

This is not the assignment sheet of the ORP. But these are the books you have available to read when that assignment is introduced (which will be very soon). The following topics are going to be your writing options for a researched-based essay that will be part of the class for weeks to come. Choose wisely, knowing that a large portion of your time, energy, and grade will be devoted to diving deep into one of the following topics.

- Education (*LoC* pages 89-140, 150-163)
  - To what extent do our schools serve the goals of a true education?
- Work (*LoC* page 177-223, 235-246)
  - How does our work shape or influence our lives?
- Community (*LoC* pages 259 -306, 317-332)
  - What is the relationship of the individual to the community?
- Gender (*LoC* pages 347-392, 408-417)
  - What is the impact of the gender roles that society creates and enforces?
- Sports and Fitness (*LoC* pages 429-475, 482-492)
  - How do the values of sports affect the way we see ourselves?
- Language (*LoC* pages 507-567, 579-589)
  - How does the language we use reveal who we are?
- Science and Technology (*LoC* pages 599-662, 678-695)
  - How are the advances in science and technology affecting the way we define our humanity?
- Popular Culture (*LoC* pages 707-758, 766-787)
  - To what extent does pop culture reflect our society's values?
- Nature (*LoC* pages 797-847, 862-887)
  - What is our responsibility to nature?
- Politics (*LoC* pages 903-961, 991-996)
  - What is the relationship between the citizen and the state?

● **Educated: A Memoir** Born to survivalists in the mountains of Idaho, Tara Westover was seventeen the first time she set foot in a classroom. Her family was so isolated from mainstream society that there was no one to ensure the children received an education, and no one to intervene when one of Tara's older brothers became violent. When another brother got himself into college, Tara decided to try a new kind of life. Her quest for knowledge transformed her, taking her over oceans and across continents, to Harvard and to Cambridge University. Only then would she wonder if she'd traveled too far, if there was still a way home.

● **Range** Plenty of experts argue that anyone who wants to develop a skill, play an instrument, or lead their field should start early, focus intensely, and rack up as many hours of deliberate practice as possible. If you dabble or delay, you'll never catch up to the people who got a head start. But a closer look at research on the world's top performers, from professional athletes to Nobel laureates, shows that early specialization is the exception, not the rule. David Epstein examined the world's most successful athletes, artists, musicians, inventors, forecasters and scientists. He discovered that in most fields—especially those that are complex and unpredictable—generalists, not specialists, are primed to excel. Generalists often find their path late, and they juggle many interests rather than focusing on one. They're also more creative, more agile, and able to make connections their more specialized peers can't see. Provocative, rigorous, and engrossing, *Range* makes a compelling case for actively cultivating inefficiency. Failing a test is the best way to learn. Frequent quitters end up with the most fulfilling careers. The most impactful inventors cross domains rather than deepening their knowledge in a single area. As experts silo themselves further while computers master more of the skills once reserved for highly focused humans, people who think broadly and embrace diverse experiences and perspectives will increasingly thrive.

● **Bullspotting** This entertaining and educational book applies the tools of critical thinking to identify the common features and trends among misinformation campaigns. With illustrations drawn from conspiracy theorists and deniers of every stripe, the author teaches readers how rumors are started, and the rhetorical techniques and logical fallacies often found in misleading or outright false claims. What distinguishes real conspiracies from conspiracy theories, real science from pseudoscience, and actual history from bogus accounts purporting to be history? How does one evaluate the credibility of rumors and quotes or judge the soundness of legal arguments advanced by tax deniers? Readers will learn how to make these critical distinctions and also how to spot "evidence" that has been manufactured or manipulated in some way to create a false impression. At a time when average citizens are bombarded with false information every day, this entertaining book will prove to be not only a great read but also an indispensable resource.

● **Misbehaving** Thaler enlightens listeners about how to make smarter decisions in an increasingly mystifying world. He reveals how behavioral economic analysis opens up new ways to look at everything from household finance to assigning faculty offices in a new building to TV game shows, the NFL draft, and businesses like Uber. Laced with antic stories of Thaler's spirited battles with the bastions of traditional economic thinking, *Misbehaving* is a singular look into profound human foibles. When economics meets psychology, the implications for individuals, managers, and policy makers are both profound and entertaining.

● **On Writing** "Long live the King" hailed *Entertainment Weekly* upon publication of Stephen King's *On Writing*. Part memoir, part master class by one of the bestselling authors of all time, this superb volume is a revealing and practical view of the writer's craft, comprising the basic tools of the trade every writer must have. King's advice is grounded in his vivid memories from childhood through his

emergence as a writer, from his struggling early career to his widely reported, near-fatal accident in 1999—and how the inextricable link between writing and living spurred his recovery. Brilliantly structured, friendly and inspiring, *On Writing* will empower and entertain everyone who reads it—fans, writers, and anyone who loves a great story well told.

