Advanced Placement Literature and Composition
College Board Certified Syllabus and Course Expectations: 2015 – 2016

Instructor:  Ms. Hausmann
Office Hours: during ELO; 7:30 – 7:50 / 3:15 – 4:20; or by appointment
Email:  stephanie.hausmann@weldre4.k12.co.us
Voicemail:  686-8100 ext. 3630
Course website:  http://hausmannaplit.wordpress.com/

Course Overview and Objectives
This course is designed with a variety of purposes: to increase critical reading and writing skills so that the student can better interpret and discuss a wide realm of classic and modern literature and to accustom each student to the demands of college-level thinking, writing and workload. This course provides sustained explicit instruction in the areas of:
• Literary terms and devices
• Analytical reading strategies
• Socratic Seminar discussion format
• Conventions and traits of effective expository prose
• Practice strategies for successful completion of the AP Lit and Comp Exam

Course Introduction
Why study literature?  Literature is the written history of the human experience; it is the connecting link between humans across time and from all walks of life. At times, we read for enjoyment; at other times we read for understanding; most prevalently, however, we read for connection. Literature is more than just entertainment; literature can be philosophical, leading us to rich understandings about ourselves and the world around us. Literature can also teach us to look within ourselves and question the world around us. It is my goal that through the close, deliberate study of literature in this course, you will study who you are, determine how you’ve arrived at this point in your life, and determine where you go from here. By becoming critical, analytical, and discerning readers, you will begin to better understand the human condition and how your life fits into it.

We will be reading and studying literature in thematic units this year. Each theme has been chosen with specific philosophical implications, either personally or pertaining to the world around us. Each thematic unit contains specific essential guiding questions which we will attempt to answer and connect back to the human condition. Here are our thematic units.
• Dystopian Truths in Modern Times/Society vs. the Individual
• Appearance vs. Reality
• Sacrifice and Unrequited Love
• Marriage and Family: The Bonds that Bind
• Alienation and Resiliency
• Loss of Innocence / Impact of Loneliness & Solitude.

The ultimate goal is that by the end of this course you will have become an excellent, close reader of literature with refined analytical capabilities that you can successfully demonstrate through polished,
insightful, and concise writing. To reach this goal, we will read constantly, write frequently, and think relentlessly about the deeper meanings of life and the human experience.

Course Description

Designed to be a college level introductory course in literature and writing, AP English Literature and Composition is a rigorous course which will challenge, inspire, and enrich the eager literature student. Upon completion of the course, students will be prepared to take the Advanced Placement English Literature exam. This course will engage students in careful and critical reading of literary works ranging from the sixteenth through twenty-first century. Such study will sharpen student awareness of language as well as understanding of writer’s craft. Accordingly, students will focus on writing through avenues such as reader response, literary analysis, process papers, and various dialectical forms.

Students will develop critical standards for independent appreciation and understanding of any literary work, in order to conceptualize what literature can mean in the larger context of their lives. While performance on the AP exam is a primary goal for the year, the goals and objectives for the course go beyond test performance and also focus upon building the skills necessary for college-level reading and writing. Students, therefore, should expect a rigorous experience with intellectual challenges and a considerable workload that culminates with the AP Literature and Composition Exam in May. All students are expected to take the AP Literature exam.

Course Philosophy

This course is designed to inspire and maintain students’ love for literature and composition. We will spend a significant amount of time looking at authors’ deliberate stylistic choices, use of figurative language techniques, and structural organization. We will continually question: What is the writer trying to do? What means does he/she utilize to accomplish this? Why is this a “great” piece of literature? The answers to these questions, and the reasons to support those answers, will be the primary focus of students’ analytical writing for this course.

This is a college-level course. The readings we cover are mature in content and theme and it is essential that you respond in a mature manner. Understand that an integral component of being a college student and well-rounded, informed reader is being exposed to a variety of different texts and philosophies. You are not expected to like, believe in, endorse, or agree with everything we read. Part of becoming a mature, discerning adult is determining how others’ beliefs and viewpoints compare to your own truth.

