'Tis the good reader that makes the good book.

-Ralph Waldo Emerson

Schools of the Sacred Heart are guided by the Goals and Criteria—founding principles that inform all we do. Goal II states that “schools of the Sacred Heart commit themselves to educate to a deep respect for intellectual values.” One of the most important foundational skills in any education is the ability to read critically—to understand challenging texts, to parse out meaning, and to speak and write intelligently about what you have read.

Beyond the “usefulness” of improving your reading skills, reading is—or should be—a pleasurable activity. The second criterion of Goal II charges Sacred Heart schools with providing “a rigorous education that incorporates all forms of critical thinking and inspires a life-long love of learning.” It is in this spirit that the English Department introduces our new Summer Reading Guide. For each English course in the Upper School, we have selected texts we hope you will find both challenging and pleasurable. If you don’t already love to read, we hope that you’ll find something here that inspires you.

This summer, you are required to read three (3) books for English. The breakdown is as follows:

- Read the **assigned text** for each grade.
- Read **two (2) other books** from the list for each grade.

Of course, we welcome and encourage you to read more than three if you like—either from your class’s list or any other books of your choosing. You should get in the habit (if it's not one already) of annotating your texts—keeping track of new vocabulary words and their definitions, noting particularly significant or confusing passages, and looking for larger themes and meaning. Spend some time reviewing your texts before the start of the school year so that plot, characters, and significant passages are fresh in your mind.

**You will have a graded assessment (a test, paper, or project) at the beginning of the school year based on your summer reading.**

Enjoy the summer months! We hope that your summer reading is both fun and challenging, and we look forward to seeing you in the fall.

-The English Department
English 9: Foundations of Western Literature

Read *Zeitoun* by Dave Eggers and two (2) other works from the following list:

- *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe
  
  In late nineteenth-century Nigeria, tribal leader Okonkwo tries to lead his family and his people to a dignified fate following the death of his disgraced father. A hard worker, talented wrestler, and man with a strong sense of justice, Okonkwo must learn to cope with the challenges brought to his people by threats of all sort: famine, drought, and conquest, to name a few. This novel, originally published in 1958, has been rightly recognized as a classic for its rich portrayal of a way of life on the brink of being lost.

- *The Penelopeiad* by Margaret Atwood
  
  In this darkly comic and modern re-telling of Homer’s *Odyssey*, Margaret Atwood gives readers the point of view from Penelope’s perch on Ithaca. While Odysseus may be known from the classic myth as a storyteller of “twists and turns,” here Penelope proves to be no slouch when it comes to trickery, deception, and seduction. Atwood combines many genres of writing, from traditional lyric poetry to musical interludes, to present a full, richly complex portrait of a heroine often overshadowed by her famous husband.

- *I, Claudius* by Robert Graves
  
  Liars! Schemers! Plotters! Seducers! Sorcerers! Backstabbers! Poisoners! Murderers! No, I’m not describing the inmates of a maximum-security prison or the cast of a reality television show—all of these unsavory characters and more can be found in *I, Claudius*, Robert Graves’s historical novel loosely based on the lives of Rome’s imperial family. The novel, told from the perspective of underestimated Claudius, describes the struggles for power that arise after the death of Augustus, Rome’s first emperor. Cursed (or blessed?) with a stutter and a club-foot, Claudius is perfectly primed to observe and record the scandalous goings-on in his royal and royally dysfunction extended family. But can even Claudius survive the murderous machinations of his bloodthirsty grandmother? The exploits of these rowdy Romans will shock even those accustomed to scandal/Scandal.

- *The King Must Die* by Mary Renault
  
  Before he was the slayer of the Minotaur, Theseus, the hero of Greek mythology, was simply a boy of unknown parentage who knew he was destined for something greater than what his humdrum daily life offered. Mary Renault, a noted classics scholar and author of many historical novels for young people based on ancient history and mythology, here brings to life the story of Theseus’s great adventure on Crete.

- *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens
  
  Dickens’ classic novel begins with a chance encounter in a graveyard between a poor orphan and an escaped convict on a cold, foggy Christmas evening; unknown to little Pip, his life will never be the same. This coming-of-age story, set against the backdrop of a rapidly changing Victorian England, pits Pip against many challenges as he sets out on an unforgettable journey to reach his goal of becoming a gentleman and winning the heart of the beautiful yet cruel woman he loves. Readers will be enchanted by the wealthy, eccentric Miss Havisham, forever locked in the moment she was abandoned at the altar, the pompous Mr. Pumblechook, the simple yet kind-hearted Joe Gargery, and will, like Pip, learn what it really means to grow up.

