

Puranananda/AP Literature and Composition

Summer Reading Assignment 2019

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Welcome to AP Literature and Composition. This summer assignment requires that you hone qualities I expect you to exhibit as a student next year: **disciplined self-study, global inquisitiveness, philosophical reflection, and intellectual curiosity**. You should be taking the class because *you yearn to learn*; approach this work with that intent. **Arrive to class in August having completed all components of the following assignment.**

Overview: Read and annotate both *Pachinko* by Min Jin Lee and *Everything I Never Told You* by Celeste Ng. These novels differ in countless ways, but both deal with **the concepts of family, relationships, and communication**. Be prepared to compare and contrast the works when class begins in August.

Part I: Background Information

Both novels are written by authors of Asian backgrounds. Prior to reading Lee's work, **be certain to have a basic knowledge of Korean and Japanese history during the 20th century**. I will likely ask you to rely on or to reference this knowledge during class discussion. **Be able to locate both countries on a map** (hopefully most of you can already do this). **General knowledge of Christianity** is also important for analyzing Lee's work, and it's an important basis for much of the work we do over the course of the year. I would like you to have a **working understanding of the history of Asian immigration to America** - which is one of my favorite subjects. I also suggest knowing a little bit about each of the authors. Unless you are well versed on these subjects, I would start with:

1. John Green's crash courses on Japanese history, Korean history, Christianity, etc.
2. A quick skim of the Wikipedia on related topics.
3. Articles and podcasts of interviews with the authors - NPR does great ones.

Part II: Suggested Supplemental Work:

If you have the time and the inclination, continue reading works that deal with the **related themes**. The following works are mere suggestions. I'm curious to find what you will discover on your own.

Silence, Shusaku Endo (I highly recommend reading this novel to understand the early history of Christianity in Japan. A former student recommended the movie version, though I have not yet seen it).

American Born Chinese, Gene Luen Yang - this is a fun and poignant graphic novel

Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet, Jamie Ford

Part III: Read and annotate Min Jin Lee's novel *Pachinko*. I would read this *before* reading *Everything I Never Told You*. It's longer and I expect you to go into greater depth in your analysis.

Read with three concepts in mind:

1. Read for the story: consider characterization, setting, conflict, antagonistic forces, tone, voice, point of view and narrative structure.
2. Read with a sense of political and historical commentary: consider why this story is specific to its setting but how it also functions on a universal level.
3. Read with a philosophical mindset: Lee begs some deep philosophical questions. Make note of these, but also consistently try to put in your own words both what she asks and what she suggests. This requires active, slow reading.

As you read, annotate specifically for but not limited to these concepts:

- Gender Roles
- Suffering
- Prejudice
- Purity versus Corruption

Write down your thoughts and assertions in the margins. In addition, you should make note of both comprehension questions and discussion questions. I recommend color coding your work for greater clarity. **Your annotated works are due the first day of class.**

Part IV: Read and annotate Celeste Ng's *Everything I Never Told You*.

This will be a quicker read than Lee's work. You do not need to read it as laboriously as you will Lee's novel, **nor do you need to spend as much time annotating.** As you read, make note of big ideas. Underline or highlight passages that contain truths about the human experience. Consider how Ng's work relates to Lee's.

I plan to grade your annotations for *Pachinko* and give you a quick reading quiz for *Everything I Never Told You*, so mark up the latter only with essential notes/underlines/etc. I will look at both, but I will only be concerned if there is no evidence that you have read.

A Recommendation About Annotations: I read with a pencil in hand and make quick check marks or lines in the margins. After a good chunk of reading, I return with a pen and highlighters and make the actual annotations. Annotating thoroughly as I go is far too frustrating, and rereading my quick notes and then augmenting them gives me a deeper memory of the novel. You may want to do the bulk of the work earlier on in the summer and then skim the novels again at the end of vacation before the quiz.

I am completely uninterested in your surface emotional responses to the literature, so no need to write things like "wow, OMG, LOL, etc." or more pronounced versions of such sentiments like "I can't believe he did that!" I also don't need you to write commentary summarizing the plot

“He finally gets a girlfriend!” I do need you to **make note of important thematic concepts**. And I do need you to step back from the literature and **make note of broad connections between different parts of the work**. It is not enough to make note of topics, themes and motifs; you need constantly to identify why those items are relevant. What does Lee say, for example, about identity? What does Ng say about isolation? What questions do the authors ask? What resolution does each reach regarding various points? Why are both works relevant on a personal, national, or universal level? Be prepared to refer to and defend your annotations both in writing and in class discussion.

Finally, and unrelated to the summer read, please have a copy of Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* for the first day of class. I recommend the Dover Thrift edition, which is about \$3.

I look forward to hearing and reading about your insights and perspectives on this unit of study. Happy reading!