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### **MARGARET ATWOOD TO SPEAK WITH WISCONSIN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**

**MADISON, Wis. (March 16, 2017)** – What started as a way to connect high school students throughout the state with resources and faculty at the University of Wisconsin-Madison will reach a record high this year. More than 1500 students from 26 Wisconsin high schools are currently reading William Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*, which was selected as the 2017 Great World Text. Launched in 2005 by the Center for the Humanities at UW-Madison, Great World Texts in Wisconsin connects scholars at UW-Madison with high school teachers and students across the state through the shared project of reading and discussing a piece of world literature. As part of the program each year, students come to Madison to hear a keynote address given by an acclaimed author associated with the selected text. This year, Margaret Atwood will deliver the keynote address. Atwood’s latest novel, *Hag-Seed*, was released in October 2016 and reimagines *The Tempest* as a twenty-first century novel.

Great World Texts in Wisconsin gives students the opportunity to read and learn from a text that might not otherwise be taught in their classes. Previous selections include Jean Jacques Rousseau’s *Confessions*, Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart*, Arundhati Roy’s *The God of Small Things*, and others. Denise Beasley, an English teacher at Osseo-Fairchild High School, notes, “The titles the Great [World] Texts team chooses for students to read are worldly, timeless, and engaging. Those books transport students to lands and times they would rarely encounter on their own, and provide opportunities to learn about cultures and people from another time and place.” Known as one of Shakespeare’s most enigmatic plays, *The Tempest* will provide an opportunity for students to participate in contemporary debates around colonialism, imperialism, racism, indigeneity, gender, and disability.

The program culminates with a day-long conference on the UW-Madison campus. On April 3, students and their teachers will journey from all corners of the state to Madison, to spend the day presenting their projects and interpretations of the play to each other. They will also hear world-renowned author Margaret Atwood deliver a keynote address on *The Tempest* and her interpretation of it; she will then participate in a Q&A with the students, and view projects.

Further information on the Great World Texts program, including a list of prior texts, teaching materials, and information on how to participate, is on the web at: <http://humanities.wisc.edu/public-humanities/gwt/about-gwt/>. To read prior press about the program, visit: <http://humanities.wisc.edu/public-humanities/gwt/great-world-texts-in-the-news/>.