

Self-Educate about Racism

Good books to borrow in Follen's library

If you want to learn more about what it means to be white in America, to be black in America, and how we all got here, Follen is building a collection of books that should help. Sign one out for as long as you need it (within reason), then return it for the next person.

If you own books (or films) that have helped you understand how racism works in America, your community, or yourself that you would like to add to the collection, great! Just add it to the shelf in the library with books on racism, and thank you.

The blurbs for each book are taken from amazon.com. Some of the books Follen Responds to Racism team has provided for the collection are, in no particular order:

Books about Being Black in America

***The Charleston Syllabus: Readings on Race, Racism, and Racial Violence* edited by Chad Williams, Kidada Williams, and Keisha Blain**

This thoroughly remarkable compendium of works about African-American life, edited by the three history professors who started the #CharlestonSyllabus Twitter hashtag, offers solid ground for the oft-requested national conversation about race. Their work firmly connects the dots among slavery, white terror organizations, the Confederate battle flag, and the murders of eight African-American Bible study members in Charleston, S.C., in 2015. ... This solid offshoot of the original online syllabus (a blockbuster bibliographic tool that's also included in this volume) is simply a must-read, both for those already versed in these topics and those just getting started. (Publishers Weekly starred review.)

***Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America.* Ibram X. Kendi.**

Winner of the 2016 National Book Award for Nonfiction

An "engrossing and relentless intellectual history of prejudice in America...The greatest service Kendi [provides] is the ruthless prosecution of American ideas about race for their tensions, contradictions and unintended consequences." —*The Washington Post*

"Kendi has done something that's damn near impossible: write a book about racism that breaks new ground, while being written in a way that's accessible to the nonacademic. If you've ever been interested in how racist ideas spread throughout the United States, this is the book to read." —*The Root*

Stamped from the Beginning is "ambitious, well-researched and worth the time of anyone who wants to understand racism." —*The Seattle Times*

***New England Bound: Slavery and Colonization in Early America.* Wendy Warren**

"With intrepid research and stunning narrative skill, Wendy Warren demonstrates how much seventeenth-century New England societies were dependent on the West Indian slave trade, and especially on the labor, bodies, and lives of black slaves. Warren has turned the prophetic lessons of Ecclesiastes back upon the Puritan fathers with scholarly judgment, humanizing both them and the people they enslaved. This book is an original achievement, the kind of history that chastens our historical memory as it makes us wiser." — David W. Blight, Yale University, author of *Race and Reunion*

***The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* by Michelle Alexander**

Contrary to the rosy picture of race embodied in Barack Obama's political success and Oprah Winfrey's financial success, legal scholar Alexander argues vigorously and persuasively that [w]e have not ended

racial caste in America; we have merely redesigned it.

Jim Crow and legal racial segregation has been replaced by mass incarceration as a system of social control. (More African Americans are under correctional control today... than were enslaved in 1850.)

Alexander reviews American racial history from the colonies to the Clinton administration, delineating its transformation into the war on drugs. She offers an acute analysis of the effect of this mass incarceration upon former ...most provocatively, she reveals how both the move toward colorblindness and affirmative action may blur our vision of injustice: most Americans know and don't know the truth about mass incarceration—but her carefully researched, deeply engaging, and thoroughly readable book should change that. (*Publishers Weekly* starred review.)

***I Am Not Your Negro*. James Baldwin and Raoul Peck. Script for the major motion picture of the same name, using the Baldwin's words.**

"*I Am Not Your Negro* is a kaleidoscopic journey through the life and mind of James Baldwin, whose voice speaks even more powerfully today than it did 50 years ago. . . . He was the prose-poet of our injustice and inhumanity. . . . The times have caught up with his scalding eloquence." —*Variety*

"A striking work of storytelling. . . . One of the best movies about the civil rights era ever made. . . . This might be the only movie about race relations that adequately explains—with *sympathy*—the root causes." —*The Guardian*

"Thrilling. . . . A portrait of one man's confrontation with a country that, murder by murder, as he once put it, 'devastated my universe.'... One of the best movies you are likely to see this year." —*The New York Times*

***Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates**

Widely acclaimed and honored, including by the National Book Award. 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's attempt to answer these questions in a letter to his adolescent son.

***Tears We Cannot Stop: A Sermon to White America*. Michael Eric Dyson**

"Dyson...creates a sermon unlike any we've heard or read, and it's right on time...an unapologetically bold plea for America to own up to its inexplicable identity anxiety." —*Essence*

"Be ready to pause nearly every other sentence, absorb what is said, and prepare for action. *Tears We Cannot Stop* is meant to change your thinking." —*The Miami Times*

"One of the most frank and searing discussions on race ... a deeply serious, urgent book, which should take its place in the tradition of Baldwin's *The Fire Next Time* and King's *Why We Can't Wait*. —*The New York Times Book Review* (Editor's Choice)

***We Gon' Be Alright: Notes on Race and Resegregation*. Jeff Chang**

"The Smartest Book of the Year" (*The Washington Post*)

In these provocative, powerful essays acclaimed writer/journalist Jeff Chang (*Can't Stop Won't Stop, Who We Be*) takes an incisive and wide-ranging look at the recent tragedies and widespread protests that have shaken the country. Through deep reporting with key activists and thinkers, passionately personal writing, and distinguished cultural criticism, *We Gon' Be Alright* links #BlackLivesMatter to #OscarsSoWhite, Ferguson to Washington D.C., the Great Migration to resurgent nativism. Chang explores the rise and fall of the idea of "diversity," the roots of student protest, changing ideas about Asian Americanness, and the impact of a century of racial separation in housing. He argues that resegregation is the unexamined condition of our time, the undoing of which is key to moving the nation forward to racial justice and cultural equity.

