

(an excerpt from the Teaching the Classics syllabus)

Adams, Richard - Watership Down

Spurred on by the prophetic visions of their companion Fiver, Hazel, Bigwig, and the other rabbits flee their comfortable warren to avoid an unnamed, impending destruction. Their subsequent journey to find a new home explores the themes of leadership, courage, and loyalty – and raises thoughtful questions about the nature of a good society. An adventure that's heart thumping and provocative, you'll find this book about rabbits is really about much more.

Austen, Jane - Pride and Prejudice

Elizabeth lives in a period in which a girl's only hope was to marry well. Unable to inherit from fathers and husbands, women were forced to hope in the kindness of their male relations for subsistence. Initially put off by his own socially induced perception of class division, proud Mr. Darcy ultimately finds himself drawn to Miss Bennett's straightforward honesty and simple wisdom. Licking her own wounded pride, she herself rejects his advances. However, when a wandering eye draws her younger sister into a promiscuous affair, Elizabeth must rely on Darcy's kindness to make matters right. Not only a period romance, but also a social satire, this timeless classic will steal the hearts of female readers. Also by Austen: Sense and Sensibility, Emma

Beowulf

Early English poetic account of the exploits of one Beowulf against the vicious and murderous monster, Grendel. Important

because of its place in the development of English literature. A breathtaking warrior epic!

Bradbury, Ray - The Martian Chronicles

Science fiction, by one of the masters of the craft.

Bronte, Charlotte - Jane Eyre

Orphaned Jane is shipped off to live in an intolerably harsh asylum for castoff girls. The darkness of her life, however, does not quench her own gentle spirit, but rather becomes a hardship that produces within her great character, perseverance, and love.

Cather, Willa - My Antonia

Set in the early American west, an immigrant family must make a living in an inhospitable terrain.

Chaucer, Geoffrey - The Canterbury Tales

Pilgrims off to see the shrine of St. Thomas agree to entertain one another with stories along the way, and to reward the narrator of the best story with a free meal upon their return. Thus the tales are born. Their subject and themes betray the character and nature of their tellers, giving the reader a glimpse into the personalities of the Middle Ages of which they are a product. literary gem is a relic of its period for the historian, and likewise for the etymologist as it represents the first literary work ever written in the English vernacular. This book is well paired with Barbara Cohen's adaptation of the Tales, which are beautifully illustrated by Trina Schart Hyman.

Conrad, Joseph - Heart of Darkness

A profound study of the sinfulness of man.

Cooper, James Fenimore – The Last of the Mohicans

The first great novel of American Literature by her first great novelist. A sweeping epic set in the French and Indian War, *Mohicans* portrays the clash of civilizations that took place during the 1750's in vivid and gripping detail. "Noble Savages" confront savage Europeans, and the hero must choose which civilization to identify with.

Costain, Thomas - The Silver Chalice

Based on legends of the years following Christ's crucifixion, this novel describes the life of Basil, the artisan who fashioned the silver chalice that held the sacred cup from which Christ drank at the Last Supper.

Crane, Stephen - The Red Badge of Courage

Naturalist journalist Stephen Crane examines the effects of the American Civil War on a young and idealistic enlisted man. Shocked by the horrors of battle, the disillusioned man is injured as he flees the battlefield and all its carnage. Steeled by the death of his close companions and enraged by the atrocities of war, he is constrained to shoulder man-sized responsibilities, and returns to the battle to fight with true valor and purpose. Also by Crane: *The Blue Hotel* and *The Open Boat*.

D'Orczy, Baroness – The Scarlet Pimpernel

Set in the time of the French Revolution, this story follows the movements of a mysterious marauder, who secrets French aristocracy and targets of the popular wrath out of the country under the noses of their hunters. His infamous exploits become the pulp of gossip in the English social circles frequented by newly married Marguerite, who

wishes she'd married the mysterious fellow instead of her own, dull spouse.

Dante - The Divine Comedy

The first literary work ever to be written in the Italian vernacular. Dante places various political and religious leaders of his era in varying levels of hell, using the principle of retributive justice to determine their eternal reward.

Defoe, Daniel – The Adventures of Robinson Crusoe

Every boy's dream of life on a desert island, this tale of a stranded sailor and his providential isolation is a strong description of the journey of a sinner to salvation.

Dickens, Charles - Great Expectations

Dickens, who initially published his works in magazines, herein tells the story of Pip, a common boy with dreams of greatness. When his ambitions are realized by an undisclosed benefactor, he forgets his roots and takes on airs, hoping to attract the attentions of high-born and disdainful Estella. A startling examination of love, sin, betrayal, and respect, Dickens's characterizations are unparalleled. Also by Dickens: A Tale of Two Cities, A Christmas Carol, David Copperfield, Nicholas Nickleby, and others.

