

#DiverseCollections: Using Twitter to Connect Students to New Perspectives

Grand Valley State University Libraries' collections – including books, journals, and media – play a key role in our efforts to support an inclusive environment on

campus. Library faculty intentionally strive to find a wide array of perspectives and lived experiences to include on our library shelves and online offerings.

Connecting those items to users can be difficult. Library users need to know the diverse points of view and voices available in order to seek them out.

During the 2018 Grand Valley State University Martin Luther King Jr. Commemoration Week, keynote speaker April Reign discussed her experience using Twitter to call out the lack of racial diversity in Oscar nominations using the hashtag #oscarssowhite. After hearing Reign's keynote, Liaisons Librarian Debbie Morrow wondered if the University Libraries might harness social media to create an online exhibit to promote self-education.

"Reign's message, Grand Valley's commitment to equity and inclusion, and the upcoming Black History Month seemed like a perfect convergence of factors for promoting self-education opportunities within our library collection across the Grand Valley community," said Morrow.

Morrow, working with Library Program Manager Erin Fisher, coordinated a staff-wide project to identify books on the African-American experience from our collections and shared a book a day on Twitter throughout the month. Morrow and Fisher also partnered with the Grand Valley State University Office of Multicultural Affairs, who solicited recommendations from African-American-based student organizations. Books ranged



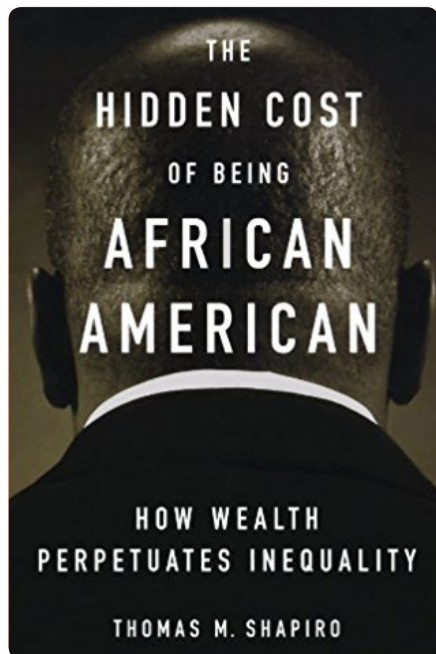
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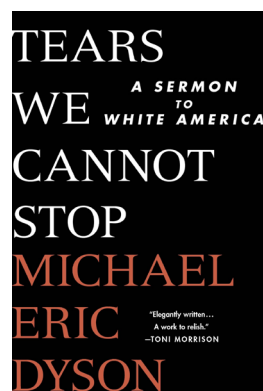
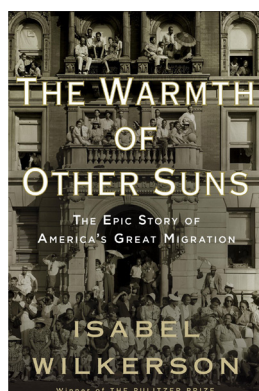
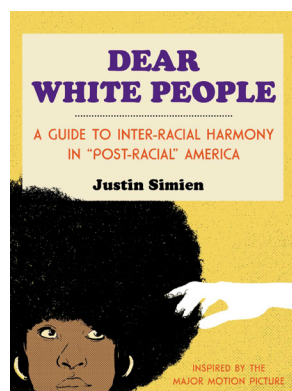
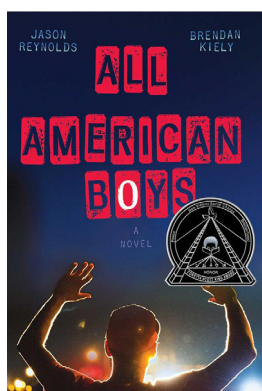
To celebrate [#BlackHistoryMonth](#), we are highlighting books we've read and loved with themes related to African/African American history & culture. You can find every book (and some other resources too) in our library catalog.... [#GVSU](#) [#GVBooks](#)



