

Welcome to Existential Literature

“The story is told (by Kierkegaard) of the absent-minded man so abstracted from his own life that he hardly knows he exists until, one fine morning, he wakes up to find himself dead.” (Barrett)

Dear Students and Families,

Welcome back to The Beacon School for the start of the 2017-18 school year and welcome to Blackboarddreams.com, our class website! I am very excited to give e-life to a vision born a few years ago. Then, I envisioned using the web as a meaningful extension of my classroom where there would be resources aplenty and a communication hub. Here, you and your family can access the following: homework assignments, updates on the happenings and direction of the class, complementary materials, writing and research resources, exemplars, a link back to the Beacon homepage, and so much more! I am most excited about using this website as our e-community built through the use of our class forums on this site! We will use the forums to examine author’s craft in search of a deeper understanding of the readings and to use those readings as a catalyst for critical discussion of our world and ourselves.

Literature instruction and discussion would satisfy both Nabokov and Vonnegut as my students and I embrace didactic and aesthetic approaches to literature. I hope to help you appreciate literature as a microcosm of life that facilitates discovery and fosters empathy. I aim to have you inhale the experience of each novel, poem, and short story. I want you to “hold [your] breath with the characters and become involved in their destiny” as we search for meaning in literature, in self, and in the world (Nafisi). This literary approach has resulted in discussions that have accounted for some of the most inspiring and beautiful moments in my classroom. Additionally, I also expect my students to appreciate each text as a work of art wherein the author has manipulated language, as a painter would color and stroke. In both cases the artist aims to achieve certain effects. We will vigorously explore the how’s and why’s as we critically and analytically deconstruct each text in search of meaning—in search of the literary effects.

While my voice and instruction are fundamentally critical to the foundation of my classroom, I stress to my students that their voices and perspectives are **equally important**. As my students immerse themselves in the world of each text, they have little trouble taking ownership of the material. For instance, one may see some of my seniors arguing that the progressive socio-theological views of Schopenhauer and Kierkegaard are devalued today in light of their respective sexist views. One might see my sophomores parody or satirize social, economic, and/or political subjects in the spirit of Orwell’s *1984*

and Huxley's *Brave New World*. As my students take ownership of the literature, they develop a sense of confidence in their ability to analyze complex literature. So, embrace your interpretation and help us to see the text from your perspective **using the text to give your argument credibility**. While you develop a sense of confidence through embracing your voice, you are also expected to work with others and appreciate the difference of opinion that often defines a humanities course. Ultimately, the intimate relationship that my students develop with the content enables them to both thoroughly understand the content and thoroughly enjoy the learning process.

Finally, my classroom is a place where my students understand that great writing must be not only clear and concise, but also purposeful, powerful, and elegant. To this end, writing and its instruction are **conscious** and **deliberate** processes rooted in close examination of student writing as well as the writing of the greats whom we read throughout the year. As the year progresses you will have control/mastery over the content, style and mechanics of your essay. You will be expected to pay as much attention to the nuances of writing (i.e. diction, syntax) as the argument.

My expectations are high, yet I am always available to help my students meet those expectations. My students and their parents will tell you that I never leave the building before five so do not hesitate to stop by if you need help. I am also available for tutoring during lunch and regular tutoring hours. I love what I do and I am passionate about helping my students not only succeed but have fun and laugh along the way. Perhaps, I take most pride in the laughter and smiles that mark the landscape of my classroom. My students have been very successful in the most quantitative ways one measures success and I understand the importance of this measure of success, yet I also place value in the more subjective, qualitative success that is measured in laughter. So here's to a school year that would make Dokken proud...rockin' like Dokken!

Syllabus: Existential Literature

Supplies:

English Binder (with dividers)—Your English Binder should have Three sections:

- Notes
- Handouts
- Printed Reading Responses (RR)

Your binder is the equivalent of your growing textbook over the course of the year. You should keep the binder **organized!** Each page of the **Notes** Section should be dated and titled clearly reflecting the day's subject matter. Class notes taken during my lectures, class discussions, and group presentations will help you in preparing for the Context Paper (PBA). Your typewritten reading responses should include class heading, date, and title. I should be able to quickly turn through your binder and get a clear sense of what you have been doing in English this year. Your binder will be checked to ensure proper note taking as well as proper organization. This will be part of your classwork grade. Perhaps most importantly, your binder should prove to be an invaluable resource for your PBA.

