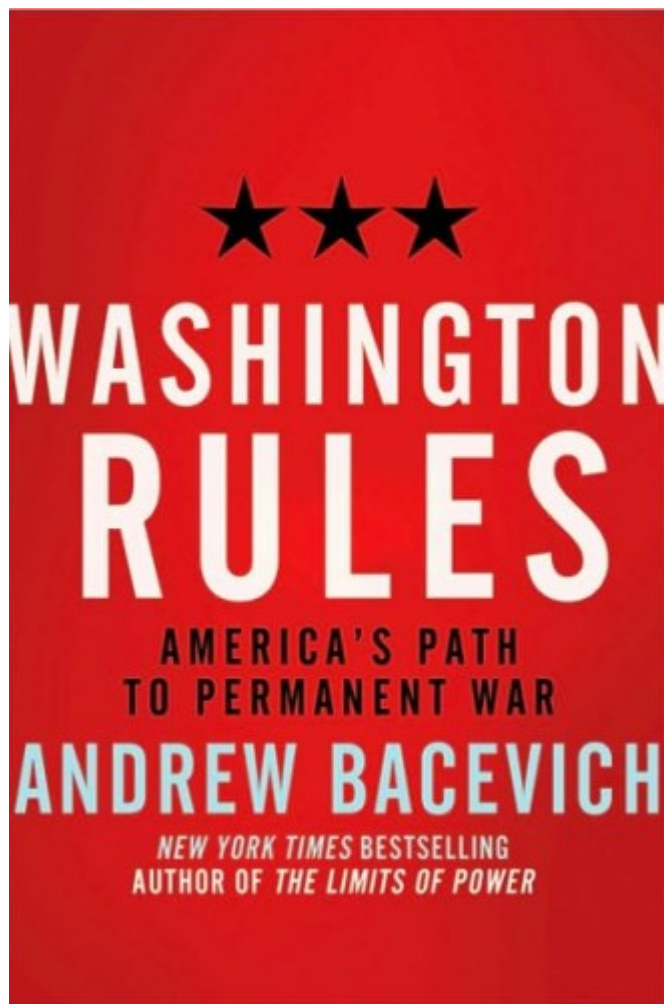


# CC recommends: History & current events

selected by [David Heim](#) and [Richard A. Kauffman](#)

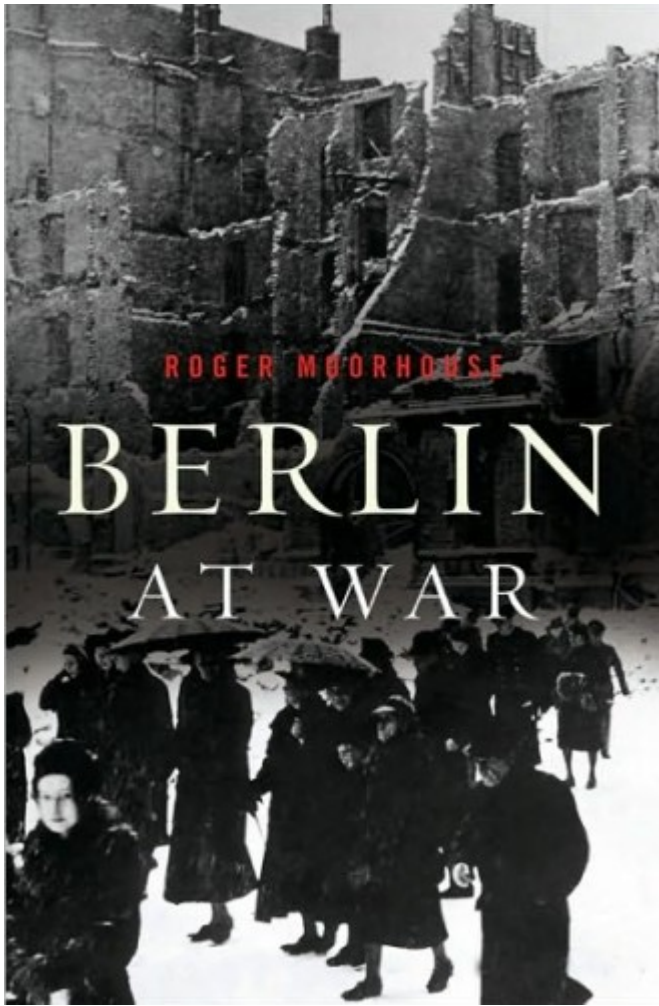
This review appears in the [December 14, 2010](#) issue.

