**How To Save Yourself A Hassle When Selecting Your ISU Novels**

Frequently when students are seeking approval for their ISU novel selections, they are disappointed when their teacher disallows the book. Frequently teachers are frustrated when dozens of students approach them with books that do not have enough literary value on which to base a thought-provoking academic literary essay.

Below are some tips which should help you in deciding whether a book contains sufficient literary merit for your consideration.

**Clues that would likely indicate that the novel is not for this course:**

* Glitzy cover - colorful, bright, and/or embossed lettering
* Glamour shot of writer
* Juvenile picture on cover
* Author’s name is larger than the title
* Does it have a yellow “Young Adult” sticker which means that the novel is not for this course?
* Written comments on the back are a little superficial such as a “good read”, “heartwarming”, “awesome”, “amazing”, “page turner”, “best seller” etc.
* “Everyone is talking about it”
* If any reviews are by Cosmopolitan, Toronto Sun, etc.

**Things to look for:**

* Does the book have a forward or afterword?
* Has it been reviewed by New York Times Literary Review, Times Literary Supplement, Kirkus Reviews, Globe and Mail?
* Has it received important literary awards/prizes e.g. Booker (winner or short-listed), Nobel (winner or short-listed), Governor General’s, Giller? Note: Newberry, though good, does not cut it here.

NOTE: Of course, to each rule there are often many exceptions. Some very substantial novels may have glitzy covers, and reviews by everyone under the sun, including The Sun; however, these are just some suggestions that may aid you in separating the wheat from the chaff.