

Social Sciences

Albom, Mitch. Tuesdays with Morrie: An Old Man, A Young Man, and Life's Greatest Lesson. New York: Doubleday, 1997. Mitch Albom's Tuesday night visits with his dying sociology professor, Morrie, offer valuable lessons about the art of living and dying with dignity.

Best, Joel. Damned Lies and Statistics: Untangling Numbers From the Media, Politicians, and Activists. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001. Do you know the difference between "good" and "bad" statistics or how statistics and public policy are connected?

Conover, Ted. Newjack, Guarding Sing Sing. New York: Knopf, 2000. Gripping and sometimes humorous insider's look at Sing Sing prison, through the eyes of a writer who worked for a year as a corrections officer.

Corwin, Miles. And Still We Rise: The Trials and Triumphs of Twelve Gifted Inner-City High School Students. New York: William Morrow, 2000. Twelve seniors from Crenshaw High School's Advanced Placement English class in Los Angeles dream of going to college, but the harsh realities of their lives threaten to derail their plans.

Cuomo, Kerry Kennedy. Speak Truth to Power: Human Rights Defenders Who Are Changing Our World. New York: Crown Publishers, 2000. A collection of biographical sketches and haunting photographs of ordinary people from 35 countries who are leading the fight to ensure basic human rights for everyone.

Davis, Wade. Light at the Edge of the World: A Journey Through the Realm of Vanishing Cultures. Washington, DC: National Geographic, 2001. Through photographs and eloquent text, the author unveils the diversity and unique quality of human culture around the world.

Dershowitz, Alan M. Why Terrorism Works: Understanding the Threat, Responding to the Challenge. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002. Focusing on the idea that terrorism is caused largely by the actions of Western governments, Dershowitz suggests steps to reduce the frequency and severity of these attacks.

Diamond, Jared. Guns, Germs and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies. New York: W. W. Norton, 1997. Why do some societies become rich and powerful while others remain poor and powerless? Diamond contends that three elements, guns, germs and steel, determined the course of history.

Doyle, William. An American Insurrection: The Battle of Oxford, Mississippi, 1962. New York: Doubleday, 2001. When James Meredith decided to integrate the University of Mississippi, it caused the worst crisis in American history since the Civil War.

Ehrenreich, Barbara. Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America. New York: Henry Holt and Co., 2001. Can you really survive on minimum wage? To find out, the author left her middle-class life for a year to see what life is really like for America's working poor.

Haddon, Mark. The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time. New York: Doubleday, 2003. Christopher has two mysteries to solve: who killed Wellington the dog, and what happened to his mother. But Christopher, who has Asperger Syndrome, a form of autism, approaches these mysteries and the world itself in a unique and special way.

Hart, Elva Trevino. The Barefoot Heart: Stories of a Migrant Child. Tempe, AZ: Bilingual Press, 1999. This honest and moving memoir follows a migrant child and her family as they travel from their home in New Mexico to the farm fields of Minnesota and Wisconsin in search of work.

Hosseini, Khaled. The Kite Runner. New York: Putman, 2003. Years after he flees Afghanistan, Amir, now an American citizen, returns to his native land and attempts to atone for the betrayal of his best friend before he fled Kabul and the Taliban.

Katz, Jon. Geeks: How Two Lost Boys Rode the Internet Out of Idaho. New York: Broadway Books, 2001. Eric and Jesse, poor students and online geeks, find their obsession with computers and technology is their ticket to college and success.

Latifa [pseud.]. My Forbidden Face: Growing Up Under the Taliban; A Young Woman's Story. New York: Hyperion Press, 2002. Sixteen-year-old Latifa dreamed of becoming a professional journalist until the Taliban's repression of women changed her life.

Martinez, Ruben. Crossing Over: A Mexican Family on the Migrant Trail. New York: Henry Holt and Co., 2001. Martinez explores the powerful forces that drive men, women and even children to risk their lives crossing the border illegally from Mexico to the United States to find work.

Pipher, Mary. The Middle of Everywhere: The World's Refugees Come to Our Town. New York: Harcourt, 2002. An exploration of the difficulties and struggles of refugees settled by the United States government in Lincoln, Nebraska as they try to adjust and build a life in America.

Salzman, Mark. True Notebooks. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003. When Salzman agreed to teach a writing class at Central Juvenile Hall in Los Angeles, he had no idea how moved he would be by the lives and the eloquence of his students, all high-risk violent offenders.

Schlosser, Eric. Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side of the All-American Meal. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2001. The growth of the fast food industry has changed America's eating habits and greatly impacted agriculture, the meatpacking industry, the minimum wage, and other aspects of American life.

Senna, Danzy. Caucasia. New York: Riverhead Books, 1998. Separated when their parents' interracial marriage ends in divorce, light-skinned Birdie and her dark-skinned sister Cole lead very different lives while hoping for a reunion with one another.

Simon, Rachel. Riding the Bus with My Sister: A True Life Journey. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2002. Rachel Simon's sister, who has mental retardation, spends her days riding buses in the Pennsylvania city where she lives. When Rachel begins to accompany her sister on the bus, she learns a lot about her sister and her disability, and about her own limitations.

Smith, Zadie. White Teeth. New York: Random House, 2000. Archie and Samad, two unlikely friends, are brought together by bizarre twists of fate and near-death experiences in this epic novel of family, culture, love and loss set in post World War II London.

Steinberg, Jacques. The Gatekeepers: Inside the Admissions Process of a Premier College. New York: Viking, 2002. Getting in – who and what drives the college admissions cycle? Find out in a behind the scenes look at Wesleyan University through the eyes of an admissions officer seeking members for the class of 2004.

Turner, Sugar and Tracy Bachrach Ehlers. Sugar's Life in the Hood: The Story of a Former Welfare Mother. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003. An anthropologist who befriends a welfare mother learns about her world and the strategies she uses to get off welfare and into college.

Wheelan, Charles. Naked Economics: Undressing the Dismal Science. New York: W. W. Norton, 2002. Without using charts, graphs or jargon, Wheelan makes economics understandable, even interesting, as he demystifies basic concepts and applies them to everyday life.