

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 during the first two days of classes.** See the next page of this handout for advice on annotating.
2. The essay for *1984* will be due on September 24th. **It must be between 4 and 5 pages.** Prepare an outline for this essay, and have it ready for the first week of classes.
3. There will not be an essay for *How to Read Literature Like a Professor*, but an assessment will come after we finish discussing the book.
4. You are expected to use quotations and proper citation from the text in composing your essay. Avoid plot summary; instead, analyze and comment using the text.
5. Format your paper 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 assignment, please contact me at: mmarino@mountsaintmary.org.

1) *How to Read Literature Like a Professor: A Lively and Entertaining Guide to Reading Between the Lines* by Thomas C. Foster

Note: As stated above, there will be no essay assigned for Foster's book. Instead, we will conduct an in-depth discussion of Foster's "methodologies" for the study of literature. You will use your annotations to assist in our study of his book, so make sure you come prepared with points to make. There will be a written assessment at the conclusion of our discussions.

2) *1984* by George Orwell

Choose one of the following and compose a 4-5 page essay, using sufficient textual evidence.

1. Some novels are real-world social commentaries hidden in a fictional world. These novels talk about/comment on real-world society and the society's faults and, at the same time, advocate changes in social or political attitudes or ideals. Using *1984*, identify the faults present in Winston Smith's society and discuss the particular real-world issues, attitudes or ideals that George Orwell wishes to modify. Avoid plot summary. (Note: you may wish to research George Orwell and his political views to help you formulate your ideas.)
2. In some works of literature, a character who appears briefly, or who does not appear at all, is a significant presence. In *1984*, Big Brother is such a character – we see references to him without actually ever "meeting" him in person. Write an essay in which you discuss and analyze the character of Big Brother and how Big Brother affects the world of the novel: actions, themes, or the development of other characters in the novel. Avoid plot summary.

(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.”