



Youth Reading List for AA/Ypsi Reads 2013 Theme, *Understanding Race*

Grades K-5

Bessie Smith and the Night Riders by Sue Stauffacher

Black blues singer Bessie Smith single-handedly scares off Ku Klux Klan members who are trying to disrupt her show one hot July night in Concord, North Carolina.

Clara Lee and the Apple Pie Dream by Jenny Han

Clara Lee is what her grandfather calls an "all-American Korean American;" she embraces all aspects of her heritage. When she isn't wrestling with what it means to be an American, Clara Lee is dealing with the ups and downs of being an older sister, a friend, a daughter, and a granddaughter.

The Colors of Us by Karen Katz

Seven-year-old Lena and her mother observe the variations in the color of their friends' skin, viewed in terms of foods and things found in nature.

Goin' Someplace Special by Patricia C. McKissack

There's a place in this 1950s southern town where all are welcome, no matter what their skin color...and Tricia Ann knows exactly how to get there. To her, it's someplace special and she's bursting to go by herself. SPOILER ALERT: it's the library and this book makes me cry.

I Love Saturdays & Domingos by Alma Flor Ada

Saturdays and Sundays are very special days for the child in this story. On Saturdays, she visits Grandma and Grandpa, who come from a European-American background, and on Sundays -- los domingos -- she visits Abuelito y Abuelita, who are Mexican-American. While the two sets of grandparents are different in many ways, they also have a great deal in common -- in particular, their love for their granddaughter.

The Jacket by Andrew Clements

When Phil sees another kid wearing his brother's jacket, he assumes the jacket was stolen. It turns out he was wrong, and Phil has to ask himself the question: Would he have made the same assumption if the boy wearing the jacket hadn't been African American? And that question leads to others that reveal some unsettling truths about Phil's neighborhood, his family, and even himself.

My Name is Yoon by Helen Recorvits

Disliking her name as written in English, Korean-born Yoon, or "shining wisdom," refers to

herself as "cat," "bird," and "cupcake," as a way to feel more comfortable in her new school and new country.

The Other Side by Jacqueline Woodson

Two girls, one black and one white, gradually get to know each other as they sit on the fence that divides their town.

Sit-in : How Four Friends Stood Up by Sitting Down by Andrea Davis Pinkney

A celebration of the 50th anniversary of the momentous Woolworth's lunch counter sit-in, when four college students staged a peaceful protest that became a defining moment in the struggle for racial equality and the growing civil rights movement.

The School is Not White! A true story of the civil rights movement by Doreen Rappaport

Eleven years after school desegregation, a family of eight children in Drew, Mississippi, start attending an "all-white" school to get a better education, but learn they must deal with daily humiliations, name-calling, and threats from the students and teachers alike.

Skin Again by Belle Hooks and Chris Raschka

"The skin I'm in is just a covering. It cannot tell my story. The skin I'm in is just a covering. If you want to know who I am you have got to come inside and open your heart way wide."

The Sneetches by Dr. Seuss

"Now, the Star-Belly Sneetches / Had bellies with stars. / The Plain-Belly Sneetches / Had none upon thars." A fantastic book for teaching tolerance.

A Taste of Colored Water by Matt Faulkner

LuLu and Jelly are very excited to see the "colored" water they heard about in the city's water fountain, but are very surprised to learn what "colored" water actually means.

When Jackie and Hank Met by Cathy Goldberg Fishman

Examines the similarities of two major league baseball players who met for the first time on May 17, 1947: Jackie Robinson, who had to overcome barriers because of his color, and Hank Greenberg, who faced challenges because of his religion.

Whoever You Are by Mem Fox

Skin color, homes, schools, lifestyles, and languages may differ, but love and laughter, pain and tears are the same for all.

Zora and Me by Victoria Bond

Drawing on some of the writings and experiences of noted author and anthropologist Zora Neale Hurston, this novel offers a tale of friendship, family ties, and race relations in the early 1900s. Class, employment, migration, and discrimination are some of the themes used to motivate the characters.

Grades 6-8

The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian by Sherman Alexie

Arnold Spirit, aka Junior, a Spokane Indian expects disaster when he transfers from the reservation school to the rich, white school in Reardan, but soon finds himself making friends with both geeky and popular students and starting on the basketball team. Meeting his old classmates on the court, Junior grapples with questions about what constitutes one's community, identity, and tribe.

Adventures of Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain

The seminal work of racial understanding.

