

2014

## From the Reference Desk: Reviews of Reference Titles

Tom Gilson

*Against the Grain*, [gilsont@cofc.edu](mailto:gilsont@cofc.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: <http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/atg>



Part of the [Library and Information Science Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Gilson, Tom (2017) "From the Reference Desk: Reviews of Reference Titles," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 26: Iss. 2, Article 34.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.6719>

This document has been made available through Purdue e-Pubs, a service of the Purdue University Libraries. Please contact [epubs@purdue.edu](mailto:epubs@purdue.edu) for additional information.

# Book Reviews — Monographic Musings

Column Editor: **Debbie Vaughn** (Adjunct Instructor, College of Charleston) <vaughnd@cofc.edu>

**Stielow, Frederick. *Reinventing the Library for Online Education*.**  
Chicago: ALA Editions, 2014. 978-0-8389-1208-9. 378 pages. \$75.00.

Reviewed by **Debbie Vaughn** (College of Charleston) <vaughnd@cofc.edu>

For the past two years, I have been teaching a learning skills class via distance education. When I taught this course in a brick-and-mortar setting, we spent at least one — but sometimes two — class periods in the library covering topics such as interpreting search results, evaluating sources, and other information literacy concepts. Moving to the online environment has been difficult for me, and one of the biggest challenges that I've faced is determining how to effectively introduce students to campus services and resources (including, of course, the library), virtually. As any instructor strives to keep up with best practices in pedagogy, I have immersed myself in books, articles, and blogs about teaching and learning strategies in the “click classroom.” In the process, I have followed news and developments in higher education and savored the dialog struck between advocates and opponents of online education, MOOCs, for-profit institutions, and other *Opposing Viewpoints*-worthy topics.

**Frederick Stielow** has written a pivotal book addressing the way the library can and needs to remain relevant in the growing enterprise of online education. *Reinventing the Library for Online Education* offers an informative overview/history of online education, the library's role in this mode of course delivery, and the demands of online library personnel. He also gives what he calls “commentaries” on a variety of library services, methods of operation, and systems. **Stielow** breaks down these commentaries into three groups, subsequently defining services, systems, and modi operandi as those that should be eliminated, redefined, or constructed.

No doubt, **Stielow's** experience and credentials make him the perfect author to tackle the subject. He has served as department head, library dean, public library system director, and professor. He has authored numerous books on archives management and virtual libraries. Perhaps most impressive is his post at the **American Public University System (APUS)**, where he is vice president and dean of libraries, electronic course materials and APUS ePress. It should be noted that APUS is an entirely online enterprise, and **Stielow** has grown its library into a model for supporting and partnering with online learning endeavors. In fact, in February he was named as this year's **Routledge Distance Learning Librarianship Conference Sponsorship Award** recipient; his prize will be presented at the **ALA Annual Conference** in Las Vegas. In her letter of nomination, **Susan Hyland**, AVP of Library Operations at APUS, aptly summed up **Stielow's** accomplishments: “As head of APUS' virtual library services, this visionary has long been at the forefront of a revolutionary transition — successfully moving distance learning librarianship into center-stage in the new world of online universities... The APUS Online Library moved from marginal to a position of sustainability.”

*Reinventing the Library* is a bit richer and more philosophical than many books on library issues. It's also written with non-traditional formatting — not quite as dramatic as **Jennifer Egan's** Pulitzer Prize-winning

novel *A Visit from the Goon Squad* or **Mark Danielewski's** *House of Leaves*, but the pages are filled with kickers, text boxes, and bullets. **Stielow** explains that this is intentional: “it reflects the Web's unfolding impact on written communication” (xv). It forces the reader to think and learn about the library as it pertains to online education as though the reader has been dropped into online education's native habitat. “See also” references act as print hyperlinks and encourage the reader to explore content in a non-linear fashion. The only thing that would bring the reader closer to the native habitat would be to offer *Reinventing the Library* in online course format. Even **Stielow's** colophon is also creative. Traditionally, of course, the colophon is a simple closer, identifying the font, spacing, paper type, and other specs of a publication — the bones, if you will. **Stielow** lauds the bones of his publication: APUS, its library, and growth of Classroom/Research Information Services, Electronic Course Materials, and other initiatives.

