

## Mercyhurst Preparatory School Required Summer Reading

### Seniors

At Mercyhurst Prep, we believe that to be truly educated, one must read. We want all of our students to experience the joy that reading brings, and we also want them to be exposed to the art of beautiful writing. We encourage our students to read closely, with attention and curiosity, and hope that they read for pleasure. To help them along, **MPS requires that all students enrolled in a College Prep (CP) English course read TWO BOOKS during the summer. Students enrolled in an IB English course must read THREE.**

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### SUMMER READING SELECTIONS

#### SENIORS

“You don’t have to burn books to destroy a culture. Just get people to stop reading them.”  
– Will Rogers

- 1) Students enrolled in World Literature CP choose one work from the list below.
- 2) Students enrolled in World Literature II – Honors/IB Standard Level choose two works from the list below.
- 3) Students enrolled in World Literature II- IB Higher Level choose two works from the list below.
- 4) Students enrolled in a college English class choose two works from the list below.
- 5) **Additionally, all students are required to personally choose one work to independently read. This work can be in any language and any genre.**

#### FICTION

*Siddhartha* by Herman Hesse

This classic novel of self-discovery is a story of a young Brahmin’s quest for the ultimate reality, taking him from the extremes of indulgent sensuality to the rigors of asceticism and self-denial. At last Siddhartha learns that wisdom cannot be taught; it must come from one’s own experience and inner struggle.

*\*Tess of the D’Urbervilles* by Thomas Hardy

Tess, a young woman facing untold hardships in Victorian England, battles gender, social and class biases as well as poverty and tragedy. (\*mature themes)

*City of the Beasts* by Isabel Allende

This novel is a sound introduction to magic realism. The story features the American teenager Alex who is pulled into an adventure in the mystical Amazon.

***Strapless: John Singer Sargent and the Fall of Madame X*** by Deborah Davis  
This is the story behind the famous portrait that rocked Parisian society in 1884.

***The Iliad*** by Homer

In this epic poem, the horror of men and gods battling drives the reader to the devastating conclusion of the Trojan War.

***The Screwtape Letters*** by C. S. Lewis

This is a classic masterpiece of religious satire that is an engaging account of temptation and triumph over it.

***Lord of the Flies*** by William Golding

The behavior of a group of boys marooned on an island devolves into primitive terror in this boundary-pushing classic.

## **DRAMA**

***Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*** by Tom Stoppard

This play is Shakespeare's *Hamlet* as perceived by its minor characters, the bewildered Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Reality and illusion are mixed up, and the Wheel of Fortune reigns.

***King Lear*** by William Shakespeare

A monarch is betrayed by his daughters, robbed of his kingdom, and descends into madness in this tragic drama, where the themes of injustice and the meaningless of life are explored.

## **NON-FICTION**

***Outliers*** by Malcolm Gladwell

Gladwell explores the key to success and discovers that it's not what we tend to think. He asserts that genius is overrated and success is not just about innate ability. Rather, it is about seizing the opportunity, random factors of chance, meaningful hard work and your cultural legacy.

***Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies*** by Jared Diamond

This book traces the dispersion of humanity from its beginnings on the African continent throughout the globe. Jared Diamond's theory of why there is such disparity between those who have advanced technology and those who still live primitively is exemplified through the impact of guns, germs and steel over time.

***Reading Lolita in Tehran: A Memoir*** by Azar Nafisi

Every Thursday morning for two years in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Azar Nafisi, a bold and inspired teacher, secretly gathered seven of her most committed female students to read forbidden Western classics. A work of great poetic beauty, this book gives a rare glimpse of women's lives in revolutionary Iran.

***A Brief History of Time*** by Stephen W. Hawking

Physicist Stephen Hawking reviews the history of scientific inquiry into the origins of the physical universe. Read about Einstein's theory of relativity and quantum mechanics.

## **POETRY**

***19 Varieties of Gazelle: Poems of the Middle East*** by Naomi Shihab Nye

This is a collection of poems about the Middle East and about being an Arab American living in the United States after September 11, 2001. These lines from Nye's heart are profoundly moving.