AP Literature and Composition
Summer Reading Assignment
Text: Sing Unburied Sing; How to Read Literature Like a Professor
Author: Jesmy Ward; Thomas C. Foster
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AP Literature and Composition Summer Reading Rationale:
The summer assignment is designed to help you prepare for college and the AP Literature Exam, where skills developed by avid reading are essential. Only the well-read student can respond intelligently to any essay question on the AP exam; therefore, summer reading is vital to your success. The summer assignment for AP Literature not only indicates your willingness to work hard, but it also measures your commitment to the course.

From Good Reads:
In Jesmy Ward’s first novel since her National Book Award–winning Salvage the Bones, this singular American writer brings the archetypal road novel into rural twenty-first-century America. Drawing on Morrison and Faulkner, The Odyssey and the Old Testament, Ward gives us an epochal story, a journey through Mississippi’s past and present that is both an intimate portrait of a family and an epic tale of hope and struggle.

Jojo and his toddler sister, Kayla, live with their grandparents, Mam and Pop, and the occasional presence of their drug-addicted mother, Leonie, on a farm on the Gulf Coast of Mississippi. Leonie is simultaneously tormented and comforted by visions of her dead brother, which only come to her when she’s high; Mam is dying of cancer; and quiet, steady Pop tries to run the household and teach Jojo how to be a man. When the white father of Leonie’s children is released from prison, she packs her kids and a friend into her car and sets out across the state for Parchman farm, the Mississippi State Penitentiary, on a journey rife with danger and promise.

Sing, Unburied, Sing grapples with the ugly truths at the heart of the American story and the power, and limitations, of the bonds of family. Rich with Ward’s distinctive, musical language, Sing, Unburied, Sing is a majestic new work and an essential contribution to American literature.

How to Read Literature Like a Professor by Thomas C. Foster
From Good Reads:
How to Read Literature Like a Professor helps us to discover those hidden truths by looking at literature with the eyes—and the literary codes—of the ultimate professional reader: the college professor.

What does it mean when a fictional hero takes a journey? Sharing a meal? Gets drenched in a sudden rain shower? Often, there is much more going on in a novel or poem than is readily visible on the surface—a symbol, maybe, that remains elusive, or an unexpected twist on a character—and there's that sneaking suspicion that the deeper meaning of a literary text keeps escaping you.

In this practical and amusing guide to literature, Thomas C. Foster shows how easy and gratifying it is to unlock those hidden truths, and to discover a world where a road leads to a quest; a shared meal may signify a communion; and rain, whether cleansing or destructive, is never just rain. Ranging from major themes to literary models, narrative devices and form, How to Read Like a Professor is the perfect companion for making your reading experience more enriching, satisfying and fun.
A. Reading Assignment # 1: How to Read Literature Like a Professor

It is advised to purchase a copy as it’s a valuable resource; however, there are PDF’s available on the internet, including THIS ONE.

1. Read the following chapters:
   a. Every Trip Is a Quest (Except When It’s Not)
   b. Nice to Eat with You: Acts of Communion
   c. When in Doubt, It’s from Shakespeare…Or the Bible (these are TWO separate chapters)
   d. It’s More Than Just Rain or Snow
   e. Is that a Symbol?
   f. Geography Matters…So Does Season (TWO separate chapters)
   g. …And Rarely Just Illness
   h. Don’t Read with Your Eyes

2. Create an outline for notes on a GDOC; use the MLA style for outlining
   a. Notes should be concise and easy to read

   EXAMPLE (feel free to use this to get started):

   1. The Quest. EVERY story is a quest and every quest needs:
      a. A quester
      b. A place to go
      c. A stated reason to go there
      d. Challenges and trials en route
      e. The REAL reason to “go there”
   2. The quest is ALWAYS for self-knowledge

*Continue via the ‘tab’ button to add more information and then move onto the next chapter with ‘enter’

3. As you read the novel, consider using a post-it note with a legend to mark when you see how one of these chapters operates within the book–especially if you read the novel early in the summer.

B. Reading Assignment # 2: Sing Unburied Sing

1. Get a copy of the novel; please do not use a PDF or kindle. I want you to be able to write/annotate in the book.
2. Read the novel and annotate as you go along.
3. Annotating focus: How is this novel a QUEST (for self-knowledge)?
   a. Who is the narrator in the story and how does his or her point of view function in the novel?
   b. The characters: create a post-it note for each character you meet and give a quick bullet-note description of him or her.
4. Fill out this chart linked HERE -PLEASE MAKE YOUR OWN COPY BEFORE FILLING IT OUT!
5. Upon return to school, you will write an in-class essay responding to a prompt in which you will use this novel.
**Annotating Text**

Here is an example of an annotation system you can use or adapt:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>?</td>
<td>Use a question mark if something you read raises a question in your mind or is confusing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>** **</td>
<td>Use a star near something you read that seems important or key to the main idea.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>! or !!</td>
<td>Use an exclamation mark when something you read is exciting or surprising or you agree with strongly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>Underline details that support the main idea.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○</td>
<td>Circle unfamiliar or confusing words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>↔</td>
<td>Connections (text, self, world)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Use a check mark when the text confirms something you already know, or you agree with.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>Use an X when you read something that contradicts your prediction, or what you believe.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>