Ream of Copy Paper (500 count)—Budget cuts have made teaching even more difficult as basic supplies are in short supply or, as is the case with copy paper, nonexistent. So your paper donation would be **greatly appreciated!**

Pens—Use whatever color you like for regular note taking. **Red (or any other “lively” color) for editing.**

2 Folders—**One folder** will be your writing project folder (holding all drafts including the final draft). This year you will be receiving a grade for the writing process and the final draft. **Second folder** will be for graded work.

Post-its— Always a helpful way to keep your thoughts together and to document any questions you may have for class.

An open mind

- **Websites for used books:**
Amazon.com
BN.com
Half.com
Abebooks.com (great site!)

Existential Literature: A Course Overview

Welcome to Existential Literature! Broadly, this course will study the human condition, but more specifically we will study existentialism not as a Philosophy but as a “timeless sensibility” (Kaufmann) preoccupied with questions that arise from the human condition, such as suffering, death, dread, despair, guilt and responsibility. This existentialist sensibility is present in the works of Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Sartre and others, as well as in the fiction of Dostoevsky, Kafka and Camus. Through an exploration of world literature (complemented by philosophical excerpts, film, and music), we will adopt the struggles of our protagonists as our existential quandary as we search for meaning in literature, in self, and in the world. On any given day, as we study the human condition, the class will represent that point at which literature, philosophy, and psychology intersect. The extent to which you become a part of the aforementioned intersect is completely up to you. However, I cannot stress enough that this course is meant to be more than an intellectual experience.

To further explain the overarching philosophical principle of this course I turn to Azar Nafisi: “I explained that most great works of the imagination were meant to make you feel like a stranger in your own home. The best fiction always forced us to question what we took for granted. It questioned traditions and expectations when they seemed too immutable. I told my students I wanted them in their readings to consider in what ways these works unsettled them, made them a little uneasy, made them look around and consider the world through different eyes.” It is critical to the course and to your personal/academic development that you allow yourself to experience the world through those different eyes. Also, I aim to have you inhale the experience of each novel, poem, film, etc. I want you to “hold [your] breath with the characters and become involved in their destiny.” Ultimately, the novels we escape into will lead us finally to question and prod our own realities; about which we, at times, feel so helplessly speechless. This is the nature of this course!

Notes on the Reading

“Read not to contradict and confute; nor to believe and take for granted; nor to find talk and discourse; but to weigh and consider. Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested: that is, some books are to be read only in parts, others to be read, but not curiously, and some few to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention.”

--Francis Bacon

The texts in this course range from the deceptively simple to the seemingly insanely incomprehensible. However, part of improving one's reading skill and learning new ideas requires a willingness to be confused, especially if the ideas that one encounters are vastly different from those the reader already holds. Let me stress, confusion is healthy insofar as it is the product of intellectual effort. Further, it is imperative that you allow yourself the opportunity to ingest and digest these ideas before allowing any subjective intellectual intolerance to impede the flow of ideas presented in the literature. As you can see, this course is reading intensive (go figure) so be prepared to have your mind blown (if you allow it)! We are spending a week on *Man's Search for Meaning*, so you can begin reading Barrett and Sartre during that time. Finally, I may add or remove texts to suit any literary/philosophical trends of profundity.

The ultimate academic goal of this course is to create a thematic tapestry reflecting the human condition of the Western world since the Industrial Revolution. Keep that in mind as we read the fiction of the course and consider how the fiction may reflect the philosophical principles explored throughout the course. Ultimately, your PBA amounts to a literary analysis through an existential/psychoanalytical lens. It is imperative that you have a keen understanding of both the literature and the philosophy to create a happy marriage at the end (your PBA).

1. *Man's Search for Meaning* by Viktor Frankl
 - A thematic introduction to the course and existentialism as seen through the literature read this term.
 - Themes: Choice, Meaning, Existence, Time, Religion, Relationships, Freedom/Confinement, Suffering, Death, Despair
2. *The Encounter with Nothingness* by William Barrett
(Excerpt from *The Irrational Man*)
 - The Decline of Religion
 - The Rational Ordering of Society
 - Science and Finitude
3. *Existentialism is a Humanism* by Jean Paul Sartre
4. *Essays and Aphorisms* (excerpts) by Arthur Schopenhauer
 - *On Thinking for Yourself*
 - *On the Suffering of the World*
 - *On the Vanity of Existence*
 - *Thing Itself and Appearance*
 - *The Indestructability of Being*

