

English 12 Honors 142-01
Summer Reading 2017-2018

This summer you will be required to read two novels for English, *Tell the Wolves I'm Home* by Carol Rifka Brunt and *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khaled Hosseini. There are multiple pieces to each of the novel assignments, so please read carefully to ensure the assignments are fully complete.

Assignments will be submitted on Monday, August 28, 2017.

Tell the Wolves I'm Home

1987. There's only one person who has ever truly understood fourteen-year-old June Elbus, and that's her uncle, the renowned painter Finn Weiss. Shy at school and distant from her older sister, June can only be herself in Finn's company; he is her godfather, confidant, and best friend. So when he dies, far too young, of a mysterious illness her mother can barely speak about, June's world is turned upside down. But Finn's death brings a surprise acquaintance into June's life—someone who will help her to heal, and to question what she thinks she knows about Finn, her family, and even her own heart.

This novel isn't about the AIDS crisis in the 80's; it is about a family and its struggle to understand what that means. It's about the struggle to belong, both in the world and in one's own skin. It is something that everyone can connect with on some level. In order to push you beyond the literal story, which you may or may not connect to, and into the characters and their struggles to figure out who they are and how they fit into their own worlds, I want you to keep a Dialectic Journal. While this is often used to discern deeper meaning in more challenging texts, it will force you to dig beneath the surface of the plot into the minds of the characters and to connect in ways you never thought you could.

The Dialectic Journal

The “dialectic” was the method Socrates used to teach his students to be actively engaged in the struggle to derive meaning from an unfamiliar text. In this type of journal, students divide the paper into two columns. One column is labeled “Text” and one column is labeled “Response.” As you read, identify passages that cause you to stop and to respond to what you are reading.

Example: taken from *Black Like Me* by John Howard Griffin

Text: (1 point)

“How else besides becoming Negro could a white man hope to learn the truth? Although we lived side by side

Response: (2 points)

This made me wonder if you can accurately understand someone unless you become them. After some thought, I discovered that there are

throughout the South, communication between the two races had simply ceased to exist” (Griffin p. 1).

no other ways in which you completely understand another person. Although I have lived in the same house with my husband for almost 20 years and I feel as if I know everything about him, when I talk to people who know him, but do not know me very well, they always have something to say that illuminates a side of him that I do not always see at home.

“The completeness of this transformation appalled me. It was unlike anything I had imagined. I became two men, the observing one and the one who panicked, who felt negroid even in the depths of his entrails” (Griffin p. 11).

In some novels, people wake up with the realization of their age, seemingly overnight. It must be exactly how Mr. Griffin feels in this passage. He feels like he is a white man, but when he looks in the mirror there is someone looking back at him who does not look as he imagined he looks. Some people feel so young, and are “trapped” in the body of an elderly person. How unsettling that experience must be.

You will use the model above to create your dialectical journal. I prefer you do this in a composition book, as this is something we will do with many of the works that we investigate this year. Please note that in the text column, you are directly citing text from the novel with the correct MLA 8 citation following it.

There are several ways to respond in the response column:

1. Raise questions about the beliefs and values **implied** in the text.
2. Give your personal reaction to the text.
3. Discuss the words, ideas, or actions of the author or character.
4. Tell what it reminds you of from your own experience.
5. Write about what it makes you think or feel.
6. Argue with or speak to the character or author.

Please vary your type of response so that you do not get into the habit of working through text in one way.

You are responsible for four (4) passages with corresponding responses for each of the four listed parts of the novel below. At the end of the novel, you should have 16 passages that are representative of the entire novel. Each entry will be worth 4 points, for a total of 64 points. Deductions will be made for failure to document correctly or superficiality of response. Each response should be a minimum of 55- 60 words in length.