Most class sessions will focus in part on either small or large-group discussion. This means you are REQUIRED to speak in class. To do this, you must keep up with and think critically about all readings. You must respect the opinions and reactions of others. We will be learning together, creating independent and collective “truths”, and challenging one another to dig deeper into texts and our own psyches. It is my hope that in this process you will have so much to say that we will run out of time in class discussions. This year we will read both traditional and contemporary prose, drama, and poetry. Take charge of your learning, read actively and closely, and attend class each session ready to discuss your insights and revelations. If you engage deeply in your learning and fulfill your responsibilities in the class, the grade you deserve (and college credit) will follow.
Upon completing the course, students should be able to do the following:

- Have acquired close reading and analytical strategies as needed both for the AP Lit exam and for adequate college preparation.
- Improve their ability to find, explain and defend (through discussion and writing) what is of value in literature and what comprises a “great” piece of literature.
- Revisit the purposes and strategies of rhetoric in order to develop an effective use of rhetoric, including controlling tone, establishing and maintaining voice, and achieving appropriate emphasis through diction and sentence structure.
- Stretch their imaginative abilities in reaction to a wide variety of literature.
- Master a wide variety of significant literary terms and be able to recognize these terms in use and explain how the author uses them to convey deeper meaning.
- Analyze and interpret samples of good writing, identifying and explaining an author’s use of strategies and techniques.
- Apply effective strategies and techniques in their own writing.
- Demonstrate understanding and mastery of standard written English as well as stylistic maturity in their writings.
- Write in a variety of genres and contexts, both formal and informal, for a variety of different audiences, employing appropriate conventions.
- Move effectively through the stages of the writing process, with careful attention to inquiry and research, drafting, revising, editing, and review.

As writers, students will:

- Employ a variety of rhetorical structures appropriate for various proposes and audiences—including writing to explain, writing to understand, and writing to evaluate.
- Combine parts to an effective whole and create appropriate transitions between them.
- Use a wide-ranging vocabulary with denotative correctness and connotative analysis.
- Use a variety of sentence structures, including appropriate use of subordinate and coordinate constructions.
- Develop logical organization, enhanced by specific techniques of coherence.
- Apply appropriate social/historical context to formal essays.
- Demonstrate clear interpretations of text through the analysis of literary elements—such as, imagery, tone, symbolism, etc.
- Engage in daily writing to support the reading process.

As readers, students will:

- Identify the purpose and modes of discourse and explain their relationship to structure.
- Explain how parts of discourse are related to each other and to the whole.
- Recognize the conventions of different genres and historical periods, and identify the assumptions authors have made about their audiences.

Expectations

In AP Lit, you will always be reading something, and you will always have some assignment on the horizon. You must be prepared to read all texts closely and analytically and to fulfill corresponding assignments that are of different lengths and levels of difficulty. The readings will be layered thematically which means as we
are reading a novel, we will also be reading short stories, poetry, or drama that corresponds to the theme of study. Thus, there will be a great deal of reading.

It is vital that students are willing to devote the time necessary both inside and outside of class in order to get the required work done (which will roughly amount to no more than three hours of reading/writing between each 90 minute class meeting.)

The Course -The class will contain the following types of texts and writings:

Anchor texts (novels)
You will read and analyze these texts through writing assignments that include but are not limited to various forms of annotation, dialectical journals, reader-responses, blogs, quick-writes, etc. The goal is to engage in a “dialogue” with the text. You will write about what is striking, illuminating, confusing, important, etc. Each anchor text will be followed by an AP-style timed writing, unit tests, and Socratic seminars. Various reading quizzes may be given during the course of reading.