*Reinventing the Library for Online Education* is a fascinating read. It is eye opening and thought provoking for library personnel supporting online education endeavors, faculty teaching online courses, and higher education administrators. In fact, it would be a good idea for all senior academic affairs administrators to take a look at this timely work, whether or not their institution's online education is currently booming — because if it isn't thriving now, it is likely that soon it will be. 🐻



## From the Reference Desk

by **Tom Gilson** (Associate Editor, *Against the Grain*, and Head of Reference Emeritus, College of Charleston, Charleston, SC 29401) <gilson@cofc.edu>

*Berkshire Dictionary of Chinese Biography* (2014, 9781933782669 \$595) is a three-volume set structured using a chronological approach as it offers one hundred thirty-five biographies of influential figures in Chinese history. The set is edited by **Kerry Brown** of the China Studies Centre at the **University of Sydney** and draws on the knowledge and expertise of an international list of more than one hundred contributors. Coverage spans the time periods from the early **Xia Dynasty** (2100 BCE) through the **Tang** (618-907 CE); the **Song Dynasty** (960-1279) through the **Ming** (1368-1644); and the **Qing Dynasty** (1644-1912) up to People's Republic and the modern opening of China in 1979. There is also a



Volume 4 (2014, 9781614729006, \$175, pre-publication price) set for release later this year that will bring coverage to the present.

While this is a biographical reference, the focus is on more than biography. The goal of the set is not only to provide facts about the lives of leading figures. The attempt here is to use these biographies to provide readers an understandable context from which to view the whole of Chinese history.

The entries are substantial and range from shorter sketches of 1,000 words to full-blown essays that come in at close to 8,000 words. Coverage includes both well- and lesser-known figures and features scientists and inventors, philosophers and religious figures, dynastic rulers, statesmen and military leaders, as well as poets, authors, artists, and scholars. As one might expect, the vast majority are men but some prominent women are covered. Each entry has a similar structure that provides

*continued on page 45*

**From the Reference Desk**  
from page 44

the subjects dates, their role, and a brief summary of the person's life and importance. This is followed by the text of the article enhanced by relevant sidebars and visuals including maps and a portrait of the subject. All articles end with a list of primary and secondary sources for further reading and exploration.

The articles are written in an accessible, reader-friendly style but grounded in academic scholarship. The biographies are both factual and evaluative including accounts of the life and achievements of the subject while at the same time offering assessments of their influence. But perhaps more importantly, reading these entries gives a sense of the historical context within which the person lived. References are continually made to the time periods being discussed and readers can use the chronological table of contents and list of articles to place each time period within an overall historical framework. Added to this is a helpful chronology of events for all time periods covered. Other aids and appendices include a listing of entries by subject, a short pronunciation guide to Mandarin Chinese, and a conversion table between pinyin and **Wade-Giles** transcription systems, an index of Kings, Emperors, an index of geographical locations and other rulers, and a general index. In addition, there is a glossary of pinyin terms, a bibliography of standard references and resources, and a list of all of the prominent people mentioned in the set with those having articles devoted to them in bold.

The *Berkshire Dictionary of Chinese Biography* reflects a rich but complicated history stretching back to 2100 BCE and does so in a way that enables the non-specialist to locate not only the biographical facts but grasp the broader context of the lives being discussed. While there have been other biographical works on specific dynasties and time periods, this set is unique in that it provides life accounts from all eras of Chinese history while simultaneously offering a framework from which to view the overall history.

With its scholarly approach, the *Berkshire Dictionary of Chinese Biography* is a natural fit for academic libraries but it will also appeal to larger public libraries where there is patron interest. Libraries that already have the publisher's well-received five-volume *Berkshire Encyclopedia of China* (2009, 978-0977015948, \$675) will definitely want to consider this new set. It will prove a valuable companion and supplement to the older, well-established reference.

Digital editions are available via major eBook and database services and a print/digital bundle is being offered in cooperation with **Credo Reference**.

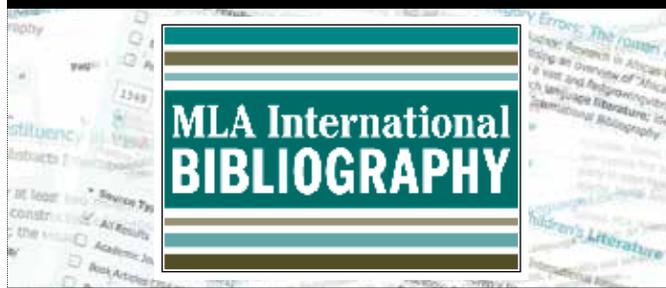
Published by **SAGE Reference** the *Encyclopedia of Military Science* (2014, 978-1412969338, \$595) is a four-volume set edited by **G. Kurt Piehler**. While the coverage emphasizes issues directly related to modern warfare and American military science, this set also provides a broader perspective. Numerous articles offer discussions of social, political, and economic elements relevant to the military as well as the effects of related services like homeland security, the border patrol, and the Coast Guard, as well as the CIA and FBI.

