

The Things They Carried
Instructor Survey
December 2004

How did you hear about *The Things They Carried*?

- (1) I taught it in UNIV 100 as well as tried to use it for floor programs as an RA.
- (2) People, Res Life Staff, RA's, UNIV 100 people, etc...
- (3) In UNIV 100 instructor training.
- (4) peer facilitating/ honors program
- (5) I had not heard about the book until I became involved with the BGeXperience program
- (6) through the reading experience
- (7) Donna Nelson-Beene
- (8) through UNIV 100 training
- (9) I used it for years in my classes, especially my Literature of War and Literature and Psychology courses.
- (10) through teaching univ 100
- (11) When I was told that the incoming freshmen would be reading it and as a V-course teacher, I was expected to read it too.
- (12) I read it in '92. Thought it was a good book.
- (13) I heard about the selection of the common reading through a member of the committee.
- (14) GSW staff
- (15) through bgx
- (16) from library selection committee
- (17) On campus, probably when it was announced as the common reading selection for this year.
- (18) It was given to me for the common reading.
- (19) The first time I heard of it was in relation to the common reading; I had not heard of it before hand. However, I told two of my kids who related that they had read the book for classes (one in college, one in high school).
- (20) from univ
- (21) I was a BGeX peer facilitator and therefore received the book at my orientation.
- (22) From my program chair, a CRE committee member.
- (23) UNIV 100
- (24) I heard about this book while I was training for the peer facilitator position for univ 100.
- (25) I did not know about the book until I became involved with the BGx program.
- (26) Through the instructor roundtables in the spring and summer beforehand.
- (27) A few years earlier in relation to books about War.
- (28) It was given to us in a meeting with the Dean back in May. I had never heard of it beforehand.
- (29) From reading in undergrad. And grad. Classes. In the CRE Context from Donna Nelson Beene.
- (30) GSW program.
- (31) I had taught it before in literature courses.
- (32) I first read the text in High School for an honors composition class.
- (33) Through the Common Reading Experience.
- (34) I was told by a colleague that it was the common reading experience for the 2004-2005 school year.
- (35) I read it several years ago when preparing a 20th century U.S. history class.
- (36) BGeXperience.
- (37) I'm on the committee

- (38) Our staff used “Things” for our department’s sections of UNIV 100. We were introduced to the book by Mary Beth Skelly during its selection process.
- (39) UNIV 100
- (40) I read it in high school
- (41) When I was training to be a Peer Facilitator.
- (42) I am familiar with the work of Tim O’Brien, so I had already read the book.
- (43) From Jodi Webb

In which class or program did you use *The Things They Carried*?

- (1) UNIV 100 and Res Life
- (2) UNIV 100
- (3) UNIV 100
- (4) BGeX
- (5) I used the book in conjunction with the BGeXperience program and the 101 class I was involved in.
- (6) BG Xperience
- (7) Eng 110
- (8) Univ 100
- (9) American Culture Studies 250: Cultural Pluralism in the United States & Chapman Learning Community.
- (10) univ 100
- (11) I teach INST 200. We used the novel in the orientation program.
- (12) American Culture Studies 200 (BGeX) and English 110
- (13) Our BGeXperience students used during their introduction and some throughout their course.
- (14) English 110
- (15) Orientation, Contemporary Moral Issues class
- (16) BGX and GSW
- (17) Univ-100
- (18) ASIA/HIST 180
- (19) BGeX. My class was MuCT 125, Music in World Cultures.
- (20) UNIV 100
- (21) It was read over the summer for use during the pre-semester BGeX orientation. The course I peer facilitated was an introduction to ethnic studies, but the book was not used during the semester.
- (22) GSW- 2 English 110 sections.
- (23) Four class sessions
- (24) univ 100
- (25) soc 101 v
- (26) univ 100
- (27) 101 Intro to Ethnic Studies V section.
- (28) BGeXperience
- (29) English 111.
- (30) GSW English 110 and 111.\
- (31) Introduction to American Culture Studies 200.
- (32) UNIV 100 and ACS 250
- (33) Eng 111
- (34) UNIV 100
- (35) At BGSU, I used it in a BGX class, HIST 205
- (36) Geol 105X
- (37) UNIV 100
- (38) UNIV 100
- (39) UNIV 100

- (40) BGeX
- (41) I used "The Things They Carried" in my University 100 class that I was a peer facilitator for.
- (42) UNIV 100
- (43) UNIV 100

Approximately how much time did you take to discuss the novel with students?

