

To the Reader in Chief...

Some of our favorite feminists recommend books for the next US president's reading list.



Illustration by Jennifer Camper.



Alicia Ostriker

The next president should read the current edition of *Our Bodies, Ourselves* (2011) cover to cover, to learn the realities of life for half the population of the United States. This is the book that more than any other begins to make clear what “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” equally for women and men should mean.

Alicia Ostriker is a poet and critic, twice a finalist for the National Book Award, currently a chancellor of the Academy of American Poets. Her most recent book of poems is *The Old Woman, the Tulip, and the Dog* (2014), and her most recent book of critical essays is *Dancing at the Devil's Party: Essays on Poetry, Politics, and the Erotic* (2000). She is also author of *Stealing the Language: The Emergence of Women's Poetry in America* (1987).

AnaLouise Keating

An Indigenous People's History of the United States, by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz (2015). The United States suffers from a profound historical amnesia that almost always ignores the origins of this country in settler colonialism, which Dunbar-Ortiz defines as “the founding of a state based on the ideology of white supremacy, the widespread practice of African slavery, and a policy of genocide and land theft.” To counter (both personally and collectively) this amnesia, the next president should be conversant with indigenous histories and white settler colonial-

ism's ongoing impact around the world. Awareness can be the first step to transformation; by thoroughly understanding our own history, perhaps the next president could assist us in avoiding a continued repetition of our previous errors.

This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color, edited by Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa (3rd edition, 2015). This multigenre collection is as relevant today as when it was first published in 1981. With contributions from 29 US women, *This Bridge Called My Back* offers a variety of firsthand perspectives on racism, sexism, homophobia, interlocking systemic oppressions, and transformation. To address the oppositional politics that plague Washington, and to avoid becoming trapped in them, our next president will need to build bridges and develop complex alliances. The *Bridge* authors' visionary alliance-building and sophisticated critiques of social injustice will provide our future president with a concise primer on feminism, as well as useful models for coalition-building.

The Miracle of Mindfulness: An Introduction to the Practice of Meditation by Thich Nhat Hanh (1999). For more than fifty years, the Vietnamese peace activist



and Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh has allowed his deeply held spirituality to guide and infuse his tireless activism and political interventions. Exiled for decades from his homeland because of his peace work during the Vietnam War and despite many other setbacks, he maintains his belief in human beings' radical inter-relatedness with all existence (which he calls "interbeing") and uses this belief to work for social change. In this short book Hanh teaches readers how to cultivate mindfulness, even in challenging situations. The future president will benefit from Thich Nhat Hanh's sage council and nonoppositional approach to individual and collective social change.

Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza by Gloria Anzaldúa (1987). Given contemporary debates about immigration, racism, and border issues, Anzaldúa's multigenre book is essential reading for every US elected official, including the president. Anzaldúa uses history, mythography, poetry, autobiography, popular culture, and critical theory to develop an incisive analysis of the borderland region between the United States and Mexico. Her theory of the "new mestiza"; her use of code-switching (shifts between English, Spanish, Nahuatl, and other languages); and her critique of sexism, homophobia, and other narrow ways of thinking can educate and transform the next leader of our country.

AnaLouise Keating, professor and director of the Doctoral Program in Multicultural Women's & Gender Studies at Texas Woman's University, is the author, editor, or co-editor of ten books, including *Transformation Now! Toward a Post-Oppositional Politics of Change* (2013); *Teaching Transformation: Transcultural Classroom Dialogues* (2010); and *Light in the Dark/Luz en lo oscuro: Rewriting Identity, Spirituality, Reality*, by Gloria Anzaldúa (2015). Her work focuses on multicultural teaching and literature; transformational pedagogies; US women-of-colors theories; womanism/feminism; Anzaldúan studies; spiritual activism; and post-oppositional thought.



Beverly Guy-Sheftall

Because of the absence of attention to Palestine from the vantage point of Palestinians, I have decided to suggest titles that an incoming president is not likely to have read. The titles speak for themselves and offer alternative perspectives to mainstream public discourse on the growing crisis in the Middle East as it relates to Occupied Palestine.



The Question of Palestine, by Edward W. Said (1992). First published in 1979 and later updated to address more recent issues, Said is one of the most compelling intellectuals of our era.

Palestine Speaks: Narratives of Life Under Occupation, edited by Cate Malek and Mateo Hoke (2014).

