open Access Challenge](#) on October 23. Answer all 3 questions correctly for a chance to win a gift certificate to the University Bookstore.

 Tweet

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## Talking in the Library – Erin X. Smithers

OCTOBER 18, 2015 3:03 PM

On October 20th, Talking in the Library presents Jazz Photographer and Blogger, Erin X. Smithers, in conversation with Dean Robert Eisenger. They will discuss Smithers' path from growing up in China with her vision of America through her father's passion for jazz, to her direct experiences with that jazz world as an adult in the United States. The discussion will take place at 4:30 p.m. in the Mary Tefft White Cultural Center in the University Library. Following is a preview of Erin X. Smithers' work.





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## The 21st Century Library

OCTOBER 16, 2015 2:17 PM

by Abby DeVeuve, *Connections Intern*



The university library is often seen as the hub of a campus, where students of all majors can mingle to study, research, and work. The needs of these students, across their various backgrounds, are constantly growing and changing. How does a library meet these needs and fit in to the ever-changing technological world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century? When imagining a library, most people picture stacks upon stacks of volumes in the traditional print format. However, libraries these days consist of much more than meets the eye. Good university libraries must use this technology to their best advantage to give their patrons access to all the information and research materials 21<sup>st</sup>-century students require to succeed. Luckily

for our students, the RWU library recognized these needs and first began to incorporate e-books into their offerings in 2004. A decade later, students are increasingly relying on online material, so to keep up with demand the library's collection of e-books has grown enormously since 2004.



### Advantages of E-Books

I spoke with Christine Fagan, the Collections Management Librarian, about how the library has negotiated the transition to e-books and the process behind the many decisions involved in offering e-books. According to Fagan, the advantages of offering e-books are countless. With e-books, students are able to do research off-campus without needing to step foot inside the library, which is especially beneficial for commuters and off-campus students. To do so, the student only needs to enter their name and their library barcode (the 14-digit number found on the back of their student ID card), when prompted, to gain access to all of the library's online material. An e-book can be viewed online or downloaded, just like checking out a regular book.

One major advantage of e-books: students can search inside the book for keywords or phrases which brings them directly to the information they need. E-books are especially helpful for use with reference books because of the ease of use with shorter entries and the keyword search function. Fagan says that reference materials "are an area prime for electronic conversion" because reference materials need to be updated constantly, which can be more easily done in an electronic format. For example, students can do a search in the Credo Reference Database, which merges a number of reference sources in one place. This is equivalent to being able to have a stack of reference books spread out around you, taking up an entire table in the library, but right on your computer screen. Credo also provides an amazing research tool called the "Mind Map," which allows a student to type in a word and see a web of interrelated words. The Mind Map is useful for giving students keywords to continue their research if they do not know where to go. For these reasons, the library has invested heavily in electronic reference materials under the direction of Christine Fagan and Susan McMullen, the primary agent for reference materials. Another advantage of e-books is that they are available 24/7, so students do not need to rely on the library's hours of operation to access them. E-books also provide students with the citation for the book, which students can email to themselves to access the book online later. E-books also provide additional materials not included in printed versions of books. For example, the *Oxford Handbook* provides a collection of essays, but the electronic version includes additional articles not bound in the print book. The e-book is the only way to purchase these bonus materials.

One of the most exciting advantages of e-books is their ability to allow access to resources students never would have been able to access before. The library has gained access for RWU students to collections of primary source material, such as Early English Books Online (EEBO). Fagan explains, "This collection contains digital facsimile page images of every printed work in England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and British North America from 1473-1700." Without e-Books, students would have to travel to England, Ireland, or wherever these old texts are stored, to gain access to these fragile volumes—obviously impractical. With EEBO, students can access a level of primary research materials that would really be otherwise unavailable. As well as EEBO, the library has 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century electronic collections of primary material such as books, essays, and pamphlets. Fagan explains how instead of relying on secondary sources, going back to the primary materials has been encouraged in history and other fields, so students can read the original documents and come to their own conclusions. Before there were e-book collections such as these, students could not do primary research on this level.

