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The American Library in Paris

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In the event that this *e-Libris* is cut short by your email service, please click the link at the bottom of the email to see the newsletter in its entirety.



Staff Reading Recommendations

If you're looking to add some fresh titles to your reading list this winter, check out our curated selection of staff favorites. There's something for everyone: **popular science, investigative journalism, psychology, history, short stories, new fiction, essays, a graphic novel, young adult fiction, and memoir**. All of these books are in the Library's collection. If the title you want is currently out on loan, you may reserve it through your [online Library account](#).
Happy reading!

[Breath: The New Science of a Lost Art](#)

by James Nestor

This life-changing book explores the history of how humans breathe, why it's important to our physical and emotional health, and how we've been doing it wrong. Nestor explains how breathing through our noses, not our mouths, can transform our health for the better and provides research data and breathing techniques. It's wonderful to know how better breathing can improve our lives!

Recommended by Bojan.

[The Decameron Project: 29 New Stories from the Pandemic](#)
from the Editors of the *New York Times Magazine*

This is a vibrant and absorbing collection of short stories from writers of diverse nationalities, languages, and styles, responding intellectually and creatively to the global COVID-19 pandemic. Standouts include Leïla Slimani's story about a popular novelist facing public vitriol, Yiyun's Li's story of a married couple forced by the pandemic to finally organize their estate planning, and John Wray's story of a man in Barcelona who hires his dogs out to people needing a pretext for going for a walk during a strict lockdown.

Recommended by Claire.

[Harrow](#)

by Joy Williams

This is a terrifying novel about climate change and God. On a polluted, post-apocalyptic Earth, an adolescent girl searching for her lost mother stumbles across a community of elderly eco-terrorists trying to save the world. The novel is Williams's first since the Pulitzer-nominated *The Quick and the Dead* (2000). *Harrow* won the 2021 Kirkus Prize for fiction.

Recommended by Elliot.

[The Right to Sex: Feminism in the Twenty-First Century](#)

by Amia Srinivasan

In clear and careful prose, Srinivasan tackles some of the most knotty issues of today: sex, pornography, consent, desire, violence against women. Her philosophical regard (she is a professor of social and political theory at Oxford University) cuts through the clamor of contemporary discourse, leaving the reader with new thoughts about old debates, and new thoughts about new debates. Read the essays in order; read them out of order; read two now and one later; read them!

Recommended by Alice.

[WAKE: The Hidden History of Slave Women-Led Slave Revolts](#)

by Rebecca Hall and Hugo Martínez (Illustrator)

This visually arresting and deeply personal graphic (non-fiction) novel follows scholar Rebecca Hall as she unearths the stories of women who fought against their bondage. Hall's deep archival research reveals evidence that slave women actively resisted, only to be relegated to a passive role in the historical record. The author shares her emotional reactions to her discoveries, directly inserting herself into the narrative and demonstrating how descendants of these women, like Hall, continue to carry the weight of historical trauma. Rebecca Hall will be discussing her book during a [virtual Evening with an Author on 26 January](#).

Recommended by Carolyn.

[Firekeeper's Daughter](#)

by Angeline Boulley

Thought-provoking, gripping, and elegantly crafted, this thriller centers on eighteen-year-old Daunis Fontaine as she assists an FBI investigation of a lethal new drug that's wreaking havoc in her hometown and on the nearby Ojibwe reservation. Debut novelist Angeline Boulley deftly layers vibrant traditions of Ojibwe culture, Daunis's exploration of existing between two cultural identities, and the changing family dynamics of a mother and daughter grieving a recent tragedy. Through Daunis's story, Boulley examines the ongoing tragedy of Indigenous women who are being murdered and assaulted at a disproportionate rate, and some readers may encounter potentially triggering scenes.

Recommended by Celeste.

