

BROOKLINE HIGH SCHOOL SUMMER READING LIST 2015

SUMMER READING 2015 is designed to align with Courageous Conversations, a school-wide committee that explores issues of race and racism at BHS, in order to promote educational equity. This year we selected one required book for 9th and 10 grades, *American Born Chinese*, a graphic novel by Gene Luen Yang, and one required book for 11th and 12th grades, *Caucasia*, by BHS alumna Danzy Senna. All students are required to read at least one more title on this topic in preparation for activities in September that will revolve around Summer Reading. Please select from the list below or go to BHS Library Catalog (bhslibrary.weebly.com) and click on the tab for a "visual search". Choose "race/identity/racial justice". Feel free to choose from any grade level or try a different book by any of the recommended authors, and don't forget the classics.

All books may be checked out from BHS Library for the summer!

NINTH and TENTH GRADES

***Cool Salsa: Bilingual Poems on Growing Up Latino in the United States* edited by Lori M. Carlson**

In both English and Spanish, many popular poets help us to discover the stories behind the memories, prejudice and fear, love and life -- sharing their experiences of what it was like growing up Latino in America.

***The Dragon's Child* by Lawrence Yep**

Ten-year-old Gim Lew Yep immigrates to America from China with his father, whom Gim barely knows, and fears he will be a disappointment to his family when he arrives at Angel Island.

***If You Come Softly* by Jacqueline Woodson**

A high school romance between Miah, who is African American and Ellie, who is white, is cut short by a tragic event.

***Leon's Story* by Leon Tillage (non-fiction)**

The son of a North Carolina sharecropper recalls the hard times faced by his family and other African Americans in the first half of the twentieth century and the changes that the civil rights movement helped bring about.

***Under the Mesquite* by Guadalupe Garcia McCall**

This coming-of-age story of a Mexican American girl whose high school years include the responsibility of taking care of seven younger siblings while her mother battles cancer is told entirely in verse.

***Eleanor and Park* by Rainbow Rowell**

Set in 1986, this is the story of two star-crossed outsiders from very different cultural backgrounds, who are smart enough to know that first love almost never lasts, but brave and desperate enough to try.

***The Crossover* by Kwame Alexander**

This winner of the Newbery Medal in 2015 combines hip-hop, verse and jazz to tell the story of twin brothers who are kings on the basketball court, with the help of their dad, a former professional baller. Their shared passion for the sport is equal to their family's dedication to education, encouraged by their mom, an assistant principal.

***Yummy: the Last Days of a Southside Shorty* by G. Neri (graphic novel)**

A compelling dramatization based on events that occurred in Chicago in 1994. This gritty exploration of youth gang life will force readers to question their own understandings of good and bad, right and wrong.

***Mexican White Boy* by Matt de la Pena**

Sixteen-year-old Danny searches for his identity amidst the confusion of being half-Mexican and half-white while spending a summer with his cousin and friends on the baseball fields and back alleys of San Diego, California.

***Code Talker* by Joseph Bruchac**

After being taught in a boarding school run by whites that Navajo is a useless language, Ned Begay and other Navajo men are recruited by the Marines to become code talkers, sending messages during WWII in their native tongue.

***Yello-Oh Girls!* edited by Vickie Nam (non-fiction)**

In this groundbreaking collection of first-person writings, young Asian American girls come together for the first time and engage in a dynamic conversation about the unique challenges they face in their lives.

***Open Mic: Riffs on Life Between Cultures in Ten Voices* edited by Mitali Perkins (non-fiction)**

Shares stories about growing up in diverse homes or communities, from an Asian youth who gains temporary popularity by making up a false background, to a biracial girl whose father clears subway seats by calmly sitting between two prejudiced women.

***Loteria* by Mario Alberto Zambrano**

Struggling to cope as her family falls apart, eleven-year-old Luz Maria Castillo retreats into her beloved set of Loteria cards -- a Mexican game featuring riddles and vibrant images.

***Port Chicago 50 : Disaster, Mutiny and the Fight for Civil Rights* by Steve Sheinkin (non-fiction)**

This is a dramatic story of prejudice and injustice in America's armed forces during World War II, and a provocative look at a controversial group of young sailors who took a stand that helped change the course of history.

***Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe* by Benjamin Alire Saenz**

Fifteen-year-old Ari Mendoza is an angry loner with a brother in prison. When he meets Dante and they become friends, Ari starts to ask questions about himself, his parents and his family.

***Ask Me No Questions* by Marina Budhos**

Trials and turmoil of a Bangladeshi family living illegally in New York for years until 9/11 changes everything.

***Gabi: A Girl in Pieces* by Isabel Quintero**

16-year-old Gabi Hernandez chronicles her senior year in high school as she copes with many issues including her friend Cindy's pregnancy, her friend Sebastian's coming out and her father's meth habit. Gabi uses poetry to help her forge her identity as a Mexican-American -- not Mexican enough for her family, not white enough for Berkeley.

***Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet* by Jamie Ford**

Henry Lee, a Chinese-American in Seattle, recalls his youth, when he and his Japanese-American friend, Keiko, spent time together during WWII, before Keiko and her family were interred at a camp. Lee deals with generational difficulties between himself and his father and college-age son.

***Girl in Translation* by Jean Kwok**

Emigrating with her mother from Hong Kong to Brooklyn, Kimberly begins a double life as a schoolgirl by day and sweatshop worker at night, an existence marked by her first crush and the pressure to save her family from poverty.

***American Son* by Brian Ascalon Roley**

A divorced mother from the Philippines looks on sadly as her teenage sons are swallowed up by the American dream, the lure of gangs, and the promise of the prosperous life. The vicious tug of wills between brothers rings true.

***A Lesson Before Dying* by Ernest J. Gaines**

Tells the story of a young African-American man sentenced to death for a murder he did not commit, and a teacher who tries to impart to him his learning and pride before the execution.

***The Assist* by Neil Swidey (non-fiction)**

A true basketball story about two African-American players at state champion Charlestown High School.

***March: Books One and Two* by John Lewis and Andrew Aydin, art by Nate Powell (graphic novels)**

Congressman John Lewis tells the true story of his rise from poverty and his part in the Civil Rights struggle. Lewis was the son of a sharecropper who grew up in rural Alabama during the time of Jim Crow; these books focus on the crusade to integrate lunch counters of Nashville via sit-ins and other non-violent protests.

***The Other Wes Moore: One Name, Two Fates* by Wes Moore (non-fiction)**

Traces the parallel lives of two youths with the same name in the same community, describing how the author grew up to be a Rhodes Scholar and business leader while his counterpart suffered a life of violence and imprisonment.

***Black Ice* by Lorene Cary (non-fiction)**

In 1972 Lorene Cary, a bright, ambitious black teenager from Philadelphia, was transplanted into the formerly all-white, all-male St. Paul's School in New Hampshire, where she became a scholarship student in a "boot camp" for future American leaders.

***Reproducing Racism: How Everyday Choices Lock in White Advantage* by Daria Roithmayr (non-fiction)**

Discusses and analyzes how people think about race and what can be done to stop racism.

ELEVENTH and TWELFTH GRADES

***Mixed: An Anthology of Short Fiction on the Multiracial Experience* edited by Chandra Prasad**

Eighteen authors, including Danzy Senna, explore what it means to be multiracial.

***What Are You? Voices of Mixed-Race Young People* edited by Pearl Fuyo Gaskins (non-fiction)**

In-depth interviews with eighty mixed-race young people who, in their own words, address issues such as dating, family life, prejudice and identity struggles.

***Mudbound* by Hillary Jordan**

The marriage between Henry and his city-bred wife Laura becomes unstable when his brother Jamie returns from WWII to help work the family's cotton farm in the Mississippi Delta, along with his comrade-in-arms Ronsel Jackson, the oldest son of local sharecroppers. Ronsel learns that his heroics in battle mean nothing in the Jim Crow south.

***Townie* by Andre Dubus IV (non-fiction)**

In this beautifully crafted memoir, the author describes his childhood in a Massachusetts mill town, saturated with drugs and crime, and his weekly visits with his father, an eminent author who taught on a college campus.

***The Good Lord Bird* by James McBride**

A powerful, fascinating mix of history, mystery and humor by the author of *The Color of Water*. "You may know the story of John Brown's unsuccessful raid on Harpers Ferry, but author James McBride's retelling of the events leading up to it is so imaginative, you'll race to the finish."—NPR

***The Brief and Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* by Junot Diaz**

Oscar grows up in a Dominican neighborhood in New Jersey, as an outsider: overweight, homely lover of science fiction and fantasy. What he really wants is love, and, though his romantic overtures are constantly rejected, he perseveres.

***Unaccustomed Earth* by Jhumpa Lahiri**

These eight stories by beloved and bestselling author Lahiri take us from Cambridge and Seattle to India and Thailand, as they explore the secrets of family life of Bengali Americans.

***Who's Irish?* by Gish Jen**

A popular Chinese American author's collection of short stories in which the children of immigrants observe their parents' efforts to assimilate while the parents question why their children would prefer to make art than money.

***How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents* by Julia Alvarez**

The story of the Garcia family's adjustment to life in the United States after emigrating from the Dominican Republic.

***The Astonishing Life of Octavian Nothing* by M.T. Anderson**

Various diaries, letters, and manuscripts chronicle the experiences of a young African American male, from birth to age sixteen, as he is brought up as part of a science experiment in the years leading up to and during the Revolutionary War.

