

Every February when we embark on another Black History Month questions arise that criticize the endeavor, questions such as “shouldn’t every month be Black History Month?” and “What about other histories? Don’t they deserve their own months?” In regards to the first question, certainly exploring Black history all year long is a worthwhile endeavor (see #BlackHistory365). And in regards to the second question, indeed other non-White histories deserve close study. Why do I say non-White? What about White history? Well, that’s the default history that we all get all the time. Without effort, White history permeates. It’s just there. It’s just everywhere.

So, why is does matter to have a month that puts Black history in the forefront? Well, on the whole, most people in the United States don’t have a clue about Black history. They may know the basics (Slavery, Martin Luther King, Jackie Robinson, Jim Crow, Rosa Parks), but they don’t know the expanse, the depth, or the breadth? What know you of Black Wall Street? The Tulsa Race Massacre? Redlining? Afrofuturism? Phillis Wheatley? The Stono Rebellion?

Furthermore, most people in the United States don’t know how to talk about race, how to contextualize it, or how to examine it. The necessity of the Black Lives Matter movement is a keen reminder of how far we still have to go, and why Black History Month is so important. The movement protests against and brings attention to incidents of police brutality and racially motivated violence against Black people, which is something that still occurs today and something that needs to stop. And yes, all lives matter. But saying “all lives matter” to a Black Lives Matter protester is like screaming “all cancers matter” at a breast cancer fundraiser. Black History Month matters.

For your Black History Month Project, you will select a book from the lists below and complete reading it by February 28. In the first week of March, you will then have a one-on-one meeting with me to discuss your book. Three days prior to our meeting you will provide me with five topics or questions you want me to bring into the conversations. I will also have five topics or questions of my own to consider.

- Choosing a book: In developing these lists, I have done my best to provide a wide variety of topics and styles.
- Five topics or questions.

## Non-fiction

- Akpan, Uwem - [\*Say You're One of Them\*](#)
- Anderson, S. E. - [\*The Black Holocaust for Beginners\*](#)
- Angelou, Maya - [\*I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings\*](#)
- Beah, Ishmael - [\*A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier\*](#)
- Brown, Henry Box - [\*Narrative of the Life of Henry Box Brown\*](#)
- Craft, William & Ellen - [\*Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom\*](#)
- Crouch, Stanley - [\*Kansas City Lightning: The Rise and Times of Charlie Parker\*](#)
- Davis, Angela - [\*An Autobiography\*](#)
- Diouf, Sylvaine - [\*Dreams of Africa in Alabama: The Slave Ship Clotilda and the Story of the Last Africans Brought to America\*](#)
- Hurston, Zora Neale - [\*Barracoon: The Story of the Last "Black Cargo"\*](#)
- Jacobs, Harriet - [\*Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl\*](#)
- Kelley, Robin (ed.) - [\*To Make Our World Anew: Volume I: A History of African Americans to 1880\*](#)
- Kelley, Robin - [\*Thelonious Monk: The Life and Times of an American Original\*](#)
- Lester, Joan Steinau - [\*Black, White, Other: Biracial Americans Talk About Race and Identity\*](#)
- Lewis, David Levering - [\*W.E.B. DuBois: Biography of a Race 1868-1919\*](#)
- Lusane, Clarence - [\*The Black History of the White House\*](#)
- Mandela, Nelson - [\*Long Walk to Freedom\*](#)
- Marable, Manning - [\*Malcolm X: A Life of Reinvention\*](#)
- Perry, Imani - [\*Breathe: A Letter to my Sons\*](#)
- Robinson, Phoebe - [\*You Can't Touch My Hair and Other Things I Still Have to Explain\*](#)

- Shakur, Assata - [\*Assata\*](#)
- Terry, Wallace (ed.) - [\*Bloods: Black Veterans of the Vietnam War: An Oral History\*](#)
- Ward, Jesmyn (ed.) - [\*The Fire This Time\*](#)
- Washington, Harriet - [\*Medical Apartheid\*](#)

Fiction (novels & short story collections)

- Achebe, Chinua - [\*Things Fall Apart\*](#)
- Adichie, Chimamanda - [\*Americanah\*](#)
- Adichie, Chimamanda - [\*Half of a Yellow Sun\*](#)
- Adichie, Chimamanda - [\*Purple Hibiscus\*](#)
- Baldwin, James - [\*Go Tell It on the Mountain\*](#)
- Brooks, Gwendolyn - [\*Maud Martha\*](#)
- Butler, Octavia - [\*Fledgling\*](#)
- Butler, Octavia - [\*Kindred\*](#)
- Butler, Octavia - [\*Parable of the Sower\*](#)
- Coates, Ta-Nehisi - [\*Between the World and Me\*](#)
- Dangarembga, Tsitsi - [\*Nervous Condition\*](#)
- Delaney, Samuel - [\*Babel-17\*](#)
- Evans, Danielle - [\*Before You Suffocate Your Own Fool Self\*](#)
- Ellison, Ralph - [\*Invisible Man\*](#)
- Gaines, Ernest - [\*The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman\*](#)
- Gysai, Yaa - [\*Homegoing\*](#)
- Hopkinson, Nalo - [\*Falling in Love with Hominids\*](#)
- Larson, Nella - [\*Passing\*](#)
- Makumbi, Jennifer Nansubuga - [\*Kintu\*](#)

- Marshall, Paula - [\*Brown Girl, Brownstones\*](#)
- Mengiste, Maaza - [\*The Shadow King\*](#)
- Miller, Kei - [\*Augustown\*](#)
- Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o - [\*Wizard of the Crow\*](#)
- Obioma, Chigozie - [\*The Fishermen\*](#)
- Okri, Ben - [\*The Famished Road\*](#)
- Senna, Danzy - [\*Caucasia\*](#)
- Tadey, Lalita - [\*Cane River\*](#)
- Tutuola, Amos - [\*Village Witch Doctor and Other Stories\*](#)
- Verghese, Abraham - [\*Cutting for Stone\*](#)
- Walker, Alice - [\*The Third Life of Grange Copeland\*](#)
- Walker, Margaret - [\*Jubilee\*](#)
- Washington, Mary Helen - [\*Black-eyed Susans and Midnight Birds: Stories by and about Black Women\*](#)
- Whitehead, Colson - [\*The Underground Railroad: A Novel\*](#)

## Poetry

- Chin, Staceyann - Crossfire
- Felix, Camonghne - Build Yourself a Boat
- Jackson, Kara - Bloodstone Cowboy
- Mans, Jasmine - Chalk Outlines of Snow Angels
- Monet, Aja - My Mother Was a Freedom Fighter
- Young, Kevin (ed.) - African American Poetry: 250 Years of Struggle and Song