On Palestine, by Ilan Pappé and Noam Chomsky (2015). An informative conversation between two outspoken critics/intellectuals.

Reflections From Palestine: A Journey of Hope, A Memoir, by Samia Nasir Khoury (2014).

Beverly Guy-Sheftall is the founding director of the Women's Research and Resource Center and the Anna Julia Cooper Professor of Women's Studies at Spelman College, and an adjunct professor at Emory University's Institute for Women's Studies. Her publications include the first anthology on black women's literature, *Sturdy Black Bridges: Visions of Black Women in Literature*, coedited with Roseann P. Bell and Bettye Parker Smith (1980); *Daughters of Sorrow: Attitudes Toward Black Women, 1880-1920* (1991); *Words of Fire: An Anthology of African American Feminist Thought* (1995); *Traps: African American Men on Gender and Sexuality*, co-edited

with Rudolph Byrd (2001); *Gender Talk: The Struggle for Women's Equality in African American Communities*, coauthored with Johnnetta Betsch Cole (2003); *I Am Your Sister: Collected and Unpublished Writings of Audre Lorde*, co-edited with Rudolph P. Byrd and Johnnetta B. Cole (2009); *Still Brave: The Evolution of Black Women's Studies*, co-edited with Stanlie James and Frances Smith Foster (2010); and *Who Should Be First: Feminists Speak Out on the 2008 Presidential Campaign*, co-edited with Johnnetta B. Cole (2010). In 1983 she became founding co-editor of *Sage: A Scholarly Journal of Black Women*. She is a past president of the National Women's Studies Association.

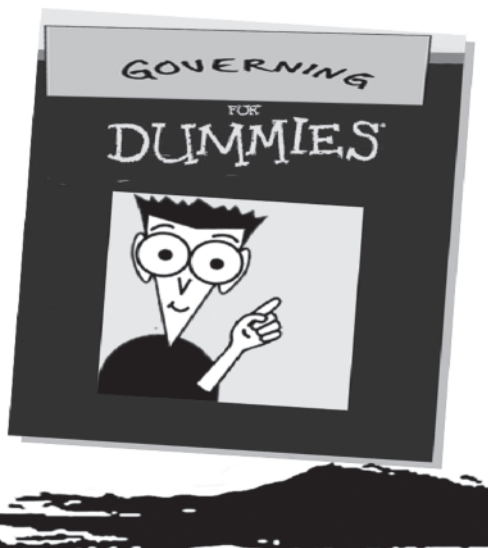


Callie Crossley

Though I read everything from the serious to the silly (both for work and for my Literary Sisters Book Club), subconsciously I ended up with a list that reflects a running theme. I guess I want the new president to look beyond his or her own experience and to develop a deep understanding of the lives of black female citizens.

Sister Outsider, by Audre Lorde (1984). I was first introduced to Lorde's work some years ago by a group of black women readers and educators. During the past few years I find myself quoting often from her body of work, especially her essays, which feel as though she wrote them yesterday.





Citizen, by Claudia Rankine (2014). So much of what Rankine writes here resonates with my experiences and with our times of race confusion and race baiting. Here is the work that describes the real meaning of “microaggression” and explains why it matters. I am still working my way through the book, because I have to keep putting it down to manage my emotions.

Americanah, by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (2013). Adichie, an expert story teller, weaves a tale of cultural assimilation from the perspective of an African woman in America. In fact, all of Adichie’s work, including her previous novels, *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) and *Purple Hibiscus* (2003), would be worthwhile presidential reading. Adichie has become famous, in addition, for her 2009 TED talk, “The Danger of a Single Story.”

The Light of the World, by Elizabeth Alexander (2015). Alexander’s heartbreaking story of her life after the sudden death of her husband celebrates marriage, family, cross-cultural connection, spirituality, and moving on. Alexander, who read her poem, “Praise Song for the Day,” at President Obama’s first inauguration, gives us a real history of black love—there are not enough of these.

The Collected Poems of Lucille Clifton 1965-2010 (2015). Clifton’s work is witty and wise, earthy and ethereal. She is a true “race woman,” and I’ve found sustenance and support in her words. Our president may, also.

A Shining Thread of Hope: Black Women in America, by Darlene Clark Hine and Kathleen Thompson (1998). This is only one of Hine’s many great books about the history of black women in America. Her research that has established the field of black women’s history in America.

