Students entering Literature of War will read Tim O’Brien’s *The Things They Carried* (2009) (ISBN #978-0544309760) for summer reading, a collection of short stories that reads like a nonlinear 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. In order to be fully prepared for class discussion during the first week of school, it is always recommended that students “engage with the text” by highlighting and annotating passages that describe characters, settings, symbols, themes, or the motifs listed below.

As you read, please pay close attention to the following 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**: Society 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.

During the course, we will explore these characteristics in detail and consider what motivated the authors to write these particular pieces of literature. Our required texts for the course will include:


In order to have the correct ISBNs and to have your books on time, we strongly encourage you to buy your books at WordsWorth Books in the Heights at 5920 R Street (501-663-9198). Amazon cannot guarantee that you will receive the correct copy of the books, but they will sell you one anyway!

Questions? Contact Ms. Conyer: lconyer@episcopalcollegiate.org