FEATURED TITLES  March 2015

The New York Times Complete World War II, 1939-1945: All the Coverage from the Battlefields and the Home Front
By: Overy, Richard, Editor
D735 .N49 2013

Review from: Booklist  February 01, 2014
This collection of articles from the New York Times during the era of WWII recounts the horrors of a war as they unfolded. Prefaced by a jingoistic foreword by Tom Brokaw, the insightful groupings of primary sources are allowed to speak for themselves, conveying a story only those willing to travel to the front lines could tell. Included among the chronologically arranged entries are numerous black-and-white photos that add additional insight to the gripping narrative of the war, as seen through the Times correspondents.

Freedom National: The Destruction of Slavery in the United States, 1861-1865
By: Oakes, James
E453 .O13 2013

Review from: Choice  July 01, 2013
Oakes has written the definitive study of the Republican Party and emancipation during the Civil War. Taking issue with scholarship that posits the reluctance of many Republicans to push for complete and effective emancipation--thus rendering freedom the exclusive province of African Americans and “radicals”--Oakes instead emphasizes the essential unity of the Republicans on slavery and emancipation. Moderate and radical Republicans were committed to emancipation as a war aim from 1861 forward; their differences were over timing and tone rather than substance. The only Northerners trying to avoid slavery and emancipation were Democrats, who never effectively exercised national power during the war. Analyzing emancipation as it progressed from a military measure (confiscation) to an explicitly avowed war aim (the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation) to final constitutional implementation (the 13th Amendment), Oakes crafts a detailed, vigorously argued, convincing narrative of how emancipation became a settled (if not uncontested) fact...

The Bully Pulpit: Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, and the Golden Age of Journalism
By: Goodwin, Doris Kearns
E757 .G66 2013

Review from: Choice  June 01, 2014
Memorable characters and episodes of modern US history spring to life in this sprawling book. Goodwin's compelling narrative features these elements: an ebullient president who changed the political game in the first decade of the 20th century; his collaboration with brilliant investigative journalists who roused public opinion and thereby provided the necessary impetus for important reforms; an intense friendship that frayed and broke under the pressure of different political priorities; and a dramatic presidential campaign in 1912 that left the book's major protagonists, Teddy Roosevelt and William Howard Taft, on the losing end...

Beyond Outrage: What Has Gone Wrong with Our Economy and Our Democracy, and How to Fix It
By: Reich, Robert B.
HC106.84 .R453 2012

Review from: PW Annex Reviews  October 29, 2012
Persuasively arguing that Americans haven’t learned the economic lessons of the Great Depression and the stock crash of 2008, and stating that "the U.S. economy won’t really bounce back until America’s surge to inequality is reversed," former labor secretary Reich (Aftershock) examines how we got into this mess and offers solutions in this slim but informative study. In his view, "An economy should exist for the people who inhabit it, not the other way around," Reich writes, assailing the ramifications of Wall Street’s unchecked power and the detrimental impact of the “Regressive Right,” his term for conservative Republicans whose social Darwinist agenda, helped along by passivity on the part of Democrats, poses a very real threat to the nation...

Several Short Sentences about Writing
By: Klinkenborg, Verlyn
PN151 .K47 2012

Review from: Booklist  August 01, 2012
Expertise and zeal are required for an established writer to offer genuinely useful guidance to aspiring writers. It helps if the writer teaches writing, as Klinkenborg has for many years, while also covering rural life for the New York Times and assuming the persona of a remarkable tortoise in Timothy; or, Notes of an Abject Reptile (2006). It’s good, too, if the advising writer takes a fresh approach. At a glance, it looks as though Klinkenborg has written a long poem about the craft of writing. Instead, he has dispensed with connecting tissue to emphasize the importance of strong sentences...
So Therefore...: A Practical Guide for Actors
By: Ruscio, Al
PN2061 .R74 2012

Review from: Choice
April 01, 2013
In this succinct guide, Ruscio draws on his successful 40-year career of film and stage experience and his professional acting training with Sandy Meisner at New York’s Neighborhood Playhouse School. He provides a plethora of practical, thorough, realistic advice in 41 bite-size chapters organized into five parts. His goal is to provide experiences that will help actors find truth and depth in their characters at all times, and to offer useful information about scene work and rehearsal processes for beginning to intermediate actors. He breaks down the salient points about each element of acting with examples and exercises including stage versus film acting, and how stamina and luck play a part in actor’s lives...

