

Fairfield Warde High School

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May 23, 2019

Dear 2019 – 2020 Advanced Placement Literature and Composition Students:

Welcome to AP Literature. The following is the list of required summer reading, viewing, and writing assignments. These assignments are designed to prepare students for the kind of work we will do in AP Literature. They each offer overarching ideas for the course content. This coming year, we will also apply various critical theories to these works in order to explore the ways such lenses affect our interpretation and understanding of texts.

Part A: Reading

Students will read a novel, a play, and two films. Additionally, students need to choose from the Warde Summer Program – Book Talk or Warde Talk. The rationale for each is articulated below the title. The theme of Advanced Placement Literature is “The Quest for Meaning” and the following works should offer much to ponder before we meet in August, as well as provide a touchstone to draw from throughout the year.

- *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967) by Gabriel García Márquez - (fiction)

Here is a quote about the novel:

“*One Hundred Years of Solitude* is the first piece of literature since the Book of Genesis that should be required reading for the entire human race. It takes up not long after Genesis left off and carries through to the air age, reporting on everything that happened in between with more lucidity, wit, wisdom, and poetry that is expected from 100 years of novelists, let alone one man... Mr. Garcia Marquez has done nothing less than to create in the reader a sense of all that is profound, meaningful, and meaningless in life.” **William Kennedy, *New York Times Book Review***

This is, still, an amazingly groundbreaking novel. It captures the history of its author, the country in which he lived (Colombia), as well as the metaphoric history of humanity. Its writing style is the genre of magical realism; it would be wise of you to conduct some research to understand this literary style. At the center of AP Literature is studying how literature is the repository of human thinking, philosophy, and experience, etc. Essentially, the arts reflect what we have thought and believed about the world and ourselves. And history, art, literature, philosophy is the telling, even the retelling, of that experience. Also, we will use this novel as a starting point for understanding the various literary theories we will work with during the year.

As you read this novel, consider the following and find related textual evidence:

- The notion of an Edenic state and archetypal images associated with it.
- Destruction and duality.
- The power of naming.
- The weaving of the magical with history, mythology, and politics.
- The relationship among the past, present, and future.
- Linear time versus non-linear time.

- ***Hamlet* by William Shakespeare – the Norton Critical Edition (2011) – (play)**

It is largely considered Shakespeare’s masterpiece; however, it has also been criticized by the writer and literary critic T.S. Eliot as being an ‘artistic failure.’ It is a compelling and mysterious work asking us to consider what it means “to be.” Or not be. It is deeply existential.

- **Again, also choose one of the following for the Warde Summer Program – Book Talk or Warde Talk. Sign up if you have not.**

Part B: Viewing

- ***Hamlet* film adaptation with David Tennant (2011). This is a BBC production and can be found on Netflix, Amazon, etc. It can also be found on Google Classroom under the topic “Films/Documentaries.”** This is a fairly recent and brilliant adaptation, largely due to Tennant’s performance. It will greatly augment your reading of the play.
- ***Birdman: Or (The Unexpected Virtue of Ignorance)* (2014) – film, R. This can also be found on Netflix, Amazon, and on Google Classroom under the topic “Films/Documentaries.”**

A film about an older superhero actor who tries to revive his career on Broadway as a “serious actor.” (“It is rated R for: for language throughout, some sexual content and brief violence.” However, all are fairly minimal.) If you have any reservations, please email your teacher; email addresses are at the end of the letter.

Part C: Writing: Exploratory Essay, Comparative Responses, and Viewing Journal

The writing assignments are designed to help you articulate your thoughts with clarity and depth. They will also help you develop ideas you will be expected to share in this seminar course. Use your own mind to arrive at an understanding of these texts, not reading aids like SparkNotes. Remember, the theme of the course is “The Quest for Meaning,” and the quest to understand must be your own – through analysis, reflection, and dialogue.

Please adhere to length requirements, and be DISCO: DEVELOPED, INSIGHTFUL, SPECIFIC, CLEAR, ORGANIZED.

Adhere to the following when preparing your writing assignments: The tone of these responses may be fairly informal and personal (however, avoid superfluous use of the first person). Be certain that you write clearly and cleanly. We will be looking at the following in your writing:

- Clarity
- Effective use of personal voice/tone
- Thoughtfulness, level of insight
- Quality of connections
- Effective integration of direct passages / specific examples from texts
- Cohesiveness

- Grammar, mechanics, and usage

Page Requirements are listed for each assignment. Follow these requirements for ALL WRITING:

- **SINGLE spacing**
- **12 point, Times New Roman font (or something similar in size and readability)**
- **Standard margins – one inch on ALL four sides**
- **MLA citation format**

Post-It **OR** Other System for your reading of *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. If you choose the system of electronic notes, it will need to be submitted to Google Classroom.