- **Loserthink** If we're not careful, loserthink would have us believe that every Trump supporter is a bigoted racist, addicts should be responsible for fixing the opioid epidemic, and that your relationship fell apart simply because you chewed with your mouth open. Even the smartest people can slip into loserthink's seductive grasp. This book will teach you how to spot and avoid it – and will give you scripts to respond when hollow arguments are being brandished against you. Whether by well-intentioned friends, strangers on the internet, or political pundits. You'll also learn how to spot the underlying causes of loserthink, like the inability to get ego out of your decisions, thinking with words instead of reasons, failing to imagine alternative explanations, and making too much of coincidences. Your bubble of reality doesn't have to be a prison. This book will show you how to break free – and, what's more, to be among the most perceptive and respected thinkers in every conversation.
- **Everything is F\*cked: A Book About Hope** We live in an interesting time. Materially, everything is the best it's ever been - we are freer, healthier, and wealthier than any people in human history. Yet, somehow everything seems to be irreparably and horribly f\*cked - the planet is warming, governments are failing, economies are collapsing, and everyone is perpetually offended on Twitter. At this moment in history, when we have access to technology, education, and communication our ancestors couldn't even dream of, so many of us come back to an overriding feeling of hopelessness. What's going on? If anyone can put a name to our current malaise and help fix it, it's Mark Manson. In *Everything Is F\*cked*, Manson turns his gaze from the inevitable flaws within each individual self to the endless calamities taking place in the world around us. Drawing from the pool of psychological research on these topics, as well as the timeless wisdom of philosophers such as Plato, Nietzsche, and Tom Waits, he dissects religion and politics and the uncomfortable ways they have come to resemble one another. He looks at our relationships with money, entertainment, and the internet, and how too much of a good thing can psychologically eat us alive. He openly defies our definitions of faith, happiness, freedom - and even of hope itself. With his usual mix of erudition and where-the-f\*ck-did-that-come-from humor, Manson takes us by the collar and challenges us to be more honest with ourselves and connected with the world in ways we probably haven't considered before. It's another counterintuitive romp through the pain in our hearts and the stress of our soul. One of the great modern writers has produced another book that will set the agenda for years to come.
- **Time and How to Spend It.** We've learned how to spot the difference between junk foods and superfoods. When you discover the equivalent rules for time, it'll change how you live your life. Here, cultural commentator James Wallman investigates the persistent problem of wasted, unfulfilling time, and finds a powerful answer—a revolutionary approach to life based on the latest scientific discoveries. At its heart is the inspiring revelation that you can actively choose better experiences. Bursting with original stories, fresh takes on tales you thought you knew, and insights from psychology, economics, and culture, this book reveals a seven-point checklist that'll help you avoid empty experiences, and fill your free hours with exciting and enriching ones instead. You'll learn how to avoid WMDs (weapons of mass distraction), and discover the roads that lead to flow. You'll get more out of every minute and every day; your weekends will fizz, and your holidays will be deeply nourishing. You'll not only be living the good life, but building a truly great life.
- **Stillness is The Key** All great leaders, thinkers, artists, athletes, and visionaries share one indelible quality. It enables them to conquer their tempers. To avoid distraction and discover great insights. To achieve happiness and do the right thing. Ryan Holiday calls it stillness - to be steady while the world spins around you. In this audiobook, he outlines a path for achieving this ancient, but urgently necessary way of living. Drawing on a wide range of history's greatest thinkers, from Confucius to Seneca, Marcus Aurelius to Thich Nhat Hanh, John Stuart Mill to Nietzsche, he argues that stillness is not mere inactivity, but the doorway to self-mastery, discipline, and focus. Holiday also examines figures who exemplified the power of stillness: baseball player Sadaharu Oh, whose study of Zen made him the greatest home run hitter of all time; Winston Churchill, who in balancing his busy public life with time spent laying bricks and painting at his Chartwell estate managed to save the world from annihilation in the process; Fred Rogers, who taught generations of children to see what was invisible to the eye; Anne Frank, whose journaling and love of nature guided her through unimaginable adversity. More than ever, people are overwhelmed. They face obstacles and egos and competition. *Stillness Is the Key* offers a simple but inspiring antidote to the stress of 24/7 news and social media. The stillness that we all seek is the path to meaning, contentment, and excellence in a world that needs more of it than ever.
- **The Tipping Point** Why did crime in New York drop in the mid-90s? Why is teenage smoking out of control? Why are television shows like *Sesame Street* good at teaching kids how to read? In *The Tipping Point*, *New Yorker* writer Malcolm Gladwell looks at why major changes in society happen suddenly and unexpectedly. Just as a single sick person can start an epidemic of the flu, so too can a few fare-beaters and graffiti artists fuel a subway crime wave, or a satisfied customer fill the empty tables of a new restaurant. These are social epidemics, and the moment when they take off, when they reach their critical mass, is the Tipping Point. Gladwell uncovers the personality types who are natural pollinators of new ideas and trends. He analyzes fashion trends, smoking, children's television, direct mail and the early days of the American Revolution for clues about making ideas infectious. *The Tipping Point* is an intellectual adventure story with an infectious enthusiasm for the power and joy of new ideas. Most of all, it is a road map to change, with a profoundly hopeful message: that one imaginative person applying a well-placed lever can move the world.
- **Nickle and Dimed** Millions of Americans work full time, year round, for poverty-level wages. In 1998, Barbara Ehrenreich decided to join them. She was inspired in part by the rhetoric surrounding welfare reform, which promised that a job -- any job -- can be the ticket to a better life. But how does anyone survive, let alone prosper, on \$6 an hour? To find out, Ehrenreich left her home, took the cheapest lodgings she could find, and accepted whatever jobs she was offered. Moving from Florida to Maine to Minnesota, she worked as a waitress, a hotel maid, a cleaning woman, a nursing-home aide, and a Wal-Mart sales clerk. She lived in trailer parks and crumbling residential motels. Very quickly, she discovered that no job is truly "unskilled," that even the lowliest occupations require exhausting mental and muscular effort. She also learned that one job is not enough; you need at least two if you int to live indoors. *Nickle and Dimed* reveals low-rent America in all its tenacity, anxiety, and surprising generosity -- a land of Big Boxes, fast food, and a thousand desperate stratagems for survival.