[Kitchen Confidential: Adventures in the Culinary Underbelly](#)

by Anthony Bourdain

In 1999, Bourdain submitted an unsolicited essay to the *New Yorker* with the title "Don't Eat Before Reading This." The article launched his media career and, at the same time, served as the foundation for his hugely popular memoir, *Kitchen Confidential*. This book unveils the less glamorous aspects of high-end restaurant kitchens as well as his path as a cook and chef.

Recommended by David.

[Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience](#)

by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi

This positive psychology classic stands the test of time and will inspire readers to dedicate more time to that sweet spot of concentration between comfort and challenge that we now call *flow*. The author, who coined the term, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (pronounced 'cheek-sent-me-high'), passed away in the fall of last year.

Recommended by Audrey.

[This Is How They Tell Me the World Ends: The Cyberweapons Arms Race](#)

by Nicole Perlroth

New York Times cybersecurity journalist Nicole Perlroth spent years researching the cyberweapon black market, the capabilities of these weapons, and the new arms race that it has created. This is a fascinating story on how hacking, social media, and cybersecurity are changing global politics. A bit of advice—change your passwords regularly!

Recommended by Morgan.

[The Island of Sea Women](#)

by Lisa See

Last year, the [Library invited author Lisa See to speak at *Evenings with an Author*](#) about her novel, *The Island of Sea Women*, which depicts the life of women divers on the island of Jeju, Korea. Since then, Nathalie has read three of See's books, and recommends them all for the enthralling stories they tell and the rich cultures they describe.

Recommended by Nathalie.

[Shuggie Bain](#)

by Douglas Stuart

Love, despair, and hope are all felt within *Shuggie Bain's* incredible examination of family, addiction, and sexuality. In this beautifully crafted novel, each sentence is skillfully put together to convey the book's Glaswegian setting and the harrowing poverty of the book's main cast of characters. The author's descriptions and metaphors stay with you long after reading them. A must-read, a literary masterpiece.

Recommended by Orlene.

[Power and Thrones: A History of the Middle Ages](#)

by Dan Jones

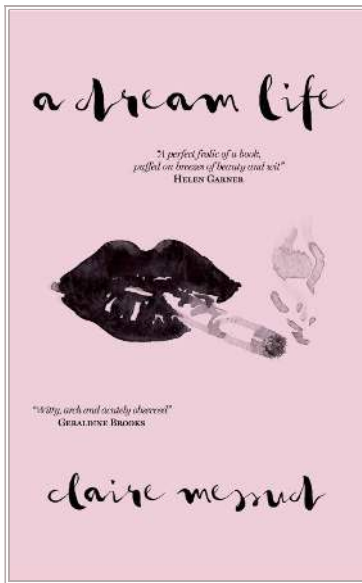
This book covers a huge time period and geographical area, but Jones's ambitious analysis of 1,000 years of history is gripping from start to finish. Informative and highly entertaining, this chronicle examines the big forces that still occupy us today: climate change, pandemic disease, mass migration, religious institutions, systems of law and governance, and technological advancements, and how they helped rebuild Europe from the ruins of an empire to the dominant power that shaped the modern world.

Recommended by Kirsty.

January Programs for Adults

Evenings with an Author events are sponsored by GRoW @ Annenberg

Due to the inherent uncertainties of these pandemic times, upcoming programs may be canceled, rescheduled, or may take place virtually. Once you have RSVPed to an event, you will be informed of any scheduling changes via email. You must RSVP to attend our *Evenings with an Author* programs, either in person or via Zoom.



TONIGHT!

[Getting Real with Claire Messud](#)

Streamed Live on Zoom

Tuesday 18 January at 19h30 CET

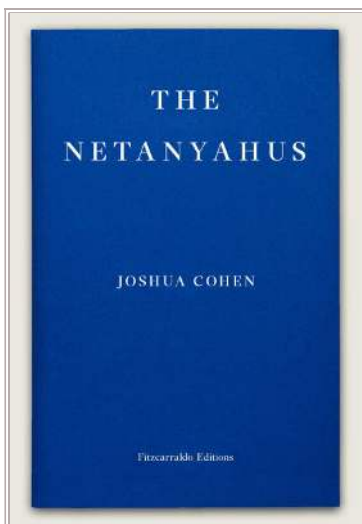
A novella about the sharp bite of reality and the allures of living in a dream, *A Dream Life* is novelist and essayist **Claire Messud**'s newest addition to an impressive and diverse body of work.