This is what we would like for you to do while reading this novel (**IT IS A GRADE**):

Required:

- If you purchase the novel, write in it. OR...
- If you use a school copy, mark significant quotes/passages with Post-Its and jot an intelligent thought/question on those Post-Its...Use lots of Post-Its.

Additionally,

- You may want to make a map in order to keep all of the characters, places, etc. clear.
- If, *in addition to the Post-Its*, you want to create some additional system to help you with this text, like the map suggested, then do whatever helps you with this *challenging* text.
- In the first weeks of class, we will have class seminars that focus on some of the issues/themes/motifs that are present in the novel. See the novel description above for ideas to consider and to anticipate what you will be expected to write about in class.

- **Exploratory Essay on *One Hundred Years of Solitude***

You will write an essay exploring the complexity of *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. Craft a lingering/essential question inspired by the novel. It can be a more universal question, not specific to the novel. An example of a lingering question is: “If we have created the world by naming, does that fate us to a destiny? Or, do we have the power to keep renaming and reshaping our future?” Take your question as far as possible. Continue to ask other questions that take your controlling question/ideas even further.

You need not arrive at a definitive “answer” to your question, but you should come to a deeper understanding of the complexity of the question/s. The style should be akin to a narrative of thought – narrative but also erudite. Include numerous details and quotes from the novel to demonstrate a close and critical reading.

Length - 1- 2 pages.

- **Comparative Responses – *Hamlet* and film adaptation**

Choose at least 3 significant moments in the play – a scene within a scene (i.e. Ophelia and Hamlet in Act III sc. 1, not the whole scene, Or Hamlet and the Gravedigger (Act V sc. 1) not the whole funeral). They should be moments that contain key quotations and/or key events and/or key metaphors, etc.

Analyze the excerpts closely – writing through the language of the play. But do so in relation to how well the film translates the language into action/acting. Find a balance between literary analysis and film criticism. How successfully is the language brought to life?

- Since you are analyzing scenes within scenes, you will likely need to discuss the context for the excerpts that you choose. These should not be merely summaries, but discussions of the context that helps to inform the analysis of your chosen scenes.
 - Ultimately, the goal is to explore how these scenes serve as microcosms (the scene's meaning) of the macrocosm (the meaning of the whole play).
 - **The goal: To help you to go deep into the ideas by going deep into the language.**
- Length – at least ½ page for EACH of the 3 scenes.**

- **Viewing Journal - Insights from *Birdman: Or (The Unexpected Virtue of Ignorance)*.**

Answer each of the following questions in a well-developed paragraph

1. What is the significance of the subtitle: “*Or (The Unexpected Virtue of Ignorance)*”?
2. What is the significance of the quote in the mirror? “A thing is a thing, not what is said of that thing.”
3. *Birdman* is a postmodern work. More specifically, it can be categorized as “metanarrative” (meaning, literally, above the story). A metanarrative is aware that it is a narrative and, hence, plays with the elements of traditional narrative. Metanarrative may also layer reality and fantasy. It also layers multiple stories/realities. Find two examples, or more, of metanarrative elements. Then describe what seems to be “metanarrative” about the element. Example: This is a story of an actual former superhero actor, Michael Keaton, whom some classify as a “washed up” actor, and he is playing a “washed up” superhero actor. That is the most obvious example. Find two others.
4. Discuss two scenes – *write a separate paragraph for each* – that are vital to the film’s meaning. Choose different scenes other than the ones you chose for #3. Be sure to discuss the scenes specifically as well as the specific meaning/s you see at work.

Length – at least 150 words per question.

Dr. Faber: jeannettefaber@hotmail.com or jfaber@fairfieldschools.org
 Mr. Frattaroli: babfrat@optonline.net or mfrattaroli@fairfieldschools.org

The Exploratory Essay, Comparative Responses, and Viewing Journal (and *OHYoS* notes IF they’re electronic) should be Google Classroom.

Be sure to enroll in your respective sections before the end of the 2019/20 school year:

Dr. Faber: Class Code: **nnit0z**
 Mr. Frattaroli: Class Code: **m0q21fl**

Post ALL above assignments to Google Classroom by or before midnight on Tuesday, August 27, 2019.

These readings and assignments are a course prerequisite and failure to complete them will likely result in exclusion from the course. Summer reading work is worth 10% of Term 1's grade. Additionally, discussions of the film and texts over the summer are encouraged, but trading of any notes or writing assignments is considered plagiarism. Any plagiarism will be pursued in accordance with school policy.

Enjoy the summer. We look forward to working with you this coming year.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jeannette Faber
English Department
Fairfield Warde High School

Mr. Mark Frattaroli
English Department
Fairfield Warde High School