- *Gulliver’s Travels* by Jonathan Swift
  
  Follow Lemuel Gulliver, a ship’s surgeon, on an unforgettable voyage of discovery, adventure, peril, and knowledge. From the land of the tiny Lilliputs, over whom Gulliver can tower like a god, to the land of the giant Brobdignangs, where Gulliver encounters severe danger, to lands of the gentle horsefolk Houyhnhnms, and the destructive Yahoos, Gulliver describes all he sees and learns with characteristic insight even as he faces uncertainty.

- *The Once and Future King* by T.H. White
  
  The Wart is the young, illegitimate son of a noble father. In this series of short novellas, T.H. White imagines the life of the undistinguished yet scrappy boy who will eventually grow up to be the legendary King Arthur. A cast of unforgettable characters, such as talking hawks, magical fish, cowardly knights, and dainty damsels accompany the Wart on his journey to take up his rightful place as the head of the Round Table in Camelot.
• *The Catcher in the Rye* by JD Salinger
While this novel has been considered controversial ever since its publication in the 1950s because of its language and unflinching depiction of a teenager's bad behavior, it has also been considered a classic since its publication. This is the story of sad, smart, sensitive Holden Caulfield, who narrates his adventures in New York—and his adventures on the way to adulthood—with an unforgettable combination of humor, anger, and humanity.

**English 10: British Literature**
Read *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen and two (2) other works from the following list:

• *Becket* by Jean Anouilh
  *The Canterbury Tales* tells the story of pilgrims making their way to the shrine of St. Thomas Becket in Canterbury Cathedral. Jean Anouilh’s play takes some liberties with history, but portrays the essential conflict between King Henry II and the Archbishop that led to Becket’s murder in 1170.

• *A Man for All Seasons* by Robert Bolt
  Bolt’s play focuses on the struggle of King Henry VIII to divorce his first wife. He is opposed by his Chancellor and friend, Sir Thomas More.

• *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens
  Dickens published a series of annual Christmas novellas, beginning in 1843. *A Christmas Carol*, the first of the five published, offers a useful introduction to the writer’s passion for social justice.

• *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* by Arthur Conan Doyle
  Doyle’s detective was introduced to the world in a short novel published in the Christmas issue of a popular magazine in 1887. He achieved iconic form in a series of short stories, written over the course of the next 35 years. The first twelve stories were collected as *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* in 1892; they offer a tantalizing picture of life in Victorian England.

• *I, Claudius* by Robert Graves
  This novel is purportedly the autobiography of the Roman emperor Claudius, who ruled from 41 to 54 A.D. Because of his stammer, Claudius is regarded as mentally deficient by his relatives—but he makes shrewd observations about the reigns of Augustus, Tiberius and Caligula. In 2000, the Modern Library included *I, Claudius* on its list of the 100 greatest 20th century novels (in English).

• *Wolf Hall* by Hilary Mantel
  Recently adapted for the stage, and as a television production by the BBC, Mantel’s novel imagines the inner life of Thomas Cromwell, an advisor of King Henry VIII who helped the monarch to make and end marriages.

• *Saint Joan* by George Bernard Shaw
  *Pygmalion*, which is included in the sophomore curriculum, is probably Shaw’s most popular play—thanks in part to its transformation into the musical comedy *My Fair Lady*. But Shaw wrote more than 40 plays in his long and successful career, and *Saint Joan*, his tragedy based on the trial and death of the French military heroine in 1431, is regarded as one of his best works. Shortly after its premiere, Shaw was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature.

• *The Hobbit* by J.R.R. Tolkien
  Forget about the recent movie, which is a seriously overblown version of Tolkien’s simple tale. In the original story, Bilbo Baggins is an unlikely hero who embodies the quintessential virtues of the ordinary Englishman when faced with an unexpected challenge.
English 11: AP American Literature
Read *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne and two (2) other works from the following list:

- *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* by Junot Díaz
  This Pulitzer Prize-winning novel chronicles the (love) life of Oscar Wao, a severely overweight “ghetto nerd” from New Jersey who dreams of becoming the Dominican J.R.R. Tolkien. Díaz has proven to be an important and influential 21st century voice, and the writing here is some of his best.

- *All the Light We Cannot See* by Anthony Doerr
  Rose Farah ’16 claims that this is the best novel she has ever read—and I can’t top that as an endorsement. Incredibly beautiful and moving, Doerr’s novel weaves an intersecting story of two teenagers—a blind French girl and a reluctant German soldier—during World War II. This novel seemed to make everyone’s “Best of 2014” list—and deservedly so.

