

Literature and Composition Summer Reading Book List

Please see the assignment sheet prior to beginning your summer reading project. Spend some time studying this list and carefully choose books that are interesting to you and that are interrelated in some way (even if only very generally). Please note: If you are in Mr. Kenning's AP US History class, you may use any of the books from his list for this assignment. (Some books are on both lists.) You still must complete the written work for this class regarding the book, in addition to whatever he assigns for his course.

Alexie, Sherman

The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven (Fict.)

Alexie's fiction chronicles modern life on an Indian Reservation.

Reservation Blues (Fict.)

Alexie's fiction chronicles modern life on an Indian Reservation.

Atwood, Margaret

The Handmaid's Tale (Fict.)

Dystopian Future where women are strictly controlled, unable to have jobs or money and assigned to various social classes.

Baker, Russell

Growing Up (Non-Fict-Bio.)

During the Depression, when Baker was only five, his father died. His mother, strong-willed and matriarchal, never looked back. After all, she had three children to raise.

Baldwin, James

Go Tell it on the Mountain (Fict)

Using as a frame the spiritual and moral awakening of 14-year-old John Grimes during a Saturday night service in a Harlem storefront church, Baldwin lays bare the secrets of a tormented black family during the depression.

Bellamy, Edward

Looking Backward

(fict.) A utopian novel first published in 1888. It was written in reaction to the disillusionment with an increasingly competitive and industrial society.

Looking Backward sold more than 1 million copies.

Bellow, Saul

The Adventures of Augie March (Fict.)

Augie is a man "in search of a worthwhile fate." After struggling as a penniless youth in Chicago, he ultimately discovers that alignment with the "axial lines" of his existence is the secret to human fulfillment.

Bierce, Ambrose

Civil War Stories (Fict)

Bierce was a Civil War veteran who seems almost to have tried to exorcise the horrors of the war he lived by writing about it. The result is gripping and utterly believable; the style is immediate, you-are-there, not-one-word-too-many.

Brown, Dee

Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee (Non-fict)

Details how white settlers forced Indian tribes off the plains, often simply by killing them. Though Hollywood and penny dreadfuls portrayed Indians as red devils who launched unprovoked attacks on innocent homesteaders, Brown's research shows that the opposite is closer to the truth.

Capote, Truman

In Cold Blood (Non-fict)

The pointless murder of a midwestern farm family in the 1950's is not a subject I would otherwise be drawn to, but the quality of Capote's writing transcends the subject.

Carson, Rachel

Silent Spring (Non-fict)

Silent Spring, released in 1962, offered the first shattering look at widespread ecological degradation and touched off an environmental awareness that still exists.

Cather, Willa

My Antonia (Fict)

Details nineteenth-century pioneer life in Nebraska, with all its hardships and beauties, and explores traditional American pioneer values, such as hard work, self-reliance, and the refusal to submit to adversity.

Chopin, Kate

The Awakening (Fict.)

Long before the women's rights movement, Kate Chopin gave us Edna Pontellier, a woman who feels life is passing her by, leaving its promise broken and unfulfilled.

She wanted something to happen, and her "awakening" one fateful summer, her quest for independence and refusal to sacrifice her individual existence.

Cisneros, Sandra

Caramelo (Fict)

The world of the 20th-century Mexican family, and of the Reyeses in particular, is as complicated, timeless, and satisfying as our own family stories.

Crow Dog, Mary and Richard Erdoes

Lakota Woman (Non-fict-bio.)

Anguished account of growing up Indian in America.

DeCrevecoeur, J.

Letters From an American Farmer

Published in 1782, Crèvecoeur illustrates the idealized version of a free society, America. While the first letters portray a perfect conception of America, through his secluded farm called Pine Hill, the following letters depict a land damaged and destroyed by society and civilization. One such entity is slavery, which is described throughout the novel. "What then is the American, this new man?...He is an American, who, leaving behind him all his ancient prejudices and manners, receives new ones from the new mode of life he has embraced, the new government he obeys, and the new rank he holds. He has become an American by being received in the broad lap of our great Alma Mater. Here individuals of all races are melted into a new race of man, whose labors and posterity will one day cause great changes in the world. Americans are the western pilgrims."