### Decisions, Decisions

Another great thing about e-books is that there are millions of them, but this also poses a problem for librarians who want to offer only the books they think RWU students would find useful. With limited funds, the library cannot just purchase every e-book out there and doing so would lead to information overload. Students would have to sift through useless titles to find what they need. The librarians hold collection management meetings to discuss what they should purchase, but Christine Fagan is the primary agent in charge of decisions regarding e-books. Most e-books are purchased either as individual titles or they are purchased as collections from publishers or agencies such as Project Muse or JSTOR.

According to Fagan, "Project Muse is a leading provider of digital humanities and social science content for the academic community, so I can rest assured that the collections that they have will be of high quality." She continues on to say that the reputations of the publishers and the agencies weigh heavily on the librarians' decisions because they only want to purchase reliable, quality material. Project Muse and JSTOR are academically-focused collections that have partnered with academic libraries, so they are the two major agencies used by the RWU library. Fagan explained how the e-book collections can be accessed through a subscription or through what is known as "perpetual access" e-book purchasing. Perpetual access means that the library retains access to the book just as if they purchased a physical book; they will always have it. Subscriptions are not as stable as perpetual access, but they do provide additional books that may not be available for perpetual access. Ebrary is the main subscription collection used by the library, which offers over 125,000 online books. Fagan and the other librarians must weigh the pros and cons of subscriptions versus perpetual access and to which books they want to gain access. If a book is central to a collection they might purchase that book in print form, especially if it is part of a subscription service rather than perpetual access.

### Challenges of E-Books

Of course, embracing new technologies comes with its challenges. Decisions about e-books have only gotten more complex as more and more resources are made available online by an increasing number of agencies. Fagan explains, "Reading a text cover to cover with an e-book can be challenging," which is why the library selects resources that are more compatible with the electronic format when deciding what to offer online and what to offer in print. Fagan has heard mixed reviews from students about e-books since it is harder to absorb material read on a screen versus in print. While they are growing in popularity, students still generally seem to prefer print books for certain tasks, such as research. Because every book cannot be duplicated in print and in e-book format, the library must make careful decisions about which books to offer in print and which to offer electronically. Fagan explains that their strategy is to focus on the "core materials that we really need to have in print, and then let the electronic collection blossom."

Another issue comes from the fact that different providers of e-books have different platforms, different licensing, differences in how much you can download, and various other inconsistencies because e-Books are not standardized. Fagan says that library professionals call e-Books the "Wild West" because there is still so much unknown territory and you never know exactly what you will get between different providers. Some agencies require students to log in, some do not; some allow students to check out a book indefinitely while others impose a time limit just like a regular library book. Some make the books available chapter by chapter while others offer the entire book for download. Generally, most e-books purchased by the RWU library offer unlimited user access, which means that more than one student can access an e-book at a time. Multiple user access is an advantage of e-books over print books, but the library must be sure to avoid e-books providing access to one user, only. There are also your run-of-the-mill technological problems such as when an e-book will not download; but this is a rare problem since the library only purchases from reliable sources. Fagan is hopeful that ultimately the process will become standardized to make a more user-friendly experience across all platforms.

### Accessing E-Books

E-Books can be accessed through the University Library website in a multitude of ways. Once you are on the library website, the easiest way to access materials regarding a topic is to select "OneSearch" from the main search bar at the top of the page. After typing in a keyword, a student can limit the search to e-books by changing the "format" tab on

the left side of the page. Another way to access e-books is by clicking on the "Books & E-books" option, which then produces a list of databases and collections of e-books available to students. This page also has a link to the e-book libguide, which provides help with viewing or downloading e-books. Alternatively, e-books can be accessed through specific databases through the alphabetical "Databases @ RWU" tab. For example, clicking on the "J" would bring up a list of all databases beginning with J, including JSTOR. Students can then click on the database they want to search.

This is where books are going, says Fagan. However, there is still value in keeping print books. Each format has pros and cons, which is why the decision making process is so complex. The 21<sup>st</sup> century university library faces unique challenges as it remains abreast of all the ways to give students access to the information and resources they need to succeed in school.