- *Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison
  Considered by many (I among them) to be one of the greatest works of American literature, Ellison’s novel is challenging, but well worth the effort. The novel is concerned with issues of race, politics, and personal identity in early 20th-century America. Bonus: this is the most frequently cited text on the AP Exam.

- *The Known World* by Edward P. Jones
  This novel, winner of the Pulitzer Prize in 2004, explores the complexity of slavery and race relations in pre-Civil War Virginia. Slaves, slave-holders (both white and black), and Native Americans all occupy shifting and ambiguous positions in society—an issue we see to some degree in Tarantino’s film *Django Unchained*.

- *On the Road* by Jack Kerouac
  A classic of the so-called “Beat Generation,” Kerouac’s novel continues to inspire generation after generation to hit the road. Beyond its cultural significance, though, this semi-autobiographical novel is innovative, experimental, and utterly unapologetic, celebrating jazz, poetry, and everything else that “America” might really be about.

- *Interpreter of Maladies* by Jhumpa Lahiri
  This short story collection, Lahiri’s first published work, is deceptively simplistic and astonishingly beautiful. The stories are largely concerned with the immigrant experience of Indians in America, what it means to be caught between the old and the new, and how we define “home.”

- *The Tiger’s Wife* by Téa Obreht
  Obreht’s debut novel is set in an unspecified Balkan country, both in the present and more than fifty years ago, as a young doctor listens to stories from her grandfather. As Obreht herself states, “it’s a saga about doctors and their relationships to death throughout all these wars in the Balkans.” More than that, though, it is a gripping example of magical realism—a blending of the magical and the mundane, to the point where you’re not sure what’s real and what’s metaphor.

- *Wise Blood* by Flannery O’Connor
  O’Connor is considered a master of the Southern gothic, often weaving the grotesque and the bizarre into her stories of Southern life. This novel features, among other things: a blind preacher, a man with “prophetic” blood, a mummified dwarf, “The Holy Church of Christ Without Christ,” and a gorilla. What more could you want?
English 12: Imagining New York

Read *Let the Great World Spin* by Colum McCann and two (2) other works from the following list:

- **Ragtime** by EL Doctorow
  This National Book Critics’ Circle Award winner mixes fact with fiction in its conception of New York in the years before the First World War. One lazy Sunday afternoon in New Rochelle, the famous escape artist Harry Houdini swerves his car into a telephone pole outside of an affluent American family’s house. From there, the line between real and invented characters disappears in this story of America’s turbulent past at the dawn of the 20th century. This is the era of Henry Ford and his Model T; of Emma Goldman, the revolutionary; of Evelyn Nesbit, the former chorus girl whose scandalous life helped shaped the modern idea of “celebrity.” All of them cross paths with Doctorow’s fictional creations, including Tateh, an immigrant Jewish peddler, and Coalhouse Walker, Jr., a ragtime pianist from Harlem whose insistence on a point of justice has shocking consequences for all.

- **The Fortress of Solitude** by Jonathan Lethem
  This is the story of Dylan Ebdus, growing up white and motherless in downtown Brooklyn in the 1970s. It’s a neighborhood where the entertainments include muggings along with games of stoopball. In this world, Dylan has one friend, a black teenager, also motherless, named Mingus Rude. As Lethem follows the knitting and unraveling of their friendship, he creates an overwhelmingly rich and emotionally gripping canvas of race and class, superheroes, gentrification, funk, hip-hop, graffiti tagging, loyalty, and memory. A must-read for fans of coming-age-novels and lovers of the city in all its mixed glory.

- **Up in the Old Hotel** by Joseph Mitchell
  Saloon-keepers and street preachers, gypsies and steel-walking Mohawks, a bearded lady and a 93-year-old “seafoodetarian” who believes his specialized diet will keep him alive for another two decades. These are among the people that Joseph Mitchell immortalized in his reportage for *The New Yorker*, collected here in one volume, that are still renowned for their precise, respectful observation, their graveyard humor, and their offhand perfection of style. This collection of short pieces presents an indelible collective portrait of an unsuspected New York and its odder citizens—as depicted by one of the great writers of this or any other time.

