AP English Literature
Summer Reading

Class of 2020!

Welcome to your senior year and AP English Literature. This course is designed to be the equivalent of a 200-level college literature course, with a fairly intense pace for both reading and writing. College credit is available through UMSL as well as the AP Exam.

Please note that the structure of the class is largely seminar and will require a great deal of class participation. Everyone’s voice is important to the work, and you are expected to talk about your ideas.

A quick peek ahead: I will begin with your college essays for about a week or so before we start the first unit on the two summer reading novels. Please have them read before the first day of school. These really are our first unit, with classwork and essays, etc. You will be scrambling to catch up if you do not have them read.

I prefer that you buy your own copies of the books so that you can annotate more easily. If you do check out the books, please do not use the “extra sticky” post-it notes; they rip the pages. As you annotate, pay attention to what each is saying about the responsibility of creator to created and vice versa, the ethical problems posed by technology, and nature versus nurture. These annotations will help you during our seminars and when you write.

☆ *Frankenstein*, Mary Shelley. REQUIRED

Do not make the mistake of thinking you know this novel because you’ve seen film versions (or the play); the original is much different. In addition, you will note that the Creature reads *Paradise Lost* at one point. This is an important allusion and your understanding will benefit from reading a summary of at least Book 1 of the poem.

☆ *Never Let Me Go*, Kazuo Ishiguro. REQUIRED

This novel is in many ways an updated version of *Frankenstein*. We will be comparing the two. A movie version exists, but it is pretty horrible, and most of my students enjoy the book quite a bit anyway.

☆ *How to Read Literature Like a Professor*, Thomas Foster. RECOMMENDED

I know most of you have read this already. If you have not, it is an easy, quick read that will answer many of the mysteries of the literary universe.

That’s it! I do not assign any written work over the summer; instead, I know you’ll be working on pulling together your lists of colleges, writing resumes, thinking about whom you will ask for letters of recommendation, etc. in anticipation of those early decision deadlines.

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