- **Maid** Stephanie Land lifts the rug on the life of the working poor in her eye-opening book, *Maid*. She is writing about the people who clean our homes, who tend to our yards—yet so often these workers go unseen and their stories untold. As a single mother, Stephanie Land cares for herself and her young daughter through a complicated system of government assistance programs and through employment as a house cleaner. Her experience with government aid programs magnifies their worst inconsistency: how difficult is it for people to become self-sufficient when they are reliant on child care and food assistance credit in order to work and live, yet even the smallest increase in income can mean a significant loss of benefits. Land doesn't have family or friends who could help her financially. They just don't have it to give. She is truly on her own, yet using a food assistance card at the grocery store checkout has earned her scorn and judgement from strangers who think anyone using the system is abusing the system. Land is a fighter—her desire to create a better life for her daughter is what drives her to keep trying to dig her way out of poverty, working long hours for low pay, and grasping what kindnesses she receives like a life line. *Maid* is compelling because it's so personal. Land isn't whining or blaming, she's letting us into her life, sharing feelings of inadequacy, loneliness, and desperation that come with trying so damn hard to do better and still living below the poverty line in spite of her efforts. Land has a hard life but she also has hope and resilience. She finds joy in small moments that are often overlooked in the distraction of material things. *Maid* is an important work of journalism that offers an insightful and unique perspective on a segment of the working poor from someone who has lived it.

- **Evicted** In *Evicted*, Princeton sociologist and MacArthur “Genius” Matthew Desmond follows eight families in Milwaukee as they each struggle to keep a roof over their heads. Hailed as “wrenching and revelatory” (*The Nation*), “vivid and unsettling” (*New York Review of Books*), *Evicted* transforms our understanding of poverty and economic exploitation while providing fresh ideas for solving one of twenty-first-century America's most devastating problems. Its unforgettable scenes of hope and loss remind us of the centrality of home, without which nothing else is possible.

- **Grit** In *Grit*, Angela Duckworth takes us into the field to visit cadets struggling through their first days at West Point, teachers working in some of the toughest schools, and young finalists in the National Spelling Bee. She also mines fascinating insights from history and shows what can be gleaned from modern experiments in peak performance. Finally, she shares what she's learned from interviewing dozens of high achievers.

- **The Truth About Stories** "Stories are wondrous things. And they are dangerous." In *The Truth About Stories*, Native novelist and scholar Thomas King explores how stories shape who we are and how we understand and interact with other people. From creation stories to personal experiences, historical anecdotes to social injustices, racist propaganda to works of contemporary Native literature, King probes Native culture's deep ties to storytelling. With wry humor, King deftly weaves events from his own life as a child in California, an academic in Canada, and a Native North American with a wide-ranging discussion of stories told by and about Indians. So many stories have been told about Indians, King comments, that "there is no reason for the Indian to be real. The Indian simply has to exist in our imaginations." That imaginative Indian that North Americans hold dear has been challenged by Native writers - N. Scott Momaday, Leslie Marmon Silko, Louis Owens, Robert Alexie, and others - who provide alternative narratives of the Native experience that question, create a present, and imagine a future. King reminds the reader, Native and non-Native, that storytelling carries with it social and moral responsibilities. "Don't say in the years to come that you would have lived your life differently if only you had heard this story. You've heard it now."

