



Welcome to Senior Honors English

Mrs. Karen Bucholt
Summer Reading and Writing 2008

“The sun never sets on the British Empire” was an expression in the mid-nineteenth century. While the empire is long gone, the legacy of writing in English continues. Your summer reading and writing transitions from your final American novel to contemporary works from England’s former colonies.

All senior honors English students will read *A Prayer for Owen Meany* by John Irving. This happens to be one of my favorite American novels. Pay particular attention to Irving’s use of time. Mark repeated images and motifs.

Your second reading may be selected from the following two choices:

***The Handmaid’s Tale* by Margaret Atwood (Canada)**

Set in a futuristic totalitarian society that oppresses women and turns them into “breeding machines”, this novel exposes some of the darker connections between politics and social injustice. Explore the role of handmaids in the Republic of Gilead.

***Cry, The Beloved Country* by Alan Paton (South Africa)**

Experience the compelling struggle of the black man under the white man’s law in South Africa. This is one of the first fierce apartheid novels.

I suggest you mark passages through your two texts that

- a) define the author’s style
- b) pose social, moral or ethical questions that relate to present day, and
- c) shape the author’s thematic message.

Select and order (or reserve) these titles as soon as possible: many book dealers and libraries deal with these popular summer reading selections. You will be writing about both works during the first week back to school. See you in late August.