5. *The Myth of Sisyphus* by Albert Camus
 - Meaning and the absurd

6. *The Stranger* by Albert Camus
 - Existential estrangement
 - The irrational universe
 - Life and meaning
 - Existential concepts—Absurdity, Alienation, and Authenticity

7. *That Individual* by Soren Kierkegaard
 - The crowd and the individual...
 - The first Existentialist
 - Critique of organized religion
 - The relationship between faith and the individual
 - Existential concepts—Despair, Leap of Faith, and Teleological Suspension of the Ethical

8. “The Grand Inquisitor” by Fyodor Dostoyevsky
 - Religious doubt and debate
 - Existential Concepts—Burden of Freedom

9. “The Madman” and *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (excerpts) by Friedrich Nietzsche
 - Nietzsche and the so-called “death of God” as a call to religious and philosophical renewal
 - Critique of morality
 - God is dead
 - Implications for the meaning/value of human life
 - Existential concepts—The Herd, Ubermensch, Will to Power, Transvaluation of Values

10. *The Second Sex* (excerpt) and *The Ethics of Ambiguity* by Simone de Beauvoir
 - Ambiguity and Freedom
 - Personal Freedom and Others
 - Women’s dependency
 - Nuanced existences
 - The source of women’s self-definition
 - Existential Concept—Woman as other

11. *Steppenwolf* by Hermann Hesse

- A search for meaning
- Complexity of the individual
- Societal affect on individual
- Quest for a higher state of consciousness
- “Learn what is to be taken seriously and laugh at the rest.”
- Jungian Psychoanalysis

12. *Nausea* (excerpt) by Jean Paul Sartre

- The psychological implications of atheism; death as the negation of all meaning and significance in human life.
- Lived experience
- Atheistic existentialism
- Existential concepts—Condemned to be Free, Contingency, For-itself, In-itself, and Alienation

13. *Notes from Underground* (Excerpt—Part I) by Fyodor Dostoyevsky and
The Man Who Lived Underground by Richard Wright

- The view that the over-examined life is not worth living; excessive rational consciousness as a form of disease; a celebration of the irrational.
- Guilt and Innocence
- Philosophical rebellion—against whom or what?
- The fallacies of rationalism and utopianism
- Existential Concepts--Subjectivity and Individuality

Guiding Philosophical Principles

Literature may be:

- A microcosm of life that facilitates discovery and fosters empathy
- A reflection of certain universal truths that allow us to see ourselves and others as part of a larger whole
- Democratic and humanizing
- Analyzed from multiple perspectives
- A product of the time in which it was written; the author's language may be a metaphor of the time period
- Timeless; different interpretations may reflect the period in which a text is read.

Course Objectives

As a result of this course, the students will be able to do the following:

- Develop an understanding of Existentialism.
- Recognize how the humanities cultivate aesthetic appreciation, imagination, and empathic understanding of others.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the ideologies, periods, and aesthetics of various examples literature considered to be existential.
- Demonstrate thematic, contextual, and philosophical control in reading and understanding literary, philosophical, or religious works both in their original historical context and as they inform debate and dialogue today.
- Analyze and write about literary, philosophical, or religious works.
- Begin to recognize how society influences humanistic thought and how the humanities transform society.
- Become practiced in the interpretation and generation of ideas.
- Demonstrate a reasonable level of mastery of major theoretical strands in literary criticism related to various examples of existential literature.
- Evaluate and discuss the literary significance of certain representative writers of existential literature, as well as certain influential texts in terms of historical periods, literary merit, theoretical frameworks, and major existing criticism in the field.
- Understand complexities of existential literature in terms of biographical, historical, artistic, and intellectual contexts.
- Develop a researched, complex approach to a work of existential literature in order to lead a class seminar/discussion of that work.
- Articulate an independent, in-depth, critically complex written argument that requires close analytical reading of one or more works of existential literature while also situating said argument within the body of existing criticism on the work and topic.

Writing

Style

Students are reminded that their writing must be not only clear and correct, but also purposeful, powerful, and elegant. To this end, we review sentences (simple, compound, complex, compound-complex), phrases (gerund, infinitive, participial), and clauses (in terms of subordination and coordination); we examine how repetition, isolation, placement, and proportion create emphasis (e.g. the periodic sentence), and how diction can be used to create a certain effect or convey an experience (e.g. the use of connotation, register, jargon, juxtaposition to create mood, tone, or impact). (White) The most conscientious writer deliberately crafts each sentence while he/she also carefully selects that sentence's neighbors. I could go on here, but in addition to all the writing tidbits you have learned at Beacon thus far, I expect to see a reasonable mastery of style.

