

Introduction to Literature/Readings in Literature

St. Mary's University/ CDH

Summer Reading: Due after Labor Day

Read two (2) books from the following list.

Pick works you have NOT read before. Pick three quotes from each book. In MLA style, write error-free, typed responses (min. 150 words each) and answer the following two questions (Total 900 words):

a) How does this quote relate to various aspects of the book, both literally and figuratively?

b) How do you relate to this quote or why did you pick it?

The Bell Jar Sylvia Plath

The Bell Jar is Plath's shocking, realistic, and intensely emotional novel of a woman falling into the grips of insanity. Set in the late 50s and early 60s, primarily in NY. Most students who read this book give it a stellar rating.

Genre: Realism/semi-autobiographical/Feminist

Brave New World Aldous Huxley

Written in the 30s, Huxley's stark warning about technological advances and government control still resonates in today's world.

Genre: Science Fiction/ Dystopian novel

A Tale of Two Cities Charles Dickens

Dickens' classic tale describes the best and worst of times during the French Revolution.

Genre: Historical fiction/ Classical literature of the Romantic Period.

Go Tell it on the Mountain James Baldwin

Baldwin's stunning first novel is an American classic that resonates through the decades.

Genre: Realism/symbolic/poetic/ African American literature.

The Pianist Wladyslaw Szpilman

Written just after his war-time experience, Szpilman's remarkable tale of survival can be inspirational to today's generation.

Genre: Memoir/ Holocaust literature/Non-fiction

The Namesake Jhumpa Lahiri

Lahiri's powerful novel addresses some of the difficulties of assimilation into US culture. The protagonist has a name he dislikes, but it leads him to discover his origins and uncover many aspects of his family's history. The author was born in the UK and raised in the US.

Genre: Coming-of Age novel/Transnational literature/ Realism

Jane Eyre Charlotte Bronte

Many writers and scholars consider this novel one of the best for young women to read today. It tells of the struggles of a young woman to find her strength through adversity.

Genre: Classical literature of the Romantic Period/ Coming-of-Age/ Feminist literature.

Beloved Toni Morrison

Voted by writers as their most inspirational novel, Morrison's tale from the American Civil War challenges and provokes readers to pay attention.

Genre: Magical Realism/tragedy/ Historical fiction.

Lord of the Flies William Golding

Placed on the Advanced Level curriculum in the UK, this symbolic novel is often read by younger readers in the US who struggle with its allegorical nature. It can be read as an adventure or as a critique of humanity's worst impulses. It remains a page-turner.

Genre: Allegory/Coming-of-age novel/symbolic

On the Road Jack Kerouac

This novel describes Kerouac's personal adventures with prose that jives in jazz riffs. Written quickly but meticulously researched, this novel tells of adventures on the road in the late 40s and early 50s.

Genre: Beat Generation/Road novel/ Unclassifiable/Postmodern/Realism

Daughter of Fortune Isabel Allende

An orphan raised in Chile, Eliza Sommers follows her lover to California during the Gold Rush of 1849. The author is one of today's foremost Latina writers, born in Peru and raised in Chile.

Genre: Historical fiction/Coming-of-age novel/Fiction in the Romantic tradition.

Questions: Contact either Dr. Sinclair-Wood or Ms. Cornett at

tsinclair-wood@c-dh.org OR jcornett@c-dh.org

- Many of these books are available from CDH for loan or from your local library.