Advanced Contemporary Literature (ACLit)
Fall Elective at OMS 2019-20
Summer Reading Assignment - 2 books, 1 essay
REQUIRED, DUE WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 7, 2019
Bring a printed copy.

Course Statement 1
Advanced Contemporary Literature is a Carnegie Unit class, meaning it is a high school level class. While it is considered an elective, the class is structured like an Advanced Placement class and is very rigorous. A student registered in the class should understand that the expectation is reading a book every two weeks. With the addition of the academic or distinguished academic endorsement on Mississippi high school diplomas in 2018-2019, Advanced Contemporary Literature is a class for students working to achieve this distinction.

Course Statement 2
In ACLit, we will spend a great deal of time discussing the influence events in history have on the teenagers that are growing up while they happen. For example, the teenagers and young adults who grew up during World War II were influenced tremendously by the war that was raging around them. Texts from a time period can represent what those teenagers value and the texts can also often shape them into the adults they become. Your task this semester will be to determine one of the following and defend it using texts of the time period.
1. which generation you most admire
2. the greatest challenge your generation faces
3. the book that will most impact your generation

Course Statement 3
The genre called Young Adult Literature (YA Lit) is relatively new. Some historians believe YA Lit began in 1942 with a book called Seventeenth Summer and others believe YA Lit started with The Outsiders in 1967. We will spend the semester reading YA Literature from different decades beginning with the 1940’s and spend the majority of the course with very recent and “just published” texts.

What am I required to read this summer?
You are required to write one essay following either Prompt 1, or Prompt 2. Answering the prompt requires you to read two books, but you are given a choice. You must annotate the two books while you read. Should you have already read one of the books, you must reread it; do not rely on your memory for the essay. The books should be read and a printed copy of the essay will be collected on the first day of school, Wednesday, August 7, 2019. Annotations will be checked on the first day of school as well; bring your book.
Most students like to buy their own copies of these books so they can write in them. Please check the public library if you choose not to buy your own books. Should you be unable to locate a book you need, please email Mrs. Elliott at kelliott@oxfordsd.org and one will be located for you.

**Note to Parents**

Please be a part of your child’s reading selection both for summer reading and for the semester. See attached document titled “A Note about Sensitive Issues in Literature.”

**What should I do while I am reading?**

You are advised to read the writing prompts **before** you begin reading your book. While you are reading, you should annotate your book either by writing in the margins or by adding sticky notes. Your annotation should help you write your essay. We will spend a great deal of time learning how to annotate effectively in class, but for now, just make notes to help you write the essay. Your annotation will be graded for quality, so do not remove sticky notes. Bring your books to class the first day of school. Quality annotation involves 2-3 notes per chapter.

**Writing Prompt Choice #1**

Sociologists and advertisers often refer to your generation (people born after 1996) as Gen Z or the iGen. Your generation follows another generation nicknamed Millennials (born between 1977-1994). Using one of the book pairs listed below, write an essay comparing and contrasting the teenagers/young adults in the older book to the teenagers in the newer book. What did the generations value? What is their perspective or outlook? Use textual evidence from the book to prove your thinking. You are not required to research what the generations are like, but you may, as long as you don’t plagiarize. Using your own knowledge and the book are sufficient. It is acceptable to use first person in this essay.

- **The Secret of the Old Clock**: 1st Nancy Drew book (1930) (revised 1959) by Carolyn Keene and **All Fall Down** (2015) by Ally Carter
- **Our Town** by Thornton Wilder (1938) and **One of Us is Lying** (2017) by Karen M. McManus
Writing Prompt Choice #2

Compare and contrast one of the following book pairs. One of the books in your book pair is older and one is more contemporary. What similarities do they have? What differences? What do the similarities and differences say about generations? How have perspectives and outlooks stayed the same or changed? Write this essay in 3rd person.

- *The Outsiders* (1967) by S.E. Hinton and *Ghost* (2017) by Jason Reynolds
- *Peter Pan; or, the Boy Who Wouldn’t Grow Up* (1911) by J.M. Barrie and *Ready Player One* (2012) by Ernest Cline

**Essay Requirements**

A strong essay contains the following:

- An introduction with a thesis statement
- A body with your original thoughts and textual evidence as support
- A closing that makes a powerful last impression. A closing should not simply restate what you have already written.

Your essay should be edited and have very minimal grammar errors. These essays should be a minimum of 1.5 pages typed with 12 point font OR 2.5 pages written on notebook paper. Please double space typed papers.

**A Note about Sensitive Issues in Literature**

One of the purposes of Advanced Contemporary Literature is to read and examine books popular with the six different generations of people still living on Planet Earth. Each generation has been influenced by the current events of their time and may have been shaped by the literature and texts of their day. “Generational Texts” listed on the syllabus are either considered classics from the time period or have been widely believed to have had a significant impact on the teenagers coming of age when they were published. Very few are considered controversial by today’s standards.

More current books may deal with issues considered sensitive by many families. Many recent young adult books contain vivid language and wrestle with difficult political and ethical dilemmas. Students will have a great deal of choice when it comes to selecting books published after 2005. It is my hope that parents participate in the selection of these books. This website has been helpful to me: [https://www.commonsensemedia.org](https://www.commonsensemedia.org)
The “After 2005” list on the syllabus contains only books that have been reviewed by School Library Journal for grades 8-up. All the books have received multiple awards, many receiving the Newbery Medal, Teen Choice Award, Alex Award, the Michael L. Printz Award, and/or the National Book Award for Young People’s Literature.

It is also acceptable for students to select a book that has been widely reviewed for grades 9-12 with approval from both their parents and me. These books may contain issues for a more mature audience. Students should select a book that has received a literary award and/or has been starred by reputable reviewers like School Library Journal or Booklist. I will then ask for a permission slip signed by a parent and a book may be approved for student reading and small group discussion. This process must take place at least a week before reading deadlines.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions you have about your student’s book selections.
Sincerely,

Karen C. Elliott

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