

Evangelical Christian Academy
AP English Summer Reading
2011 Annotated Reading List

Required Reading: *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini.

Supplemental Reading List (16):

*Augustine, St.: *On Two Cities*: Book XI begins the second part of *The City of God*, where Augustine describes the doctrine of the two cities, one earthly and one heavenly. In the next three books he details how these two cities came about, based on his reading of the Bible. The next four books explain the prehistory of the city of heaven, from Genesis to the age of Solomon, whose story is allegorized as Christ and the church. In book XVIII, Augustine undertakes a similar process of portraying the prehistory of the city of the world, from Abraham to the Old Testament prophets. Augustine focuses on how the two cities will end in book XIX, and in the process he outlines the nature of the supreme good. He emphasizes the idea that the peace and happiness found in the heavenly city can also be experienced here on earth. Book XX deals with the Last Judgment and the evidence found for it in the Bible. Augustine continues with this theme in book XXI and describes the eternal punishment of the damned, arguing that it is not a myth. The final book, book XXII, tells of the end of the city of God, after which the saved will be given eternal happiness and will become immortal.

Faulkner, William: *The Sound and the Fury*. This book follows the lives and passions of the Compsons: a once-proud Southern family now just barely scraping by both financially and emotionally. Howard passes the time in a bottle; his brother Bengy is child in a man's body; sister Caddy has come crawling home after years of being kept by a string of "admirers". Only Jason, the cruel, cold-hearted adopted head of the family, and Quentin, who was abandoned at birth by Caddy, have the fire and the fury needed to put the family back on its feet again
Hansberry.

Golden, Arthur: *Memoirs of a Geisha*. In 1929, an impoverished nine-year-old named Chiyo is sold to a geisha house in Kyoto's Gion district and subjected to cruel treatment from the owners and the head geisha Hatsumomo. Her stunning beauty attracts the vindictive jealousy in Hatsumomo and she is rescued by Hatsumomo's bitter rival, Mameha. Under Mameha's mentorship, Chiyo becomes the geisha named Sayuri, trained in all the artistic and social skills a geisha must master in order to survive in her society. As a renowned geisha, she enters a society of wealth, privilege, and political intrigue.

Hansberry, Lorraine: *A Raisin in the Sun*. This play was produced in New York city in 1959. Hansberry creates the story of the Youngers, a struggling African-American family whose members deal with poverty, racism, and painful conflict among themselves as they reach for a better life. The Youngers are, in my opinion, one of the most unforgettable families in American literature. Hansberry balances grim drama, comic moments, and redemptive love as the play unfolds.

Hugo, Victor: *Les Miserables*. Story of Jean-Valjean, a convict struggling to escape his past, that became a gospel for the poor and oppressed.

Joyce, James: *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. Stephen Dedalus is a young man growing up in Ireland in the early part of the 20th century. His search for knowledge and understanding, and the decline of his family's circumstances, lead him to revelations on the nature of art and politics. His personal renaissance makes him feel unwelcome in his own nation, and forces him to decide whether to leave and accept exile, or to stay and fight.

Kingsolver, Barb. *The Poisonwood Bible*. The drama of a U.S. missionary family in Africa during a war of decolonization. At its center is Nathan Price, a self-righteous Baptist minister who establishes a mission in a village in 1959 Belgian Congo. The resulting clash of cultures is seen through the eyes of his wife and his four daughters.

Logan, Ben. *The Land Remembers*. This is a story about a farm and its people, of a hilltop world in the 1930s in southwestern Wisconsin. Ben Logan grew up on a farm with his three brothers, father, mother, and hired hand Lyle—"the fifth Logan boy"—and marked the seasons by the demands of the land. The boys discussed and argued and joked over the events around their hilltop farm, testing each other and themselves as they learned the lessons of the farm and growing up.

McCarthy, Cormac. *The Road*. At once brutal and tender, despairing and rashly hopeful, "The Road" is a fierce and haunting meditation on the tenuous divide between civilization and savagery, and the sometimes terrifying power of filial love.

Miller, Arthur: *Death of a Salesman*. A social drama about an ageing travelling salesman who recognizes the emptiness of his life and commits suicide.

Robinson, Marilynne. *Gilead*. In 1956, toward the end of Reverend John Ames's life, he begins a letter to his young son, an account of himself and his forebears. Ames is the son of an Iowa preacher and the grandson of a minister who, as a young man in Maine, saw a vision of Christ bound in chains and came west to Kansas to fight for abolition: He "preached men into the Civil War," then, at age fifty, became a chaplain in the Union Army, losing his right eye in battle. Reverend Ames writes to his son about the tension between his father - an ardent pacifist - and his grandfather, whose pistol and bloody shirts, concealed in an army blanket, may be relics from the fight between the abolitionists and those settlers who wanted to vote Kansas into the union as a slave state. And he tells a story of the sacred bonds between fathers and sons, which are tested in his tender and strained relationship with his namesake, John Ames Boughton, his best friend's wayward son.

See, Lisa: *Snow Flower and the Secret Fan*. Coded communications eloquently detail the (literally and figuratively painful constrictions (such as foot-binding) and unexpected rewards of the traditions by which 19th century Chinese country women conducted their lives. Lily, an elderly matriarch, looks back at her intimate friendship with Snow Flower, a relationship initiated when both were seven years old with a fan Snow Flower sent to Lily. Using a special women's language called "nu shu," the two pour out their innermost feelings to one another, deepening their connection throughout the years until a betrayal divides them.

*Solzhenitsyn, Ivan: *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*. Solzhenitsyn's first book, this economical, relentless novel is one of the most forceful artistic indictments of political

oppression in the Stalin-era Soviet Union. The simply told story of a typical, grueling day of the titular character's life in a labor camp in Siberia, is a modern classic of Russian literature and quickly cemented Solzhenitsyn's international reputation upon publication in 1962. It is painfully apparent that Solzhenitsyn himself spent time in the gulags--he was imprisoned for nearly a decade as punishment for making derogatory statements about Stalin in a letter to a friend.

Tolstoy, Leo. *War and Peace*. Presents the classical epic of the Napoleonic Wars and their effects on four Russian families.

Walker, Alice: *The Color Purple*. The heart-wrenching story of a young black girl in the early 20th century who's forced into a brutal marriage and separated from her sister.

Williams, Tennessee: *The Glass Menagerie*. A strong willed woman attempts to impose her shattered dreams into the life and personality of her shy, reclusive daughter.