Essay Guidelines

Address the "little things" before the first round of peer editing:

- Heading (Upper left corner, single-spaced)
 - Your Name (Sean Leon)
 - Class (Existential Literature)
 - Date (08/15/17)
- Topic=Observation + Opinion
- Use present tense when discussing the novel
- Always analyze your evidence
- Use normal font **for your title** (No underlining, bold, etc)
- Be sure TITLE reflects the theme of the essay (for instance, 1984: Hierarchical Hegemony)
- Italicize all other titles
- Spell ALL proper nouns correctly!!!!!!
- No contractions
- MLA Citations
- No 1st or 2nd person pronouns
- Pay attention to verb use. Only use "to be" and "to have" verbs when you have a rationale for using them. Otherwise, use active verbs. You should always circle all "to be" and "to have" verbs on your first draft. To Be (am, is, are, was, were)/To Have (has, have, had)

General Formatting:

- Double-spaced; size 12 font; Times New Roman or similar
- **1 inch margins** on both left and right sides. Indentations- .5" or 1 tab space.
- Page numbers starting with page 2 (bottom right corner)
- Include Title, Author, and General Theme of work in first paragraph of essay...For Example—Jean Paul Sartre's *Nausea*
- Follow MLA guidelines

Order of Arrangement:

- Final Draft on top.
- 1st Draft—with significant corrections made + name and signature of reader

Avoid the Following:

- Avoid First and Second Person Pronouns: I, you, me, we, us
- Avoid troublesome language. Do your best to avoid the following words: it, these, this, those, kind of, almost, seems, maybe, like, then, later, eventually, basically, constantly, so, many, a lot, things, due to the fact (or any variations of the fact that), in reality, very, really, forms of the verb “to be” and “to have”
- In the intro, nix all book-review commentary—i.e. “is fascinating, interesting...”
- Avoid meaningless sentences—i.e. “Authors rely heavily on symbolism.”
- While I am not suggesting that you avoid all modifiers, you certainly should be conscious of how you are using them. Yet, definitely avoid the likes of really, basically, very, excellent, terrible, etc.
- Avoid misspelling proper nouns!

Remember:

- When writing about literature, write in the present tense.
- Active voice should be your default voice and only use passive when you are CHOOSING to use passive voice.
- Get comfortable writing in complex and compound sentences.
- Introductions and conclusions are factored into the grading of this essay.
- **Read your essay aloud and you will hear many diction and syntax issues.**

Keys to Good Writing:

- Cohesion—Every sentence fits together; paragraphs flow smoothly. Ensure that the entire discussion comes together as one unified discussion of your text and its context.
- Concision—Less is more. Use fewer words to explain yourself. Begin fusing sentences by merging ideas into tightly knit phrases.
- Precision—Accuracy. Use words that accurately capture what you mean. Don’t settle for words or expressions that come close.
- Coherence—Does your essay make sense? Are your ideas organized in a logical sequence? Do you prove your thesis? Do the parts contain the essence of the whole?

The following sources will be vital tools to complement writing instruction throughout the year:

- The Elements of Style (<http://www.bartleby.com/141/>)
- University of North Carolina writing center (<http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/>)

In order to make this year successful, embrace the following information:

1. **Arrival:** It is imperative that you make it to class on time every day. If for some reason you will be late for school, please provide a parent or guardian's note of explanation. Lateness must not become a habit because not only does it affect your performance in my class due to reduced participation, but also it is disruptive to a class already in progress and I do not tolerate disruption. Each unexcused lateness will result in a **5 point deduction** to your participation grade. Often short book quizzes are given at the beginning of class, so if you are late and miss the quiz, you will get a big fat "goose egg" (zero). Walking in even one minute late is LATE.
2. **Attendance:** In addition to progress through the course work, attendance also plays a vital role in your success. All absences must be excused by a note from either parent/guardian or doctor. **It is the student's responsibility to make up any class work, homework, and tests missed.** Blackboarddreams.com is a wonderful resource that can be accessed at any time to check on any missed homework. So, frankly, there is no excuse. Each unexcused absence will result in a **10 point deduction** from your participation grade (in addition to the detriment of falling behind in class due to your absence).
3. **Be Prepared:** Our days are short and we have lots of material to cover. Therefore, you must come to class prepared **every day** with a pen, a loose-leaf 3-ring binder, and any relevant texts. A student will be marked unprepared if one of these items is missing, and points will be deducted from the participation grade ultimately affecting the final grade. Most importantly, if you do not have the relevant text for any given class period, your participation grade will suffer a **10 point deduction**. In short, **DO NOT COME TO CLASS UNPREPARED**.
4. **Homework is given every day.** Homework must be completed on time. This means that the homework (whether reading response, essay, etc) should be ready at the beginning of class. So, **do not ask me to print out homework at the beginning of class**; if you do not have it at the beginning of class, it is Late!
Reading is given every night! The course is obviously reading intensive and you are expected to complete the reading every night. Let's set aside the very real possibility that the reading may benefit you personally. A significant percentage of your grade is based on participation and meaningful participation comes only from reading the literature and reading it closely. Additionally, the Context Paper (PBA) requires a familiarity with and understanding of the collective course and all reading therein. Further, reading responses should be submitted to the class forum by midnight the day they are assigned. One minute after midnight is late! Failure to hand in homework will result in a zero. I expect the homework to be neat and complete. If there is a legitimate reason for a student not completing his homework, the parent must send a note to me on the day the homework is due stating the reason it was not completed. Once again I encourage you to make use of the class website and check homework assignments.
5. **Stay Organized:** Binders will be checked from time to time. Students are responsible for keeping their binders up to date, neat, and orderly.
6. **Plagiarism:** Per Merriam-Webster: Plagiarize means to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own: use (another's production) without crediting the source. Also to commit literary theft: present as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source. So, if the thoughts or ideas are not your own, give

credit where credit is due. Once again, To avoid confusion, students should keep in mind that plagiarism occurs not only when someone copies an author word for word, but also when someone uses another's ideas without giving credit, even if the ideas are paraphrased. Always document your sources! Plagiarism is academic suicide. If you are found guilty of plagiarism you will receive a zero for the assignment. Further, if you plagiarize the PBA, you will fail the course.

7. **Participate:** Ladies and gentlemen, this class is rooted in discussion. You will find that in many ways you and your insightful thoughts and questions represent the foundation of each class. You will be challenged to analyze, critique, synthesize, elaborate, explain, etc. each and every day. Remember, in doing so, you are expected to **bring the class back to the text** as you prove your point. Ultimately I look forward to seeing a text in a different light due to your words of wisdom and insight. So speak up and let your voice be heard and be an active member of this community. But note, do not waste our time and insult our intelligence by relying on Spark Notes (or any equivalent) for your in-class commentary. Further, do not merely paraphrase your peer's thoughts during class discussions.
8. **Listen:** It is a critical life skill! Listen intently to your peers with an open mind avoiding your default intellectual impulse. You will become a better student of English and a better YOU.
9. **Eye contact:** When you refer to one of your peers (which I expect you to do often), look at him or her. Also, NEVER give someone your back when he/she is talking. That is just weirdly inhuman behavior. So, turn around and make eye contact.
10. **Support:** You will quickly learn that this year will be an intense experience, so be supportive of one another.
11. **Respect:** I have established a classroom based on the principal of respect—**WE** respect each other. Disruptive, rude, and disrespectful behavior will not be tolerated. It is absolutely critical that each member of this community feel comfortable in sharing his/her thoughts. Once again I will not allow anyone in this class to deny anyone the opportunity to freely participate in our “free flow of ideas.” In short, I can stomach many issues in the classroom, but I have **zero tolerance** for any form of disrespect.
12. **Tutoring:** I am here every day after school, usually accessible during lunch, as well as during tutoring hours. If you have any questions, feel free to visit room 332.
13. **Packing Up to Go:** Often the most critical minutes in a class session are the last five, where conclusions are drawn and assignments are made. Please do not pack up your belongings before the end of class. And absolutely DO NOT pack up while someone is talking.
14. **No Zero Policy:** I believe all assessments and assignments are central to our larger reading and writing objectives this year. As such, it is critical that you complete all of them to ensure your success in this class, even if you are late in submitting the assignment. So, instead of getting a zero for failure to complete or submit an assignment, there will be a 15-point deduction for the first day late and a 10-point deduction for each day beyond that. If you turn in an essay one day late, instead of getting a zero for the assignment, you can still earn up to an 85. If you are two days late in submitting a reading response, you can still earn a 75, which is far better than a goose egg. And so on... The one exception to this policy is attendance quizzes! So, get to class on time!