(Note that the novels chosen for anchor texts are predominantly British literature. This decision was made for two reasons. 1. The prerequisite for this course is American Literature, which all students must take their junior year. In American Literature, students read major works by authors such as: Nathaniel Hawthorne, Mark Twain, John Steinbeck, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Arthur Miller, and J.D. Salinger. 2. Students have very little exposure to British literature in grades 9-11, especially novels, as our high school does not offer a British literature course. Finally, extra emphasis has been placed on including canonical American plays, short stories and poetry in the AP Literature reading schedule, along with the inclusion of two American novels.

Context Texts (videos, short fiction, poetry, film excerpts, non-fiction, etc.)
These texts create prior knowledge that gives context to the complexity of further reading. You will respond to these texts as we begin each unit.

Texture texts (plays, essays, short stories, poetry)
These texts will be read in accompaniment with our anchor texts. You will make various connections between our anchor and texture texts as we delve into each thematic unit.

COURSE TEXTS: (all can be purchased via Amazon.com at the prices listed below.) For most of the books, I would recommend buying the Dover Thrift Editions at Barnes and Noble. These are usually very inexpensive.

- How to Read Literature Like a Professor by Thomas C. Foster
- Brave New World by Aldous Huxley, Paperback Harper Perennial
- Frankenstein by Mary Shelley (Dover Thrift Editions) (Unabridged) (Paperback)
- A Tale of Two Cities by Charles Dickens (Dover Thrift Editions) (Unabridged) (Paperback)
- The Poisonwood Bible by Barbara Kingsolver Publisher: Harper 2005
- Wuthering Heights by Emily Bronte (Dover Thrift Editions)
- Hamlet by William Shakespeare (an annotated version would be helpful)
- A Thousand Splendid Suns by Khaled Hosseini (check out Amazon for new copies starting at $5.68)
*If purchasing the books will cause you undue financial distress, please come and speak to me privately to discuss alternate arrangements.

Here is a breakdown of the types of work we will do this year:

**WRITING**
Throughout the year, we will write in a variety of ways for a variety of audiences. Students will be writing for multiple purposes throughout the year including: writing to understand, to explain, to analyze, to evaluate, to argue, and to respond.

**Daily Writing**
You will complete daily writing tasks, which may include responses to text, timed writings, formulation of paragraphs and thesis statements, creation of discussion materials, and question papers. You are expected to apply your best skills to these assignments. Teacher feedback will be provided on these assignments to help develop organizational and rhetorical writing skills.

**Thematic Essays / Process Papers**
You will write an argumentative/literary analysis essay approximately every six weeks. This will require you to develop an interpretive writing based on the text of a single work or numerous related works, possibly considering social and historical contexts, theme, figurative language, and other literary elements. A significant portion of the essay grade will consist of prewriting, editing, and revision activities. A strong emphasis is placed on the writing process, not only the final outcome. At the completion of each writing process, before submitting the final draft, you will write an evaluative piece which reflects upon what you have learned in the process, along with your perceived areas of strength and weakness. You will receive teacher feedback before, during, and after these writing processes. **Once final essays are polished and turned in, you are encouraged to revise any essay you would like to improve for a higher grade. (Any revisions are due no later than one week after the graded essay is returned.)**

**In class timed essays**
To adequately prepare for the AP Lit exam in May, you will write a variety of AP style essays over the course of the year, most timed and in class. These essays will be scored holistically using the AP 1-9 rubric. These essays will receive teacher feedback and extensive class discussion to aid you in improving your future timed essay writing abilities. On average, you will write a timed essay every three weeks; however, as we move into March and April, we will write more frequent timed essays.

