MUS 12th-Grade Summer Reading List
Rising 12th graders should read three books over the summer. On his honor a student should choose books that he has not already read. Students will be tested on all three books during the first week of school.

The Handmaid's Tale by Margaret Atwood. Dystopian fiction.
Offred lives in the Republic of Gilead – formerly a part of the United States – and is able to bear children in a time when most cannot. She begins her story: “I would like to believe this is a story I’m telling. I need to believe it. I must believe it. . . . If it’s a story I’m telling, then I have control over the ending. Then there will be an ending, to the story, and real life will come after it.”

Seventeen-year-old Willie Dunne of Dublin, Ireland, wants to attain “bloody manhood” and so enlists to fight for “King, Country, and Empire” in the trenches of WWI. (Recommended for boys taking Mr. Askew’s MUS in Europe course.)

Wuthering Heights by Emily Bronte. Gothic fiction.
Set on the moors of England, this is the classic, gothic love story of Heathcliff and Catherine.

Striking Memphis in 1878, the yellow fever epidemic devastated thousands of lives and altered the future of the city. US doctors, led by Walter Reed, resorted to human experimentation to understand the disease once and for all.

Paddy Clarke, Ha Ha Ha by Roddy Doyle. Fiction.
1993 Booker Prize-winning Irish novelist Roddy Doyle tells the story of Paddy, a young boy growing up in the shadow of his parents’ failing marriage. (Recommended for boys taking Mr. Askew’s MUS in Europe course.)

What is the What by Dave Eggers. Autobiography/Fiction.
“Intense, straightforward, lit by lightning flashes of humor, wisdom and charm, Valentino’s story — novel, autobiography, whatever — is an account of what it was like to be one of the Lost Boys of Sudan” (New York Times). Sadly, Valentino Deng asserts, “[e]very boy had a story like this.”

Peace Like a River by Leif Enger. Fiction.
Davy Land, on trial for murder, has escaped from jail. His brother, Reuben, and his sister and father cross the country in an Airstream trailer, trying to find him before the law does. Despite the odds stacked against his family, Reuben believes in miracles.

The Princess Bride by William Goldman. Fantasy.
Buttercup and Westley find true love and manage to hold onto it, despite the odds. It's also about “Fencing. Fighting. Torture. Poison. True love. Hate. Revenge. Giants . . . Beasts of all natures and descriptions. Pain. Death . . . Lies. Truths. Passion. Miracles.” (Note: You may skip the Introductions to the novel, but you should start with the first page of the novel's frame, which begins with the following sentence: “This is my favorite book in all the world, though I have never read it.” You may stop reading after the chapter called “Honeymoon” and before the chapter called “Buttercup's Baby”).

The Power and the Glory by Graham Greene. Fiction.
One of President Obama's favorite books (New York Times), this is the story of an unnamed priest trying to minister to people in a time and place in which Catholicism is outlawed.
**One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest** by Ken Kesey. *Fiction.*
The power structure shifts on a psychiatric ward with the admission of a new patient. It's the individual vs. the forces of social conformity. John Wayne vs. “the Combine” (Kesey).

**Into Thin Air** by Jon Krakauer. *Non-fiction.*
Krakauer ascended Mount Everest with the mind of a journalist and the heart of an extreme adventurer. He had no idea that he would find himself part of a climbing debacle.

**Newton and the Counterfeiter** by Thomas Levenson. *Historical thriller.*
You know about Isaac Newton's contributions to our understanding of how the physical universe works. But did you know that Newton had a second career as Warden of His Majesty’s Mint? It was in this position that Newton faced -- and chased -- the counterfeiter William Chaloner. This book offers insight into Newton's life as a scientist and law enforcement agent as well as into the world -- and underworld -- of London in the late seventeenth century.