DeLillo, Don

Libra (fict.)

Did Lee Harvey Oswald act alone in assassinating President John F. Kennedy? DeLillo skillfully weaves together fact and fiction to create an engrossing tale. It is a measure of his success that while reading, one must keep reminding oneself that this is, indeed, a novel making "no claim to literal truth."

White Noise (fict.)

National Book Award winner (1985). Chairman of the department of Hitler studies at a Midwestern college, Jack Gladney is accidentally exposed to a cloud of noxious chemicals, part of a world of the future that is doomed because of misused technology, artificial products and foods, and overpopulation.

Ehrenreich, Barbara

Nickel and Dimed (non-fict.)

In 1998 moving from Florida to Maine to Minnesota, Ehrenreich worked as a waitress, a hotel maid, a cleaning woman, a nursing home aide, and a Wal-Mart sales clerk. Very quickly, she discovered that no job is truly "unskilled," that even the lowliest occupations require exhausting mental and muscular effort. She also learned that one job is not enough; you need at least two if you intend to live indoors.

Faulkner, William

Light in August (Fict.)

The book is a glimpse at the deep South immediately prior to the depression era. We're presented with a culture that still hasn't quite come to grips with life on the other side of the Civil War, and racialism is so deeply ingrained that although slavery is no longer law, the caste system it birthed lives on in the arrogant attitudes of the whites and the subservient squalor of the blacks.

Fitzgerald, F. Scott***Tender is the Night* (Fict.)**

Set on the French Riviera in the late 1920s, *Tender Is the Night* is the tragic romance of the young actress Rosemary Hoyt and the stylish American couple Dick and Nicole Diver.

Gaines, Ernest***The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman* (Fict.)**

This is a novel in the guise of the tape-recorded recollections of a black woman who has lived 110 years, who has been both a slave and a witness to the black militancy of the 1960's.

Glancy, Diane***Stone Heart: A Novel of Sacajawea* (Fict.)**

Sacajawea, the Shoshone native who accompanied Lewis and Clark on their famed expedition, narrates this fictional version of the magnificent, yet harrowing, journey. As told through the heart of a woman and through the spirit of a Native American, the Lewis and Clark expedition takes on entirely new contours.

Hawking, Stephen***A Brief History of Time: From the Big Bang to Black Holes* (Non-fict.)**

Helps nonscientists understand the questions being asked by scientists today: Where did the universe come from? How and why did it begin? Will it come to an end, and if so, how?

Heat-Moon, William Least***Columbus in the Americas* (Non-fict)**

Filled with stories of triumph and tragedy, courage and villainy, *Columbus in the Americas* offers a balanced yet unflinching portrait of the most famous and controversial explorer in history.

Hemingway, Ernest***Farewell to Arms* (Fict)**

Semi-autobiographical novel about the Lost Generation during and after WWI.

***In Our Time* (Fict)**

Hemingway's Nick Adams short stories about WWI, Spanish bullfights, and experiences as a reporter.

***The Sun Also Rises* (Fict.)**

A powerful insight in to the lives and values of the so called 'lost generation', a generation supposedly scarred by the effects of World War I.

Herr, Michael***Dispatches* (Non-fict.)**

American correspondent Herr's documentary recalls the heavy combat he witnessed in Vietnam as well as the obscene speech, private fears and nightmares of the soldiers. "Herr captures the almost hallucinatory madness of the war," said PW. "This is a compelling, truth-telling book with a visceral impact, its images stuck in the mind like shards from a pineapple bomb."

Hersey, John***Hiroshima* (Non-fict.)**

Hersey recorded the stories of Hiroshima residents shortly after the explosion and, in 1946, *Hiroshima* was published, giving the world first-hand accounts from people who had survived it.

