Summer Reading 2016

You know it, you love it, you look forward to it every year.

Well, here it is. Sure, catch some rays and zzz’s; see the world and take selfies, but then, get the books, and do the work or else your brain might dissolve and trickle out of your ears, and we can’t have that, can we.
Twelfth Grade – AP Literature

*Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley and *The Stranger* by Albert Camus

Write a response of NO MORE THAN 2 SIDES to answer the following question:

The conflict created when the will of an individual opposes the will of the majority is the recurring theme of many novels, plays, and essays. In a critical essay, analyze the role of the individual in light of larger community and identify the conflict. Please discuss the moral and ethical implications for both the individual and the society. Do not summarize the plot or action of the work you choose.
12th Grade Honors

Get Your Copy of the Text


Know Your Genre—That Always Helps

*White Noise* is a genre blend, but its most prominent genre ingredient is social satire: a novel that ridicules the way society seems to work in order to make us think enough about our culture to want change.

*White Noise* will make you laugh, disgust you, anger you, surprise you, and befuddle you in turns. But above all, it made me think about the society around me. Like any social satirist, DeLillo uses hyperbole, verbal irony, situational irony, caricature, and understatement to prod and poke our perceptions. He is deliberately over-the-top at times: but he makes us think!

As you read, be alert for the novel’s satirical targets—the specific aspects of American culture being targeted for re-evaluation. Keep in mind that a novelist makes his points in a variety of ways—direct statement, characterization through action or dialogue, stereotype, symbolic action, aspects of setting, symbols, motifs, metaphors—all adding up to the entire picture. Satirical targets emerge as parts of that picture.

While You Read

Use a highlighter and highlight passages or lines of observation, evaluation, philosophical principle, or fortune cookie wisdom stated by either the narrator or a character. What do I mean by this? Here's what I highlighted while reading the first four chapters:

"Things, boxes. Why do these possessions carry such powerful weight? There is a darkness attached to them, a foreboding. They make me wary not of personal failure and defeat but of something more general, something large in scope and content" (6).

"Decorative gestures add romance to a life" (9).
"Heat. This is what cities mean to me. . . . The entire infrastructure is based on heat, desperately uses up heat, breeds more heat. The eventual heat death of the universe that scientists love to talk about is already well underway and you can feel it happening all around you in any large or medium-sized city. Heat and wetness" (10).

"No one sees the barn. . . . Once you've seen signs about the barn, it becomes impossible to see the barn. . . . Being here is a kind of spiritual surrender. We see only what the others see. The thousands who were here in the past, those who will come in the future. We've agreed to be part of a collective perception. This literally colors our vision. A religious experience in a way, like all tourism. . . . Taking pictures of taking pictures. . . . We can't get outside the aura. We're part of the aura. We're here, we're now" (12 – 13).

"When times are bad, people feel compelled to overeat. Blacksmith is full of obese adults and children" (14).

"I am the false character that follows the name around" (17).

Why did I pick those passages to highlight? Because they tickled me, intrigued me, befuddled me, or make me look at the people around me with new eyes. You do the same. We will share the results in class discussion—it will be interesting to discover what each of us chose to highlight and why. (Try to avoid painting the entire novel yellow! Be selective. Choose the passages that speak to you the most.)

After You Have Finished Reading the Novel

Write a reflective essay on the topic below. Use no outside sources of any kind. You will submit your essay to turnitin.com during the first week of class, once we set up the class account for that purpose. Thus, if you use outside sources that will get you in lots of trouble.

I am interested in your first impressions of the topic. After we discuss the novel, you will have a chance to revise these first impressions, and then we'll go on from there.

Your Topic
In Physics, "white noise" means noise containing many frequencies of equal intensity. Because the frequencies are many and of equal intensity, they cannot be distinguished one from another. By metaphorical extension, "white noise" is any background noise that is so constant, we stop noticing it is there or we ignore it. Therefore, it becomes meaningless or without value.

Obviously, DeLillo is using the phrase "white noise" metaphorically: he sees this as the defining characteristic of American culture. Discuss various 'frequencies' or levels of 'white noise' that make up the cultural presentation in the novel. Discuss how it adds up to a culture in which 'meaning' or 'value' is hard to determine. Then, evaluate your result: to what extent do you agree or disagree with DeLillo's presentation of the overall picture of American society?

Requirements and Expectations: This essay is worth one "test" grade.

1) Put a heading on the top, left corner of the first page:
   Your name
   English 12H-1
   Mr. Dunton
   Date of composition

2) Double space your essay—no extra spacing between paragraphs. Use a number 11 font and ~one inch margins all around. Number your pages in the upper right corner.

3) Title your essay. Do not use a report cover or title page.

4) Staple your essay in the upper left corner before the due date.

5) Plan ahead: read the novel; plan the essay; compose the draft; take time off; revise the draft for organization, paragraphing, and flow; take time off; edit the revision for sentence-level flow; take time off; proof-read for the picky stuff.

Taking time off is essential: it lets you get distance and perspective on your essay, so you can see it with an editor's eyes.
When you revise, edit, and proof-read, print the essay first. Then read it aloud as if you were performing it to an audience. You'll be surprised at how much more you can catch that way, as opposed to reading silently off the computer screen.

6) The pronoun "I" and the phrase "I think" are fine. Avoid "I feel." Think. Feelings are not analytical and have no place in this essay.

7) Length: 3 - 4 pages or so. Due date: the first day of class.
12th Grade Hot Topics

This year the senior Hot Topics class will focus on different types of literacy as a vehicle for connecting the reader to the meaning of a work. Every work: articles, songs, films and books contains cultural signposts from the author/director/artist to guide the reader toward the intended meaning.

The opening unit for this class will guide the seniors (some of whom are first time voters) to an understanding of the candidates and the issues in preparation for the presidential elections.

Students should come to class having read the book *All the President’s Men* by Woodward and Bernstein.

Students will need a prepared outline on the topic of the role of responsible journalism and the people’s right to know. Focus on Woodward and Bernstein’s methods. Specify five points which demonstrate their journalistic methodology and five points related to their journalistic ethics.

Cite specific instances which exhibit the tension between a right to know and the accepted Canons of Journalism [http://198.104.176.120/canons.htm](http://198.104.176.120/canons.htm) and be sure to include the page number(s) in the book where you find this information. You will need it for class discussions and in class writing. The will be due the first day of school.