As you might expect, many entries treat key military activities like operations and tactics, supply and logistics, recruitment and training, and modern weapon systems. However, the complex relationship between civil and military authority also garners a good bit of attention, as do modes of leadership and command and issues related to the law and military justice. Specific U.S. allies and adversaries are covered in individual articles as are broader issues as they relate to the military like diversity, medical care, family concerns, and values and ethics. In addition, all of America's major conflicts from the colonial era to today's involvement in Afghanistan have their own entries. The set is text rich but there are a number of photos and illustrations that offer visual relief. It also boasts value-added features from article-specific bibliographies to a topical Reader's Guide to appendices containing relevant primary sources and useful statistics. Access to specific topics and subtopics is provided by a well-designed index.

Each article provides historical background for the topic as well as its current status along with mention of possible future developments. The writing is descriptive, fact-filled, and to the point. The articles

continued on page 46

## The Online Database for Language, Literature, and More



The *MLA International Bibliography* is pleased to announce the launch of a video tutorial series on searching the bibliography. New tutorials will be released every few months. If you have a suggestion for a topic that you'd like to see covered in a tutorial, write to [bibliography@mla.org](mailto:bibliography@mla.org).



Please feel free to link to our tutorials, embed them in your syllabus or LibGuides, and share them with anyone who might find them useful.

Find the tutorials at [www.mla.org/bibtutorials](http://www.mla.org/bibtutorials) and on the MLA's *YouTube* channel ([www.youtube.com/user/ModernLanguageAssoc](http://www.youtube.com/user/ModernLanguageAssoc))

### Keep up with the latest scholarship in literature, language, film, linguistics, folklore, and teaching.

- ◆ More than 2.5 million books, articles, and Web sites searchable
- ◆ Seamless links to full text
- ◆ Hundreds of journals available through EBSCO, Gale, and ProQuest
- ◆ Over 444 open access journals
- ◆ DOIs from Cross-Ref
- ◆ Links to Web sites for JSTOR, Project Muse, Wiley Blackwell, De Gruyter, Palgrave Macmillan, Edinburgh University Press, Taylor & Francis, Intellect, and more
- ◆ Film, new media, and cultural studies

**For additional full-text linking capabilities or subscription information, please contact**

EBSCO Publishing  
800 653-2726  
[www.ebscohost.com](http://www.ebscohost.com)

Gale Cengage Learning  
800 487-8488  
[www.gale.cengage.com](http://www.gale.cengage.com)

ProQuest  
800 521-0600  
[www.proquest.com](http://www.proquest.com)

**For editorial information, please contact**

Modern Language Association  
26 Broadway, 3rd floor  
New York, NY 10004-1789  
646 576-5155  
fax 646 576-5160  
[www.mla.org](http://www.mla.org)

E-mail  
[bibliography@mla.org](mailto:bibliography@mla.org)  
for more information.



Visit our pages on *Facebook* and *MLA Commons*.

are informative, well researched, and free of jargon. Multiple audiences from students and researchers to bloggers and journalists will find it a valuable resource to get relevant facts and solid background.

The *Encyclopedia of Military Science* is an impressive effort that offers readers a comprehensive perspective on a multifaceted topic. It is much more than a collection of articles dealing with the nuts and bolts of military strategies and operations. Editor **G. Kurt Piehler** and his contributors have fashioned a reference that looks at the American military using a wide open lens providing insightful and factual observations. Academic libraries and larger public libraries will want to give it serious consideration. It may even find its way on to some high school library shelves.

The set is also available online via **SAGE Knowledge** at: <http://knowledge.sagepub.com/view/encyclopedia-of-military-science/SAGE.xml>.

**M.E. Sharpe** recently published the second edition of *American Immigration: An Encyclopedia of Political, Social, and Cultural Change* (2013, 978-0-7656-8212-3, \$399). Edited by **James Ciment** and **John Radzilowski**, this four-volume set revises, updates, and reorganizes the first edition published in 2001 under the title of the *Encyclopedia of American Immigration*.

Abandoning the chronological arrangement of the first edition, this set opts for a framework that divides coverage among six major categories starting with causes, processes, and patterns then moving on to the history of immigration from the earliest Spanish settlers to post 9/11. The third section consists of entries dealing with the numerous themes related to society, culture, and politics. This section is followed by two sections that offer articles discussing nations of origins and U.S. Destinations and those covering international perspectives. The set ends with a collection of 80 documents and primary sources that complement the other entries.

