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Book Learning

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Book learning

The slower pace of summer offers not only a time to relax and regenerate for a new school year, it also gives faculty time to catch up on reading outside of the classroom. We asked four Linfield professors to give us a glimpse of what came off their bookshelves, nightstands and coffee tables this summer. These titles are by no means all of their reading, but offer some insight into the varied interests of Linfield faculty.



Barbara Seidman
Professor of English

In the Lake of the Woods by Tim O'Brien

A murder mystery — maybe. Clothed in the broader tragedy of the Vietnam War and contemporary American politics, this novel is a decade old and more timely than ever.

Crabwalk by Günter Grass

The German Nobel laureate's recent novel exploring the intersections of Internet culture, post-unification German disaffection and neo-Nazi mythmaking in relation to a catastrophic disaster at sea in the waning days of World War II.

My Son's Story by Nadine Gordimer

A post-apartheid novel by the South African Nobel laureate in which the adolescent son of a leading black African political activist confronts the familial and racial "betrayal" of his father's affair with a white South African civil rights worker.

Arabian Nights and Days by Naguib Mahfouz

The Egyptian Nobel laureate's reimagining of various characters and plots from the Middle Eastern classic Arabian Nights.

Teaching: ***Animal Physiology*** by Richard Hill

Research: ***Archaeology of Palestine*** by W.F. Albright

Classic that covers what was known up to the '50s about sites in Palestine, plus theoretical discussion of trade and animal domestication.

Social consciousness: ***Forgotten Truth*** by Huston Smith

Relation of science and religion; too bad it's a rather unfair and unrealistic treatment of science. I'm always on the lookout for good books on this topic.

Academic fun: ***Eats(,) Shoots and Leaves*** by Lynn Truss

Ah punctuation where would we be without it

Fiction with a research connection: ***Dragon Bones*** by Lisa See

Modern Chinese mystery swirls around the building of the Three Gorges Dam.



Mike Roberts
Professor of Biology



Kathy Sims
Professor of Nursing

Space by James Michener

Chronicles the U.S. rocket and space program development using fictional astronauts and others.

Tara Road by Maeve Binchy

An Oprah pick about the testing of friendships and marriages.

Hold Tight the Thread by Jane Kirkpatrick

Third book in the Tender Ties series by this Oregon author. Continues the story of Madame Dorion who crossed the country westward with the Astor expedition. This book tells of her life in Oregon.

Diary of a Baby by Daniel N. Stern

An exploration of the inner life of a young child.

The Mother Dance by Harriet Learner

To be read by anyone who is or knows a mother.

Woman: An intimate geography by Natalie Angier

Explores those things that make a woman a woman. Well researched.

The Human Stain by Philip Roth

A college professor with a dark secret loses his job over an accusation of racism. The book is a look at the moral and political environment of the 1990s.

The Jane Austen Book Club by Karen Joy Fowler

Six Austen fans meet over the course of six months to discuss one Austen novel at each meeting. The meetings become an opportunity to discuss relationships and share experiences all of which have echoes of Austen. You need not be an Austen nut to enjoy the book, but it helps.

Publish and Perish: Three Tales of Tenure and Terror by James Hynes

You do not have to be a college professor to appreciate the skewering of academia in these three novellas, but it helps as well. A hilarious look at the absurdity of academics and academic politics.

Close to Home by Peter Robinson

Alan Banks, a Yorkshire detective, confronts the demons of a crime from his own past. Robinson is probably the best contemporary British “whodunit” writer around.

Vile Bodies by Evelyn Waugh

An uproarious sendup of British “bright young things,” circa 1920. We follow along as a group of minor aristocrats aggressively pursue hedonistic and frivolous lives. Thin on plot, long on laughs.



Howard Leichter
Professor of Political
Science