Drawing on tropes of the bourgeois novel—the grandiose estate, the domestic affairs, family drama, and class relations—Messud has produced a book about confined spaces and the dynamics that emerge within them.

Messud will be on Zoom, in conversation with journalist **Christopher Beha**.

Free and open to the public. Registration required.

[RSVP to attend on Zoom](#)



[Negligible Stories, Famous Families with Joshua Cohen](#)

In Person at the Library/Streamed Live on Zoom

Wednesday 19 January at 19h30 CET

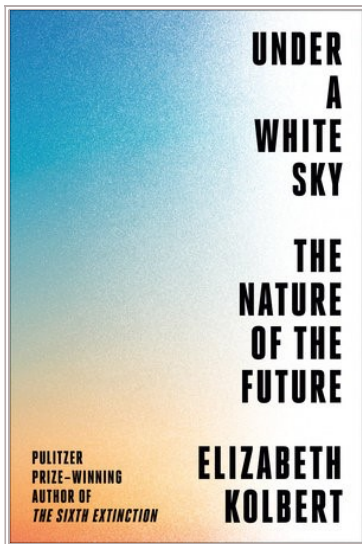
Set at Corbin College in a fictional, sleepy town in upstate New York over the winter of 1959 to 1960, *The Netanyahus* follows Ruben Blum, a Jewish historian, as he reviews the job application of an exiled Israeli scholar whose speciality is the Spanish Inquisition. Subtitled *An Account of A Minor and Ultimately Even Negligible Episode in the History of a Very Famous Family*, **Joshua Cohen**'s new novel mixes fiction with nonfiction, the campus novel with the lecture. The final product is a wildly inventive, genre-bending comedy of blending, identity, and politics. Cohen will appear at the Library, in conversation with Professor **Daniel Medin**.

The discussion is co-sponsored by the [Center for Writers and Translators](#) and the [Center for Critical Democracy Studies](#) at the American University of Paris.

Copies of *The Netanyahus*, in French and in English, will be for sale after the event, thanks to the [Red Wheelbarrow Bookstore](#) and [Librarie Tome 7](#).

Free and open to the public. Registration required.

[RSVP to attend at the Library or on Zoom](#)



[Entre Nous: The Anthropocene with Elizabeth Kolbert](#)

Streamed Live on Zoom

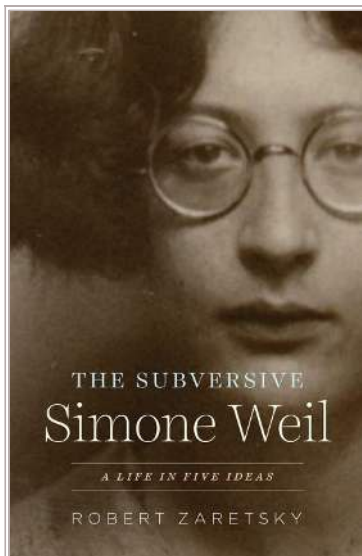
Sunday 23 January at 19h30 CET

Permanent dark skies in California. A bleached, skeletal Great Barrier Reef in Australia. Amplified calls for alarm from virtually every environmental organization, with noncommittal government response. It is no longer possible to deny that the climate crisis is one of the defining questions of our age. Peering into these scenes of devastation with which we are all too familiar, Pulitzer Prize-winning author and journalist **Elizabeth Kolbert's** *Under a White Sky* is a dry and disturbing account of human activities which have led to unforeseen chains of disaster.

