

CALGARY ASSOCIATION OF LIFE LONG LEARNERS
HOW CAN YOU THINK THAT? A POLITICAL BOOKCLUB
SEPTEMBER 2021 - JUNE 2022 READING LIST

July - August 2021. "Summer Reads"

Animal, Vegetable, Junk: A History of Food, from Sustainable to Suicidal

Mark Bittman

"Epic and engrossing."—*The New York Times Book Review*

From the #1 New York Times bestselling author and pioneering journalist, an expansive look at how history has been shaped by humanity's appetite for food, farmland, and the money behind it all—and how a better future is within reach.

The story of humankind is usually told as one of technological innovation and economic influence—of arrowheads and atomic bombs, settlers and stock markets. But behind it all, there is an even more fundamental driver: Food.

In *Animal, Vegetable, Junk*, trusted food authority Mark Bittman offers a panoramic view of how the frenzy for food has driven human history to some of its most catastrophic moments, from slavery and colonialism to famine and genocide—and to our current moment, wherein Big Food exacerbates climate change, plunders our planet, and sickens its people. Even still, Bittman refuses to concede that the battle is lost, pointing to activists, workers, and governments around the world who are choosing well-being over corporate greed and gluttony, and fighting to free society from Big Food's grip.

Sweeping, impassioned, and ultimately full of hope, *Animal, Vegetable, Junk* reveals not only how food has shaped our past, but also how we can transform it to reclaim our future.

Land: How the Hunger for Ownership Shaped the Modern World
Simon Winchester

"In many ways, Land combines bits and pieces of many of Winchester's previous books into a satisfying, globe-trotting whole. . . . Winchester is, once again, a consummate guide."—Boston Globe

The author of *The Professor and the Madman*, *The Map That Changed the World*, and *The Perfectionists* explores the notion of property—bought, earned, or received; in Europe, Africa, North America, or the South Pacific—through human history, how it has shaped us and what it will mean for our future.

Land—whether meadow or mountainside, desert or peat bog, parkland or pasture, suburb or city—is central to our existence. It quite literally underlies and underpins everything. Employing the keen intellect, insatiable curiosity, and narrative verve that are the foundations of his previous bestselling works, Simon Winchester examines what we human beings are doing—and have done—with the billions of acres that together make up the solid surface of our planet.

Land: How the Hunger for Ownership Shaped the Modern World examines in depth how we acquire land, how we steward it, how and why we fight over it, and finally, how we can, and on occasion do, come to share it. Ultimately, Winchester confronts the essential question: who actually owns the world's land—and why does it matter?

SEPTEMBER 28, 2021

Values: Building a Better World for All

Mark Carney

NATIONAL BESTSELLER

A bold and urgent argument by economist and former bank governor Mark Carney on the radical, foundational change that is required if we are to build an economy and society based not on market values but on human values.

Our world is full of fault lines--growing inequality in income and opportunity; systemic racism; health and economic crises from a global pandemic; mistrust of experts; the existential threat of climate change; deep threats to employment in a digital economy with robotics on the rise. These fundamental problems and others like them, argues Mark Carney, stem from a common crisis in values. Drawing on the turmoil of the past decade, Mark Carney shows how "market economies" have evolved into "market societies" where price determines the value of everything.

When we think about what we, as individuals, value most highly, we might list fairness, health, the protection of our rights, economic security from poverty, the preservation of natural diversity, resources, and beauty. The tragedy is, these things that we hold dearest are too often the casualties of our twenty-first century world, where they ought to be our bedrock.

In this profoundly important new book, Mark Carney offers a vision of a more humane society and a practical manifesto for getting there. How we reform our infrastructure to make things better and fairer is at the heart of every chapter, with outlines of wholly new ideas that can restructure society and enshrine our human values at the core of all that we build for our children and grandchildren.

OCTOBER 26, 2021

War: How Conflict Shaped Us

Margaret MacMillan

NATIONAL BESTSELLER

SHORTLISTED for the 2021 Lionel Gelber Prize

Thoughtful and brilliant insights into the very nature of war--from the ancient Greeks to modern times--from world-renowned historian Margaret MacMillan.

War--its imprint in our lives and our memories--is all around us, from the metaphors we use to the names on our maps. As books, movies, and television series show, we are drawn to the history and depiction of war. Yet

we nevertheless like to think of war as an aberration, as the breakdown of the normal state of peace. This is comforting but wrong. War is woven into the fabric of human civilization.

In this sweeping new book, international bestselling author and historian Margaret MacMillan analyzes the tangled history of war and society and our complicated feelings towards it and towards those who fight. It explores the ways in which changes in society have affected the nature of war and how in turn wars have changed the societies that fight them, including the ways in which women have been both participants in and the objects of war.