**Reader’s Response to anchor text**
The Reader’s Response (RR) is mandatory for each reading assignment associated with an anchor text. The assignment will vary but will most likely be a reader-response, a dialectical journal, creation of literary discussion materials, including those for Socratic circles; or a response to an interpretive or evaluative question. Make the RR assignment a productive part of your homework routine. Get into the habit of having the text and your RR on your desk when class begins. From time to time, I may let you use your RR on a quiz or it may count as a quiz grade. **All Readers’ Responses should help you to review for tests and will help you contribute meaningfully to class discussions.**
**Literary Response Journal**
The (LRJ) is different from the Reader’s Response in that you will only write 4-6 per thematic unit. Each will be 2-3 handwritten pages in length, and you will be expected to cover specific points within the response. The LRG allows you to use outside sources as an aide for better understanding the deep thematic questions posed by the texts we read. You will need a composition notebook for your LRJ entries.

**Major Works Data Sheet**
These will be due with almost every longer text and the four major independent readings. This will require close analysis of the text in addition to research regarding the relevance of the author’s life and style, plus the historical and cultural context in which the book was produced. These sheets will be HUGELY valuable when you begin prepping for the AP exam in the spring.

**Vocabulary Study**
We will study vocabulary throughout the year, as it is critical you know as many words as possible both for understanding the reading on the AP exam and to be able to use effectively in your own writing.

**Grammar Instruction**
Grammar instruction will focus on student needs. Generally, we will focus on varied sentence structure, semi-colon and colon use, integration of quotes in formal writing, and techniques for varying sentences to affect mood and tone. Grammar will be taught in context, reviewed in written assignments, and addressed in mini lessons. We will also focus specifically on pronoun/antecedent agreement and how writers strategically use punctuation stylistically and to convey meaning.

**Independent Reading (One each quarter)**
For each quarter of the school year, you will select one major work which you will read independently. A list of acceptable choices will be provided for you to choose from for each quarter (choices will focus on specific time periods and/or themes and will be classified as texts of literary merit.) The independent reading assignment will be due the final week of each quarter and each one will have slightly different requirements. You will receive a specific handout detailing this assignment for first quarter within the first two weeks of school.

**Poetry**
This course will introduce you to critical evaluation of poetry. You will investigate what constitutes poetry, techniques for reading poetry, and the difference between denotation and connotation. Poems selected will be evaluated in class and at home. Students will focus on imagery and figurative language (simile, metaphor, personification, apostrophe, metonymy, symbol, allegory, paradox, overstatement, understatement, irony, juxtaposition, and allusion). Students will learn to define each term and identify the use of the term in various works. Finally, students will examine and write about how the above techniques are employed by authors to deepen or strengthen the meaning of their work.

**My Favorite Poem project (completed after the AP exam in May)**
You will complete this project after taking the AP Literature exam in May. More specific details regarding the assignment will be provided at that time. In short, you will complete your own “My Favorite Poem” project based after the online favorite poem project. This will entail you selecting a poem and creating a video of yourself performing the poem and explaining its relevance and meaning to your life.
Supplies

Please bring the following required materials to class each day as appropriate:

- Two good-sized three ring binders for organizing and storing the plethora of handouts, assignments and readings you will receive. (One binder for poetry, one for fiction). It is essential that you keep these materials for the entire year and have them available daily with you in class. This class will require its own binders; do not share binders with another course.
- Lined paper with no spiral edges
- A place for class notes (So: a section in your binder -or if you prefer, a separate spiral notebook-which is exclusively for notes.) You can also create an online notebook in Google Docs, if you’d like.
- A separate composition notebook for Literary Response Journals (LRJ)
- A blue/black pen (anything turned in must be in ink)

Attendance

Class discussions, activities, and lectures will be VITAL to your learning and will be nearly impossible to replicate - so don’t be absent. You need to be here to be successful in the class. **Fact: Student who frequently miss class do not perform as well on the AP exam.**

- **Course website:** I will update the course website after each class meets with what we did that day. If you miss class, you are responsible for checking Classroom as well as our class website to catch yourself up BEFORE coming to me to ask me what you’ve missed. It is also your responsibility to take note of the assigned reading and complete it in its entirety **before** the next class (unless you are truly too ill to do so.)
- All assignments are due at the beginning of class on deadline day whether you are in attendance or not. Work submitted after deadline will not receive full credit.
- You will submit the majority of your work via Google Classroom. Major writings will be submitted through turnitin.com

Grades:

Here is the grade breakdown. I have designed it to closely mimic the college course(s) this class is replacing.

