Honors/DUAL CREDIT Book Choices:

**English II Honors (9th grade)** Choose **ONE** of the following:

*Alas Babylon* by Pat Frank

This true modern masterpiece is built around the two fateful words that make up the title and herald the end—“Alas, Babylon.” When a nuclear holocaust ravages the United States, a thousand years of civilization are stripped away overnight, and tens of millions of people are killed instantly.

But for one small town in Florida, miraculously spared, the struggle is just beginning, as men and women of all backgrounds join together to confront the darkness. The tale paints an ominous picture of the terrible possibilities of the nuclear age. The book, though, is not primarily about the military aspects, or science, or fighting back. It is about survival of the people after the attack has destroyed the infrastructure of society and anarchy reigns, and how they cope with it. Would you be able to survive after being cut off from the rest of the world? How would you cope?

*The Lord of the Flies* by William Golding

Are you familiar with the phrase “It’s all fun and games until someone gets hurt?” This book examines what could happen when you have unstructured, unsupervised time on your hands. What would you do if there were no adults? What if no one is watching you or enforcing rules? What is more important—keeping up a good camp with order and responsibility or having fun with no rules? How long could you live like this before things go bad? Which should come first, your wants or your needs? This is a journey that takes you back to man’s original need to hunt and slay the “beast,” but just who or what is the “beast”? Is it the wild boar that is a possible food source? Is it a dark mysterious force that lurks just outside the camp fire? Or . . . are you the “beast”?

**English III Honors (10th grade Honors British Literature)** Choose **ONE** of the following:

*A Tale of Two Cities*, Charles Dickens

The storming of the Bastille . . . the death carts with their doomed human cargo . . . the swift drop of the guillotine blade—this is the French Revolution that Charles Dickens vividly captures in this famous work. With dramatic eloquence he brings to life a time of terror and treason, a starving people rising in frenzy and hate to overthrow a corrupt and decadent regime. With insight and compassion he casts his novel of unforgettable scenes with unforgettable characters.

(List continued on next page)
Jane Eyre, Charlotte Bronte

Charlotte Bronte’s impassioned novel is the love story of Jane Eyre, a plain yet spirited governess, and her employer, the arrogant, brooding Mr. Rochester. Published in 1847 under the pseudonym of Currer Bell, the book heralded a new kind of heroine—one whose virtuous integrity, keen intellect and tireless perseverance broke through class barriers to win equal stature with the man she loved. Hailed by William Makepeace Thackeray as “the masterwork of a great genius,” Jane Eyre is still regarded, over a century later, as one of the finest novels in English literature.

Pride and Prejudice, Jane Austen

Austen trains her sights on a country village and a few families—in this case, the Bennets, the Philips, and the Lucases. Into their midst comes Mr. Bingley, a single man of good fortune, and his friend, Mr. Darcy, who is even richer. Mrs. Bennet, who married above her station, sees their arrival as an opportunity to marry off at least one of her five daughters. Bingley is complaisant and easily charmed by the eldest Bennet girl, Jane; Darcy, however, is harder to please. Put off by Mrs. Bennet's vulgarity and the untoward behavior of the three younger daughters, he is unable to see the true worth of the older girls, Jane and Elizabeth. His excessive pride offends Lizzy, who is more than willing to believe the worst that other people have to say of him; when George Wickham, a soldier stationed in the village, does indeed have a discreditable tale to tell, his words fall on fertile ground.

Wuthering Heights, Emily Bronte

Classic novel of consuming passions, played out against the lonely moors of northern England, recounts the turbulent and tempestuous love story of Cathy and Heathcliff. Heathcliff and Cathy, childhood playmates who grow into soul mates, believe they’re destined to love each other forever, but when cruelty and snobbery separate them, their untamed emotions literally consume them. Both poetic and incisive, this novel examines the dark depths of human psychology as the soul searches for love, understanding, and acceptance.

English IV Honors (Honors American Literature) Choose ONE of the following: *Note: Our Town and A Streetcar Named Desire are paired readings.

The Sun Also Rises, Ernest Hemingway

What does it mean to be a part of the “Lost Generation”? In his career-making novel, Hemingway provides a poignant look at the disillusionment and angst of the post-World War I generation. The story follows the flamboyant Lady Brett Ashley and the hapless Jake Barnes as they journey from the wild nightlife of 1920s Paris to the brutal bullfighting rings of Spain with a motley
group of expatriates. It is an age of moral bankruptcy, spiritual dissolution, unrealized love and vanishing illusions. Every element of every great Hemingway book can be seen here - plenty of vivid descriptions; moments of strange, elegiac melancholy; the human spirit fighting against the world; loneliness, isolation, and endurance. They're all here as Jake struggles to find his place in a world that is far less innocent now.

The Age of Innocence by Edith Wharton

The Age of Innocence is the haunting story of the struggle between love and duty in Gilded Age New York told through the eyes of Newland Archer and his betrothed, May Welland. A young lawyer on the rise, Newland Archer needs only a society wife to solidify his position, but finds himself torn after he meets and falls deeply in love with May’s disgraced cousin, the Countess Olenska. This is an exclusive, stifling social world, which is the only world Newland has ever known and the "home" Ellen has longed for all her life, and the society is so established and rigid that both of these strong people find it overwhelming. Even though neither of them is happy here, what choice do they have? While the attraction between Archer Newland and Countess Olenska is undeniably strong, can Archer Newland deny the foundation of his upbringing? Can he defy the monster that is "society?" Can love truly conquer all?

