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For Review Copies of Titles Please Contact

LIZ WETZEL
212.364.0661 • liz.wetzel@hbgusa.com

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ABOUT

BASIC BOOKS

Studying zoology made Lucy Cooke feel like a sad freak. Not because she loved spiders or would root around in animal feces: all her friends shared the same curious kinks. The problem was her sex. Being female meant she was, by nature, a loser.

Since Charles Darwin, evolutionary biologists have been convinced that the males of the animal kingdom are the interesting ones—dominating and promiscuous, while females are dull, passive, and devoted.

In Bitch, Cooke tells a new story. Whether investigating same-sex female albatross couples that raise chicks, murderous mother meerkats, or the titanic battle of the sexes waged by ducks, Cooke shows us a new evolutionary biology, one where females can be as dynamic as any male. This isn’t your grandfather’s evolutionary biology. It’s more inclusive, truer to life, and, simply, more fun.

Lucy Cooke is the author of The Truth About Animals, which was short-listed for the Royal Society Prize, and the New York Times bestselling A Little Book of Sloth. She is a National Geographic explorer, TED talker, and award-winning documentary filmmaker with a master’s degree in zoology from Oxford University. She lives in Hastings, England.
Inspired by Homer’s description of the ebb and flow of the “wine dark sea,” the ancient Greeks conceived a back-and-forth movement of blood. That false notion, perpetuated by the influential Roman physician Galen, prevailed for fifteen hundred years until William Harvey proved that blood circulates. Harvey’s discovery revolutionized the life sciences by making possible a new quantitative understanding of the cardiovascular system.

In The Wine-Dark Sea Within, cardiologist Dhun Sethna argues that Harvey’s revelation inaugurated modern medicine and paved the way for groundbreaking advances from intravenous therapy, cardiac imaging, and stent insertions to bypass surgery, dialysis, and heart-lung machines.

Weaving together three thousand years of global history, following bitter feuds and epic alliances, this is a provocative history by a fresh voice in popular science.

DHUN SETHNA is a clinical and academic cardiologist who has served on the senior academic staff at major medical centers including The Cleveland Clinic and Carilion Clinic. He has contributed to Braunwald’s Heart Disease: A Textbook of Cardiovascular Medicine. He lives in Virginia.
The Texas Revolution has long been cast as an epic episode in the origins of the American West. As the story goes, larger-than-life figures like Sam Houston, David Crockett, and William Barret Travis fought to free Texas from repressive Mexican rule. In *Unsettled Land*, historian Sam Haynes reveals the reality beneath this powerful creation myth. He shows how the lives of ordinary people—white Americans, Mexicans, Native Americans, and those of African descent—were upended by extraordinary events over twenty-five years. After the battle of San Jacinto, racial lines snapped taut as a new nation, the Lone Star republic, sought to expel Indians, marginalize Mexicans, and tighten its grip on the enslaved. This is a revelatory and essential new narrative of a major turning point in the history of North America.

**SAM W. HAYNES** is a professor in the department of history and the director of the Center for Greater Southwestern Studies at the University of Texas at Arlington. He lives in Dallas, Texas.

A bold new history of the origins and aftermath of the Texas Revolution, revealing how Indians, Mexicans, and Americans battled for survival in one of the continent’s most diverse regions.
What comes to mind when you think about algebra? For many of us, it’s memories of dull or frustrating classes in high school. Award-winning mathematics professor G. Arnell Williams is here to change that. *Algebra the Beautiful* is a journey into the heart of fundamental math that proves just how amazing this subject really is.

Drawing on lessons from twenty-five years of teaching mathematics, Williams blends metaphor, history, and storytelling to uncover algebra’s hidden grandeur. Whether you’re a teacher looking to make math come alive for your students, a parent hoping to get your children engaged, a student trying to come to terms with a sometimes bewildering subject, or just a lover of mathematics, this book has something for you. With a passion that’s contagious, G. Arnell Williams shows how each of us can grasp the beauty and harmony of algebra.

G. ARNELL WILLIAMS is a professor of mathematics at San Juan College in New Mexico. He is the author of *How Math Works* and the recipient of numerous teaching awards. Williams holds degrees in physics from California State University at Long Beach and mathematics from Yale University. He lives in San Juan County, New Mexico.
A diabetic woman awakens from a coma having forgotten the last ten years of her life. A Haitian immigrant has nightmares that begin bleeding into his waking hours. A retired teacher loses the use of her right hand due to pain of no known origin.

Noga Arikha began studying these patients and their confounding symptoms in order to explore how our physical experiences inform our identities. Soon after she initiated her work, the question took on unexpected urgency, as Arikha’s own mother began to show signs of Alzheimer’s disease.

Weaving together stories of her subjects’ troubles and her mother’s decline, Arikha searches for some meaning in the science she has set out to study. The result is an unforgettable journey across the ever-shifting boundaries between ourselves and each other.

