

Honors Humanities 10
2023 Summer Assignment

Dear Students of Honors Humanities 10,

Welcome to the course! I've taught this class (or one much like it) for twelve years, and I still love it. I hope you'll enjoy your experience too. Yes, the expectations are more intense than in a non-honors course, and those expectations begin over the summer. However, I trust that you are ready to embrace your intellectual nature and dig in.

Below are the details and expectations of your summer work.

- I. As we will start the year studying the religions, philosophies, literature and history of China, I'd like you to do some background research on the following topics related to China in the first half of the 20th century: the fall of the Qing Dynasty and its causes, the era of civil wars (1911-1949), the communist revolution and China during the dictatorship of Mao Zedong, and Mao's Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. Annotate as you learn, and be prepared to show me these notes. This knowledge will help orient you before you begin reading the novel.
- II. Read *Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress* by Dai Sijie. Annotate as you go. You can do so in the margins of your book, or in a separate notebook. I would also like you to keep a journal as you read. In this journal you should write down quotations that you find interesting and/or important, questions you have, insights about the characters and themes in the book, etc. Specifically, look for and comment on these themes:
 - Friendship (the relationship between Luo and the narrator)
 - The power of stories and art
 - Eastern and Western values
 - "Education" and "Re-education"
 - Freedom and "independent action"
 - the individual and the community
 - Life in a totalitarian state

Above all, your journal should prove to me that you read the book and that you truly engaged with it. With each note, comment, question or revelation, include the page number on which you found it.

- III. Write a 1-2 page review of the book. What did you think of it? What were your favorite parts? Least favorite parts? This is an informal assignment designed to get you writing again. You may submit your finished review to me via Google Docs or via email in a Word Doc.

So to summarize- By the first day of class you should be ready to submit:

- Your 20th c. China History Notes
- Your *Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress* notes and journal
- Your 1-2 page *Seamstress* review

Clearly, the focus this summer is on annotating and engaging! Please do both! Don't hesitate to contact me with any questions that arise. (pgoodrich@christchurchschool.org).

Additionally- Read other stuff! Check out the suggestions compiled by Mr. Kempe! Or read whatever interests you. Also, if you are not in the habit of doing so, read the news every other day or so, or simply conduct your own independent research on parts of the world you don't know much about. There won't be anything to submit based on your individual ramblings, but these are wonderful habits that I'd like to instill in you. The more you read, the better you will write and think! It's a fact! I look forward to a great year with you guys.

Sincerely,

Mr. Goodrich