- **Factfulness** In the book, Rosling suggests the vast majority of human beings are wrong about the state of the world. He shows that his test subjects think the world is poorer, less healthy, and more dangerous than it is. Rosling recommends thinking about the world as divided into four levels based on income brackets. He suggests ten instincts that prevent us from seeing real progress in the world. These are listed as Gap, Negativity, Straight Line, Fear, Size, Generalization, Destiny, Single, Blame, and Urgency. [Bill Gates](#) highlighted the book as one of his suggested 5 books worth reading for summer 2018. A *Business Insider* review notes that although Rosling argues that the future will be better than expected because birth rates are stabilizing, life expectancy around the world is increasing, the gender gap is nearly closed, and the extremely impoverished population is shrinking, others point out that populations are still expanding (with many still under-nourished), life expectancy in the US is decreasing, the gender gap is only nearly closed in education and not in employment, and extreme wealth has become more extreme.

- **The Broken Ladder** The levels of inequality in the world today are on a scale that have not been seen in our lifetimes, yet the disparity between rich and poor has ramifications that extend far beyond mere financial means. In *The Broken Ladder* psychologist Keith Payne examines how inequality divides us not just economically; it also has profound consequences for how we think, how we respond to stress, how our immune systems function, and even how we view moral concepts such as justice and fairness. Payne examines how inequality divides us not just economically; it also has profound consequences for how we think, how we respond to stress, how our immune systems function, and even how we view moral concepts such as justice and fairness.

- **Between the World and Me** In a profound work that pivots from the biggest questions about American history and ideals to the most intimate concerns of a father for his son, Ta-Nehisi Coates offers a powerful new framework for understanding our nation's history and current crisis. Americans have built an empire on the idea of "race", a falsehood that damages us all but falls most heavily on the bodies of black women and men - bodies exploited through slavery and segregation and, today, threatened, locked up, and murdered out of all proportion. What is it like to inhabit a black body and find a way to live within it? And how can we all honestly reckon with this fraught history and free ourselves from its burden? *Between the World and Me* is Ta-Nehisi Coates' attempt to answer these questions in a letter to his adolescent son. Coates shares with his son - and listeners - the story of his awakening to the truth about his place in the world through a series of revelatory experiences, from Howard University to Civil War battlefields, from the South Side of Chicago to Paris, from his childhood home to the living rooms of mothers whose children's lives were taken as American plunder. Beautifully woven from personal narrative, reimagined history, and fresh, emotionally charged reportage, *Between the World and Me* clearly illuminates the past, bravely confronts our present, and offers a transcendent vision for a way forward.

- **Quiet: The Power of Introverts** At least one-third of the people we know are introverts. They are the ones who prefer listening to speaking, reading to partying; who innovate and create but dislike self-promotion; who favor working on their own over brainstorming in

teams. Although they are often labeled "quiet," it is to introverts that we owe many of the great contributions to society—from van Gogh's sunflowers to the invention of the personal computer. Passionately argued, impressively researched, and filled with indelible stories of real people, *Quiet* shows how dramatically we undervalue introverts, and how much we lose in doing so. Taking the reader on a journey from Dale Carnegie's birthplace to Harvard Business School, from a Tony Robbins seminar to an evangelical megachurch, Susan Cain charts the rise of the Extrovert Ideal in the 20th century and explores its far-reaching effects. She talks to Asian-American students who feel alienated from the brash, backslapping atmosphere of American schools. She questions the dominant values of American business culture, where forced collaboration can stand in the way of innovation, and where the leadership potential of introverts is often overlooked. And she draws on cutting-edge research in psychology and neuroscience to reveal the surprising differences between extroverts and introverts. Perhaps most inspiring, she introduces us to successful introverts—from a witty, high-octane public speaker who recharges in solitude after his talks, to a record-breaking salesman who quietly taps into the power of questions. Finally, she offers invaluable advice on everything from how to better negotiate differences in introvert-extrovert relationships to how to empower an introverted child to when it makes sense to be a "pretend extrovert." This extraordinary book has the power to permanently change how we see introverts and, equally important, how introverts see themselves.

- **Dreamland: The True Tale of America's Opiate Epidemic** In 1929, in the blue-collar city of Portsmouth, Ohio, a company built a swimming pool the size of a football field; named Dreamland, it became the vital center of the community. Now, addiction has devastated Portsmouth, as it has hundreds of small rural towns and suburbs across America—addiction like no other the country has ever faced. How that happened is the riveting story of *Dreamland*. With a great reporter's narrative skill and the storytelling ability of a novelist, acclaimed journalist Sam Quinones weaves together two classic tales of capitalism run amok whose unintentional collision has been catastrophic. The unfettered prescribing of pain medications during the 1990s reached its peak in Purdue Pharma's campaign to market OxyContin, its new, expensive—extremely addictive—miracle painkiller. Meanwhile, a massive influx of black tar heroin—cheap, potent, and originating from one small county on Mexico's west coast, independent of any drug cartel—assaulted small town and mid-sized cities across the country, driven by a brilliant, almost unbeatable marketing and distribution system. Together these phenomena continue to lay waste to communities from Tennessee to Oregon, Indiana to New Mexico.