- **The New York Trilogy** by Paul Auster
  This is a collection of three loosely-linked, uniquely stylized detective novellas. In *City of Glass*, Quinn, a mystery writer, receives an ominous phone call in the middle of the night. He’s drawn into the streets of New York, onto an elusive case that’s more puzzling and more deeply-layered than anything he might have written himself. In *Ghosts*, Blue, a student of Brown, is hired by White to spy on Black from a window on Orange Street. Once Blue starts stalking Black, he finds his Black on a similar mission, staring back at him. In *The Locked Room*, Fanshawe has disappeared, leaving behind his wife and baby and nothing but a cache of novels, plays, and poems. If you are a fan of mysteries and suspense, this novel will play with all of your preconceived notions of what it means to solve a crime.

- **The Song Is You** by Arthur Phillips
  Each song on Julian’s iPod, what he considers the greatest of all inventions, has deep personal significance. But when Julian’s family falls apart, even music loses its hold on him. But one snowy night in Brooklyn, his life’s soundtrack—and life itself—start to play again. Julian stumbles into a bar and sees Cait O’Dwyer, an Irish rock singer, performing with her band, and a strange love affair is ignited: artist and muse, musician and fan, stalker and prey. Over the next few months, Julian and Cait’s passion plays out, though they never meet, and their relationship re-defines “modern romance.”

- **Just Kids** by Patti Smith
  In *Just Kids*, “Punk priestess” Patti Smith’s first book of prose, the American artist and musician offers a never-before-seen glimpse of her remarkable relationship with photographer Robert Mapplethorpe in the heyday of New York’s 1960s bohemia. A moving story of youth and friendship, Smith brings the same unique, lyrical quality to *Just Kids* as she has to the rest of her diverse body of work—from her influential 1975 album *Horses* to her visual art and poetry.

- **The Chosen** by Chaim Potok
  Set within an insular, Orthodox Jewish community in 1940s Brooklyn, two fathers and two sons connect and clash over the pressures on all of them to pursue their religion. As the boys grow into young men, they discover in the other a lost
spiritual brother, and a link to an unexplored world that neither had ever considered before. In effect, they exchange places, and find the peace that neither will ever retreat from again.

- *Bright Lights, Big City* by Jay McInerney
  This novel follows an affluent young Manhattanite through night-clubs, fashion shows, editorial offices, and loft parties as he attempts to outrun both mortality and the inevitability of dawn. With nothing but good will, wit, and certain semi-illegal substances to sustain him, he wanders aimlessly until he reaches a point of no return. Will he be able to acknowledge loss and, possibly, to rediscover his better instincts? This novel of youth and New York set against the backdrop the 1980’s “Me” decade, provides an indelible portrait of life in a recognizable, yet bygone era.

**English 12: Leadership in Literature**

Read *Mandela’s Way* by Richard Stengel and two (2) other works from the following list:

- *Mother Teresa* by Kathryn Spink
  Examines the lifelong work of Mother Teresa as both a spiritual leader and advocate of change in the slums of Calcutta. Often called one of the great saints of the 20th century, this biography reveals her struggles, successes, and failures.

- *Little Princes* by Connor Grennan
  In search of adventure, 29-year-old Conor Grennan traded his day job for a year-long trip around the globe, a journey that began with a three-month stint volunteering at the Little Princes Children’s Home, an orphanage in war-torn Nepal. Later, this decision changes his life in unpredictable ways.

- *Born to Run* by Christopher McDougall
  In this biography, the writer Christopher McDougall seeks to uncover the secrets of a group of “super-athletes”: the Tarahumara Indians who have honed the ability to run hundreds of miles without rest or injury. Ending with a climactic race, this offers a surprising look into a sport’s unexpected leaders.

- *Becoming Steve Jobs* by Brent Schlender and Rick Tetzeli
  *Becoming Steve Jobs* examines the complex, complicated growth of Apple founder Steve Jobs from a youth to a visionary leader of one of America’s most innovative and profitable companies of all time.

- *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* by Malcolm X and Alex Haley
  A biography which *Time* magazine named as one of the ten most important non-fiction books of the 20th century, this follows how Malcolm X left a life of crime and whose work polarized the civil rights struggle. His request for freedom “by any means necessary” and later, recusal following his pilgrimage to Mecca shows a fascinating life of a singular leader.

- *Hero for Humanity: A Biography of William Wilberforce* by Kevin Belmonte
  Known best as the composer of the hymn “Amazing Grace”, it was Wilberforce’s 46-year battle to abolish the slave trade and eventually slavery in Britain that is his greatest accomplishment. His difficult journey to complete this tremendous feat makes for a fascinating read.

- *1984* by George Orwell
  In this classic dystopian novel, our protagonist finds himself trying to assert his individuality and identity against the omnipresent, totalitarian collective Big Brother. Will he be successful? Although written in 1949, Orwell’s anticipation of the future still resonates and feels current today.

