

**Saint Francis High School
English Department
American Literature
Summer Reading 2016**

All American Literature (non-Honors) students are required to read Barbara Kingsolver's *The Bean Trees*. Check the ISBN when you purchase your copy so you bring to class the correct edition: ISBN 13: 9780062277756.

During 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, please choose one title from the provided list. For the 2nd book, you may be required to write a personal and/or creative response. During the first week of school, you will be provided with a list of guided questions for this response. Depending on your assigned teacher, there may be additional assessments. Come prepared by finishing the two books before the first class.

Choice Book List

Disclaimer: Some books have mature content and themes. Please be sure to consult a parent or guardian when making your selection.

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings by Maya Angelou

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.

McTeague by Frank Norris

This 1899 novel, set in San Francisco (a Cliff House scene is memorable), tells of a dentist who marries a woman after she wins \$5000 from a lottery ticket, but nothing goes well, greed rearing its ugly head.

A Tree Grows in Brooklyn by Betty Smith

Giving a good sense what it was like to grow up in America between 1912 and 1920, the novel focuses on Francie Nolan, who relies on her imagination and her love of reading to provide a temporary escape from poverty.

Animal Dreams by Barbara Kingsolver

A woman returns to her hometown in Arizona to help an aging father and also takes a biology teacher job at the local high school. The novel is rich in Hispanic and Native American themes; the alternating perspectives also making the book interesting.

Native Son by Richard Wright

Bigger Thomas, a black American youth living in poverty in Chicago, is hired by a rich white family. He kills the daughter of that family and tries to hide the crime by burning her body in the house's furnace. This is a powerful novel from 1940 about racism and much more.

The Autobiography of Malcolm X by Malcolm X and Alex Haley

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.

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer by Mark Twain

In this 1876 novel we meet Tom Sawyer, Huckleberry Finn, Judge Thatcher and his daughter Becky, Widow Douglas, and others who reside in St. Petersburg, which is on the Mississippi River.

Franny and Zooey by J. D. Salinger

"Franny" (a short story) takes place in a college town and tells of an undergraduate disenchanted by selfishness and inauthenticity around her. In Zooey (a novella), the character with that name comes to Franny's aid, offering brotherly love and advice.

My Ántonia by Willa Cather

Set in Nebraska, the novel has five sections that correspond roughly to stages of Ántonia's life, through marriage and motherhood, except the middle volume, "Lena Lingard," is about Jim Burden in college and his affair with Lena, Ántonia's friend.

Babbitt by Sinclair Lewis

A satire of American culture, society, and behavior in the early 1920s -- George F. Babbitt is committed to making money but then rebels against middle-class American life and its pressure toward conformity. The word "Babbitt" now means any person who conforms unthinkingly to middle-class standards.

Hunger for Memory: The Education of Richard Rodriguez by Richard Rodriguez

The book consists of influential essays by a Chicano intellectual. The book, consisting of separate essays, tells of the author's educational history and how he lost touch with cultural values that he once held in common with his family.

The Ox-Bow Incident by Walter Van Tilburg Clark

In this western novel with a setting in and around Reno, a mob of 28 men are determined to bring swift justice to men accused of stealing cattle--really they form a lynch mob. But some realize that "mob justice" is an oxymoron, so they protest.

Dreams from My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance by Barack Obama

The author recounts his life up to his enrollment in Harvard Law School. Many readers are surprised by the early experiences that influenced our nation's 44th president. He lived in diverse environments--Hawaii, Jakarta, Los Angeles, Kenya-- where he learned about others and himself.

The Old Man and the Sea by Ernest Hemingway

His influence was huge in the 20th century. This novel, published in 1952, is about Santiago struggling with a giant marlin in the Gulf Stream. He is a fisherman. Jesus said, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men..."--look for symbolism and Biblical allusions in Hemingway's work. This was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1953.

All The Light We Cannot See by Anthony Doerr

This book was published and won the Pulitzer Prize in 2014. The novel details the intersecting stories of two young people during World War II.

The Invention of Wings by Sue Monk Kidd

Detailing the harsh life of an enslaved family, this novel was a New York Times bestseller in 2015.

Cannery Row by John Steinbeck

Steinbeck uses a Monterey street and its residents to explore common themes about life, love, and loss.

God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater by Kurt Vonnegut

Vonnegut is a master of satire and this novel will make you laugh and think at the same time.

The Heart is a Lonely Hunter by Carson McCullers

The author published this novel when only 23 years old and her characters -- misfits in a small Southern town -- are memorable.

Into The Wild by Jon Krakauer

This work on non-fiction explores the life of a young, college graduate who leaves his family, friends, and possessions behind to enter the woods and test his survival skills.

The Bonesetter's Daughter by Amy Tan

A woman is inspired to trace her family lineage and learns very interesting details in the process.

Woman Warrior by Maxine Hong Kingston

This memoir contains the life experiences of a woman who seeks to understand how her Chinese ancestors shaped her own life story.

You Can't Take It With You by Moss Hart and George S. Kaufman

This humorous, three act play details the everyday lives of ordinary people.

All The Way by Robert Schenkkan

Winner of the 2014 Tony Award for Best Play, the content explores power and politics in the Lyndon Baines Johnson administration as it works to pass the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius by Dave Eggers

A college senior loses both parents and gains guardianship of his eight year old brother.

Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close by Jonathan Safran Foer

A young boy who lost his father on 9/11/2001 embarks on an important and emotional journey.