

Outreach Book List - Medicine

Medicine			
Title of book	Suggested by	Blurb	Review
1 The Man Who Mistook his Wife for a Hat by Oliver Sacks	<i>Rebecca Sweeney, Reach Out Makerspace Assistant</i>	A classic work of psychology, this international bestseller provides a groundbreaking insight into the human mind. If a man has lost a leg or an eye, he knows he has lost a leg or an eye; but if he has lost a self – himself – he cannot know it, because he is no longer there to know it. In this extraordinary book, Dr. Oliver Sacks recounts the stories of patients struggling to adapt to often bizarre worlds of neurological disorder. Here are people who can no longer recognize everyday objects or those they love; who are stricken with violent tics or shout involuntary obscenities; who have been dismissed as autistic or retarded, yet are gifted with uncanny artistic or mathematical talents. If inconceivably strange, these brilliant tales illuminate what it means to be human.	<i>A fascinating look into the curious and bewildering effects when something in the brain goes wrong. Neurologist Oliver Sacks shares a collection of case histories of patients he has treated for bizarre neurological disorders, recounting extraordinary tales of profound amnesias, photographic memory, 'seeing' musical sounds, phantom limbs, and a man whose visual agnosia meant he perceived his wife as a hat. I love this book because it poignantly illustrates both the fragility of our 1.5kg brain and its remarkable ability to compensate for cognitive deficiencies, often with comical yet wondrous consequences.</i>
2 The Ghost Map by Steven Berlin Johnson	<i>Ahreum Jung, Invention Room Associate: Hacking and Making</i>	It's the summer of 1854, and London is just emerging as one of the first modern cities in the world. But lacking the infrastructure-garbage removal, clean water, sewers-necessary to support its rapidly expanding population, the city has become the perfect breeding ground for a terrifying disease no one knows how to cure. As the cholera outbreak takes hold, a physician and a local curate are spurred to action-and ultimately solve the most pressing medical riddle of their time.	<i>The Ghost Map: The Story of London's Most Terrifying Epidemic – and How it Changed Science, Cities and the Modern World is a book by Steven Berlin Johnson in which he describes the most intense outbreak of cholera in Victorian London and centers on John Snow and Henry Whitehead.</i>
3 Happy Accidents: Serendipity in Modern Medical Breakthroughs by Morton A. Meyers	<i>Elzbieta Lauzikaite, Research Postgraduate Dept of Metabolism, Digestion and Reproduction</i>	Happy Accidents is a fascinating, entertaining, and highly accessible look at the surprising role serendipity has played in some of the most important medical discoveries in the twentieth century. What do penicillin, chemotherapy drugs, X-rays, Valium, the Pap smear, and Viagra have in common? They were each discovered accidentally, stumbled upon in the search for something else.	<i>An highly entertaining book on the role of serendipity in medical research, covering the most important discoveries in the 20th century. It reminded me of the importance of an open and creative mind, and that not everything in science goes according to a plan.</i>

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<p>4 Brave New World by Aldous Huxley</p>	<p><i>Helen Sharman, UK Outreach Ambassador</i></p>	<p>Far in the future, the World Controllers have created the ideal society. Through clever use of genetic engineering, brainwashing and recreational sex and drugs all its members are happy consumers. Bernard Marx seems alone harbouring an ill-defined longing to break free. A visit to one of the few remaining Savage Reservations where the old, imperfect life still continues, may be the cure for his distress... Huxley's ingenious fantasy of the future sheds a blazing light on the present and is considered to be his most enduring masterpiece.</p>	<p><i>Set in a futuristic social and political world, although written way back in 1931, this book made me think about how society uses science, in particular that the same knowledge can be used for good or bad purposes. It is amazingly inciteful, given that it was written way before IVF was developed and before we knew what we do about foetal development, yet it provokes thought about genetic engineering and other ways we change and adapt as humans. I really liked the way the main character held opinions based on logic that were against what everyone else had been made to think. For me, science wins over unthinking conditioning any day!</i></p>
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