

Welcome to AP Literature! This course is focused on the close reading of literary texts for analysis and critique. In this class, you will hone your reading and writing skills by experiencing and examining a wide variety of literary styles. Over the summer, in preparation for the class, you are to complete the following reading and assignments listed below. I recommend reading them in the order they are listed.

1) *How To Read Literature Like A Professor*, by Thomas C. Foster

What does it mean when a fictional hero takes a journey? Shares a meal? Gets drenched in a sudden rain shower? Often, there is much more going on in a novel or poem than is readily visible on the surface—a symbol, maybe, that remains elusive, or an unexpected twist on a character—and there's that sneaking suspicion that the deeper meaning of a literary text keeps escaping you. In this practical and amusing guide to literature, Thomas C. Foster shows how easy and gratifying it is to unlock those hidden truths, and to discover a world where a road leads to a quest; a shared meal may signify a communion; and rain, whether cleansing or destructive, is never just rain. Ranging from major themes to literary models, narrative devices, and form, *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* is the perfect companion for making your reading experience more enriching, satisfying, and fun. (amazon.com)

Assignment: As you read this book, answer the attached questions in a word document. These questions will be due through turnitin.com on the first week of school.

2) *Jane Eyre*, by Charlotte Bronte

Jane Eyre, the story of a young girl and her passage into adulthood, was an immediate commercial success at the time of its original publication in 1847. Its representation of the underside of domestic life and the hypocrisy behind religious enthusiasm drew both praise and bitter criticism, while Charlotte Brontë's striking expose of poor living conditions for children in charity schools as well as her poignant portrayal of the limitations faced by women who worked as governesses sparked great controversy and social debate. (amazon.com)

3) *Wide Sargasso Sea*, by Jean Rhys

Jean Rhys's reputation was made upon the publication of this passionate and heartbreaking novel, in which she brings into the light one of fiction's most mysterious characters: the madwoman in the attic from Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*. Set in the Caribbean, its heroine is Antoinette Cosway, a sensual and protected young woman who is sold into marriage to the prideful Rochester. In this best-selling novel, Rhys portrays a society so driven by hatred, so skewed in its relations, that it can literally drive a woman out of her mind. (amazon.com)

Assignment: Be prepared to write about these two novels during the first week of classes.

Chapter 1: "Every Trip is a Quest"

1. What are the five essentials of a quest?
2. What is the real reason for a quest?
3. Why shouldn't the words "never" and "always" be used in literary analysis?

Chapter 2: "Nice to Eat with You"

1. What happens whenever people eat and drink together?
2. Breaking bread together is an act of what?
3. How is food a conflict solver?

Chapter 3: "Nice to Eat You: Acts of Vampires"

1. What else is vampirism about other than vampires?
2. Name the author fascinated by the dual nature of humanity.
3. Vampires were first written about in the Victorian age. Why?
4. What group of people does Foster name as an example of modern day vampires?

Chapter 4: "If It's Square, It's a Sonnet"

1. When was the sonnet first written?
2. Name the FOUR adjectives Foster uses to describe a sonnet.
3. How does the shape of the square pertain to the sonnet?

Chapter 5: "Where Have I Seen Her Before?"

1. Northrop Frye speaks about literature. What does he say and what does he mean?
2. What is the point of the simile about the eels?
3. What is the point of the mushroom analogy?

Chapter 6: "When in Doubt, It's from Shakespeare"

1. Name a TV show that used a Shakespearean theme.
2. What does "ubiquity" mean?
3. Who does Foster mention as the greatest tragic hero?

Chapter 7: "... Or the Bible"

1. Foster notes that even *Pulp Fiction* has Biblical references. To what does it refer?
2. In Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, who do the "four horsemen" represent?
3. James Baldwin was the son of a _____?

Chapter 8: "Hansel and Gretel"

1. What is the "literary canon"?
2. What does any form of irony do?
3. For the reader, what does this borrowing bring us?

Chapter 9: "It's Greek to Me"

1. Why does the story of Icarus still have meaning today?
2. Give one reason why we pay so much attention to Homer.
3. What is the tone of the author in this chapter?

Chapter 10: "It's More Than Just Rain or Snow"

1. Ever since "we crawled up on the land" what has the water been trying to do to us?
2. Explain the paradox of rain . . . how does it backfire?
3. What do the rainbow, fog and snow symbolize?

Chapter 11: "More than It's Gonna Hurt You: Concerning Violence"

1. What does the death of the boy in Frost's poem "Out Out" really represent?
2. Foster says that Lawrence's deaths are "heavily symbolic". Which character's death in the story "The Fox" does Foster use as an example?
3. Why is it nearly impossible for us to generalize about the meaning of violence?

Chapter 12: "Is That A Symbol?"

1. What is the problem with symbols?
2. What is an allegory?
3. Why does EM Forster use the cave as an example of the ambiguity of symbols?

Chapter 13: "It's All Political"

1. Why doesn't Foster like political literature?
2. What type of political writing does Foster love, and why?
3. Explain how Sophocles' "Oedipus at Colonus" could be political?