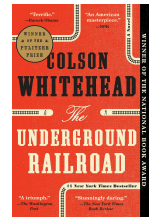
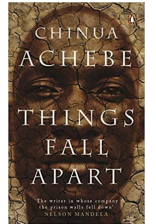


Black History Month 2020 - The English Department Recommends...

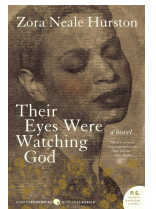
Mr Coolin: *The Underground Railroad* by Colson Whitehead. A highly readable Pulitzer Prize-winning novel. Cora, an escaped slave, moves from state to state on the Underground Railroad, a network of secret routes and safe houses, in her quest for freedom and contentment. A fascinating and important book.



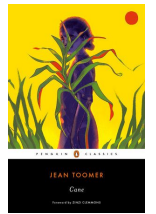
Miss Williamson: *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe. Arguably the greatest African novel of the 20th century and one of the first to explore colonialism from a black perspective. Okonkwo is the greatest warrior alive but when he accidentally kills a clansman, things begin to fall apart. Okonkwo returns from exile to find colonists have arrived in his village and his life hurtles towards tragedy. Not just a novel about colonisation but also a poignant examination of the relationship between fathers and sons.



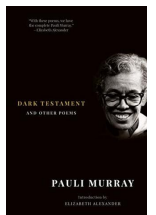
Mr Hindley: *Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston. Very readable - lots of twists and turns. A novel that explores issues of gender and racial equality yet the humanity of the protagonist is never overpowered by the political voice of one of the leading female figures of the Harlem Renaissance. A great read.



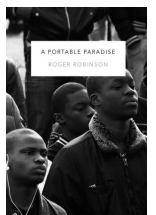
Dr Justice: *Cane* by Jean Toomer, an undervalued work of modernism written during the Harlem Renaissance which spans all genres of literature. Toomer's experimental style and cyclical structure mirrors the journey of the Black Migration from the Southern States to the North at the start of the Twentieth Century, and then back to the South to reckon with the demons of the past. We so often see modernist writing through a distinctly white lens so it was a rewarding experience to study *Cane* alongside the work of T. S. Eliot, Virginia Woolf and James Joyce at university.



Miss Rocker-Cook: *Dark Testament* by Pauli Murray. I recently discovered this collection of poetry in my pursuit of celebrating more diversity in my reading, and it has quickly become one of my all-time favourite anthologies. Powerfully addressing and examining issues of race, gender equality, and identity; "Dark Testament" holds up a mirror to the marginalisation of black people in society. Murray herself is a new source of true inspiration; and I highly recommend reading up on their life, and the way they fought for equality. Poems I find particularly poignant are "Words" and "Mr Roosevelt Regrets", the latter of which still rings very true and relevant today.



Mr Jamison: *A Portable Paradise* by Roger Robinson. Winner of the 2020 T.S. Eliot Prize for poetry, this collection deals not only with race and prejudice, but also with the concept of paradise and how we might find it in ourselves, in poems which are well crafted and lively.



Mrs Bridgeworth: *The Nickel Boys* by Colson Whitehead follows the story of Elwood Curtis who is about to enroll in the local black college, but one innocent mistake leads to alter the course of his life. Elwood arrives at The Nickel Academy, a place which aims to equip inmates to become 'honorable and honest men'. The reality is much more horrific; Elwood and his new friend Turner have to fight to survive. Whilst this book explores the tensions of the Civil Rights movement, it also provides a gateway to help us understand the current realities and issues in the United States.

