

SYNERGY

UNCW's Common Reading Experience

Read Reflect Respond

2014-2015 Selection

Ready Player One

by Ernest Cline

In the year 2044, reality is an ugly place. The only time teenage Wade Watts really feels alive is when he's jacked into the virtual utopia known as the OASIS. Wade's devoted his life to studying the puzzles hidden within this world's digital confines—puzzles that are based on their creator's obsession with the pop culture of decades past and that promise massive power and fortune to whoever can unlock them.

But when Wade stumbles upon the first clue, he finds himself beset by players willing to kill to take this ultimate prize. The race is on, and if Wade's going to survive, he'll have to win—and confront the real world he's always been so desperate to escape.

– *Random House*

Faculty and Staff Participation

Faculty and staff can get involved in the Common Reading Experience in numerous ways:

- **Read** and encourage students and colleagues to read the selection.
- **Share ideas** with students and colleagues about the book and its themes.
- **Incorporate** the novel into a course you teach or program you work with.
- **Share expertise** as a guest speaker in another class, or for a Synergy event.
- **Attend** Common Reading events and **Encourage** others to attend.
- **Facilitate** informal discussion groups as part of Synergy's Coffee Conversations.
- **Recommend** a title for a future selection.

Disciplines/Themes Related to the Book

- **Economics** – Imagining a new currency in a collapsed economy
- **History** – Pop culture, the iconic 1980s, and the history of the internet
- **Education** – Technology in the classroom
- **Computer Science** – Computer Gaming and Digital Arts
- **Cultural Anthropology** – Globalization, Culture, and Gender
- **Sociology** – The rise of a virtual society
- **Psychology** – Risk taking, culture of fear, living in isolation
- **Philosophy and Religion** – Existentialism and God in the virtual world
- **Information Technology** – The future of Human-Computer Interfaces

Suggestions for Incorporating the Common Reading in the Classroom

1. **Discussion** – Discuss the themes of the book and/or the actual text. Sample discussion questions can be found at <http://www.uncw.edu/commonreading/>. Or, better yet, have students bring in their own questions and lead discussion.
2. **Writing** – Have students write a reflective essay in response to a prompt related to the book.
3. **Creative Interpretations** – Have students do a creative representation – film, skit, poem, song, art work - of the book and its themes.
4. **Research** – Have students complete research projects related to the book's topics.
5. **Presentations** – Students can present on topics related to book.
6. **Current Events** – Have students connect the themes and topics of the book to current events and bring in articles for a presentation or discussion.
7. **Events** – Require or encourage students to attend a Synergy event(s). For a schedule, visit <http://www.uncw.edu/commonreading/events.html>. Require a follow up assignment such as a reflective paper or presentation.
8. **Further Readings and Films** – Assign readings or show films related to the text and its topics. A bibliography is provided on the Synergy website.

Faculty Resources

The following resources are available to faculty:

- Synergy Website (teaching and reading resources, event list, program info, and more) – www.uncw.edu/commonreading
- Summer Discussion Groups – please see website for dates and times.

Program Information

The purpose of the UNCW Common Reading Experience is to provide:

- an introduction to / reinforcement of academic expectations and intellectual engagement
- a common experience with peers and faculty
- opportunities for self-reflection, critical thinking, and critical reading
- a powerful, meaningful, and fun learning experience

All faculty, staff, and students are encouraged to participate in the Common Reading Experience. Incoming freshmen will receive the selected book at Orientation to read over the summer, and a limited number of books will be available to upperclassmen at Synergy events. During the fall semester, the book will be used in First-Year Seminar and in various other courses as determined by faculty. There will also be several events related to the Common Reading selection, including discussion groups, films, art exhibits, lectures, and a keynote speaker.

We are taking suggestions for next year's Synergy Common Reading selection.

To suggest a title, please visit: <http://www.uncw.edu/commonreading/suggestabook.html>

www.uncw.edu/commonreading

Teaching and Reading Resources - Event List - Program Info

Questions? Contact Gina Garera at garerag@uncw.edu or 910-962-3921