Hosseini, Khaled***The Kite Runner* (Fict.)**

Hosseini's first novel -- and the first Afghan novel to be written originally in English -- *The Kite Runner* tells a heartbreaking story of the unlikely friendship between Amir, the son of a wealthy Afghan businessman, and Hassan, the son of his father's servant. Amir is Sunni; Hassan is Shi'a. One is born to a privileged class; the other to a loathed minority. One to a father of enormous presence; the other to a crippled man. One is a voracious reader; the other illiterate.

Hurston, Zora Neale***Their Eyes Were Watching God* (Fict.)**

Hurston, a writer from the Harlem Renaissance, tells the life story of Janie, an African-American woman. We accompany Janie as she experiences the very different men in her life. Hurston's great dialogue captures both the ongoing "war of the sexes," as well as the truces, joys, and tender moments of male-female relations. But equally important are Janie's relationships with other Black women. There are powerful themes of female bonding, identity, and empowerment which bring an added dimension to this book.

Irving, John***Prayer for Owen Meaney* (Fict.)**

Predestination, faith, doubt, politics, love, hate, family, friendship...these are all themes that make appearances in this book.

Jabbar, Kareem Abdul***On the Shoulders of Giants: My Journey Through the Harlem Renaissance***

(Non-fic) The former Milwaukee Buck and Los Angeles Laker pays tribute to the black artists, activists, athletes, and intellectuals whose lives have shaped--and continue to shape--his own.

Jackson, H. H.***A Century of Dishonor***

(Non-fict.) Originally published over 100 years ago, *A Century of Dishonor* is Helen Jackson's eye-opening sketch of the U.S. government's often shameful mishandling of what was called the "Indian problem". Using official documents as authentic research materials, Jackson asserts that the government and citizens of the United States were the cause of the "problems", and not the Native peoples.

James, Henry***The Portrait of a Lady* (Fict.)**

When Isabel Archer, a beautiful, spirited American, is brought to Europe by her wealthy Aunt Touchett, it is expected that she will soon marry. But Isabel, resolved

to determine her own fate, does not hesitate to turn down two eligible suitors. She then finds herself irresistibly drawn to Gilbert Osmond, who, beneath his veneer of

charm and cultivation, is cruelty itself. A story of intense poignancy, Isabel's tale of love and betrayal still resonates with modern audiences.

***The Bostonians* (Fict.)**

Deals with feminism and the role of women in society. This bittersweet tragicomedy centers on an odd triangle of characters: Basil Ransom, an unbending political conservative from Mississippi; Olive Chancellor, Ransom's cousin and a zealous Boston feminist; and Verena Tarrant, a pretty protege of Olive's in the feminist movement. The storyline concerns the contest between Ransom and Olive for Verena's allegiance and affection, though the novel also includes a wide panorama of political activists, newspaper people, and quirky eccentrics.

***The Turn of the Screw* (Fict.)**

One of the great intellectual spook tales of all time. The plot: A neurotic governess, believing that the two children in her care are being haunted by malevolent ghosts, seeks to exorcize them.

Karlsen, Carol***The Devil in the Shape of a Woman: Witchcraft in Colonial New England***

(nonfict) Intriguing social history of witchcraft in Puritan New England (1620-1725).

Keller, Helen***The Story of My Life* (non-fict-bio.)**

Helen Keller would not be bound by conditions. Rendered deaf and blind at 19 months by scarlet fever, she learned to read (in several languages) and even speak, eventually graduating with honors from Radcliffe College in 1904, where as a student she wrote *The Story of My Life*.

Kennedy, John F.***Profiles in Courage* (non-fict)**

In 1954-55 a freshman U.S. Senator from Massachusetts wrote a book profiling eight of his historical Senatorial colleagues, such men as John Quincy Adams, Sam Houston, and Robert A. Taft. Instead of focusing on their storied careers, John F. Kennedy chose to illustrate their acts of integrity, when they stood alone against tremendous political and social pressure for what they felt was right.