- (1) only a couple class periods. And only 1 program
- (2) 25 minutes about 10 times throughout the semester
- (3) The equivalent of 3 full class sessions.
- (4) 2 hours
- (5) We used it mostly in the beginning of the semester. First we had a discussion in the pre-class sessions with the students, then they were only responsible for writing a reactionary paper about the book using what they knew about their personal values.
- (6) 20 minutes
- (7) 4 hours
- (8) about 10 hours total
- (9) one week
- (10) We spent a part of four class sessions discussing four of the short stories and then had the students write journals on the short stories.
- (11) 90 minutes
- (12) The ACS class was devoted to approximately 2 or 3 hours at the BGeX intro. The Eng 110 classes looked at a couple stories every week. They then wrote the last essay in the class as an evaluation of the book. We took time in many classes talking about the book, but all those discussions combined probably represents 5 or 6 hours.
- (13) The group leaders were to use during a 2 hour group session during introduction. Some faculty also used periodically in their course during the fall semester.
- (14) 1hr every two weeks
- (15) Was it a novel? I thought it was a collection of short stories. About three hours in total.
- (16) 1 week
- (17) I had scheduled approximately 5 hours of class time, plus attending the Tim O'Brien talk, but we ended up spending much less time on this in class due to the students' inability (or lack of willingness) to discuss the book.
- (19) We spoke of it frequently during the introductory classes and a few times during the first classes of the semester. In the introductory classes, I played some Vietnamese music as well.
- (20) About a half hour for four weeks or so.
- (21) The structure of the orientation granted the text two hours of discussion.
- (22) One class period per week for first four weeks.
- (24) For approximately 3-4 weeks, we spend each class period, (50 minutes), discussing the book.
- (25) About one and a half hours.
- (26) We took about 3 class periods to incorporate aspects of the book and then the class attended the Tim O'Brien presentation on Wednesday evening. To finish our class experience the students also gave presentations on the "Things that they have Carried" to college and throughout the first semester. It has been interesting to parallel the book with this concept.
- (27) Not much since most of the students had not finished reading the book by the time I began discussing it in class.

- (28) Very, very little because the novel in no way had any connection to my class (economics).
- (29) We spent six 75 minute class sessions discussing it. Plus, my assignments drew from it.
- (30) Three Weeks.'
- (31) Two weeks.
- (32) In the UNIV section, we spent about a week talking about it (two class sessions). In the ACS section, we spent about a week and a half discussing it (four or five classes).
- (33) One class session every two weeks.
- (34) Aproximately 2 ½ class periods.
- (35) about 2 hours
- (36) The time that was put aside at the BGeX orientation was used to discuss the novel.
- (37) LOTS- we discussed individual chapters of the book for a few minutes each day for several weeks.
- (38) 5-6 class periods.
- (39) 1 class period
- (40) Only during orientation for about an hour.
- (41) We discussed the novel over about three, fifty minute class periods.
- (42) 50 minutes.

Were discussions of the novel

___ **Integrated into student's curriculum** (1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 20, 23, 26, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 37, 38, 39, 42, 43)

___ **Part of a welcome or orientation experience** (2, 4, 5, 6, 9, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 18, 19, 21, 24, 25, 27, 28, 32, 35, 36, 40, 41, 43)

What did you think of the Common Reading Experience selection this year?

- (1) I didn't like it at all. I read the Laramie Project last year for UNIV 100 and I thought it was much more worthwhile and understandable. I didn't enjoy this book as much.
- (2) I didn't like the book that was picked
- (3) I enjoyed the book, but I do not think my students found it relevant to their experiences. I had a very difficult time trying to connect the book with University Success, possibly because I was not able to attend any of the training sessions.
- (4) I personally didn't like the book but thought that it raised some good issues
- (5) Not all the students were able to connect with the book, but its content was not invalid. The major problem with the book, which in fact has nothing to do with the book itself, was that the kids didn't know they had to read the book prior to school. The instructions apparently came to them in a blurb on a note card, amongst lots of mail they were receiving from BG anyways. It was lost and forgotten in the shuffle
- (6) I personally liked the book but it seemed lots of people didnt read it so it was not really a common experience.
- (7) It was more difficult for students than past choices.
- (8) The book was very relevant. Many students connected our current war experiences in this country and the upcoming elections at the time with the book. They found it interesting to read.
- (9) Excellent. It was powerful, engaging, and provocative. Students loved the book and I enjoyed teaching it. The book likewise provided a _ton_ of different topics for discussion.
- (10) I think it was a good book but hard to apply to UNIV 100.
- (11) I liked it