- **Thank You For Your Service** Finkel writes with tremendous compassion not just about soldiers but about their wives and children. Where do soldiers belong after their homecoming? Is it possible, or even reasonable, to expect them to rejoin their communities as if nothing has happened? And in moments of hardship, who are soldiers expected to turn to if they feel alienated by the world they once lived in? These are the questions Finkel faces as he revisits the brave but shaken men of the 2-16. More than a work of journalism, *Thank You for Your Service* is an act of understanding - shocking but always riveting, unflinching but deeply humane, it takes us inside the heads of those who must live the rest of their lives with the chilling realities of war.

- **The Evangelicals: The Struggle to Shape America** The evangelical movement began in the revivals of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, known in America as the Great Awakenings. A populist rebellion against the established churches, it became the dominant religious force in the country. During the nineteenth century white evangelicals split apart, first North versus South, and then, modernist versus fundamentalist. After World War II, Billy Graham attracted enormous crowds and tried to gather all Protestants under his big tent, but the civil rights movement and the social revolution of the sixties drove them apart again. By the 1980s Jerry Falwell and other southern televangelists, such as Pat Robertson, had formed the Christian right. Protesting abortion and gay rights, they led the South into the Republican Party, and for thirty-five years they were the sole voice of evangelicals to be heard nationally. Eventually a younger generation proposed a broader agenda of issues, such as climate change, gender equality, and immigration reform. Evangelicals now constitute twenty-five percent of the American population, but they are no longer monolithic in their politics. They range from Tea Party supporters to social reformers. Still, with the decline of religious faith generally, FitzGerald suggests that evangelical churches must embrace ethnic minorities if they are to survive.

- **These Truths: A History of the United States** *These Truths* tells this uniquely American story, beginning in 1492, asking whether the course of events over more than five centuries has proven the nation's truths, or belied them. To answer that question, Lepore wrestles with the state of American politics, the legacy of slavery, the persistence of inequality, and the nature of technological change. "A nation born in contradiction... will fight, forever, over the meaning of its history," Lepore writes, but engaging in that struggle by studying the past is part of the work of citizenship. With *These Truths*, Lepore has produced a book that will shape our view of American history for decades to come.

- **Geek Girls Don't Cry** What does it mean for a woman to be strong—especially in a world where our conception of a "hero" is still so heavily influenced by male characters like Batman, Spider-Man, and Superman? *Geek Girls Don't Cry* explores the subject, offering advice tailor-made for fans of any age. Andrea Towers, who works in public relations at Marvel Entertainment and has written about superheroines for outlets such as *Entertainment Weekly*, outlines some of the primary traits heroic women can call upon, like resilience, self-acceptance, and bravery, pulling in stories from real-life women as well as figures from the pop-culture pantheon. She also interviews the creators of our favorite fictional heroines, who discuss how they drew from their own experiences to develop these protagonists and how, conversely, their own creations continue to inspire them.

- **All the Single Ladies** In 2009, award-winning journalist Rebecca Traister started *All the Single Ladies* about the twenty-first century phenomenon of the American single woman. It was the year the proportion of American women who were married dropped below fifty percent; and the median age of first marriages, which had remained between twenty and twenty-two years old for nearly a century (1890–1980), had risen dramatically to twenty-seven. But over the course of her vast research and more than a hundred interviews with academics and social scientists and prominent single women, Traister discovered a startling truth: the phenomenon of the single woman in America is not a new one. And historically, when women were given options beyond early heterosexual marriage, the results were massive social change—temperance, abolition, secondary education, and more. Today, only twenty percent of Americans are married by age twenty-nine, compared to nearly sixty percent in 1960.

- **Everyday Sexism** This book is a call to arms in a new wave of feminism and it proves sexism is endemic - socially, politically, and economically. But women won't stand for it. The Everyday Sexism Project is grounded in reality; packed with substance, validity, and integrity and it shows that women will no longer tolerate a society that ignores the dangers and endless effects of sexism. In 2012 after being sexually harassed on London public transport Laura Bates, a young journalist, started a project called Everyday Sexism to collect stories for a piece she was writing on the issue. Astounded by the response she received and the wide range of stories that came pouring in from all over the world, she quickly realised that the situation was far worse than she'd initially thought. Enough was enough. From being leered at and wolf-whistled on the street, to aggravation in the work place and serious sexual assault, it was clear that sexism had been normalised. Bates decided it was time for change. This bold, jaunty, and ultimately intelligent book is the first to give a collective voice to the protest against sexism. This game-changing book is a juggernaut of stories, often shocking, sometimes amusing, and always poignant - it is a must-listen for every inquisitive, no-nonsense modern woman. Welcome to the fourth wave of feminism.

- **When Pride Still Mattered: A Life Of Vince Lombardi.** In this groundbreaking biography, David Maraniss captures all of football great Vince Lombardi: the myth, the man, his game, and his God. More than any other sports figure, Vince Lombardi transformed football into a metaphor of the American experience. The son of an Italian immigrant butcher, Lombardi toiled for twenty frustrating years as a high school coach and then as an assistant at Fordham, West Point, and the New York Giants before his big break came at age forty-six with the chance to coach a struggling team in snowbound Wisconsin. His leadership of the Green Bay Packers to five world championships in nine seasons is the most storied period in NFL history. Lombardi became a living legend, a symbol to many of leadership, discipline, perseverance, and teamwork, and to others of an obsession with winning. In *When Pride Still Mattered*, Pulitzer Prize-winning author David Maraniss captures the myth and the man, football, God, and country in a thrilling biography destined to become an American classic.

