

Snow College Faculty Reading List

**Kari Arnoldsen** (Ph.D., Mathematics)

*Chaos: Making a New Science*

by [James Gleick](#)

Subject: A layman's introduction to chaos theory and fractals.

Comment: It is easy to read and expands your mind about how you see the world and how scientists work.

*The Children on the Hill: The Story of an Extraordinary Family*

by [Michael Deakin](#)

Subject: A reporter who spent months with a home schooling family.

Comment: An odd family by all accounts, but what love they showed their children, and what a determination to give them what they wanted to succeed (whatever that means).

Enders Series

by Orson Scott Card

Subject: Science fiction, far future, human emotions, redemption are all still needed.

Comment: A fantastic, thought-provoking series (but very entertaining) about one boy/man and how he changes history and himself before he realizes it. Wonderful.

Any book by Dick Francis

Subject: Murder and mystery on race courses and anything to do with horses.

*All the Little Live Things*

by [Wallace Stegner](#)

Comment: A powerful novel of love and coming to terms with death. His language and use of words is indescribable. Any of his books are good.

*Pride and Prejudice*

by [Jane Austen](#)

Comment: Read this because it is so funny as it describes upper and middle-crust 19<sup>th</sup> century English society.

*Jane Eyre*

by [Charlotte Bronte](#)

Comment: Read this because it is the leader of the love stories now pitifully existing in Harlequin romances.

**Cameron Beatty** (M.A., ESL – TSFL, retired)

*Southeast Asia*

by Milton Osborne

Subject: History of Southeast Asia

Comment: It's a good (if dry) introduction to the history and geography of the whole mainland and maritime Southeast Asia—a culturally consistent part of the world that most of us know extremely little about.

*The End of Sanity*

by Martin L. Gross

Subject: The excesses of the “New Establishment” and political correctness.

Comment: There's much to disagree with, but the author also makes a lot of good points. See particularly his chapter four, “Colleges in the New Establishment: Extraordinary Ignorance, PC, and the New McCarthyism.”

**Boyd Beck** (Ph.D, Chemistry)

*Organic Chemistry*

by R. T. Morrison and R. N. Boyd

Subject: Organic chemistry

Comment: I first read this book while herding sheep in the summer between my freshman and sophomore year of college. This book literally changed my life. I was fascinated by the use of logic to determine the structure of complicated molecules and the ability to use this understanding to control chemical reactions.

*A Brief History of Time*

by Stephen W. Hawking

Subject: Space, time, and the universe

Comment: This book made me think about how marvelously complex, and yet ordered, the universe is. The interrelationship between space, time and unusual objects in the universe was especially interesting.

*Contact*

by Carl Sagan

Subject: First contact with extraterrestrials

Comment: I have always been fascinated by the search for life in the universe. This fictional account of the first communication with other technologically advanced civilizations captures the enormous meaning and difficulty of such a communication.

**Ralph Brenchley** (M.S., History)

*Dreadnought*

by Robert K. Massie

Subject: History of Great Britain, Germany, and the coming of World War I.

Comment: It is an excellent chronicle of the national and personal rivalry between Great Britain and Germany in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries that lead to the First World War. Especially interesting are the biographical sketches of a number of leading personalities of the time such as: Queen Victoria, Edward VII, Kaiser Wilhelm II, and Bismarck.

*Go Forward with Faith*

by Sheri L. Dew

Subject: Biography of Gordon B. Hinckley

Comment: It is the life story of one of the most vigorous and dynamic men of our time. Now, nearly 88 years old (at the time of this writing), Gordon B. Hinckley has not slowed his frantic pace as leader of the 10 million member Mormon church, but has actively stepped up his world-wide travels visiting and strengthening Mormon faithful across the globe.

*The Prince of Wales*

by Jonathan Dimbleby

Subject: Biography of Prince Charles

Comment: It is a good, if biased, treatment of Prince Charles. I think it helps to balance the overwhelming favoritism shown by biographers and the media towards Princess Diana. Prince Charles is a remarkably versatile individual, with accomplishments and interests often ignored or overlooked in the rush to focus attention on Diana.

*Clear and Present Danger*

by Tom Clancy

Subject: The United States' covert war against Latin American drug cartels

Comment: For people who like action-adventure books, this one is packed. It's too bad the movie did not follow the storyline of the book. The book was excellent, the movie disappointing.

**Kim Cragun** (M.S., Early Childhood Education – Child Development)

*Disappearance of Childhood*

by Neal Postman

Comment: An interesting look at how society has changed as a result of technology.