***The Autobiography of Malcolm X: As Told to Alex Haley.* Alex Haley and Attallah Shabazz**

One of *Time's* Ten Most Important Nonfiction Books of the Twentieth Century

With its first great victory in the landmark Supreme Court decision *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954, the civil rights movement gained the powerful momentum it needed to sweep forward into its crucial decade, the 1960s. As voices of protest and change rose above the din of history and false promises, one voice sounded more urgently, more passionately, than the rest. Malcolm X—once called the most dangerous man in America—challenged the world to listen and learn the truth as he experienced it. And his enduring message is as relevant today as when he first delivered it.

***The Other Wes Moore: One Name, Two Fates* by Wes Moore**

In 2000, Wes Moore had recently been named a Rhodes scholar when he read a newspaper article about another Wes Moore who was on his way to prison. It turned out that the two of them had much in common: both young black men raised in inner-city neighborhoods by single mothers. Stunned by the similarities in their names and backgrounds and the differences in their ultimate fates, the author eventually contacted the other Wes Moore and began a long relationship. The author examines eight years in the lives of both Wes Moores to explore the factors and choices that led one to a Rhodes scholarship, military service, and a White House fellowship, and the other to drug dealing, prison, and eventual conversion to the Muslim faith, with both sharing a gritty sense of realism about their pasts. Moore ends this haunting look at two lives with a call to action and a detailed resource guide.

Books for People Who Identify as White

***Uprooting Racism: How White People Can Work for Racial Justice* by Paul Kivel, 3rd edition**

Uprooting Racism offers a framework for understanding institutional racism. It provides practical suggestions, tools, examples, and advice on how white people can intervene in interpersonal and organizational situations to work as allies for racial justice. Completely revised and updated, this expanded third edition directly engages the reader through questions, exercises, and suggestions for action, and takes a detailed look at current issues such as affirmative action, immigration, and health care. Accessible, personal, supportive, and practical, this book is ideal for students, community activists, teachers, youth workers, and anyone interested in issues of diversity, multiculturalism, and social justice.

***White Like Me: Reflections on Race from a Privileged Son* by Tim Wise**

With a new preface and updated chapters, *White Like Me* is one-part memoir, one-part polemical essay collection. It is a personal examination of the way in which racial privilege shapes the daily lives of white Americans in every realm: employment, education, housing, criminal justice, and elsewhere.

Using stories from his own life, Tim Wise demonstrates the ways in which racism not only burdens people of color, but also benefits, in relative terms, those who are “white like him.” He discusses how racial privilege can harm whites in the long run and make progressive social change less likely. He explores the ways in which whites can challenge their unjust privileges, and explains in clear and convincing language why it is in the best interest of whites themselves to do so. Using anecdotes instead of stale statistics, Wise weaves a narrative that is at once readable and yet scholarly, analytical and yet accessible.

***White Privilege: Essential Readings on the Other Side of Racism* by Paula Rothenberg, 4th edition**

Vital, eye-opening, and powerful, this unique anthology expertly presents the significance and complexity of whiteness today and illuminates the nature of privilege and power in our society. *White Privilege* leads students through the ubiquity and corresponding invisibility of whiteness; the historical development of

whiteness and its role in race relations over time; the real everyday effects of privilege and its opposite, oppression; and finally, how our system of privilege can be changed.

***Waking Up White and Finding Myself in the Story of Race* by Debby Irving**

Debby Irving's powerful *Waking Up White* opens a rare window on how white Americans are socialized. Irving's focus on the mechanics of racism operating in just one life—her own—may lead white readers to reconsider the roots of their own perspectives—and their role in dismantling old myths. Readers of color will no doubt find the view through Irving's window fascinating, and telling. —Van Jones

***11 Reasons to Become Race Literate: A Pocket Guide to a New Conversation* by Milagros Phillips**

Race literacy changes everything. It changes the way we view ourselves and our nation. Race literacy gives us the proper context in which to ground our conversations on Race. It touches our heart, and leaves us free to have healthier relationships, and greater compassion for self and other. We don't know what we don't know, but if we open ourselves up to new possibilities, everything changes. Written to be read in under an hour, this book is meant to spark thoughts and conversations leading to new ways of being. ... *11 Reasons to Become Race Literate: A Pocket Guide to a New Conversation*, leads its readers through a journey and a rediscovery of ourselves, our communities, and our nation. This book is for those who find it uncomfortable to have a conversation about race and who could benefit from more information on the subject.

Books for Children

***Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer, Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement.* Carole Boston Weatherford, illustrated by Ekua Holmes.**

Gr 6 Up—This welcome biography brings to light one of the civil rights movement's most inspiring leaders. The youngest of 20 children, Fannie Lou Hamer grew up in a family of sharecroppers in the Mississippi Delta. Forced to leave school after sixth grade, she joined the rest of her family in the fields picking cotton. Still hungry for knowledge, she found strength in the love of her family and through her Christian faith. Weatherford describes the hardships that Hamer endured. For instance, in 1961, while she was having a small tumor removed, a doctor performed a hysterectomy without her consent; at that time, Mississippi law allowed poor women to be sterilized without their knowledge. Hamer was in her 40s when young activists spoke at her church; until that point, she hadn't known that she could vote, and she volunteered to register. Though she faced threats and in 1963 was brutally beaten, she spent the rest of her life rallying others.