



Home of the New Braunfels Unicorns!

NEW BRAUNFELS HIGH SCHOOL

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Dual Credit British Literature/English IV: Optional Summer Reading Assignment 2019

Your optional summer reading assignment will focus on one of two texts: *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus* by Christopher Marlowe, a tale of the seven deadly sins and the possibility of redemption, or *Gulliver's Travels* by Jonathan Swift, a tale of adventure on the high seas that satirizes the flaws of English society during the Restoration period in English history.

As English 4 Dual Credit is the study of British literature, reading this drama or novel will add to a student's understanding of the themes prevalent during the Renaissance and Restoration as well as present a continuing focus on the weaknesses of humanity. Many students are surprised to learn that, while they thought they knew the plots of the respective stories, the original work is much different than its modern counterparts or film versions.

Reading challenging works over the summer will keep students' minds engaged, as well as add to the class discussion of popular themes, such as the purpose of art, the supremacy of youth and beauty, the superficial nature of society, and the negative consequences of influence. With this in mind, students should, therefore, plan to read the work slowly and thoughtfully, paying particular attention to Marlowe or Swift's style (to include plot structure, characterization and imagery). Students should annotate the work as they read, marking literary elements, interesting quotes, motifs and possible themes. It is essential that students read and analyze the original work. They must understand that simply reading a synopsis of the plot (to include "SparkNotes" or any other "study guide") or searching online for analysis will not substitute for understanding the original work.

Another advantage of this summer reading is the opportunity to have an extra test grade for the first grading cycle. Should a student decide to complete the summer reading assignment, he or she should be prepared to write an in-class analytical/argumentative essay. This could positively affect the overall grade average. If a student chooses not to do the summer reading, there will be no penalty, but the opportunity for the additional test grade will not be offered. **The due date for the summer reading activity is Friday, September 13, 2019. There will be no late submission accepted.**

Purchasing a copy of the work will allow students to annotate the text, a skill that must be practiced throughout the year to ensure successful use in potential college courses. Of course, students might also check out the book from the public library. However, several websites offer the full text and it may be found online by searching for "The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus online text" or "Gulliver's Travels online text." I do recommend the Norton Critical Editions of both texts because of the extensive footnotes and background information provided by the editors.

One caveat must be made, however: there are two versions of Marlowe's drama, Version "A" written in 1604, and Version "B" written in 1616. It is imperative that students have a text that contains both versions. The following edition of the play contains both versions and is an outstanding resource for the study of the play: Doctor Faustus (Norton Critical Edition), ISBN-13: 978- 0393977547 or ISBN-10: 0393977544. Purchase of the text is NOT required, but an edition with BOTH versions of the play is.

Again, should you have any questions over the summer, please feel free to email me at pdonahue@nbisd.org. I may not respond immediately, but I will do my best to get back to you in a timely manner (please remember it will be summer).

It's going to be a GREAT year!

See you in August.