- Timed Writings and Process Essays - 30%
- RLJ and Dialectical Journals / Independent Books - 20%
- Reader Responses and Vocabulary Work - 5%
- Quizzes (including vocabulary quizzes) - 10%
- Socratic Seminars / Discussions / Participation -15%
- Unit Tests - 20%

Late work

This is a college-level course. At the college level, late work is not tolerated, and it is important that this course prepare you for that environment. **Know that technological difficulties are not a valid excuse for missing class deadlines. You are responsible for backing up all your coursework. Give yourself adequate time to finish assignments early to avoid potentially troublesome technology issues.** Remember that if
you’re having difficulty with an assignment PLEASE contact me and ask for help before the assignment is due.

**Tardy Policy:**
Prompt attendance is key to academic success and will be required in all areas of adult life. If you are tardy to class, you must report to the Attendance Office for a tardy slip before you will be admitted to class.

**1:1 Chromebook Program:**
Students in my classes will have the opportunity to work in a pilot 1:1 technology classroom. Students will be expected to follow all classroom rules related to the daily use and care of a Chromebook checked out to the student during class time. Failure to properly care for the technology will result in loss of privileges and/or alternate assignments. Because we have these devices, there will be no food or drink (besides water) allowed in my room.

Use of personal and district technology is subject to the users adherence to the district AUP and WHS network etiquette. This includes abstaining from using social media on district technology (unless deemed appropriate by your teacher).

**Cell Phones**
We have an enormous amount of material to cover and learn in order to adequately prepare you to take the AP Lit exam in May. I want you to earn as much college credit as possible. Cell phones are terribly tempting distracters. Simply stated, we do not have time for cell phones in class. So:
- Please ensure that your phone is OFF when you get to class. I will take your phone if I see you using it. If it’s your second offense, I will take it to the main office where you can pick it up at the end of the day.

**Plagiarism**
Defined as intellectual theft, plagiarism includes using someone else’s work without proper citation (this includes another peer’s work, copy/pasting from the Internet, etc.) Plagiarism, even if claimed to be accidental, is not tolerated and will result in the following consequences:
1st offense: zero on the assignment (no chance to rewrite); parent contacted; note on academic record; removal from National Honor Society
2nd offense: no credit earned; parent contacted; note on academic record; student drop failed from the course
Understand that in college, plagiarism = an automatic failure of the course. The dean of students is contacted, and in many cases, the student is not allowed to continue attending the school.

**Final Thoughts**
Do take me up on offers to help you with your writing or understanding of the literature we are reading.
Do ask questions when they arise. Don’t feel like you’re bothering me if you come in outside of class to ask questions. Please understand that I’m here as a resource to help you succeed.
COURSE THEMATIC UNITS OF STUDY

*All the anchor texts listed will be used. We will also read nearly all of the poetry, short stories and plays listed. I will be adding some additional poems and stories this year, some of which may be swapped out with choices currently on the list. Students need to purchase their own anchor texts. Texture texts will be available online through our website or in our class anthology which can be checked out through me.

Thematic Focus One – Dystopian Truths in Modern Times / Society vs. the Individual  (August – September)

**Essential Guiding Questions:**
- What is a dystopia and is its occurrence plausible in humanity's future?
- What elements of a dystopia are most disturbing?
- What steps or actions must take place to prevent the emergence of a dystopian-like existence?
- Who and what give us our identity?
- How and in what ways does society try to control the individual?
- In what ways does society expect us to conform?
- What is the individual’s obligation to society?
- What happens when an individual and the society in which he/she live in collide?