The thematic structure works well for this set giving readers a built-in context along with the related detailed information. However, an arrangement like this requires good indexing and finding aids. Fortunately this set possesses them. Each volume starts with a complete listing of contents for the entire set and there is a well-designed and thorough general index at the end of the last volume. In addition, there is an index to the numerous tables and figures that are interspersed throughout the set supplementing and informing the text. Each entry provides lists of further readings, and there is a collected bibliography as well as a glossary of terms adding value to the set. The entries are informed by recent scholarship and are written in a style that is appropriate for upper division high school students, undergraduates, and interested lay readers.

*American Immigration: An Encyclopedia of Political, Social, and Cultural Change* treats a seminal topic in the American experience that has historical importance as well as current relevance. Examining this encyclopedia makes it clear that successive waves of immigration have been essential to the development of the United States. The set also portrays immigration as a multifaceted phenomenon with complex ramifications that can be viewed from multiple perspectives. It is a compliment to the editors and their contributors that *American Immigration...* does so in a factual, scholarly fashion providing readers a valuable source for further study and understanding. This encyclopedia should find its way on to the shelves of college and high school libraries as well as many public libraries where there is interest.

This title is also available via **Sharpe Online Reference** (<http://www.sharpe-online.com/>).

The *European Union Encyclopedia and Directory 2014* (978-1857436990, \$895) is the latest version of a standard reference that made its first appearance in 1995. Published by **Routledge**, this one-volume work has evolved into an annual publication that provides information on both the EU's history and its current operation with an emphasis on facts and details.

The new edition continues the basic structure of past editions starting with an A-Z list of entries that offers factual discussions of the numerous EU institutions and operations, the member nations and those that are applying for, or are considering membership, as well as other countries that have "relevance to the Union." Brief biographical sketches of key individuals who have been influential in the development of the EU are also provided. Lending a sense of context are essays that offer updated background on the EU and its legal framework, economic concerns, social issues, external relations, migration and asylum policy, future prospects, and the continuing discussion of membership enlargement. There is also a new essay on environmental policy. These essays are followed by the Directory of the European Union that has a section on each institution of the EU including the Council of the European Union, the European Commission, the European Parliament, and numerous other EU agencies. The information provided in this section includes addresses, phone and fax numbers, email and Web addresses, and information on officers and their work. The book is rounded out by a statistical survey of the EU with population figures and various economic indicators and statistics.

The single-volume *European Union Encyclopedia and Directory 2014* is unique in the amount of information that it provides on the EU. With its combination of encyclopedic entries, involved essays, directory information, and statistical tables, this reference provides interested students and researchers with an authoritative, comprehensive, and balanced resource. The main audience for this work will be academic libraries and businesses

and government agencies concerned with EU related issues. However, given the cost of the book those on tight budgets who have the 2013 edition may want to wait for the 2015 edition due in November of 2014. It does not appear to be available online.

### Extra Servings

April 2014 sees **CQ Press** publishing a couple of references that will be of interest.

- **Political Handbook of the World 2014** (978-1-4833-3326-7, \$375) by **Thomas Lansford** has "more than 200 entries on countries and territories throughout the world," with "coverage of all major and minor political parties and groups in each political system. It also provides names of key ambassadors and international memberships of each country, plus detailed profiles of more than 30 intergovernmental organizations and UN agencies." According to **CQ Press** it "has been updated to include coverage of current events, issues, crises, and controversies."
- **Landmark Legislation, 1774–2012: Major U.S. Acts and Treaties**, (978-1-4522-9228-1, \$175) is a second edition that contains "information about the most important laws and treaties enacted by the U.S. Congress — including an additional decade of new legislation since the first edition was published. Detailing more than 1,300 bills that became law, the Second Edition... expands its coverage to include the last five numbered Congresses, which have seen landmark legislation in the areas of health insurance and health care reform, financial regulatory reform, fiscal stimulus ..."

**SAGE Reference** has just released two new multivolume sets.

- **Encyclopedia of Humor Studies** (978-1-4129-9909-0, \$350) is a two volume set edited by **Salvatore Attardo** that "explores the concept of humor in history and modern society in the United States and internationally. This work's scope encompasses the humor of children, adults, and even nonhuman primates throughout the ages, from crude jokes and simple slapstick to sophisticated word play and ironic parody and satire. As an academic social history, it includes the perspectives of a wide range of disciplines, including sociology, child development, social psychology..."
- **Encyclopedia of Deception** (978-1-4522-5877-5, \$350) is another two-volume set. Edited by **Timothy R. Levine**, this work "examines lying from multiple perspectives

*continued on page 47*

## From the Reference Desk from page 46

drawn from the disciplines of social psychology, sociology, history, business, political science, cultural anthropology, moral philosophy, theology, law, family studies, ... and more. From the "little white lie," to lying on a resume, to the grandiose lies of presidents, this two-volume reference explores the phenomenon of lying in a multidisciplinary context to elucidate this common aspect of our daily lives..."