Noga Arikha is a philosopher and historian of ideas. The author of Passions and Tempers, she is associate fellow of the Warburg Institute, honorary fellow of the Center for the Politics of Feelings, London, and research associate at the Institut Jean Nicod, Paris. She lives in Florence, Italy.
One of the country’s most astute legal scholars explains how American political culture disempowers ordinary citizens and makes the case for a reinvigorated democracy.

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JEDEDIAH PURDY
TWO CHEERS FOR POLITICS
Why Democracy Is Flawed, Frightening—and Our Best Hope

Amercians across the political spectrum agree that our democracy is in crisis. We view our political opponents with disdain, if not terror, and an increasing number of us are willing to consider authoritarian alternatives. In Two Cheers for Politics, Jedediah Purdy argues that this heated political culture is a symptom not of too much democracy but too little. Today, the decisions that most affect our lives and our communities are often made outside the political realm entirely, as market ideology, constitutional law, and cultural norms effectively remove broad swaths of collective life from the table of collective decision. The result is a weakened and ineffective political system and an increasingly unequal and polarized society. If we wish to renew that society, we’ll need to claw back the ground that we’ve ceded to anti-politics and entrust one another with the power to shape our common life.

JEDEDIAH PURDY is the William S. Beinecke Professor at Columbia Law School and a noted scholar of environmental, property, and constitutional law. His work has appeared in the Atlantic, the New York Times, and the New Yorker, among other outlets, and he is on the editorial board of Dissent. He lives in New York City.
Ronald Reagan has long been lionized for building a conservative coalition sustained by an optimistic vision of American exceptionalism, small government, and free markets. But as historian Nicole Hemmer reveals, the Reagan coalition was short-lived; it fell apart as soon as its charismatic leader left office. In the 1990s—a decade that has yet to be recognized as the breeding ground for today’s polarizing politics—changing demographics and the emergence of a new political-entertainment media fueled the rise of combative far-right politicians and pundits. These partisans, from Pat Buchanan and Newt Gingrich to Rush Limbaugh and Laura Ingraham, forged a new American right that emphasized anti-globalism, appeals to white resentment, and skepticism about democracy itself.

Partisans is essential reading for anyone seeking to understand the crisis of American politics today.

Nicole Hemmer is a political historian and associate research scholar with the Obama Presidency Oral History Project at Columbia University. The cofounder of Made by History, the historical analysis section of the Washington Post, she writes regularly for the New York Times, CNN, Vox, and Politico. She lives in New York.
An Oxford philosopher argues that solving today’s problems might require putting future generations ahead of ourselves.

The human story is just beginning. There are five thousand years of written history, but perhaps millions more to come. In What We Owe the Future, philosopher William MacAskill develops a perspective he calls longtermism to argue that this fact is of enormous moral importance. While we are comfortable thinking about the equal moral worth of humans alive today, we haven’t considered the moral weight of future generations. We have put them at grave risk, and not just with climate change. AI could lock humans into perpetual dystopia, or pandemics could end us. But the future could be wonderful: moral and technological progress could result in unimaginable human flourishing.

The future is in our hands. As MacAskill shows, we can make the world better for billions of years to come. Perhaps even more importantly, he shows us just how much is at stake if we consign future generations to oblivion.

WILLIAM MACASKILL is an associate professor in philosophy at the University of Oxford, and the most widely cited philosopher of his age. A TED speaker and past Forbes 30 Under 30 social entrepreneur, he also cofounded the Centre for Effective Altruism, which has raised over $1 billion for charities. He lives in Oxford, England.
On July 4, 2012, the announcement came that one of the longest-running mysteries in physics had been solved: the Higgs boson, the missing piece in understanding why particles have mass, had finally been discovered. On the rostrum, surrounded by jostling physicists and media, was the particle’s retiring namesake—the only person in history to have an existing single particle named for them. Why Peter Higgs? Drawing on years of conversations with Higgs and others, Close illuminates how an unprolific man became one of the world’s most famous scientists. Close finds that scientific competition between people, institutions, and states played as much of a role in making Higgs famous as Higgs’s work did.

A revelatory study of both a scientist and his era, Elusive will remake our understanding of modern physics.