**Anchor Novel** – *Brave New World* – Aldous Huxley

**Context Texts**—Dystopian handouts and articles, film excerpts

**Texture Texts**—“All Watched Over by Machines of Loving Grace” –Richard Brodigan
- “Smart Appliances” –Dave Barry
- “There Will Come Soft Rains” –Sara Teasdale
- “There Will Come Soft Rains” –Ray Bradbury
- “Ode to Science” –Edgar Allan Poe
- “The Ones Who Walk Away From Omelas” –Ursula Se Grim
- “The Machine Stops” E.M. Forrester
- “The Man Who Spilled Light” – David Wagoner
- “A Sound of Thunder” – Ray Bradbury
- “On Advice to a Prophet” – Richard Wilbur

Thematic Focus Two: Appearance vs. Reality/ The Nature of Good and Evil (Late September – October)

**Essential Guiding Questions:**
- What is truth? Is it absolute or relative?
- What is the relationship between language and truth?
- How willing are we to embrace the truth?
- What if a “truth” leads us to violate an essential element of our self-concept?
- Does literature present truths or undermine them?
- How do we define what is good and what is evil?
How do we make moral choices?
What are the consequences of the choices we make?
What is the difference between sin and crime, revenge and justice?
How does point of view affect the presentation of good and evil?

**Anchor Texts**—*Frankenstein*—Mary Shelley

**Context Texts**—The Modern Prometheus, Informative handouts, Maslow's hierarchy of needs, video excerpts; music selections

**Texture Texts**—“The Rime of the Ancient Mariner”—Samuel Coleridge
*A Streetcar Named Desire*—Tennessee Williams
“The Lottery”—Shirley Jackson
“Hills Like White Elephants”—Ernest Hemingway
“Just Walk on By”—Brent Staples
“The Birthmark”—Nathaniel Hawthorne
“Convergence of the Twain”—Thomas Hardy
“Titanic”—David R. Slavitt
“Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night”—Dylan Thomas
“Unholy Sonnet”—Mark Jarman
“Victims”—Sharon Olds
“Whatsoever is”—Charlotte Perkins Gillman
“We Real Cool”—Gwendolyn Brooks

**Thematic Focus Three: Sacrifice and Unrequited Love (November – December)**

**Essential Guiding Questions:**

- What is love?
- Can love make despair, discontent, and envy turn to joy?
  
  What are the factors that move individuals to great emotion and what are the consequences?
- To be genuine, must true love be completely unselfish?
- How important is self love?
- If any, what are the boundaries of love and sacrifice, and where does one draw the line between them?
- Which is more powerful - love (good) or hatred (evil)?

**Anchor Text:** *A Tale of Two Cities*—Charles Dickens

**Context Texts:** Non-fiction writings relevant to the French Revolution, film clips, music selections

**Texture Texts:** “The Necklace”—Guy de Maupassant
“The Gift of the Magi”—O Henry
“O Captain, My Captain”—Walt Whitman
“How They Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix”—Robert Browning
“Warren Pryor”—Alden Nowlan
“The Sorrows of Young Werther”—Johann Wolfgang von Goethe
“The Windhover”—Gerald Manley Hopkins
“House of Mirth”—Edith Wharton
“The Lady with the Pet Dog”—Anton Chekhov

Emily Dickinson poetry
Thematic Focus Four: Marriage and Family: The Bonds that Bind (January – February)

**Essential Guiding Questions:** When is a family a family? This thematic focus asks you to consider the definition of family and the impact of family on development of characters and of self. There is no one ideal type of family and American culture draws much of its strength from the diversity of its cultures. When reading a book about a non-traditional, highly dysfunctional family, you will be better equipped to understand your own families, many of which may not resemble the mother, father, sibling arrangement of previous generations.

- What defines family?
- What happens when conflict is introduced to a family?
- How does family influence identity?
- In what ways does the portrayal of family in literature affect self?
- Is one’s family an integral, inherent part of one’s lasting identity?
- Is it possible to escape one’s history or one’s family?
- How much forgiveness is possible within a family?