- (12) I liked the book a great deal. It worked well with English classes because it dealt with some issues of meta-writing. It also used some interesting techniques that could be talked about. My ACS class benefited from it as a discussion of values related to war and current events.
- (13) I enjoyed the common reading because it related to current issues going on in society today.
- (14) good selection
- (15) I think the students and I found it hard to relate to.
- (16) didn't like it, thought it was ill suited for student's needs
- (17) This was a very difficult book for freshmen. While I enjoyed the book myself, it was much to challenging for my univ 100 class, and we did not spend as much time on it or get as much out of the experience as I had planned.
- (18) Good book.
- (19) I enjoyed the book, the students seemed to, and it was nice that Tim O'Brien could visit the campus. I've never done a common reading before and have nothing to compare the experience with. There was a little crossover appeal with the Iraq war, and it brought home some anxieties that soldiers face.
- (20) I liked the book, but it was difficult for many of the freshman.
- (21) Inasmuch as the purpose of the BGeX is to teach value language and its use within disciplines, I thought the CRE selection was most inappropriate. Students did not have a clear enough understanding of values with which to attack this book. There was no clear argument in the book, which is where values are found. I had trouble finding passages in which I thought there was an explicit enough argument that students may be able to find the value preferences. Overall, I thought the challenge of applying values language to this text was too great for introductory students. And the way they responded confirmed my sentiments.
- (22) it was better than in previous years, since this work was intended to be read as a book (unlike "The Laramie Project") and had actual literary merit (unlike, in my opinion, "A hope in the Unseen"). Short stories were a nice idea for this project- these allowed a bit more freedom in my own scheduling, since we could read a few, take a break, and read a few more. I do find the book a bit old for our purposes, and would urge the committee to choose a newer book in the future.
- (23) I did not like this year's selection. It was very difficult to incorporate into the course.
- (24) I thought this was a good book, and we were able to relate it to first year experiences, however I think the students thought the book was too long and drawn out. Only some students enjoyed reading it.
- (25) I did not care for it.
- (26) I enjoyed it. I think that the timeliness of world events assisted in the discussions of the book. I wish there would have been additional resources available to provide even greater "real" experiences for the students. I appreciated with other common readings the ability to take the students to see either a theatrical representation of the work or show a movie about the book in class. This is a great way to make it real for the students.
- (28) I hated it.
- (29) Excellent. The text is challenging and raises a number of important textual, moral and cultural questions.
- (30) Extraordinary. It is an experience I will never forget. I found it personally satisfying in every way, from being able to discuss this excellent book with my students to being able to meet O'Brien in person.'
- (31) I think this was a terrific book t choose this year, especially in a time of war. The students genuinely liked it-they read they whole thing and getting them to read anything these days is no small task. We were able to talk about many different topics ranging from the importance of empathy, war and morality, fact vs fiction, and the history of a war which, unfortunately, is proving to be uncannily similar to that in which our young men and women are currently fighting.

- (32) Neither group of my students got as much out of it as they did “The Laramie Project.” I thought it was nice to get something that was so germane and important to read this time in world history, but my students didn’t take as much from it.
- (33) I absolutely loved the book itself, and I thought it was appropriate to current events with the war in Iraq.
- (34) I thought it was relevant for this year because of Iraq. There are similarities between the current war and the Vietnam War and it is great to bring the past to the present.
- (35) I liked it-found it provocative, easy to read, and extremely relevant. I am, however, a little concerned about how male-centered our common readings have been for the last few years: from A HOPE IN THE UNSEEN, to LARAMIE PROJECCT, to THE THINGS THEY CARRIED, the 1st three years’ readings have revolved around the pretty specific experiences of young men. Would we consider assigning a book so specific to young women even for one year (let alone three)? How about THE BODY PROJECT by Joan Brumberg?
- (36) I thought it was an overall good book, but I was disappointed that there wasn’t many positive portrayals of women in the book. I was also confused by the format. I felt misled when I found out most of the stories weren’t even true.
- (37) Great book!
- (38) “Things” was a good selection given the political state of the nation. It was easily integrated into issues dealing with responsible citizenship, decision making, and awareness.
- (39) I did not enjoy it.
- (40) The book sucked. You could not tell what was real or made up or both. I understand what he was trying to say, but it was repetitive and confusing and basically worthless to me.
- (41) I did not like the Common Reading Experience this year. I do not think that particular book was a good choice. It was not interesting enough to keep people’s attention, and I don’t think the students could relate to the story very well. I definitely think a much better book could have been chosen.
- (42) Much better than last year. This book was more accessible and lent itself more readily to use in the classroom.
- (43) Poor choice difficult to use in a classroom setting; I did not feel prepared to address the student’s questions.

How do you feel students responded to *The Things They Carried*?

- (1) Many of my students did not like reading this book. They complained about how hard it was to follow and how they felt it didn’t relate to them enough. I think that many of them struggled with this choice and as a result didn’t enjoy the book.
- (2) I think they had a hard time relating to this book
- (3) Truthfully I think only a few of the students read the entire book. They practiced "selective reading" to complete the required assignments. Only one of my 24 students indicated that he really enjoyed the book.
- (4) it wasn't as relevant to them; they are just coming out of high school
- (5) Some enjoyed it, but most we too rushed into reading it for them to really get the most out off the material.
- (6) the ones who did read it all the way through liked it. Some people could not get past the first chapter and put the book down for good.
- (7) Not very positively
- (8) As mentioned above, they found it interesting to read and relevant.
- (9) My students enjoyed the book a great deal. I also heard from several other faculty that their students found the book to be interesting. Some faculty reported problems with their students not receiving the book at orientation. This meant that they came to campus without having read the book and having reflected

