

Faculty Book Recommendations

Looking for something to read?
Try one of these timeless faculty favorites.



Taylor-Grey Miller (Philosophy)

A Grotesque in the Garden by Hud Hudson

Hud Hudson's *A Grotesque in the Garden* is a story of two spiritual mistakes: a failure on the one hand to love God with one's whole self and, on the other, to love one's neighbor as oneself. These mistakes are bound up in the personal stories of the main characters, whose understanding of God and the intellectual challenges facing belief in or being in a relationship with God are inextricable from their personal stories (including their emotional and spiritual shortcomings).

The book is not only an accessible introduction to longstanding philosophical concerns about the nature of God—including the problem of evil, the possibility of divine deception, God's hiddenness, God's silence, and the nature of love—but it also illustrates ways in which an undue preoccupation with philosophical reasoning can make one vulnerable to spiritual ruin. If you want to begin seriously thinking about these deeply important issues, *A Grotesque in the Garden* is a wonderful place to start.

Miriam Whiting (Linguistics)

Seven Blessings: A Novel by Ruchama King

I have reread *Seven Blessings* several times, and I always enjoy it. It takes place in an Orthodox Jewish neighborhood in Jerusalem, and the vivid sensory details and engaging characters that the author includes do an excellent job of immersing the reader in the community. She also makes the faith of her central characters a real and vital part of their lives without her tone being preachy or cynical. I recommend this book for anybody who writes or wants to write about people of faith or for anybody who is interested in Jewish culture.

Christopher Flood (French & Italian)

The Accursed Kings (Les Rois maudits) by Maurice Druon

Druon's seven-volume work of historical fiction is frequently described as the original *Game of Thrones*. The major difference is that in *The Accursed Kings*, Druon mixes well-researched historical fact with deliciously melodramatic fiction to recount a true story of medieval political intrigue. The author takes as his starting point and inspiration French King Philip IV's execution of the last grand master of the Knights Templar, Jacques de Molay. According to legend, Molay used his final breaths to curse the king and his posterity, as well as a few others he held responsible for the Templars' demise. The king died unexpectedly soon after, as did the others cursed by Molay. It is a fun read but too historically accurate and well written to be dismissed as simply a guilty pleasure.

Valerie Hegstrom (Global Women's Studies)

The Left Hand of Darkness by Ursula K. Le Guin

I love all of Ursula K. Le Guin's novels and stories. *The Left Hand of Darkness* moves me because of the self-sacrifice that one of the alien characters willingly makes on the chance that their sacrifice will result in communication between them and us (humans). I think when it appeared, critics read it as a metaphor about women living in an alien masculine world. I believe it also makes sense to recognize in the novel the kinds of struggles we might need to undertake to create understanding across other divides: race, ethnicity, social class, nationality, religion, and sexuality. 📖