

Teacher's Rationale

School: Arrowhead High School

Teacher: Freeburg

Title: **Godless** by Pete Hautman

Grade or Course: English 12

Approximate date(s) a book will be used:

Semester 1

Semester 2

This book will be (check one or more):

studied by the whole class. (but students are allowed to read an alternative)

studied by small groups.

placed on a reading list.

placed in a classroom library.

recommended to individual students.

part of a larger study of (explain):

other (explain):

Ways in which the book is especially appropriate for student in this class:

English 12 is a class where the students are often underserved when it comes to characters they can relate to in literature. They feel disaffected and to some extent, victimized by society. Part of the goal of the course is to help the students articulate who they, what they believe, and to advocate for themselves. The narrator and the situations of this book are very relatable to the students in the class. The text itself is accessible enough for struggling readers, but the concepts are deep enough to engage all students in the class.

Ways in which the book is especially pertinent to the objectives of this course or unit:

- Explain the structure of selected classical and contemporary works of literature, in whole and in part, from various cultures and historical periods, and illustrate ways in which authors use syntax, imagery, figures of speech, allusions, symbols, irony, and other devices in the context of history, culture, and style
- Draw on a broad base of knowledge about the universal themes of literature such as initiation, love and duty, heroism, illusion and reality, salvation, death and rebirth, and explain how these themes are developed in a particular work of literature
- Investigate and report on ways in which a writer has influenced or been influenced by historical, social, and cultural issues or events
- Develop, explain, and defend interpretations of complex literary works
- Explain how details of language, setting, plot, character, conflict, point of view, and voice in a work of literature combine to produce a dominant tone, effect, or theme
- Develop and apply criteria to evaluate the literary merit of unfamiliar works

Special problems that might arise in relation to the book and some planned activities that handle this problem:

Some readers may find the idea that a student refuses organized religion and starts his own to be offensive--however, this book neither promotes nor discourages any type of religious expression. In fact, the book is more an examination of belief, charisma, and influence. The main character also faces consequences for going "against the grain."

Some other appropriate books an individual student might read in place of

this book:

10th Grade by Joseph Weisberg, Martyn Pig by Kevin Brooks, The Five People You Meet in Heaven by Mitch Albom

Summary of the book:

Jason Bock is a teenager who isn't quite athletic or good-looking enough to fit in with the kids at school. He's bored because of his extreme intelligence, and to spite his religion teacher, jokingly invents a new religion based on the town's watertower. Using his personality, he recruits several other high-school students (from a cross section of cliques and stereotypes--the bully, the cute girl, the overly-sensitive kid) to help create a working religion. What starts as a game overtakes Jason and his friends and the results are nearly catastrophic--can he control what he started? What about his friends? In the end Jason must confront the results of his choices. This novel explores friendship, worship, charisma, and being strong in your beliefs.

Reviews and/or awards of the book or author:

Awards:

Elizabeth Burr/Worzalla Award Outstanding Achievement 2005 United States

Minnesota Book Awards Winner 2005 Young Adult Fiction and Poetry United States

National Book Awards Winner 2004 Young People's Literature United States

Best-of-the-Year Distinctions:

Best Books for Young Adults, 2005 ; American Library Association YALSA; United States

The Children's Literature Choice List, 2005 ; Children's Literature; United States Choices, 2005 ; Cooperative Children's Book Center

Editors' Choice, 2004 ; American Library Association Booklist; United States

Top 10 Religion Books for Youth, 2004 ; American Library Association-Booklist; United States