Something to read during this dreary weather. Stop up and check these new titles out!

The fall of the house of Habsburg

From Barnes and Noble: “Edward Crankshaw's distinguished study offers a compelling account of the final decades of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. At the center of the dramatic events stands the majestic figure of the Emperor Franz Josef, facing the tragedies of his disastrous marriage and the suicide of his only son, and doggedly resisting the ruin of his inheritance. In a sweeping panorama of Vienna, Imperial Russia, Napoleon's France, Bismark's Prussia and Cavour's Italy, Crankshaw portrays the political and military intricacies, the statesman, soldiers and common people, and examines the ambitions and disillusionment that broke the Empire and forged the destiny of the twentieth century.”

Ukraine: an illustrated history

From Barnes and Noble: “Ukraine is Europe’s second-largest state. Roughly the size of Germany and Great Britain or the states of Arizona and New Mexico combined, it shares borders with seven countries and in 2001 had a population of more than 48 million. This lavishly illustrated volume provides a concise and easy-to-read historical survey of the country from earliest times to the present. Each of the book’s forty-six chapters is framed by a historical map, which graphically depicts the key elements of the chronological period or theme addressed within. In addition, over 300 historic photographs, line drawings, portraits, and reproductions of books and works of art bring the rich past of Ukraine to life.”

Ancient Greece: from prehistoric to Hellenistic Times

From Barnes and Noble: “In this compact yet comprehensive history of ancient Greece, Thomas R. Martin brings alive Greek civilization from its Stone Age roots to the fourth century B.C. Focusing on the development of the Greek city-state and the society, culture, and architecture of Athens in its Golden Age, Martin integrates political, military, social, and cultural history in a book that will appeal to students and general readers alike. Now in its second edition, this classic work now features new maps and illustrations, a new introduction, and updates throughout.”
Storm Center: the Supreme Court in American politics

From Library Journal: “With the abortion and school desegregation decisions, O'Brien contends, the Supreme Court has ceased to be Hamilton's "least dangerous branch." Increasingly activist, it has in fact become a "storm center" of national politics. Ever mindful of our judicial past, O'Brien likewise finds the Court is markedly more bureaucratic. His lucid text describes the inner rules and procedures the cost of filings, screening procedures, certiorari petitions, the justices' give-and-take negotiations, their tentative votes and maneuverings, the oral arguments, the growing number of dissents and plurality opinions. O'Brien finds the Court rife with heated personal clashes. Rather than above the battle, it is highly sensitive to external pressures, from the President, Congress, public opinion. This is an illuminating, first-rate primer for those seeking to understand the workings of the Court.”

Living with animals: Ojibwe spirit powers

From Barnes and Noble: “Within nineteenth-century Ojibwe/Chippewa medicine societies, and in communities at large, animals are realities and symbols that demonstrate cultural principles of North American Ojibwe nations. Living with Animals presents over 100 images from oral and written sources – including birch bark scrolls, rock art, stories, games, and dreams – in which animals appear as kindred beings, spirit powers, healers, and protectors.”

The chemistry of beer: the science in the suds

From Barnes and Noble: “Ever wondered just how grain and water are transformed into an effervescent, alcoholic beverage? From prehistory to our own time, beer has evoked awe and fascination; it seems to have a life of its own. Whether you're a home brewer, a professional brewer, or just someone who enjoys a beer, The Chemistry of Beer will take you on a fascinating journey, explaining the underlying science and chemistry at every stage of the beer making process. All the science is explained in clear, non-technical language, so you don't need to be a PhD scientist to read this book and develop a greater appreciation for the world's most popular alcoholic drink.”
Social conflict within and between groups

From Barnes and Noble: “Social Conflict within and between Groups provides an overview of contemporary research from the social sciences on these questions. It brings together the research output of a number of leading researchers in psychology, management and economics, sociology and political science, and draws on the outcomes of ten prominent research programs conducted over the past five years. The chapters cover a range of fascinating topics, including prejudice and discrimination in multi-ethnic societies, and conflict and negotiation in the field of industrial relations. The authors also consider the possibilities for intervention at the interpersonal, intergroup and societal level.”

