

Honors History Seminar
Summer Reading '09

One of the key skills you will need for this course, and, by extension, for college, is the ability to read a text *actively* as opposed to *passively*. There are many different ways to read actively (taking notes and writing an outline, annotating the text, whether physical or virtual, recording audio responses to the text, etc. Notice we do *not* include highlighting), but the important part is that as you read you engage with the ongoing ideas and arguments of the text, and not strive simply to remember information. If you have read a text well, you should be able to go back to it later and use its ideas fruitfully in a discussion or a paper. If you have created some kind of product from reading the text, this is infinitely easier.

The summer reading assignment is to actively read Jared Diamond's *Collapse* (New York, Penguin, 2005). The text is readily and inexpensively available from Amazon, Barnes & Noble and other bookstores, and is also available as a virtual (kindle/iPhone) and audio edition from Amazon. Whatever form of text you choose, you must read it actively and be able to demonstrate in September that you have done so. That means you should have extensive annotations, or an outline, or other significant evidence of whatever works for you to keep track of the *key ideas and argument* of the text. Yes, we are leaving the product up to you; just be sure that what you bring in September as evidence of your active reading is thorough and good. This is a hefty text, so do not try and record the details. You want a sense of the key ideas that you can draw upon readily in the first week of school.

Good luck!

Dr. Keesee
Mr. Pyles