



Literature of War
Summer Reading Assignment
Mr. Simon Gooch

“*We make war that we may live in peace.*”

-Aristotle

“*If we are to teach real peace in this world, and if we are to carry on a real war against war, we shall have to begin with the children.*”

-Mahatma Gandhi

The English Department is excited to offer The Literature of War this fall! For summer reading, we ask you to read *The Things They Carried* by Tim O’Brien (ISBN 978-0544309760), a collection of short stories that reads like a non-linear novel about the Vietnam War. While Tim O’Brien is a character that appears in the stories and while it reads like a memoir, *The Things They Carried* is a work of fiction.

There are numerous resources about this text available online, but we want YOUR thoughts and perspectives unsullied by other voices, so please avoid accessing *Cliffs Notes*, *Wikipedia*, *Shmoop*, *Spark Notes*, or any sources other than the text and your own brain.

AS YOU READ, PLEASE PAY CLOSE ATTENTION TO THE FOLLOWING LITERARY ASPECTS OF THIS WORK:

- **Memory Moments:** Memory is a unifying motif in these stories. Look for the use of memory and what O’Brien seems to be saying about memory—how it shapes and is shaped by the narrator’s point of view.
- **Symbols:** The symbolism of what the soldiers carry is, in fact, the significance of the title. Look for symbols and motifs, noting what they MEAN beyond their literal physical natures.
- **Tough Questions:** Societal pressures, one’s own moral code, and the question of truth are all essential human conundrums that arise from internal and external conflicts. Look for these conflicts and themes, and for patterns that arise from the collection.
- Other elements or patterns that you notice: passages, recurring characters, imagery, and/or figurative language you deem significant.

In addition to the required reading text, you may wish to read other excellent books of thematic relevance to Literature of War:

Alvarez— *Time of Butterflies*
Ambrose— *Band of Brothers*
Coetzee— *Life & Times of Michael K*
Crane— *The Red Badge of Courage*
Doerr— *All the Light We Cannot See*
Frazier— *Cold Mountain*
Heinlein— *Starship Troopers*
Heller— *Catch-22*
Hemingway— *A Farewell to Arms*
Hemingway— *For Whom the Bell Tolls*
Hersey— *Hiroshima*

Hoesseini— *The Kite Runner*
Homer— *The Iliad*
Kogawa— *Obasan*
Michaels— *Fugitive Pieces*
O’Brien— *Going After Cacciato*
O’Brien— *In the Lake of the Woods*
Shakespeare— *Henry V*
Sun Tzu— *The Art of War*
Trumbo— *Johnny Got His Gun*
Zusak— *The Book Thief*

Have a wonderful summer. Be safe, relax, have fun, and READ. Questions? Contact Mr. Gooch: sgooch@episcopalcollegiate.org