

ASHLAND UPDATES

[repeated]

We are confirmed for **April 28-30**th. We will attend "Much Ado About Nothing," "Guys and Dolls," and "Secret Love in Peach Blossom Land."

I still need, however, many of the **permission slips** and down payments of **\$30** to secure spots. Please submit the necessary paperwork and payments if you have not. Copies of the permission forms are available via my website (http://733257565503770808.weebly.com/).

Fees will cover:

- Transportation to and from Ashland via coach bus (includes bus drivers' room and board)
- Room and Board at the Southern Oregon College Campus (all meals provided except during travel)
- Tickets to three plays: Much Ado about Nothing, Guys and Dolls, and Secret Love in Peach Blossom Land
- One workshop produced by the Oregon Shakespeare Festival (with the actors!)
- Two workshops at Southern Oregon University
- Snacks & other travel goodies

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READING

DISCUSSION GROUPS

The second semester will focus on reading and discussing novels within small groups. There is a critical distinction between good literature and what makes a good discussion novel. Not all literature creates dynamic conversations. Conversations and differing opinions are, however, essential to a good discussion. The book might be a "page turner," but if it does not prompt conversation then it is a dud as a discussion choice.

The choice of a novel is often a contentious and touchy issue. I do not wish to step on any toes or push a student into reading a subject matter they are not ready for or comfortable with. I emailed the list of novels and groups to families last Thursday (1/16). Please let me know if you have concerns or desires to switch novels as soon as possible. Your help, respect, and diligence are appreciated.

Students prepare for participation in a discussion by completing an assignment. Each discussion focuses on a certain number of pages or chapters as delineated in the "bookmarks" for each discussion group.

Before participating in the discussions, students will

complete a job and submit the assignment for the job the day before the discussion. Novel discussions will be held at the end of every other week. The meeting schedule is: 2/6,



2/20, 3/6, and 3/20 for the 3rd quarter. During the 4th quarter the meetings will be 4/17, 5/1, 5/15, and 5/29.

3rd QUARTER JOBS:

- Riddler—asks thought provoking questions & leads the discussion
- Summarizer—summarizes the assigned section of reading and presents a plot line
- **Story Elements II**—keeps track of 2 major characters and how they change through the assigned reading
- Illustrator—provides a cover and teaser for the assigned section of reading
- **Illustrator Il**—creates 3 drawings with captions for the assigned section of reading
- Story Elements—draws and describes the effects of the setting on the assigned section of reading
- Literary Luminary—provides examples of 4 quotes with different literary techniques from the assigned section of reading

Please read and follow directions for the response and reflection sections. If there are any questions, students will have two weeks to clarify assignment expectations. Each assignment and each discussion are worth 25 points.

DISCUSSION #1

John

Newbery

Medal

Students have twenty minutes each day to read their discussion novel.
Additionally, students should use whatever time at home necessary to fulfill the number



of pages or chapters required for each discussion. Each student has a bookmark listing the dates of each discussion and the assigned pages. The bookmarks are also available via the "Reading" page of my web page.

The assignment sheets for the discussions are also available via the "Reading" page of my web page. You will have to access the bookmarks (or ask the student) to determine what assignment the student must complete. Students are given the new assignment sheet two weeks(ish) ahead of time. I recommend using the assignment sheet as a second bookmark and completing the assignment as the novel is read. Directions are on each sheet, but the "post discussion" part is completed after the discussion.

The assignment for discussion #1 is due Thursday (2/5)

a day before the discussion so that make time to evaluate and provide feedback on the assignment. It is something that I have learned over the years and it has generated better discussions.

SHORT STORIES

"2BR02B" is a science fiction short story by Kurt

Vonnegut. It was originally published in the digest magazine Worlds of If Science Fiction, in January, 1962, and collected in Vonnegut's Bagombo Snuff Box (1999). The title is pronounced "2 B R naught 2 B", referencing the famous phrase "to be, or



not to be" from William Shakespeare's Hamlet, Prince of Denmark. In this story, the title refers to the telephone number one dials to schedule an assisted suicide with the Federal Bureau of Termination. Vonnegut's 1965 novel <u>God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater</u> describes a story by this name, attributing it to his recurring character Kilgore Trout, although the plot summary given is closer in nature to the eponymous tale from the short-story collection <u>Welcome to the Monkey</u> House.

The setting is a society in which aging has been cured, individuals have an indefinite lifespan, and population control is used to limit the population of the United States to forty million. This is maintained through a combination of infanticide and government-assisted suicide—in short, in order for someone to be born, someone must first volunteer to die. As a result, births are few and far between, and deaths occur primarily by accident.