Shifting: The Double Lives of Black Women by Charisse Jones and Kumea Shorter-Gooden (2003). Jones and Shorter-Gooden’s ground-breaking book examines the particular family and cultural challenges black women face in the corporate workplace.

72 Hour Hold, by Bebe Moore Campbell (2005). Campbell’s novel about mental health-challenges in black families helped to break down some of the stigma of mental illness.

Ebony and Ivy: Race, Slavery, and the Troubled History of America’s Universities, by Craig Wilder (2013). In his meticulously researched book, Wilder examines the relationships of some of America’s most prestigious colleges and universities with slavery.

Callie Crossley is the host of the weekly public radio program *Under the Radar with Callie Crossley* and of the public television show *Basic Black*, and a frequent commentator on local and national television and radio. A former producer for *ABC News 20/20*, Crossley often lectures at colleges and universities about media literacy, media and politics, and the intersections of race, gender, and media. She has had fellowships from the Nieman Foundation for Journalism and the Institute of Politics at the John F. Kennedy School of Government. Her awards include the 2015 Salute to Excellence Award from the National Association of Black Journalists, for a compilation of her weekly commentaries, *Observations on Ferguson: America’s Racial Ground Zero*; and the 2014 Associated Press, Edward R. Murrow, and Clarion awards for writing, producing, and co-hosting the radio documentary, *Witness to History: WGBH’s 1963 Coverage of the March on Washington*.



Courtney E. Martin

The Samaritan’s Dilemma by Deborah Stone (2008). Stone explores the philosophical and moral implications of caretaking and provides suggestions for integrating it into public policy.

The Art of the Common Place by Wendell Berry (2002). This is a foundational look at how meaning is found in taking responsibility for what is right in front of us—whether that is a place or a person.

Healing the Heart of Democracy: The Courage to Create a Politics Worthy of the Human Spirit by Parker Palmer (2011). Palmer draws a line straight from the personal to the political. He calls for a reimagining of the public sphere, which would include how we interact in neighborhoods, communities, and cities—in order to change Washington.

Citizen by Claudia Rankine (2014). This deeply affecting, multigenre poem is about the ways racism infects even the smallest of human interactions. I think it would be an important addition to a president’s understanding of structural racism.

Courtney E. Martin is an author, entrepreneur, and weekly columnist for the public radio program *On Being*. She is currently working on a book titled *The New Better Off*, exploring how people are redefining the American dream (think more fulfillment, community, and fun; less debt, status, and stuff). Martin is the co-founder of the Solutions Journalism Network and a strategist for the TED Prize. Her books include *Do It Anyway: The New Generation of Activists* (2010), and *Perfect Girls, Starving Daughters: How the Quest for Perfection*

is *Harming Young Women* (2007). Her work appears frequently in national publications, including the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*. She has appeared on the *TODAY Show*, *Good Morning America* and other television.



Ellen Feldman

We are in a period of societal struggle as significant as that for self-determination in the sixties and early seventies. Now, as then, the struggle takes many forms: equal rights, including marriage equality, for the LGBT community; freedom from discrimination and injustice, including police brutality, for African Americans; and equal rights and breaking through glass ceilings, for women. The struggle (always) continues even as we celebrate our victories.

Courting Equality: A Documentary History of America’s First Legal Same-Sex Marriages, photographs by Marilyn Humphries and text by Patricia A. Gozemba and Karen Kahn (2007). This is a chronicle of how the LGBT community fought for and gained marriage equality, with photographs documenting players in one of the most important achievements in civil liberties of our time. The book demonstrates how much you can achieve by listening to and forming alliances with grassroots constituencies.

Carrie Mae Weems, by Andrea Kirsch and Susan Fisher Sterling (1993). In her “Kitchen Table Series,” Carrie Mae Weems created a narrative with facing pages of photographs and text. The images are black-and-white, stripped-down photographs of Weems, who is African American, by herself and with others at a kitchen table, that most commonplace private and communal space. She pairs these with colorful, streetwise, lyrical prose that traces the progress of a fictional romantic relationship, from start to collapse, along with a woman’s growing self-assurance.

Cindy Sherman, by Eva Respini (2013). Cindy Sherman made a name for herself with her “Untitled Film Series,” in which she photographed herself as an actress in fake publicity stills of fake foreign, art-house, and noir movies. With each subsequent photographic series of herself, she delves into ever darker terrain, from bleak “centerfolds” through grotesque “fairy tales” to macabre scenes of violence and decay. When everyone in a policy meeting is

willing to complacently adopt conventional strategies, particularly those to improve the lives of women, people of color, and those in the LGBT community, remember Sherman's bravery in continually defying expectation ... and go for the bold and daring approach.