- *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller
  At once an allegory of the 1950s' anti-communist witch hunts and a spotlight on seventeenth-century witch trials in Salem, Massachusetts, this play shows how ignorance and good intentions can interweave to destroy lives. The central, flawed character John Proctor offers a chance to see how leadership can be found in unusual, surprising places.
English 12: Shakespeare and His Influence

Read The Tragedy of Arthur by Arthur Phillips and two (2) other works from the following list:

- **Tudors** by Peter Ackroyd
  Ackroyd’s history begins with the coronation of the 19-year old Henry VIII, and ends with the death of his daughter Elizabeth, almost a century later. A very readable and accessible work of narrative history, this book is especially good in detailing England’s evolution from an orthodox Catholic country to a Protestant world power. Recommended for students taking AP European History.

- **A Man for All Seasons** by Robert Bolt
  Bolt’s play focuses on the struggle of King Henry VIII to divorce his first wife. He is opposed by his Chancellor and friend, Sir Thomas More.

- **Bingo** by Edward Bond
  Edward Bond was a major figure in the British theatre in the late 20th century. In this play, he imagines an aged Shakespeare in retirement – as a greedy landowner and investor.

- **Nothing Like the Sun** by Anothony Burgess
  The novelist Anthony Burgess (A Clockwork Orange) also had an estimable reputation as a scholar and critic. In this novel, he used his knowledge of Shakespeare’s biography to create a fictional account of the playwright’s love life.

- **West Side Story** by Arthur Laurents
  To be read in conjunction with Romeo and Juliet. Broadway producers originally thought of updating Shakespeare’s family feud as a conflict between Christians and Jews in New York–but they eventually crafted a play that showed the conflict between the Jets (a white gang) and the Sharks (a gang from a Puerto Rican neighborhood). The romance of Tony and Maria is doomed by ethnic prejudice.

- **Wolf Hall** by Hilary Mantel
  Recently adapted for the stage, and as a television production by the BBC, Mantel’s novel imagines the inner life of Thomas Cromwell, an advisor of King Henry VIII who helped the monarch to make and end marriages.

- **Romeo and Juliet** by William Shakespeare
  To be read in conjunction with West Side Story. Not Shakespeare’s greatest tragedy, but certainly one of his most iconic. The tale of two “star-crossed” lovers has never disappeared from the theatrical repertoire.

- **The Elizabethan World Picture** by E.M.W. Tillyard
  Tillyard’s study was written for the general reader some 75 years ago. It explains in simple and lucid language what the average Elizabethan believed about the elements, the four humours of the body, and the political structure of society (among other things).
Read *Sula* by Toni Morrison and two (2) other works from the following list:

- **Passing** by Nella Larsen
  In this novel, set in Harlem in the 1920s, Clare Kendry, a black woman, “passes” as a white so successfully that even her husband does not know. When she returns to her childhood community and attempts to reconnect with her past, trouble ensues.

- **Their Eyes Were Watching God** by Zora Neale Hurston
  As Henry Louis Gates Jr. describes, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* is primarily concerned “with the project of finding a voice, with language as an instrument of injury and salvation, of selfhood and empowerment.”

- **Dust Tracks on the Road** by Zora Neale Hurston
  Hurston’s autobiography explores the idea of that our self-identity is an amalgamation of how others see us as much as how we see ourselves and our tendency to “invent” aspects of ourselves.

- **Song of Solomon** by Toni Morrison
  The novel chronicles Milkman’s journey from his home in Michigan to various points in the South in his quest to “unlock” certain family mysteries and the mythic past of his ancestors.

- **The Bloody Chamber** by Angela Carter
  In this compilation of short stories, Carter revises classic fairy tales and rewrites the heroines from the traditional helpless victims they often appear into complicated characters motivated by a range of interests and emotions.

- **Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit** by Jeanette Winterson
  Adopted in the North of England, in the 1960s, Jeanette is raised by evangelical parents but decides to leave her family and church when at sixteen she falls in love with a young woman.

- **Breath, Eyes, Memory** by Edwidge Dandicat
  As a young girl, Sophie is sent away from Haiti’s political strife to live with her mother in New York City. As she learns about her mother’s nightmares as a young girl, she also comes to learn about the strength and perseverance of Haiti’s women.

- **The Poisonwood Bible** by Barbara Kingsolver
  Nathan Price, a missionary, moves his family from Georgia to the village of Kilanga in the Belgian Congo. The novel is told from the alternating perspectives of his wife and daughters.