- upon it. This needs to be addressed in the future, but it has nothing to do with the book or the Common Book Committee.
- (10) I think that they had a hard time relating to the book, which is odd to me since we have a war on at the moment.
 - (11) Mixed. Some liked it a lot., some found it to be O.K., others didn't like it at all. Too many of them didn't read it, but they told me they received a postcard notifying them about the expectations that they would read the book only a week before they came to BGSU>
 - (12) My English 110 students (students who need extra help writing essays) almost unanimously said they loved the book. One student actually said he'd never read a book before, but this was probably because they didn't pick cool books like this in high school. However, a couple students pointed out that more should be expected of them at the college level. Perhaps...
My ACS students, because I didn't work it into the curriculum as much, didn't have as much to say about it.
 - (13) I think it was 50/50. Those students who read it I feel were quite involved. However, there were a number of students who did not read it or did not complete prior to introduction.
 - (14) Either loved it or hated it...most loved it
 - (15) They didn't seem too thrilled about it. It was really difficult to get them to be interested in it.
 - (16) most responded negatively
 - (17) Most responded negatively. Only a handful of my students were able to appreciate this as a piece of literature and discuss it intelligently.
 - (18) Considering that most of them (95%) did not read the book over the summer—I have no idea. The ones that did read it liked it for the most part.
 - (19) Not all read it because many understood that it was optional. Students liked it and felt it taught them something, though several kept coming back to the issue of whether the book was “true” or fictional. We discussed that for awhile, but some frustration remained.
 - (20) They gave up on it.
 - (21) The students did not respond well to the text. First, the text was almost a study on the art of writing. The author's comments to that effect kept students skeptical of whether the stories were true at all. Next we asked the students to be on the lookout for value preferences. To the extent that value preferences are most easily identified in arguments, the students were unable to find arguments with which to work. So I tried to identify between five and ten passages that were nearly explicit arguments, and then told the students to work with those. The students still did not respond well. For students just learning values language, the abstract nature of terms and concepts can be disorienting. To then add a confusing text is deadly to student interaction.
 - (22) Fairly well. It was depressing, obviously, and probably didn't make them want to pick up another book any time soon- which is a shame. I think it would be great if the committee chose a book that was more pleasurable and less heavy in the future, since many of my students are not readers and have yet to see the real pleasure that reading can bring. “TTTC” is a great book-but not terribly enjoyable one on a lot of levels.
 - (23) They didn't seem very engaged in the topics presented, compared to those books selected in the past.
 - (24) They responded well once we began talking in depth about the book and how it can relate to their first year experience in college, but the particular class I worked with rated this book about a 7/10.
 - (25) Many did not read it.
 - (26) I think at times our class felt like the book was over processed; particularly if they were also involved in an English Class or another course that also incorporated the book. It might be helpful in those instances to have all of the departments across campus or instructors that will be using the book to discuss the syllabi creation and find ways to

enhance the total experience of the reading so that we are not asking students to replicate the same projects in multiple classes.

- (27) We did not have a good discussion on the Things they Carried.
- (28) They had no idea why they were reading this book, especially when I did not use it in my class.
- (29) Very well. As it isn't the most easily digestible book it asked a lot of them. But they worked hard and discussing it and thinking about it.
- (30) Mixed at first. My students were not used to reading such a challenging novel. They warmed to it as we discussed it and were quite curious. They wrote an essay on the novel for their portfolio.
- (31) As I said above, very well. It is so important to get them reading and so difficult to find something-in this day of visual technology- that they are willing to read and that sustains their attention. O'Brien succeeded on all of these fronts.
- (32) They were pretty indifferent. They didn't take much away from the text (or, at least they said they didn't). They were more hung up on deciding whether it was fictional or "factual" and had trouble finding different kinds of truth in the text.
- (33) Mostly positive. Some absolutely hated the book, but they felt free to explore their opinions.
- (34) For the most part, they responded well. We had them write to reaction papers to the book-one was more abstract, while the other was specific to the book and their feelings, etc. I know that many were not happy to know that it as "A Work of Fiction."
- (35) Few read it, so I distributed copies of a few key chapters. Most read those hand-outs and they worked very well-made for interesting and self-reflective discussions.
- (36) It was hard to get my group to discuss the book in general. Most of our discussion had to do with the current war.
- (37) Not sure they liked it all that much-it was hard to relate it to UNIV 100 topics.
- (38) I have a strong feeling that not all my students read the book as I did not test them over material-only had them journal. However, the students who did read the book enjoyed it. It gave them a new perspective of the "fantasy" of military and allowed them to learn part of American history though supplemental lectures on Vietnam.
- (39) They did not enjoy it, didn't read it, or didn't understand it.
- (40) They could have cared less.
- (41) I don't think the students responded to the book as well as many had hoped. We could not get much feedback pertaining to the book. Last year for UNIV the students read "The Laramie Project." I thought that was a wonderful book and it was a great choice for that class.
- (42) As with most students who do not read, they were generally ambivalent. Those who do enjoy reading liked the book.
- (43) Mixed responses, quite a few had read it in high school.