Faces and Phases, by Zanele Muholi (2010). Zanele Muholi, a black lesbian artist, photographs LGBT people in her native country, South Africa, in an approach she calls "visual activism." This book's portraits of strong, even defiant individuals, who live in a country plagued by homophobia, make the case for using artistic activity to move people from sympathy to action. As you establish a public works program, remember the role our artists can play in effecting cultural change.

Ellen Feldman is a fine arts photographer whose portfolios often take off from her interests in street photography and film history. In addition to exhibiting her photos in numerous solo and group shows, she has self-published a photo/comic book of a dancer incorporated into a Fantastic Four comic, *The Dancer as the Invisible Girl* (2011) and two books of street photographs: *Les Mystères de Paris/Paris Mysteries* (2010), and *A Week in Prague: Wall People/Street People* (2012). Feldman is photography editor of *Women's Review of Books*. She holds a PhD in Cinema Studies from New York University. Visit her website at www.ellenfeldman.net.

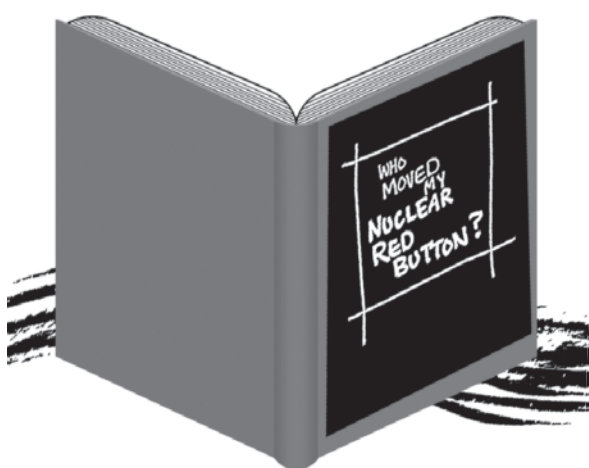


Jennifer Camper

The Lottery, by Shirley Jackson (1948). This story needs to be reread often, because, of course, it's so perfectly written, but also to remind us that we do many hateful things merely because of stupid, obsolete traditions.

The Kid, by Sapphire (2012). A sequel (of sorts) to Sapphire's book, *Precious* (2009), this novel tells the story of Precious's son, Abdul, and how he is repeatedly failed by people and institutions. It's a powerful and brutal account of how a person can get chewed up by our society, how victims become victimizers, and the devastating results of injustice.

People Like Us: Misrepresenting the Middle East, by Joris Luyendijk (2009). Luyendijk is a Dutch journalist who explains how "truth" is carefully controlled and edited by those with the power to disseminate information—and how they do it inevitably, both consciously and unconsciously. While he specifically describes his experiences as a journalist in the Middle East, his descriptions of how the messenger manipulates the message is universally applicable.



The Sneetches, by Dr. Seuss (1961). Seuss writes:

Now, the Star-Belly Sneetches had bellies
with stars.
The Plain-Belly Sneetches had none upon thars.
Those stars weren't so big. They were really
so small.
You might think such a thing wouldn't matter
at all.

But humans, like Sneetches, take insignificant things and turn them into gigantic problems.

Jennifer Camper is a cartoonist and graphic artist. Her books include *Rude Girls and Dangerous Women* (1992) and *subGURLZ* (1999). She is also the editor of two Juicy Mother comics anthologies. Her work appears in numerous publications and has been exhibited internationally. She edited the Queer Pin-Ups playing cards and is the founding director of the Queers & Comics Conference.



Kate Clinton

If the Trump juggernaut somehow holds through November 2016, we won't have to stock the White House with any books because he knows everything. Ayn Rand? He wrote it. Pop-up books? He is one.

If President Obama leaves some of his **Marilynne Robinson** collection behind, it would be a nice welcoming gift to the incoming president.

I hope she will arrive having already read *Between the World and Me*, by **Ta-Nahisi Coates** (2014).

For her bedside table I recommend poetry. Had a tough day at the Oval Office? Try a **Kay Ryan**, **June Jordan**, or **Adrienne Rich** nightcap.

Kate Clinton is a humorist.



