All juniors taking U.S. History are required to read the nonfiction selection, *Our Declaration*. Each student should then pick one book from the fiction list to read in addition.

**Nonfiction (required for all students)**

*Our Declaration: A Reading of the Declaration of Independence in Defense of Equality* (Danielle Allen)

**Fiction (students are required to select one book from this list to read in addition to the nonfiction selection)**

*Americanah* (Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie) - *Americanah* tells the story of a young Nigerian woman who emigrates to the United States to attend college, and in the process provides powerful reflections on race, identity, community, politics, and privilege.

*How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents* (Julia Alvarez) - This novel spans more than thirty years in the lives of four sisters, and tells a story of the hardships of immigration, a family’s struggle to acculturate to life in the United States, and what it’s like to begin a new life in New York City.

*Blues for Mister Charlie* (James Baldwin) - Loosely based on the Emmett Till murder that occurred at the beginning of the Civil Rights Movement, *Blues for Mister Charlie* is a play that interrogates the use and abuse of Christianity in the context of race relations in the American South.

*Go Tell It on the Mountain* (James Baldwin) - *Go Tell It on the Mountain* tells the story of John Grimes, a teenager in 1930s Harlem, and his relationships with his family and the Pentecostal Church.

*Caleb’s Crossing* (Geraldine Brooks) - This novel explores the relationship between Bethia Mayfield, a 12-year-old living in a Puritan settlement on Martha’s Vineyard, and Caleb, the son of a Wampanoag chieftain who goes on to become the first Native American to graduate from Harvard College.

*The Book of Daniel* (E.L. Doctorow) - *The Book of Daniel* is based on a fictionalized account of the trial and execution of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg. It tells the story of the Isaacson family through the eyes of the son, Daniel, and his sister, Susan, who are college students deeply involved in 1960s politics.

*Ragtime* (E.L. Doctorow) - Set in New York City in the early 20th century, *Ragtime* blends fiction and history to explore important events, characters, and ideas in American history.

*My Ántonia* (Willa Cather) - *My Ántonia* tells the stories of an orphan, Jim Burden, and Ántonia,
the daughter of Bohemian immigrants, each brought as children to the Nebraska frontier at the end of the 19th century. It explores the challenges of life on the American frontier and the creation of a distinctive identity of the American West.

*Middlesex* (Jeffrey Eugenides) - *Middlesex* explores three generations of a Greek-American family through the lens of protagonist Cal, who is born intersex as a result of a gene mutation. The first half of the novel tells the story of the family’s assimilation into American society, while the second half focuses on Cal’s experience of his modified gender identity in Detroit and then his escape to San Francisco.

*Love Medicine* (Louise Erdrich) - *Love Medicine* spans 60 years in the lives of a small group of Chippewa Indians living on a reservation in North Dakota. Drawing from indigenous myths and story-telling techniques, it explores themes of native resistance, homecoming, identity, and survival.

*Light in August* (William Faulkner) - Faulkner explores themes of race, sex, class, and religion in the American South through the characters of Lena Grove, a young, pregnant white woman from Alabama looking for the father of her unborn child, and Joe Christmas, a man who lives in Mississippi and passes as white but believes he has some black ancestry.

*Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet* (Jamie Ford) - *Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet* is a story of love and friendship between a Chinese American boy and a Japanese American girl during Japanese internment.

“The Yellow Wallpaper” (Charlotte Perkins Gilman) - A short story regarded as a foundational work of American feminist literature, “The Yellow Wallpaper” tells the story of a woman whose physician husband moves her into an old mansion for the summer to try to treat her “temporary nervous depression.”

*Snow Falling on Cedars* (David Guterson) - Guterson tells the story of a murder mystery in which Kabuo Miyamoto, a Japanese American, is accused of killing Carl Heine, a respected fisherman in the small community of San Piedro Island in Washington State. The trial is held in 1954, in the midst of anti-Japanese sentiments following World War II.

*The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (Mohsin Hamid) - This story takes place over the course of a single evening in a cafe in Lahore, Pakistan, during which the protagonist tells a stranger the story of his love affair with an American woman and his eventual abandonment of America.

*A Raisin in the Sun* (Lorraine Hansberry) - In this play, Hansberry tells the story of a black family’s experiences in Chicago as they explore what it means to “better” oneself in the wake of an insurance payout following the death of their husband and father.
The Mambo Kings Play Songs of Love (Oscar Hijuelos) - *The Mambo Kings Play Songs of Love* tells the story of two Cuban brothers who immigrate to the United States and settle in New York City in the 1950s.

A Map of Home (Randa Jarrar) - *A Map of Home* is the coming-of-age story of Nidali, set during the 1990 invasion of Kuwait. It explores the struggles of family and the question of what “home” means when one home is at war with another.

Mona in the Promised Land (Gish Jen) - In 1968 America, teenager Mona Chang, the child of Chinese immigrants, decides to convert to Judaism. *Mona in the Promised Land* explores the question of whether being American truly means “being whatever you want.”

The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man (James Weldon Johnson) - *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man* is a fictional account of a biracial young man living in post-Reconstruction America. He decides to “pass” as white for reasons of safety and advancement, but struggles with his decision to “abandon” the black race.

Lucy (Jamaica Kincaid) - *Lucy* comes from the West Indies to the United States to be a nanny for a wealthy white family. This novel explores themes of immigration, identity confusion, and the legacies of imperial rule.

