

List of Favorite Books

The following is a list of favorite books submitted by faculty. Try one, you might like it! If you have a favorite book you would like to share, let us know!

Alexandria Quartet *Lawrence Durrell*

The language of this epic 4-volume novel is some of the most beautiful and lyric I have ever read. It is a story of love and lovers set in Egypt with all its sensual beauty.

All God's Children Have Traveling Shoes *Maya Angelou*

I like her insights on Africa.

An American Tragedy *Theodore Dreiser*

Dreiser is a naturalistic writer with great story lines.

Animal Farm *George Orwell*

An easy to read book that can be interpreted on several levels.

As I Lay Dying *William Faulkner*

The story is about a poor family transporting the body of the mother to a distant cemetery. Sounds grisly, but the book focuses on the secret inner thoughts of each person.

The Autobiography of Malcom X *Alex Haley*

An amazing autobiography where one can visualize Malcom X at different stages of his life.

Beloved *Toni Morrison*

One of America's best writers, Morrison tells of the effects of slavery on one family.

Black Like Me *John Howard Griffin*

No other story has been written like this. It's an unbelievable, yet true story of a white man passing as a black.

Bless Me Ultima *Rudolfo Anaya*

A coming-of-age novel that is great for the cultural content and story.

Brave New World *Aldous Huxley*

Huxley predicts future development. Many of his predictions pinpoint present social issues.

To Build a Fire and Other Stories *Jack London*

"To Build a Fire" is, in my opinion, one of the greatest short stories in English because of its descriptive power.

Call it Sleep *Henry Roth*

"Call it Sleep" is a great novel about a young Jewish boy growing up in New York, and the tension in his parent's marriage.

Carrie *Theodore Dreiser*

Dreiser is a naturalistic writer with great story lines.

Catch 22 *Joseph Heller*

Heller's classic novel makes World War II both horrifying and funny.

Catcher in the Rye *J.D. Salinger*

On the brink of adulthood, a teenager's simple, honest, and funny observations perfectly capture growing up.

Childhood's End *Arthur C. Clarke*

A great science-fiction book about the invasion of Earth by aliens and how they help humans evolve to a higher level.

A Christmas Carol *Charles Dickens*

I love it for its message.

The Color of Water *James McBride*

McBride's memoir reveals the connections and chasms between blacks and whites in America.

Confederacy of Dunces *John Kennedy Toole*

An eccentric intellectual failure has strange adventures in New Orleans – very funny.

Crime and Punishment *Fyodor Dostoyevsky*

One of my favorites. (Translation from Russian)

The Decapitated Chicken and Other Stories *Horacio Quiroga*

If you like Jack London and Poe, you should like Quiroga. (Translation from Spanish)

Deptford Trilogy (3 novels) *Robertson Davies*

These three interconnected books explore the lives of several fascinating characters and their adventures over several years.

Different Seasons *Stephen King*

Four novellas of some of King's best work, including "Shawshank Redemption" and "Stand By Me."

(The Dr. Kay Scarpetta books)

Body Farm, From Potter's Field, Point of Origin *Patricia Cornwall*

Cornwall is a former prosecutor. So she bases her novels on this knowledge. Dr. Kay Scarpetta is a successful *single* career woman making it on her own.

Dr. Zhivago *Boris Pasternack*

I read this in the 10th grade at the age of 16 and found it a fascinating tale of romance and the Russian Revolution.

Dracula *Bram Stoker*

Good horror story. None of the movies have come close to equaling the book in descriptive details.

Earth *David Brin*

A scientist invents a quantum singularity (a mini black hole) and it escapes into the center of the earth – very forward-looking book.

Eloquent Dissent *James Sledd*

A collection of essays from a former teacher of mine argues that to change education we in education must change society first.

The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test *Tom Wolfe*

My first book in which I read a style that matched the story, both wild and exuberant.

Final Jeopardy & Likely to Die *Linda Fairstein*

About Alex Cooper, a single, career woman in New York, who prosecutes sex crimes and watches Jeopardy.

The Foundation Trilogy *Isaac Asimov*

Any Asimov science fiction is good! But, this trilogy is the basis around which his entire written universe is built.

Grapes of Wrath *John Steinbeck*

Steinbeck's novel looks into the Depression era with great characterizations.

Great Expectations *Charles Dickens*

I like the social realism.

The Great Gatsby *F. Scott Fitzgerald*

A wonderful, but grim look into the decadence of America in the 1920s.

The Heart is a Lonely Hunter *Carson McCullers*

This is one of my all-time favorites. I like the content, point of view. Good coming-of-age novel.

Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy *Douglas Adams*

Hilarious satire on science fiction. An ordinary Englishman ends up traveling on an alien spaceship.

The Hobbit *J.R.R. Tolkien*

A fantasy epic of good versus evil. I like it because a little guy (like me) learns to face his fears. Oh, yeah, it has a big dragon, too!

The House of Mango Street *Sandra Cisneros*

Cisneros' style is easy to read, but her characters are complex and fascinating.

Huckleberry Finn *Mark Twain*

I loved this book about adventure on the Mississippi River, and also the way Huck became friends with Jim, an African-American former slave.

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings *Maya Angelou*

I like Maya's descriptive Power.

Jazz style in Kansas City and the Southwest *Ross Russell*

This book led me to my decades-long love of swing and modern jazz.

Jane Eyre *Emily Bronte*

I found this to be an intriguing love story set in England.

The Joy Luck Club *Amy Tan*

It makes you laugh and cry. It's well written and has good descriptive passages.

Lolita *Vladimir Nabokov*

A middle-class man obsessed with a 12-year old girl. Creepy, but touching, funny, and beautifully written.

Lonesome Dove *Larry McMurtry*

If you only read one Western in your life, read this one! The novel is full of tough men, spunky women, fast guns, cattle, bad guys, and a good plot to hold it all together.

Lord of the Flies *William Golding*

An amazing, insightful look at the society children unmonitored can develop. Very relevant to some of our gang issues today.

Lucifer's Hammer *Larry Niven & Jerry Pournell*

A great book about mankind's struggle to survive after a comet devastates the Earth.

The Miracle of Mindfulness *Thich Nhat Hanh*

This Vietnamese Zen monk teaches various ways of paying attention to our every moment.

Mists of Avalon *Marion Bradley Zimmerman*

This is the Arthurian legend told from all the women's point of view.

The Mote in God's Eye *Larry Niven & Jerry Pournell*

First contact with aliens! What more needs to be said?

The Moviegoer *Walker Percy*

Set in New Orleans, a middle-class man cannot quite adjust mentally to the world; funny and thoughtful.

Night *Elie Wiesel*

Very sad Holocaust story.

Norwood *Charles Portis*

Funny, odd story of a simple man's life. Set in Texas.

Nine Princes in Amber *Roger Zelazny*

A favorite of mine and the first in a long series about contemporary adults in a fantasy-fiction setting.

On Being Blue *William Gass*

A philosophical wandering, this book explores the color blue and different meanings of the word "blue."

One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich *Alexander Solzhenitsin*

A touching story of how a Siberian prison laborer transcends his situation by his love of work.

One Hundred Years of Solitude *Gabriel Garcia Marquez*

I just love it – the story, characters and, above all, descriptive power. (Translation from Spanish)

A Patch of Blue *Elizabeth Kata*

It was a story of great poignancy about a black man befriending and helping a young blind woman against the wishes of her family.

Pet Sematary *Stephen King*

For escape, I read anything and everything by Stephen King, but I like his early works best.

A Prayer for Owen Meany *John Irving*

A great story of the friendship between two boys who grow up to be men. The unforgettable character of Owen and the odd twists in the plot make this book a real page-turner.

Pride and Prejudice *Jane Austen*

I loved reading about society during the last century in England.

Razors' Edge *Somerset Maughman*

Set in the years following World War I, the story traces the intellectual and spiritual wanderings of a young American in search of a meaning for life.

She's Come Undone *Wally Lamb*

This funny and provocative story of a woman from 4 to 40 was written by a man!

Silas Marner *George Eliot*

Even though we had to read it in school, I have always enjoyed the story.

Speak Memory *Vladimir Nabokov*

His prose is like poetry. Nabokov asks for no sympathy in telling how his family lost all and then had to leave Russia.

The Sun Also Rises *Ernest Hemingway*

Hemingway's abbreviated prose is an easy introduction to literary style.

Tess of the D'Urbervilles *Thomas Hardy*

I greatly enjoyed this story of romance in England.

To Kill a Mockingbird *Harper Lee*

The author painted such a vivid picture of life during the Depression and raised my sensitivity to the issues of race.

The Tropic of Cancer *Henry Miller*

Some call it pornography; others colorful prose. The author's adventures in France were so intriguing that I had to go there myself to take a look.

Ulysses *James Joyce*

Joyce's book, so rich I'll read it all my life, has beautiful language that comments on all aspects of life.

Waiting for Godot *Samuel Beckett*

This play tells of the loneliness of modern man with wordplay and slapstick.

The Warlock in Spite of Himself *Christopher Stasheff*

The first of a series, this book depicts a futuristic pioneer who reluctantly finds himself in a quasi-medieval world.