Katie Grover

The Shriver Report: A Woman's Nation Changes Everything, by Maria Shriver and the Center for American Progress with Heather Boushey and Ann O'Leary (2009).

From Outrage to Courage: Women Taking Action for Health and Justice, by Anne Firth Murray (2009). Murray is the founder of the Global Fund for Women, and here she looks at the health of women around the world as a human rights issue. It is an indicator and correlate to poverty, social inequity, war, violence against women, trafficking, education, housing, and a host of other facets of human rights and social welfare.

Girls Like Us: Fighting for a World Where Girls Are Not for Sale, an Activist Finds her Calling and Heals Herself, by Rachel Lloyd (2011).

Half the Sky, by Nicholas D. Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn (2008).

Don't Think of An Elephant: Know Your Values and Frame the Debate—the Essential Guide for Progressives, by George Lakoff (2004).

Katie Grover is the board chair emerita of the Ms. Foundation for Women. She has also served on the advisory board of the Wellesley Centers for Women, and on the boards of Re:Gender (formerly the National Council for Research on Women), and Equality Now. She has long worked for social justice for all women and girls.



Layli Maparyan

Understanding not only race relations, but also racial psychology in the United States, will be an absolute must for the next president. Here are three classic books that I've found provide different angles on black psychology and politics. Triangulation of the three provides great insight into black thought and the solutions black intellectuals have brought to moving race relations forward in a complicated world:



The Souls of Black Folk, by W.E.B. DuBois (1903).

The Wretched of the Earth, by Frantz Fanon (1963).

Sister Outsider: Essays & Speeches, by Audre Lorde (1984).

With a world embroiled in conflict and significant controversies, it will be essential for our next president to know how to maintain inner peace and equipoise. Here are four of my favorite books for staying centered, focused, and calm, even in the midst of storms:

The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, translated by Alistair Shearer (2002).

When Things Fall Apart, by Pema Chödrön (1997).

Peace Is Every Step, by Thich Nhat Hanh (2005).

Your Invisible Power, by Genevieve Behrend (1921).

Given the generational changes occurring in US society and globally, I think it is important to have a fresh and research-informed perspective on youth. So many current issues—from education and jobs, to mental and physical health, to drug use and the criminal justice system, to family concerns ranging from teen pregnancy to childcare to family leave—hinge on how we think about youth. To this end, I am recommending

The Age of Opportunity: Lessons from the New Science of Adolescence, by Laurence Steinberg (2014).

In terms of foreign affairs, here are two items I'd like the next president to read and reflect upon. The first is a controversial book that invites us to ask tough questions about foreign aid to developing countries, and the second is a document I'd like the next president to get the United States to ratify!

Dead Aid: Why Aid Is Not Working and How There Is a Better Way for Africa, by Dambisa Moyo (2009).

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1979.

Layli Maparyan, PhD, is the Katherine Stone Kaufmann '67 Executive Director of the Wellesley Centers for Women, and a professor of Africana Studies at Wellesley College.



Yi-Chun Tricia Lin

The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts (1975) and its sequel (of a sort), *China Men* (1980), by Maxine Hong Kingston. Kingston's first two books were instant classics and are counted among the finest of American literature. In these two books, Kingston retells—beautifully, hauntingly, and poignantly—an American origin story, with Chinese-Americans, in place as the missing piece of the American genealogy.

The Fifth Book of Peace, by Maxine Hong Kingston (2003). This is Kingston's prayer for world peace. She offers a meditation, an exercise in mindfulness, for all who enter her literary world. In this book, her Chinese-American character Wittman Ah Sing (who first appears in Kingston's 1989 novel *Tripmaster Monkey: His Fake Book*) reappears. Kingston's book of peace is a defiant act against war and destruction, and a Chinese American song of "Mitakuye Oyasin" ("All our relations," in Lakota).

