

AP Literature & Composition
Summer Reading & Writing
2009

REQUIRED :

*How to Read **Literature** Like a Professor* (Thomas C. Foster)

AND

Bridge of Sighs (Richard Russo)

AND

CHOOSE ONE (1)

from List below: *Do some research before you choose.*

In the Lake by the Woods (Tim O'Brien)

Going After Cacciato (Tim O'Brien)

Atonement (Ian McEwan)

Out Stealing Horses (Per Petterson)

The Handmaid's Tale (Margaret Atwood)

Slaughterhouse Five (Kurt Vonnegut)

A Prayer for Owen Meany (John Irving)

One Hundred Year's of Solitude (Gabriel Garcia Marquez)

Straight Man (Richard Russo)

Native Son (Richard Wright)

Interpreter of Maladies (Jhumpa Lahiri) (2000 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction;
Hemingway/PEN Award; *The New Yorker* Best Debut)

A Thousand Splendid Suns (Khaled Hosseini)

The Gathering (Anne Enright) (2009 Man Booker Prize)

Olive Kitteridge (Elizabeth Strout) (2009 Pulitzer Prize —13 connected short stories)

The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao (Junot Díaz) (Pulitzer Prize for Fiction 2008)

After This (Alice McDermott) (Finalist Pulitzer Prize 2007)

Middlesex by Jeffrey Eugenides (Winner Pulitzer Prize 2003)

PLEASE SEE NEXT PAGE FOR ASSIGNMENTS AND DUE DATES.

10 Easy Steps for Successful APE Summer Reading

1. Go to SJPrep **Moodle** site **NOW** and enroll in AP Lit & Comp **2009-2010**
Password is APES2009
Please use your **Prep e-mail** address in your sign-up and profile.
2. **Upload spots** will be there for assignments 2 and 3. Please **observe due dates**.
3. There will also be **Discussion Boards** set up to talk to one another (and me) about the books you are reading. This is NOT a requirement, but you might find it helpful and rewarding — personally, intellectually and extra credit for Quarter 1.
4. **Purchase your own copies** of Russo and your independent choice book.
Bring them to class with you in September.
5. **Read Foster book first.** It will really help you digest the two other readings.
6. Take **detailed chapter notes** for Foster. Do NOT type; (handwrite) Bring to class with you on Day 1. **THIS IS ASSIGNMENT #1.**
7. Read *Bridge of Sighs*. **Annotate** (mark up) your copy of the book. Russo is a remarkable writer. He has a gift for capturing everyday life in smalltown upstate New York. There is wonderful humor and deep sadness in this novel, as well as first love and world travel.
8. Journal responses to Russo book:
THIS IS ASSIGNMENT #2.
9. **Read your Independent Choice book.** **Annotate** (mark up) your copy of the book. There is something on the list for every interest.
10. **Journal responses** to Independent Choice reading. AND 2-3 page essay
 - **one essay on each novel**
 - OR**
 - **one essay that compares and contrasts the two readings on a specific area****THIS IS ASSIGNMENT #3.**

YOU ARE FINISHED. ENJOY YOUR SUMMER!

If you have any questions, feel free to e-mail me:

jchristian@sjprep.org

May 20, 2009

Dear

Welcome to AP Literature & Composition! I hope you are proud of your accomplishment. I know that I am looking forward to exploring literature and life with you in September.

Why do we do Summer Reading and writing?

- to keep those brain cells exercised (Use it or lose it.)
- to have works everyone has read in common so we can begin the year with deep conversation
- to increase the number of AP quality works that you will have as a resource for the AP Exam in May.
- just because it is fun and intellectually and personally stimulating.

Be aware of the following due dates:

- **Assignment #2** (Russo — 3 Journal Responses) due **on or before 20 July 2009**. Upload to Moodle as a **MS Word document or a pdf**.

Check your e-mail for an acknowledgement from me regarding receipt of document.

- **Assignment #3** (Independent Choice — 3 Journal Responses) **AND** 2-3 page essay due **on or before 20 August 2009**. Upload to Moodle as a **MS Word document or a pdf**.

Check your e-mail for an acknowledgement from me regarding receipt of document.

If you are on Summer Service trips, attending athletic or educational camps, or traveling, you are responsible to PLAN NOW so that you complete and upload the assignments on time.

Failure to complete the Summer Reading and Writing in a timely manner will signal your unreadiness to handle a college level course and you may lose your spot in APE. In that case you will be placed in available electives (those not already filled). This has happened in the past; don't put yourself in that position.