Did you attend a workshop conducted by Brett Holden in the beginning of the semester? If so, was this helpful in your planning?

- (1) no, I was unable to do so.
- (2) no
- (3) no
- (4) no
- (5) no
- (6) no
- (7) no
- (8) I attended this workshop and it was ESSENTIAL! I really gained a lot of insight by going and was very grateful to have the ideas and feedback that he gave (as well as others in the training session).
- (9) conducted the workshops
- (10) yes, it was great

- (11) I wish I could have, but it didn't fit my schedule
- (13) no
- (14) I did attend but the methods of integrating the book were not appropriate for a composition class.
- (15) yes, a bit
- (16) no
- (17) yes it was very helpful
- (18) Did not attend.
- (19) I did not attend.
- (20) No
- (21) no
- (22) Did not attend.... sorry!
- (23) Yes. Good information and resources were shared.
- (24) No, I did not attend the workshops.
- (25) no
- (26) No, I think that this would have provided a better concept of alternate way to teach the course with the book. I would really love to see some of the roundtables on the common reading experience to take place in the spring. I wish that my schedule over the summers was able to accommodate attending one of the workshops however between vacations in May or June and training beginning July 1 until opening my availability is greatly limited. Any help and assistance with this consideration would be excellent.
- (27) no
- (28) no
- (29) Yes I attended but It wasn't helpful. I felt Dr. Holden over emphasized a standardized reading of TTTC as mimetic, experiential text. He made no effort to introduce the textual and metafictional elements that define the novel and permeate its cultural value.
- (30) no
- (31) no
- (32) nope
- (33) Yes, yes.
- (34) no
- (35) no
- (36) no
- (37) Yes, Brett was great and gave me some useful information on presenting this to my class.
- (38) Yes, Brett is fantastic and did a wonderful job. It helped meeting with him and peers to brainstorm themes and experience diverse perspectives. Hearing others reactions to the book enabled me to prepare for the many ways my students could have reacted.
- (39) no
- (40) no
- (41) no
- (42) no.
- (43) yes, yes.

Did you attend a session with Tim O'Brien? If so, please comment on the experience.

- (1) no
- (2) yes, very interesting
- (3) Yes. The talk was very interesting, but I wish he had allowed time for questions. He also left me feeling somewhat disillusioned with the book. I wanted to email him and tell him I felt the entire book was a "turtle."

- (4) no
- (5) no
- (6) no
- (7) yes, it was great
- (8) no
- (9) Many. I took Tim to each of his presentations and introduced him. I especially was impressed by the student question-answer sessions.
- (10) no
- (11) No, but several of my students did and really enjoyed it.
- (12) no
- (13) I helped organize his visit and was able to meet with him several times. I enjoyed speaking with him not only about the book but the aspect of why he wrote the book. He was an enjoyment to have on campus.
- (14) no
- (15) no
- (16) no
- (17) yes it was excellent
- (18) Yes. The dinner with Mr. O'Brien was very nice.
- (19) I saw him speak and thought it was excellent. He answered the issue about "truth" and "story" and humanized his experience. He had a lot to offer. Most of my students were there too.
- (20) Yes, I went to the listen to him speak
- (21) no
- (22) Yes, I did. In my opinion, Tim seemed not to know his audience-first year students from across the spectrum, rather than a bunch of creative writers. It might be nice to fully brief the visiting writer in the future (as I'm sure you did this year); I'm not sure how to get an author to leave behind the familiar territory of the writing process, though, for a mass audience (or if an author even should). The presentations just didn't seem that relevant to me (although, as a writer, I enjoyed them) – maybe a reading of a new work would probably be better for a large audience.
- (23) Yes. The lecture in Olscamp was a good opportunity, but not well organized with regard to space.
- (24) no, I was unable to attend due to a night class that I had to go to.
- (25) no
- (26) Yes, my class and I attended the Wednesday evening presentation. I think that the style of presentation was different from what I expected. I appreciated how he told more about the importance of language and perception of language; however I think students were frustrated in our class that he did not talk more about the war/experiences in Vietnam.
- (27) Yes. Tim O'Brien's talk was great. Moreover, my students enjoyed the talk. However, the session that I attended was too big-maybe need to have small sessions with different groups of people.
- (28) no
- (29) Well, just the lecture. I thought it was great.
- (30) Yes. I will never forget it. It was one of the most stimulating presentations I have ever attended.
- (31) Yes. He was a wonderful speaker and presence. The students I spoke with genuinely enjoyed listening to him-several said to me "I expected to be bored, but I wasn't."
- (32) nope
- (33) I went to the "intimate" Q and A with my students. I really enjoyed it because he was open to any questions. I felt my students learned a lot-even if they disliked TTC, they were able to get additional feedback about the book.
- (34) I only saw his presentation.