## John Hazen White – Talking in the Library – Mary Tefft White Cultural Center

OCTOBER 8, 2015 9:10 AM

By Abby DeVeuve, *Connections Intern*



On Tuesday, September 29<sup>th</sup>, the first lecture of the fall Talking in the Library series was also the very first lecture given in the new Mary Tefft White Cultural Center Instant Theater. It is fitting, then, that this inaugural lecture was given by John Hazen White Jr., the son of Mary Tefft White, the center's namesake. Mary Tefft "Happy" White was a beloved alumna of Roger Williams University whose endowment made the Center and the lecture series possible. Her goal in providing the space and the lecture series was to introduce students to accomplished individuals who could share their professional and personal stories in order to inspire students in their search for their own careers. The Center has hosted nearly 400 presentations, including lectures from authors, faculty presentations, and student exhibitions.

Now, to more fully bring the original vision of the Mary Tefft White Center to life, and to expand its capacity as a learning space, it has been renovated as an Instant Theater. When not in use for a lecture, the glass walls enclose an area arranged with clusters of tables and chairs that can be changed into different layouts to accommodate students' needs.



Seniors Stephanie Ressler, Daniel Ressler, and Eric Valenti have used the updated Center for all of their group project meetings this semester. "I like how we can change around the tables based on what we need them for. I also enjoy the updated, clean feeling of the glass walls," said Stephanie. Eric commented, "It's ideal for group work because you don't disturb others in the library when talking to your group."

When it is being used for a lecture, the glass walls and doors separate the lecture space from the low-level buzz typical of the first floor of the library. The students in the library are not disrupted by the lecturer, and the lecturer is not distracted by the students. However, the nearly invisible walls make the Center feel like an integrated part of the library because curious library patrons can still see the lecture and decide to join in. The glass is more inviting than closed-off walls, but more private than the previous open space.



The new space is called an "Instant Theater" because of how easily it can convert from student group space to lecture and presentation space. The Center also features a technological update, including four permanently mounted TV screens around the room and one larger screen that descends at the front of the room. These screens add to the functionality of the lecture space and the student space because the library is increasingly being used for multimedia purposes.

The updated Mary Tefft White Cultural Center will advance the purpose of the original space by inviting speakers from the outside community into Roger Williams and allowing these speakers to use the space in new ways. The legacy of Mary Tefft White lives on in this lecture series and in her son, John Hazen White Jr.



To kick off the lecture series, Mr. White talked about education, business, philanthropy, leadership, and civic-mindedness. Standing at the front of the new Mary Tefft White Cultural Center in his Easter-egg-green pants and his "live free or ride" Harley Davidson belt, Mr. White proclaimed, "I love every minute of my life."

It was clear that Mr. White is grateful for the opportunities he has had, but he also feels a great degree of responsibility for making his life one he can enjoy. According to him, part of why he loves his life is because he feels good about his work, which involves philanthropy and community service. This service begins with his company, Taco Comfort Solutions, a hydronic manufacturing company that he inherited from his father. Mr. White repeatedly stated that his work is for the people: "I don't go to work every day to make money. I go to work to perpetuate an environment where 700 people and their families can grow. I love my employees with my heart and soul."

In order to create this work environment, his father created the Taco Learning Center, where employees and their families can take free classes taught by high school teachers and college professors. Classes offered at the Learning Center include English as a second language, math, and civics. The Learning Center is progressive in that it puts the employees' needs first and treats them like people. Mr. White said that the Learning Center is his father's greatest legacy, which is one he has been able to perpetuate and expand upon. Since 1994 Taco has run two art and music summer camps for children ages 6-12 and two oceanography camps for children ages 13-17. The camps are open to the extended families of employees.

Mr. White learned to be philanthropic by watching his parents. However, he admits that he did not always have a civic mindset – in fact, he claimed that he was given a job at his father's company in an out-of-the-way sales position to keep him out of trouble. He surprised everyone, including himself, it seems, by growing his department into one of the largest in the company and then taking over the company from his father.



Mr. White revealed that a turning point came when his father died. "On that day, I had to decide if I believed in myself," he said, looking at the audience with tangible emotion in his eyes. Throughout the talk, he was personable and intimate, at times revealing his struggles and at others making the audience laugh. He explained that he grew up watching his father take action in civics and politics and realized he wanted to make an impact in the same way. He created the TV show *Lookout RI* and became a watchdog on issues pertinent for taxpayers. Suddenly serious and subdued, he revealed how he felt responsible to step up as a leader when people told him he was a voice of the people. In the next moment he joked, "Plus, I love being on TV!"

