

**Saint Francis High School
Honors American Literature
Summer Reading 2017**

Honors American Literature students are required to read John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*. Check the ISBN number when you purchase your copy so you bring to class the correct edition: 0143039431. In the first week of school, you will be tested on your understanding of the novel. The book will also be discussed in seminars and you will write a formal essay on the novel.

For the 2nd book, pick one selection from the list below.

Nathaniel Hawthorne *The House of the Seven Gables* – Greedy, piratical Colonel Pyncheon builds his mansion on ill-gotten ground, setting the stage for generations of suffering. Years later, a country cousin and an enigmatic young boarder attempt to reverse the tide of misfortunes surrounding the house in Hawthorne's evocative blend of mystery and romance

Edith Wharton *The House of Mirth* - Set against the backdrop of the 1890s New York aristocracy, focuses on how Lily Bart adjusts to traditions and conventions but resents them.

Ernest Hemingway *The Sun Also Rises* - The quintessential novel of the Lost Generation, it is a poignant look at the disillusionment and angst of the post-World War I generation. The story follows the flamboyant Brett and the hapless Jake as they journey from the wild nightlife of 1920s Paris to the brutal bullfighting rings of Spain with a motley group of expatriates.

Carson McCullers *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter* - At its center is the deaf-mute John Singer, who becomes the confidant for various types of misfits in a Georgia mill town during the 1930s. Each one yearns for escape from small town life. McCullers spins a haunting, unforgettable story that gives voice to the rejected, the forgotten, and the mistreated.

Ray Bradbury *Fahrenheit 451* - A masterwork of twentieth-century literature set in a bleak, dystopian future. Guy Montag is a fireman who starts fire rather than put them out in order to destroy the most illegal of commodities, the printed book. Montag never questions the destruction until he meets an eccentric young neighbor, Clarisse, who introduces him to a past where people didn't live in fear.

Malcolm X *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* - This has been called a "spiritual conversion narrative" since it shows the evolution of Malcolm X's influential views on black pride, black nationalism, and pan-Africanism.

Maya Angelou *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* - This 1969 autobiography about the early years of African-American writer and poet Maya Angelou illustrates how strength of character and a love of literature can help overcome racism and trauma.

Norm Maclean *A River Runs Through It* - Based on Norman Maclean's childhood experiences, *A River Runs Through It* has established itself as one of the most moving stories of our time; it captivates readers with vivid descriptions of life along Montana's Big Blackfoot River and its near magical blend of fly fishing with the troubling affections of the heart.

Erik Larsen *The Devil in the White City* - Based on real characters and events, the book is set in Chicago around 1893, telling about the architect behind the 1893 World's Fair and also about Dr. H. H. Holmes, a serial killer who lured victims to their deaths in his Murder Castle