February 1999

Bestsellers for 1998

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Recommended Citation
DOI: https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.3735
For this issue we depart from the narrow subject focus of our prior YBP Bestseller lists. Instead we offer the Big Picture. No categories at all! Here are the 50 titles our customers purchased most often during (calendar year) 1998.

The list captures the ascendance in academic publishing of the Interdisciplinary (we think the word has earned capitalization). Black Studies by itself, for example, accounts for 19 of the 50 titles, or nearly 40% of the list. University presses, with 37 titles, produced nearly three-fourths of the list, and the larger university presses prove that they know how to make books with appeal to both general and academic readers, from Ira Berlin's Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America (Harvard) to John Townsend's What Women Want—What Men Want: Why the Sexes Still See Love and Commitment So Differently. This title is from Oxford University Press, with 10 titles the list's predominant publisher as well as the most eclectic and even athletic performer, with OUP showing mastery of fields ranging from Black Studies to Mathematics to Music.

But our list's lead title was neither interdisciplinary nor much of a crossover read. Towering above all other titles—with 306 copies sold to date, some 70% more than our #2 title (Oxford's History of Jazz)—is the MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing, probably the lone title the Modern Language Association will ever land on any Bestseller list, anywhere.

We hope you enjoy conducting your own analysis of YBP's 1998 Bestseller list.


Gioia, Ted. History of Jazz. Oxford Univ Press 1997 $30.00 Cloth 0195090810


White, Shane. Stylin': African American Expressive Culture from its Beginnings to the Zoot Suit. Cornell Univ Press 1998 $30.00 Cloth 0801431794


Baldwin, James, 1924-1987. Collected Essays. Library of America 1998 $35.00 Cloth 1883011523


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Questions and Answers

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