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BE THE ANSWER

10 BOOKS THAT WILL
CHANGE THE
WAY YOU THINK

ESSENTIAL READINGS SELECTED BY OUR FACULTY

PARDEE RAND GRADUATE SCHOOL

10 RECOMMENDED BOOKS

Pardee RAND Graduate School students **aspire to lead** change—whether by influencing decisionmakers, by participating in critical policy debates, or as public policy leaders in their own right. We recently **asked our faculty**, What books inspire you to train your sights on the most intractable problems of our time? To come up with **innovative, persuasive, and enduring solutions**? To ensure that no matter the topic, the problem is well formulated and the research approach is well designed and well executed?

PSYCHOLOGY
Thinking, Fast and Slow
(2011)

One of today's greatest thought leaders, **DANIEL KAHNEMAN**, explores the way we think and choose, and why humans are prone to flawed thinking.

“Current and brilliant. I also urge people to watch his Nobel speech on the web.”

—**PROFESSOR PAUL DAVIS**,
policy analysis

“The content is essential for policy analysts. And the communication style is exemplary.”

—**PROFESSOR FRANK CAMM**,
economics

POLITICAL SCIENCE
Bureaucracy
What Government Agencies Do and Why They Do It (1991)

In this classic text, **JAMES Q. WILSON** examines a range of U.S. bureaucracies—including the Army, FBI, CIA, FCC, and the Social Security Administration—and sheds light on what they do, why they operate the way they do, and how they might become more responsible and effective.

“For those who are concerned with efficiency in the public sector, this analysis is insightful, comprehensive, thoroughly engaging, and—more than two decades later—completely relevant.”

—**PROFESSOR FABIAN DUARTE**,
game theory

MATHEMATICS
How to Solve It
A New Aspect of Mathematical Method (1945)

This book by one of the twentieth century's most prominent mathematicians approaches problem-solving in a way that sticks. What was originally a chapter in one of **GEORGE PÓLYA'S** books became so popular that it was published separately and remains a stand-alone classic to this day.

“Pólya defines four principles in problem solving—(1) understand the problem; (2) devise a plan; (3) carry out the plan; and (4) review and extend the solution—a clear and compelling approach to all types of problems. These principles have stuck with me since I was a high school senior, and I highly recommend this to students at all levels.”

—**PROFESSOR NATALIE CRAWFORD**,
mathematics

STATISTICS
How to Lie with Statistics
(1954)

In the introduction, author **DARRELL HUFF** writes, “This book is a sort of primer in ways to use statistics to deceive. It may seem altogether too much like a manual for swindlers. Perhaps I can justify it in the manner of the retired burglar whose published reminiscences amounted to a graduate course in how to pick a lock and muffle a footfall: The crooks already know these tricks; honest men must learn them in self-defense.”

“A classic. More quantitative in nature, but it gives *Time Magazine*-type illustrations of why you should never fully trust the media when they are presenting data.”

—**PROFESSOR BART BENNETT**,
operations research

ANALYTIC DESIGN
The Visual Display of Quantitative Information
(1983)

Some images are better than others. **EDWARD TUFTE'S** classic will help you convey your message with words, numbers, and pictures, and with clarity, precision, and efficiency.

“To be an effective policy analyst you have to be able to communicate the results of your research clearly and effectively. This book illustrates how statistical graphics can be the simplest, yet most powerful way to describe, explore, and communicate complex data. Tufte lays out the criteria for effective graphical displays and provides many examples to illustrate the key concepts.”

—**PROFESSOR JEANNE RINGEL**,
health economics and
mathematics for policy analysis

SOCIOLOGY

Everything Is Obvious* *Once You Know the Answer How Common Sense Fails Us (2011)

DUNCAN J. WATTS demonstrates how commonsense reasoning and history mislead us into believing that we understand more about the world of human behavior than we do, and why attempts to predict, manage, or manipulate social and economic systems often go awry.

"It's a great look at how historical events often have commonsense explanations that are useless for policy development."

—**PROFESSOR DAVID KENNEDY**,
anthropology

POLITICS/CURRENT EVENTS

It's Even Worse Than It Looks How the American Constitutional System Collided with the New Politics of Extremism (2012)

Political dysfunction in the United States—putting political advantage ahead of good government—has reached a critical point, calling into question the country's ability to govern itself.

THOMAS E. MANN and **NORMAN J. ORNSTEIN** caution that there is no magic panacea to fix a problem so complex, but they do discuss how greater public participation and some media reforms can help ease the gridlock.

"Mann and Ornstein provide a bipartisan approach to describing the problem of increasing extreme partisanship and its impact on public policy. They then offer up what they believe could be done and needs to be done to get the American political system back on track."

—**DEAN SUSAN L. MARQUIS**,
policy analysis

POLITICAL SCIENCE

Democracy in America (Volume 1, 1835; Volume 2, 1840)

According to translator Harvey C. Mansfield, **ALEXIS DE TOCQUEVILLE'S** *Democracy in America* is "at once the best book ever written on democracy and the best book ever written on America." This is essential reading for anyone interested in history, or emerging democracies.

"A wide worldview is essential for the policy analyst. This book remains an eye-opener."

—**PROFESSOR LOIS DAVIS**,
public health

ESSAYS/CULTURAL STUDIES

Representations of the Intellectual The 1993 Reith Lectures (1996)

In these six essays, delivered as part of the BBC's esteemed lecture series, **EDWARD SAID** explores what it means to be an intellectual in the age of information.

"If you read only one book on this list, make it this slim volume. Said argues that an intellectual should be independent and an 'amateur' operating outside institutional structures. If you read this and buy Said's arguments, you will never ever buy into packaged thoughts. And never assume that famous people have the only interesting things to say. Often, the reverse is true."

—**PROFESSOR KRISHNA KUMAR**,
economic development

LEADERSHIP

Smart Choices A Practical Guide to Making Better Decisions (1999)

HAMMOND, **KEENEY**, and **RAIFFA** blend the art and science of decisionmaking into a straightforward approach to making difficult choices. This book will be of interest not only to students of policy analysis but also to anyone who makes business, personal, or family decisions—i.e., everyone.

"This book succeeds very well in its aim to provide a practical roadmap on how to think about and make hard decisions. It is an easy read with good examples of decisions many people face, but it slips in most of the concepts of decision theory. The authors are justly renowned for their expertise and their ability to communicate ideas clearly."

—**PROFESSOR EMMETT KEELER**,
decision analysis

EVERY DAY AT THE PARDEE RAND GRADUATE
SCHOOL, WE CALL UPON OUR STUDENTS
TO **BE THE ANSWER** TO THE CHALLENGES
THEY SEE IN THEIR COMMUNITIES AND
THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

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