

Academic Magnet High School

Advanced Placement English Literature and Composition

Reading/Writing Assignments -- Summer 2023



Welcome to AP English Literature! You have several assignments to work on this summer in preparation for our coursework. Read the instructions on this paper carefully. We have chosen these assignments to get you excited about the reading we will do throughout the year and to provide a baseline for the skills you will hone in this class. Be prepared. Enjoy!

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Assignment 1: Purchase 2 books

1. **Purchase** *How to Read Literature Like a Professor: A Lively and Entertaining Guide to Reading Between the Lines* by Thomas C. Foster – **2014 edition**.
2. **Purchase** *Counting Descent* by Clint Smith.

You may purchase used copies from Amazon. You may also check with graduating seniors who may wish to donate their copies. Mrs. Bortz (Room 7217) and Mrs. Lankford (Room 7210) have extra copies of some of these texts. Check with us before the end of the school year. Regardless, you need a physical copy of these books (no electronic copies accepted).

Assignment 2: Choice Novel: Read & Complete Significant Words Assignment

1. **Choose one of the novels listed below. Read** it in its entirety and be prepared to discuss and write about the novel during the first days of class. You should **develop your own system of annotation**, either by taking notes, using color coded comments, Post-It Notes, etc. You will not be assessed on your annotations, but thoughtful annotations will help you with the first assignments of the year.
2. **Significant Words:** Choose **ten important words** from your book that the reader should pay close attention to and understand while reading. Your choices should come from multiple chapters throughout the novel and be words of special importance in the story.
 - a. Type your list of words and include the chapter and page number where you find them.
 - b. Include the definition(s).
 - c. We will use your list of words on the first day of school. You will need a **printed copy** of your words on the first day of class.
 - i. Must include MLA header & properly formatted quotes
 - ii. No handwritten copies will be accepted.
 - iii. You **MUST PRINT** before school. No late papers will be accepted.
 - d. You do not need to list the page number for every instance your word appears in the novel. Choose the **BEST** instance only.

➤ **Due: first day of school**

Book Selection List

***Americanah* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie**

“There are some novels that tell a great story and others that make you change the way you look at the world. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* is a book that manages to do both. It is ostensibly a love story – the tale of childhood sweethearts at school in Nigeria whose lives take different paths when they seek their fortunes in America and England – but it is also a brilliant dissection of modern attitudes to race, spanning three continents and touching on issues of identity, loss and loneliness.”

***Oryx and Crake* by Margaret Atwood**

“*Oryx and Crake* is at once an unforgettable love story and a compelling vision of the future. Snowman, known as Jimmy before mankind was overwhelmed by a plague, is struggling to survive in a world where he may be the last human, and mourning the loss of his best friend, Crake, and the beautiful and elusive Oryx whom they both loved. In search of answers, Snowman embarks on a journey through the lush wilderness that was so recently a great city, until powerful corporations took mankind on an uncontrolled genetic engineering ride. Margaret Atwood projects us into a near future that is both all too familiar and beyond our imagining.”

***All the Light We Cannot See* by Anthony Doerr**

“Deftly interweaving the lives of Marie-Laure and Werner, Doerr illuminates the ways, against all odds, people try to be good to one another. From the highly acclaimed, multiple award-winning Anthony Doerr, the stunningly beautiful instant New York Times bestseller about a blind French girl and a German boy whose paths collide in occupied France as both try to survive the devastation of World War II.”

***The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini**

“The unforgettable, heartbreaking story of the unlikely friendship between a wealthy boy and the son of his father's servant, caught in the tragic sweep of history, *The Kite Runner* transports readers to Afghanistan at a tense and crucial moment of change and destruction. A powerful story of friendship, it is also about the power of reading, the price of betrayal, and the possibility of redemption; and an exploration of the power of fathers over sons—their love, their sacrifices, their lies.”

***The Poisonwood Bible* by Barbara Kingsolver**

“*The Poisonwood Bible* is a story told by the wife and four daughters of Nathan Price, a fierce, evangelical Baptist who takes his family and mission to the Belgian Congo in 1959. They carry with them everything they believe they will need from home, but soon find that all of it—from garden seeds to Scripture—is calamitously transformed on African soil. What follows is a suspenseful epic of one family's tragic undoing and remarkable reconstruction over the course

of three decades in postcolonial Africa.”

***The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien**

“A classic work of American literature that has not stopped changing minds and lives since it burst onto the literary scene, *The Things They Carried* is a ground-breaking meditation on war, memory, imagination, and the redemptive power of storytelling. *The Things They Carried* depicts the men of Alpha Company: Jimmy Cross, Henry Dobbins, Rat Kiley, Mitchell Sanders, Norman Bowker, Kiowa, and the character Tim O'Brien, who has survived his tour in Vietnam to become a father and writer at the age of forty-three. Taught everywhere—from high school classrooms to graduate seminars in creative writing—it has become required reading for any American and continues to challenge readers in their perceptions of fact and fiction, war and peace, courage and fear and longing.”

***The Nickel Boys* by Colson Whitehead**

“When Elwood Curtis, a black boy growing up in 1960s Tallahassee, is unfairly sentenced to a juvenile reformatory called the Nickel Academy, he finds himself trapped in a grotesque chamber of horrors. Elwood's only salvation is his friendship with fellow “delinquent” Turner, which deepens despite Turner's conviction that Elwood is hopelessly naive, that the world is crooked, and that the only way to survive is to scheme and avoid trouble. As life at the Academy becomes ever more perilous, the tension between Elwood's ideals and Turner's skepticism leads to a decision whose repercussions will echo down the decades. Based on the real story of a reform school that operated for 111 years and warped the lives of thousands of children, *The Nickel Boys* is a devastating, driven narrative that showcases a great American novelist writing at the height of his powers.”