FRANK CLOSE is a particle physicist and an emeritus professor of physics at the University of Oxford. He is the author of over a dozen books, including Infinity Puzzle and Half-Life. He lives in Oxford, England.
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Seal Press was founded in 1976 and stands as one of the most enduring feminist publishing houses to emerge from the women’s press movement of the 1970s. What began as a letterpress in a Seattle garage has grown to an award-winning publishing house in New York and an imprint of Hachette, the third largest publisher in the world. Seal’s list is devoted to groundbreaking, boldly conceived books that inspire and challenge readers, lift up original voices, and imagine a better future. Publishing highlights include Ijeoma Oluo’s *So You Want to Talk About Race*, Julia Serano’s *Whipping Girl*, Michelle Tea’s *Valencia*, Minda Harts’s *The Memo*, and Susan Stryker’s *Transgender History*. 
Feminists have long challenged the ways in which men tend to sexualize women. But pioneering activist, biologist, and trans woman Julia Serano argues that sexualization is a far more pervasive problem, as it’s something that we all do to other people, often without being aware of it.

Why do we perceive men as sexual predators and women as sexual objects? Why are LGBTQ+ people stereotyped as being sexually indiscriminate and deceptive? Why are people of color still being hypersexualized? These stereotypes push minorities farther into the margins, and even the privileged are policed from transgressing, lest they also become targets.

Many view sexualization as a mere component of sexism, racism, or queerphobia, but Serano argues that liberation from sexual violence comes through collectively confronting sexualization itself.

JULIA SERANO is the author of four books, including the acclaimed modern classic Whipping Girl. Her writing has been published in the New York Times, the Guardian, TIME, Salon, Out, and Bitch. Serano holds a PhD in biochemistry from Columbia University. She lives in Oakland, California.
A renowned judge wonders: What would criminal justice look like if we put respect at the center?

The Black and Latina daughter of a working-class family, Victoria Pratt learned to treat everyone with dignity, no matter their background. When she became Newark Municipal Court’s chief judge, she knew well the inequities that poor, mentally ill, Black, and brown people faced in the criminal justice system. Pratt’s reforms transformed her courtroom into a place for problem-solving and a resource for healing. She assigned essays to defendants so that the court could understand their hardships and kept people out of jail through alternative sentencing and nonprofit partnerships. She became the judge of second chances, because she knew too few get a first one.

With a foreword from Senator Cory Booker, The Power of Dignity shows how we can transform courtrooms, neighborhoods, and our nation to support the vulnerable and heal community rifts. That’s the power of dignity.

JUDGE VICTORIA PRATT
served as the chief judge of the Newark Municipal Court, is a professor at the Newark School of Criminal Justice, and has taught at the Rutgers School of Law. Her TED talk, “How Judges Can Show Respect,” has been viewed over thirty million times. She lives in Montclair, New Jersey.
On a Saturday in New York City in 1912, around the wooden tables of a popular Greenwich Village restaurant, a group of women gathered, all of them convinced that they were going to change the world.

It was the first meeting of “Heterodoxy,” a secret social club. Its members were passionate advocates of free love, equal marriage, and easier divorce. They were socialites and socialists; reformers and revolutionaries; artists, writers, and scientists. Their club, at the heart of America’s bohemia, was a springboard for parties, performances, and radical politics. But it was the women’s extraordinary friendships that made their unconventional lives possible, as they supported each other in pushing for a better world.

Hotbed is the never-before-told story of the bold women whose audacious ideas and unruly acts transformed a feminist agenda into a modern way of life.

JOANNA SCUTTS is a literary critic, historian, and author of The Extra Woman. She has written for the New York Times, Washington Post, New Yorker, and the Paris Review series “Feminize Your Canon.” She holds a PhD from Columbia University and lives in New York.
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LARA HEIMERT
PUBLISHER,
BASIC BOOKS & SEAL PRESS
p: 212-364-0669
e: lara.heimert@hbgusa.com

Lara Heimert joined Basic Books in 2005. Previously, she was publisher of the trade division at Yale University Press. She has published numerous prize-winning and New York Times bestselling titles. Highlights include Edward Baptist’s The Half Has Never Been Told, Eugene Rogan’s The Fall of the Ottomans, Timothy Snyder’s Bloodlands, Bee Wilson’s Consider the Fork, Victor Davis Hanson’s The Second World Wars, and Neil Price’s Children of Ash and Elm. A graduate of Princeton University, Lara acquires primarily in the field of history, broadly conceived—from world wars to marginalia, from culinary history to political theory, from diaspora to doodles.

THOMAS KELLEHER
ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER & EDITORIAL DIRECTOR,
SCIENCES
p: 212-364-0657
e: thomas.kelleher@hbgusa.com

Thomas Kelleher joined Basic Books in 2009, and publishes predominantly in science, mathematics, and economics. He has published Eric Topol, Sherry Turkle, Edward Frenkel, Thor Hanson, Eugenia Cheng, and Leonard Susskind, among many others. Recent highlights include Azra Raza’s The First Cell, Julian Barbour’s The Janus Point, Stephon Alexander’s Fear of a Black Universe, Adam Becker’s What Is Real?, Beth Shapiro’s Life as We Made It, Rob Dunn’s A Natural History of the Future, and Sabine Hossenfelder’s Lost in Math. He is also responsible for the publishing program surrounding The Feynman Lectures on Physics.