Section 1: Chapter 1-24 (pp. 1-105)

Section 2: Chapters 25-35 (pp. 106-169)

Section 3: Chapters 36-48 (pp. 170-252)

Section 4: Chapters 49-66 (pp. 253-360)

A Thousand Splendid Suns

Born a generation apart and with very different ideas about love and family, Mariam and Laila are two women brought jarringly together by war, by loss and by fate. As they endure the ever escalating dangers around them-in their home as well as in the streets of Kabul-they come to form a bond that makes them both sisters and mother-daughter to each other, and that will ultimately alter the course not just of their own lives but of the next generation. With heart-wrenching power and suspense, Hosseini shows how a woman's love for her family can move her to shocking and heroic acts of self-sacrifice, and that in the end it is love, or even the memory of love, that is often the key to survival. This is not only the story of two women, but also the story of an unforgiving time, an unlikely friendship, and an indestructible love.

Before reading the novel, please read the information about Afghanistan. Although the travesties of Afghanistan are certainly a focal point in the news, most people in the West are not well-educated about the geography or the tumultuous and complex history of the Afghani culture. The information attached will give you a more pointed perspective and modest understanding of the complexity of the situation the characters face. This is the first Afghani author published in English, and although it is fiction, the places are real and the events are realistically portrayed.

Although Afghanistan is in the news almost often, to truly even attempt to understand the complexity of the situation, information about the ethnic groups of Afghanistan and the harsh changes incurred by the Taliban are necessary to have a deeper understanding of the novel. Take the time to read the background information before reading the novel and again after completion and you will acquire a more profound understanding of Miriam and Laila's problems and cultural dilemmas.

Afghanistan is ethnically diverse. There are approximately 30 million people living in this country. Pashtu and Dari are considered the official languages of this country. About 99% of the country is Muslim. The major ethnic groups are as follows:

PASHTUNS: Pashtuns are the majority ethnic group in Afghanistan comprising about 42% of the population. They are highest on the social ladder and dominate governmental bodies. Pashtu is their native language. They consist mainly of Sunni Muslims.

TAJIKS: Tajiks account for 27% of the population. They are a group that is considered to have low income and like many Hazaras, they are not the highest on the social ladder.

HAZARAS: The Hazara ethnic group makes up 9% of the population. Most are Shi'ite Muslims. The Hazaras are considered to be on the lower end of the socio-economic scale. They are often servants, housekeepers, gardeners and cooks to the higher classes.

The History of Afghanistan during the Time of *A Thousand Splendid Suns*

A Thousand Splendid Suns deals with the country of Afghanistan from the 1960s to the early 2000s. Like all places, Afghanistan has a long and complicated history, but it came to international attention only after the coup of 1973. The nation is located in Central Asia and is made up of thirty-four provinces. The country's capital is Kabul, which is also the capital of the northeast province of the same name. Afghanistan means "Land of Afghan," Afghan being a name the Pashtun majority used to describe themselves starting before the year 1000. It is bordered by Pakistan, Iran, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and for a short distance, China.

From 1933-1973, Afghanistan was a monarchy ruled by King Zahir Shah. On July 17, 1973, when the king was on vacation, Mohammad Daoud Khan seized power. Mohammad Daoud Khan was Zahir Shah's cousin and a former Prime Minister of Afghanistan. The military coup was nearly bloodless, but as we see through Mariam and Laila story, it was still a frightening time for the people of Kabul who heard rioting and shooting in the streets. For six years, Mohammad Daoud Khan was President and Prime Minister of Afghanistan. Then, on April 27, 1978, he was violently overthrown by the PDPA, People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan. Daoud was killed in the coup along with most of his family. Even though Afghanistan had long insisted on maintaining its independence from Russia, the PDPA was a Communist party and therefore held close ties to the Soviet Union.

The PDPA instituted many political and social reforms in Afghanistan, including abolishing religious and traditional customs. These reforms incensed groups of Afghans who believed in adherence to traditional and religious laws. These factions began to challenge the government so rigorously that in 1979, the Soviet Army entered Afghanistan, beginning an occupation that would last a decade. Throughout the ten years of Soviet occupation, internal Muslim forces put up a resistance. The United States was among the countries that supported the resistance, because of its own anti-Soviet policies. When the Soviet Troops finally withdrew in 1989, Afghanistan remained under PDPA for three more years. Then in 1992, in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union and therefore Soviet support for the government, the *mujahedin* finally won Afghanistan and converted it to an Islamic State.

