

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 List by Professor

Dr. Lori Askeland

Uncle Tom's Cabin, Harriet Beecher Stowe

Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, Harriet Jacobs

Who Would Have Thought It?, Maria Ruiz de Burton

Age of Innocence, Edith Wharton

American Indian Stories, Zitkala-Sa

Dr. Ty Buckman

The Faerie Queene, Edmund Spenser

King Lear, William Shakespeare

The Winter's Tale, William Shakespeare

Selected Works of John Donne

Paradise Lost, John Milton

Dr. Robert Davis

The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave, Frederick Douglass

Moby Dick, Herman Melville (also McClelland)

Walden, Henry David Thoreau

Leaves of Grass, Walt Whitman

Ulysses, James Joyce (also Smith)

Howl and Other Poems, Alan Ginsberg

The Complete Stories, Flannery O'Connor
White Noise, Don DeLillo (also McClelland)

Professor D'Arcy Fallon

Slouching Towards Bethlehem, Joan Didion
Teaching a Stone to Talk, Annie Dillard
The Things They Carried, Tim O'Brien
The Boys of My Youth, Jo Ann Beard
The Undertaking, Thomas Lynch

Dr. Scot Hinson

Absalom, Absalom, William Faulkner
One Hundred Years of Solitude, Gabriel Garcia Marquez
The Unbearable Lightness of Being, Milan Kundera
Love Medicine, Louise Erdrich
The Moor's Last Sigh, Salman Rushdie

Dr. Robin Inboden

Selected Poetry of the Brownings
Jane Eyre, Charlotte Bronte
In Memoriam, Alfred Tennyson
Middlemarch, George Eliot
Tess of the d'Urbervilles, Thomas Hardy

Dr. Rick Inorvati

Lyrical Ballads, William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Pride and Prejudice, Jane Austen

Frankenstein, Mary Shelley

“Lamia,” “Isabella,” “The Eve of St. Agnes,” and other poems, John Keats

The Importance of Being Earnest, Oscar Wilde

Dr. Michael Mattison

Lost in the Funhouse, John Barth

Still Life with Woodpecker, Tom Robbins

Rhetorical Grammar, Martha Kolin and Loretta Gray, 7th edition

A Supposedly Fun Thing I’ll Never Do Again, David Foster Wallace

Geek Love, Katherine Dunn

Dr. Michael McClelland

Moby Dick, Herman Melville (also Davis)

Huck Finn, Mark Twain

Their Eyes Were Watching God, Zora Neale Hurston

Invisible Man, Ralph Ellison

White Noise, Don DeLillo (also Davis)

Professor Jody Rambo

The Collected Poems, Wallace Stevens

The Complete Poems, Emily Dickinson

The Complete Poems, Elizabeth Bishop

The Collected Poems, Sylvia Plath

The Essential Neruda: Selected Poems, Pablo Neruda

Dr. Cynthia Richards

Clarissa, Samuel Richardson (Broadview abridged)

Tom Jones, Henry Fielding

Tristram Shandy, Laurence Sterne

Evelina, Frances Burney

The Letters of John Keats

Dr. Fitz Smith

Ulysses, James Joyce (also Davis)

To the Lighthouse, Virginia Woolf

Collected Poetry of W.B. Yeats

Beckett's Trilogy: Malloy, Malone Dies, The Unnameable

Suttree, Cormac McCarthy

Dr. Carmiele Wilkerson

Souls of Black Folk, W.E.B. DuBois

Plum Bun, Jessie Fauset

Notebook of a Return to the Native Land, Aime Cesaire

Omeros, Derek Walcott

Prospero's Daughter, Elizabeth Nunez

Jordan Hildebrandt

Flatland, Edwin A. Abbott (Mr. Hildebrandt was the first student to complete The List— including an additional 10 selections from Emeriti professors Kent and Mimi Dixon, May 2012)