Course Syllabus

# Course Name: Great Books

# High School Level Elective Course

#### Contact Information

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Office Hours: Monday-Friday, 8am – 4pm

If you need to contact me, please email me using the email provided above. I will return your email within 24 hours during the weekday. If it is an urgent matter, please flag the email and I will be alerted.

# About this Course

Do you love to read and want to broaden your horizons? In this elective we will discover various types of literature beyond the current best selling titles. The categories will be science fiction and fantasy, mystery, historical fiction, and non-fiction focusing on biographies. In these categories we will explore some authors and the books that are considered classics of literature and award winners. Various authors that will be included are C.S. Lewis, Lois Lowry, Mark Twain, H.G. Wells, and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, to name a few. In this class you will learn how these great authors wrote and thought, and so learn how to write and think better yourself!

For each week’s module, students will read the selected works, then post their analysis of each book onto their individual blogs and the course management assignment page. Students will also post their summary of the required section from “How to Read a Book”. The final module will include a group project.

This course will be delivered solely over the internet, so if you have any technical complications do not hesitate to contact the school’s technical support staff. Technical problems will not be an excuse for late assignments. If you do not understand an assignment, contact your fellow peers first, then if no consensus is reached, contact me at the given information in the syllabus. I will respond within 24 hours. This course is set to be completed in 6 weeks. Deadlines will be posted in each week’s module folder and also on the class calendar. No late grades will be accepted. Though there are no prerequisites for this class, it is an advanced high school level class, so it is going to go at a very rapid pace. Please do your best to keep on top of the reading and assignments! All papers are to be submitted in APA formatting. Further instructions will be attached to assignment if different steps are required.

**Course Objectives:**  
  
Upon completion of this course you will be able to:

1. Be an accomplished, active reader who appreciates ambiguity and complexity
2. Articulate your own interpretations with an awareness and curiosity for other perspectives.
3. Analyze how the formal elements of language and genre shape meaning.
4. Read works of literary, rhetorical, and cultural criticism, and deploy ideas from these texts in their own reading and writing.
5. Demonstrate the skills needed to participate in a conversation that builds knowledge collaboratively: listening carefully and respectfully to others’ viewpoints; articulating your own ideas and questions clearly; and situating your own ideas in relation to other voices and ideas.
6. Cultivate a love for various literary genres.

**Course Resources:**

**Email** – All course correspondence will come from email through the course management software email. You are expected to regularly check and utilize that email for course related communication.

**Technical support** – Call or email the school’s technical support at: (210) 335-7515 ; techsupport@ak.com

**Reading Materials** - Students are expected to obtain the following books: The Giver; The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes; Count the Stars; Look Up for Yes, and How to Read a Book.

**Grading Scale:**  
  
Before each assignment, I will post a specific rubric for that module.   
  
Total points are listed below for the course. Please email me if you have any questions.   
  
1000-900             A  
  
890-800               B  
  
790-700               C  
  
690-600               D  
  
590-0                 F

Your grades will be based off of the following components:

**Components Points**   
  
Discussions and blog posts 250  
  
Assignments and webpage 650  
  
Final Project and participation 200  
  
Total Points 1,000

**Course Activities**

# Aug 1st – Sept 12th, 2016

## Week 1 - Introduction to the course Due: August 7: 11:00pm

Part A - Introduction activities

1. Create a blog using any of the popular website creators, such as weebly, google websites, etc. Follow the principles of design and express your creativity when making this blog. The blog needs to contain the following three components:
   1. Homepage
   2. Self introduction page
   3. Seven blank pages for future assignments
2. As this course will contain discussions, please introduce yourself so your peers know who they are talking to. Use the course’s discussion page, and post your entry under Module 1 – Introduction. In your introduction please include:
   1. Why you are taking this course
   2. Your reading background
   3. Experience with online learning
   4. The link to your blog
3. As you and your peers will be using various formats, let’s address the elephant in the room by discussing digital vs traditional reading formats. Post this entry under Module 1 – Digital vs Traditional readers.
   1. Will digital readers replace hard-copy books? Why or why not?
   2. Which format is “better”? How do you define “better”? Explain your answer.
   3. Which format do you prefer and why?
4. Reply to two other posts in the Digital vs Traditional reader forum.

