

AP Seminar

Name _____

**Mr. Chambers
Summer Reading Assignment
Dystopian fiction and *Fahrenheit 451***

Welcome to AP Seminar! As part of your preparation for the academic year, you are required to complete a summer assignment. This assignment aims to engage you in critical thinking, literary analysis, and preparation for the demanding coursework ahead.

****ALL SUMMER WORK MUST BE SUBMITTED BY CLASS TIME ON OUR FIRST DAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 2024.**

****A digital copy of this assignment will be posted on the high school website under "Student Resources, Summer Reading & Assignments."**

****You are encouraged to purchase a copy of the novel for annotation purposes. The recommended ISBN is 9781451673319. This paperback copy of the book will be available at Barnes and Noble on Transit (\$17 in store, \$13.99 using the online "match" for in-store purchases). You can also find the book on Amazon. Extra copies of *Fahrenheit 451* will be available in the high school Guidance & Counseling Center, but you will not be able to annotate them because they belong to the school. You will have to use sticky notes, which is fine.**

If you have any questions, please feel free to email (achambers@clarenceschools.org) or message me through Schoology.

Thanks!

PART 1 - Read and annotate the article "8 of the Most Popular Tropes in Dystopian Fiction" by Cole Salao. This article provides an overview of the key elements and characteristics of dystopian literature, which will serve as the foundation for your understanding and analysis of the novel *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury.

Annotate the article, "8 of the Most Popular Tropes in Dystopian Fiction," by creating a *one sentence synopsis for each paragraph* in the left-hand margin.

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"8 of the Most Popular Tropes in Dystopian Fiction" by Cole Salao

A dystopia is an imagined society where the ills of humanity have overtaken the majority of human life. In this kind of world, inequality, violence, fear, and hardship are normal elements in society. Dystopian literature began as a response to utopian literature, which envisions a world that has achieved a perfect society. It challenges you to look closer at current environmental, political, and economic climates and judge what kind of future humanity is moving toward.

1. Power Obsession

In a dystopian world, there's always someone or something who wants to assert control over humanity—militaristic leaders with a fetish for violence, self-aware A.I. rebelling against humanity, or the rich and powerful intent on keeping others subservient to them. Their methods of control can vary, but they most commonly include constant surveillance, drugging the populace, indoctrinating their citizens, and overloading them with vice. *V for Vendetta's* Adam Susan (Adam Sutler in the movie adaptation) is an excellent example of this trope. A pure fascist, he bans all civil liberties and seeks to oversee every aspect of his citizens' lives.

2. Test or Lottery that Determines Your Fate

Usually seen in YA dystopian fiction, this is when a teenager reaches a certain age and must endure a rite of passage that will govern their whole life. Their role in society is prescribed, which may be either the most undesirable role in that particular society or one that's directly opposite of their interests. These roles are often specific. For example, in *City of Ember*, members of the city are assigned their jobs by lottery. The main characters, Lina and Doon, are given the jobs "pipeworks laborer" and "messenger" respectively. Many of the stories that include this trope involve the characters defying their given roles. This often makes them outcasts or fugitives because objecting is considered rebellion with the consequence of death or exile.

3. Oppressive Governments

Dystopian literature often presents the government as the biggest enemy in society. It is corrupt, incompetent, and run by self-serving people. These governments are often indifferent to the plight of their citizens and only cater to those with money or influence. And in many cases, their agenda is to actually control people through a mixture of fear, technology, and indoctrination. Some stories have corporations taking on the role of the government. In these narratives, society builds itself around these corporations' identities. The majority of people work for them, consume their products, and die in the shadows of their skyscrapers. Perhaps the best examples of this trope are in Great George Orwell's *1984* and Aldous Huxley's *A Brave New World*. One controls its citizens with pain, while the other drowns them in pleasure.