Despite his success in taking over his father's company and in continuing the mission of the White Family Foundation, Mr. White remains humble and self-deprecating. He does not consider himself a great businessman or a leader, but he does consider himself someone who knows how to consult experts on such topics. This was another main point of his talk: to cultivate relationships with other people and learn from them. Other people are the most important things in the world, he stated, and it is important to get to know their stories. Mr. White knows the names of all 700 of his employees and their family members' names.

Of course, knowing people is just the first step for Mr. White. The next is helping them. The White Family Foundation focuses on the arts, education, and healthcare, because these are the issues that he believes will create a better community. Mr. White believes that everyone has a responsibility to give back to the community. He stressed that philanthropy is not all about money – it can be giving time and care, and learning about each other.



Mr. White's own engagement in the community reflects what Roger Williams University is trying to do with the Mary Tefft White Cultural Center – to be present and active in the wider community. While talking about his many blessings and the things he is grateful for, Mr. White captured perfectly this purpose of the Mary Tefft White Center: "The greatest blessing that we're given in this life is the time to share with others . . . to spend time to listen and to learn. If we listen and we learn, we'll be better for it."



## What We're Reading – Library Staff – October 2015

OCTOBER 6, 2015 8:05 AM

Students, faculty and staff are always asking the Learning Commons Librarians and Staff for suggestions about what books to read.

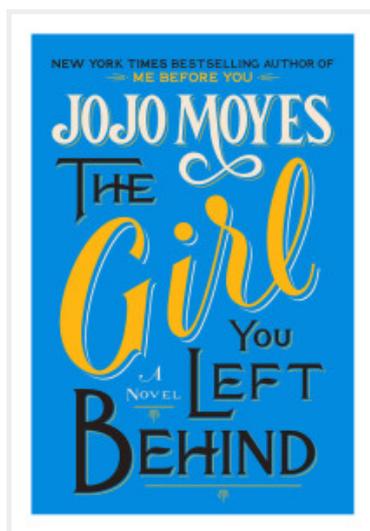
Here is a list of what we are currently reading and some of our favorite summer reads.



**Betsy Peck Learned**, Interim Dean of University Libraries

My current read is *Euphoria* by Lily King. It is a fictional account of the early life of Margaret Mead, the anthropologist, studying tribes in New Guinea.

My favorite summer read was *The Goldfinch* by Donna Tartt. She's an amazing writer who tells a very dark and dramatic but human story of a boy named Theo who spends his life both trying to find and lose himself.



**Susan McMullen**, Professor – Research Services & User Engagement Librarian

I'm currently reading *The Girl You Left Behind* by JoJo Moyes. Through her vividly drawn characters and brilliant storytelling, JoJo Moyes immediately engages her readers in an emotional ride that spans two time frames and locations—a small village in France during the German occupation of World War I and modern-day London. In this gorgeous story of unwavering love and sacrifice, the romantic narratives of two compelling women are bound together through a fictional painting named *The Girl You Left Behind*. Their stories of love and sacrifice take the reader on a journey that explores the complexities of the human spirit and the power of art to resonate through the ages. Moyes has a unique talent for grabbing the reader's attention and writing a story that makes a lasting impression.



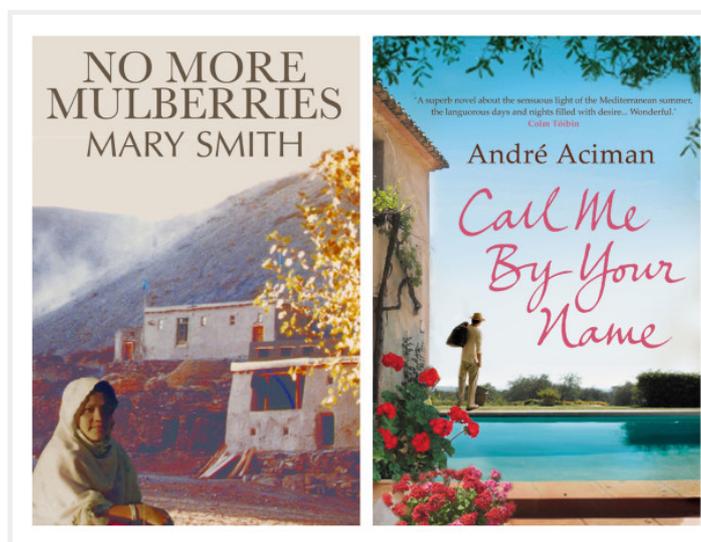
**Karen Jones Ethier**, Director of Support Services – Information Technology

My current read is *The Casual Vacancy* by J.K. Rowling.

