

Ms. Denison

AP 12

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### **Summer Reading Assignment**

*The Things They Carry*

By: Tim O'Brien

Novel: "An unparalleled Vietnam testament, a classic work of American literature, and a profound study of men at war that illuminates the capacity, and the limits, of the human heart and soul."

*"They carried malaria tablets, love letters, 28-pound mine detectors, illustrated Bibles, each other. And if they made it home alive, they carried unrelenting images of a nightmarish war..."*

Task: Your task is to read the novel; pay close attention to characters, symbols, potential motifs, themes and style of prose. You can expect assignments and assessments the first week based on the novel.

On the first day of class you will bring in a letter (one page single spaced, MLA format) discussing two to three things you carry. These objects may be concrete, tangible or something more abstract, intangible or symbolic. Make sure the items are meaningful! These items should tell me a great deal about you. Ask yourself the following questions to direct your letter.

- Why am I carrying these "items?"
- Did I make the choice to carry these items or did someone make me carry them?
- What do they weigh? Literally, figuratively?
- What are their demands?
- Where would I be without these things?

Your letter must be in a business format (much like your letter of intent). You must talk about these things you carry. Your purpose is to make your reader (me) understand these things you carry, why you take them with you and how their weight(s) affect you. The tone of the letter will depend to a great extent on what you carry. Be honest, be thoughtful and make this a meaningful assignment. This is a chance for you to introduce yourself to me.

Best of luck! I look forward to a challenging and intellectually stimulating year!

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