*Men are From Mars, Women are from Venus*

by John Gray

Comment: A humorous look at the differences between men and women.

*Habits of the Heart*

by Robert Bellah

Comment: Describes the evolution of American culture as different authors see it.

Any book by Tony Hillerman

Comment: Besides the fact that they are entertaining, they provide good insights into the Navajo culture and belief system.

**Doug Dyreng** (M.S., Business Management)

*Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*

by Steven R. Covey

*The Control Theory Manager*

by William Glass

**Layle Erickson** (M.S., Mathematics, retired)

*Speaker for the Dead*

by Orson Scott Card

Subject: Science fiction

Comment: One of a series, all good but especially this second book. For any science fiction fan or anyone who would like to get a taste of science fiction at its best.

*The Road from Coorain*

by Jill Ker Conway

Subject: Autobiography

Comment: Well-written, compelling story of a woman born in Australia who became the first woman president of Smith College. The sequel *True North* is also excellent.

*Innumeracy*

by John Allen Paulos

Subject: Mathematical illiteracy

Comment: Discusses why number sense is important, the rather deplorable state we are in, and what we ought to be doing about it.

*A Civil Action*

by Jonathan Harr

Subject: Legal action on industrial pollution

Comment: A modern version of *Enemy of the People*. Nonfiction that reads like a novel—very compelling.

*Reviving Ophelia*

by Mary Pipher

Subject: Adolescent girls

Comment: Anyone who has daughters or female students should read this definitive discussion of problems faced by young women in our current era. Pipher has also written *The Shelter of Each Other: Rebuilding our Families*.

*Overcoming Math Anxiety*

by Sheila Tobias

Subject: Math anxiety

Comment: Revised in 1993, this 1978 treatise by a non-mathematician, gives much insight into being successful at math. For anyone who has ever said, "I'm no good at math."

Any book by Anne Perry, Elizabeth George, Tony Hillerman, or Ellis Peters.  
Mysteries are great stress relievers for busy people.

**Paul Gardner** (Ph.D., Biology)

*A Sand County Almanac*

by Aldo Leopold

Subject: Essays on conservation

Comment: Leopold relates the history of Sand County, Wisconsin to the state of existence and the quality of life of his time.

*The Third Chimpanzee*

by Jared Diamond

Subject: Evolution and the future of our species

Comment: This is an amazing collection of insightful essays that cover numerous aspects of human history and behavior.

*A Natural History of the Senses*

by Diane Ackerman

Subject: The anatomy, physiology, and natural history of our senses

Comment: A fascinating story of how we perceive the world. Ackerman gives the science of the senses and brings it alive with details.

*Naturalist*

by Edward O. Wilson

Subject: Autobiography

Comment: Wilson writes of the joys and challenges that shaped his life as a scientist.

*Blueprints*

by Maitland Edey and Donald Johanson

Subject: A history of the unfolding of evolutionary theory

Comment: Edey and Johanson present a lively history of evolutionary theory from before Darwin to the later half of this century.

*The Diversity of Life*

by Edward O. Wilson

Subject: Evolution of biodiversity

Comment: Wilson discusses the central theme of biology in an entertaining, engaging way and shows its relevance to today's world.

*The Beak of the Finch*

by Jonathan Weiner

Subject: Natural history of Darwin's finches

Comment: Weiner unfolds the research that has recorded evolution in progress in one of the greatest natural laboratories in the world, the Galapagos islands, and relates it to applications today.

**Beth Hewes** (M.S., Communications)

*The One Minute Manager*

by Kenneth Blanchard

Comment: Good information on leadership techniques.

*The Book of Questions* (series)

by Gregory Stock

Comment: Good training for impromptu speaking.

**Melanie Jenkins** (M.A., English)

*Beloved*

by Toni Morrison

Comment: Nobel Prize winner

*The Things they Carried*

by Tim O'Brien

Comment: Literature about Vietnam

*Refuge*

by Terry Tempest Williams

*Dreaming in Cuban*

by Christina Garcia

*The Joy Luck Club*

by Amy Tan

*The Bonesetter's Daughter*

by Amy Tan

*To the Lighthouse*

by Virginia Woolf

*Their Eyes were Watching God*

by Zora Neale Hurston

*The House on Mango Street*  
by Sandra Cisneros

*The Last Report on the Miracles at Little No Horse*  
by Louise Erdrich

**Sharon Kilmer** (M.S., ESL -- TSFL)

*Dogs Playing Cards*  
by Dennis Earl Feher

Comment: It's a readable art history book which "challenges comfortable prejudices."

