

PCA School of Rhetoric Community Reading:

All students (9-12) must read: *Why Are We Yelling: The Art of Productive Disagreement* (ISBN:978-0-525-54010-6), and be prepared for Harkness discussions on the first day of school. Students should prepare for Harkness discussion utilizing the following methods:

- Maintain a dialectical journal as you read (see attached information).
- Be prepared to discuss your reaction to the book, specific questions raised, Biblical connections, writing style, logic employed, ideas, etc.
- Be prepared to address the key ideas raised by the authors in the book.
- Prepare three discussion questions for consideration.
- Students are strongly encouraged to participate in active reading – making notes in the text, highlighting, asking questions in the margins, looking up scriptures, summarizing each chapter, etc.

Students are required to bring the book and dialectical journal to class for the discussions.

Additionally, all SENIORS must read *Mere Christianity* by C.S. Lewis (978-0060652920). This non-fiction selection is strongly encouraged for all students, but only required for the senior class. This text will be heavily utilized in Senior Thesis. For all others that choose to participate in reading this book, it will provide many connections to Logic, Rhetoric, Theology, Worldview, and most importantly, it will challenge readers to go deeper in their walk with Christ.

In addition to the above, students should read the appropriate book below and complete the corresponding assignment.

Ancient Literature (Grade 9): Students will first read over the summarized version of the Greek myth “The Twelve Labors of Hercules” at <https://www.crystalinks.com/12laborshercules.html> Students must then read *The Labors of Hercules* by Agatha Christie (ISBN: 978-0062073983) and keep a dialectical journal on the book. They must have a minimum of two entries per short story.

They will choose three of the short stories and write an 5-8 paragraph expository essay on the book. The first paragraph should include an introduction to the book and an explanation of how it is connected to the ancient myths. The next 3-6 paragraphs should compare and contrast the three short stories to the three ancient labors that the student chose. The last paragraph is the conclusion and should also contain an opinion statement about whether the author did a good job connecting her story to the ancient myths.

All papers must be typed and double-spaced. Please use Times New Roman or Arial font in size 11. Do not use personal pronouns (e.g. I, you).

Helpful resources:

An introduction to expository essays can be found: https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/academic_writing/essay_writing/expository_essays.html

The dialectical journal can be kept in a notebook or this template can be printed out and used: <https://www.murrieta.k12.ca.us/cms/lib5/CA01000508/Centricity/Domain/1758/Form%205%20Dialectical%20Journals.doc>

Medieval Literature (Grade 10): Students will first read over the following list of common archetypes: <https://www.humbleisd.net/cms/lib/TX01001414/Centricity/Domain/3492/Archetypes%20-%20Notes%20Handout.pdf>

Students will then read Neil Gaiman's *Norse Mythology* (ISBN-10: 039360909X, ISBN-13: 978-0393609097) and keep a dialectical journal of archetypes that they see while they read. Students should aim for at least 2 archetypes per story. Students will then write a 5-paragraph essay in response to the following prompt:

Neil Gaiman highlights many archetypes present in medieval Norse mythology in his retelling of these stories. Select 3 archetypes that stand out to you as particularly important and write an essay which explains each archetype and how it adds depth to a reader's understanding of a particular character or event. What does this archetype draw the reader's attention to? What does this archetype help readers understand about a character's motivations? You might choose an archetype because you noticed it more than once or you might choose an archetype that you noticed only once but that struck you as interesting. Each of your body paragraphs should have at least one direct quote from the text with an in-text citation that looks something like this: (Gaiman 47).

Your essay will be graded on your understanding of archetypes, understanding of the text, use of direct quotes from the text, essay structure, and grammar. All papers must be typed and double-spaced. Please use Times New Roman font and avoid personal pronouns (I, you, etc.). Essays are due on the first full day of school.

British Literature (Grade 11): Students will read *The Ocean at the End of the Lane* by Neil Gaiman (ISBN-10: 0062255657). They will write a paper and prepare a speech to delivered to the class.

Paper topic: Examine the novel as an archetypal hero journey. Explain each of the steps in the narrator's monomyth cycle. In what ways does he fit the archetype of the hero? In what ways does he differ from an archetypal hero?

All papers must be typed and double-spaced. Please use Times New Roman or Arial font in size 11. Do not use personal pronouns (e.g. I, you).

Speech: On page 112, Lettie tells the narrator, “Sometimes monsters are things people should be scared of, but they aren’t.” What is something that you think people should be more afraid of than they are? Compose a persuasive speech to convince your classmates that something or someone is more dangerous than they believe it to be. Using the flapping creature/Ursula Monkton as your guide, include a description of what the thing you are describing would look like if it were an actual monster.

American Literature (Grade 12): Students must read *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald (ISBN: 978-0743273565). It has been said that the theme of the novel is “the withering of the American Dream.” After reading, the students must write a five paragraph essay explaining what the novel offers about American identity and how the novel does or does not demonstrate the death of the American Dream.

Each body paragraph of the essay should have at least one direct quote from the text with an in-text citation that looks something like this: (Fitzgerald 45). Essays will be graded on understanding of *The Great Gatsby*, depth of analysis of the American Dream, use of textual evidence, essay structure, and grammar. All papers must be typed and double-spaced. Please use Times New Roman font and avoid personal pronouns (I, you, etc.). Essays are due on the first full day of school.