- **The Sports Gene** "In high school, I wondered whether the Jamaican Americans who made our track team so successful might carry some special speed gene from their tiny island. In college, I ran against Kenyans, and wondered whether endurance genes might have traveled with them from East Africa. At the same time, I began to notice that a training group on my team could consist of five men who run next to one another, stride for stride, day after day, and nonetheless turn out five entirely different runners. How could this be?" We all knew a star athlete in high school. The one who made it look so easy. He was the starting quarterback and shortstop; she was the all-state point guard and high-jumper. Naturals. Or were they? The debate is as old as physical competition. Are stars like Usain Bolt, Michael Phelps, and Serena Williams genetic freaks put on Earth to dominate their respective sports? Or are they simply normal people who overcame their biological limits through sheer force of will and obsessive training? The truth is far messier than a simple dichotomy between nature and nurture. In the decade since the sequencing of the human genome, researchers have slowly begun to uncover how the relationship between biological endowments and a competitor's training environment affects athleticism. Sports scientists have gradually entered the era of modern genetic research. In this controversial and engaging exploration of athletic success, *Sports Illustrated* senior writer David Epstein tackles the great nature vs. nurture debate and traces how far science has come in solving this great riddle.

- **Concussion** Jeanne Marie Laskas first met the young forensic pathologist Dr. Bennet Omalu in 2009, while reporting a story for *GQ* that would go on to inspire the movie *Concussion*. Omalu told her about a day in September 2002, when, in a dingy morgue in downtown Pittsburgh, he picked up a scalpel and made a discovery that would rattle America in ways he'd never intended. Omalu was new to America, chasing the dream, a deeply spiritual man escaping the wounds of civil war in Nigeria. The body on the slab in front of him belonged to a fifty-year-old named Mike Webster, aka "Iron Mike," a Hall of Fame center for the Pittsburgh Steelers, one of the greatest ever to play the game. After retiring in 1990, Webster had suffered a dizzyingly steep decline. Toward the end of his life, he was living out of his van, tasing himself to relieve his chronic pain, and fixing his rotting teeth with Super Glue. *How did this happen?* Omalu asked himself. *How did a young man like Mike Webster end up like this?* The search for answers would change Omalu's life forever and put him in the crosshairs of one of the most powerful corporations in America: the National Football League. What Omalu discovered in Webster's brain—proof that Iron Mike's mental deterioration was no accident but a disease caused by blows to the head that could affect everyone playing the game—was the one truth the NFL wanted to ignore.

- **What is a Girl Worth?** In this powerful debut, attorney and former gymnast Denhollander tells of her life leading to the 2018 conviction of sexual predator Larry Nassar, a sports physician associated with Michigan State University and the USA Gymnastics team who molested the author and more than 200 other girls. Raised in Kalamazoo, Mich., Denhollander was homeschooled, deeply religious, and aspired to become a lawyer. "Gangly" and 5'6," she didn't fit the profile of a gymnast but was placed on her gym's competitive team; after sustaining a lower-back injury at age 15, she was sent to Nassar, who would—under the guise of treatment, without gloves, and without consent—vaginally penetrate her with his fingers. She reported the abuse to her coaches, but, she writes, they didn't believe her; nearly 16 years later when another gymnast's story of abuse by a coach broke, Denhollander decided to speak out again, eventually leading to Nassar's indictment and conviction. Denhollander reveals her anguish and emotional pain, her feelings of helplessness ("How do I even try to heal from something, when I don't even know what that 'something' is?"). Denhollander's brave and detailed memoir serves as a clear-eyed look into a disturbing case of sexual abuse that gained national attention.

- **Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art** A comic book about comic books. McCloud, in an incredibly accessible style, explains the details of how comics work: how they're composed, read and understood. More than just a book about comics, this gets to the heart of how we deal with visual languages in general. "The potential of comics is limitless and exciting!" writes McCloud. This should be required reading for every school teacher. Pulitzer Prize-winner Art Spiegelman says, "The most intelligent comics I've seen in a long time."

- **Virtual Unreality** Today, the Internet allows us to spread information faster and to more people than ever before—never mind whether it's true or not. In *Virtual Unreality*, mathematician, science reporter, and journalist watchdog Charles Seife takes us deep into the information jungle and cuts a path through the trickery, fakery, and cyber skullduggery that the Internet enables. Providing a much-needed toolkit to help separate fact from fiction, Seife, with his trademark wit and skepticism, addresses the problems that face us every time we turn on our computers and Google our most recent medical symptoms, read a politician's tweet, fact-check something on Wikipedia, or start an online relationship. Let the clicker beware.

