

## Humanist Association of Connecticut Book Discussion – Upcoming Books 2017

### **Saturday, September 23: *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies* by Jared Diamond**

[Note date: fourth Saturday (rather than 3<sup>rd</sup>)]

In this "artful, informative, and delightful" (William H. McNeill, *New York Review of Books*) book, Jared Diamond convincingly argues that geographical and environmental factors shaped the modern world. Societies that had had a head start in food production advanced beyond the hunter-gatherer stage, and then developed religion --as well as nasty germs and potent weapons of war --and ventured on sea and land to conquer and decimate preliterate cultures. A major advance in our understanding of human societies, *Guns, Germs, and Steel* chronicles the way that the modern world came to be and stunningly dismantles racially based theories of human history.\*

Winner of the Pulitzer Prize, the Phi Beta Kappa Award in Science, the Rhone-Poulenc Prize, and the Commonwealth Club of California's Gold Medal.

### **Saturday, October 21: *American War: A Novel* by Omar El Akkad**

An audacious and powerful debut novel: a second American Civil War, a devastating plague, and one family caught deep in the middle—a story that asks what might happen if America were to turn its most devastating policies and deadly weapons upon itself.

Sarat Chestnut, born in Louisiana, is only six when the Second American Civil War breaks out in 2074. But even she knows that oil is outlawed, that Louisiana is half underwater, and that unmanned drones fill the sky...\*

"Powerful . . . As haunting a postapocalyptic universe as Cormac McCarthy [created] in *The Road*, and as devastating a look as the fallout that national events have on an American family as Philip Roth did in *The Plot Against America*. . . . – Michiko Kakutani, *The New York Times*

### **Saturday, November 18: *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City* by Matthew Desmond**

In *Evicted*, Harvard sociologist and MacArthur "Genius" Matthew Desmond follows eight families in Milwaukee as they struggle to keep a roof over their heads. Hailed as "wrenching and revelatory" (*The Nation*), "vivid and unsettling" (*New York Review of Books*), *Evicted* transforms our understanding of poverty and economic exploitation while providing fresh ideas for solving one of 21st-century America's most devastating problems. Its unforgettable scenes of hope and loss remind us of the centrality of home, without which nothing else is possible.\*

"Astonishing...Desmond is an academic who teaches at Harvard—a sociologist or, you could say, an ethnographer. But I would like to claim him as a journalist too, and one who, like Katherine Boo in her study of a Mumbai slum, has set a new standard for reporting on poverty." – Barbara Ehrenreich, *New York Times Book Review*

### **Saturday, December 16: *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind* by Yuval Noah Harari**

From a renowned historian comes a groundbreaking narrative of humanity's creation and evolution...that explores the ways in which biology and history have defined us and enhanced our understanding of what it means to be "human."

One hundred thousand years ago, at least six different species of humans inhabited Earth. Yet today there is only one – homo sapiens. What happened to the others? And what may happen to us?\*

"Sapiens tackles the biggest questions of history and of the modern world, and it is written in unforgettably vivid language." – Jared Diamond, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *Guns, Germs, and Steel*, *Collapse*, and *The World until Yesterday*

**All discussions are from 2-4 pm at the Unitarian Society of New Haven, 700 Hartford Turnpike, Hamden, CT.**

\*Description from Amazon.com website

\*\*Description from wikipedia.org website