Political ideologies and political parties in America

From Barnes and Noble: “Treating ideology as neither a nuisance nor a given, the analysis describes the development of the modern liberal and conservative ideologies that form the basis of our modern political parties. Hans Noel shows that liberalism and conservatism emerged as important forces independent of existing political parties. These ideologies then reshaped parties in their own image. Modern polarization can thus be explained as the natural outcome of living in a period, perhaps the first in our history, in which two dominant ideologies have captured the two dominant political parties.”

A brief history of ancient Greece: politics, society, and culture

From Barnes and Noble: “...concise enough to be used alongside other books in courses in Greek Civilization, Greek and Roman Civilization, Ancient Greece, or Western Civilization. It is enhanced by text boxes featuring excerpts from ancient documents, an extensive glossary, and a timeline and general introduction that provide a bird’s-eye view of Greek history.”
Design for information

From Barnes and Noble: “The visualization process doesn’t happen in a vacuum; it is grounded in principles and methodologies of design, cognition, perception, and human-computer-interaction that are combined to one’s personal knowledge and creative experiences. Design for Information critically examines other design solutions — current and historic — helping you gain a larger understanding of how to solve specific problems. This book is designed to help you foster the development of a repertoire of existing methods and concepts to help you overcome design problems.”

Tactics Time

From Barnes and Noble: “Everyone knows that the way to improve at chess is to solve tactics puzzles. But why do tactics books make amateurs study grandmaster or master games? How useful is it to analyze games that are unreal for everyday chess players? In the real world of beginning and casual players openings are dubious, positions are messy, material is uneven, and cheap traps and oversights are occurring constantly. Most amateur games are won by rather primitive means, compared to the cool and fancy moves that masters need in order to gain victory. This book only takes positions from amateur games and puts them out there, warts and all. Tim Brennan and Andrea Carson have assembled thousands of games by everyday players, and selected the most instructive tactical examples.”

Dumbbell training

From Barnes and Noble: “More than just exercises, Dumbbell Training includes workouts and programs proven to add muscle mass and definition and enhance sport performance. You’ll find 33 programs for increasing power, speed, agility, and balance for athletes in 11 popular sports: basketball, cycling, ice hockey, skiing, soccer, softball, speed skating, swimming, track, volleyball, and wrestling. It’s all here and ready to use.”
Act of Congress: how America’s essential institution works, and how it doesn’t

From The Washington Post: “The author has delivered a blow-by-blow account of the tawdry compromises, Republican intractability and factional fighting within the Democratic Party that went into making the law. Congress comes across as the nation’s grandfather: antiquated, inconsistent, as slow-moving as it is dull-witted. The book is in part an elegy for the Congress—particularly the Senate—of yore...”

What does a black hole look like?

(see book above: “Act of Congress”)

A history of the Middle East

From Barnes and Noble: “One of the most crucial, volatile, and complex regions of the modern world, the Middle East has long confounded the dreams of conquerors and peacemakers alike. This now-classic book, fully updated to 2012 and still the essential work on the subject, follows the historic struggles of the Middle East from Napoleon’s campaign in Egypt and Syria, through the slow decline and fall of the Ottoman Empire, to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the history of Islam and its recent resurgence.”
Practical electronics for inventors

From BookNews: “Covering the same basic information as other introductory electronics books, only presenting the information on particular devices and circuits do before discussing the physics of how they work, this text covers basic circuit components, semiconductors, optoelectronics, integrated circuits, operational amplifiers, filters, oscillators and timers, voltage regulators, audio electronics, digital electronics, DC motors, RC servos, and other devices.”

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"If you don’t like the road you’re walking, start paving another one.” –Dolly Parton