Our Town by Thornton Wilder (paired with A Streetcar Named Desire)

Do people really understand the significance of their lives while they are living or does it take death to make sense of it? Taking place between 1901 and 1913, this three-act drama focuses on the seemingly average lives of the citizens of Grover’s Corner. But are these lives really what they appear to be? The characters share flashbacks, monologues and events as they examine the milestones of life: birth, marriage, and inevitable death as part of the cycle of life.

A Streetcar Named Desire by Tennessee Williams (paired with Our Town)

A powerful look at the culture clash between the Old South and the rising urban industrial class when fading southern belle Blanche Dubois moves in with her sister Stella and brother-in-law Stanley. Out of touch with reality and living in her own fantasies, Blanche is tormented by her brother-in-law as she struggles to cope in the new working class society of the New South.

English V Honors/DUAL CREDIT (12th grade Honors) Choose ONE of the following:

Hard Times, Charles Dickens

The novel is set in a system whose schools eschew the arts and humanities. These are hard times, but not times without humor. School teacher Gradgrind makes it clear that feelings, art, decoration, are worthless distractions. Only facts have value. Gradgrind's own children, Tom and Louisa, prove early victims of this "just the facts" upbringing. By way of contrast, Sissy Jupe, perhaps Gradgrind's worst
student, the indigent daughter of circus performers, channels her innate creativity to save Tom from jail and Louisa from an unwanted husband.

*A Prayer for Owen Meany* by John Irving

Owen Meany is a dwarfish boy with a strange voice who accidentally kills his best friend's mom with a baseball and believes--accurately--that he is an instrument of God, to be redeemed by martyrdom.

*The Mayor of Casterbridge* by Thomas Hardy

The novel opens with a poor workman named Michael Henchard, in a fit of drunken rage when he sells his wife and baby daughter to a stranger at a country fair. Stricken with remorse, Henchard forsweares alcohol and works hard to become a prosperous businessman and the respected mayor of Casterbridge. But he cannot erase his past. His wife ultimately returns to offer Henchard the choice of redemption or a further descent into his own self-destructive nature.

*To the Lighthouse* by Virginia Woolf

The three sections of the book take place between 1910 and 1920 and revolve around various members of the Ramsay family during visits to their summer residence on the Isle of Skye in Scotland. Mrs. Ramsay, with her emotional, poetic frame of mind, contrasts Mr. Ramsay, a self-centered philosopher, but both are flawed by their limited perspectives. A painter and friend of the family, Lily Briscoe, works on completing a painting throughout the novel.

*Note: Upon returning to school, the first reading assignment is paired with the summer reading selections. Students will need to pick/purchase ONE of the following selections for the first week of school.*

*The Last Lecture* by Randy Pausch & Jeffrey Zaslow

*Tuesdays with Morrie* by Mitch Albom

*The Five People You Meet in Heaven* by Mitch Albom

*Crazy Love* by Francis Chan

*The Last Lecture* by Randy Pausch & Jeffrey Zaslow

When Randy Pausch, a computer science professor at Carnegie Mellon, was asked to give such a lecture, he didn't have to imagine it as his last, since he had recently been diagnosed with terminal cancer. But the lecture he gave--"Really Achieving Your Childhood Dreams"--wasn't about dying. It was about the importance of overcoming obstacles, of enabling the dreams of others, of seizing every moment (because "time is all you have...and you may find one day that you have less than you think"). It was a summation of everything Randy had come to believe. It was about living.

*Tuesdays with Morrie* by Mitch Albom

This true story about the love between a spiritual mentor and his pupil has soared to the bestseller list for many reasons. For starters: it reminds us of the affection and gratitude that many of us still feel for the significant mentors of our past. It also plays out a fantasy many of us have entertained: what would it
be like to look those people up again, tell them how much they meant to us, maybe even resume the mentorship? Plus, we meet Morrie Schwartz--a one of a kind professor, whom the author describes as looking like a cross between a biblical prophet and Christmas elf. And finally we are privy to intimate moments of Morrie's final days as he lies dying from a terminal illness. Even on his deathbed, this twinkling-eyed mensch manages to teach us all about living robustly and fully.

*The Five People You Meet in Heaven* by Mitch Albom

Part melodrama and part parable, Mitch Albom's *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* weaves together three stories, all told about the same man: 83-year-old Eddie, the head maintenance person at Ruby Point Amusement Park. As the novel opens, readers are told that Eddie, unsuspecting, is only minutes away from death as he goes about his typical business at the park. Albom then traces Eddie's world through his tragic final moments, his funeral, and the ensuing days as friends clean out his apartment and adjust to life without him. In alternating sections, Albom flashes back to Eddie's birthdays, telling his life story as a kind of progress report over candles and cake each year. And in the third and last thread of the novel, Albom follows Eddie into heaven where the maintenance man sequentially encounters five pivotal figures from his life. Each person has been waiting for him in heaven, and, as Albom reveals, each life (and death) was woven into Eddie's own in ways he never suspected. Each soul has a story to tell, a secret to reveal, and a lesson to share. Through them Eddie understands the meaning of his own life even as his arrival brings closure to theirs.

*Crazy Love* by Francis Chan

Chan's own life compels him to live with urgency, and with good reason. His mother died giving birth to him, his stepmother died when he was nine, and his dad when he was 12. As a pastor, Chan says that conducting weekly funerals for people younger than himself has likewise sobered him to life's unexpectedness and frailty. The book offers real-life accounts of people who have given all—time, money, health, even their lives. Chan also recounts his own attempts to live crazy by significantly downsizing his home and giving away his resources to the poor.