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PLANT CITY HIGH SCHOOL

May 13, 2021

Dear Prospective AP English Literature and Composition Students:

Thank you for your interest in AP English Literature and Composition for the 2021-2022 school year. I am thrilled to facilitate your survey through the Western Canon and beyond. While we cannot possibly cover the entirety of the Canon, it is my goal for you to understand the trajectory of English Literature throughout its history. Like its scientific counterparts, Literature is an evolving discipline: basic practices refined, new perspectives invented, and old precedents overturned. Literature itself is based on examining the values, problems, and fears of the world, and it is that same critical observation that is at the heart of this course.

As this is an AP class, you are expected to be self-directed in much of your study. This summer you are required to read two books: a novella and a play. These will serve as important touchstones to which we will frequently return throughout the course. Both are available under public domain and links of digital copies will be provided in the event you are unable to obtain a physical copy. They are also short.

Summer Reading List:

The Metamorphosis, Franz Kafka.

As our modern exemplar, Kafka's classic explores a man who wakes up one morning and finds himself transformed into an insect. *The Metamorphosis* provides a great exercise for analyzing symbolism and characterization. Kafka's novella has been hugely influential to Western Literature and culture.

Ebook:

<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/5200/5200-h/5200-h.htm>

Medea, Euripides.

Serving as our Ancient Greek exemplar, *Medea* provides a strong basis for the exploration and discussion of tragedy and tragic heroes. Additionally, *Medea* sets important themes of class, race, and justice with a central character whose background and actions are atypical for her time.

<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/35451/35451-h/35451-h.htm>

Both assessments we will be doing after school begins. For the *Metamorphosis* we will hold a mock trial and *Medea* will be our baseline writing. As you read, pay attention to literary elements such as theme, literary devices, narrative pacing, and other techniques of craft. Your ability to express your thoughts on the elements that make up a work of literature is integral to this course. Literature is always in conversation, and a major goal of this course is to prepare you to enter that conversation.

Both texts are paragons in the Western Canon of Literature—delving into questions and struggles of the human condition and the constrictive flaws of society. While necessary for the preparation of the course and laying the foundation for your future success with the AP exam, the summer reading will challenge you to rethink what you find normal or acceptable. Embrace the dissonance.

Sincerely,

Matthew Pinson

AP Literature & Composition

*If you have a concern over summer, please feel free to contact me.

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