Dear Students,

Welcome to AP English Literature & Composition. This course is designed to teach you how to analyze, interpret, and evaluate great literature. We take as our subject matter a corpus of human creative writing from various genres, times, and cultures. Our goal is to engage with these texts, to draw connections and distinctions between them, and to think, speak, and write intelligently about them.

To help facilitate this process, you are to acquire the following books and read them (which includes annotating / note-taking) before the first day of class, preferably in the order in which they are listed.

- *How to Read Literature like a Professor* – Thomas C. Foster (READ THIS FIRST)
- *Heart of Darkness* – Joseph Conrad
- *Things Fall Apart* – Chinua Achebe

Before we return to class, you should compose an essay of approximately 500-1000 words that provides a close reading of a passage of your choosing from either *Heart of Darkness* or *Things Fall Apart*. I would recommend that the passage you choose be between 1 and 3 pages in length.

Your analysis should show an attempt to engage with the literary style of the author, which includes:

- Figurative language
- Diction
- Imagery
- Irony
- Structure

The thesis of your essay should be in some way related to the effect that the author produces by employing his unique mix of devices.

In the first week of class, we will have a Socratic Seminar about the concept of literary discourse; that is, the cultural conversation happening among literary works across time and culture. We will be discussing the ways in which *Things Fall Apart* appears to have been written in response to *Heart of Darkness*, and how that influences our understanding of, and reactions to, both texts.

I’m excited to start our literary journey together!

Mr. Fowler