2020-21 High School Summer Reading for 9th Graders

Materials
The all-school summer reading book is *The Collected Works of Billy the Kid* (2008) by Michael Ondaatje. Students should also listen to the complete third season of the historical podcast on the life of Billy the Kid entitled *Infamous America*, episodes 1-10. Additionally, students will read one book from the short summer reading list (below).

Important Directions
Reading the all-school summer book is an essential part of the St. Francis experience. The entire faculty, staff, and all students will read this novel. Represent yourself well by reading and writing thoughtfully. Give yourself adequate time to reflect and compose thorough responses to the reading. Be sure to bring *The Collected Works of Billy the Kid* to class on the first day of school and share your Google doc with your English teacher by the first day of school!

Note for New High School Students
If you are coming from the Goshen Campus and already have an SFS email address or if you otherwise have a Gmail account, you can use Google docs as outlined above. If neither of these apply but you are taking our Prep for Success course, you will get your SFS email account then and can use it to create and share this Google doc. If none of these apply, you can simply do your writing assignment in Word or an equivalent program, print it out, and turn it in on the first day of school.

A Note About *The Collected Works of Billy the Kid*
This is a work of mixed genre, consisting of poetry, prose, and photography. Do not be alarmed by its hybridity; it’s still one cohesive book with a narrative—even if that narrative isn’t presented as linear. Read the book from cover to cover. Neither jump around nor read the pieces out of sequence. A lot of thought by both the writer and the publisher went into the book’s order. Remember: **form is an extension of meaning**. So, accept the text for what it is, yet question: How are the various parts of the work interconnected? What does the form of the work say about its content?

Summer Reading List 2020-21
In addition to the all-school summer reading, all students must read one work from this list:

- *Emma* (1815) by Jane Austen
- *The Piano Lesson* (1990) by August Wilson
- *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937) by Zora Neale Hurston
- *Othello* (1603) by William Shakespeare
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Writing Requirements
Select one essay prompt under each heading (one for the all-school and one for your chosen second book). Write **6-8 pages total** (3-4 pages per essay).

Use Garamond, 12 point, in a double-spaced document with one-inch margins, MLA formatted citations. Title the document *Summer Reading 2020* [Your last name].

Writing Prompts
Below are the prompts for your writing assignment. Remember, choose **one** about *The Collected Works of Billy the Kid* and **one** about the other text you choose from the list. Your essays should cite instances from the texts to analyze and illustrate your points.

Prompts for *The Collected Works of Billy the Kid*
1) What is a theme (some abstract idea related to the text’s subject, e.g. violence, hero vs. antihero) that you perceive operating in the narrative and what motifs (any repeated concrete element in a literary work, e.g. food imagery or depictions of buildings) are being used to communicate that theme?
2) How are the settings in the Ondaatje text particularly important for communicating some meaning about the text or its characters/voices?
3) After reading the Ondaatje book and listening to the podcast, who is Billy the Kid? What does he mean as an historical American hero?
4) How does the text’s form affect its narrative?

Prompts for the additional summer reading text
5) What is a theme (some abstract idea related to the text’s subject, e.g. refusal or betrayal) that you perceive operating in the narrative and what motifs (any repeated concrete element in a literary work, e.g. food imagery or depictions of buildings) are being used to communicate that theme?
6) What types of symbolism do you find in this text? What do these objects really represent? How do characters react to and interact with these symbolic objects?
7) Does the book address broader social issues? Does the author take a stance, for example, the plight of the impoverished or the abuse of women? How is a particular culture or subculture portrayed?