4. False Utopia

There are stories that depict societies that appear to be perfect. The world is at peace, all is well, and everyone is happy... but it's all a lie. While true conflict, starvation, and injustice are practically non-existent, a closer look at these societies reveals a rotten core, but their dysfunction is hidden from outsiders and their own citizens. Those who discover the reality behind their utopia may try to reveal the truth to everyone, but they are silenced by those in power. Or, the masses may consciously ignore them, preferring to live in ignorance. *Wall-E* is an excellent example of this. Throughout the film, you see humans being catered to

excessively, but their overreliance on technology has turned them complacent and unimaginative.

5. Loss of Individualism

In maintaining a dystopia, power figures often use many methods to keep the populace under control. Memories and personalities are altered through drugs or surgery. People are indoctrinated from childhood to believe a certain ideology. Information is restricted to only show the people what the rulers want them to see. This creates a nation of practically identical people who dress, act, and think the same. It never occurs to them that they might deviate from what they're taught, because it's the only reality they know. Take the *Uglies* series as an example. Three hundred years in the future, the government conducts a mandatory plastic surgery operation for all 16-year-olds. They're transformed into "pretties," society's standard of beauty. But it also makes them vapid and shallow.

6. Scarce Resources

Many dystopian stories are either near or already in a post-apocalyptic world. Most of the world has collapsed and resources are already depleted. The privileged few hoard what remains and sell it at cutthroat prices, even for basic goods or necessities. Those without money or power are left to buy, steal, or substitute what they can. In many stories, a trade economy among the poor is established, ranging from basic commodities to rare electronic components. The scarcest resource is always food and the alternatives are often disgusting. In the movie *Soylent Green*, it's revealed that the titular food wafer is actually made out of dead human bodies. Similarly, the more recent *Snowpiercer* includes gelatinous bars that are made out of bugs and exclusively are fed to the poor.

7. Education Bans

Because knowledge is power, the more that the masses are educated, the less they can be controlled. To make sure this doesn't happen, those in power indoctrinate their citizens starting from childhood. They teach a revised version of history, ban any kind of information they don't like, and invent any details they need to make their narrative stronger. Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* is a great example of this. Literature is censored, history is rewritten, and any outlawed books are burned.

8. Resistance

Dystopian societies naturally breed dissatisfaction and fear. When the people have had enough, they resort to destroying the status quo or at least getting a semblance of equality. This resistance may or may not already be established by the time the protagonist realizes there is a need to change. They become the support system of the hero, giving them necessary advice, equipment, and information. In some cases, the resistance doesn't exist as a specific organization; it's in the little things that people do, from establishing an underground trading system to choosing to hide anyone being unfairly pursued by the authorities. In *Hunger Games*, District 13, long thought to have been destroyed, turns out to have rebelled against the Capital. Being the nation's primary weapons manufacturer, it poses a significant threat to the current regime.

The Importance of Dystopian Fiction

Dystopian fiction, by definition, is dark and depressing. It features a world on the brink of collapse and yet no one seems to care. To better illustrate that vision, many dystopian stories use real and current issues and imagine them at their extremes. Most of these issues go hand-in-hand: tyrannical governments, corporate greed, environmental disasters, societal regression and invasive technology. Dystopian literature compels us to question, "What if...?" and the answers often are disturbingly prophetic.

PART 2 - Read *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury. Following your introduction to dystopian fiction, delve into Ray Bradbury's classic novel, *Fahrenheit 451*. Set in the future, this seminal work of literature offers a compelling portrayal of a dystopian society where books are banned and critical thinking is suppressed.

**As you read, please annotate or use sticky notes to mark significant dystopian elements, narrative structures, character development, literary techniques, and social commentary embedded in the text.