Jack Kerouac***Dharma Bums* (fict.)**

(1958) The semi-fictional accounts in the novel are based upon events that occurred years after *On the Road*. The main characters are the narrator Ray Smith, based on Kerouac, and Japhy Ryder, based on the poet, essayist and Buddhist Gary Snyder. The book largely concerns duality in Kerouac's life and ideals, examining the relationship that the outdoors, mountaineering, hiking and hitchhiking through the West have with his "city life" of jazz clubs, poetry readings, and parties.

On the Road

(1957) This largely autobiographical work, written as a stream of consciousness and based on the spontaneous road trips of Kerouac and his friends across mid-century America, is often considered a defining work of the postwar Beat Generation that was inspired by jazz, poetry, and drug experiences. As the inspiration came from real life, hundreds of references in *On the Road* have real-world counterparts. The novel was chosen by *TIME* Magazine as one of the 100 best English-language novels from 1923 to the present.

Kingsolver, Barbara

The Poisonwood Bible (Fict.)

Evangelical Baptist minister's family to the Congo in the late 1950s, entwining their fate with that of the country during three turbulent decades.

The Bean Trees (Fict)

Follows the gritty, outspoken Taylor Greer, who leaves her native Kentucky to head west. She becomes mother to an abandoned baby and, when her jalopy dies

in Tucson, is forced to work in a tire garage and to room with a young, battered divorcee who also has a little girl. With sisterly counsel and personal honesty,

the two face their painful lot (told in ponderous detail).

Kovic, Ron

Born on the Fourth of July (Non-Fict/Bio.)

Ron Kovic is a Marine whose life was blasted and changed forever by the paralyzing wound he received in Vietnam. Confined permanently to a wheelchair, without mobility or feeling below his chest, Kovic successfully turned his enormous inner rage to a public purpose in opposing the continuation of the Vietnam War.

Kozol, Jonathan

Savage Inequalities: Children in America's Schools (non-fict.)

Kozol believes that children from poor families are cheated out of a future by grossly underequipped, understaffed and underfunded schools in U.S. inner cities and less affluent suburbs.

Krakauer, Jon

Into the Wild (non-fict.)

After graduating from Emory University in Atlanta in 1992, top student and athlete Christopher McCandless abandoned his possessions, gave his entire \$24,000 savings account to charity and hitchhiked to Alaska, where he went to live in the wilderness. Four months later, he turned up dead. His diary, letters and two notes found at a remote campsite tell of his desperate effort to survive, apparently stranded by an injury and slowly starving.

Lanier, Shannon

Jefferson's Children: The Story of One American Family (Non fict.)

"My name is Shannon Lanier. I am a twenty-year-old descendant of Thomas Jefferson and his slave Sally Hemings," begins this thought-provoking, handsome volume designed to resemble a family photo album.

Madison, Hamilton, and Jay

The Federalist Papers (non-fict)

A series of 85 articles advocating the ratification of the United States Constitution, the essays serve as a primary source for interpretation of the Constitution. They outline the philosophy and motivation of the proposed system of government. The authors of the Federalist Papers wanted to both influence the vote in favor of ratification and shape future interpretations of the Constitution.

Mason, Bobbi Ann

In Country (fict.)

Sam Hughes, whose father was killed in Vietnam, lives in rural Kentucky with her uncle Emmett, a veteran whom she suspects is suffering from exposure to Agent Orange.

Melville, Herman

Moby Dick (Fict.)

Considered one of the great works in American literature, the novel describes the voyage of the whaling ship Pequod, commanded by Captain Ahab, who leads his crew on a hunt for the great whale, Moby-Dick. The book's language is highly symbolic, and many themes run throughout the work.

McCarthy, Cormac

The Road (Fict.)

A haunting and grim novel about civilization's slow death after the power goes out.

McCullough, David

1776 (Non-fict.)

The military side of the momentous year of 1776, with characteristic insight and a gripping narrative. Adding new scholarship and a fresh perspective to the beginning of the American Revolution.

McPherson, James

Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era (Non-fict.)

