

XAVIER COLLEGE PREPARATORY HIGH SCHOOL
SUMMER READING 2023



Dear Incoming Honors Senior,
("Nation, Identity, and Literature"; "Place, Culture and Literature")

We hope that this letter finds you well and anticipating the end of a rewarding year. We expect that you will have many good experiences and make good decisions before we see you again in August. One of those decisions we would like to help you with is for you to remain engaged in some kind of academic activity this summer. It is our belief that encouraging students to read year-round is a key element in the development of lifelong learners. While the summer is certainly a time to be away from school, we do not want you to stop reading, thinking, and growing.

You will read two books this summer: the non-fiction text is required, the other will be your choice (see below). This required reading will be part of the work for each course. Both readings are intended to be challenging and compelling, and provide you with a good foundation for written and oral literary analysis. Expect to think AND enjoy the readings.

Please read the assignment below. It contains information to help you focus your attention and know what to read for.

Required Books:

1. *How to Read Literature Like a Professor: A Lively and Entertaining Guide to Reading Between the Lines.* (Revised Edition) by Thomas C. Foster

"A lively and entertaining introduction to literature and literary basics, including symbols, themes and contexts, that shows you how to make your everyday reading experience more rewarding and enjoyable ... Ranging from major themes to literary models, narrative devices and form, Foster provides ... a broad overview of literature—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 a shower-and shows us how to make our reading experience more enriching, satisfying, and fun."

Make sure that you get the revised edition; here's [a link to what it looks like on Amazon](#).

2. You can choose what you will read to accompany the above book; below are some suggestions, but feel free to choose your own book. In any case, it should be a **new** book for you (no books from past English classes, for instance).

Fiction

- *Station Eleven* by Emily St. John Mandel
- *Love Medicine* by Louise Erdrich
- *Regeneration* by Pat Barker
- *The Dubliners* by James Joyce
- *The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien
- *Beloved* by Toni Morrison
- *Song of Solomon* by Toni Morrison
- *East of Eden* by John Steinbeck
- *If I Had Your Face* by Frances Cha
- *Purple Hibiscus* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

Non-Fiction

- *Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates
- *Born a Crime* by Trevor Noah
- *A Room of One's Own* by Virginia Woolf
- *Where I Was From* by Joan Didion
- *Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi
- *Into the Wild* by Jon Krakauer
- *California: A History* by Kevin Starr
- *Mountains Beyond Mountains* by Tracy Kidder
- *Crying in H Mart* by Michelle Zauner

Reading Assignment:

For both books, make sure to carefully read and take notes/ annotate. This will be all that is required of you to complete before we return to school in August.

In the first weeks of class, you will be asked to explain in writing and orally* the basics of your 2nd book (plot and characterization) along with what you discovered in it using the 1st book – you'll practice "reading between the lines." Specifically, your task will be to apply two different topics that are covered in separate chapters in *How to Read Like a Professor* to the 2nd book you choose. For example, it could be about the fate of the protagonist's companion in "Never Stand Next to the Hero" (Ch. 10) or the metaphor of illness in "It's Never Just Heart Disease" (Ch. 23). There is a lot to choose from in terms of topics. You are NOT expected to do this over the summer but will demonstrate what you learned when we return.

*You can expect an assessment that will include comprehension questions, written responses, and oral presentation.

Maturity Level: As a rising senior, we continue to trust you with more challenging content – works that may make you uncomfortable. The suggested books, as well as the texts we will be studying during the school year, will contain some difficult passages that will call for maturity, contemplation, and critical analysis. It is not just about *what* happens but also *how* the events contribute to the greater message.

Please note that there is required summer reading ONLY for Senior Honors. However, if you have any thoughts or considerations of taking the Honors classes, you should do the above Reading Assignment.