The 2016-2017 Synergy Common Reading Selection is *Little Bee* by Chris Cleave

**Synopsis (Goodreads)**

Little Bee, a young Nigerian refugee, has just been released from the British immigration detention center where she has been held under horrific conditions for the past two years, after narrowly escaping a traumatic fate in her homeland of Nigeria. Alone in a foreign country, without a family member, friend, or pound to call her own, she seeks out the only English person she knows. Sarah is a posh young mother and magazine editor with whom Little Bee shares a dark and tumultuous past.

They first met on a beach in Nigeria, where Sarah was vacationing with her husband, Andrew, in an effort to save their marriage after an affair, and their brief encounter has haunted each woman for two years. Now together, they face a disturbing past and an uncertain future with the help of Sarah's four-year-old son, Charlie, who refuses to take off his Batman costume. A sense of humor and an unflinching moral compass allow each woman, and the reader, to believe that even in the face of unspeakable odds, humanity can prevail.

Praise for *Little Bee*:

"Little Bee will blow you away....In restrained, diamond-hard prose, Cleave alternates between these two characters' points of view as he pulls the threads of their dark -- but often funny -- story tight. What unfolds between them...is both surprising and inevitable, thoroughly satisfying if also heart-rending."

-- Washington Post

"Vividly memorable and provocative...heartwarming and heartbreaking...Cleave paces the story beautifully, lacing it with wit, compassion, and, even at the darkest moments, a searing ray of hope."

-- Boston Globe

**Little Bee as a Synergy Selection:**

The Synergy Common Reading selection for the 2016-2017 academic year is *Little Bee*. The book will be utilized in First-Year Seminar classes, however all students are encouraged to participate in the Synergy Common Reading Experience. Faculty are encouraged to incorporate *Little Bee* and/or its themes into their fall and spring courses. The book was partly selected due to the multitude of interdisciplinary themes encompassing many academic departments such as History, International Studies, Political Science, Psychology, Cultural Anthropology, Health and Applied Human Sciences, Communication Studies, and Sociology. As a story that closely aligns with current events, the book has the potential to expose students to discussions about immigration, the refugee crisis, the current political climate, and privilege, allowing them to critically think and formulate ideas relevant to the world around them. Also, *Little Bee* includes themes of transition and identity, both of which parallel the experience of incoming freshman.

First-year students will be able to purchase *Little Bee* at orientation or at the beginning of the Fall 2016 semester in the UNCW Bookstore. Several related events, including a keynote speaker, a faculty panel, discussion groups, and films will be planned for the fall semester.

For more information, contact Gina Garera, Synergy Coordinator: garerag@uncw.edu or refer to the Synergy website: www.uncw.edu/commonreading