

June 6, 2013

**Dear 2013 – 2014 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 you for the kind of work we will be doing in AP Literature throughout the school year. They each offer over-arching ideas for the course content. This coming year, we will also apply various critical approaches to these works in order to explore the ways such lenses affect our interpretation and understanding of literature.

**Part A: Reading**

**Students will read two texts plus one of your choosing from the FWHS Summer Reading book list.** The rationale for each is articulated below each title. The theme of Advanced Placement Literature is “The Quest for Meaning” and the following works should give you much to think about before we meet in August as well as provide a touchstone to draw from throughout the year.

- ***One Hundred Years of Solitude* 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 a truly unique novel. It is a novel that tries to capture not only the history of its author, but the country in which he lived (Colombia), as well as the history of humanity. It is written in the style 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. Essentially, the arts reflect what we have thought and believed about the world and ourselves. And history is the telling, and even the retelling, of that experience. Also, we will use this novel as a starting point for understanding the various literary theories we will be working with in the subsequent school year.

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

- The notion of an Edenic state and archetypal images associated 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.
- ***Man’s Search for Meaning* by Viktor Frankl - (non-fiction)**  
This is a philosophical exploration of how one can create meaning even in the most devastating of circumstances. Frankl, a Holocaust survivor, chronicles his survival and from it develops a theory – logotherapy - from which we can all benefit in our quest for meaning.
  - The above are the two new texts; *however*, if you have not read *The Great Gatsby*, I ask that you do. The critical theory text with which we will be working next year consistently uses this text as an example through which to describe certain theories. If you have read it, and you feel you have a firm grasp on it, then you do not have to reread it. Certainly do reread it if you like.
  - **Lastly, chose ONE book from the FWHS Summer Reading Book Chat list. When we return to school, you will participate in the “Book Chat” for this title. All AP Literature students are expected to participate in a book chat.**

### **Part B: Viewing**

***Waking Life* (film - R)** – This film offers a basis for understanding and considering many of the philosophies we will be exploring this year relative to upcoming readings. The film’s protagonist is on a journey – encountering many philosophies and theories that inform his life – that “wake” his life. The plan is that you too will be on such a journey. *Waking Life* is rated “R” for “language and violent images” and “some sexual content.” The ‘language and violence and some (truly little) sexual content’ is very nominal. If you have any reservations, please email me; the address is at the end of the letter.

### **Part C: Writing and Journals/Reading System**

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 reflection and dialogue. Although these are not all formal writing assignments but rather response journals, they should still offer crafted writing with attention to grammar and usage. Please adhere to the page limits, be concise, and avoid verbosity.

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. As you and I assess your responses, we will be looking at the following aspects of 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 and usage

Page Requirements are listed after each assignment. Be sure to also use:

- ✓ Double spacing
- ✓ 12 point, Times New Roman font (or something similar in size and readability)
- ✓ Standard margins
- ✓ MLA citation format

- **Post-It and Other System for your reading of *One Hundred Years of Solitude***

This is what I would like for you to do while reading this novel:

- Mark significant quotes/passages with Post-Its and jot an intelligent thought/question on those Post-Its... Use lots of Post-Its.
- You may want to make a map in order to keep all of the characters, places, etc. clear in your mind.
- If, *in addition to the Post-Its*, you want to create some additional system to help you with this text, like the map I 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 descriptions above for ideas to consider and to anticipate what you will be expected to write about in class during the first few weeks of school.

- **Scene Journal of Significant Insights from *Waking Life*.\***

For your response to this film, simply keep a journal responding to 6 or more scenes which offer provocative ideas/philosophies. Analyze the scene and in 100 – 150 words discuss what idea/philosophy you find engaging. Do not simply summarize.

- **Reading Journal for *Man's Search for Meaning***

For this reading, please devise a system that works for you. The one requirement is that there be some writing. Example: If you chose Post-Its, then write on them as you will do for the novel. If you want to create a graphic organizer with key ideas and quotes, fine. If you need to write a paragraph/take notes for each section, do. The bottom line is to create a system that helps you process and understand what Frankl offers. Your system needs to be something I can see, created by you, on paper or on a computer screen.

- **Exploratory Essay\***

After completing the viewing and reading assignments, you should undertake the final essay exploring the connections among *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, *Man's Search for Meaning* and *Waking Life*. Craft a lingering/essential question inspired by the two texts and the film. It can be a more universal question, not specific to the books or film, but, again it should be

inspired by the texts. An example of a lingering question is: “If what we call a “convention” is actually a socially constructed paradigm, how do we go about liberating ourselves from possible constraints?”

Then write an exploratory essay which *explores* that question through the three texts *but also* through other ways we experience the world like: our own life experiences, other texts, culture, history, popular culture, etc. Again your response should largely focus on all three texts, but it is also necessary to make other connections. 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/idea you pose. The style should be akin to a narrative of thought – narrative but also erudite. And well written, of course. The response should be 3-4 double spaced pages in Times New Roman font.

I recommend you purchase all of the written texts *if possible* as we would like to be able to refer to them when you return. They will also be available in the FWHS LMC and in local libraries. If there are financial constraints or if you have any issues or questions, please email me at [jeannettefaber@hotmail.com](mailto:jeannettefaber@hotmail.com) or [jfaber@fairfieldschools.org](mailto:jfaber@fairfieldschools.org) by or before the first week of August.

\*The Exploratory Essay and Scene Journal must be submitted to turnitin.com. Be sure to enroll in your respective sections before the end of the 2013 school year: Class ID: 6537516 Password: delve. Post by or before Wednesday, August 28, 2013.

**These readings and assignments are a course pre-requisite and failure to complete them will likely result in exclusion from the course. Summer reading work is worth 10% of Marking Period 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. I look forward to working with you this coming year.

Sincerely,

Dr. Faber  
English Department  
Fairfield Warde High School