

## English 11 - American Studies Honors - Summer Reading 2026

Hello American Studies Students!

In class this upcoming school year, we will be reading, discussing, and studying a wide variety of American literature. The goal of this summer's reading is to expose you to various works of fiction and non-fiction in order to learn more about America through literature. If you have questions, please email Mrs. Sica at [psica@bishopbrady.edu](mailto:psica@bishopbrady.edu).

Happy Reading!

The Bishop Brady English Department

**Note to Parents, Families, and Guardians:** Our 2026 Summer Reading suggestions include some titles containing mature themes and content. Thus, we encourage parents and guardians to take an active role in helping individual students choose those books that are the best for them. Several websites, including Common Sense Media and Amazon.com, offer reviews to help parents and students make the best selection.

### Bishop Brady Honor Code Pledge

By signing this statement, I agree that I have read the Honor Code Policy as stated in the Student/Parent handbook, understand it, and will abide by its provisions. As a student, my signature indicates that I agree to the following statement on all academic activities requested by faculty. I agree that if the statement is not requested, I still will abide by the Honor Code Policy.

### Bishop Brady Honor Code Statement

During this activity I have not participated in or been witness to a violation of the Bishop Brady Honor Code.

**Student Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:**

\_\_\_\_\_

[See pgs. 20 and 55 in 2025-2026 Student-Parent Handbook]

**The Assignment: You will read two selections (1 fiction and 1 non-fiction) from the list below.**

### **Fiction**

*The Sun Also Rises* - Ernest Hemingway

*The Things They Carried*- Tim O'Brien

*Their Eyes Were Watching God* - Zora Neale Hurston

*A Prayer for Owen Meany* - John Irving

*Little Fires Everywhere* - Celeste Ng

### **Non-Fiction**

*Rocket Boys (The Coalwood Series #1)*--Homer H. Hickam

*In the Garden of Beasts* -- Erik Larson

*The Emerald Mile* -- Kevin Fedarko

*Dreams From My Father* -- Barack Obama

*Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption* -- Brian Stephenson

### **Fiction**

- For your fiction selection, you will complete a visual project which should represent the overall message of the novel. It should also convey any deeper meaning you see in the work. The goal here is to capture the essence of the book in a unique, creative way. You will present the project to the class during the first two weeks of school.
- Some ideas for your visual project: collage, painting, drawing, brochure with pictures, diorama, redesigned book cover/jacket, costume design for characters, artistic interpretation of setting/theme/etc. Be creative. Look at the rubric.
- **No digital projects.**
- **Your project is DUE Thursday, September, 3, 2026, at the start of class.**

### **Non-Fiction**

- For your non-fiction selection, you will respond to a writing prompt.
- The prompt will be provided during class ***WITHIN THE FIRST TWO WEEKS OF SCHOOL*** and you will complete the assignment in that class.
- You will not be writing a summary. Expect a question on purpose, symbolism, point of view, etc. It will be graded.
- You will be able to use and reference your book while writing your essay which is why annotating would be beneficial.

## **Fiction Novel: Visual Project Ideas**

1. **Scrapbook.** Think about all the kinds of mementos you would put in a scrapbook if you had one. Then create a scrapbook for your character, cutting out pictures from magazines or drawing the mementos he or she would have in a scrapbook. Include at least ten mementoes.
2. **Re-write and illustrate the story as a picture book** for young children. Include both images and words. Your story should be at least twenty pages in length.
3. **Word collage.** Write the title of the book in the center of a sheet of paper. Then look through magazines for words, phrases, and sentences that illustrate or tell something about your book. As you look, think in terms of the theme, setting, plot line, as well as characters. Work to get **fifty** such words, phrases, or sentences so the whole sheet of paper will be covered with no visible blank space. The visual impact of the collage should tell a potential reader a lot about the book.
4. **Create a character's room.** We learn a lot about people by what they keep in their closets, what they have on their walls, what they select to put in a room. Select a character you know well and create a living room, bedroom, kitchen, or some other room that would mean a lot to the character. Draw it or write about it, making sure to include an explanation of why you designed the room as you did.
5. **Create a mobile from items related to the story.** Select 10 items that represent people, places, events, or other parts of the book and hang them from a hanger using string or yarn. Write a key that explains each object and why you chose it.
6. **Create a diorama of a scene from the book.** Create a scene from the book in a shoebox or other box paying attention to detail and nuance. Write a description of what the scene shows; this should be at least one, detailed paragraph.
7. **Create an illustrated timeline** showing the important events in this book. Your timeline should include at least twenty events from throughout the entire novel. While digital timelines are appealing, please create a physical project.
8. **Invent a game** (sport, board, word, logic, or other) inspired by the book. Your game should include the board(s), pieces, rules, etc.
9. **Create a playlist of at least twelve songs** and explain how each song relates to either the characters, settings or themes of your book. Be sure to include the song title, the artist, and a written explanation of at least 3-5 sentences per song.

| Category                | Advanced<br>(10 points)  | Proficient<br>(7-8 points)   | Basic<br>(5-6 points)  | Below Basic<br>(4 points or below)   |
|-------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| Originality / Inference | Student imaginatively infers what may happen before or after an author's writing, or makes educated and supported guesses about the author's or a character's hidden intent. | Student uses imagination and inferences in determining an author's intent, as well as what may have happened before and after the text.  | Student makes reasonable guesses at where an author is going in the writing, but only supports these assertions with minimal textual evidence..          | Student either doesn't make any inferences, or makes those that he or she cannot support from the text.  |
| Description / Detail    | Student insightfully provides detailed explanations about various components of a text while demonstrating keen understanding for multiple nuances or interpretations.       | Student provides ample detail and description about several elements of a text while showing exceptional understanding of how to view characters and the author's intent through various lenses. | Student demonstrates an understanding of the main events, themes, and characters, but does not delve into these components from more than one viewpoint. | Student provides minimal or no detail on any components of the text, while displaying little insight into the plot, setting, characters, or themes of that work. |
| Accuracy                | Student presents claims and information that are not only accurate but show a level of understanding beyond the surface level of a text.                                     | Student's claims are all accurately presented and clearly supported through citation of relevant textual evidence.   | Student's claims are mostly accurate, but only somewhat supported by citations of relevant textual evidence.   | Student makes claims that are either inaccurate or cannot be supported at all by the text.   |
| Art / Layout            | Student's artwork attractively shows careful thought as to its interpretation and meaning, as well as its relevance to the written work.                                     | Student's artwork attractively shows some thought as to its interpretation and meaning, as well as its relevance to the written work.  | Student's artwork is attractive, but shows little thought as to its interpretation and meaning.  | Student's artwork is not colorful and shows little or no thought as to its relevance to the written work at hand.  |
| Presentation            | Student presents enthusiastically, accurately, and thoroughly. Speaks loudly and clearly. Maintains consistent eye contact.  | Student presents concisely. Speaks clearly. Eye contact is maintained.   | Student presents project. Difficult to hear. Minimal eye contact.  | No presentation.   |