The scene is a waiting room at the Chicago Lying-In Hospital, where Edward K. Wehling, Jr. is faced with the situation that his wife is about to give birth to triplets, but he has found only one person - his maternal grandfather - who will volunteer to die. A painter on a stepladder is redecorating the room with a mural depicting famous doctors and nurses - in particular, Dr. Benjamin Hitz, the hospital's Chief Obstetrician. Leora Duncan, from the Service Division of the Federal Bureau of Termination, arrives to pose for the mural. The mural is a picture of a garden that's well taken care of. It is a metaphor for the United States at that time. Later, Dr. Hitz enters the scene, conversing with everyone but the painter of the mural.

It becomes apparent to all that Wehling is in a state of despair, wanting not to send his grandfather and two of his children to death. Dr. Hitz questions Wehling's belief in the system, and tries to make Wehling feel better by explaining how the surviving child will "live on a happy, roomy, clean, rich planet."

How will the conflict resolve?

MKTITIA

VOCABULARY #8

Students should be reviewing the lists for **five minutes each**



day. Repeated exposure to the words or stems will help in the long-term retention of the meaning and lead to greater success. Students should also be organizing the stems into antonyms, synonyms, and similar groupings (body parts, numbers, etc.).

Students will work on list #8 Tuesday and Wednesday (1/20-21). The assignment (list, sentences, and analogies) are due Friday (1/23). The quiz is next **Wednesday** (1/28) and not the usual Thursday.

THIS I BELIEVE

Students are invited to contribute to this project by writing and submitting their own statement of personal belief.

I understand how challenging this is—it requires such intimacy that no one else can do it for them. To guide you through this process, I offer these suggestions:

Tell a story: Be specific. Take your belief out of the ether and ground it in the events of your life. Consider moments when belief was formed or tested or changed. Think of your own experience, work, and family, and tell of the things you know that no one else does. Your story need not be heart-warming or gut-wrenching—it can even be funny—but it should be real. Make sure your story ties to the essence of your daily life philosophy and the shaping of your beliefs.

Be brief: Your statement should be between 350 and 500 words. That's about three minutes when read aloud at your natural pace.

Name your belief: If you can't name it in a sentence or two, your essay might not be about belief. Also, rather than writing a list, consider focusing on one core belief, because three minutes is a very short time.

Be positive: Please avoid preaching or editorializing. Tell us what you do believe, not what you don't believe. Avoid speaking in the editorial "we." Make your essay about you; speak in the first person.

Be personal: Write in words and phrases that are comfortable for you to speak. We recommend you read your essay aloud to yourself several times, and each time edit it and simplify it until you find the words, tone, and story that truly echo your belief and the way you speak.

Students will work on choosing a topic and creating an introduction during the week. We will be listening to several examples in class to help guide and direct the students. Please ask them about their topic.

This is a much shorter, sweeter, and simpler written piece than the historical fiction narrative. It is, however, no less of a demand on the students. I am asking them



would consider cringe-worthy. It is essential, however, to examine what it is that we do believe and why. I am excited to see what they write.

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HISTORY WEST AFRICA (7th)

We conclude our journey through West Africa. This week we will be reading "-

"Cultural Legacy of West Africa" (chapter 15: pages 164-171). As we progress through the chapters students will be creating a mobile with significant people, ideas, events, geography, etc. pertaining to West Africa. Essentially, students need to select, visually represent, and summarize in writing 3 key geographic features, 3 essential people (or groups of people), 3 important events, and 3 vital ideas or effects. The project is due Monday, January 26.

The region of western Africa was formed from the ancient craton Atlantica approximately 2 billion years ago when the Earth was beginning to form. Studies have found that early human settlers arrived in West Africa around 12,000 BCE. Microlithic stone industries have been found primarily in the region of the Savannah where pastoral tribes existed using chiseled stone blades and spears. The tribesmen of Guinea and the forested regions of the coast were without small stone tools for thousands of years, but prospered using bone tools and other means.

In the fifth millennium, as the ancestors of modern West Africans began entering the area, the development of sedentary farming began to take place in West Africa, with evidences of domesticated cattle having been found for this period, along with limited cereal crops.

A major migration of Sahel cattle farmers took place in the third millennium BCE, and the pastoralists encountered the developed hunter-gatherers of the Guinea region. The migration of the Sahel farmers was probably caused by the final desiccation of the Sahara desert in this millennium, which contributed greatly to West Africa's isolation from cultural and technological phenomena in Europe and the Mediterranean Coast of Africa.

Symbiotic trade relations developed before the trans-Saharan trade, in response to the opportunities afforded by north-south diversity in ecosystems across deserts, grasslands, and forests. The agriculturists received salt from the desert nomads. The desert nomads acquired meat and other foods from pastoralists and farmers of the grasslands and from fishermen on the Niger River. The forest dwellers provided furs and meat.

The Ghana Empire may have been an established kingdom as early as the 4th century CE. After 800, the empire expanded rapidly, coming to dominate the entire western Sudan; at its height, the empire could field an army of 200,000 soldiers.

Ghana was inhabited by urban dwellers and rural farmers.

