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James Siodla

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# READ/LISTEN/WATCH

**James Siodla**

## **Assistant Professor of Economics**

As an economist, I am persuaded by data and hard facts. But I also know the power of narrative, which is what I often look for in the books I read (one of my favorite books is *The Grapes of Wrath* and I can hardly teach the Great Depression without thinking about it). I try to read often and widely, everything from classic fiction to religion and spirituality. I recently finished Nathaniel Philbrick's *In the Heart of the Sea*, a gut-wrenching story about the 19th-century whaling disaster that inspired Melville's *Moby-Dick*. I learned a lot reading two good memoirs this year, *Hillbilly Elegy* by J.D. Vance and Trevor Noah's *Born a Crime*. Colson Whitehead's *The Underground Railroad* is the most recent novel I've read, and is an imaginative (if not painful) blend of science fiction and history. In nonfiction, I'm currently reading Edward E. Baptist's thought-provoking book on slavery and capitalism, *The Half Has Never Been Told*, and Leah Platt Boustan's *Competition in the Promised Land*, which rigorously studies the impact of the Great Black Migration in northern cities. And for some lighter fare, I'm blazing my way through Bruce Springsteen's autobiography, *Born to Run*.

