

AP Literature Summer Reading 2019

"This is how you read a novel: you inhale the experience. So start breathing."

Azar Nafisi, *Reading Lolita in Tehran*

Welcome to AP Literature and the Summer Reading Experience

I hope you love reading as I do, those moments of pure joy when nothing can tear you away from a good book. Azar Nafisi's *Reading Lolita in Tehran* continues to top my list of all-time-favorites because she describes imaginative literature so profoundly. Many of you already inhale reading and are open to new genres. Some of you love certain books but need more guidance on how to approach those titles deemed "higher literary merit." Others may approach the reading requirements on tiptoe, excited but a little leary. In this course, all readers will find space for discovering a new reading self.

Summer Reading Matters

We all look forward to a restful and rejuvenating summer but understand how much could be lost if we completely stop reading and writing during the next three months. The following requirements for AP Literature are meant to stimulate your reading and thinking during this relaxing time.

PART I ORGANIZATION

Find a notebook you will use for an AP Literature critical reading journal (CRJ): a composition book, a spiral notebook, or a journal for your reading responses. Your CRJ will be self-managed, and how you make it work for you will be one of the first choices you make. Decide how you prefer to include your summer reading responses, book talks, class notes, required reading, book clubs, and independent reading.

PART II TEACHER-SELECTED NOVEL

I selected *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007) by Khaled Hosseini, in part because it is accessible for independent reading and in part because you will learn about a new culture as the backdrop of the story. Khaled Hosseini presents us with two women's stories, weaving their lives together in a web of complex sisterhood and survival. You can find this book in the Media Center and check it out for the summer. Please keep it in good shape to return in the fall. Plan to take at least four pages of notes, one after each of the four major parts.

Part 1: Read with an eye for character development - take notes on Mariam's developing agency, her power to navigate life in Afghanistan.

Part 2: Read with an eye for setting - respond to Laila's family relationships as well as how war infiltrates her life and its challenges.

Part 3: Plot the intersections where, together, Mariam and Laila must learn to adapt to their surroundings and to each other.

Part 4: Analyze how the ending, while not happy, provides closure.

PART II STUDENT-SELECTED NOVELS

The following list of novels was created by my students and includes their favorite titles. Choose at least one to study. While you are reading, choose four scenes that are important to the book as a whole and write at least a one-page response to each, explaining each scene's power over you (the reader) and the characters involved.

Finally, I want to challenge you. Read any and all of these books for the sheer joy of reading. No notes. Just joy. Building your love of reading begins with reading a lot - constantly, in fact.

Purple Hibiscus

Orphan Train

Snow Flower and the Secret Fan

The Art of Hearing Heartbeats

The Extraordinary Life of Sam Hell

Kite Runner

The Memory Keeper's Daughter

In the Lake of the Woods

Oryx and Crake

The One Man

Sing, Unburied, Sing

*The Curious Incident of the Dog in the
Night Time*

Atonement

The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao

Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine

I'd love to provide time for us to meet this summer to discuss the books you are reading. If you are interested in coming to Biggby to talk about books, we can talk about anything you are reading, and I promise to share some new ones. Our first date is Wednesday, June 26. [Sign up on the homepage of my website: steelmancafe.weebly.com.](http://steelmancafe.weebly.com)

Dr. Steelman, 2019