Field Notes 4: Summer Edition

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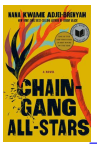
> Welcome to Field Notes, a series from the Reconciliation & Inclusion team, offering curated resources to support deeper learning and inclusive practices across Seneca Polytechnic. Each issue will feature a bespoke collection of resources — such as books, TV shows and events — that the team has personally engaged with, reflected on and found meaningful in our own learning.

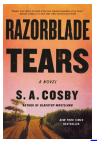
Read **Watch** **Local Favourites** **Other Recommendations**

Read



Chain-Gang All-Stars by Nana Kwame Adjei-Brenyah
In a near-future America, prisoners fight to the death for a shot at freedom in a brutal televised sport. Two women rise through the ranks, bound by love and survival, as they challenge a system built on violence and spectacle.

> **Why**: A piece of speculative fiction that is a commentary on the current prison system. Women and men fighting, literally, for their freedom. A mash up of Gladiator meets Hunger Games.



Razorblade Tears by S.A. Cosby
Two ex-convict fathers are brought together by the murder of their sons, who were in a same-sex relationship. United by grief, guilt over their strained relationships, and a need for justice, they embark on a journey that forces them to confront their pasts and challenge their biases.

> **Why**: An action-packed story that explores racism and homophobia through redemption and identity.



What Strange Paradise by Omar El-Akkad
A young Syrian boy named Amir is the only survivor of a shipwreck that was carrying him and other Arab migrants. He washes up on an island and meets Vanna, a local girl that dedicates herself to bringing him to safety.

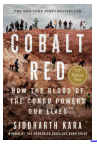
> **Why**: The story alternates between 'before' and 'after', telling the story of Amir's life and follows him and Vanna. It explores how empathy, hope and humanitarianism can blind us to reality.





The City We Became by N.K. Jemsin
In a world where cities come alive through human avatars, New York awakens to find itself under attack. As five boroughs take human form, they must unite to defend their city from a mysterious force threatening to erase its soul.

> **Why**: Cities are defined by their people. When each of the boroughs of New York "wake up" to fend off threats of hate, five people, reflective of their borough find out they have gifts. This book seamlessly weaves identity and lived experiences together.



Cobalt Red: How the Blood of the Congo Powers Our Lives by Siddharth Kara
Beneath the surface of our smartphones and electric cars lies a truth. In the cobalt mines of the Congo, children and families risk their lives to fuel the global tech economy. This urgent expose reveals the human cost behind the devices we use every day.

> **Why**: The Congo is a complex place in the world and has the highest concentration of cobalt needed in almost all our electronics. The class struggle of how the poorest miners dig and struggle for us to have phones.



Her First Palestinian by Saeed Teebi
A collection of short stories written by a Palestinian Canadian writer, that weave together the diverse yet collective experiences and identities of Palestinians living in Toronto.

> **Why**: Each story is well crafted with unique characters, complex emotional journey and tell the stories of the immigrant experience through place, identity and family dynamics.

Watch



Prime's ***It's A Sin***
A series on life during the AIDs crisis in Britian.

> **Why**: A story of love, friendship and holding each other close in times of Peril.



CBC's ***Kim's Convenience***
A must-see Toronto based sit-com that follows the adventures of a Korean Family running their store.

Why: Watching firsthand the expectations and love of immigrant families, and their children provide context to our community of international students.



CBC's ***For the Culture with Amanda Parris***
An adventurous, insightful and personal documentary series where Amanda goes on a revelatory journey into some of the most important stories impacting Black people around the world.

Why: Black Canadian creator and content.

Local Favourites

Bellwoods Books
784 College St., Toronto

A Toronto bookshop that curates vintage, secondhand and rare books and focuses on beautiful and uncommon editions.

Why: The shop specializes in women writers from diverse backgrounds and has selection in literature, poetry, psychology, gender/sexuality, feminism and more. The owner, Julie, is knowledgeable and gives great recommendations.

Dai Bi Chay
2399 Cawthra Rd. #100, Mississauga

Dai Bi Chay is a Vietnamese vegetarian restaurant in Mississauga that serves traditional dishes, such as phở, spicy noodle soup and handmade vegan drumsticks rooted in cultural authenticity.

Why: The restaurant highlights the spiritual and cultural values of Buddhism through plant-based cuisine. Some of our favourite dishes include vegetarian rice rolls and the mixed vegetables hot pot.

Lil E Coffee Cafe
2 St Clair Ave. W #107, Toronto

Lil E Coffee Cafe in Toronto is a not-for-profit café dedicated to providing meaningful employment opportunities to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, empowering them with life skills and work experience.

Why: Lil E Coffee Cafe is a great choice because it serves quality drinks while championing inclusivity by empowering individuals with disabilities.

Other Recommendations

Taste of Vietnam
100 Queen St. W., Toronto
Thursday, July 24 – Saturday, July 26

This three-day festival in Toronto showcases traditional Vietnamese music, dance and fashion, alongside authentic street food and artisan markets.

Why: You can learn more about Vietnamese heritage through the Ao Dai parade and the cultural fashion show, which showcases clothing from different regions, such as the Hmong ethnic minority and elegant silk dresses of central Vietnam.

Royal Ontario Museum (ROM): Auschwitz exhibit
100 Queens Park, Toronto

The featured exhibition at the ROM this summer is Auschwitz. It invites visitors to explore the social and political landscape in Europe prior to the camp's creation, see objects and archival records and understand their role in creating a more inclusive society.

Why: Support this exhibition to ensure quality programming keeps coming back. Take advantage of free admission on the third Tuesday night of each month from 4 to 8:30 p.m. Students can save 15 per cent off regular admission rates when you buy your ticket online and enter the promo code: **SSFINC**

The Reconciliation & Inclusion team knows the best learning happens in conversation. Let us know if you explore any of the resources above, or if there's something you'd recommend we include in future editions. Share your thoughts and suggestions in the comments, or email us at ri@senecapolytechnic.ca.

tags : field-notes, ri-news, student-news