- (35) I attended his evening talk.
- (36) no
- (37) My class attended a small meeting with him-it was just question and answers. I think everyone enjoyed it. I'm not so sure my students were as impressed as I was with the chance to meet and talk to an acclaimed writer.
- (38) I and the majority of my class attended his large lecture in OLSC. To ensure I could take attendance of all my students, I was unable to enter the room he spoke in, but was in the first overflow room. While, I would have appreciated being in the same room with him, I still found the experience positive. I think his presentation really helped students understand his literary technique.
- (39) no.
- (40) NO! I don't like the book, why would I waste my time with O'Brien.
- (41) No, I did not attend. I had class at the time.
- (42) Yes. It was a wonderful experience. He is a great speaker.
- (43) No.

Do you have any book suggestions for the Common Reading Experience for next year?

- (1) Get something shorter with the basic theme and point of the book more on the surface. Get a book like Laramie Project again!! That book was much more worth the read!
- (2) The 5 People You Meet in Heaven
- (3) none at this time
- (5) Hunter S. Thompson's "Hells Angels" or maybe James Clavell's "Shogun"
- (6) Rosa Lee by Leon Dash
- (9) I firmly believe that we need to engage the university in a discussion of Islam. This is such a pressing problem, especially in light of the war in Iraq, that it would be irresponsible for us not to address it. Many of our problems in the region reflect our misunderstanding (total ignorance) of the religion and of the people who practice it.
- (11) While I enjoyed The Things They Carry, I noticed that the female characters were not around much and the few that were -- well, they didn't have a lot of depth or interest or seemed real. I would hope that if another novel was chosen, the depiction of all kinds of characters (gender, race, sexual orientation, etc.) would be taken into account. Not every possible characteristic needs to be represented, let alone by a fully drawn character, but who is included and how should be considered. I do not mean this as a criticism since I was not part of the selection committee and have no idea what other books were considered, and so that might have actually been considered but O'Brien's book was selected because of other reasons.
- (12) Life of Pi. Another novel that would be interesting (but not about religion) is Blindness by Jose Saramago. A brilliant work. The world goes blind--except for one person.
- (15) "Jennifer Government" by Max Barry
- (17) Maybe something by a female author since I think all so far have been male.
- (19) I'm currently reading Tuesdays With Morrie. This has been widely circulated and might have also been a previous common reading, but it would work well (I suppose his other book, The Five People You Meet in Heaven, might be acceptable as well). The biography of Alice Walker would be a mature choice. Both would raise a myriad of values issues.
- (20) na
- (21) I have no suggestions for a specific text. I do, however, think that one should keep in mind the need for the book to contain explicit arguments. Perhaps they are made by the characters. Perhaps the arguments are made explicitly by the author. Whatever the case, explicit arguments within the text make the task of identifying value preferences inexplicably easier for students.

- (22) How about something fun, like, perhaps the first book in the Harry Potter series? Or maybe we could go with a mystery or genre piece that has some topical interest, as well as some literary merit.
- (24) I don't really have any suggestions of any particular books, but I really enjoyed reading the Laramie Project last year, so if there are any other books similar to that one, I would suggest choosing it because a lot of students I talked to said they really liked that book.
- (25) Yes, I would recommend Alice Sebold's Lucky. This is Sebold's story of being raped while at Syracuse University, and the consequences of the rape.
- (26) No, however the last two books have focused on male characters. I think that it would be great to incorporate the use of a book that chronicles the experience of a female in society.
- (27) Beverly Daniel Tatum, "Why are all The Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?" And Other Conversations About Race, rev. ed., New York: Basic Books, 1997. Open House: Of Family, Friends, Food, Piano Lessons and the Search for a Room of My Own. By Patricia J. Williams. Arc of Justice: A Saga of Race, Civil Rights, and Murder in the Jazz Age. By Kevin Boyle
- (28) Yes, not this book or The Laramie Project. It needs to better relate the hard(er) sciences and be interesting to students-like Fast Food Nation by Eric Schlosser.
- (29) Yes. Nickel and Dimed by Barbara Ehrenreich. Or, Their Eyes were Watching God by Zora Neale Hurston.
- (30) Man's Search for Meaning, by Viktor Frankl.
- (32) I think it'd be great to have a text that deals with weight prejudice. With anorexia and bulimia being so prevalent among college aged students, and with so much bigotry directed at fat people in the media and even locally, it's important to understand the real issues surrounding fatness.
- (33) A few of my students recommended the DaVinci code.
- (35) Joan Brumberg's THE BODY PROJECT. Barbara Ehrenreich's NICKEL AND DIMED. I've not read Tom Wolfe's I AM CHARLOTTE SIMMONS (?), but am intrigued by the book reviews.
- (38) Nothing specific, but in order to successfully incorporate it into other course content, it must be a reasonable length.
- (40) Leave it out! Freshmen do not care about reading a book over the summer before college. It is their last summer to hang out and just have fun before they change their lives in college. Let them enjoy the summer and not have to read something that will have no value to them in life.
- (41) Any book the students could relate to and could keep their attention.
- (42) The Fountainhead, by Ayn Rand; Of human Bondage by W. Somerset Maugham; Candide, by Voltaire.
- (43) Technology; plagiarism; changes; transistion.

