

2010-2011 Summer Reading and Anticipated Writing Assignments

Directions:

1. Read and annotate **both texts** prior to fall discussion. Some discussions will be student-led, others teacher-led. We will discuss the books in the order they appear below. **I will check annotations for both texts during the first two days of classes.** See the next page of this handout for advice on annotating.
2. The essay for *Pride and Prejudice* will be due on September 24<sup>th</sup>. The topics are provided at the bottom of this paper. **The essay must be between 3 and 4 pages.** Prepare an outline for this essay, and have it ready for the first week of classes.
3. The essay for *Jude the Obscure* will be due sometime toward the end of October. Essay topics and a firm essay due date will be provided toward the end of September. When topics are distributed, you will prepare an outline for this essay as well.
4. You are expected to use quotations and proper citation from the text in composing your essays. Avoid plot summary; instead, analyze and comment using the texts.
5. Format your papers according to the MLA guidelines and the Mount writing rubric. (There are ample MLA resources on the web to help you with formatting.)
6. If you require any assistance with annotating or the reading/essay assignments, please contact me at: mmarino@mountsaintmary.org.

Essay Topics for *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen

**Choose one of the following** and compose a 3-4 page essay, using sufficient textual evidence.

1. In the society that Austen portrays in *Pride and Prejudice*, what does it mean to be an ‘accomplished’ woman? What does *Pride and Prejudice* reveal about a woman’s role in society in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century in England (a time period referred to as Regency England)? What can we infer about the prevalent views on women and marriage based upon Austen’s depiction of the Bennets and their associates? To what extent does Austen accept or criticize women’s role in society?
2. The characters’ ‘pride’ and ‘prejudice’ in Austen’s novel *Pride and Prejudice* develop as a result of class tensions. For example, Darcy thwarts Bingley’s marriage to Jane and denies his feelings for Elizabeth because he cannot imagine allying himself or his friend to Mrs. Bennet, whom he regards as vulgar and socially inferior. How does the characters’ social awareness dictate their behavior in this novel? Does Austen seem critical of the importance her characters attach to social status?

(SEE THE NEXT PAGE FOR ANNOTATION ADVICE.)

## Excerpt from *How to Mark a Book*

By Mortimer J. Adler, Ph.D.

“Why is marking up a book indispensable to reading? First, it keeps you awake. (And I don't mean merely conscious; I mean awake.) In the second place; reading, if it is active, is thinking, and thinking tends to express itself in words, spoken or written. The marked book is usually the thought-through book. Finally, writing helps you remember the thoughts you had, or the thoughts the author expressed....”

“If reading is to accomplish anything more than passing time, it must be active.... But, you may ask, why is writing necessary? Well, the physical act of writing, with your own hand, brings words and sentences more sharply before your mind and preserves them better in your memory. To set down your reaction to important words and sentences you have read, and the questions they have raised in your mind, is to preserve those reactions and sharpen those questions.....”

“There are all kinds of devices for marking a book intelligently and fruitfully. Here's the way I do it:

- \* **Underlining (or highlighting):** of major points, of important or forceful statements.
- \* **Vertical lines at the margin:** to emphasize a statement already underlined.
- \* **Star, asterisk, or other doo-dad at the margin:** to be used sparingly, to emphasize the ten or twenty most important statements in the book. (You may want to fold the bottom corner of each page on which you use such marks. It won't hurt the sturdy paper on which most modern books are printed, and you will be able take the book off the shelf at any time and, by opening it at the folded-corner page, refresh your recollection of the book.)
- \* **Numbers in the margin:** to indicate the sequence of points the author makes in developing a single argument.
- \* **Numbers of other pages in the margin:** to indicate where else in the book the author made points relevant to the point marked; to tie up the ideas in a book, which, though they may be separated by many pages, belong together.
- \* **Circling or highlighting of key words or phrases.**
- \* **Writing in the margin, or at the top or bottom of the page, for the sake of:** recording questions (and perhaps answers) which a passage raised in your mind; reducing a complicated discussion to a simple statement; recording the sequence of major points right through the books. I use the end-papers at the back of the book to make a personal index of the author's points in the order of their appearance.”