

2017 Summer Reading for Greenville Technical Charter High School
Contact Cara Mathis: 250-8844 or cmathis@gtchs.org

Dear GTCHS students,

In addition to *Ready Player One*, our school-wide summer reading, all students at GTCHS are provided summer reading assignments as part of their English requirements. Students should read the novel assigned for the English course they will take during the 2017-2018 school year. Summer reading will be assessed in English classes upon students' return to school in August 2017.

Happy reading and enjoy your summer!

Cara Mathis
English Department Chair
Greenville Technical Charter High School

English I: *Animal Farm* by George Orwell (Please see assignment)

About the novel:

- As ferociously fresh as it was more than a half century ago, this remarkable allegory of a downtrodden society of overworked, mistreated animals and their quest to create a paradise of progress, justice, and equality is one of the most scathing satires ever published. As readers witness the rise and bloody fall of the revolutionary animals, they begin to recognize the seeds of totalitarianism in the most idealistic organization—and in the most charismatic leaders, the souls of the cruelest oppressors (Amazon.com).
- *Animal Farm* is an allegory, which is a simple, straightforward story that has another, deeper meaning and is rich with many layers of thought. Allegories are written in the form of fables, parables, poems, stories, and almost any other style or genre. An allegory is a literary work in which characters, events, objects, and ideas have secondary or symbolic meanings. The difference between an allegory and a symbol is that an allegory is a complete narrative that conveys abstract ideas to get a point across, while a symbol is a representation of an idea or concept that can have a different meaning throughout a literary work.

Assignment:

- In the third week of school, we will have a Socratic seminar on *Animal Farm*. You should have TYPED answers to the questions below and be prepared to have an academic, full class discussion about these questions; your participation in the discussion will be count as your first major grade of the school year.
 - Is man really the root of the animals' problems?
 - How does *Animal Farm* help us understand deception and propaganda in our world today?
 - Using the pigs as an example, do you think that greed and wanting power are part of human nature?
 - What about the other animals—are fear and gullibility part of human nature?
 - Are the animals on *Animal Farm* willing to die for their ideals? What makes a person willing to die for a cause? Would you die for your country? At what point is service to one's country an illogical act?
 - What would happen if all the animals were as educated as the pigs? How would our world change if everyone was highly educated?
 - What is the role of the idea of Sugar Candy Mountain and what might this idea symbolize in our world today?
 - What did *Animal Farm* teach you about society?

English II: *The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak (Please see Ms. Moreira's website for assignment)

It's just a small story really, about among other things: a girl, some words, an accordionist, some fanatical Germans, a Jewish fist-fighter, and quite a lot of thievery. . . .

Set during World War II in Germany, Markus Zusak's groundbreaking new novel is the story of Liesel Meminger, a foster girl living outside of Munich. Liesel scratches out a meager existence for herself by stealing when she encounters something she can't resist—books. With the help of her accordion-playing foster father, she learns to read and shares her stolen books with her neighbors during bombing raids as well as with the Jewish man hidden in her basement before he is marched to Dachau.

This is an unforgettable story about the ability of books to feed the soul (www.goodreads.com).

English II Honors: *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe (Assessment will be assigned in class)

Things Fall Apart tells two overlapping, intertwining stories, both of which center around Okonkwo, a “strong man” of an Ibo village in Nigeria. The first of these stories traces Okonkwo's fall from grace with the tribal world in which he lives, and in its classical purity of line and economical beauty it provides us with a powerful fable about the immemorial conflict between the individual and society.

The second story, which is as modern as the first is ancient, and which elevates the book to a tragic plane, concerns the clash of cultures and the destruction of Okonkwo's world through the arrival of aggressive, proselytizing European missionaries. These twin dramas are perfectly harmonized, and they are modulated by an awareness capable of encompassing at once the life of nature, human history, and the mysterious compulsions of the soul. *Things Fall Apart* is the most illuminating and permanent monument we have to the modern African experience as seen from within (www.goodreads.com).

English III: *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald (Please see Ms. Mathis' website for assignment)

The Great Gatsby is one of the great classics of American twentieth-century literature. F. Scott Fitzgerald's third book, it stands as the supreme achievement of his career. The story of the fabulously wealthy Jay Gatsby, his love for the beautiful Daisy Buchanan, and his lavish parties on Long Island is an exquisitely crafted tale of America in the 1920s (Amazon.com).

Graphic organizers and a writing assignment are found in the Summer Reading section on Ms. Mathis' website. All summer reading assignments are due on the first day of class.

English III Honors: *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* by Thomas C. Foster AND *The Poisonwood Bible* by Barbara Kingsolver (Please see Ms. Mathis' website for assignment)

How to Read Literature Like a Professor: What does it mean when a fictional hero takes a journey? Shares a meal? Gets drenched in a sudden rain shower? Often, there is much more going on in a novel or poem than is readily visible on the surface -- a symbol, maybe, that remains elusive, or an unexpected twist on a character -- and there's that sneaking suspicion that the deeper meaning of a literary text keeps escaping you.

In this practical and amusing guide to literature, Thomas C. Foster shows how easy and gratifying it is to unlock those hidden truths, and to discover a world where a road leads to a quest; a shared meal may signify a communion; and rain, whether cleansing or destructive, is never just rain. Ranging from major themes to literary models, narrative devices, and form, *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* is the perfect companion for making your reading experience more enriching, satisfying, and fun (www.goodreads.com).

The Poisonwood Bible: *The Poisonwood Bible* is a story told by the wife and four daughters of Nathan Price, a fierce, evangelical Baptist who takes his family and mission to the Belgian Congo in 1959. They carry with them everything they believe they will need from home, but soon find that all of it -- from garden seeds to Scripture -- is calamitously transformed on African soil. What follows is a suspenseful epic of one family's tragic undoing and remarkable reconstruction over the course of three decades in postcolonial Africa (www.goodreads.com).

Graphic organizers and a writing assignment are found in the Summer Reading section on Ms. Mathis' website. All summer reading assignments are due on the first day of class.

English IV: *Grendel* by John Gardner (Assessment will be assigned in class)

Grendel is a beautiful and heartbreaking modern retelling of *Beowulf* from the point of view of the monster, Grendel, the villain of the 8th-century Anglo-Saxon epic. This book benefits from both of Gardner's careers: in addition to his work as a novelist, Gardner was a noted professor of medieval literature and a scholar of ancient languages (Amazon.com).