Kolbert will appear as part of the Entre Nous series in collaboration with Columbia Global Centers | Paris and the Institute for Ideas and Imagination.

Free and open to the public. Registration required.

[RSVP to attend on Zoom](#)



[The Subversive Simone Weil with Robert Zaretsky](#)

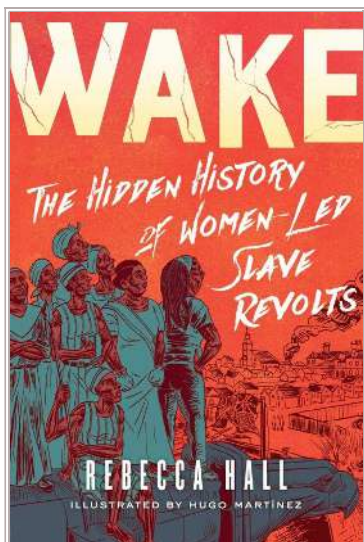
Streamed Live on Zoom

Tuesday 25 January at 19h30 CET

20th-century philosopher Simone Weil lived a famously enigmatic life. Born into a bourgeois, Jewish family, the writer renounced her roots: working in a car factory, volunteering in the Spanish Civil War, dabbling in Marxism and anarchism and, finally, converting to Catholicism. The supreme achievement of historian, writer, and University of Houston professor Robert Zaretsky's new release, *The Subversive Simone Weil: A Life in Five Ideas* is its reading of the complexities of Weil's work as complementary contradictions of her life. Identifying five central concepts from Weil's writings, Zaretsky deftly explores each one by way of Weil's biography, demonstrating how her experience informed and inspired her politics and ethics. An original approach to an original philosopher, Zaretsky unifies Weil's actions with her thought, arguing that, above all, the philosopher was committed to approaching ideas as practice.

Free and open to the public. Registration required.

[RSVP to attend on Zoom](#)



[The Hidden History of Women-led Slave Revolts with Historian Rebecca Hall](#)

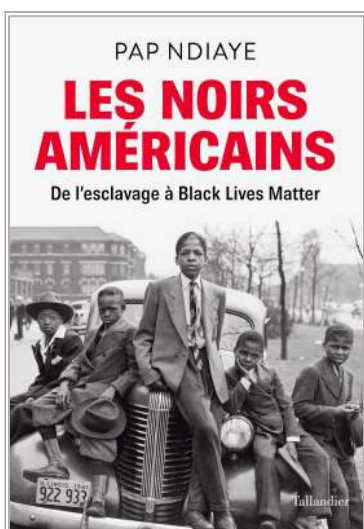
Streamed Live on Zoom

Wednesday 26 January at 19h30 CET

In her new graphic novel *WAKE: The Hidden History of Women-Led Slave Revolts*, **Dr. Rebecca Hall** explores the gaps that exist in accepted historical narratives. Building off painstaking archival work, Hall embraces a practice of careful imagination as she pieces together the lives of enslaved women at the front of slave revolts. She enriches and recalibrates a historical record that refused to entertain even the possibility of Black female resistance. Hall deliberately inserts herself into the narrative, creating an emotional confrontation of the historical with the present.

Free and open to the public. Registration required.

[RSVP to attend on Zoom](#)



[From Slavery to Black Lives Matter with Pap Ndiaye](#)

In Person at the Library/Streamed Live on Zoom

Tuesday 1 February at 19h30 CET

In March 2021, many news outlets from *Le Monde* to the *New York Times* reported on a historic moment: Pap Ndiaye, a French historian specializing in African American and Afro-French history, had been appointed director of the National Museum of the History of Immigration in Paris. Described as a “quiet revolutionary,” Ndiaye’s appointment followed an immensely successful transatlantic academic career. An authority on questions of race and post-colonialism, Ndiaye frequently consults on various cultural projects, from the Musée d’Orsay’s exhibit “Black Models” to the Opéra Garnier’s diversity report. The author of many books, including *La Condition noire* and *Les Noirs américains: En marche pour l’égalité*, Ndiaye has also written for *Le Monde* and *Libération*. Join Ndiaye as he discusses his career and his future projects with Paris-based author and professor of creative writing **Jake Lamar**.

