

**Vail Christian summer 2018 reading/ writing assignments. Assignments due on the first day of Fall classes.**

**Incoming Freshmen:**

The Alchemist, by Paulo Coelho/ Assignment: In a typed, double-spaced 2-page essay, please describe how the main character changes during the course of the novel. Include in your response the factors influencing the character's development. Support your opinion with references to specific incidents and with brief quotations. Avoid plot summary. Print your essay and bring it to class on the first day of school.

The Screwtape Letters, by C.S. Lewis/ Assignment: In a typed, double spaced essay, please analyze three main points Screwtape makes throughout his 31 letters. For each main point you discuss, include a quote from the book that has helped you formulate your analysis. Also for each main point you discuss, explain how it translates to today's spiritual struggles. Print your essay and bring it to class on the first day of school.

**Incoming Sophomores:**

Ethan Frome – by Edith Wharton/ Assignment: In this novel, as in many works of literature, past events can affect, positively or negatively, the present actions, attitudes, or values of a character. Choose a character and write an essay in which you show how the character's relationship to the past contributes to the meaning of the work as a whole. Avoid mere plot summary. Bring an electronic version of your essay to the first day of class.

Life of Pi, by Yann Martel/ Assignment: In the final pages of this novel, your understanding of the entire story will be shaken. You can look at it as a literal story, or as a figurative one. "And so it goes with God." (Martel, Chap 99) In a 2-page essay, comment on which story (the literal or figurative) is the better story and why. Include your opinion as to the value of choosing the better story. Bring an electronic version of your essay to the first day of class.

**Incoming Juniors:**

Their Eyes Were Watching God – by Zora Neale Hurston/ Assignment: In a two- to three-page essay, analyze the theme of this novel. Support your position with examples from the text. Bring an electronic version to class.

Into the Wild – by Jon Krakauer/ Assignment: In his introductory note, Krakauer writes that "A surprising number of people have been affected by the story of McCandless's life and death." Reactions have run the gamut from admiration, to sympathy, to bewilderment, to anger. In a two- to three-page essay, evaluate McCandless and his choices. Do you understand why he did what he did? For instance, can you sympathize, do you think he was heroic, or do you think his actions were ill-conceived and selfish? Support your position with examples from the text. Bring an electronic version to the first day of class.

**Incoming Seniors:**

How to Read Literature Like a Professor, by Thomas Foster – (Buy the 2014 version) This text contains 27 chapters about how to become a close reader. The assignment below contains activities for nine of those chapters. You can expect an assessment on all chapters in the first weeks of school. Please type responses for these nine activities into a word document, using 12 point, Times New Roman font. Length: 3 to 5 pages. Bring an electronic version of this assignment to the first day of class.

Lord of the Flies, by William Golding – Read this short, British novel, and apply it to the appropriate chapters in How to Read Literature Like a Professor. Then, compose an essay in which you analyze how Golding portrays human nature. 3-page minimum. Bring an electronic version to the first day of class.

**ASSIGNMENT FOR HOW TO READ LITERATURE LIKE A PROFESSOR:**

Chapter 2 - Choose a meal from Lord of the Flies and apply the ideas of this chapter to this literary depiction.

Chapter 4 - What is the "big secret" Foster reveals in this chapter? In your response, be sure to define intertextuality.

Chapter 6 - Many critics compare aspects of the setting in Lord of the Flies to the Garden of Eden. Read a print or online version of Genesis, Chapters 2 and 3 in the Bible. What comparisons can you draw between the two stories or between their settings?

Chapter 9 - Discuss the importance of weather in a specific literary work, not in terms of plot. The Great Gatsby and Frankenstein come to mind.

Chapter 11 - After reading this chapter, discuss the type and meaning of the violence found in Lord of the Flies.

Chapter 12 - Use the process described in this chapter and investigate the symbolism of the island, fire or Piggy's glasses in Lord of the Flies.

Chapter 13 - Use Foster's criteria to show that one of the major works you have read in your VCHS career is political. (Candide comes to mind.)

Chapter 14 - Apply the criteria given to a major character in a significant literary work you have read. (Meursault from The Stranger, Billy Pilgrim from Slaughterhouse 5, and Simon from Lord of the Flies come to mind.)

Chapter 18 - Think of a "baptism scene" from a significant literary work. How was the character different after the experience? (A Separate Peace comes to mind. Fahrenheit 451 comes to mind.)