*Illusions*

by Richard Bach

Subject: Paradigms

Comment: It is a reminder that things just might not be as they appear, and before we dogmatically disseminate "knowledge" and "truth" to students, we should remember that. We should encourage them (and ourselves) to approach learning humbly and with an open mind.

*On the Justice of Roosting Chickens*

by Ward Churchill

Comment: It's controversial, and it includes information that all Americans should at least be aware of so they can check it out for themselves.

*Radical Priorities*

by Noam Chomsky

Comment: Because readers need access to both (or all) sides of Chomsky.

*The Reinvention of Work*

by Matthew Fox

Subject: Work

Comment: It is a reminder that "life and livelihood ought not to be separated, but flow from the same source;" and that they both should be "about living in depth . . . with meaning, purpose, joy, and a sense of contribution . . ." As we think about learning and working and helping our students get the most from both, this book gives food for thought in both areas.

*The Silent Language*

by Edward T. Hall

Subject: Cultures

Comment: It tells about how different cultures view time and space. Because of these differing views, misunderstandings are very likely between people of different cultures. As our country becomes more and more ethnically diverse, it is important for us, as

people who will be dealing with cultural diversity directly, to be aware of some of the perceptions which cause people to behave as they do.

**Michael Kowalski** (Ph.D., English)

*Walden*

by Henry David Thoreau

Subject: How to live

Comment: We need to simplify our lives

*Dancing at the Rascal Fair*

by Ivan Doig

Subject: Historical novel

Comment: Good reading for understanding the connections between land, family identity, and social history.

*Fool's Progress*

by Edward Abbey

Subject: Life and death

Comment: Abbey is honest about himself and the ways one must learn to cope with life.

*Martin Eden*

by Jack London

Subject: The struggle for education and acceptance as a person and a writer

Comment: London cares about real education--the kind one lives.

*The Rebel*

by Albert Camus

Subject: Intellectual history of rebellion

Comment: Camus urges man to know his values and to rebel against all forces that limit his freedom and creativity.

**Ron Lamb** (M.S., English)

*Song of Solomon*

by Toni Morrison

Subject: One man's efforts to find himself through his trials as he retraces historical family steps.

Comment: Morrison reaches into your soul and lets you understand how beautiful the act of discovery can be. A wonderful story for its own sake, it is also one of those books that spawn thought and dialogue.

*A River Runs Through It*

by Norman Maclean

Subject: Fly fishing and life

Comment: This book may be the most wonderfully written book I've ever read. It describes the love of two brothers. If there is a heaven, Norman and Paul Maclean are fishing together, right now. The last paragraphs are perfection.

*Ain't Nobody's Business if you do*

by Peter McWilliams

Subject: General interest

Comment: Discusses the absurdity of consensual crimes in a free society. Says it all.

**Lynn Lindsay** (M.A., Mathematics and Astronomy)

*Men of Mathematics*

by E. T. Bell

Subject: Life sketches of prominent mathematicians

Comment: The writer has an engaging style in telling the life stories of brilliant men who lived and struggled much the same as we do.

*In Mathematical Circles*

by Howard Eves

Subject: Three hundred sixty historical anecdotes from the history of mathematics

Comment: This book is chock full of entertaining tidbits from all cultures concerning mathematical explorations.

*Fantasia Mathematica*

by Clifton Fadiman

Subject: Science fiction, fiction, and poetry involving mathematics.

Comment: These stories are very entertaining and thought-provoking.

*Coming of Age in the Milky Way*

by Timothy Ferris

Subject: Astronomy

Comment: This book contains an excellent history of the development of modern astronomical principles.

*365 Starry Nights*

by Chet Raymo

Subject: Astronomy

Comment: An interesting guide to the constellations and the objects found within their boundaries. There is something for you to find in the heavens each night of the year.

**John Meade** (M.S., Psychology and Mathematics)

*Towards Excellence*

by Earl V. Pullias

Comment: Gives the roots and wider origins of excellence. Written by one of the greatest teachers of all time.

*The Good Son*

by Michael Gurian

Comment: Explains how to shape the moral development of boys and young men.

*Your Memory: How it Works and How to Improve it*

by Kenneth L. Higbee

Comment: Very helpful memory techniques.

*How Can I Help?*

by Lowell L. Bennion

Comment: Explains the good life to be lived to its fullest.

