



Anchorage Christian Schools

Preschool • Elementary • Junior High • Senior High • Learning Center

June 4, 2014

A warm welcome to the class of 2015,

As you begin to prepare for your senior year, I encourage you to consider the opportunity of including AP English Literature and Composition in your senior schedule. This is a college level course providing exposure to in-depth reading and analysis of numerous literature genres coupled with frequent opportunities to improve your writing skills.

You can receive many benefits from participating in this class. The Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) is structured to emphasize reading and writing skills, both of which you will become well acquainted in this class. If you choose to take the AP Exam in May, this course is factored to your transcript on a 5-point scale instead of the typical 4-point scale for high school classes. This allows students with a 4.0 GPA to earn a GPA of more than 4.0. If you choose to take the AP exam in the spring there is also the possibility of receiving college credit for the class. Finally, no matter what field of study you pursue in college, strong reading and writing skills will be essential for your academic success.

Because of our intense schedule, AP Literature requires summer reading and writing assignments. These are as follows:

- Read the play *The Importance of being Earnest* by Oscar Wilde. You are to define verbal, dramatic, and situational irony. Then for each definition, you are to quote several lines from the play that demonstrate this type of irony. This may be written in a bullet format.
- Read *My name is Asher Lev* by Chaim Potok. In a 1 1/2 – 2 page typed paper, discuss the conflict(s) that exist in this paper. You may choose the conflict(s) of your choice to focus on in this paper.
- Read a classic novel of your choosing, one that was written between the 1600's through early 1900's (CS Lewis is not quite there yet). Enclosed in this letter is the data sheet for your writing project on this novel as well as a suggested reading list. Feel free to use internet sources to help you answer some of the questions. Sparknotes is a great place to go for help. You will use this data sheet to help you develop an oral report that you will present to the class during the third week of school.

If you have any questions, feel free to email me at edmonds@gci.net or facebook me at Donna Doll Edmonds. I will be happy to help you in any way I can; I just can't read the books and write the papers for you ☺.

This information is also posted on the ACS website. Go to Parents then Senior Information.

Looking forward to experiencing life through literature with you this year.

Mrs. Edmonds

Suggested Classics Reading List

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| <i>Pride and Prejudice, Sense and Sensibility</i> | Jane Austin |
| <i>Jane Eyre</i> | Charlotte Bronte |
| <i>Wuthering Heights</i> | Emily Bronte |
| <i>Don Quixote</i> | Miguel de Cervantes |
| <i>Murder on the Orient Express</i> | Agatha Christie |
| <i>Heart of Darkness</i> | Joseph Conrad |
| <i>Last of the Mohicans</i> | James Fenimore Cooper |
| <i>Robinson Crusoe</i> | Daniel Defoe |
| <i>Hound of the Baskervilles</i> | Sir Arthur Conan Doyle |
| <i>A Tale of Two Cities</i> | Charles Dickens |
| <i>The Three Musketeers</i> | Alexander Dumas |
| <i>The House of Seven Gables</i> | Nathaniel Hawthorne |
| <i>The Old Man and the Sea</i> | Ernest Hemingway |
| <i>The Odyssey</i> | Homer |
| <i>Hunchback of Notre Dame</i> | Victor Hugo |
| <i>The Call of the Wild</i> | Jack London |
| <i>Doctor Faustus</i> | Christopher Marlowe |
| <i>Moby Dick, Billy Budd</i> | Herman Melville |
| <i>Ivanhoe</i> | Sir Walter Scott |
| <i>The Jungle</i> | Upton Sinclair |
| <i>The Grapes of Wrath</i> | John Steinbeck |
| <i>Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, Kidnapped, Treasure Island</i> | Robert Louis Stevenson |
| <i>Uncle Tom's Cabin</i> | Harriet Beacher Stowe |
| <i>The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, Tom Sawyer</i> | Mark Twain |

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO HASIDISM

The Hasidim, or "pious ones" in Hebrew, belong to a special movement within Orthodox Judaism, a movement that, at its height in the first half of the nineteenth century, claimed the allegiance of millions in Eastern and Central Europe--perhaps a majority of East European Jews. Soon after its founding in the mid-eighteenth century by Jewish mystics, Hasidism rapidly gained popularity in all strata of society, especially among the less educated common people, who were drawn to its charismatic leaders and the emotional and spiritual appeal of their message, which stressed joy, faith, and ecstatic prayer, accompanied by song and dance. Like other religious revitalization movements, Hasidism was at once a call to spiritual renewal and a protest against the prevailing religious establishment and culture.

The history of Hasidism, which encompasses a variety of sometimes conflicting outlooks, is a fascinating story. The movement survived a century of slow decline--during a period when progressive social ideas were spreading among European Jewry--and then near-total destruction in the Holocaust. After World War II, Hasidism was transplanted by immigrants to America, Israel, Canada, Australia, and Western Europe. In these most modern of places, especially in New York and other American cities, it is now thriving as an evolving creative minority that preserves the language--Yiddish--and many of the religious traditions of pre-Holocaust Eastern European Jewry.

The Hasidic ideal is to live a hallowed life, in which even the most mundane action is sanctified. Hasidim live in tightly-knit communities (known as "courts") that are spiritually centered around a dynastic leader known as a rebbe, who combines political and religious authority. The many different courts and their rebbes are known by the name of the town where they originated: thus the Bobov came from the town of Bobova in Poland (Galicia), the Satmar from Satu Mar in present-day Hungary, the Belz from Poland, and the Lubavitch from Russia. In Brooklyn today, there are over sixty courts represented, but most of these are very small, with some comprising only a handful of families. The great majority of American Hasidim belong to one of a dozen or so principal surviving courts. Hasidism is not a denomination but an all-embracing religious lifestyle and ideology, which is expressed somewhat differently by adherents of the diverse courts (also called "sects").

The Hasidic way of life is visually and musically arresting, with rich textures, unusual customs, and strong traditions of music and dance. Hasidic tales, intriguing and memorable doorways into a complex world of Hasidic thought, religious themes, and humor, are fruits of a long and continuing oral tradition. Popularized in the non-Hasidic world by writers such as Martin Buber, Isaac Bashevis Singer, and Elie Wiesel, they are famous for their particular wisdom and wit.

Yet this world is virtually unknown to most Americans, who are apt to confuse Hasidic men, who wear beards, sidelocks, black hats, and long coats, with the similarly-dressed Amish. This shared style of dress does indeed reflect similar values of piety, extreme traditionalism, and separatism. But where the Amish are farmers in rural communities, the great majority of the approximately two hundred thousand American Hasidim live and work in enclaves in the heart of New York City, amid a number of vital contemporary cultures very different from their own.

Most of the approximately 165,000 Hasidim in the New York City area live in three neighborhoods in Brooklyn: Williamsburg, Crown Heights, and Boro Park. Each of the three neighborhoods is home to Hasidim of different courts, although there is overlap and movement between them. There are approximately forty-five thousand Satmar Hasidim in Williamsburg, over fifty thousand Bobover Hasidim in Boro Park, and at least fifteen thousand Lubavitch in Crown Heights. The population of each of these groups has increased dramatically since the first American Hasidic communities were formed in the late 1940s and 1950s, with especially rapid growth in the last two decades.