**ABC-CLIO** is also publishing a couple of new sets in April.

- **Famous Assassinations in World History: An Encyclopedia** (978-1-61069-285-4, \$189) is edited by **Michael Newton** and provides "complete and up-to-date coverage of assassinations of key figures throughout history and around the world... Each entry identifies the assassination target and summarizes that person's significance; discusses the person's assassination, including the factors that led up to it and its political and cultural contexts; and explains the powerful effects of the assassination in world history. ... In addition, 23 primary source documents provide accounts of assassinations throughout world history."
- **Muhammad in History, Thought, and Culture: An Encyclopedia of the Prophet of God** (978-1-61069-177-2, \$189) Editors **Coeli Fitzpatrick** and **Adam Hani Walker**, offer readers "more than 200 A-Z entries" that "summarize views of Muhammad from the earliest editors of the Qu'ran to contemporary Muslim theologians" and "explores the traditions, ceremonies, and beliefs of Islam as they have spread worldwide, and examines Muhammad's role in other religious traditions as well as the secular world."

**IGI Global** has recently added one new title to their reference list.

- **Encyclopedia of Business Analytics and Optimization** (9781466652026, \$2560) is a five-volume set edited by **John Wang** that looks at the "challenges of information retrieval in the age of Big Data by exploring recent advances in the areas of knowledge management, data visualization, interdisciplinary communication, and others. Through its critical approach and practical application, this book is ... for the professional, leader, analyst, or manager interested in making the most of the knowledge resources at their disposal."

**Wiley** has also added a new reference to their list.

- **The Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedia of Health, Illness, Behavior and Society** (978-1-4443-3076-2, \$795) is co-edited by **William C. Cockerham**, **Robert Dingwall**, and **Stella Quah** and provides a "comprehensive, interdisciplinary, and international reference work on all aspects of the social scientific study of health and illness..."

In case you missed it, January saw **Oxford University Press** add a number of new titles to their online **Oxford Quick Reference** collections.

- **A Dictionary of Genetics** (8 ed.)
- **The Concise Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church** (3 ed.)
- **A Dictionary of Food and Nutrition** (4 ed.)
- **A Dictionary of Epidemiology** (5 ed.)
- **A Supplementary Dictionary of Sports Personalities** (1 ed.)

**Oxford** also added one title to its online **Oxford Reference Library**.

- **The Oxford Encyclopedia of Biblical Interpretation** (1 ed.)

You can find more information along with relevant links at: <http://www.oxfordreference.com/page/new/whats-new>. 📖

## Rumors from page 43

Marketing Program at **Harvard University** (1992). Read all about her in *Forbes*, *BusinessWeek*, etc.

<http://www.forbes.com/profile/anthea-stratigos/>

<http://www.businessweek.com/stories/2005-05-04/work-family-and-the-holistic-way>

We will also have a keynote from **John Rennie**. **John** received a Bachelor of Science in Biology from **Yale University** and worked as a science writer and researcher at **Harvard Medical School**. He currently teaches science

writing as adjunct professor at **New York University's Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute**, and writes his **The Gleaming Retort** on the PLoS Blogs Network. **John** served as editor in chief of *Scientific American* between 1994 and 2009. Based in New York, he continues to work as a science writer and editor, and as an adjunct instructor in **New York University's** Science, Health and Environmental Reporting Program.

<http://blogs.plos.org/retort/about/>  
<http://www.weather.com/tv/tvshows/hacking-the-planet/cast>

We will have another debate this year between **Rick Anderson** (University of Utah) and **David Magier** (Princeton). This year's

*continued on page 62*

# Let us help build your collection!

**Collection Reports**  
and **Want List Matching**  
offer a **FREE** way to help  
you make the most out  
of your resources!

## Collection Reports

We can find the books that will complete your collection for a new subject or one you are looking to expand.

- ✓ **Retrospective collection-development projects**
- ✓ **Specialized Grants**
- ✓ **New graduate programs**
- ✓ **New faculty with new subject emphasis**

## Want List Matching

Give us a list of titles, and we'll save you time by tracking down the books for you.

- ✓ **Replacement projects**
- ✓ **Books you can't find from another vendor**
- ✓ **Collection analysis reports or bibliographies**



**alibris**  
for Libraries

Alibris.com/library • 1-877-ALIBRIS  
Libraries@alibris.com