**Bart Nelson** (M.A., Mathematics)

*Profiles in Courage*

by John F. Kennedy

*Poetry of the Universe*

by Robert Osserman

Comment: Nice discussion about mathematics and the universe.

*Descarte's Dream*

by Davis and Hirsh

Comment: The relevance of mathematics in our world.

*Angle of Repose*

by Wallace Stegner

Comment: Simply great literature.

**Joseph Papenfuss** (Ph.D., Biology and Genetics)

*The Book of Mormon*

*The Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings* trilogy

by J.R.R. Tolkien

*Dr. Hudson's Secret Journal*

by Lloyd C. Douglas

*Magnificent Obsession*  
by Lloyd C. Douglas

*How to Win Friends and Influence People*  
by Dale Carnegie

Favorite authors include: Louis L'Amour, Jules Verne, Robert Heinlein, Alan C. Nourse, Andre Norton, Ann McCaffrey, Jane Austen, Georgette Heyer, Louisa May Alcott, L.M. Montgomery, R.D. Blackmore, Helen MacInnes, Mary Stewart, Tom Clancy, Abraham Lincoln, Benjamin Franklin, George Washington, and C.S. Lewis.

**Gary Parnell** (Ph.D., English)

*Realms of Meaning*  
by Philip Phenix

Subject: Philosophical foundations of a general education

Comment: It provides a rational and intuitively convincing argument for the teaching of the traditional disciplines. It focuses on meaning rather than knowledge and promotes the idea that the more vantage points from which you see things, the more likely you are to see them clearly. The book was a gift from my father-in-law who was a much admired professor of education at Utah State University.

*The Name of the Rose*  
by Umberto Eco

Subject: Murder mystery set in a medieval monastery

Comment: It is written by a philosopher and linguist who brings to life the ideas that motivated the thinkers of this period. It illuminates the ideals of St. Francis, the influence of Aristotle and the methods of the Inquisition in the context of an Arthur Conan Doyle style detective story.

*The Revolt of the Masses*  
by Jose Ortega y Gasset

Subject: Quality vs. equality

Comment: While he is not a systematic philosopher, Ortega has a clear and expressive writing style. His mastery of the Spanish language easily shines through in the English translation and clearly demonstrates the effective use of examples and metaphors. His analysis of the defects of a society aimed at the lowest common denominator is devastating and his definition of an elite which earns status by demanding more from itself is intriguing. I first heard of Ortega y Gasset at Cornell and studied his writings in his native Spain.

*The Story of Philosophy*  
by Will Durant

Subject: A popular history of the great names in Western thought.

Comment: While it is aimed at the general public, it contains enough quoted material to provide access to the philosophers themselves. I like the “story” concept because I learn best from stories and because Durant has a gift for telling them.

**Steve Peterson** (M.A., English)

*Walden*

by Henry David Thoreau

Subject: God, Man, Nature

Comment: This is the archetype of nature writing. The values here are good for all. Whatever we can take from *Walden* should help simplify our overly complex lives.

*All Quiet on the Western Front*

by Erich Remarque

Subject: Man and war

Comment: Reading it will keep people from killing each other.

*Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*

by Robert M. Pirsig

Subject: An inquiry into values

Comment: An interesting book about an English teacher is rare. And this one gives me a sense of what and why everyone is.

*Ceremony*

by Leslie Marmon Silko

Subject: Native American culture

Comment: This book is by an Indian about an Indian, written in Native American cyclical style. It confirms that prejudice and violence of any kind is evil.

*The Things that Matter Most*

by Lowell Bennion

Comment: A daring title; who is to say what matters most? But Bennion’s humble approach confirms his values. The purpose of the book is “to not let the things that matter most be controlled by the things that matter least.”

**Lynn Poulson** (M.Ed., Marriage and Family – Health)

*Anatomy of Love: The Natural History of Monogamy, Adultery, and Divorce*

by Helen Fisher

Subject: A cross-cultural look at the attraction of the sexes and why men and women in different cultures continue to marry.

Comment: This book is a fascinating look at love, sexuality, and marriage from an anthropological point of view. It adds a compelling body of facts and information to our understanding of why humans do the things they do in the name of love. It also helps explain some of the reasons for the mess our current culture finds itself in.

*Inevitable Illusions: How Mistakes of Reason Rule our Minds*

by Massimo Piattelli-Palmarini

Subject: Reason and mistakes in judgment

Comment: This is a book that really makes you stop and think about how you reach the conclusions you do. The author gives ample illustrations to back up the points he makes. He shows how people can get caught in narrow paths of decision making that precludes truly creative solutions to problems.

