

English 12- *The Hero's Journey* Summer Project

For your summer project, you will read an anthology of myths that will help lay the foundation for our discussions throughout the year. You will also watch a film series that will provide further opportunities for discussion and analysis. Be sure to complete the film and summer writing component before our first day of class, but also be prepared for in-class assessments such as essays and graded discussions upon your return.

Reading Component:

Please read either *Norse Mythology* by Neil Gaiman or *Mythology* by Edith Hamilton. Both are available in paperback or as iBooks. As you read, take notes either in your text or in a separate space for the following focus areas:

- How the respective Norse/Greek culture defines the world, including its origin story and the way it is governed by supernatural forces
- What similarities you notice across individual myths within the text regarding conflicts, the depictions of heroes and their antagonists, and any themes or cultural values that might be revealed through these stories
- What similarities you notice between these stories and other stories you are familiar with, including books you have read but also potentially films, television, and even videogames
- What these stories appear to reveal as essential cultural values of the communities that created them

Be prepared to complete in-class assessments related to the priorities above in the early weeks of school.

Film Component and Summer Writing Component:

- Watch a film trilogy that you would consider relevant to discussions of “epic storytelling”, a “hero’s journey”, or just “classic” tales. Write TWO thorough paragraphs explaining:
 1. What each component of the trilogy (first, second, and third entry) contributes to the overall story arc and development of the hero
 2. What about this trilogy appeals to our core values and beliefs (essentially, why do we love these stories and find them meaningful?)

Recommended trilogies (feel free to check other potential choices with Mr. Thomas; these are admittedly American and eurocentric options as we consider what gets produced and celebrated in “mainstream” Hollywood, but you are encouraged to branch outside of these traditional boundaries):

- *Star Wars (A New Hope, The Empire Strikes Back, Return of the Jedi)*
- *Alien, Aliens, and Alien 3*
- *The Lord of the Rings (The Fellowship of the Ring, The Two Towers, and The Return of the King)*
- *Batman Begins, The Dark Knight, and The Dark Knight Rises*
- *The Hunger Games, Catching Fire, and Mockingjay (Parts I and II)*
- *Kung Fu Panda 1-3*

If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Thomas at pthomas@stjohnschs.org.