This summer’s required book for English III is Chimamanda Adichie’s *Purple Hibiscus*. Please make sure that you’ve read and annotated the book according to the directions in [this Annotation Guide](#) by the first day of class (and expect assessments on both of those tasks of reading and annotating upon the first day of school).

*Purple Hibiscus* is about a lot of things, both general and specific: adolescence and one’s coming-of-age; family dynamics; gender; personal and cultural identity in post-colonial worlds; education; Nigeria; Catholicism; the Biafran War; the Igbo people; imperialism; the struggle for autonomy...the list goes on. In order to provide you with the proper context for this novel by one of the foremost African and Nigerian authors of our time, we’re asking you to watch and read the following before reading the book:

- **BBC News, “Nigeria’s Civil War Explained”**
- **Kobo, “January 2020: ‘No Victor and No Vanquished’ - Fifty Years after the Biafran War”**
  → These two resources provide historical context for the novel.

- **Adichie, “The Danger of a Single Story”**
  → This TedTalk will enrich your sense of Adichie’s personal reading history and its implications (both personally and culturally) on her personhood, imagination and cultural identity.

You might also find the following sources helpful. While these sources are not required, they are nonetheless strongly encouraged to support your understanding and experience of Adichie and her novel’s myriad dynamics.

- **Glossary of Igbo Words, Names, and Phrases (as well as Catholic references and Pidgin English)**
  → This is an invaluable resource for navigating the text while you read!

- **Achebe, “The African Writer and the English Language”**
  → Chinua Achebe is one of the most famous African writers of all time. In fact, he is considered the father of modern African literature. In this essay, he explains why, as an African, he uses not his indigenous language but the English language—often regarded by his Nigerian peers as the language of the oppressor—in his writing.

- **Adichie, “We Should All Be Feminists”**
  → Like “The Danger of a Single Story,” this is another popular TedTalk from Adichie that asks the audience to re-evaluate traditional gender roles.

- **Fela Kuti, “Zombie”**
  → Fela Kuti’s music is referenced throughout *Purple Hibiscus*. Here’s one of his more popular (and notorious) songs. The video also provides some historical context for why this song was so controversial.
We in the English Department, particularly Ms. Cook, Mr. Kearney, and Mrs. Sullivan, are excited to explore Adichie’s novel with you this September. Our foray into African literature and in particular Nigerian literature will invite us into a critical and creative engagement with myriad themes and conflicts that Adichie so artfully explores. Enjoy!