KD: A Jazz Biography
By: Oliphant, Dave
PS3565.L454 K3 2012

Review from: ForeWord Magazine
May 01, 2012
Trying to put jazz into words can be tricky, like setting James Joyce to music. But Texas author, poet, and jazz expert Dave Oliphant has embraced a novel way to do so that is adventurous, just a little odd, and entirely satisfying. First he selected the confining and highly structured poetic form of the quatrain, with its four-line stanzas and AABB, ABAB, or ABBA rhyming schemes. Then he chose to write an epic poem about a relatively obscure trumpet side man, Kenny Dorham, who could blend into any style of jazz, from Miles Davis cool to Diz and Monk’s be-bop. Both Oliphant’s choice of subject and form are superb. The structure enforced by the quatrain is no more severe than the structure of jazz itself. Every musician from Django Reinhardt to Thelonius Monk knows you can riff wildly inside a jazz motif, but ignore chord progressions and key changes, and you’re playing noise, not music. So Oliphant riffs with four lines that rhyme. And like a great musician, he can make a deceptively simple line speak eloquently: “his fleet patented tonguing so under control / high to low a Bud Powell quote a coda with soul.”...

A Field Guide to Radiation
By: Biddle, Wayne
QC475 .B484 2012

Review from: Choice
January 01, 2013
This book is a pleasure to read; it is chock-full of information and thought provoking—not the usual description for a field guide. Information about radiation is frequently clothed in technical lingo that laypersons cannot easily understand. Biddle (writing seminars, Johns Hopkins Univ.) points out that field guides are not “scholarly texts,” but should be “utilitarian handbooks for amateurs and professionals.” The alphabetical ordering of the material serves to divide the text into a collection of short, self-contained chapters on various elements and related topics. Most chapters provide a historical context, a brief technical overview of a substance’s radiation properties, and an evaluation of its uses and dangers. The author includes some serious comments about the government’s role in honest disclosure and testing of radiation effects...

Eclipse: The Horse That Changed Racing History Forever
By: Clee, Nicholas
SF355.E2 C54 2012

Review from: Choice
March 01, 2014
Irresistible from the get-go, this account of horse racing’s first great Thoroughbred, Eclipse, combines a powerful narrative and vivid details of the eighteenth-century London in which the horse and his owner, Irish gambler and former debtors’ prisoner Dennis O’Kelly, along with Kelly’s business partner, infamous brothel madam Charlotte Hays, thrived. Born into poverty, O’Kelly combined pluck, ambition, hard work, street smarts, and an astute eye for people who could help advance him as he amassed a fortune large enough to invest in a barely tested but obviously gifted racer. The second half of Clee’s book tracks Eclipse’s career as a stud, explaining the eighteenth-century process of covering the mares and pointing out that some 95 percent of Thoroughbreds today are Eclipse’s male-line descendants Secretariat, for example. It also follows the unfulfilled final years of O’Kelly, who, notwithstanding his success in owning and breeding Eclipse, failed to crack the higher echelons of London society.

Libertarianism: What Everyone Needs to Know
By: Brennan, Jason
JCS99.Us B675 2012

Review from: PW Annex Reviews
January 14, 2013
Freedom to live your life as you see fit does not seem like a controversial political stance at first, or even a political stance at all, until it is applied to civil rights, economic freedoms, and social justice. Application of this basic tenet of libertarianism is what Brennan (A Brief History of Liberty) aims to do here, beginning with an explanation of the political philosophy itself—an umbrella term for several ideologies constructed from the premise that each individual is a sovereign entity then systematically describes what would reasonably follow when the ideas are consistently applied to politics or life...