MacMillan's new book contains many revelations, such as war has often been good for science and innovation and in the 20th century it did much for the position of women in many societies. But throughout, it forces the reader to reflect on the ways in which war is so intertwined with society, and the myriad reasons we fight.

NOVEMBER 23, 2021

Doom: The Politics of Catastrophe

Niall Ferguson

Setting the *annus horribilis* of 2020 in historical perspective, Niall Ferguson explains why we are getting worse, not better, at handling disasters.

Disasters are inherently hard to predict. Pandemics, like earthquakes, wildfires, financial crises, and wars, are not normally distributed; there is no cycle of history to help us anticipate the next catastrophe. But when disaster strikes, we ought to be better prepared than the Romans were when Vesuvius erupted, or medieval Italians when the Black Death struck. We have science on our side, after all.

Yet in 2020 the responses of many developed countries, including the United States, to a new virus from China were badly bungled. Why? Why did only a few Asian countries learn the right lessons from SARS and MERS? While populist leaders certainly performed poorly in the face of the COVID-19

pandemic, Niall Ferguson argues that more profound pathologies were at work--pathologies already visible in our responses to earlier disasters.

Drawing from multiple disciplines, including economics, cliodynamics, and network science, Doom offers not just a history but a general theory of disasters, showing why our ever more bureaucratic and complex systems are getting worse at handling them.

Doom is the lesson of history that this country--indeed the West as a whole--urgently needs to learn, if we want to handle the next crisis better, and to avoid the ultimate doom of irreversible decline.

JANUARY 25, 2022

The Power of Geography: Ten Maps That Reveal the Future of Our World

Tim Marshall

From the author of the New York Times bestseller Prisoners of Geography, the highly anticipated follow-up that uses ten maps of crucial regions around the globe to explain the geopolitical strategies of today's world powers and what it means for our future.

Tim Marshall's global bestseller Prisoners of Geography offered us a "fresh way of looking at maps" (The New York Times Book Review), showing how every nation's choices are limited by mountains, rivers, seas and concrete. Since then, the geography hasn't changed, but the world has.

Now, in this revelatory new book, Marshall takes us into ten regions that are set to shape global politics and power. Find out why the Earth's atmosphere is the world's next battleground; why the fight for the Pacific is just beginning; and why Europe's next refugee crisis is closer than we think.

In ten chapters covering Australia, The Sahel, Greece, Turkey, the UK, Iran, Ethiopia, Saudi Arabia, Spain and Space, Marshall explains how a region's geography and physical characteristics affect the decisions made by its

leaders. Innovative, compelling, and delivered with Marshall's trademark wit and insight, this is a gripping and enlightening exploration of the power of geography to shape humanity's past, present, and—most importantly—our future.

FEBRUARY 22, 2022

The New Map: Energy, Climate and the Clash of Nations

Daniel Yergin

A Wall Street Journal bestseller and a USA Today Best Book of 2020!

Pulitzer Prize-winning author and global energy expert, Daniel Yergin offers a revelatory new account of how energy revolutions, climate battles, and geopolitics are mapping our future

The world is being shaken by the collision of energy, climate change, and the clashing power of nations in a time of global crisis. Out of this tumult is emerging a new map of energy and geopolitics. The "shale revolution" in oil and gas has transformed the American economy, ending the "era of shortage" but introducing a turbulent new era. Almost overnight, the United States has become the world's number one energy powerhouse. Yet concern about energy's role in climate change is challenging the global economy and way of life, accelerating a second energy revolution in the search for a low-carbon future. All of this has been made starker and more urgent by the coronavirus pandemic and the economic dark age that it has wrought.

World politics is being upended, as a new cold war develops between the United States and China, and the rivalry grows more dangerous with Russia, which is pivoting east toward Beijing. Vladimir Putin and China's Xi Jinping are converging both on energy and on challenging American leadership, as China projects its power and influence in all directions. The South China Sea, claimed by China and the world's most critical trade route, could become the arena where the United States and China directly collide. The map of the Middle East, which was laid down after World War I, is being challenged by jihadists, revolutionary Iran, ethnic and religious clashes, and restive

populations. But the region has also been shocked by the two recent oil price collapses--and by the very question of oil's future in the rest of this century.

A master storyteller and global energy expert, Daniel Yergin takes the reader on an utterly riveting and timely journey across the world's new map. He illuminates the great energy and geopolitical questions in an era of rising political turbulence and points to the profound challenges that lie ahead.

