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## Summer Reading Program

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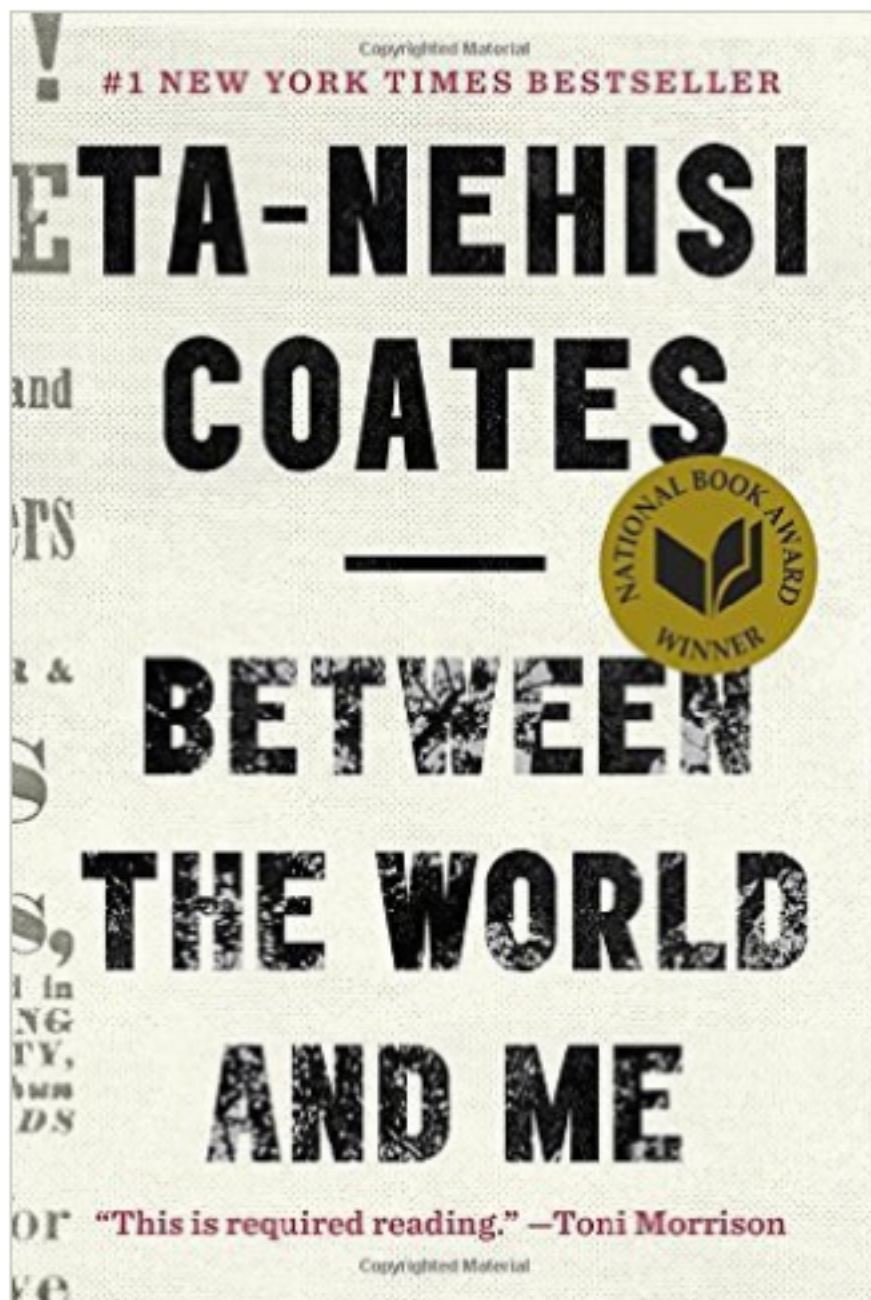
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# Summer Reading Program

Illinois Wesleyan University's Summer Reading Program is designed as an opportunity for incoming students to participate in a shared intellectual conversation about a common text with their Gateway Colloquium classmates and the University community (faculty, staff, alumni and student leaders) during [Turning Titan: New Student Orientation](#).



## 2017-2018 Book Selection

### *Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates

In response to IWU's 2017-18 intellectual theme of [The Evolution of Revolution](#) and the University's commitment to diversity and social justice, the Advising and Summer Reading Committee, in consultation with the University's Speakers Committee, selected *Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates for the 2017 Summer Reading Program.

Throughout history, revolutions have challenged traditions of the past in favor of future possibilities. In *Between the World and Me*, Coates challenges traditions including society's conceptions of race, the distribution of justice, and attempts at achieving racial equality in America. He envisions possibilities rarely discussed openly, including conceiving of race as a social construct, and a radical rethinking of how much—or how little—progress has been made with regard to race relations in America over the decades. Coates calls for nothing less than a *revolution of thought* in this crucial area of social discourse that has continuously evolved since the nation's founding.

## Assignment

Students are expected to purchase and read *Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates over the summer of 2017, as well as complete and reflect on the [guided reading and discussion questions](#) which will be the focus of the small group discussions during [Turning Titan: New Student Orientation](#) on Wednesday, August 23, 2017.

## About the Book

*"This is your country, this is your world, this is your body, and you must find some way to live within the all of it."*

In a profound work that pivots from the biggest questions about American history and ideals to the most intimate concerns of a father for his son, Ta-Nehisi Coates offers a powerful new framework for understanding our nation's history and current crisis. Americans have built an empire on the idea of "race," a falsehood that damages us all but falls most heavily on the bodies of black women and men—bodies exploited through slavery and segregation, and, today, threatened, locked up, and murdered out of all proportion. What is it like to inhabit a black body and find a way to live within it? And how can we all honestly reckon with this fraught history and free ourselves from its burden?

*Between the World and Me* is Ta-Nehisi Coates's attempt to answer these questions in a letter to his adolescent son. Coates shares with his son—and readers—the story of his awakening to the truth about his place in the world through a series of revelatory experiences, from Howard University to Civil War battlefields, from the South Side of Chicago to Paris, from his childhood home to the living rooms of mothers whose children's lives were taken as American plunder. Beautifully woven from personal narrative, reimagined history, and fresh, emotionally charged reportage, *Between the World and Me* clearly illuminates the past, bracingly confronts our present, and offers a transcendent vision for a way forward.

(Description retrieved from [Penguin Random House](#).)

## About the Author



Ta-Nehisi Coates is a national correspondent for *The Atlantic* and the author of the #1 *New York Times* bestseller *Between the World and Me*, a finalist for the National Book Award. A MacArthur "Genius Grant" fellow, Coates has received the National Magazine Award, the Hillman Prize for Opinion and Analysis Journalism, and the George Polk Award for his *Atlantic* cover story "The Case for Reparations." He lives in New York with his wife and son.

(Biography and photo retrieved from [Penguin Random House](#).)

## President's Convocation

To complement the Summer Reading Program, Dr. Jelani Cobb will be the speaker for President's Convocation on Wednesday, September 6, 2017 at 11 a.m. His remarks are entitled, "The Half Life of Freedom: Race and Justice in America Today."

For more information about Dr. Jelani Cobb, please visit the [Lavin Agency website](#).

