Summer Reading

Gombrich, E.H. A Little History of the World. (English Edition 2005—ISBN: 0-300-10883-4) Yale University Press.
Assignment Below—Reading and Assignment **must be completed no later August 21st (end of the 3rd week of school)**
This work includes: references to war violence appropriate for elementary aged children and above.
From the Publisher (Yale University Press):

> "A remarkable book, written in an amiable, conversational style, effortlessly explaining, without condescension, difficult matters like the achievements of Charlemagne, the monetary system of medieval Europe and the ideas of the Enlightenment. . . . This resurrected history deserves reading for all its delights."—Edward Rothstein, *New York Times*
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> "In simple, vivid prose, Gombrich surveys the human past from pre-history to his own time. . . . Lucky children will have this book read to them. Intelligent adults will read it for themselves and regain contact with the spirit of European humanism at its best."—Anthony Grafton, *Wall Street Journal*
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> "This is an unusual work for Yale: a children's history originally published 70 years ago. But it is a work one can quickly come to love. . . . Using vivid imagery, storytelling and sly humor, [Gombrich] brings history to life in a way that adults as well as children can appreciate. The book displays a breadth of knowledge."—*Publishers Weekly* (starred review)

Winter Reading (Highly suggested that this be started during the summer)

Jung, Chang. Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China. (ISBN: 978-0743246989) Touchstone Publishing.
Assignment Below—Reading and Assignment must be completed no later than the first week of 2nd semester.
This work includes: war and social based violence, treatment of women that may challenge western morals.

> Jung Chang's ***Wild Swans***: ***Three Daughters of China*** (Anchor, $14, 524 pp.) is, I think, the best *of* an ever growing number *of* memoirs *of* life in Maoist *China*, and in particular *of* the painful years between the antirightist movement *of* 1957 which saw the removal *of* tens *of* thousands *of* intellectuals from public life, teaching, and writing, through the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution and the gradual openness that began after Mao's death. Chang's book is more than that, however, for she looks at *China's* history in this century through *three* generations *of* women in her family: her Manchurian grandmother, concubine to a warlord; her mother, a Communist activist; and herself, growing up in the Maoist years, and coming *of* age in the Cultural Revolution. There is enough background so that the person unfamiliar with *China* will not feel lost, and Chang, who now lives in England, writes touchingly about a revolution that turned on and destroyed many *of* the very people who had given their lives to it.—Nicholas Clifford, *Commonweal*; 12/3/93, Vol 120, Issue 21, page 25
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> At the beginning *of WILD SWANS*, the author provides a useful chronology *of* the book's contents. Family and personal histories are documented against the general history *of* Chinese politics. Beginning with the birth *of* her mother's stepfather in 1870, in the waning years *of* the Manchu empire, the chronology notes important dates such as the births and deaths in the author's family as well as the rise and fall *of* dominant powers in twentieth century *China*.
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> The narrative ends in 1978, when the author embarks from *China* to Great Britain on a coveted academic scholarship. Ten years later, after Chang made London her home, her mother visited her and began to tell

her about the family history. The personal stories *of* her mother's and her grandmother's lives prompted Chang to return to *China* in 1989 to research the material for *WILD SWANS*.

By covering *three* generations *of* her family, Chang shows the many changes wrought in Modern *China*, especially upon women. In 1909, Chang's grandmother was bartered as a concubine to a warlord general by her father, a petty officer. The alliance produced a *daughter*, who was renamed by her legal stepfather, and who became Chang's mother. Both mother and *daughter* were named "*wild swan*."

Chang's mother grew up during the Japanese occupation *of* Manchuria, while Chang experienced the impact *of* the Cultural Revolution. Both women, like so many *of* their elitist background, avidly supported the Communist ideology. But both also became rapidly disillusioned by the seemingly arbitrary and senseless brutality *of* the regime.

Both *of* Chang's parents were eventually denounced as "capitalist roaders" and sent to separate labor camps. The five children were also sent to the countryside, each to a different locale, to live and work among the peasants. The author herself served as a"barefoot doctor" and as an electrician.

The author sees both the negative and hopeful sides *of* humanity from her own experiences and through her mother's stories. She balances her observations with a philosophical attitude toward suffering and happiness. Finally, she makes an important statement in her book about survival and endurance in the face *of* the most adverse historical and political circumstances. –Cynthia Wong, Magill Book Reviews, 1/1/1992

A LITTLE HISTORY OF THE WORLD ASSIGNMENT

Directions: You are to create a timeline of all of the events that Mr. Gombrich mentions in his book for which he includes a date. Your timeline should go from the earliest date mentioned in the book, to the latest date mentioned. This should be completed prior to the first day of class so that we may discuss the structure of the course and the concept of historical periods. At the beginning of your timeline make a brief notation about the history of the book itself, including some basic information about the author.

Additionally, as you read the book you are to write annotations identifying pieces of information by their theme. The Themes that you are looking for are: Social, Political, Religious, Technological, and Economic. Every time you see one of these themes as you read make a note in the margin (perhaps using different colors would be helpful). You will need to be prepared to discuss these themes and various examples of these themes by the end of the third week of the fall semester.

WILD SWANS ASSIGNMENT

Directions: You are to outline changes and continuities using the book Wild Swans by Jung Chang (assigned over the summer to be read by the completion of winter holidays). You may not discuss this assignment with anyone or work with any other student on this assignment. You must have completed the reading and outline of changes and continuities by the beginning of 2nd semester.

Look for **specific changes** in the era after 1900 in the following areas:

a. Gender Roles and the Treatment of Women
b. Political Structure and Ideology
c. Economic Ideology and Capacity

Be sure to use specific examples from your book (Wild Swans)—for each of these areas. You should have at least 1 specific citation (pg number) for each major change/continuity. It would probably help if you annotated your book and had the page numbers that you wished to use for specific evidence marked. You will receive a additional information on the assignment AND a detailed rubric after the winter holidays!