

**ENGLISH IV HONORS
DR. VAN GUNTEN
SUMMER READING 2018**

Instructions: Choose and carefully read two books from this list. You will have a written-response type test on your chosen books during the first three days of class in August, 2018.

Gabriel Garcia Marquez, *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*.

A man returns to the town where a baffling murder took place 27 years earlier, determined to get to the bottom of the story. Just hours after marrying the beautiful Angela Vicario, everyone agrees, Bayardo San Roman returned his bride in disgrace to her parents. Her distraught family forced her to name her first lover; and her twin brothers announced their intention to murder Santiago Nasar for dishonoring their sister. Yet if everyone knew the murder was going to happen, why did no one intervene to stop it? The more that is learned, the less is understood, and as the story races to its inexplicable conclusion, an entire society--not just a pair of murderers—is put on trial.

Hermann Hesse, *Siddhartha*.

The title of this novel is a combination of two Sanskrit words, “siddha,” which is defined as “achieved,” and “artha,” which is defined as “meaning” or “wealth.” The word serves as the name for the principal character, a man on a spiritual journey of self-discovery during the time of the first Buddha. Siddhartha is the son of a wealthy Brahmin family who decides to leave his home in the hopes of gaining spiritual illumination. Siddhartha is joined by his best friend Govinda. The two renounce their earthly possessions, engage in ritual fasting and intense meditation and ultimately seek out and speak with Gautama, the original Buddha. Here the two go their separate ways, Govinda joining the order of the Buddha, Siddhartha traveling on in search of spiritual enlightenment. In order to complete this novel Hesse immersed himself in the sacred teachings of both Hindu and Buddhist scriptures and lived a semi-reclusive life in order to achieve his own spiritual enlightenment. Considered one of Hesse’s most important works, “Siddhartha” remains to this day as one of his most popular. It is a work that deals with the quest that we all undertake in some way or another, to define our lives in an environment of conflicting dualities and ultimately find spiritual awareness.

Albert Camus, *The Stranger*.

Since it was first published in English in 1946, Albert Camus’ first novel has had a profound impact on millions of readers. Through this story of an ordinary man who unwittingly gets drawn into a senseless murder on a sun-drenched Algerian beach, Camus explores what he termed “the nakedness of man faced with the absurd.”

Possessing both the force of a parable and the excitement of a perfectly executed thriller, *The Stranger* is the work of one of the most engaged and intellectually alert writers of the past century.

Leo Tolstoy, *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*.

Hailed as one of the world’s supreme masterpieces on the subject of death and dying, *The Death of Ivan Ilyich* is the story of a worldly careerist, a high court judge who has never given the inevitability of his dying so much as a passing thought. But one day death announces itself to him, and to his shocked surprise he is brought face to face with his own mortality. How, Tolstoy asks, does an unreflective man confront his one and only moment of truth?