

Summer Reading

AP Language & Composition

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Welcome to Advanced Placement (AP) Language & Composition! This year, we're following a time-honored AP tradition by starting class with a summer reading and writing assignment.

This will give us an opportunity to practice the skills at the heart of our class: composing your thoughts in language as clearly as possible, and understanding the thoughts of others.

Summer Reading

You will need two texts for this summer assignment:

- ***Where You Go Is Not Who You'll Be* by Frank Bruni**, a non-fiction book about how many American students and parents go about the college admissions process today. Like most of the texts we will read for our class, this is a book with an argument. Your job is not to agree or disagree with the argument (though there may be points when you do both), but to understand what the author is saying and analyze how they are saying it. A library or bookseller can help you find the text with the International Standard Book Number (ISBN): 1455532681
- **MLA Handbook (Eighth Edition)**. This handbook created by the Modern Language Association of America (MLA) provides a set of standardized guidelines for documenting sources in academic writing. This is the standard handbook used at Longleaf School of the Arts, and you may already own a copy. ISBN: 1603292624

You will need to buy the books or check them out from the library (as you will need to do with most of our texts for next year). This is a necessary part of a college-level class. I will try to keep costs at a reasonable level for the entire course (well below the textbook costs for most college English classes), but you should always talk to me if buying a book presents a financial hardship. Don't hesitate to email me this summer.

A Few Notes on Course Readings

The texts for this course should and will be challenging in multiple senses of the word. Not to make the class difficult for the sake of difficulty, but because the goal I mentioned earlier—learning to compose your thoughts in conversation with others—is a lifelong challenge, a skill that you will practice continuously in a world that sometimes resists clarity and dialogue.

In this texts, and in the rest of the course, you'll encounter people whose ideas, decisions, hopes, backgrounds, ways of speaking, and political affiliations may not match yours. That's another challenge. We're trying to figure out how to better understand and communicate with a diverse and complex world of others, and that means grappling with a vast array of different beliefs and minds. Throughout the class, we'll look at a lot of divisive issues, as well as texts including college-level topics and language.

I'll never expect you to agree with the contested ideas you encounter, and none of them are presented as ideological models—but I'll ask you to work to *understand* all of them.

The Writing Assignment

Answer the questions below in a substantial paragraph each. Provide evidence from the text to support your answer using appropriate in-text citations according to the guidelines on page 116 of the *MLA Handbook (Eighth Edition)*. Please include a Works Cited page.

1. What is Bruni's purpose in writing *Where You Go Is Not Who You'll Be*?
2. Who is the intended audience for *Where You Go Is Not Who You'll Be*?
3. Many journalists avoid using the first-person "I," even when making an argument, but Bruni uses it frequently throughout the text. Why do you think he makes this choice?
4. Choose one example of an interview subject from whom Bruni includes quotes. Why do you think Bruni includes the perspective of this person?
5. How does Bruni attempt to create emotional responses on the part of the reader in order to strengthen his argument?

You should write your responses in Google Docs and share it with my email address:

gregory@longleafschool.com. If you have questions about how to do this, you are welcome to email me. You do not need to turn in a printed copy. Your assignment is due on **the first day of classes**. Late work will not be eligible for credit. The rubric for the assignment, then, is as follows. If your responses...

- answer the questions in the prompts (40%),
- cite supporting evidence from the text for each question (40%),
- uses MLA style successfully (20%),
- and is turned in on time (mandatory for credit!),

...then it's possible to start the class with an A. This assignment isn't meant to trip you up—it's a warm-up, and it'll help me get a feel for your writing right from the start. Note that "gives the right answer for each question" is *not* on the rubric. Don't stress out about getting the questions wrong. I want to see how you respond to the text, how you think, and how you support your interpretations.

If you have any questions, you are more than welcome to email me. Enjoy your summer, enjoy your reading, and I look forward to seeing you in August!

All best,
Mr. Eric Gregory