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Honors Humanities 11

Summer Reading Assignment

Our main focus in this course will be to investigate the concepts of rights and identity within a society. For this, we will look specifically at the manner in which the system of the United States has created a deep and complicated debate around rights. While many people tend to associate rights with individual groups, our investigation will be more broad than any one group of individuals. Equally, our investigation will center around individual freedoms and the balance with­­­­­­­ national values. We will do all of this by using stories as a way to guide our investigations. Those stories will take the form of poetry, biographies, novels, histories, art, and a range of other “texts”. Your summer assignment will be the beginning of investigating rights in this nation through stories.

* Pay attention to the world around you throughout the summer. Look for and compile an **ongoing** list of ideas that highlight the debate over rights in this nation. This could be photographs you take, news articles of current events, pieces of art you see, literature you read, plays you go to, movies you watch, etc. Include the thing (link to news article, photograph, name of movie, etc.) and write a brief summary (a couple sentences – can be bulleted) about how it connects to the points above. They should be specific. In other words, not “I hear there are some protests going on” but “I read this article on NPR about this specific event in Chicago”. Be looking for some common themes that might emerge over time. Are rights constant? Do people agree on those rights? Which stories are you most interested in investigating further?
  1. Do this by creating a google doc. The first thing I will do is look at your revision history as the goal is not 50 items the day before it is due. Rather, I am looking for consistency over time. Doing this all the week before school starts will not meet the goals of the assignment. This should not take you a lot of time but it should be consistent over time. In other words, fifteen minutes twice a week is way more effective than eight hours the weekend before school starts. You will find that this will be a truism of the course so start practicing that pattern of behavior now.
* Ask your parents, grandparents, family friends, neighbors, or strangers what was going on in their life around 1970. You might consider asking them: what music were you listening to?, what television shows were you watching?, what was dinner like?, what was church like?, did you travel around the United States at all?, did you have friends, teachers, doctors etc. that were another race or nationality?, did civil rights debates impact you at all?. Create a comparison to how they were living in 1970 and how you live today. What has changed? What has stayed the same? If you can, include a comparison about the impact of rights on your daily life. The goal is to get you to recognize the events in the book below were not ages ago. Rather, it is a story that happened while people you know and love were alive. Your comparison can be in any format you want: a poem, a drawing, a song, an essay, a mindmap, etc. Do this before you read the book below.
* Read *Blood Done sign My Name* by Timothy Tyson.[*https://www.amazon.com/Blood-Done-Sign-My-Name/dp/1400083117*](https://www.amazon.com/Blood-Done-Sign-My-Name/dp/1400083117)*)*. As you read, annotate the book on four main ideas. 1. What factors and pressures keep society from changing and/or allow it to change. 2. In what ways is memory impacted by time. 3. What connections exist between these stories you are reading in *Blood Done Sign My Name* and today. 4. Anything you find yourself thinking about rights as your read the text. Additionally, as you read make a list of any questions this text raises for you as well as topics/issues you want to explore further? These questions could be specific about a particular episode (what was the Civil Rights Act of 1964) or more theoretical in nature (why do different groups support some rights but not others). Notice, the assignment is to annotate and come up with questions. You must read the book and annotate in the text. Reading an online summary will not work for this assignment.

If you have questions on the assignment, please feel free to email me over the course of the summer.

**Other**

It is summer, so relax. But while doing so, think about how you can relax while also thinking about this question of the place of individuals within a broader society and nation

I specifically want to highlight listening to some podcasts. There is some amazing work going on out there in radio. I know, who listens to talk radio? Check out these programs if you are not already familiar with them. You could also download the podcast and listen to them on your family vacation, perhaps with your family. If you want specific recommendations for any of them, let me know and I’d be happy to give you some that would meet your specific interests.

* This American Life
* Invisibilia
* Revisionist History
* More Perfect
* Radio Lab
* Memory Palace
* Snap Judgment
* On Being
* Wait, Wait, Don’t Tell Me
* Throughlines