June 2026

Dear Syracuse University Project Advance Student:

Welcome to SUPA, a first-year college course in academic writing and textual studies that all Syracuse freshmen take as part of their baccalaureate studies at Syracuse University. You will find this college course enjoyable, challenging, and useful. SUPA will intellectually challenge you, requiring you to deeply explore and thoroughly interact with college-level subject matter. This college course will prepare you for the academic rigor you can look forward to in your near future, and you will have the opportunity to earn 6 Syracuse University credits.

In preparation for this year, please read:

The Anxious Generation **by Jonathan Haidt**

In the nonfiction book, the author shows how the "play-based childhood" began to decline in the 1980s, and how it was finally wiped out by the arrival of the "phone-based childhood" in the early 2010s. He calls this the "great rewiring of childhood" and he discusses how it has interfered with children's social and neurological development. Haidt covers everything from sleep deprivation to attention fragmentation, addiction, loneliness, social contagion, social comparison, and perfectionism. He explains why social media is damaging to young people, and he describes steps that parents, teachers, schools, tech companies, and governments can take to end the epidemic of mental illness and restore a more humane childhood.

There is a resource page associated with the book, including suggested viewing of five TEDTalks:

- How to Solve the Education Crisis for Boys and Men
- iGen: The Smartphone Generation
- The Decline of Play
- Why Having Fun is the Secret to a Healthier Life
- Why You Should Spend Less Time With your Kids

After you read *The Anxious* Generation, please watch one or more of the above suggested TEDTalks. Then, **write a thoughtful three-paragraph reflection (one full page minimum)** in which you relate the TEDTalk(s) to one or more ideas from Haidt's book. In the first paragraph, identify and explain one of Haidt's arguments. Then, in the second paragraph, identify and explain an argument from one of the TEDTalks. In the third paragraph, connect these two texts. Does one demonstrate the other? Does one complicate or contradict the other? Does one dig more deeply into a subject touched upon by the other?

To prepare for this assignment, we encourage you to:

- Reread the introduction and conclusion chapters of *The Anxious Generation* and attend to the end summaries of each chapter
- Use page numbers and time stamps (e.g. 1:23 for one minute and twenty three secords) to accurately cite and reference the texts in your response
- Include a Works Cited section using MLA formatting for both the book and the TEDTalk
- Proofread your response carefully to make sure it reflects your best work – you're making a fist impression in a college class

This assignment is due the first week of school. We look forward to a SUPA year together!

Sincerely,
Ms. Seren Cepler and Ms. Amy Estersohn
Syracuse University Adjunct Instructors