Assignment 3: Poetry Collection: Read & annotate one of the poetry collections listed below. Purchase the collection (you must have a physical copy; no electronic versions accepted) and **read** it in its entirety. Then, **annotate** the collection for patterns and themes. Your annotations will not be graded, but you will use your annotations for assignments on the first day of school (and more). You will not be able to complete our in class assignments without a thorough understanding of the collection as a whole. You should aim to read & annotate approximately 5 poems at a time. Don't save this assignment for the last minute, as you will NOT be able to successfully read and process an entire book of poetry in 2-3 nights.

◆ **Sean Thomas Dougherty, *The Dead Are Everywhere Telling Us Things***

"Raw and plainspoken, heartbreaking yet humorous, this book is free of even the slightest hint of poetry-posturing. 'I learned how to take care / of people from taking care of you I thought until I realized / it was you taking care of me,' reads one of many poems that will not turn away—from a wife struggling with illness and addiction; from two daughters, one of whom has autism; from strangers cared for as part of a night-shift job. Running throughout is also a current of social justice, a speaking up for working folks of every race and class fueled by the type of attention that is another name for love. And Dougherty, despite all the acknowledged sorrow, refuses despair."

◆ **José Olivarez, *Citizen Illegal***

In this stunning debut, poet José Olivarez explores the stories, contradictions, joys, and sorrows that embody life in the spaces between Mexico and America. He paints vivid portraits of good kids, bad kids, families clinging to hope, life after the steel mills, gentrifying barrios, and everything in between. Drawing on the rich traditions of Latinx and Chicago writers like Sandra Cisneros and Gwendolyn Brooks, Olivarez creates a home out of life in the in-between. Combining wry humor with potent emotional force, Olivarez takes on complex issues of race, ethnicity, gender, class, and immigration using an everyday language that invites the reader in. Olivarez has a unique voice that makes him a poet to watch

◆ **Marcus Amaker, *The Birth of All Things***

"*The Birth Of All Things* is a joyous collection with the breath of Amaker's newborn daughter running through. Despite The current chaos of our times, these poems conjure a world filled with magic and music that centers us and keep us brave. Birth spins into music into poetry. These Poems find a steady pulse in the beat of Marcus Amaker's own heart, they defy the rulebook of nature and makes air where there is shallow breath."

◆ **Billy Collins, *The Trouble with Poetry And Other Poems***

"Collins's poems are filled with mischief, humor, and irony....Through simple language, Collins shows that good poetry doesn't have to be obscure or incomprehensible. Gorgeous, funny,

and deeply empathetic, Billy Collins's poetry is a window through which we see our lives as if for the first time."

◆ **Ada Limón, *The Hurting Kind***

"In her sixth collection of poetry, *The Hurting Kind*, Ada Limón seeks to find the intimate connections between the seemingly disparate in the everyday: humans and the natural world, the living and the dead, the intellectual and the spiritual. The collection's title is apt—it is a testament to the innate power of feeling, whether grief, rage, or tenderness. For Limón, the current Poet Laureate of the United States, who declares herself "too sensitive, a weeper... the hurting kind," even the seemingly banal facets of our existence deserve not only observation but also empathy and amazement." — TIME Magazine, The 100 Must-Read Books of 2022

◆ **Victoria Chang, *Barbie Chang***

"In her fourth collection, Victoria Chang is at her best, performing sharp language-play and breathless turns in poems that ring vivid, humorous, and true. Barbie Chang is an energetic social commentary whose eponymous heroine is a perpetual outsider, failing at the impossible task of fitting in with "the beautiful thin mothers at school" who "form a perfect circle." We follow Barbie Chang on romantic misadventures with Mr. Darcy and through the humbling heartbreak of caring for ailing parents. Two sonnet sequences interrupt Barbie Chang's narrative with first-person lyricism and urgency, revealing the great emotional undercurrents that animate these pages: love and desire."

◆ **Joy Harjo, *An American Sunrise***

"*An American Sunrise* is a wisdom quest as Joy Harjo returns to the place of her ancestors. This haunting and breathtaking book invokes the relocation of the southeastern peoples, of what they endured and lost. Harjo is a visionary and a truth

sayer, and her expansive imagination sweeps time, interpolating history into the present. She writes: 'Rivers are the old roads, as are songs, to traverse memory.' Creating a confluence of

words, a new language for storytelling arises. *An American Sunrise* is a powerful tour de force."— Elise Paschen, author of *The Nightlife*"

Annotation Suggestions: Here are some elements that may seem worthy of annotation, but note that not all will apply to every poem in your collection:

- What is the poem about?
- Who is the speaker? Is it a persona?
- Define unknown words.
- Unique or surprising images - what do they convey to you?
- Music - Meaningful poems are pleasing to the ear. Does the poem use specific sound elements (alliteration, rhyme scheme, meter, etc)? What is the effect of these elements?
- Emotion - Meaningful poems invite or evoke an emotional response. Does the poem have a distinct tone or mood? Do these change or stay the same as the poem progresses?
- Imagery - Meaningful poems create word pictures in the reader's mind. Does the poem contain interesting metaphors, symbols, personification?
- Form - Meaningful poems have a form that complements the poem's intentions. The ordering of the lines of verse adds significantly to the poem's effect and meaning, as does the white space between the stanzas and words, the punctuation that is used (or not used), and even the way the poem is placed on the page. Consider end-stopped vs enjambed lines, caesura, punctuation, couplets, tercets, prose, other?
- What else? Figurative language, word play, title significance, POV, shift

Due: First day of school

On the first day of class, bring the following:

- Annotated poetry collection
- Your choice novel & printed copy of your Significant Words (include an MLA header)
- How to Read Literature Like a Professor & Counting Descent*