BRIAN J. DISTELBERG
EDITIORAL DIRECTOR,
HISTORY & SOCIAL SCIENCES
p: 212-364-0655
e: brian.distelberg@hbgusa.com

Brian J. Distelberg joined Basic Books in 2015 and acquires primarily in history. Books he has edited and published include Martha Jones’s Vanguard, Peniel Joseph’s The Sword and the Shield, Martyn Rady’s The Habsburgs, Edward Watts’s Mortal Republic, Walter Johnson’s The Broken Heart of America, Erika Lee’s America for Americans, and Alice Baumgartner’s South to Freedom. He also publishes a select number of books in politics and law; highlights include Jonathan Metzl’s Dying of Whiteness and Jonathan Sacks’s Morality. Brian worked previously at Harvard University Press and holds a PhD in US history from Yale University.
MEET THE EDITORS

EMMA BERRY
SENIOR EDITOR,
BASIC BOOKS & SEAL PRESS
p: 212-364-0542
e: emma.berry@hbgusa.com

Claire Potter joined Basic Books and Seal Press in 2019. On the Basic list, she acquires broadly in the field of history, as well as biography, literary studies, and Classics. Books she has edited and published include Peter Fritzsche’s Hitler’s First Hundred Days, Virginia Postrel’s The Fabric of Civilization, Wendy Moore’s No Man’s Land, Judith Flanders’s A Place for Everything, and Leslie Brody’s Sometimes You Have to Lie. Her forthcoming Basic titles include works by Dan Berger, Ellen Carol DuBois, Joan DeJean, Maurice Isserman, and Robert Zaretsky. On the Seal list, she publishes social history, group biography, theory, and queer studies, with an emphasis on feminist modes of scholarship, works of literary quality, and original voices. Her forthcoming Seal titles include books by Grace Lavery, Kellie Carter Jackson, and Joanna Scutts. Before joining Basic, she worked at Crown, where she acquired and edited books including The Whiteness of Wealth by Dorothy Brown and Let the Lord Sort Them by Maurice Chammah.

EMI IKKANDA
SENIOR EDITOR,
SEAL PRESS
p: 212-364-0666
e: emi.ikkanda@hbgusa.com

Emi Ikkanda joined Seal Press in 2019. She previously worked as an editor at Spiegel & Grau and at Henry Holt & Company. She acquires books on current and global affairs, social issues, race, LGBTQ+, feminism, parenting, humor, history, business, politics, tech, and science. Recent standout titles include #1 New York Times bestselling author Ijeoma Oluo’s Mediocre, Karla Cornejo Villavicencio’s National Book Award finalist The Undocumented Americans, Minda Harts’s Right Within, Ellen Pao’s narrative of her Silicon Valley gender discrimination case Reset, Julia Angwin’s New York Times bestseller about online surveillance Dragnet Nation, and NASA Astronaut Nicole Stott’s Back to Earth.

EMILY BERRY
SENIOR EDITOR,
BASIC BOOKS & SEAL PRESS
p: 212-364-0542
e: emma.berry@hbgusa.com

Emma Berry joined Basic Books in 2020 and acquires in law, psychology, medicine, and the social sciences, with a particular interest in feminism and queer studies. Forthcoming acquisitions include Steve Vladeck’s The Shadow Docket, Jedediah Purdy’s Two Cheers for Politics, and June Thomas’s untitled book on lesbian spaces. Before joining Basic, she was an editor at Crown, where she acquired and edited books including The Whiteness of Wealth by Dorothy Brown and Let the Lord Sort Them by Maurice Chammah.
MEET THE EDITORS

KYLE GIPSON
ASSOCIATE EDITOR,
BASIC BOOKS & SEAL PRESS
p: 212-364-0633
e: kyle.gipson@hbgusa.com

Kyle Gipson joined Basic Books in 2021 and primarily acquires in history, biography, and the social sciences, with a particular interest in African American studies, gender and sexuality studies, and social justice. Kyle worked previously at Johns Hopkins University Press, the MIT Press, and Beacon Press. He holds an MA in English from Harvard University, where his studies focused on African American literature.

MARISSA KOORS
ASSOCIATE EDITOR,
BASIC BOOKS & SEAL PRESS
p: 212-364-0658
e: marissa.koors@hbgusa.com

Marissa Koors joined Basic Books in 2021, and acquires primarily in philosophy, science, history, fashion, internet culture, and technology and society. She also acquires selectively in theology and religious studies. Before joining Basic, she was the philosophy editor at Wiley Blackwell, an imprint of John Wiley and Sons, where she acquired and published books by Peter Singer, Peter Hacker, Ernest Sosa, Susan Schneider, Alister McGrath, Antony Kenny, and Timothy Williamson.