Greetings!

Congratulations in being selected to take our World Cultures class this fall. This cross-curricular English and history course, exploring the development of western civilization, places sixty-four students into one classroom on a daily basis**. It requires a high level of maturity, organization, self-motivation, and the ability to participate democratically and self-advocate.** The demanding rigor of this Pre-Advanced Placement course will provide opportunities for your academic growth as well as lay a solid foundation for taking Advanced Placement courses your junior year. You will read at least **40 points of Accelerated Reading** each semester in conjunction with reading class novels and/or plays, including *Gilgamesh*, *Julius Caesar, Sir Gawain & the Green Knight, Pastwatch*, exerpts from *A Tale of Two Cities,* and *Things Fall Apart*; in addition we plan meaningful projects, presentations and active learning lessons connected to the history curriculum.

We have selected a novel for you to read over the summer which can be purchased at the local bookstores or online. It can also be found in the local library, too. The book, *Siddhartha*, by Hermann Hesse, **(ISBN # 0-553-20884-5)** is a story about a man who goes on a journey to find the meaning of his existence. As you read, carefully take notes in the margins of the book. These notes might include initial comments, questions, evaluations, predictions or simply review memorable scenes and quotations. On your first day back to Reed in the fall you will take an Accelerated Reader test on the novel and we will conduct a Shared Inquiry discussion soon after. Our class will explore beliefs from the beginning of civilization, and how the ancients applied wisdom, intelligence, and knowledge. ☺

In a final reflection paper for World Cultures a former student once stated, “Really I didn’t understand what I was getting myself into when I signed up for World Cultures, but I don’t mean that in a negative way. You get to meet people who are on the same page as you—college bound. You are treated more like young adults than just normal high school kids. From now on the bar is set just a little higher than normal…I’m stronger and I feel more confident in my writing skills. Not just my writing skills, everything: talking to people, expressing my opinion, getting in front of people and sharing my ideas. The greatest talents I believe that will make you go further in life…working with people and expressing yourself.”

We hope your experiences in this class will be rewarding and help create a clearer path for your future in the world we live.

Have a fantastic summer!

Julie Dillard Nick Kuster

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