

May 16, 2008

Dear Junior A-Level English student,

Welcome to the Junior A-Level program for the 2008-2009 school year. The two works selected for summer reading have a direct connection to the overall themes and topics covered in American literature. We are looking forward to having great class discussions about both of these books. Copies of the two required texts are available at any bookstore or library. Extra copies have been ordered from Barnes and Noble in Town Square and Borders at Rice Lake. Please read the following two works:

1. **The Grapes of Wrath by John Steinbeck**

An objective test over this novel, as well as over background information delineated below, will be given on the first full day of the semester, Wednesday, August 21st.

- **Please keep notes on this text.** Include discussion questions, important quotes, reactions, character analysis, literary devices used, recurrent elements or symbols, larger ideas or themes, and anything else that would be of interest or value in discussion and writing.
- **Pre-reading strategy** – Before reading the book, please do a little research into the Great Depression. This book will be discussed primarily second semester. The focus of second semester is the American Dream, so please pay special attention to the characters interactions with the American Dream.

2. **Into the Wild by Jon Krakauer**

This book will be the subject of an in-class essay to be written by all A-level students on the second full day of the semester, Thursday, August 22nd.

- **Please keep notes on this text.** Include discussion questions, important quotes, reactions, character analysis, literary devices used, recurrent elements or symbols, larger ideas or themes, and anything else that would be of interest or value in discussion and writing. These notes may be used on the in-class essay.
- **Pre-reading strategy** – Pay close attention to the conflicts between the individual and society as well as the individual's relationship with nature as these will be two of the defining questions first semester.
- **Bring your book.** Please bring *Into the Wild* and your notes to the first full day of class for use during the in-class essay.

Please note that these novels contain some challenging topics and mature subject matter.

We hope you enjoy reading these books as much as all of us in the English department will enjoy our own summer reading. We encourage you to find a quiet place where you can escape into these fine works.

Sincerely,

Mr. James Claud

Mr. Richard Mitchell