Dillard, Annie – A Pilgrim at Tinker Creek

A master of metaphor, this book represents a collection of essays the author wrote during her personal Thoreau experience. It is densely written, and poetically effected so that each essay strikes deep chords, some horrifying and others lovely. The severity of nature is taken is one great gulp with its simple beauty. The author conjures up pictures that remain long after the last page is consumed.

Dumas, Alexandre – The Three Musketeers

A swashbuckling suspense tale of three daring defenders of King Louis XIII, and

their youthful and idealistic protégée, D'Artagnan. The Three Musketeers combines romance and intrigue to create a fantastically entertaining adventure story of the battle between good and evil in pre-Revolution era France. Also by Dumas: The Count of Monte Cristo, The Man in the Iron Mask

Forester, C.S. – Lieutenant Hornblower

Eleven volumes of adventure on the high seas during the Napoleonic Wars as seen by hero Horatio Hornblower.

H.G. Wells - The Invisible Man

A psychological thriller about a young scientist who must face the consequences of his own experiments. Using himself as the subject, the scientist discovers the key to invisibility; yet, he is unable to reverse the results.

Hawthorne, Nathaniel – The Scarlet Letter

Set in Puritan New England, this story traces the effects of hidden sin on one sadly oppressed pastor, comparing its tyranny with the effects of confessed sin in the life of another, Hester Prynne.

Hemingway, Ernest – The Old Man and the Sea

A master of modern American prose, Hemingway's rejection of Christianity is borne out in the bleak worldview his works espouse. With no true redemption, grace under pressure becomes the character quality most prized. Also by Hemingway: *The Sun Also Rises*, "The Snows of Kilimanjaro", and numerous short stories. His short play, "Today Is Friday," is perhaps one of the most revealing of his works.

Henry, O. – "The Ransom of Red Chief" and other short stories

Perhaps the master of his genre, O. Henry distinguishes himself time and again in his

collection of short stories, each with unique humor and a developed sense of irony.

Henty, G.A. - The Cat of Bubastes

Set in ancient Egypt, this work of historical fiction follows a conquered prince into servitude in an Egyptian household where, together with his master's son, he

seeks to cover up the unintentional slaying of a cat, deemed sacred, and exposes the deceit and trickery of temple priests, stumbling into a murderous plot against his master's life. This and other Henty books are rich in historical detail, enriching any study of their period settings.

Herriot, James - All Creatures Great and Small

English country veterinarian James Herriot writes of his daily interactions with all of God's great creatures. Also by the author, All Things Bright and Beautiful, and All Things Wise and Wonderful.

Heyerdahl, Thor - Kon-Tiki

An 101 day journey across the Pacific on a balsa wood raft to prove an historical theory made history of its own in April of 1947. Battling sharks and leaks and the elements, Heyerdahl and his crew lived one of the great ocean adventures of all time.

Hilton, James - Good-bye Mr. Chips

Dear old Chips, the English schoolmaster that found personal worth and usefulness in spite of mediocrity...Few are great. Most are mediocre. But mediocrity is not failure. An average life leaves ripples in the lives of so many.

Homer - The Iliad

When Menelaus's beloved wife, Helen, is borne off by Paris the Trojan, all Helen's erstwhile suitors band together to retrieve her. Thus follows the siege of Troy, the exploits of the soldier, Odysseus, and the tragic story of the anti-hero, Achilles. The character qualities the Greeks extolled become evident, and the

human condition is laid bare in this beautiful and captivating epic.

Homer – *The Odyssey*

A sequel to *The Iliad*, this narrative follows Odysseus on his journey home from the Trojan War.

Hugo, Victor – Les Miserables

Hugo's tale of the French Revolution and the fugitive, Jean Valjean, is imbued with an understanding of the nature of the Law, and the redemptive power of self-sacrificing grace.

Irving, Washington – The Legend of Sleepy Hollow

After being rebuffed by the damsel Katrina, schoolmaster Ichabod Crane rides off on his landlord's horse, sees an apparition of a headless horseman, and is never seen again. Also by Irving: Rip Van Winkle

Jacques, Brian - Redwall (series)

In the tradition of Tolkien's *The Hobbit* and Grahame's *Wind and the Willows*, meet Matthias, a church mouse destined for greatness. Epic in its scope, the battle between good and evil rages within the pages of this narrative.

Latham, Jean Lee - Carry On, Mr. Bowditch

The biography of a math genius, thrust into indentured servitude by a family that could not support him. Nathaniel Bowditch finds his calling to be deeper than his circumstances.

Lee, Harper - To Kill A Mockingbird

Lee's tale of a young girl's journey to maturity in Depression-era Alabama is imbued with warmth, humor, and wisdom. Somewhat autobiographical in nature, this treasure remains Lee's one gift to the world.