The urban dwellers were the administrators of the empire, who were Muslims, and the *Ghana* (king), who practiced traditional religion. Two towns existed, one where the Muslim administrators and Berber-Arabs lived, which was connected by a stone-paved road to the king's residence. The rural dwellers lived in



broader polities that pledged loyalty to the *Ghana*. The *Ghana* was viewed as divine, and his physical well-being reflected on the whole society. Ghana converted to Islam around 1050.



The Ghana Empire grew wealthy by taxing the trans-Saharan trade. A percentage of salt and gold going through its territory was taken. The empire was not involved in production.

By the 11th century, Ghana was in decline. One important reason is the transfer of the gold trade east to the Niger River and the Taghaza Trail, and Ghana's consequent economic decline. Another reason cited is political instability through rivalry among the different hereditary polities.

The Mali Empire began in the 13th century CE, eventually creating a centralized state including most of West Africa. Although the salt and gold trade continued to be important to the Mali Empire, agriculture and pastoralism were also critical. The growing of sorghum, millet, and rice was a vital function. On the northern borders of the Sahel, grazing cattle, sheep, goats, and camels were major activities. Society was organized around the village and land. A cluster of villages was called a *kafu*, ruled by a *farma*. The *farma* paid tribute to the *mansa* (emperor). A dedicated army of elite cavalry and infantry maintained order, commanded by the royal court. A formidable force could be raised from tributary regions, if necessary.

Conversion to Islam was a gradual process. The power of the *mansa* depended on upholding traditional beliefs and a spiritual foundation of power.

Mali reached the peak of its power and extent in the 14th century, when *Mansa* Musa (1312–1337) made his famous *hajj* to Mecca with 500 slaves, each holding a bar of gold worth 500 mithqal (4.25 grams). *Mansa* Musa's *hajj* devalued gold in Egypt for a decade. He made a great impression on the minds of the Muslim and European world.

The Mali Empire saw an expansion of learning and literacy. In 1285, a freed slave, usurped the throne. This mansa established Timbuktu as a center of learning and commerce. The book trade increased, and book copying became a very respectable and profitable profession. A university at Timbuktu instituted a program of free health care and education for Malian citizens with the help of doctors and scholars brought back from his legendary hajj. Timbuktu became an important center of learning within the Muslim world.

After the mid fourteenth century, Mali began its spiral downward. Rival cavalry raided the exposed southern border. Others harassed the northern border to retake Timbuktu. A competing kingdom eroded Mali's authority in the west by establishing an independent kingdom. Alliances were broken. After 1599, the empire lost the Bambouk goldfields and disintegrated into petty polities.



AMERICAN REVOLUTION (8th)

We conclude our journey in the American Revolution. This week we will be reading -"Tyranny is Tyranny" (Zinn



chapter 4: 52-66). As we progress through the chapters students will be creating a mobile with significant people, ideas, events, etc. pertaining to the American Revolution. Essentially, students need to select, visually represent, and summarize in writing 3 key battles, 3 essential people (or groups of people), 3 important events, and 3 vital ideas or effects. The project is due Monday, January 26.

Before and during the French and Indian War, from about 1650 to 1763, Britain essentially left its American colonies to run themselves in an age of salutary neglect. Given relative freedom to do as they pleased, the North American settlers turned to unique forms of government to match their developing new identity as Americans. They established representative legislatures and democratic town meetings. They also enjoyed such rights as local judiciaries and trials by jury in which defendants were assumed innocent until proven guilty. American shipping, although theoretically regulated by the Navigation Act, functioned apart from the mighty British fleet for more than a hundred years. Finally, the promise of an expansive, untamed continent gave all settlers a sense of freedom and the ability to start fresh in the New World.

After the French and Indian War, the age of salutary neglect was finished. Britain, wanting to replenish its drained treasury. placed a larger tax burden on America and tightened regulations in the colonies. Over the years, Americans were forbidden to circulate local printed currencies, ordered to house British troops, made to comply with restrictive shipping policies, and forced to pay unpopular taxes. Furthermore, many of those failing to comply with the new rules found themselves facing a British judge without jury. Americans were shocked and offended by what they regarded as violations of their liberties. Over time, this shock turned to indignation, which ultimately grew into desire for rebellion. In a mere twelve years—between the end of the French and Indian War in 1763 and the outbreak of the Revolutionary War in 1775—the colonists moved from offering nightly toasts to King George III's health to demonstrations of outright hostility toward the British Crown.

The American Revolution had profound consequences, not only for the American colonists but for the rest of the world as well. Never before had a body of colonists so boldly declared their monarch and government incapable of governing a free people. The Thomas Jefferson—penned Declaration of Independence was as unique as it was reasonable, presenting a strong, concise case for American rebellion against a tyrannical government. Since then, his declaration has been a model for many groups and peoples fighting their own uphill battles.

Essentially, students need to select, visually represent, and summarize in writing 3 key battles, 3 essential people (or groups of people), 3 important events, and 3 vital ideas or effects. The project is due next Thursday (1/23).