## In Review



## Washington Rules

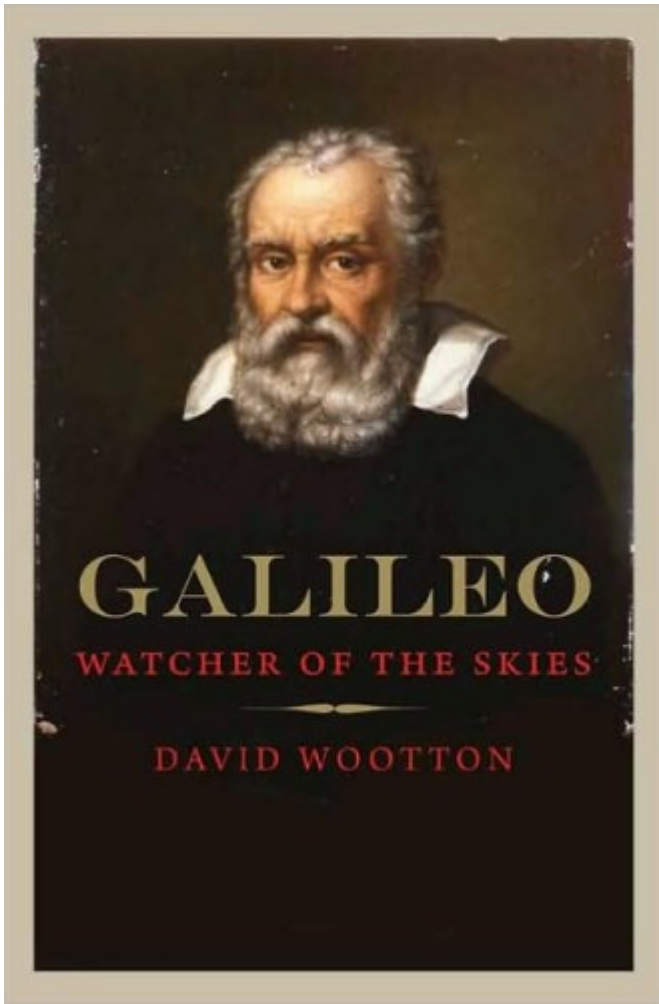
By Andrew J. Bacevich  
Metropolitan



## **Berlin at War**

By Roger Moorhouse

Basic Books



## **Galileo**

By David Wootton  
Yale University Press

**Thomas Geoghegan**

*Author of Which Side Are You On?*

**WERE YOU**

**BORN ON**

**THE WRONG**

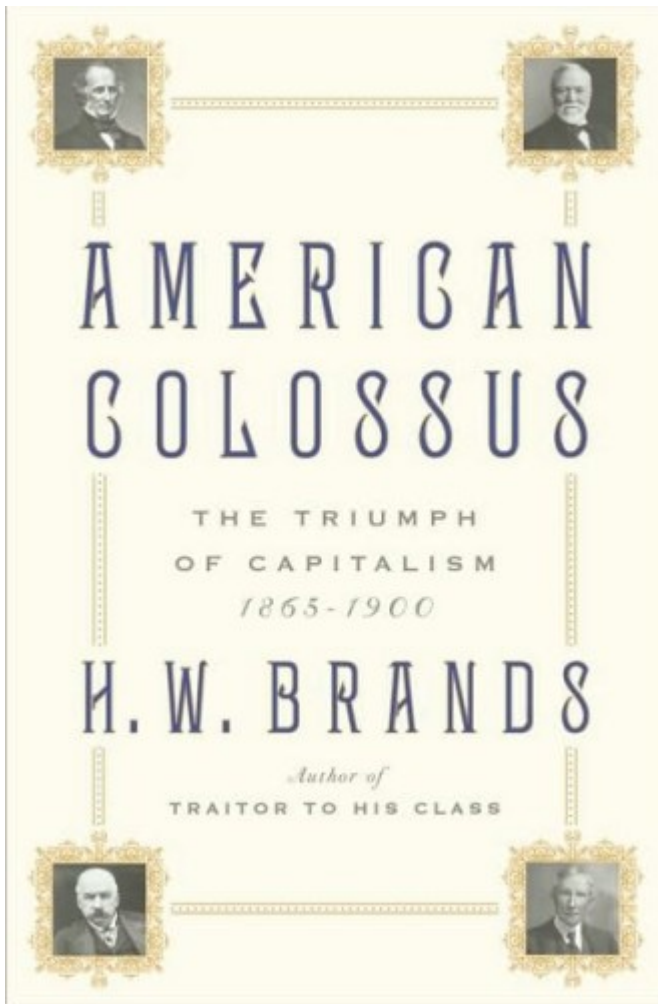
**CONTINENT?**

**How the European Model  
Can Help You Get a Life**

## **Were You Born on the Wrong Continent?**

By Thomas Geoghegan

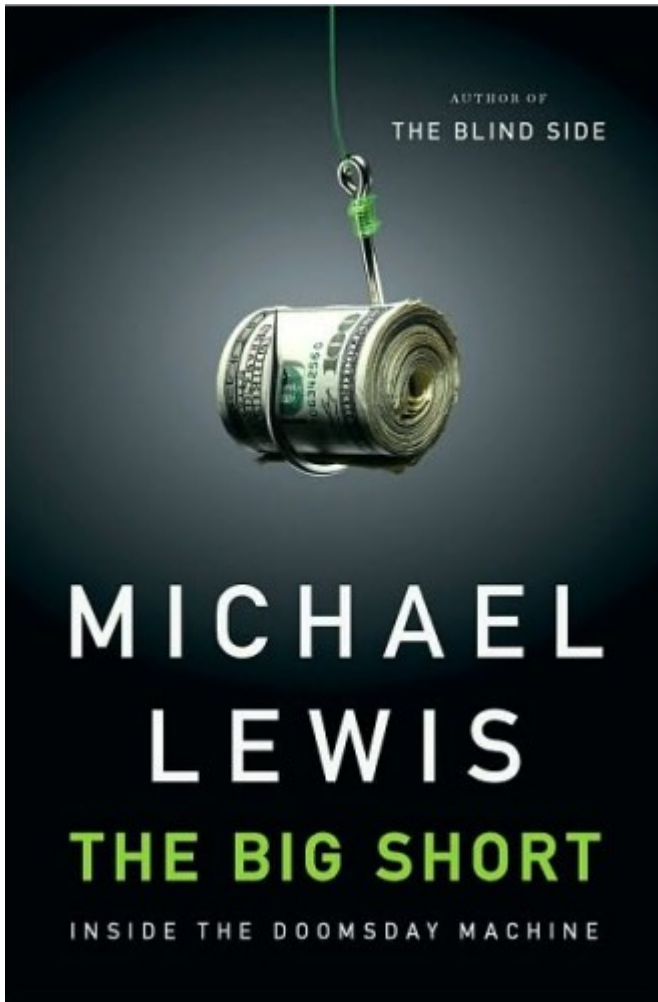
New Press



## **American Colossus**

By H. W. Brands

Doubleday



## The Big Short

By Michael Lewis  
Norton

Andrew Bacevich, *Washington Rules: America's Path to Permanent War*. Bacevich is heir to Reinhold Niebuhr as a realist commentator on American foreign policy. Bacevich argues that not much changes from one presidential administration to the next. The consensus view is that the U.S. should have a permanent armed presence around the world so that it can intervene in the affairs of other countries on short notice. But U.S. dominance around the world is fading, and that provides an opportunity for national reflection about the country's role in the world. Fixing Afghanistan shouldn't take priority over fixing Detroit.

Roger Moorhouse, *Berlin at War*. Hundreds of books have been written about the Nazi regime and what happened to the Jews under Hitler, but few books have been

written about what life was like for ordinary Germans during that time. Using diaries, memoirs and interviews, Moorhouse gives an account of daily life in the capital, which despite the Nazis remained something of a liberal city. More Jews survived in underground Berlin than in any other city in Hitler's Reich. Yet it attracted more air raids than any other German city and experienced a devastating land assault by the Soviet army, suffering more civilian losses than any other city in western or central Europe.