My favorite is a tie:

1. *The Goldfinch* by Donna Tartt: Fiction
2. *The Rosie Project* by Graeme Simsion: Fiction

I loved *The Goldfinch* because her writing just swept me right into the story and I loved *The Rosie Project* because it made me laugh out loud!



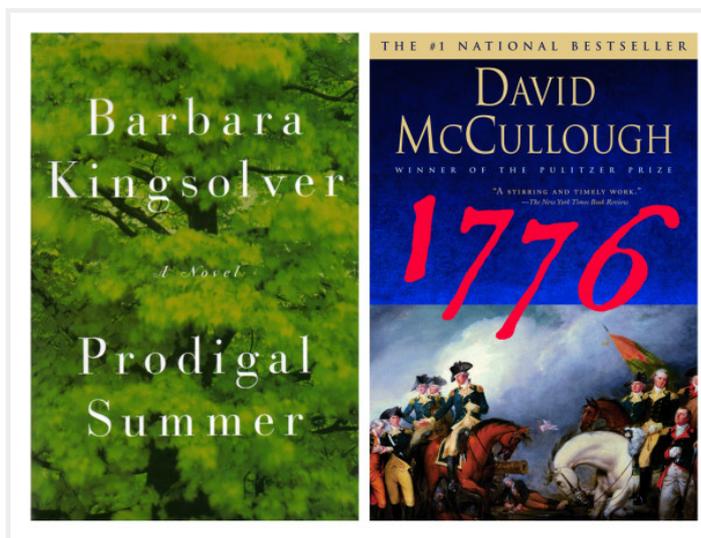
**Lindsey Gumb**, Instructional Technology Librarian

I'm currently reading *No More Mulberries* by Mary Smith (women's fiction).

So far, this is a beautifully written novel about a Scottish-born midwife who finds herself married, widowed and remarried in Afghanistan amidst the civil war in 1995. She must learn to cope with the loss of her first husband while raising her two children and navigating her new marriage of convenience and her career as a midwife in a country with little to no resources.

My favorite summer read is *Call Me by Your Name* by André Aciman (fiction).

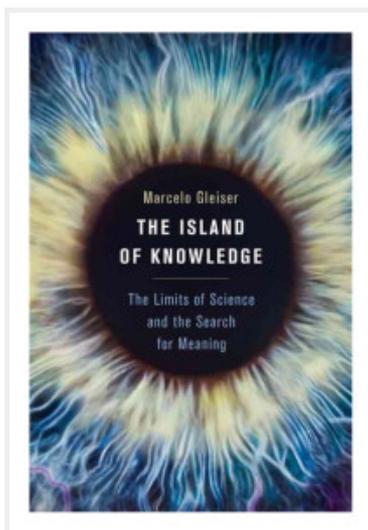
I just finished reading this book, and Aciman's poetic writing moved me to tears and made my heart ache when I realized I had come to the end of this epically beautiful story of love and loss set in Italy. I've downloaded his next book *Harvard Square*, and can't wait to delve in.