Part B - How to read a book – part 1

1. Summarize each chapter in part 1 of How to Read a Book and how you will apply what you learned to your future readings.
2. Create a powerpoint or sway with this information. One slide per chapter summary, with a separate slide for your personal application. You should have a total of six slides.
3. Post your powerpoint or sway on the How to Read a Book page on your blog. You may do this in a link format, but try to show a preview of the slides on your blog to entice your readers. Title the submission: “How to Read a book – part 1”.
4. Double check that the comments section of your blog is enabled, as your peers will be commenting on your blog.
5. Post your powerpoint or sway in the assignments page of the course management system under Module 1 – How to Read a Book - part 1
6. Access your peer’s blogs using the links included in the self-introduction forum, and post comments on at least two other blogs, on their How to Read a Book page.

## Week 2 – Science Fiction and Fantasy Due: August 14: 11:00pm

Part A - Reading Activity

1. Read *The Giver* by Lewis Lowry
2. Write an analysis of the book using the questions below. Your analysis should be succinct, yet on point. Consider including copyright free images to boost visual appeal.
   1. *What passages and quotes stood out to you, and why?*
   2. *What are the major themes in this book?*
   3. *How did the characters develop in this book?*
   4. *Why is this book considered a classic, or why did it win an award?*
3. Post your analysis to the second blank page. Title the page: “Science Fiction and Fantasy”.
4. Submit your analysis to the assignment page under Module 2 analysis.

Part B - How to read a book – part 2

1. Summarize each chapter in part 2 of How to Read a Book and how you will apply what you learned to your future readings.
2. Create another powerpoint or sway with this information. One slide per chapter summary, with a separate slide for your personal application. You should have a total of six slides.
3. Post your powerpoint or sway on the How to Read a Book page on your blog. You may do this in a link format, but try to show a preview of the slides on your blog to entice your readers. Title the submission: “How to Read a book – part 2”.
4. Post your powerpoint or sway in the assignments page of the course management system under Module 2 – How to Read a Book - part 2
5. Access your peer’s blogs using the links included in the self-introduction forum, and post comments on at least two other blogs, on their How to Read a Book page.

## Week 3 – Mystery Due: August 21: 11:00pm

Part A – Reading Activity

1. Read *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle
2. Write an analysis of the book using the questions below. Your analysis should be succinct, yet on point. Consider including copyright free images to boost visual appeal.
   1. *What passages and quotes stood out to you, and why?*
   2. *What are the major themes in this book?*
   3. *How did the characters develop in this book?*
   4. *Why is this book considered a classic, or why did it win an award?*
3. Post your analysis to the second blank page. Title the page: “Mystery”.
4. Submit your analysis to the assignment page under Module 3 analysis.

Part B - How to read a book – part 3

1. Summarize each chapter in part 3 of How to Read a Book and how you will apply what you learned to your future readings.
2. Create another powerpoint or sway with this information. One slide per chapter summary, with a separate slide for your personal application.
3. Post your powerpoint or sway on the How to Read a Book page on your blog. You may do this in a link format, but try to show a preview of the slides on your blog to entice your readers. Title the submission: “How to Read a book – part 3”.
4. Post your powerpoint or sway in the assignments page of the course management system under Module 3 – How to Read a Book - part 3
5. Access your peer’s blogs using the links included in the self-introduction forum, and post comments on at least two other blogs, on their How to Read a Book page.

## Week 4 – Historical fiction Due: August 28: 11:00pm

Part A – Reading Activity

1. Read *Number the Stars* by Lewis Lowry
2. Write an analysis of the book using the questions below. Your analysis should be succinct, yet on point. Consider including copyright free images to boost visual appeal.
   1. *What passages and quotes stood out to you, and why?*
   2. *What are the major themes in this book?*
   3. *How did the characters develop in this book?*
   4. *Why is this book considered a classic, or why did it win an award?*
3. Post your analysis to the next blank page. Title the page: “Historical Fiction”.
4. Submit your analysis to the assignment page under Module 4 analysis.

