

## Honors Humanities 12, 2023-2024 Summer Assignment

Dear Honors Humanities 12 Member:

Your summer work consists of:

**Active Reading** Find a copy of Thomas Friedman's *Thank You for Being Late: An Optimist's Guide to Thriving in the Age of Accelerations* (ISBN 978-1250141224). There are some floating around campus or you can get one pretty inexpensively from online book sellers. A used copy is fine.

One of the greatest challenges (and most important skills) for college prep students is reading a text well. Part of the reason for our summer reading is to get some practice with doing this. As you read, remember that in reading any text for academic reasons, the key is to be able to use the information, and your critical analysis and evaluation of it, later. To do this, you must read actively, interacting with the text as you read (questioning it, evaluating it, responding to it, being in dialogue with it) and you must create a record that allows you to draw on that interaction intelligently later (e.g., in class discussion and writing).

So in reading this text, you need to make some kind of record of your active reading. What *kind* of record you create is up to you; it should certainly suit your way of thinking and working and be something that you can sustain all year next year as you work with other texts. Above all it has to feel natural for you, so that you will actually do it. You might underline key points in the texts, and write summaries and questions in the margins. You might make brief outlines of each section of the text, whether in a separate document or on the opening page of each chapter (highly recommended!). You might take brief notes in a notebook or laptop. You might make a mind map diagram of the text. Whatever you do, you should be interacting and asking questions, and you should leave a framework that

will be accessible to you later when you discuss and write about the text, a framework that helps you to articulate the argument of the book.

During the week of Sept. 11, *I will want to see the evidence of your active reading* and you will draw on it for discussion and for writing our first essay during the first few weeks of school. Your evidence must be something you can show me, and it must include questions you have asked of the text.

Some questions to think about as you read actively:

- Read the title and publication pages:
- Who is Thomas Friedman?
- What else has he written?
- What is the significance of the book's title? (Think about what it means to signify . . . )
- What is the point of view of the author? Does his particular bias affect his presentation or interpretation of facts?
- Can you state the book's thesis succinctly? Being able to explain the argument of this book succinctly (in no more than a few sentences) is an important skill that we will put to the test.
- What are the key issues that the book grapples with?

Our first assessment in class, after we discuss the book, will be based on this text. In that essay, I will ask you to analyze and evaluate Friedman's argument. Your summer work should help you to do this well. Even more importantly, this text will help us to understand the framework of the course.

I have high expectations for the quality of your work, and you can expect to have your brain hurt a little as we learn to think and make connections. We will also have fun, and I hope you will enjoy the class.

I look forward to our adventure in intellectual growth together!