**Anchor Text:** *The Poisonwood Bible*—Barbara Kingsolver

**Context Texts:** Supplemental nonfiction readings relevant to the Congo; film clips; musical selections

**Texture Texts**—“Separation” —John Updike

“The Lady with the Peg Dog”—Joyce Carol Oates

“The Story of an Hour”—Kate Chopin

“A Sorrowful Woman”—Gail Godwin

“A Doll’s House”—Henrik Ibsen

“The Flea”—John Donne

Anne Bradstreet poetry

“My Last Duchess”—Robert Browning

“My Papa’s Waltz”—Theodore Roethke

Sonnet 29—William Shakespeare

Thematic Focus Five: Alienation and Resiliency (end of February – March)

**Essential Guiding Questions:**
Many complex texts explore the theme of resiliency through the conflicts faced by major and minor characters. You will consider how plot and character interact with one another to portray the resilient nature (or lack thereof) of a character and how his/her level of resiliency influences the individual and those around him/her. Also worthy of consideration is how gender, race, ethnicity, religion, family, education, class, etc. shape one’s capacity for resiliency.

- How does alienation affect literary characters? How are personality, conflict and circumstance tied into effect?
- What might be the role of ethics and values in alienation?
- How might existentialism cause human alienation?
- How may alienation be important to artists and writers?
- Why is alienation a common theme in works about rite of passage or self actualization?
- What are some implied links between insanity and alienation?
What is resiliency? What are its central components?
Why/how is resiliency developed and is it important?
How can we connect the theme of resiliency to today's global issues?

Anchor Text: *Wuthering Heights*—Emily Bronte and *Hamlet*—William Shakespeare

Context Texts: film clips; music selections

Texture Texts: *Hamlet*—William Shakespeare
“The Yellow Wallpaper”—Charlotte Perkins Gilman
Emily Dickinson poetry
“Mother to Son” Langston Hughes
“Telephone Conversation”—W. Soyinka
“A Rose for Emily” William Faulkner
“Everyday Use”—Alice Walker
“I Want a Wife”—Judy Brady
“Legal Alien”—Pat Mora
“Language of Discretion”—Amy Tan
“Barbie Doll”—Marge Piercy
“Death Be Not Proud”—John Donne
“Acquainted with the Night”—Robert Frost

Thematic Focus Six: Loss of Innocence / Impact of Loneliness & Solitude (late April – May)

Essential Guiding Questions:
The topic of loss of innocence deals with issues of maturity, decision-making, and value formation in an open, informed, and frank atmosphere. Sidestepping important questions or distorting reality with half-truths or myths is not the job of literature. Discovering what is valuable in your own life, the lives of your peers, and the world at large is an integral part of coming of age. Examining and comparing values, beliefs, and other points of view is the first step in critically understanding any text.

- What is innocence?
- What is experience?
- What defines realistic expectations of life?
- Is life in literature fair? Should it be?
- Does literature represent life, or vice versa?
- When do we let go of our innocence?
- Are we better off letting go of our innocence or maintaining it?

Anchor Text: *A Thousand Splendid Suns* – Khaled Hosseini

Context Texts: Documentaries; supplemental non-fiction readings relevant to the Dominican Republic; film excerpts

Textual Texts: “Battle Royale”—Ralph Ellison
“A Good Man is Hard to Find”—Flannery O’Connor
“Revelations”—Flannery O’Connor
“Good Country People”—Flannery O’Connor
“A & P”—John Updike
“Eveline”—James Joyce
“I Want to be Miss America”—Julia Alvarez (from *Something to Declare*)
“The Lamb” and “The Tyger”—William Blake
“Nothing Gold Can Stay”—Robert Frost
“The Death of the Ball Turret Gunner”—Randall Jarett and "Rite of Passage - Sharon Olds