*The Culture of Disbelief*

by Stephen L. Carter

Subject: How American law and politics trivialize religious devotion

Comment: This is a piercing and introspective look at how our culture may have gone too far in moving away from encouraging, or even allowing religious expression. He looks at evidence of the anti-religious movement and examines the consequences.

*The Age of Missing Information*

by Bill McKibben

Subject: An expose of the “age of information”

Comment: The author explores the information explosion we are experiencing and questions whether or not it is, in fact, an improvement in our lives. He concludes that we may really be living in a period of deep ignorance—having lost sight of vital knowledge that we used to possess.

**Larry Smith** (Ph.D., Mathematics and Physics)

*Godel, Escher, Bach*

by Douglas R. Hofstadter

Subject: Multidisciplinary look at computers and artificial intelligence

Comment: While not an easy read, *GEB, the Eternal Golden Braid* is a wonderful interdisciplinary book. Hofstadter weaves dialogue about Bach’s music with discussion of Escher’s drawing with a lot of math about Godel’s incompleteness theorem. Hofstadter is a physicist, but dares venture into the field of artificial intelligence. He is essentially a materialist and thinks that artificial intelligence will be achieved as soon as we have computers that have the same computational power as a brain.

*Coming of Age in the Milky Way*

by Timothy Ferris

Subject: A well-written history of physics and cosmology

Comment: Ferris’ style is very engaging. He tells us about the lives of the scientist as well as their discoveries. The book can profitably be read without an extensive math background. Ferris discusses the latest theories which try to unite all four of the unknown forces in nature and integrates aesthetics and symmetry into his narrative.

**Diana Spencer** (Ph.D., English, retired)

*The Complete Works*

by Shakespeare

Subject: Life, the universe, and everything

Comment: I recommend this book because it touches on more aspects of human experience and emotion than any other book I know of. Shakespeare questions our place in the universe, our relationship with deity, the faces of evil, our relationships with authority and each other, the functions of government, the nature of war, the uses of humor, the purposes of education, the possibilities of change, the roles of men and women, the rules of courtship, the passions of love and hate, the power of forgiveness, the anguish of injustice, the inevitability of grief, the delight of first love, the need for reverence, the value of clothing—as I said above, Shakespeare deals with life, the universe, and everything.

*The Complete Works*

by Chaucer

*The Oxford English Dictionary*

Subject: History and mystery of the English language

*Longitude*

by Dava Sobel

Subject: Individual vs. establishment

*The Map that Changed the World*

by Simon Winchester

Subject: Solving problems with math, physics, and common sense (ingenuity)

*Brunelleschi's Dome*

by Ross King

Subject: Inventing as you go

*The Professor and the Madman*

by Simon Winchester

Subject: Language history—OED.

**Susan Whiting** (M.A., Wellness Director)

*A Course in Miracles*

by Foundation for Inner Peace

Subject: Connection with your higher self

Comment: It drastically changes a person's life to a place of peace and love (nondenominational).

*Johnathan Livingston Seagull*

by Richard Bach

Subject: The transformation from mundane to ecstasy

Comment: It expands the parameters of thinking and creativity.

*Seven Laws of Spiritual Success*

by Deepak Chopra

Comment: It explains an Eastern and Western form of philosophy and a higher level of living.

*Te of Piglet*

by Benjamin Hoff

Comment: A light and humorous dissertation on Taoism.

**Dan Witt** (M.A., Sociology and Anthropology)

*Skin Walkers*

by Tony Hillerman

Subject: Navajo witchcraft

Comment: I recommend not only this Hillerman book, but all he has written. They allow students to get inside another culture.

*The Power of Myth*

by Joseph Campbell

Subject: Cross-cultural myths

Comment: I recommend this book because of its insights into the variety of religious experiences.

**Cless Young** (M.Ed., Geography and Psychology)

*Chesapeake*

by James Michener

Comment: An insightful look at the establishment of colonial America with a sensitive look at the horrors and reality of slavery.

*Stilwell and the American Experience in China*

by Barbara Tuchman

Comment: An example of misguided foreign policy formulated by the U.S. State Department.

*Balkan Ghosts*

by Robert Kaplan

Comment: It helps in understanding the complex issues at work in the former Yugoslavia and surrounding region.

*On Becoming a Person*

by Carl Rogers

Comment: Deep insights on the human condition.