David Wootton, *Galileo: Watcher of the Skies*. Galileo was one of the first to recognize the importance of the telescope and was a founder of modern science. Yet he was not an avid experimentalist and tended to favor deductive over experimental science. Wootton argues that he had become a Copernican much earlier than usually claimed, and he comes to the controversial conclusion that Galileo was not the orthodox Christian the Catholic Church says he was. Wootton draws heavily on Galileo's letters, many of which were self-censored.

Thomas Geoghegan, *Were You Born on the Wrong Continent? How the European Model Can Help You Get a Life*. To be called a "European socialist" is a political smear these days, but Geoghegan, a Chicago labor lawyer, offers a spirited defense of the European political model. He focuses on Germany, a country that is more competitive in the global market than the U.S. and that offers its workers much more in wages, health care, education, pensions and vacations than comparable U.S. workers get. It turns out, Geoghegan says, that the Europeans beat us at both capitalism and socialism. They enjoy a high standard of living, work less and get six weeks of vacation besides. What's not to like?

H. W. Brands, *American Colossus: The Triumph of Capitalism, 1865-1900*. Brands takes in the varied elements of a transformative era, when wage labor replaced slave labor in the South, men like J. P. Morgan and Andrew Carnegie amassed unprecedented wealth and power, and the industrial age took off. It's a timely reminder of how market forces shaped the modern world—forces that we are still trying to comprehend and tame in our politics.

Michael Lewis, *The Big Short: Inside the Doomsday Machine*. The nation seems to want to forget the stock market crash and the near collapse of the banking industry in 2008. It's easy to move on when you never understood what happened in the first place. Lewis explains the financial crisis not by recounting policies and numbers but by telling the personal stories of some key players in the derivative markets, like the one-eyed money manager who, "on March 19, 2005, alone in his office . . . got an

idea: credit default swaps on subprime mortgage bonds."