

Mr. Roets/Mr. Nicholas

Junior Final Project -2018-19

This project is your culminating assessment for the junior year in English. It is very much a self-directed exercise; we will give guidance when asked, but this is **your** task. **The project will count as both fifteen percent of your fourth quarter grade and as your final exam.**

Assignment: *Design a product which demonstrates your understanding and knowledge of American literature. The essential question to answer here is “What makes American literature American?”*

Rules:

1. Any product you create be it a paper, creative writing, a film, a play, a game, music, a dance, visual art etc., will be judged by the attached rubric. CONTENT matters most. Creativity also matters, but not to the exclusion of your thoughtful answers to the essential question, and your ample evidence to support those answers.
2. You must include in your evidence your independent reading of one of the following texts:
 - a) *The Song of Solomon*, by Toni Morrison
 - b) *The Bluest Eye*, by Toni Morrison
 - c) *The House on Mango Street*, by Sandra Cisneros
 - d) *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fist Fight in Heaven*, by Sherman Alexie
 - e) *The Absolutely True Diaries of a Part Time Indian*, by Sherman Alexie
 - f) *Master Butcher’s Singing Club*, by Louise Erdrich
 - g) *The Last Report of the Miracle at Little No Horse*, by Louise Erdrich
 - h) *The Shipping News*, by E. Annie Proulx
 - i) *All the Pretty Horses*, by Cormac McCarthy
 - j) *Fences*, a play by August Wilson
 - k) *Ragtime*, by E.L.Doctorow
 - l) *All the King’s Men*, by Robert Penn Warren
3. You may work with **one** other person from your class on this project. In some circumstances I will allow three people to work together, but in that case a very clear schedule of the division of labor must be produced before I grant permission.
4. A summative but brief abstract of the project, outlining your defining ideas of American literature and the information you will use to support those ideas is due **May 20/21**. Also included in the abstract is a clear statement of not only what you plan to do, but how you plan to do it.
5. **Project Due Date:** Beginning **June 4**, students will present their projects in class in ten to fifteen minute time slots. These presentations will continue through the exam period. Lots will be drawn to determine the order of presentation.

Ideas:

1. The academic mundane: write a thesis paper exploring the essential question by examining commonalities such as characters, themes, issues or styles that you see running through American literature. No less than four works are required as evidence. You may focus on authors, decades, literary movements, gender, geography/regionalism, cultural impact or other ideas. A microcosmic view that focuses on certain elements of American literature, while still addressing the essential question, is preferable to a very broad or general view.
2. Referring to number one above as the general idea of how to approach answering the essential question, use your personal skills to be creative in how you demonstrate your understanding and knowledge. Clarity of intent and content are paramount! Examples from the past include:
 - Write creatively in the manner of AL, using the common themes etc. Poetry chapbooks, plays, short stories, novellas, and film scripts have all been attempted. Important to be clear about what it is you are attempting to accomplish.
 - Use visual artistic skills to represent your answer to the essential question. Portraiture, murals, photography, sculpture, dioramas, computer generated graphics, triptychs, illustrated books and other visual art have been used to explore the essential question symbolically and visually.
 - Technology in the form of digital video, desktop publishing and web design has been used to answer the essential question. Scenes, interviews, documentaries, and spoofs have been filmed with varying degrees of success (content matters most!). Yearbooks, magazines and newspapers have been published. Web pages with specific intent and content have been designed. With any technology, the reminder is that the magic of the tech must be secondary to the clarity of the content. Power point presentations are not encouraged, as they often become vehicles of pretty pictures, fun music, and neat transitions with nothing to actually say.
 - Performance pieces have been created by students with performance skills. Music has been written, performed and selected for soundtracks to American lit. Dance has been choreographed to physically represent the issues of American lit. Plays, monologues and dialogues have been written and performed.
 - Games teaching and testing knowledge of American literature have been created. Many have been based on a Trivial Pursuit model, with a minimum of 100 questions. Television game shows have been mimicked, as have many other board games. Again – clarity of content and intent is paramount here. Questions must have a varying degree of difficulty and depth and represent your answers to the essential question.
 - There are other possibilities out there I've not thought of – go for it, but for safety's sake, check out your idea with me first.

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Junior Final Project Rubric

Name(s): _____

Project subject/title: _____

CONTENT GRADE – 70%

Understanding:

Defining characteristics of American literature clearly explained: 35%

Knowledge:

Depth of supporting information (four works used minimally): 20%

Accuracy of supporting information: 15%

PRESENTATION GRADE – 30%

Creativity: 10%

Audio/Visual – artistry, neatness, care: 10%

Textual – grammar, spelling neatness, care: 10%

TOTAL SCORE: _____