• **Life 3.0: Being Human in the Age of Artificial Intelligence** How can we grow our prosperity through automation without leaving people lacking income or purpose? What career advice should we give today's kids? How can we make future AI systems more robust, so that they do what we want without crashing, malfunctioning or getting hacked? Should we fear an arms race in lethal autonomous weapons? Will machines eventually outsmart us at all tasks, replacing humans on the job market and perhaps altogether? Will AI help life flourish like never before or give us more power than we can handle? What sort of future do *you* want? 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.

• **The Order of Time** Why do we remember the past and not the future? What does it mean for time to "flow"? Do we exist in time or does time exist in us? In lyric, accessible prose, Carlo Rovelli invites us to consider questions about the nature of time that continue to puzzle physicists and philosophers alike. For most readers this is unfamiliar terrain. We all experience time, but the more scientists learn about it, the more mysterious it remains. We think of it as uniform and universal, moving steadily from past to future, measured by clocks. Rovelli tears down these assumptions one by one, revealing a strange universe where at the most fundamental level time disappears. He explains how the theory of quantum gravity attempts to understand and give meaning to the resulting extreme landscape of this timeless world. Weaving together ideas from philosophy, science and literature, he suggests that our perception of the flow of time depends on our perspective, better understood starting from the structure of our brain and emotions than from the physical universe. Already a bestseller in Italy, and written with the poetic vitality that made *Seven Brief Lessons on Physics* so appealing, *The Order of Time* offers a profoundly intelligent, culturally rich, novel appreciation of the mysteries of time.

• **The Power of Habit** In *The Power of Habit*, award-winning business reporter Charles Duhigg takes us to the thrilling edge of scientific discoveries that explain why habits exist and how they can be changed. Distilling vast amounts of information into engrossing narratives that take us from the boardrooms of Procter & Gamble to the sidelines of the NFL to the front lines of the civil rights movement, Duhigg presents a whole new understanding of human nature and its potential. At its core, *The Power of Habit* contains an exhilarating argument: The key to exercising regularly, losing weight, being more productive, and achieving success is understanding how habits work. As Duhigg shows, by harnessing this new science, we can transform our businesses, our communities, and our lives.

• **The Happiness Project** *The Happiness Project* describes one person's year-long attempt to discover what leads to true contentment. Drawing at once on cutting-edge science, classical philosophy, and real-world applicability, Rubin has written an engaging, eminently relatable chronicle of transformation.

• **I Find Your Lack of Faith Disturbing** In *I Find Your Lack of Faith Disturbing*, A. D. Jameson takes geeks and non-geeks alike on a surprising and insightful journey through the science fiction, fantasy, and superhero franchises that now dominate pop culture. Walking us through the rise of geekdom from its underground origins to the top of the box office and bestseller lists, Jameson takes in franchises like *The Lord of the Rings*, *Guardians of the Galaxy*, *Harry Potter*, *Star Trek*, and, in particular, *Star Wars*—as well as phenomena like fan fiction, cosplay, and YouTube parodies. Along the way, he blasts through the clichés surrounding geek culture: that its fans are mindless consumers who will embrace all things *Spider-Man* or *Batman*, regardless of quality; or that the popularity and financial success of *Star Wars* led to the death of ambitious filmmaking. A lifelong geek, Jameson shines a new light on beloved classics, explaining the enormous love (and hate) they are capable of inspiring in fan and non-fan alike, while exploding misconceptions as to how and why they were made. *I Find Your Lack of Faith Disturbing* tells the story of how the geeks have inherited the earth.

• **The Art of Cruelty** Writing in the tradition of Susan Sontag and Elaine Scarry, Maggie Nelson has emerged as one of our foremost cultural critics with this landmark work about representations of cruelty and violence in art. From Sylvia Plath's poetry to Francis Bacon's paintings, from the *Saw* franchise to Yoko Ono's performance art, Nelson's nuanced exploration across the artistic landscape ultimately offers a model of how one might balance strong ethical convictions with an equally strong appreciation for work that tests the limits of taste, taboo, and permissibility.

• **Eyes Wide Open: Going Behind the Environmental Headlines** We're living in an Ah-Ha moment. Take 250 years of human ingenuity. Add abundant fossil fuels. The result: a population and lifestyle never before seen. The downsides weren't visible for centuries, but now they are. Suddenly everything needs rethinking – suburbs, cars, fast food, cheap prices. It's a changed world. This book explains it. Not with isolated facts, but the principles driving attitudes and events, from vested interests to denial to big-country syndrome. Because money is as important as molecules in the environment, science is joined with politics, history, and psychology to provide the briefing needed to comprehend the 21st century.

• **The New Jim Crow** This is a book by Michelle Alexander, a civil rights litigator and legal scholar. The book discusses race-related issues specific to African-American males and mass incarceration in the United States, but Alexander noted that the discrimination faced by African-American males is prevalent among other minorities and socio-economically disadvantaged populations. Alexander's central premise, from which the book derives its title, is that "mass incarceration is, metaphorically, the New Jim Crow."