Part B - How to read a book – part 4

1. Summarize each chapter in part 4 of How to Read a Book and how you will apply what you learned to your future readings.
2. Create another powerpoint or sway with this information. One slide per chapter summary, with a separate slide for your personal application.
3. Post your powerpoint or sway on the How to Read a Book page on your blog. You may do this in a link format, but try to show a preview of the slides on your blog to entice your readers. Title the submission: “How to Read a book – part 4”.
4. Post your powerpoint or sway in the assignments page of the course management system under Module 4 – How to Read a Book - part 4
5. Access your peer’s blogs using the links included in the self-introduction forum, and post comments on at least two other blogs, on their How to Read a Book page.

## Week 5 – Nonfiction Part A Due: September 4: 11:00pm

## Part B Due: September 11 : 11:00pm

Part A – Reading Activity

1. Read *Look up for yes*  by Julia Tavalaro
2. Write an analysis of the book using the questions below. Your analysis should be succinct, yet on point. Consider including copyright free images to boost visual appeal.
   1. *What passages and quotes stood out to you, and why?*
   2. *What are the major themes in this book?*
   3. *How did the characters develop in this book?*
   4. *Why is this book considered a classic, or why did it win an award?*
3. Post your analysis to the next blank page. Title the page: “Nonfiction”.
4. Submit your analysis to the assignment page under Module 5 analysis.

Part B - How to read a book – selected reading from Appendix A and analysis

*Part B of Module 5 will not be due until the last class day. You have two weeks to work on this, so use your time wisely to create a quality project.*

1. Pick one of the readings from Appendix A and read it.
2. Using what you have learned from “How to read a book”, analyze the book you choose from Appendix A. Analysis must have between 8-16 slides.
3. Create a powerpoint or sway with this information.
4. Post your final powerpoint or sway on the How to Read a Book page on your blog. This should be your sixth powerpoint on that page. Title the submission: “How to Read a book – [insert name of chosen reading] analysis”.
5. Post your powerpoint or sway in the assignments page of the course management system under Module 6 – How to Read a Book – Selected reading analysis
6. Access your peer’s blogs using the links included in the self-introduction forum, and post comments on at least two other blogs, on their How to Read a Book page.

## Week 6 – Group project. Due: September 11 : 11:00pm

Choose one of the books from the four categories and one of the following activities. You are only doing ONE group project. Your group members can be found using the link “Final project group members” on the left side of our class’s home page. Post this final presentation to the Unit 6 assignments page, and on your final blank blog page. Choose your own title.

Option 1 - Group Movie Discussion:

* 1. Select a movie based on the book. (Make sure everyone in your group watches the same movie)
  2. Compare the book and movie using the following questions:
     1. What differences in messages did the movie vs the book convey?
     2. Why were section left out or added in the movie?
     3. What would you have changed, added, or left out in the movie? Why?
     4. Is it more beneficial to read the book first or watch the movie? Why?
  3. With your group, discuss and collaborate the discussion questions above. You may use any communication tool you want, such as text, email, skype, google hangouts, etc…
  4. Answer the discussion questions showing your group’s agreed answers. Use colors to signal who is credited to which sections. (hint: google docs or other similar tools is an easy way to complete this task).

Option 2 – Alternative ending

* 1. Create an alternative ending to The Giver using voicethread and Realtime white board, or other similar technology, to communicate with each other. Include relevant pictures and clear text for final presentation.
  2. The presentation may be done using any media other than text and pictures only.

Option 3 – Fanfiction

* 1. Write a fanfiction about one of the main characters. The character must retain the same characteristics as they had in the book, but the plot must be different and show how the character of choice can be grown and expanded in ways the book did not show.
  2. With your group, discuss the prompt above. You may use any communication tool you want, such as text, email, skype, google hangouts, etc…
  3. Use colors to signal who is credited to writing which sections or ideas. (hint: google docs or other similar tools is an easy way to complete this task).

References:   
Learning Outcomes | Department of English | Pacific Lutheran University. (n.d.). Retrieved July 30, 2016, from http://www.plu.edu/english/learning-outcomes/

Simonson, M., Smaldino, S., & Zvacek, S. (2015). Teaching and Learning at a Distance: Foundations of Distance Education, Sixth Edition. Charlotte: Information Age Publishing