**Barbara Kenney**, Professor, Instructional Services and Campus Initiatives Librarian

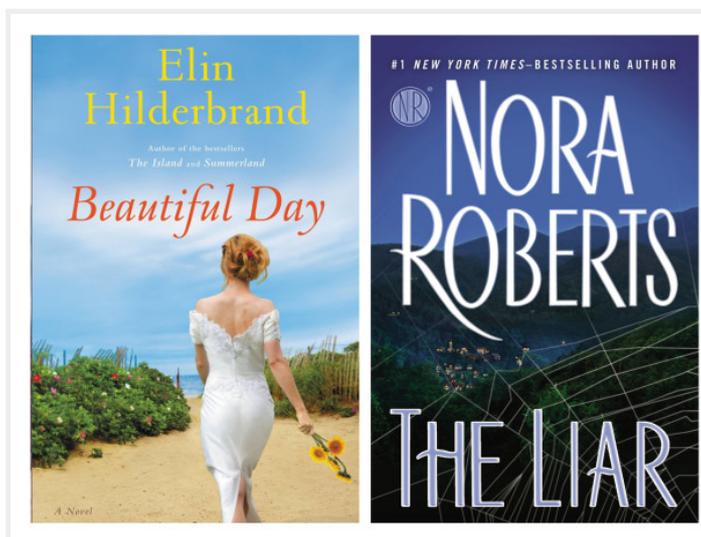
My current read is *1776* (audiobook) by David McCullough. Listening to the author tell the thrilling and improbable story of the year our country was born is pure delight. It is a timely reminder that freedom comes at a cost, we should never take for granted that freedom, and the people who founded our country were dedicated patriots, something we could use more of these days.

My favorite (all-time) summer read: *Prodigal Summer* by Barbara Kingsolver. For four summers, I listened to the author narrate these beautifully written, interwoven tales of life, love and the natural world in an Appalachian summer. I love this book!



**John Schlinke**, Architecture/Art Librarian

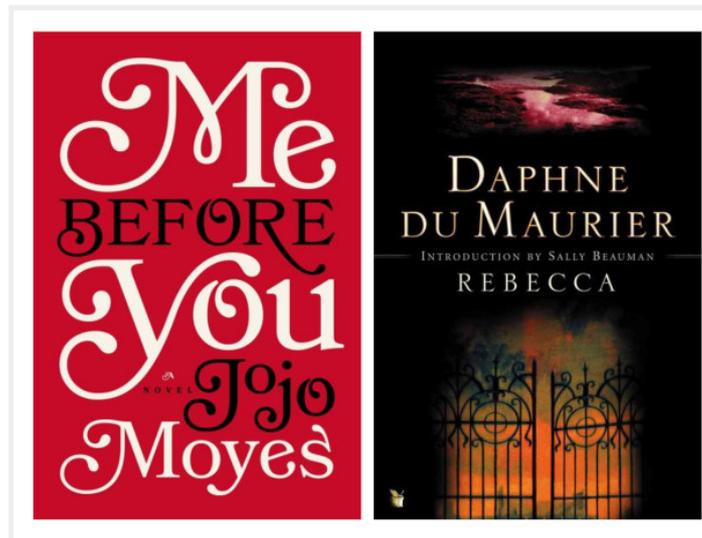
I'm currently reading *The Island of Knowledge* by Marcelo Gleiser. It is an exploration of the limits of scientific knowledge.



**Nancy Jannitto**, Learning Commons Administrative Assistant

Current read: *Beautiful Day* by Elin Hilderbrand. I love the way she writes. It is about a woman who is planning her wedding on Nantucket Island and everything that goes wrong. It's also very funny.

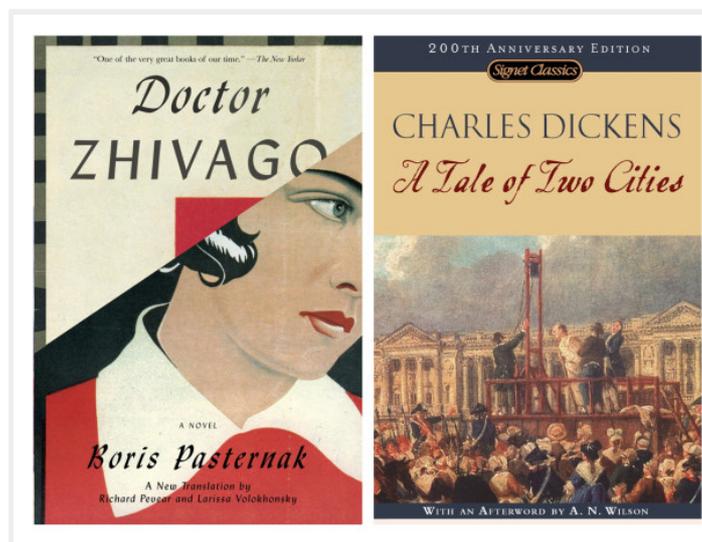
Favorite summer read: *The Liar* by Nora Roberts. This book had my attention from the beginning. It is about a woman who gets pregnant young and marries a man who she eventually finds out is not what he appears to be.



