

Book Club READING LIST - The Spirit of 1968

Like reunion classes before us, we will be having a “book club meeting” during reunion. But unlike most book clubs with just one selection, we have compiled a reading selection that includes a novel, a non-fiction book, an article, essays, and a play. You can choose to read any one or more; we recommend that you start with the Kurlansky book which provides a comprehensive overview of our graduation year. Through literary and historical books, we are hoping to grasp the atmosphere of 1964-1968. Looking back at the politics, the social change, the arts and the revolutionary spirit of our Goucher years should lead to a broad discussion of what was then and is now as we re-experience the turmoil, marches and protests today. And with wisdom and reflection, you may see how the 60's played (or didn't play) a part in making you who you are today. Happy Reading!

Discussion with Barbara Roswell, Goucher College Professor of Writing

1968 The Year that Rocked the World

By Mark Kurlansky

Goodreads Review:

To some, 1968 was the year of sex, drugs, and rock and roll. Yet it was also the year of the Martin Luther King, Jr., and Bobby Kennedy assassinations; the riots at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago; Prague Spring; the anti-war movement and the Tet Offensive; Black Power; the generation gap; avant-garde theatre; the upsurge of the women’s movement; and the beginning of the end for the Soviet Union.

In this monumental book, Mark Kurlansky brings to teeming life the cultural and political history of that pivotal year, when television’s influence on global events first became apparent, and spontaneous uprisings occurred simultaneously around the world. Encompassing the diverse realms of youth and music, politics and war, economics and the media, 1968 shows how twelve volatile months transformed who we were as a people—and led us to where we are today.

https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/3345.1968?from_search=true

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The Fire Next Time

By James Baldwin

Goodreads Review:

A national bestseller when it first appeared in 1963 and now a classic, *The Fire Next Time* galvanized the nation and gave passionate voice to the emerging civil rights movement. At once a powerful evocation of James Baldwin's early life in Harlem and a disturbing examination of the consequences of racial injustice, the book is an intensely personal and provocative document. It consists of two "letters," written on the occasion of the centennial of the Emancipation Proclamation, that exhort Americans, both black and white, to attack the terrible legacy of racism. Described by *The New York Times Book Review* as "sermon, ultimatum, confession, deposition, testament, and chronicle...all presented in searing, brilliant prose," *The Fire Next Time* stands as a classic of our literature.

<https://www.nypl.org/events/programs/2018/01/13/book-club-fire-next-time-james-baldwin>
https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/464260.The_Fire_Next_Time?from_search=true

The Loss of Innocence

By Richard North Patterson

From Eve Kraus Rauber '68:

Having gone to Goucher (a small women's college similar to Wheaton), I was able to identify with the protagonist in this coming of age novel. This book captures all of the themes of 1968 and is based on interviews with women who graduated from Wheaton in that year as well as some of their professors.

Like male novelists of the Nineteenth century, Richard North Patterson actually looks at the world through a woman's eyes. He tells us the story of a girl born into a derived identity, and her path toward who she is and what she wants. In one life of the 1960s, he symbolizes a movement that keeps changing all our lives.—Gloria Steinem, author of *Revolution from Within*

<http://www.richardnorthpattersonbooks.com/loss-of-innocence-2/>

How America Lost Its Mind

Kurt Andersen

This 50 page article in *The Atlantic* is an adaptation of *Fantasyland: How America Went Haywire: A 500-Year History* which has just been published. You can download the Atlantic article at http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2017/09/how-America-lost-its-mind/534231/?utm_source=ML-to-080817

Goodreads Review:

In this sweeping, eloquent history of America, Kurt Andersen demonstrates that what's happening in our country today—this strange, post-factual, "fake news" moment we're all living through—is not something entirely new, but rather the ultimate expression of our national character and path. America was founded by wishful dreamers, magical thinkers, and true believers, by impresarios and their audiences, by hucksters and their suckers. Believe-whatever-you-want fantasy is deeply embedded in our DNA.

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The Heidi Chronicles

By Wendy Wasserstein

A Pulitzer Prize and Tony award winner in 1989, Wendy Wasserstein's play *The Heidi Chronicles* still rings true today. The women's movement, the war in Vietnam, the AIDS crisis, the counterculture protests, Watergate, and the civil rights movement - we realize that they all have their counterparts today as we reflect on how far we've come over the years, or not.

As *The New York Times Book Review* wrote, Wasserstein's words, both serious and humorous, lead us to consider: "Do the responsibilities that come with age inevitably erode the ideals of youth? Can women achieve the most in their careers while enjoying a fully satisfying family life? Is sadness a natural — as opposed to pathological — response to the realization that life will not bring us everything we had hoped it would?"

<https://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/20/theater/review-the-heidi-chronicles-with-elisabeth-moss-opens-on-broadway.html>

(You can either read a written script of the play, listen to it on Audible, or watch it on YouTube.)

We hope there's something here for everyone! We look forward to a rich discussion after revisiting our college years and reflecting how we evolved from 1964/68 to 2018.