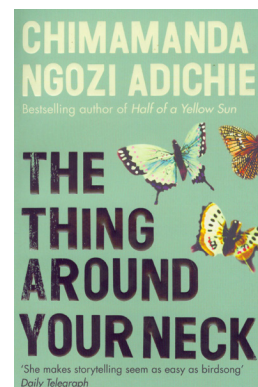
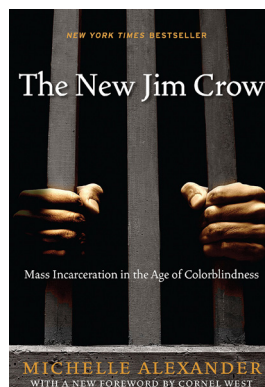
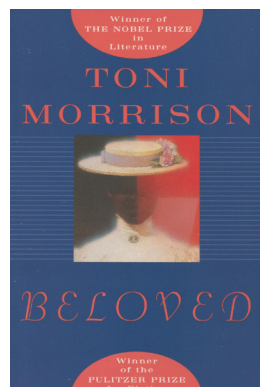
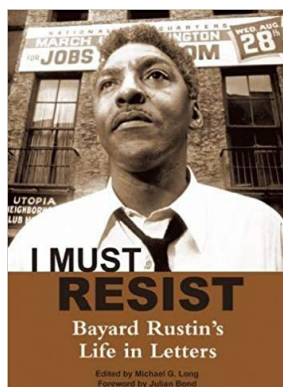
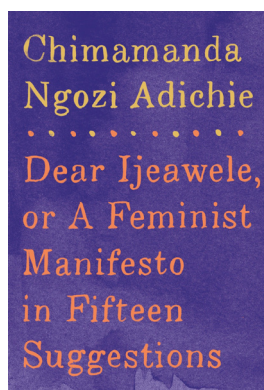
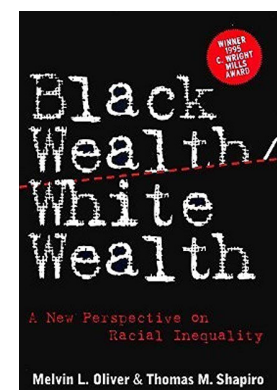
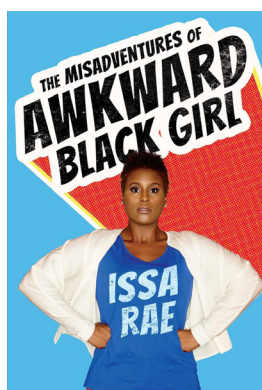
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Today's book recommendation comes to us from @BsuGvsu. Start reading Thomas Shapiro's "The Hidden Cost of Being African American." gvsu.edu/s/0Ei [#BlackHistoryMonth](#) [#GVBooks](#) [#GVSU](#) @gvsuOMA





April Reign's visit to GVSU during Martin Luther King Jr. commemoration week inspired us to find our own way to use Twitter for social justice, the University Libraries collections honor Black History every day with diverse collections.



from *Beloved* by Toni Morrison to *Tears We Cannot Stop: A Sermon to White America* by Michael Eric Dyson to *The New Jim Crow* by Michelle Alexander.

Historically, outreach like Morrow suggested has been conducted in libraries and bookstores using on-site displays of physical books. The University Libraries used this social media "Twitter exhibit" to connect to students in their feeds and timelines. The virtual access reached

students regardless of whether they were online, studying abroad, or living on-campus. The Twitter feed connects to the University Libraries' homepage, which gives visitors exposure to the titles.

The University Libraries continue to explore how we might use social media to connect our diverse collections to our campus population to broaden perspectives, promote diverse experiences, and showcase our goals of inclusivity.

The University Libraries are open to collaboration with classes and student groups that might want to partner on future "Twitter exhibits" to showcase an underrepresented population.

The work is rewarding.

"I value the opportunity to use my voice in my workplace to support equity and inclusion through encouraging self-education," Morrow stated.