**Linda Beith**, Director of Instructional Design

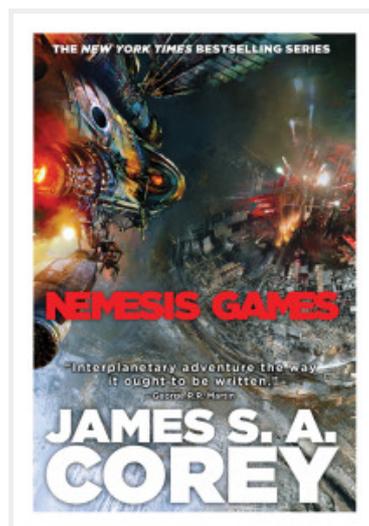
I just finished *Me Before You* by JoJo Moyes—a romantic novel—so heartbreaking! It's a love story but gives the reader a lot to think about around loving yourself as well (or more!) as another and the right to choose how you live.

My favorite summer read is *Rebecca* by Daphne du Maurier—a gothic novel. I know it's old but I enjoy revisiting it and the beautiful Manderley.



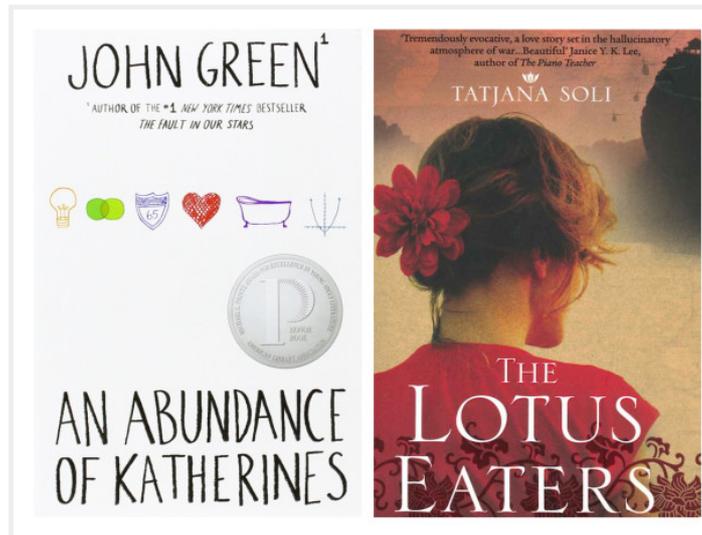
**Mary Wu**, Digital Scholarship and Metadata Librarian

I am fond of the classics. Right now I'm reading *Dr. Zhivago* by Boris Pasternak, recommended to me by my oldest son. Not long ago, I read *A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens and saw outlines of the Chinese Cultural Revolution, though they are set nearly two centuries apart. So, my son may have thought it interesting to read a book about the Russian Revolution together with one about the French Revolution, to consider why one revolution led to a free, democratic France, while the other created a totalitarian Soviet regime.



Chris Truskowski, Web and Digital Services Specialist

I'm reading *Nemesis Games* by James S. A. Corey. The fifth book in a series described as "the science fictional equivalent of *A Song of Ice and Fire*," *Nemesis Games* sees a thousand new worlds opened up to humanity. During the initial waves of colonization, old governments start to buckle, ships go missing, private armies come to power and the crew of a small ship just wants to make it home through all of this.



Hannah Goodall, Learning Commons Coordinator

My current read is *An Abundance of Katherines* by John Green. My favorite summer read is *The Lotus Eaters* by Tatjana Soli. *The Lotus Eaters* is about an American female journalist in Saigon during the Vietnam War. I read this the summer after I had finished traveling in Southeast Asia so I felt a bit more connected to the places the book describes. I also liked the story of a lone female photojournalist in a man's world and war, with a hint of a love story.

Stop in at the University Library for more recommendations and to check out some great books!



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