Do you have a particular theme or issue you would like the Common Reading Experience planning committee to keep in mind when selecting a book for next year?

- (1) I think issues relating more directly to college students is much better.
- (2) no
- (3) I really think there has to be a more direct connection between the freshman year experience and the reading than what was evident this year.
- (4) adjusting to college
- (5) Consider the experience of the student in the first year and what ideas that you are trying to convey to them. Don't pick a book because it is a classic, or because you get a good deal with the author. Take a book that will engage the majority of readers and give

- them something to really ponder and discuss when they aren't in the class room. That is the true sign of whether or not the book works; do they want to learn more about what the book talks about...
- (6) Something that teaches people the importance of participation in the society you belong to.
 - (8) I am sure the committee will do a great job choosing something with a values orientation and that provides good discussion.
 - (9) Islam
 - (10) I think it is easier to tie into UNIV 100 when there is a diversity theme in the book or it deals directly with a college student/issue. I know that this is for more than UNIV 100 and that it is hard to find a book that applies to everyone.
 - (11) So many important topics -- how to choose?
General topics that jump to mind immediately include Islam, or recent Chinese history and/or development, role of sports in society, role of media in society, something related to science, I could go on and on.
I really, really liked that the author was on campus this fall. I think that should be one of the criteria for the book we choose, that we have a guest speaker associated with the book. The author if possible, but if we would choose the Ramayana, the Koran or some other book where the author is unknown or dead, that would be difficult!
 - (12) Religion. I find it amazing how ignorant most of my students are in regard to religions (often, even their own!). The Life of Pi deals to some degree with this issue. He (Pi) is a Christian/Muslim/Buddhist. Ha.
The topic of religion would also work well in values classes. And current events. And, as I've mentioned, is an area of severe cultural ignorance (albeit, maybe not as "dangerous" in America as other areas of ignorance.)
 - (13) I think the theme should be in relation to a current topic that students can relate to.
 - (14) I think it would be valuable for students to read a book that challenges them to consider the idea that what they THINK, or what they BELIEVE is a product of marketing. Consumerism, commercialism, marketing...something dealing with the destructive influence of these things.
 - (16) something on Islam
 - (18) Yes I have one issue: do you really expect these students to read the book over the summer?
 - (19) No. Since I'm in music, something dealing with music somehow would be nice.
 - (21) Individualism. Given the election this year, I think it would do students a service to read about all the value preferences implied when someone behaves or thinks as an individualist (and of course the implication for society when its citizens do think this way).
 - (22) Themes and issues are your big problem. Your books aren't much fun to read, in my opinion. They're preachy. I'd love to see my students turned on to reading, but "A Hope in the Unseen" and "The Laramie Project" isn't going to do that for them.
 - (24) Something both males and females can relate to and enjoy reading.
 - (26) I would love for a book to include within it the challenge with Alcohol use and abuse. I think that a character that the students might be able to identify with and make issues hit home would be really great. Other than that, I am receptive to whatever the committee is able to narrow down and select.
 - (28) Individual actions add up to collective consequences.
 - (29) Well, something like TTTC that addressed the interaction of Race, Class, Gender and Sexuality.
 - (30) Writing as survival (psychological and/or physical survival).
 - (32) Fat acceptance and weight prejudice would be great topics.
 - (33) I would like to see a new book as a selection.
 - (34) AIDS/HIV; sexual assault; confrontation.
 - (35) Young women

- (36) Since mostly freshmen are required to read these books, I think something should be chosen that they can directly relate to. (I.E. eating disorders, drug and alcohol abuse, adjusting to living in a new place, etc.)
- (37) I think it is time for BGSU to define what the CRE is and how we will run it, especially with the expansion of the BGeX program. Shouldn't BGeX own this now and figure out how to run the discussions and/or how the BGeX faculty (V courses) might utilize this book in their small classes for freshmen? I'm not sure we should continue to use UNIV 100 and GSW as the main vehicles for interacting with students and the book.
- (40) Don't have one!
- (42) No, but avoid all of the multicultural stuff. We get enough of that already. It is overplayed and repetitive. Additionally, it serves only the purpose of indoctrinating students into a world view that has not been adequately examined philosophically.

When would be the best time of year to offer book discussions or training sessions related to the book selection for those who decide to use the Common Reading Experience book selection in their classroom?

