Dear Students,

Welcome to the class! AP Language and Composition is designed both to challenge and inspire you. The goal of our course of study, put simply, is to learn to use and exercise our brains well. Doubtless, there are many ways to achieve such a goal, but our way will be to engage primarily in the practice of rhetoric, or the art of speaking and writing effectively. And what precedes good speaking and writing is good thinking. Above all else, to succeed in this course, you must be a dedicated thinker.

“Great, but what will we think about?”

Most often, we will be thinking about and responding to how people develop arguments and perspectives across the broad spectrum of topics concerning the human condition. Primarily, we will engage in inquiry regarding various texts, with an emphasis on non-fiction (that in and of itself marks a difference from most English courses you have taken). To get started, you will participate in a summer reading program that features some representative literature and processes we will take on during the year.

The first step of the program is to acquire the following books and begin reading them. Please purchase your own copies, and make sure that you have access to these books when we begin the school year in August. (I.e. Bring them to class.)


*Do not start with this title. You will not need to read every essay it contains during the summer months. In fact, I only want you to read the two following essays before the school year begins: “A Moral Equivalent to War” – Henry Adams, and “A Law of Acceleration” – William James. We will consult other essays from the collection throughout next year.

These texts will contextualize our discussions and inspire the first writing assignments of the school year.

Thanks, and enjoy your reading. – The English Department