Free and open to the public. Registration required.

[RSVP to attend at the Library or on Zoom](#)

February Programs Preview: Black History Month

This February 2022 the American Library in Paris will celebrate Black History Month through conversations with emerging and established Black writers, journalists, filmmakers, historians, and scholars. Keep reading for a preview of this special programming series.

We'll look at the **history of Blackness in France** as well as the **historical relationship between Black Americans and Paris** with journalist [Audrey Edwards](#) and filmmaker [Alan Govenar](#), and consider the historical status of Paris as a place of refuge for African American artists.

Professors [Pap Ndiaye](#) and [Mame-Fatou Niang](#) will ask how we might articulate and understand **Afro-French identity in the twenty-first century**. Finally, [Mikki Kendall](#), [Cassandra Lane](#), and [Rebecca Hall](#) will show us the **gaps in personal and global Black history**, and allow us to consider the value of imaginative work in addressing them.

For children ages 9–12, we'll follow the evolution of race relations in America from the country's earliest beginnings until the present day, guided by author [Barbara Diggs](#).

Ultimately, we will seek out not only **new ways of thinking about Black history**, but new ways of teaching it: in museums, films, creative nonfiction, graphic novels, and, above all, open dialogue.

The Library's Black History Month 2022 programming has been curated in partnership Patrick Banks of [The Californien Agency](#), which serves as a consultant and strategic adviser to artists and creative enterprises. The Library would especially like to thank [Little Africa Paris](#), our media partner for this series.



Past programs are on YouTube, including creating and inventing with Ayşegül Savaş; the state of US and French relations; Ian Goldin on a Better Future; Pulitzer Prize-winner Viet Thanh Nguyen on The Committed; and Kati Marton and Thomas Chatterton Williams on The Remarkable Odyssey of Angela Merkel.



Listen to our podcast, Evenings with an Author, available wherever you get your podcasts.



Visit our Facebook page for information about upcoming events and Evenings with an Author sponsored by GRoW @ Annenberg.



**GROW@
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Evenings with an Author and other weeknight programs at the Library are free and open to the public (with a 10€ suggested donation) thanks to support from GRoW @ Annenberg, our members, and those who attend programs.

Kids and Teens News



A new year of programming for children kicked off this past Saturday with our Winter Wonderland event, where we warmly welcomed the Library's newest staff member, Claire. Many thanks to the volunteers who helped to prepare for the celebration.

Events for children and teens continue in person, in very small groups, or as hybrid events. Registration is required to attend any event, and you must be a Library member. Story Time, Toddler Time, and seasonal celebrations such as Winter Wonderland are just a few of the many perks of a Library membership. To find out what's coming up next, be sure to check our [calendar of events](#), and register early!

Introducing New Staff Member Claire Hargreaves

Please join us in welcoming Front of House Assistant Claire Hargreaves to the Library team. Claire will be working in Member Services on Tuesdays and Sundays, and in the Children's and Teens' Services Department on Saturdays. Claire holds a BA in French and German, with a Masters in Urban History and Culture. She has experience as a Library Assistant at the Bibliothèque publique d'information at the Centre Pompidou. Since coming to Paris two and a half years ago, she has spent her time reading, exploring the city's many galleries and museums, and sampling as much food and drink as possible!



How Can You Help the American Library?



As an independent, non-profit institution, we rely on the support and generosity of our community. How can you help the American Library in Paris throughout the year? Renew your Library membership, make a donation online, become a volunteer, and tell your friends about the Library.

RENEW

DONATE

VOLUNTEER

The American Library in Paris is an independent, non-profit institution that receives no regular government funding. Your generosity is essential in keeping the Library vibrant and creative.

All contributions are tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law.

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