- (1) the end of spring semester or beginning of fall (but once classes have already started)
- (3) Right before classes begin--and after O-Reg!
- (5) The sooner the better. The same goes for contacting students about their involvement in the BGeX program. Get them excited about being in the program AND coming to college. If you can make them feel like they are involved with something great then they feel great about being involved.
- (8) The end of spring 2005 and then a follow up time in the summer. This way, people can choose in case they have vacation plans.
- (9) I would host them over the summer, if possible. We could also offer them in the fall, as we did this year.
- (10) summer
- (11) Spring, for those who are not around in the summer. And summer, for those who are.
- (12) I'm guessing early in the semester.
- (13) spring semester
- (14) Week or two before class starts
- (15) Probably the latter part of the summer.
- (17) summer
- (19) Right at the beginning of the semester.
- (21) If the training sessions are meant to help BGeX staff (and they should be), then the sessions need to be held before the pre-semester BGeX orientation with students.
- (22) I'm not sure- there's never a good time for things like that, is there? Final third of spring semester and supplemental sessions in the summer would probably work well.
- (23) Late summer/early fall.
- (24) If the book is going to be used in the fall, I think the best time to offer discussions or training sessions would be the spring semester before they use it in the fall.
- (25) unsure
- (27) August seems best.
- (28) Spring, definitely NOT summer.
- (29) late drunk
- (30) Beginning of Fall semester.
- (31) Late spring or early Fall.
- (32) late spring and early fall.
- (33) end of summer, very beginning of the semester.

- (34) End of spring semester, the summer, and the beginning of the fall semester.
- (38) The training sessions scheduled in the past have really worked well for my schedule. Would enjoy attending book discussions, but they would have to take place before the break that is OREG begins-late spring semester or shortly after spring semester ends.
- (39) In the beginning of class after the summer reading.
- (41) Prior to the beginning of the semester.
- (42) mid summer and early in the fall semester.
- (43) summer

Other comments and suggestions?

- (3) There is a distinct problem when students are reading the book for more than one class. The Things They Carried was no doubt very appropriate for an English class, but for UNIV 100.....????? And if it's being read in all BGX classes, we have to think about that too.
- (5) Shorten up the pre-class sessions; use the peer facilitators more for things like round table discussions of the book and other issues, but don't force them upon the students; Allow the Peer Facilitators to have more time with the students in general (that would be easiest during the orientation period); Don't push the student, lead them with the program; Another thing to think about, let the departments (or the peer facilitators in the departments in conjunction with their faculty) decide on the common reading (this would allow for a reading that may carry be more useful than one blanket book).
- (8) Keep up the great work!
- (9) Keep up the excellent effort. What you are doing for our campus is very important: engaging students, faculty, and staff in a common experience involving discussions and debates concerning the human condition. We need many more such discussions, throughout the academic year, at all institutions of higher learning throughout the world.
- (11) Keep up the good work! I appreciate the efforts you put into this.
- (12) Students in general just don't read much. The Things They Carried got them to read. That's great! I have some mixed emotions toward the program, however, because it is sort of "simple." One book? We had summer reading lists in highschool that had five or six books on them. But, anything is better than nothing. Another mixed emotion, for me, is the stature of the writer. I love O'brien, but he's raking in a ton of cash from universities all over the place. There are probably other writers just as deserving, but not as well known. (Not to mention cheaper and more willing to spend time here.) Regardless, from a purely practical point of view, students all over the place were writing essays about O'brien. They no longer have to go home for Thanksgiving to exchange ideas and/or entire essays. -- Just some thoughts.
- (21) Do not be afraid to challenge students. I understand that incoming freshmen are likely to be put off by heavy reading material (especially when we infringe upon their summer vacation so). However, to assign reading like The Things They Carried, which is taught to high school sophomores in my hometown, is somewhat insulting and somewhat boring. What impression do we give to students when we ask them to read a book more commonly taught to fifteen-year-olds?
- (22) I like the project- and I sure hope my responses don't seem too critical. It's just been my sense that the committee has chosen books that are "good for you" for the last few go-arounds-and in my opinion, ALL books (fiction, nonfiction, genre works, classics, poetry, picture books, porn, religious texts, how-to/self-help, etc., etc., etc.) are "good for you." Let's try to make life-long readers out of these students by giving them a good starter book. Do you realize how many of my students have never even read a book?
- (27) Really like this idea of a common reading experience....
- (30) I would like to congratulate the book committee on its choice of *The Things They Carried*. This novel is challenging, but well worth the effort to teach. I also think that given our situation in the Middle East, this novel was a particularly apt choice. I congratulate the committee on having the courage to choose this novel. I was very proud

to be a part of this entire experience. I was proud of my university and believe we gave our students a truly memorable experience. Thank you.

- (31) Speakers should be scheduled in larger rooms!! The union ballroom perhaps?
- (43) The Laramie Project was so timely and thought-provoking. I did not get the same response with The Things They Carried.