Yi-Chun Tricia Lin is director and professor in the Women's Studies Program at Southern Connecticut State University. She has worked with the African American Women's Summit, a Sisters' Collective; the Coalition of Women's Studies in Connecticut and Rhode Island; the Connecticut Health Equity Leadership Council; Finch College Alumnae Foundation Scholarship Committee; New Haven League of Women Voters; the Perfect Blend Youth Leadership Program; Veteran Feminists of America, Connecticut; and others. She has served as a member of the Advisory Committee for the Fund for Women and Girls of the Greater New Haven Community Foundation since 2006; a member of the Consulting Scholars of the Connecticut Women's Hall of Fame since 2005; and a trustee on the Board of the Connecticut Women's Hall of Fame since 2006. Nationally, she was president of Women's Caucus for Modern Languages; vice president of the National Women's Studies Association; and co-chair, with Beverly Guy-Sheftall of the National Women's Studies Association Gloria Anzaldúa Book Prize Committee. She received an Ingrid Washinawatok El-Issa O'Peqtaw Metaehmoh-Flying Eagle Woman Peace, Justice, and Sovereignty Award in 2011. Internationally, she continues her work with and writing about Taiwan Indigenous women and their cultural productions.

Marjorie Agosin

State of Exile, by Cristina Peri Rossi, translated by Marilyn Buck (2008). These powerful poems capture the experience of exile in our nomadic and fragmented world: the constant search for meaning in a foreign land and the power of language to evoke dislocation and a permanent state of loss. Rossi left her native Uruguay in the early 1970s, when a military dictatorship took over the country. From Barcelona, where she makes her home, she evokes what is forever missing: what once was and is no longer possible. This collection is timely, due to the current refugee crisis in Europe.



Language Duel, by Rosario Ferre (2002). Rosario Ferre is one of Puerto Rico's leading feminist novelists and short story writers. In *Language Duel* she explores biculturalism and what it means to write in two languages, English and Spanish. In our globalizing world, it is important to understand biculturalism and bilingualism, celebrating both differences and similarities.

Country of Red Azaleas, by Domnica Radulescu (2016). This riveting novel traces the friendship of two women, one from Bosnia and the other from Serbia. Even as war tears their countries apart, their friendship survives. The novel celebrates courage in times of adversity as well as the power of women's friendships.

Marjorie Agosin is a poet and human rights activist. Originally from Chile, she is the author of nearly forty books, including poetry, essays, and memoirs. Agosin is the Luella Lamer Slaner Professor of Latin American Studies at Wellesley College.

Martha Nichols



I spent July through December 2015 in Geelong, Victoria, near Melbourne, Australia, and I confess: living outside the United States during the run-up to a

presidential election is a blessed relief. Many of the Australians I spoke with seemed to consider the American campaign an entertaining sideshow akin to *Survivor* or *The Voice*. They were surprisingly knowledgeable about US presidential candidates—at least in terms of bad or good hair and the most absurd sound bites. But it's disturbing that many Americans don't know much beyond the sound bites, either.

Australians and Americans are culturally kissing cousins. Australian ideals are both egalitarian and "matey" (i.e., macho and white), and while you can find ferocious feminists in progressive pockets like Melbourne, the status of women and indigenous people often elicits eye-rolling. Australia has had a female prime minister (briefly), so Hillary Clinton's candidacy is not an issue. But women, children, and minorities of all types are disproportionately affected by economic class differences, and just who benefits from "the good life" in Australia (or America) is the big issue.

So, this presidential season, I've found myself most worried about the increasing gap between rich and poor around the world—and the cultural gaps in understanding that are festering everywhere. For these reasons, I've selected five books for the next US president that highlight such gaps and the lasting damage they do.

Indelible Ink, by Fiona MacGregor (2010). Fiona MacGregor's big fat social novel documents economic change in one of the world's most expensive cities, Melbourne, through the eyes of a formerly wealthy wife who loses almost everything in a divorce, and her adult children. The protagonist ends up covering her body with artful tattoos, crossing all sorts of class and cultural boundaries. Why should the next US president read this book? Because novels make you *feel* what it means to fail in a tough economy.

Barracuda, by Christos Tsiolkas (2013). Christos Tsiolkas (also author of *The Slap* [2008]) is a master at portraying economic, ethnic, and racial differences. The protagonist of *Barracuda* is a young working-class swimmer who dreams of Olympic gold—and even gets a scholarship to a fancy private school. His story exposes the flip side of the Australian (and American) dream: What happens when you aren't good enough to make the cut?

Unspeakable Things: Sex, Lies, and Revolution, by Laurie Penny (2014). Laurie Penny says, "Being a good girl gets you nowhere. Asking nicely for change gets you nowhere. Mutiny is necessary. Class mutiny, gender mutiny, sex mutiny, love mutiny. It's got to be mutiny in our time." Even if we end up with a female president, she needs to be reminded that feminism is not just about advancing your career—it's about changing the terms of the patriarchy.