This is a thrilling and compelling story about one man's tribute to his white mother, Ruth Jordan. She battled poverty and racism to raise her children and, despite being tested time and again, her faith and love for her children never wavered. This novel addresses racial identity with compassion, insight, and realism. (Recommended for boys taking Mr. Smith’s Literature of the African Diaspora elective.)

**Blood Meridian** by Cormac McCarthy. *Fiction.*
1849. The 14-year-old “Kid” runs away from his Tennessee home and hooks up with the Judge, an Indian scalp hunter, in this dark and violent Western.

**The Road** by Cormac McCarthy. *Post-apocalyptic fiction.*
Survivors of an apocalyptic event, a man and his son walk the road, “each the other’s world entire.” This novel won the Pulitzer Prize in 2007.

**Angela's Ashes** by Frank McCourt. *Memoir.*
His father forever unemployed and spending the little he earns at the pub, Frankie and his mother fight for the family's survival in Limerick, Ireland. McCourt's Pulitzer Prize-winning memoir is “such a marriage of pathos and humor that you never know whether to weep or roar and find yourself doing both at once” (critic Thomas Cahill).

**Born to Run** by Christopher McDougall. *Non-fiction.*
The Tarahumara Indians of Mexico are “amazing runners.” Journalist (and runner) Christopher McDougall sets out to discover why.

**Song of Solomon** by Toni Morrison. *Fiction.*
Drawing on an African American folktale that slaves could fly from bondage back to Africa, this novel is the story, from birth to death, of a man named Milkman Dead. Set primarily in a large city in Michigan (probably Detroit) between 1931 and 1963, the novel is peopled with interesting characters with names like Solomon, Hagar, Magdalene, Pilate, First Corinthians, Circe, Sweet, and Singing Bird. It is also President Obama’s favorite book.

**Going After Cacciato** by Tim O'Brien. *Fiction.*
Seventeen-year-old Cacciato, an American soldier in Vietnam, goes AWOL, striking out on his own to walk from Vietnam to Paris. His squad is charged with pursuing him and bringing him back to reality. (Recommended for boys taking Mr. Askew’s Literature and War elective.)
The Color of Magic by Terry Pratchett. Comic fantasy.
This is Pratchett's maiden voyage through the bizarre land of Discworld. His entertaining and witty series has grown to more than 20 books, and this is where it all starts--with the tourist Twoflower and his hapless wizard guide, Rincewind. Pratchett spoofs fantasy clichés--and everything else he can think of--while marshaling a profusion of characters through a madcap adventure. (Recommended especially for boys taking Mr. Reese’s Monomyth in Literature elective.)

Hellhound on his Trail by Hampton Sides. Non-fiction.
Written by a graduate of MUS, this narrative chronicles the bizarre criminal career of Eric Galt -- aka James Earl Ray -- culminating in his stalking of Martin Luther King, Jr., and his flight from justice following the assassination.

Among the most widely read Jeeves novels and one of his best, Code of the Woosters has Bertie Wooster and his “gentleman’s personal gentleman” Jeeves reconciling newt-obsessed Gussie Fink-Nottle with “droopy, blonde, saucer-eyed” Madeline Bassett, all the while trying to help Aunt Dahlia to deprive Sir Watkyn Bassett of an antique silver cow-creamer, unite Stiffy Byng and her secret lover the local curate and Bertie’s old school friend ‘Stinker’ Pinker, and thwart the violent inclinations of Sir Roderick Spode by uncovering the mysterious “Eulalie.”

Joy in the Morning by PG Wodehouse. Fiction.
Nobby Hopwood, Stilton Cheesewright, Florence Craye, Uncle Percy, the impending doom of a mésalliance; a blazing country cottage; a nocturnal confrontation; a fancy-dress ball, and the perfect union of a running gag about “the fretful porpentine” that culminates with “a hidden hand” concealing a hedgehog in Bertie Wooster’s bed. These and others hijinks lead Bertie to believe his biographers will refer to this outing as “The Steeple Bumpleigh Horror.”