In the years following Soviet withdrawal, there was a great deal of infighting among rival militias, making everyday life in Afghanistan unsafe. In *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, Mariam and Laila live through this struggle. They are accustomed to the rumble of gunfire. Then in 1996, the

Taliban took control of Kabul. After so many years of insecurity and violence, the people welcomed the takeover. Rahim Khan remembers, "... We all celebrated in 1996 when the Taliban rolled in and put an end to the daily fighting." The Taliban were a group of Pashtun supremacists who banded together and took almost complete control of the country. Despite their warm initial reception, they soon made life in Afghanistan dangerous again. Being Sunni fundamentalists supremacists, they systematically massacred Shiites including the Hazara people. They also enacted fundamentalist laws, most famously those banning music and dance, and those severely restricting women's rights. In *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, we see how the Taliban used fear and violence to control the people of Afghanistan, especially women like Laila and Mariam.

After the events of September 11, 2001, the United States invaded Afghanistan and overthrew the Taliban. Today, there are countless Afghan refugees living in other parts of the world. For those Afghans living in Afghanistan, life is still dangerous. In the South, conflict continues to rage on and the Taliban have managed to reemerge. According to Amnesty International's 2007 report, violence and human rights abuses are still a common reality in Afghanistan due to weak governance.

Taliban Rules

The Taliban Rules are specific to both male and female. The following is an incomplete list but give an idea of the rigidity of its law.

Rules Regarding Females

1. Females may not work outside the home, including teachers, engineers, and doctors.
2. Females may not participate in any activity outside the home unless accompanied by a close male relative, such as a father, brother, or husband.
3. Females may not deal with male shopkeepers.
4. Females may not be treated by male doctors.
5. Females may not study at schools, universities.
6. Females must wear a long veil (burqa) which covers them from head to toe.
7. Females whose ankles are visible will be whipped in public.
8. Females may not talk to or shake hands with males who are not in their family.
9. Females may not laugh loudly.
10. Females may not wear high heel shoes. Men must never hear a woman's footsteps.
11. All home windows must be painted so females cannot be seen from outside their homes.
12. Females may not be filmed or photographed.
13. Females may not play sports or enter a sports center or club.

Rules Regarding all Afghans—male or female

1. NO ONE CAN LISTEN TO MUSIC
2. No one can watch movies, television, or videos.
3. No citizen of Afghanistan may have a non-Islamic name.
4. All men must wear Islamic clothes and a cap.
5. Men may not shave or trim their beards.

6. All Afghans must attend prayers 5 times daily.
7. No one may fly kites.
8. Anyone who carries objectionable literature will be shot.
9. All boy students must wear turbans.
10. No one may use the internet, including foreigners.
11. No burying of anyone who was killed by the Taliban. Bodies must remain in the streets as examples to other “wrongdoers.”

*information from Amnesty International

Assignment:

1. Dialectic Journal

You will continue in your use of the Dialectic Journal. While it may seem cumbersome, it will help you in your discussion of the texts when you return to class in the fall. The novel is divided as follows:

- Part 1: Chapters 1-15
- Part 2: Chapters 16-26
- Part 3: Chapters 27-47
- Part 4: Chapters 48-51

AND

2. Final Artistic Interpretation:

“It is in the shelter of each other that the people live.”

~Irish Proverb

Create a work of art—it may be a collage (half sheet of posterboard please), a sculpture, an abstract construction of some sort, that encompasses the idea conveyed in the Irish Proverb, as well as its intersection with **Both** of our novels. Accompanying this will be a one page explanation of your artifact or collage. Please be sure to use the correct MLA heading at the top of this explanation.

When you come to school in August, you will have your Dialectic Journal in a composition book with entries from both of the novels, your artifact, in whatever form you wish to have it, as well as your explanation of the artifact. We will be using these pieces of art as well as the Dialectic Journals to explore these texts in August.