Age of Ambition: Chasing Fortune, Truth, and Faith in the New China, by Evan Osnos (2014). American presidential candidates pay lip service to China's status as a world power, but Osnos's recent book offers a complex understanding of a nation undergoing rapid economic change.

Notes of a Native Son, by James Baldwin (1955). Racial prejudice remains a raw wound to the American national soul. These essays, although they were written during the American civil rights movement, remain disturbingly relevant. I recommend *Notes of a Native Son* to all white Aussie politicians as well as to the next US president.

Martha Nichols is editor in chief of **Talking writing.com**, a digital literary magazine based in the Boston area. She's a contributing editor at **WRB** and teaches in the journalism program at the Harvard University Extension School.



Moya Bailey

I struggled with this task of selecting books for the new president, because to desire the position is to desire imperial, colonial, patriarchal, capitalist, and racist power. That said, should someone be elected to the nation's highest office, I'd like to offer materials that would hopefully help them realize the deep-seated problems with their chosen profession.

A People's History of the United States, by Howard Zinn (1980). If you are going to be the leader of the so-called free world, you need to get down the basics about your country's violent past. Howard Zinn's history will help the new president see how the United States government has violated the human rights of the people who reside on Turtle Island (North America) in both the past and present. Perhaps the new president will be moved by people's continual resistance and willingness to fight in the face of governmental oppression.

The Street, by Ann Petry (1946). Ann Petry's book is a master-class in the real world impact of capitalism on those most marginalized in our country. This is deep sociological theory disguised as a brilliant novel. Racism, sexism, class, and the impossibility of the American Dream when you are black and poor are all expertly rendered in this tragic but beautifully told story. If the president takes the book to heart, they will surely have to transform the economy, end racism and sexism, all while creating a new plan for city living.

Parable of the Sower, by Octavia Butler (1993). The dystopic future predicted by Octavia Butler is here, now. The threat of collapse is closer than we think. By following Butler's character Lauren and her ever-growing cult of followers, the new president might start to see how big policy changes affect communities and individuals. The new president would hopefully see the writing on the wall and attempt to shift course by intervening in the corporatization of our lives.

Moya Bailey is a Dean's Postdoctoral Scholar of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies and Digital Humanities at Northeastern University. Her

work focuses on marginalized groups' use of digital media to promote social justice, self-affirmation, and health. She is interested in how race, gender, and sexuality are represented in media and medicine. She curates the #trans formDH Tumblr initiative in Digital Humanities and is the digital alchemist for the Octavia E. Butler Legacy Network.



Robin Becker

Diving into the Wreck, by Adrienne Rich (1973). The incoming president might want to listen to the inner lives of US women baby boomers by reading one of Adrienne Rich's most potent collections. Here, the struggle to articulate the consequences of patriarchy finds a voice—in poems including "From a Survivor," "Translations," and "Meditations for a Savage Child." In the title poem, Rich begins to fashion a language for a new way of being and thinking.

Mrs. Dalloway, by Virginia Woolf (1925). With its thematic antipathy to war and war's devastating consequences for the human psyche, this novel is more important than ever. In it, Virginia Woolf combines an examination of gendered, middle-class London in the post-World War I era with her style-breaking rendering of the inner life. Women's friendship, the compromises of heteronormative marriage, and a poet's lush language make this a presidential must-read.

Robin Becker, Liberal Arts Research Professor of English and Women's Studies at Penn State University, is the author of seven collections of poems, the most recent of which is *Tiger Heron* (2014). New poems are forthcoming in the *American Poetry Review* and the *New Yorker*.





Rochelle Ruthchild

Where do I begin, when the range of candidates on the Republican side includes those who deny science, are willfully ignorant of history, lie, exaggerate, sidle up to preachers who encourage violence against LGBT people, or who are just plain demagogues?

For the Republicans, I recommend simple books with clear, easy-to-understand messages that might upset their neatly ordered apple carts.

The Bible. Its themes include social justice, ethical values, inequality—and how all are flouted. Isn't it the Bible that portrays a marriage between a man and a woman and a woman and a woman?

Heather Has Two Mommies, by Leslea Newman (1989). This pioneering classic expands the possibilities of the nuclear family.

The Secret History of Wonder Woman by Jill Lepore (2014). Who knew that the superheroine's creator was the nephew-in-law of Margaret Sanger, the founder of Planned Parenthood? In Sanger's spirit, kudos to the Boston-Irish taxi driver who said to

Gloria Steinem, "If men got pregnant, abortion would be a sacrament." And a Wonder Woman chastity bracelet to anyone who still wants to ban abortions.