Likely to become the standard one-volume history of our Civil War, this vivifies, with palpable immediacy, scholarly acumen and interpretive skill, events foreshadowing the conflict, the war itself and its basic issue: slavery.

Mills, Kay

This Little Light of Mine: The Life of Fannie Lou Hamer

A biography that captures the pain, sorrow, and joy of a spirited woman who fought for basic human rights. Born into a black sharecroppers' family in rural Mississippi, Hamer was always reaching out; as a child she would hop off a truck to retrieve a scrap of paper so she would have something to read.

Undeterred by the threat of personal injury and the loss of her job, she organized and encouraged members of her race to register to vote.

Morrison, Toni

Beloved

In the troubled years following the Civil War, the spirit of a murdered child haunts the Ohio home of a former slave. This angry, destructive ghost breaks mirrors, leaves its fingerprints in cake icing, and generally makes life difficult for Sethe and her family; nevertheless, the woman finds the haunting oddly comforting for the spirit is that of her own dead baby, never named, thought of only as Beloved.

Song of Solomon

A powerful, sensual, and poetic exploration of four generations of a family mistakenly named Dead. Told through the eyes of "Milkman," a rare male protagonist in Morrison's wonderful catalog of unforgettable characters, we discover a century's worth of secrets, ghosts, and troubles. Milkman is faced with resolving the differing memories of his parents and his mysterious aunt Pilate, while questioning the historically charged realities thrown at him by the death of real-life victims of racism like Emmett Till as viewed by his lifelong friend Guitar.

O' Brien, Tim

Going After Cacciato

Winner of the National Book Award for fiction in 1979, this complex novel is set during the Vietnam War and is told from the point of view of the protagonist, Paul Berlin. The story traces the events that ensue after Cacciato, a member of Berlin's squad, decides to go AWOL by walking from Vietnam to France, through Asia. Cacciato, pronounced "catch-ee-ah-to," means "hunted"/"caught" in Italian.

O'Connor, Flannery

Everything that Rises Must Converge

Exquisite legacy from a genius of the American short story, in which she scrutinizes territory familiar to her readers: race, faith, and morality. The stories encompass the comic and the tragic, the beautiful and the grotesque; each carries her highly individual stamp and could have been written by no one else.

A Good Man is Hard to Find

With an keen eye for the dark side of human nature, an amazing ear for dialogue, and a necessary sense of irony, Flannery O'Conner exposes the underside of life in the rural south of the United States. One of the powers in her writing lies in her ability to make the vulnerability of one into that of many; another is her mastery of shifting "control" from character to character, making the outcome uncertain.

Philbrick, Nathaniel

Mayflower

Philbrick masterfully recounts the desperate circumstances of both the settlers and their would-be hosts, and how the Wampanoags saved the colony from certain destruction. His account brings the Plymouth Colony and its leaders, including William Bradford, Benjamin Church and the bellicose, dwarfish Miles Standish, vividly to life. More importantly, he brings into focus a gruesome period in early American history. For Philbrick, this is yet another award-worthy story of survival.

Pirsig, Robert***Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance***

Very difficult novel that is really a book about philosophy. Although set as a story of a cross-country trip on a motorcycle by a father and son, it is more nearly a journey through 2,000 years of Western philosophy.

Porter, Katherine Anne***The Collected Stories*****Rogosin, Donn*****Invisible Men: Life in Baseball's Negro Leagues (Non-fict.)***

Although their games were ignored by white-owned newspapers and radio stations, black ballplayers became folk heroes in cities such as Chicago, Kansas City, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, New York, and Washington DC, where the teams drew large crowds and became major contributors to the local community life. This memorable narrative, filled with the memories of many surviving Negro League players, pulls the veil off these "invisible men" who were forced into the segregated leagues.