March 22, 2022

The New Class War: Saving Democracy from the Managerial Elite
Michael Lind

In both Europe and North America, populist movements have shattered existing party systems and thrown governments into turmoil. The embattled establishment claims that these populist insurgencies seek to overthrow liberal democracy. The truth is no less alarming but is more complex: Western democracies are being torn apart by a new class war.

In this controversial and groundbreaking new analysis, Michael Lind debunks the idea that the insurgencies are primarily the result of bigotry, traces how the breakdown of mid-century class compromises between business and labor led to the conflict, and reveals the real battle lines.

On one side is the managerial overclass—the university-credentialed elite that clusters in high-income hubs and dominates government, the economy and the culture. On the other side is the working class of the low-density heartlands—mostly, but not exclusively, native and white.

The two classes clash over immigration, trade, the environment, and social values, and the managerial class has had the upper hand. As a result of the half-century decline of the institutions that once empowered the working class, power has shifted to the institutions the overclass controls: corporations, executive and judicial branches, universities, and the media.

The class war can resolve in one of three ways:

- The triumph of the overclass, resulting in a high-tech caste system.
- The empowerment of populist, resulting in no constructive reforms
- A class compromise that provides the working class with real power

Lind argues that Western democracies must incorporate working-class majorities of all races, ethnicities, and creeds into decision making in politics, the economy, and culture. Only this class compromise can avert a never-ending cycle of clashes between oligarchs and populists and save democracy.

APRIL 26, 2022

Next: Where to Live, What to Buy, and Who Will Lead Canada's Future

Darrell Bricker

Where will the world go after COVID-19? CEO of Ipsos Public Affairs Darrell Bricker's prescient and timely new book has the insights and the data to understand what we are going through and why, and who we still are despite the disruption. While the world around us has changed, Bricker's extensive research and analysis resonate for the future.

In this groundbreaking new book, Bricker, a Canadian expert in what Canadians will want and need, distills the trends based on real and extensive demographic data and dares to forecast what will come next. Why is Harley-Davidson making smaller motorcycles and changing the way they sell their bikes? Should restaurateurs be focusing on vibrant, frenetic restaurants offering the latest food fashion or on open, quieter restaurants that focus on tasty standard fare? What's the fastest-growing sector in the housing market? Where should companies plan on setting up shop? Why do we face a population crisis? Which provinces will become the haves and which the have-nots? Where will Canadians be emigrating from, and where will they live? Should we be building more hockey arenas or basketball courts, or even cricket pitches?

Next is the first book in decades that offers an honest, often provocative prescription for where we will live, what we'll be buying and who our leaders

will be in the decades to come. Filled with stories of Canadians making critical decisions for their businesses and their personal lives, *Next* will appeal to a wide audience: anyone who is wondering where they should look for their next job or where they might plan on living in retirement—even how they will live in Canada’s ever-changing future.

May 24, 2022

Whipped: Party Discipline in Canada

Alex Marland

Canadians often see politicians as little more than trained seals who vote on command and repeat robotic talking points. Politicians are torn by dilemmas of loyalty to party versus loyalty to voters. *Whipped* examines the hidden ways that political parties exert control over elected members of legislatures. Drawing on extensive interviews with politicians and staffers across Canada, award-winning author Alex Marland explains why Members of Parliament and provincial legislators toe the party line, and shows how party discipline has expanded into message discipline. This book exposes how democracy works in our age of instant communication and political polarization. *Whipped* is a must-read for anyone interested in the real world of Canadian politics.

JUNE 28, 2022

Evil Geniuses: The Unmaking of America

Kurt Andersen

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER • When did America give up on fairness? The author of *Fantasyland* tells the epic history of how America decided that big business gets whatever it wants, only the rich get richer, and nothing should ever change—and charts a way back to the future.

During the twentieth century, America managed to make its economic and social systems both more and more fair and more and more prosperous. A huge, secure, and contented middle class emerged. All boats rose together. But then the New Deal gave way to the Raw Deal. Beginning in the early 1970s, by means of a long war conceived of and executed by a confederacy of big business CEOs, the superrich, and right-wing zealots, the rules and norms that made the American middle class possible were undermined and

dismantled. The clock was turned back on a century of economic progress, making greed good, workers powerless, and the market all-powerful while weaponizing nostalgia, lifting up an oligarchy that served only its own interests, and leaving the huge majority of Americans with dwindling economic prospects and hope.

Why and how did America take such a wrong turn? In this deeply researched and brilliantly woven cultural, economic, and political chronicle, Kurt Andersen offers a fresh, provocative, and eye-opening history of America's undoing, naming names, showing receipts, and unsparingly assigning blame—to the radical right in economics and the law, the high priests of high finance, a complacent and complicit Establishment, and liberal “useful idiots,” among whom he includes himself.