May 21, 2018

Dear Class of 2019:

Although we have never met, I am already one of your biggest fans. Your reputation as a compassionate, insightful group of young scholars precedes you, and I look forward to reading, writing, and learning with you in ENGL 1301/English IV Dual Credit in the fall.

Please read carefully through the information about summer reading for this course. The texts may be obtained at a bookstore or a library. Purchasing your books will enable you to highlight and annotate as you read. Both hard copies and digital copies are acceptable, so choose the format that works best for you.

To communicate with me during the summer and engage in online discussions with your peers about the texts you will read, log in to your Google Account for Humble ISD, open Google Classroom, and enter the following enrollment code: labzdd.

The summer reading assignments and the posts in Google Classroom are meant to benefit you without being intrusive. There are no set rules about how often you must log in to Google Classroom or how much you are required to type. I merely want to build community among us as readers and writers and provide you with direct support when you have questions or concerns.

Please enjoy your summer and make time to do activities with family and friends that spark creativity and create lasting memories. After all, a well-lived life is a writer’s best source of inspiration.

Sincerely,

Daphne Henderson, Ed.D.
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What Are We Reading & Why?

The summer reading assignment for this course has two purposes—information and inspiration. **First, each student is expected to read** *Write Your Way In: Crafting Unforgettable College Admissions Essays* by Rachel Toor for information. Toor is an experienced admissions counselor who provides readers with invaluable advice about writing effective personal narratives for college applications. The text will help you discover essay topics and employ effective writing strategies for your college application essays. We will discuss and practice these strategies during our first unit on narrative writing in August.

**Second, each student is expected to read at least one of the poetry collections listed below for inspiration.** Each book of poetry is a “poetry memoir” that chronicles a poet’s life experiences in verse. I sincerely hope the book of poetry you select to read will help you discover writing topics and model sentences you can use to compose personal essays for college applications (and this class). Please take time to research the poets and the contents of each collection before making your choice so that you are not surprised by any mature topics or themes. Choose ONE of the following to read:

- Giovanni, Nikki. *A Good Cry: What We Learn from Tears and Laughter*
- Blanco, Richard. *Looking for the Gulf Motel*
- Lyon, George Ella. *Many-Storied House*

What Assignments Are We Doing & Why?

1. **Note-Taking/Annotation:**
   
   As you read *Write Your Way In*, take notes on Toor’s purpose, ideas, and methods of elaboration. Your notes may take the form of traditional outlines, Cornell Notes, sketch notes, or web diagrams. I will also post discussion questions in Google Classroom throughout the summer to guide you. You will be allowed to use your notes on a short-answer exam (summatative grade) during the first nine weeks if they are handwritten by you.

2. **Journaling:**
   
   As you read through one of the books of poetry by Giovanni, Blanco, or Lyon, you will write at least 10 journal reflections. Once the school year begins, you will use these entries to find writing topics for personal essays that can be submitted for course credit and college admissions.

   - You will need to purchase (or repurpose) a composition notebook to write journal entries in response to the poems you read. Feel free to include sketches or colorful artwork along the margins of your entries!
   - You must complete at least 10 different journal entries by September 4, 2018, for a *formative grade*. The journal topics are listed on the next page.
   - Since I plan to do the assignment with you this summer, I will share a few of my journal entries in Google Classroom as examples. Enrollment Code: labzdd
Each entry should be at least two pages in length (front and back of one page = two pages).

Your entries should be handwritten. Each one must include the date of the entry and the title of the poem that inspired your response.

Write deeply and meaningfully to increase the chances of discovering a unique and insightful topic that admissions officers and others will enjoy!

**Journal Prompts**
(Minimum: 2 pages each)

1. Introduce yourself to me. Use a line from one of the poems as your opening sentence or as a recurring sentence in your introduction.

2. Ask a friend or parent to list 20 weird or unusual things about you. Include the list in your journal. Choose one or two things from the list to write about in more detail. Pattern one or two sentences after lines in one of the poems from your book. Be sure to underline or highlight them.

3. Find a poem in one of the books that conveys a tone of sadness or regret. Copy the lines from the poem that best convey the tone and explain why you think the speaker of the poem feels this way. Then write about an experience in your life that causes you to feel sadness or regret.

4. Choose a poem that focuses on a specific room or place. Write about the details the speaker uses to convey emotions or important truths about the place. Then write about a specific room or place in your life, using similar details or phrases.

5. Identify a poem that focuses on the speaker’s memories of a specific person. Explain how the speaker feels about the person based on the speaker’s word choice and/or use of images. Then write about a specific person in your life, using images, sounds, and colors to convey your attitude toward the person.

6. Find a poem that refers to an important date or event. How does the speaker use the event to convey a deeper message about his/her life or memories? Then write about an important date or event in your life. How did it impact your life? What truths did you learn? Explain.

7. Choose a poem that addresses/mentions a social issue (abuse, discrimination, poverty, crime, etc.) Identify words and phrases that convey the speaker’s attitude or society’s attitude. Then explain how the speaker personalizes the issue or provides readers with a different perspective on the issue.

8. In the poem _______, the line(s) “____________” shocked/angered/annoyed me because …

9. One of the most beautiful lines of poetry in this book are “__________” because…

10. The most powerful poem in this book is ______ because…