Writing the Voice Inside your Head/The Clearest Voice

In addition to the reading, I ask that you **write**:

• **three journal responses**, as you read, **for each of the two books** (6 total). One of these should focus on the • **style** of the writing of each book, how the author uses language. In general, these should • **demonstrate your involvement or your engagement with the novel**. I am much more interested in your honest and thoughtful responses to what you're reading than I am with your writing something you think I want to read, but that really doesn't reflect you trying to come to grips with what you're reading. In these responses, you can:

- focus on a character (s) that seem(s) interesting or puzzling,
- focus on any patterns you discover, either related to a character, an idea,
- focus on the writing, or on how these come together.

Whatever you choose, get involved in the details of the novel. These responses should **reflect a close and deep engagement with what you're reading**. Consider about **a page or so** as a length for each of these. Again, don't worry about "answers" in these journal responses. I do, though, want to see your minds at work creating understanding. Understanding is tricky, though. Coming to an understanding often involves asking questions that have multiple answers, involves false starts, and is often elusive. As a teacher and reader, **I am skeptical about readers who seem to have easy, quick, pat answers. Perhaps more simply, just try to capture the "voice inside your head."** (See poem at end of this document.)

In addition, after you've finished reading and writing the journal responses,

• **bring your reading and understanding to a conclusion in a two/three-page essay**. *Let this come out of your journal responses*. Whereas journal writing focuses on the details of your reading, this should **focus more on a generalization or two about the novel**. These should draw on the journal responses as support for these generalizations.

- **You can write one essay that demonstrates a similarity between the two books,**

OR

two separate essays.

SUMMARY OF READINGS:

- *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* by Thomas Foster
- *Bridge of Sighs* by Richard Russo
- One novel of *your choice* from the list above.

RUBRIC FOR GRADING WRITING:

Outstanding Responses (9 and 10 pts.):

May vary in length but go on long enough to reflect and accommodate extended thought. Responses regularly stretch the writer's understanding or pose thoughtful questions for which the writer may have no ready answer. Responses are willing to speculate and show the writer willing and eager to interact with the text. Responses are provocative, spirited, and lively. Over time responses show a growth in understanding and frequently makes connections between ideas and parts of the text. Writer has a strong sense of her own voice.

Average Responses (7 and 8 pts.):

Occasionally lengthy and complex, but other brief to the point of sketchiness. Some responses willing to pose questions, but many do not probe beneath the surface of the text. Entries seem cursory, the result of obligation rather than of interest. Responses sometimes lively and spirited sometimes tired or flat. Overall, these only give inconsistent sense of progress and/or understanding of the process of critical reading.

Poor Responses (6 and below):

Responses are irregular, sparse, and fragmentary. Little or no effort to speculate or to reach for more conclusions. Little to no interaction with the text. There is little or no sense of progress in understanding of the process of critical reading. Little or no sense that the writer has thought much beyond the immediate entry.

I am not interested in what *Sparknotes* (or any other “crutch” material) has to say about any of these books. If I were, I’d just read those and skip reading your writing. In addition to personal interest in what you have to think and write, I, of course, have a teacherly responsibility. Should I find evidence of **writing that is not yours, you will receive a zero**, and my suggestion that you transfer from the class. Should you decide to stay in the course, you will be lucky to earn a C for the quarter.

See poem below!

THE VOICE YOU HEAR WHEN YOU READ SILENTLY

is not silent, it is a speaking-
out-loud voice in your head; it is spoken,
a voice is saying it
as you read. It's the writer's words,
of course, in a literary sense
his or her "voice" but the sound
of that voice is the sound of voice.
Not the sound your friends know
or the sound of a tape played back
but your voice
caught in the dark cathedral
of your skull, your voice heard
by an internal ear informed by internal abstracts
and what you know by feeling,
having felt. It is your voice
saying, for example, the word "barn"
that the writer wrote
but the "barn" you say
is a barn you know or knew. The voice
in your head, speaking as you read,
never says anything neutrally -- some people
hated the barn they knew,
some people love the barn they know
so you hear the word loaded
and a sensory constellation
is lit: horse-gnawed stalls,
hayloft, black heat tape wrapping
a water pipe, a slippery
spilled *chirr* of oats from a split sack,
the bony, filthy haunches of cows . . .
And "barn" is only a noun- no verb
or subject has entered into the sentence yet!
The voice you hear when you read to yourself
is the clearest voice: you speak it
speaking to you.

— Thomas Lux

The above is the business end of this letter. Personally, I am excited to have this opportunity to work with you. Get good rest, have fun, and stay safe. See you in September!