***Woman Warrior* by Maxine Hong Kingston (non-fiction)**

A Chinese American woman tells of the Chinese myths, family stories and events of her California childhood that helped shape her identity.

***Empire of the Summer Moon* by S.C. Gwynne (non-fiction)**

Gwynne traces the rise and fall over four decades of the Comanche, the most powerful Indian tribe in American history, while relating the remarkable story of the last and greatest chief of the Comanche, the mixed-race son of a woman who was kidnapped by the Comanche as a child.

***Who's Afraid of Post-Blackness?* by Toure (non-fiction)**

In this provocative book, writer and cultural critic Touré explores the concept of Post-Blackness: the ability for someone to be rooted in but not restricted by their race. Drawing on his own experiences and those of 105 luminaries, he argues that racial identity should be understood as fluid, complex, and self-determined.

***The Reluctant Fundamentalist* by Mohsin Hamid**

A Pakistani man is the victim of racial discrimination after the events of 9/11. The question for the reader is: Is the man really who people think he is, or is he innocent?

***The Complete Fiction of Nella Larsen* by Nella Larsen**

This classic anthology of short fiction by biracial Harlem Renaissance writer explores the complexity of identity.

***Americanah* by Chimamanda Adichie**

Separated by differing ambitions after falling in love in occupied Nigeria, beautiful Ifemelu experiences triumph and defeat in America while Obinze endures an undocumented status in London until the pair is reunited in their homeland fifteen years later.

***What is the What?* by Dave Eggers**

Based closely on true experiences of the Lost Boys of Sudan, who fled their war-ravaged country to come to the United States in the mid-1980s.

***The Known World* by Edward P. Jones**

Henry Townsend, an African farmer and former slave, is befriended by the most powerful man in antebellum Virginia's Manchester County and becomes proprietor of his own plantation, as well as of his own slaves.

***The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* by Rebecca Skloot (non-fiction)**

In 1951, a poor African American woman dies of cervical cancer, but pieces of the tumor that killed her--taken without her knowledge or consent--live on, first in one lab, then in giant factories churning out polio vaccines, then aboard rocket ships launched into space.

***Citizen: An American Lyric* by Claudia Rankine**

In brilliant, terse prose poems, Rankine explores what it means to be a black citizen in the U.S. in the early 21st century.

***White Like Me* by Tim Wise (non-fiction)**

A personal examination of the ways in which white racial privilege shape the daily lives of white Americans in every realm: employment, education, housing, criminal justice and elsewhere.

***Raceball: How the Major Leagues Colonies the Black and Latin Game* by Rob Ruck (non-fiction)**

Discusses the relationship between race and baseball, beginning with the integration of the Major Leagues.

***My Beloved World* by Sonia Sotomayor (non-fiction)**

A fascinating memoir by Sotomayor, the first Hispanic and third woman appointed to the United States Supreme Court.

***Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption* by Bryan Stevenson (non-fiction)**

Not simply a memoir, Stevenson's story of his experiences as a lawyer committed to the Equal Rights Initiative is a compelling exploration of the need for compassion in the pursuit of justice.

***Whistling Vivaldi* by Claude M. Steele (non-fiction)**

The personal story of a young black man who realizes that he can defuse the fears of white people by whistling melodies from the Baroque composer, Vivaldi. Steele uses his groundbreaking research on how stereotypes, left unexamined, perpetuate themselves.

***The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* by Michelle Alexander (non-fiction)**

Legal scholar Alexander powerfully argues that "by targeting black men through the War on Drugs and decimating communities of color, the U.S. criminal justice system functions as a contemporary system of racial control."

***Sister Citizen: Shame, Stereotypes and Black Women in America* by Melissa V. Harris-Perry (non-fiction)**

A highly respected thinker on race, gender and American politics presents a new consideration of black woman and how distorted stereotypes affect their political beliefs.

***Radical Equations: Civil Rights from Mississippi to the Algebra Project* by Robert P. Moses and Charles E. Cobb (non-fiction)**

At a time when popular solutions to the educational plight of poor children of color are imposed from the outside--national standards, high-stakes tests, charismatic individual saviors--the acclaimed Algebra Project and its founder, Robert Moses, offer a vision of school reform based in the power of communities. Begun in 1982, the Algebra Project is transforming math education in twenty-five cities.

***Waking up White* by Debby Irving (non-fiction)**

Debby Irving's powerful and personal story opens up a rare window on how white Americans are socialized.

***Tyranny of a Meritocracy* by Lani Guinier (non-fiction)**

Harvard Law professor critiques the system that claims that the SAT has merit in determining college success. Guinier's book is not pessimistic, but rather hopeful for a better future. She ends with this sentence: "A culture shift can happen. And, we need to work together to make it happen."