Grading Policy

You will be given an Engrade username and password.

(40%) **Major Projects and Essays**—All readings in class will serve as the catalyst for various writing assignments and creative projects/interpretations. Included in this grade are the following:

- PBA Independent Research Paper
- 2 Literary Analyses
- Précis
- Insight Paper
- Creative Project Final (written or visual)

(25%) **Reading Responses / Homework**—Ladies and gentlemen, I am not one for excuses. Take care of your job and complete your homework. All homework will have a direct bearing on in class assignments/discussions. So, essentially completing your homework makes the class that much easier. As we have the good fortune of the class website, absence is no excuse for missing homework.

Additionally, you are expected to annotate as or after you read each night. This is mandatory. You will learn how to provide some focus to your annotations. There is a helpful annotating guide linked on the website. Ultimately, focused annotating prepares you for your reading responses and your formal essays. I encourage you to print out the Annotating handout! To *annotate* is to supply with critical or explanatory notes:

- Identifying lines that resonate with you, confuse you, or make you want to know more
- Asking questions of general thematic/philosophical value
- Tracking the development of a theme that may connect to one or more of the philosophical readings or other fiction.

**** Merely underlining or highlighting the text will earn you a D, at best.**

Reading Responses:

All reading responses should be submitted by midnight the day they are assigned.

The only exception: weekend responses are due by Sunday night (midnight).

We use our class forums, so all reading responses will be submitted through your class forum as part of a discussion thread. Nevertheless, you are to **print out your response** and bring it to class the next day for class discussion. It should be placed in the reading response section of your binder. All responses should include class heading and a **title**. Typically, you will be assigned 2 responses per week. While some reading responses will

require creative and/or more personalized/internalized approaches to the literature, most require specific analysis of devices/elements. Here, students are expected to **master the concept of literary analysis and demonstrate philosophical control**.

These guided responses should be critical and/or analytical in nature...**NOT SUMMARY**. Mere summary will result in little (half credit max) to no credit.

Further, your reading responses will always be relevant to class discussions and I expect that they contribute to your classroom participation. Think of the reading responses as the vehicle for the ideas that you will share with the class via small group or whole group discussion. Your ideas are of extraordinary value to me, thus your reading journal is of extraordinary value!!! Reading responses are assessed based upon the following:

- Engagement with the reading demonstrating analytical thought
- Understanding of the reading demonstrating critical and/or analytical thought
- Complexity of response
- Use of quotations*
- Reference to other student responses*
- Completeness
- Organization

*I will always let you know in advance if you are required to quote and/or refer to a peer's response in the discussion thread.

Your reading responses are a critical part of the overall grade in this class, so ensure that they meet ALL of the above criteria! Finally, DO NOT COPY/PARAPHRASE YOUR PEERS' RESPONSES! That is plagiarism!

(10%) **Tests/Quizzes**—Book quizzes often at the beginning of class.

(25%) **Course Participation/Attendance**

Course participation grades are not automatic. They are based on oral contributions to the collective learning experience of the class as a whole in terms of asking pertinent questions, making insightful observations, and offering other meaningful expressions of interest in the material that help encourage learning. I expect your comments to reflect control of the text so cite the text during discussion. Failure to do so demonstrates little textual control and *sparks* other concerns. Finally, in addition to meeting the above criteria, students who do well in this category listen attentively to others during discussions. Thus, their contributions to our discussion not only reflect control of the text but also refer to prior points made during discussion. I begin by assuming a C for each student's course participation grade and move from there. Know this, *it is possible to talk a lot in class and receive a low grade for course participation*.

While I want you to aim for more than an A in this class (that will make more sense later), I understand the pragmatic nature of grades. So, to earn an A, do the following:

- Rarely ever miss class!
- Rarely, and I mean rarely, ever get to class late! (I will often give a quiz at the beginning of morning classes...arriving late means a big ole zero for that quiz)
- Maintain a complete, organized, and, most importantly, thoughtful reading responses.
- Read AND annotate EVERY text. (I collect every text and assess your annotations)
- Contribute meaningfully to classroom discussions...let your voice be heard...Yawp!
- Work diligently and meticulously on all essays. Make meaningful use of the writing process. Meet the writing expectations of the course.
- Produce creative work that you would be proud to share with the entire class!