American Born Chinese by Gene Luen Yang

Alternates three interrelated stories: the determined efforts of the Chinese folk hero Monkey King to shed his humble roots and be revered as a god; the struggles faced by Jin Wang, a lonely Asian American middle school student who would do anything to fit in with his white classmates; and the sitcom plight of Danny, an All-American teen so shamed by his Chinese cousin Chin-Ke (a purposefully painful ethnic stereotype) that he is forced to change schools.

Bat 6 by Virginia Euwer Wolff

In small town, post-World War Oregon, twenty-one 6th grade girls recount the story of an annual softball game, during which one girl's bigotry comes to the surface.

The Cruisers by Walter Dean Myers

Friends Zander, Kambui, LaShonda, and Bobbi, caught in the middle of a mock Civil War at DaVinci Academy, learn the true cost of freedom of speech when they use their alternative newspaper, The Cruiser, to try to make peace.

Esperanza Rising by Pam Munoz Ryan

Esperanza thought she'd always live with her family on their ranch in Mexico--she'd always have fancy dresses, a beautiful home, and servants. But a sudden tragedy forces Esperanza and Mama to flee to California during the Great Depression, and to settle in a camp for Mexican farm workers. Esperanza isn't ready for the hard labor, financial struggles, or lack of acceptance she now faces.

Glory Be by Augusta Scattergood

In the summer of 1964 as she is about to turn twelve, Glory's town of Hanging Moss, Mississippi, is beset by racial tension when town leaders close her beloved public pool rather than desegregating it.

The Land by Mildred Taylor

After the Civil War Paul, the son of a white father and a black mother, finds himself caught between the two worlds of colored folks and white folks as he pursues his dream of owning land of his own.

The Lions of Little Rock by Kristin Levine

In 1958 Little Rock, Arkansas, painfully shy twelve-year-old Marlee sees her city and family divided over school integration, but her friendship with Liz, a new student, helps her find her voice and fight against racism.

Lizzie Bright and the Buckminster boy by Gary D. Schmidt

In 1911, Turner Buckminster hates his new home of Phippsburg, Maine, but things improve when he meets Lizzie Bright Griffin, a girl from a poor, nearby island community founded by former slaves that the town fathers--and Turner's--want to change into a tourist spot.

One Crazy Summer by Rita Williams-Garcia

In the summer of 1968, after traveling from Brooklyn to Oakland, California, to spend a month with the mother they barely know, eleven-year-old Delphine and her two younger sisters arrive to a cold welcome as they discover that their mother, a dedicated poet and printer, is resentful of the intrusion of their visit and wants them to attend a nearby Black Panther summer camp.

The Other Half of My Heart by Sundee T. Frazier

When Minerva and Keira King were born, they made headlines: Keira is black like Mama, but Minni is white like Daddy. Together the family might look like part of a chessboard row, but they are first and foremost the close-knit Kings. Then Grandmother Johnson calls, to invite the twins down South to compete for the title of Miss Black Pearl Preteen of America.

The Rock and the River Kekla Magoon

In 1968 Chicago, fourteen-year-old Sam Childs is caught in a conflict between his father's nonviolent approach to seeking civil rights for African Americans and his older brother, who has joined the Black Panther Party.

The Skin I'm In by Sharon Flake

Thirteen-year-old Maleeka, uncomfortable because her skin is extremely dark, meets a new teacher with a birthmark on her face and makes some discoveries about how to love who she is and what she looks like.

Sources of Light by Margaret McMullan

Fourteen-year-old Samantha and her mother move to Jackson, Mississippi, in 1962 after her father is killed in Vietnam, and during the year they spend there Sam encounters both love and hate as she learns about photography from a new friend of her mother's and witnesses the prejudice and violence of the segregationists of the South.

Uglies series by Scott Westerfeld

The aesthetic ideal in this futuristic society includes straight hair that isn't kinky (subtext: not African) and wide eyes that aren't squinty (subtext: not Asian). Does this mean race is eradicated?

The Watsons go to Birmingham--1963 by Christopher Paul Curtis

The ordinary interactions and everyday routines of the Watsons, an African American family

living in Flint, Michigan, are drastically changed after they go to visit Grandma in Alabama in the summer of 1963.

Weedflower by Cynthia Kadohata

Twelve-year-old Sumiko and her little brother Tak-Tak live with their aunt and uncle on a flower farm in California. The only Japanese student in her class, Sumiko longs for friends and acceptance. After Pearl Harbor, Sumiko and her family are removed from their land and transported to an internment camp on an Indian reservation in Poston, Ariz.