

## American Literature & Honors American Literature

### WELCOME CLASS OF 2017!

The summer reading folder below has been updated! Please choose any book from that list for your summer reading. Try to find something you like - if you start something and hate it, feel free to switch. :)

For now, you can ignore the warning at the top of the list about a paper. You won't be writing anything about your book for now, but we may be using the summer reading books for a paper later in the year. Because of that, it may be a good idea to take strong notes while you read so you won't have to reread the book later in the year.

### SUMMER READING CLARIFICATION

You ONLY have to read a book from the list below. You DO NOT have to read *Death of a Salesman* or *A Raisin in the Sun* OR write an essay.

JUST choose a book and take notes. And enjoy August. :)

If you have any questions, please feel free to email me!

### Book List

#### Warnings:

- (1) I have read every book on this list, so do not try to get away with reading a synopsis – I will know. ;)
- (2) You may select the same book as another student, but if you do, I will have another paper to compare to your work, so choose carefully.

**Moby Dick** by Herman Melville (1851): A monomaniacal captain with a vendetta against a white whale refuses to accept defeat

**Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl** by Harriet Jacobs (1861): A first-person account of a slave girl's struggles and sacrifices

**The Red Badge of Courage** by Stephen Crane (1895): Ashamed of fleeing from battle, a Civil War soldier longs to become a hero

**Ethan Frome** by Edith Wharton (1911): Worn down by his sickly wife's caviling, Ethan Frome falls in love with another woman

**The Age of Innocence** by Edith Wharton (1920): Edith Wharton's apology for *House of Mirth*, this story offers another perspective of upper-class romance and expectations

**The Beautiful and Damned** by F. Scott Fitzgerald (1922): Believed to be based on Fitzgerald's relationship with his wife, this book describes the tumultuous relationship of a wealthy young couple

**The Great Gatsby** by F. Scott Fitzgerald (1925): Bewitched by a past love, Gatsby goes to great lengths to impress the one that got away

**The Sound and the Fury** by William Faulkner (1929): This book provides a profound glimpse into the inner workings of the human mind in the context of the Reconstruction era South

**As I Lay Dying** by William Faulkner (1930): Forced to transport their mother's dead body to her family burial plot, a poor family faces a series of obstacles, physical, emotional, and moral

**Absalom, Absalom!** by William Faulkner (1936): A Harvard student recounts the tale of three Southern families to his roommate

**Gone with the Wind** by Margaret Mitchell (1936): The coming-of-age story of a spoiled Southern belle who grows up during and after the Civil War

**In Dubious Battle** by John Steinbeck (1936): The tale of a group of laborers protesting in Great Depression era California

**The Grapes of Wrath** by John Steinbeck (1939): Displaced by the Dust Bowl, a poor farming family seeks hope in California

**Native Son** by Richard Wright (1940): When a moment of panic leads to disaster, a young black man must avoid capture

**A Tree Grows in Brooklyn** by Betty Smith (1943): A third-generation American girl copes with issues of ethnicity and impoverishment in the early 1900s

**Black Boy** by Richard Wright (1945): A memoir of a black boy's Southern childhood and eventual move to Chicago

**A Streetcar Named Desire** by Tennessee Williams (1947): A fading Southern belle visits her sister in New Orleans and is shocked by the urban atmosphere

**The Catcher in the Rye** by J.D. Salinger (1951): A troubled teenage boy roams around New York City to forestall telling his parents he was kicked out of boarding school

**Invisible Man** by Ralph Ellison (1952): The story of a black man's journey to self-discovery in a world that doesn't see him

**Nine Stories** by J.D. Salinger (1953): A collection of short stories, a number of which focus on members of the Glass family

**Lolita** by Vladimir Nabokov (1955): An imprisoned pedophile tells his love story

**Cat on a Hot Tin Roof** by Tennessee Williams (1955): A juicy family drama where secrets and lies abound

**A Separate Peace** by John Knowles (1959): A wartime coming-of-age novel that follows a pair of best friends at an all-boys boarding school

**A Raisin in the Sun** by Lorraine Hansberry (1959): A play about a black family in Chicago with competing ideas of success.

**Flowers for Algernon** by Daniel Keyes (1959): A mentally disabled man receives the gift of intelligence when he serves as a test subject for a potential medical solution

**Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?** by Edward Albee (1962): A dysfunctional older couple invites a young couple to the house and spend the entire night airing their dirty laundry

**One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest** by Ken Kesey (1962): The story of the inmates of a psychiatric institution

**The Bell Jar** by Sylvia Plath (1963): The story of a young woman's struggles with clinical depression

**Slaughterhouse-Five** by Kurt Vonnegut (1969): A satirical novel about a World War II veteran and his battle with post-traumatic stress disorder

**I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings** by Maya Angelou (1969): The memoir of a young black girl who went on to become a famous poet

**The Bluest Eye** by Toni Morrison (1970): A young black girl's struggles with society's beauty standards push her to the edge

**The Color Purple** by Alice Walker (1982): A story about a woman's struggles with race and sexuality

**Beloved** by Toni Morrison (1987): The heartbreaking tale of a slave returned to her owners under the Fugitive Slave Law

**The Secret History** (1992): A group of college Greek students engage in a secret ritual that spirals out of control

**Oleanna** by David Mamet (1992): A play about a female college student and her male professor, this story tackles the issues of sexual harassment and political correctness

**Angela's Ashes** by Frank McCourt (1996): A poor Irish Catholic boy details his family's struggles to make it from day to day

**The Poisonwood Bible** by Barbara Kingsolver (1998): A family of missionaries – led by an irascible patriarch – relocates to Africa to spread Christianity, but their stay is more difficult than they anticipated

**The Kite Runner** by Khaled Hosseini (2003): The story of a young Afghani boy and his best friend – a servant boy – set against the background of a war-torn country

**A Thousand Splendid Suns** by Khaled Hosseini (2007): Exposes the brutal oppression of women in Afghanistan through the story of a woman and her husband's new wife

**The Help** by Kathryn Stockett (2009): It's the 1960s, and tensions are still high between blacks and whites in Jackson, Mississippi – despite the continued racial divide, a young white lady and a group of black servants come together to reveal the truth about life in Jackson

**And the Mountains Echoed** by Khaled Hosseini (2013): A series of love stories (romantic and otherwise) spanning from Afghanistan to the United States show the universality of human nature

**The Glass Castle** by Jeannette Walls (2006): A remarkable memoir of resilience and redemption and a revelatory look into a family at once deeply dysfunctional and uniquely vibrant