

The List

The English Department invites you to complete the list. What is the list? It is easier to say what it is not than what it is. It is not a list of books that represents the canon. It is not even a list of all our favorite books or all the great works we hope you will someday read. Rather, it is the list of books that emerged when we asked this question of ourselves: what books do we think are essential; what books do we think no one—and in particular, no English major—should leave college without having read? We gave ourselves this limitation: we could each only offer up five books for the list and at least three of those had to come from our area of specialization. So, the list is idiosyncratic in the best sense of the word: thirteen of us struggled individually to identify the five books we thought it most essential for you to read while in college; the 65 books that emerged from those individual choices became “The List.”

We hope you will take the challenge to read these books along with us. For those of you who complete all 65 books, you get to make a difficult choice yourself: you get to choose a work of literature to add to the list. For those of you who complete 50 works from the list, we will buy you a copy of your favorite work from the list, inscribe it, and then invite you at the end of the year to join us at a literary salon where we discuss these wonderful works.

Here's how the challenge works:

- Sign up in the English Department office (Hollenbeck 102) if you want to take the challenge. You have your college years to complete the list.
- When you finish reading a work of literature from the list, pick up a slip from the English Department office to fill out with your name and the title of the book.
- Take that slip with you and talk with the professor(s) who recommended the book about what you found most interesting about the work, and get his/her signature on your completion slip. Return the slip to the English Department office.
- When you complete 50 works, there is cause for celebration: a gift of a book and the promised party are forthcoming. If you complete all 65, you have earned the right to name your own essential book and alumni will be contacting you in the future and letting you know what they found interesting about your selection.

The (check) List

Date
Read

- _____ *A Supposedly Fun Thing I'll Never Do Again*, David Foster Wallace (Mattison)
- _____ *Absalom, Absalom*, William Faulkner (Hinson)
- _____ *Age of Innocence*, Edith Wharton (Askeland)
- _____ *American Indian Stories*, Zitkala-Sa (Askeland)
- _____ *Beckett's Trilogy: Malloy, Malone Dies, The Unnameable* (Smith)
- _____ *Clarissa*, Samuel Richardson, Broadview abridged (Richards)
- _____ *Collected Poetry of W.B. Yeats* (Smith)
- _____ *Evelina*, Frances Burney (Richards)
- _____ *Frankenstein*, Mary Shelley (Incorvati)
- _____ *Geek Love*, Katherine Dunn (Mattison)
- _____ *Howl and Other Poems*, Alan Ginsberg (Davis)
- _____ *Huck Finn*, Mark Twain (McClelland)
- _____ *In Memoriam*, Alfred Tennyson (Inboden)
- _____ *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, Harriet Jacobs (Askeland)
- _____ *Invisible Man*, Ralph Ellison (McClelland)
- _____ *Jane Eyre*, Charlotte Bronte (Inboden)
- _____ *King Lear*, William Shakespeare (Buckman)
- _____ *"Lamia," "Isabella," "The Eve of St. Agnes," and other poems*, John Keats (Incorvati)
- _____ *Leaves of Grass*, Walt Whitman (Davis)
- _____ *Lost in the Funhouse*, John Barth (Mattison)
- _____ *Love Medicine*, Louise Erdrich (Hinson)

Date
Read

- _____ *Lyrical Ballads*, Williams Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge (Incorvati)
- _____ *Middlemarch*, George Eliot (Inboden)
- _____ *Moby Dick*, Herman Melville (Davis and McClelland)
- _____ *Notebook of a Return to the Native Land*, Aime Cesaire (Wilkerson)
- _____ *Omeros*, Derek Walcott (Wilkerson)
- _____ *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, Gabriel Garcia Marquez (Hinson)
- _____ *Paradise Lost*, John Milton (Buckman)
- _____ *Plum Bun*, Jessie Fauset (Wilkerson)
- _____ *Pride and Prejudice*, Jane Austen (Incorvati)
- _____ *Prospero's Daughter*, Elizabeth Nunez (Wilkerson)
- _____ *Rhetorical Grammar*, Martha Kolin and Loretta Gray, 7th edition (Mattison)
- _____ *Selected Poetry of the Brownings* (Inboden)
- _____ *Selected Works of John Donne* (Buckman)
- _____ *Slouching Towards Bethlehem*, Joan Didion (Fallon)
- _____ *Souls of Black Folk*, W.E.B. DuBois (Wilkerson)
- _____ *Still Life with Woodpecker*, Tom Robbins (Mattison)
- _____ *Suttree*, Cormac McCarthy (Smith)
- _____ *Teaching a Stone to Talk*, Annie Dillard (Fallon)
- _____ *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, Thomas Hardy (Inboden)
- _____ *The Boys of My Youth*, Jo Ann Beard (Fallon)
- _____ *The Collected Poems*, Sylvia Plath (Rambo)
- _____ *The Collected Poems*, Wallace Stevens (Rambo)
- _____ *The Complete Poems*, Elizabeth Bishop (Rambo)
- _____ *The Complete Poems*, Emily Dickinson (Rambo)
- _____ *The Complete Stories*, Flannery O'Connor (Davis)

Date
Read

- _____ *The Essential Neruda: Selected Poems*, Pablo Neruda (Rambo)
- _____ *The Faerie Queene*, Edmund Spenser (Buckman)
- _____ *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Oscar Wilde (Incorvati)
- _____ *The Letters of John Keats* (Richards)
- _____ *The Moor's Last Sigh*, Salman Rushdie (Hinson)
- _____ *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave*, Frederick Douglass (Davis)
- _____ *The Things They Carried*, Tim O'Brien (Fallon)
- _____ *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, Milan Kundera (Hinson)
- _____ *The Undertaking*, Thomas Lynch (Fallon)
- _____ *The Winter's Tale*, William Shakespeare (Buckman)
- _____ *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, Zora Neale Hurston (McClelland)
- _____ *To the Lighthouse*, Virginia Woolf (Smith)
- _____ *Tom Jones*, Henry Fielding (Richards)
- _____ *Tristram Shandy*, Laurence Sterne (Richards)
- _____ *Ulysses*, James Joyce (Smith and Davis)
- _____ *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Harriet Beecher Stowe (Askeland)
- _____ *Walden*, Henry David Thoreau (Davis)
- _____ *White Noise*, Don DeLillo (McClelland and Davis)
- _____ *Who Would Have Thought It?*, Maria Ruiz de Burton (Askeland)
- _____ *Flatland*, Edwin A. Abbott (Jordan Hildebrandt: the first student to complete The List—
including an additional 10 selections from Emeriti professors Kent and Mimi Dixon, May 2012)