Silko, Leslie Marmon***Ceremony (Fict.)***

A young Native American fights to defeat the demons that have followed him since his return from WWII. They intensify the estrangement he feels over his mixed parentage and his people's alienation. Adam Henderson tackles this novel with the slight singsong rhythm often adopted by traditional storytellers. He vividly personifies this young man, whose pain is almost overwhelming, but who strives to resist succumbing to the oblivion of alcohol, the refuge of many of his contemporaries. Henderson expresses the strength and hope of this young man, as well as his pain, and brings this compelling character to life.

Sinclair, Upton***The Jungle (Fict.)***

Describes the life of a family of Lithuanian immigrants working in Chicago's Union Stock Yards at the beginning of the 20th century. The novel depicts in harsh tones, poverty, the complete absence of social security, the scandalous living and working conditions, and generally the utter hopelessness prevalent among the have-nots, which is contrasted with the deeply-rooted corruption on the part of the haves. The sad state of turn of the century labor is placed front and center for the American public to see that something needs to change to get rid of American "wage slavery." The novel is also an important example of the "muckraking" tradition

Steinbeck, John***Grapes of Wrath (Fict.)***

Set during the Great Depression, the novel focuses on a poor family of sharecroppers, the Joads, driven from their home by drought, economic hardship, and changes in the agriculture industry. In a nearly hopeless situation, they set out for California along with thousands of other "Okies" in search of land, jobs, and dignity. The novel is meant to emphasize the need for cooperative, as opposed to individualistic, solutions to social problems brought about by the mechanization of agriculture and the Dust Bowl drought.

Stowe, Harriet Beecher***Uncle Tom's Cabin***

Published in 1852, the anti-slavery novel had a profound effect on attitudes toward African Americans and slavery in the United States, so much so in the latter case that the novel intensified the sectional conflict leading to the American Civil War. Also a controversial novel today for its negative stereotypes of African Americans.

Tan, Amy***The Joy Luck Club (Fict.)***

"Intensely poetic, startlingly imaginative and moving, this remarkable book will speak to many women, mothers and grown daughters, about the persistent tensions and powerful bonds between generations and cultures."

The Kitchen God's Wife (Fict.)

Pressured to reveal to the young woman her secret past in war-torn China in the 1940s, Winnie weaves an unbelievable account of a childhood of loneliness and abandonment and a young adulthood marred by a nightmarish arranged marriage. Winnie survives her many ordeals because of the friendship and strength of her female friends, the love of her second husband, and her own steadfast courage and endurance. At the conclusion, her secrets are uncovered and she shares a trust/love relationship with her daughter, Pearl, that was missing from both their lives.

Terkel, Studs***Working (non-fict.)***

Studs Terkel records the voices of America. Men and women from every walk of life talk to him, telling him of their likes and dislikes, fears, problems, and happinesses on the job.

The Good War (Non-fict.)

It is a firsthand account of people involved before, during and after the war, challenging the prevailing notion that World War II was a time of unblemished national solidarity, goodwill, and unified purpose in contrast to the Vietnam War era. The book mainly consists of interviews with people who lived the events that went from the beginning of America's involvement in World War II, Pearl Harbor, to the end.

Hard Times (Non-fict.)

Oral history features the voices of men and women who lived through the Great Depression of the 1930s.

My American Century (non-fict.)

From the Depression to WWII to race problems to the grind of the working man. Mr. Terkel has captured real Americans living real lives. I finished this book with a new appreciation for all those that have lived before me, and a new understanding of the uniquely American culture.

Tocqueville, Alexis de***Democracy in America (Non-fict.)***

In 1831, twenty-seven year old Alexis de Tocqueville and Gustave de Beaumont were sent by the French government to study the American prison system. They arrived in New York City in May of that year and spent nine months traveling around the United States, taking notes not only on prisons, but on all aspects of American society, including the nation's economy and its political system.

Tyler, Anne***Digging to America (Fict.)***

Two families arrive at the Baltimore/Washington International Airport in August 1997 to claim the Korean infants they have adopted. Strangers until that evening, they are destined to begin a friendship that will span their adoptive daughters' childhoods.

