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Dear Future AP Modern European History Student,

The school year is passing quickly and summer looms ahead of us. We are looking forward to sharing next year with you as we study Europe's rich and diverse history from 1450-2014. This class is certainly challenging, but also fascinating. It promises to be a great year!

In preparation for this experience, we would like you to read two books. These are available in libraries and bookstores. In addition, there are several copies of each book available in the school library when you check out your books today and some through Overdrive! You should write your responses in single spaced, size 12, Times New Roman font, indicating your interaction with the subject material. You are asked to submit your notes on Manchester to www.turnitin.com by **Friday August 30 by 11:59 pm**. Your teacher will give you the turnitin login and password on the first day of school when class periods are determined.

Book #1 (REQUIRED/PROVIDED) is A World Lit only by Fire: The Medieval World and the Renaissance – Portrait of an Age. Manchester describes the medieval worldview as “shackled in ignorance, disciplined by fear, and sheathed in superstition.” What evidence does he give to support that perspective? Do you agree with his analysis? Be specific in your notes on which historical characters Manchester utilizes to confirm his thesis. On Friday, August 31, 2012, you will be asked to write an in class essay based on your notes. You will have 40 minutes to write the essay –we are interested in seeing your synthetic/analytical abilities and your capacity for writing succinctly and persuasively within a timed writing experience. **Take this opportunity to display your academic sophistication.**

Your reading notes on Manchester's books should be **no more** than 4 pages single spaced. These notes will be assessed for clarity, accessibility, comprehensiveness and, also for discernment in the identification of key principles. They will be due with your written essay at the end of class on Friday and you may use the notes for the essay. (Remember, they will be of no use if they are not organized and specific). These notes should include:

1. The Crisis' of the Middle Ages
2. The importance of the Church in the period of early Modern European History
3. The pivotal characters of this time period
4. Your response to Manchester's thesis that the medieval worldview was “shackled in ignorance, disciplined by fear, and sheathed in superstition.”

Book #2 (RECOMMENDED) is Inferno by Dan Brown (copies available at each school). This contemporary novel highlights several of the themes which will be introduced in this class throughout the year. It powerfully illustrates the power and influence of the Medici family in Florence, it highlights the controversial philosophy of Thomas Malthus regarding population control, and it graphically conveys the social, cultural and economic implications of the plague within Medieval and Renaissance Europe. Although this is only recommended, we strongly urge you to embrace this opportunity for academic discourse within the context of contemporary publications.

We look forward to seeing you in class next year. Have a great summer!

Sincerely,
Fairfield AP Modern European History Teachers