The Leavers (Lisa Ko) - *The Leavers* tells the story of a young boy and his mother, an undocumented Chinese immigrant, who works at a nail salon and one day doesn’t come home. Adopted by a well-meaning white family, the boy struggles to assimilate to American life amid memories of his mother and the community he left behind.

Angels in America (Tony Kushner) - *Angels in America* is Kushner’s examination of AIDS and homosexuality in America in the 1980s. It explores both the dark side of the Reagan revolution and the plights of isolated, modern Americans struggling to connect.

Interpreter of Maladies (Jhumpa Lahiri) - This is a critically acclaimed collection of short stories about the lives of Indians and Indian Americans caught between their roots and the “new world” of America. It explores themes of immigration, family, and the difficulty of maintaining relationships across borders.

Quicksand and Passing (Nella Larson) - This is a collection of two novellas set in Harlem by an author of the Harlem Renaissance. *Quicksand* examines a woman’s need for sexual fulfillment in the face of a deeply religious society. *Passing* confronts the reality of racial “passing” in America.
**Babbitt** (Sinclair Lewis) - *Babbitt* is a satirical novel about American society that critiques middle-class life and its accompanying social pressure to conform.

**At Weddings and Wakes** (Alice McDermott) - McDermott tells the story of three generations of an Irish-American family living on Long Island through the eyes of its youngest members. It explores themes of lost innocence and the cycle of betrayed dreams.

**House Made of Dawn** (N. Scott Momaday) - *In House Made of Dawn*, Momaday tells the story of protagonist Abel, a young Native American who has come home from war and finds himself caught between two worlds: the world of the reservation and the world of modern, industrial America.

**The Things They Carried** (Tim O’Brien) - This is a collection of linked short stories about a platoon of American soldiers fighting in Vietnam. It explores themes of service, the anti-war movement, and the gulf between those who have served in the military and those who have not.

**There There** (Tommy Orange) - This novel, by a member of the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes of Oklahoma, is about the lives of urban Native Americans in Oakland. It follows the stories of 12 characters as their lives move toward an event called the Big Oakland Powwow.

**The Buddha in the Attic** (Julie Otsuka) - *The Buddha in the Attic* tells the story of Japanese picture brides who immigrate to America in the early 1990s. It describes their lives in their new country and their relationships with the men they marry, their neighbors, and, eventually, their American-born children.

“Brokeback Mountain” (Annie Proulx) - This is a short story that focuses on the relationship between two men hired to look after sheep on fictional Brokeback Mountain. They form an intense emotional and sexual attachment, but are forced to part ways after the summer; the story explores how their lives play out, separately and together.

**Gilead** (Marilynne Robinson) - *Gilead* is the fictional autobiography of Reverend John Ames, set in the small town of Gilead, Iowa in the 1950s. It explores themes of Christianity in America and life in the country’s heartland.

**Call It Sleep** (Henry Roth) - *Call It Sleep* tells the story of a young boy growing up in the Jewish immigrant neighborhood of New York’s Lower East Side in the early 20th century. It provides a realistic portrayal of life in a slum with sensitivity to its characters’ triumphs and failures.

**A Kind of Freedom** (Margaret Wilkerson Sexton) - *A Kind of Freedom* is the story of three generations of a black family in New Orleans, dealing first with Jim Crow, then with the drug epidemic of the 1980s, and finally with the disaster of Hurricane Katrina. It explores the legacy of racial disparities in
the South, and America, through the lens of a single family.

*The Jungle* (Upton Sinclair) - *The Jungle* portrays the harsh conditions and exploited lives of immigrants in the meat industry in Chicago. It depicts working-class poverty, unpleasant living and working conditions, and the hopelessness of workers, and contrasts them with the deep corruption of those in power.

*Super Sad True Love Story* (Gary Shteyngart) - *Super Sad True Love Story* takes place in the near future, in a dystopian New York where life is dominated by the media and retail. The America of the novel is on the brink of economic collapse, while a totalitarian bipartisan government promotes consumerism to minimize political dissent.

*The Joy Luck Club* (Amy Tan) - *The Joy Luck Club* focuses on four Chinese American families in San Francisco. The novel is structured like a mahjong game, with four parts divided into four sections, and explores the lives of the protagonists in the form of vignettes.

*A Confederacy of Dunces* (John Kennedy Toole) - *A Confederacy of Dunces* tells the story of Ignatius J. Reilly, a 30 year old man living with his mother in early 1960s New Orleans. In his quest for employment, he interacts with a variety of French Quarter characters, and those interactions form the heart of the novel.

*Sing, Unburied, Sing* (Jesmyn Ward) - *Sing, Unburied, Sing* tells the story of a black family’s triumphs and challenges in the fictional town of Bois Sauvage, Mississippi.

*The Underground Railroad* (Colson Whitehead) - *The Underground Railroad* tells the story of enslaved Cora and Caesar, who escape from their Georgia plantation by following the Underground Railroad, which the novel reimagines as an actual rail transport system in the South.

*Another Brooklyn* (Jacqueline Woodson) - *Another Brooklyn* is the story of the friendship between four women who grow up in Brooklyn in the 1970s. It explores their dreams for the future, the dangers faced in their neighborhood, and various forms of family strife.

*American Born Chinese* (Gene Luen Yang) - In this graphic novel, Yang tells three stories: first, a tale from classic Chinese literature; second, the story of a second-generation child of immigrants in San Francisco; and, finally, the story of a white American boy whose Chinese cousin comes to visit every year.