Vonnegut, Kurt***Slaughterhouse Five (Fict.)***

1969 novel by Kurt Vonnegut and one of his most popular works and widely regarded as a classic, it combines science fiction elements with an analysis of the human condition from an uncommon perspective, using time travel as a plot device and the bombing of Dresden in World War II, the aftermath of which Vonnegut witnessed, as a starting point.

God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater (Fict.)

Published in 1965, the plot focuses on Eliot Rosewater, the primary trustee of the philanthropic Rosewater Foundation whom one of the family lawyers, Norman Mushari, is attempting to have declared insane to enable a more distant relative, Fred Rosewater, an insurance salesman from Rhode Island, to gain control.

Warren, Robert Penn***All the King's Men (Fict.)***

Published in 1946, it portrays the dramatic political ascension and demise of Willie Stark (a.k.a. "the Boss"), a populist governor in the American South during the 1930s. The novel is narrated by Jack Burden, a political reporter who comes to work as Governor Stark's right-hand man. The trajectory of Stark's career is interwoven with Jack Burden's life story and philosophical reflections: "the story of Willie Stark and the story of Jack Burden are, in one sense, one story."

Wharton, Edith***The Custom of the Country (Fict.)***

Wharton creates one of the most unlikable, even despicable, characters known in American fiction. Undine Spragg is not a murderer, sociopath, or monster, but an ambitious young woman determined to climb New York's social ladder to the very top. The ambitions in themselves are not inherently bad, and other characters clearly share them. It is Undine's utter lack of regard for anyone else, from her aging parents to her neglected son, that makes her contemptible. What makes her chilling is the odd combination of ingenuousness and its opposite; with rare exceptions she is oblivious to the rights, aspirations, and feelings of others if they do not pertain to her own objectives.

Wideman, John Edgar***Philadelphia Fire (Fict.)***

When African-American writer Cudjoe returns to his hometown of Philadelphia to write a book about the 1985 police firebombing of a black cult, his homecoming spurs within him a myriad of memories and

impressions. While recalling the abandonment of his white wife and two children, his failed novel and a dead mentor, he provides rich observation about the about the crumbling state of a once-beloved city.

Wright, Richard

Black Boy (Non-Fict./bio.)

Classic of American autobiography, a subtly crafted narrative of Richard Wright's journey from innocence to experience in the Jim Crow South. An enduring story of one young man's coming of age during a particular time and place, *Black Boy* remains a seminal text in our history about what it means to be a man, black, and Southern in America.

Native Son (Fict.)

Bigger Thomas is doomed, trapped in a downward spiral that will lead to arrest, prison, or death, driven by despair, frustration, poverty, and incomprehension. As a young black man in the Chicago of the '30s, he has no way out of the walls of poverty and racism that surround him, and after he murders a young white woman in a moment of panic, these walls begin to close in. There is no help for him--not from his hapless family; not from liberal do-gooders or from his well-meaning yet naive friend Jan; certainly not from the police, prosecutors, or judges. Bigger is debased, aggressive, dangerous, and a violent criminal. As such, he has no claim upon our compassion or sympathy. And yet...

X, Malcolm

The Autobiography of Malcolm X (non-fict/bio)

Autobiography is a classic American tale of one of the most misunderstood figures in American history. Malcolm has been and is viewed as everything from an evil racist hate-monger to the champion of modern day militant pro-Black radicals. What he was, in reality, was a remarkably intelligent and charismatic leader who reflected the ills of the society around him, changed throughout his life, and gradually evolved from ignorance to anger to enlightenment.

Zinn, Howard

Zinn is a combat veteran of WWII, an American historian, social critic, and political scientist. He has been a visible figure in the Civil Rights movement and anti-war movements in the United States. Any of the following are recommended:

A People's History of the United States

Declarations of Independence

The People Speak: American Voices, Some Famous, Some Little Known

A People's History of the Civil War: Struggles for the Meaning of Freedom,
(with David Williams)

Voices of a People's History of the United States

You Can't Be Neutral on a Moving Train