PART 3 - Identify and analyze dystopian tropes/elements in the novel. Create **four responses** of at least 250 words each in which you:

- identify and analyze *at least four* of the eight dystopian elements (one for each response)
- explain how Bradbury uses specific scenes, characters, symbols and/or motifs to develop those elements
- show your in-depth understanding of the *entire* book
- support your explanations with *at least one direct quotation* for each
- use proper MLA citations
- proofread to avoid common errors in spelling, punctuation and usage
- **attach your typed responses to this packet**

*****Consider this MODEL RESPONSE based on a *different* dystopian book, *Lord of the Flies*, by William Golding.**

ELEMENT - POWER OBSESSION

In *Lord of the Flies*, William Golding develops a dysfunctional utopia through characterization and symbolism. Specifically, Jack and his tribe of hunters represent the savagery that can result from unchecked power. Jack's relentless pursuit of authority over the other boys on the island highlights his reckless, destructive and dangerously ambitious nature. When the boys are first stranded on the island, Ralph is initially voted in as "Chief." However, when Jack assumes leadership of his "tribe" of hunters, their hunting quickly becomes less about survival and more about dominance and bloodlust. This is clearly illustrated in Chapter Four when, in their fervor for the hunt, they neglect to keep the fire at the top of the mountain burning, so when a possible rescue ship passes by, there is no signal. Jack and his tribe triumphantly return to the beach after killing a wild pig, but Ralph and Piggy confront Jack about the fire. Jack feels challenged and strikes out in violence against Piggy: "The bolting look came into his blue eyes. He took a step, and able at last to hit someone, stuck his fist into Piggy's stomach" (Golding 71). Although Jack reluctantly apologizes, he continues to fuel the brutality of his followers at their feast as they chant, "Kill the pig. Cut her throat. Bash her in" (Golding 75). The hunters' lack of restraint and remorse is most evident during the vicious killing of one of the younger boys on the island in Chapter Nine. During a frenzied dance in the midst of a storm, Jack whips his hunters into hysteria as they chant around the fire. When a young boy emerges from the jungle, the hunters "mistake" him for a "beast." In their manic and uncontrolled state, they "...leapt on to the beast, screamed, struck, bit, tore" (Golding 153). This scene horrifically illustrates the destructive consequences of unbridled power and mob mentality. The once-civilized boys in Jack's tribe abandon reason and morality, embracing primal instincts and the desire for violence and domination.

ENGLISH 10 AP SEMINAR ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

As members of the English 10 AP Seminar, students are expected to uphold the highest standards of honesty, integrity, and ethical behavior in all academic pursuits. This policy outlines the principles, expectations, and consequences related to academic integrity within our learning community.

Principles and Expectations of Academic Integrity:

Honesty: Students must always represent their work truthfully and accurately. This includes acknowledging all sources and respecting the intellectual property of others' ideas used in assignments, presentations, and discussions.

Originality: Students are expected to produce original work that reflects their own ideas, insights, and analyses. *Plagiarism, the uncredited use of another person's work or ideas and/or ideas generated by artificial intelligence (ChatGPT, etc.), is strictly prohibited.*

Collaboration: Collaboration with peers is a necessary component of the course. However, it must be conducted ethically and within the parameters set by the teacher. Collaboration should never involve sharing or copying work in a manner that compromises individual learning or assessment integrity.

Respectful Conduct: It is imperative for all members of our classroom to engage in respectful conduct by actively listening, offering constructive feedback without criticism, and honoring diverse perspectives. Respectful communication involves speaking with courtesy, acknowledging differing viewpoints with openness, and fostering an inclusive environment where everyone feels valued and heard.

Adherence to Guidelines: Students must adhere to all instructions, guidelines, and deadlines provided by the teacher for each assignment or assessment.

Consequences of Academic Misconduct:

Violations of academic integrity will result in consequences that may include, but are not limited to, the following:

Parent/Guardian Notification: Parents or guardians will be notified of any incident of academic misconduct and the resulting consequences.

Warning: For minor infractions or first-time offenses, students will receive a warning and the opportunity to revise or resubmit the work with appropriate corrections for partial credit.

Grade Penalty: In cases of more serious and/or repeat violations, students will receive a zero on the assignment(s)

and will also face

Academic Disciplinary Action: which may include detention, suspension, and/or a superintendent's hearing.