• **The Sixth Extinction** Over the last half-billion years, there have been Five mass extinctions, when the diversity of life on earth suddenly and dramatically contracted. Scientists around the world are currently monitoring the sixth extinction, predicted to be the most devastating extinction event since the asteroid impact that wiped out the dinosaurs. This time around, the cataclysm is us. In prose that is at once frank, entertaining, and deeply informed, *New Yorker* writer Elizabeth Kolbert tells us why and how human beings have altered life on the planet in a way no species has before. Interweaving research in half a dozen disciplines, descriptions of the fascinating species that have already been lost, and the history of extinction as a concept, Kolbert provides a moving and comprehensive account of the disappearances occurring before our very eyes. She shows that the sixth extinction is likely to be mankind's most lasting legacy, compelling us to rethink the fundamental question of what it means to be human.

- **The Other Slavery** Since the time of Columbus, Indian slavery was illegal in much of the American continent. Yet, as Andrés Reséndez illuminates in his myth-shattering *The Other Slavery*, it was practiced for centuries as an open secret. There was no abolitionist movement to protect the tens of thousands of Natives who were kidnapped and enslaved by the conquistadors. Reséndez builds the incisive case that it was mass slavery—more than epidemics—that decimated Indian populations across North America. Through riveting new evidence, including testimonies of courageous priests, rapacious merchants, and Indian captives, *The Other Slavery* reveals nothing less than a key missing piece of American history. For over two centuries we have fought over, abolished, and tried to come to grips with African American slavery. It is time for the West to confront an entirely separate, equally devastating enslavement we have long failed truly to see.

- **How to Do Nothing** Nothing is harder to do these days than nothing. But in a world where our value is determined by our 24/7 data productivity . . . doing nothing may be our most important form of resistance. So argues artist and critic Jenny Odell in this field guide to doing nothing (at least as capitalism defines it). Odell sees our attention as the most precious—and overdrawn—resource we have. Once we can start paying a new kind of attention, she writes, we can undertake bolder forms of political action, reimagine humankind’s role in the environment, and arrive at more meaningful understandings of happiness and progress. Far from the simple anti-technology screed, or the back-to-nature meditation we read so often, *How to do Nothing* is an action plan for thinking outside of capitalist narratives of efficiency and techno-determinism. Provocative, timely, and utterly persuasive, this book is a four-course meal in the age of Soylent.

- **The Price of Inequality** The top 1 percent of Americans control 40 percent of the nation's wealth. And, as Joseph E. Stiglitz explains, while those at the top enjoy the best health care, education, and benefits of wealth, they fail to realize that "their fate is bound up with how the other 99 percent live." Stiglitz draws on his deep understanding of economics to show that growing inequality is not inevitable: moneyed interests compound their wealth by stifling true, dynamic capitalism. They have made America the most unequal advanced industrial country while crippling growth, trampling on the rule of law, and undermining democracy. The result: a divided society that cannot tackle its most pressing problems. With characteristic insight, Stiglitz examines our current state, then teases out its implications for democracy, for monetary and budgetary policy, and for globalization. He closes with a plan for a more just and prosperous future.

- **The Great Successor** The behind-the-scenes story of the rise and reign of the world's strangest and most elusive tyrant, Kim Jong Un, by the journalist with the best connections and insights into the bizarrely dangerous world of North Korea. Since his birth in 1984, Kim Jong Un has been swaddled in myth and propaganda, from the plainly silly--he could supposedly drive a car at the age of three--to the grimly bloody stories of family members who perished at his command. Anna Fifield reconstructs Kim's past and present with exclusive access to sources near him and brings her unique understanding to explain the dynastic mission of the Kim family in North Korea. The archaic notion of despotic family rule matches the almost medieval hardship the country has suffered under the Kims. Few people thought that a young, untested, unhealthy, Swiss-educated basketball fanatic could hold together a country that should have fallen apart years ago. But Kim Jong Un has not just survived, he has thrived, abetted by the approval of Donald Trump and diplomacy's weirdest bromance.

- **Strangers in Their Own Land: Anger and Mourning on the American Right** When Donald Trump won the 2016 presidential election, a bewildered nation turned to *Strangers in Their Own Land* to understand what Trump voters were thinking when they cast their ballots. Arlie Hochschild, one of the most influential sociologists of her generation, had spent the preceding five years immersed in the community around Lake Charles, Louisiana, a Tea Party stronghold. As Jedediah Purdy put it in the *New Republic*, "Hochschild is fascinated by how people make sense of their lives. . . . [Her] attentive, detailed portraits . . . reveal a gulf between Hochschild's 'strangers in their own land' and a new elite." Already a favorite common read book in communities and on campuses across the country and called "humble and important" by David Brooks, Hochschild's book has been lauded by Noam Chomsky, New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu, and countless others.