Maus, by Art Spiegelman (1980). Cartoonist Art Spiegelman shows what it's like to be crushed by the top dogs and the fat cats. In a just world, this book would put an end to fake analogies to the Holocaust.

For the Democrats, I recommend:

Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin, by Timothy Snyder (2010). It's critical that our president move away from cold war stereotypes and begin to appreciate the magnitude of the destruction of lives and property in the former Soviet Union and the countries of Eastern Europe. Twenty-seven million Soviet citizens lost their lives in the war in Europe; the Red Army saved the rest of the world from Hitler and an even worse Holocaust. This book aids understanding of the murderous crimes of Stalin and their legacy in Russia and the former Soviet bloc. Yet, if the US could work with Stalin to defeat Hitler, surely we can figure out a way to work with Putin to defeat ISIS and Al Qaeda.

Sex, Politics, & Putin: Political Legitimacy in Russia, by Valerie Sperling (2014). Valerie Sperling argues that Putin maintains power by appealing to strong masculine stereotypes. Feminism is thus an opposition strategy.

The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness, by Michelle Alexander (2010). Our country was built by the free labor of countless slaves, too many of whose descendants are now in prison as the US has, by far, the highest incarceration in the world.

Year One of the Empire: A Play of American Politics, War, And Protest Taken From The Historical Record, by Elinor Fuchs and Joyce Antler (1973). This play shows how US global imperialist policies began with the War on the Philippines at the end of the nineteenth century. Teddy Roosevelt plays a critical role in whipping up passions for

global expansion. Southern segregationists and Jim Crow demagogues such as Pitchfork Ben Tillman oppose him, to no avail. Abominable atrocities against Native people including water torture, go largely unpunished.

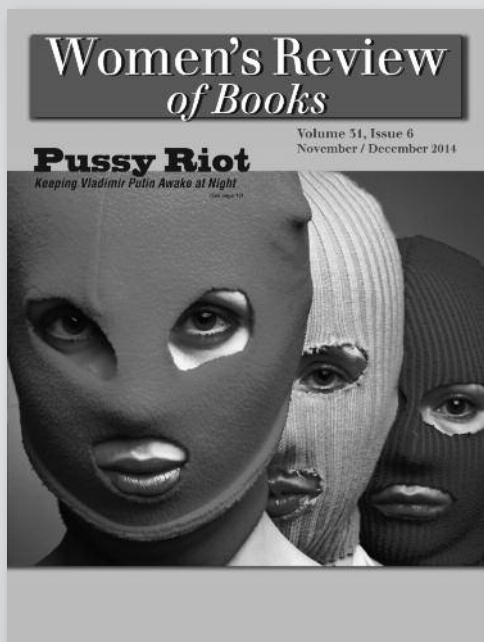
Eleanor Roosevelt, Volume 1, 1884-1933, (1992), and **Eleanor Roosevelt: Volume 2, The Defining Years, 1933-1938** (1999), by Blanche Wiesen Cook. Hillary Clinton will make history if she wins, as the first female leader of the most powerful country in the world. Margaret Thatcher hardly offers a positive role model, and Angela Merkel appears to have been weakened. Eleanor Roosevelt is the best model of a US woman close to the centers of power, who knew how to stand up to men in power and maintain the courage of her principles.

Rochelle Goldberg Ruthchild is an associate at the Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies at Harvard University, a resident scholar at the Women's Studies Research Center at Brandeis University, and a producer of the documentary film **Left on Pearl: Women Take Over 888 Memorial Drive**, Cambridge. 🌐

Editor in Chief's Afterword

These book recommendations from WRB writers and supporters are not for the next president only; personally, I'm planning to add many of them to the top of the pile next to my reading chair. Several themes emerged as I read: as feminists, our recommenders are particularly concerned that our country's leaders know enough "people's history" to take an intersectional view of gender and, in particular, race. Internationally, they view as urgent the president's development of a sophisticated understanding of the roots of the Palestine-Israel conflict and its effect on individuals and communities throughout the Middle East. Lastly, our recommenders want to make sure that the president doesn't neglect self-care, but learns about meditation, develops a spiritual practice, and reads creative literary works, especially poetry.

—Amy Hoffman



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