

**XAVIER COLLEGE PREPARATORY HIGH SCHOOL
SUMMER READING Project 2026 - Grade 10 (AP Seminar)**

Dear Incoming AP Seminar Student,

We hope that this letter finds you well and anticipating a rewarding sophomore year. We hope that you will have many good experiences and make many good decisions before we see you again in August. One of those decisions we would like to help you with is the decision to remain engaged in academic activity that will benefit our efforts in AP Seminar.

Your work this summer will include two parts. The first part is completion of the summer assignment expected of all entering 10th grade students. The second part is specific to AP Seminar students and must be completed in order to stay enrolled in the class in the fall.

Part I (All 10th grade students complete):

You will read the sophomore summer text (see below) and complete the attached assignment on literary terms. This novel has been selected for its interest level and readability as well as for its challenging, compelling content. In short, you should expect to think, but the book should be fun to read. You will be expected to take a substantive test on it in the first week of classes. Please carefully read the book in preparation (think about themes, symbolism, and characterization).

Required Book for 10th grade English:

- *The Art of Racing in the Rain* by Garth Stein (Fiction) (expect 5 hours)
A heart-wrenching but deeply funny and ultimately uplifting story of family, unconditional love, loyalty, and hope. It is a beautifully crafted and captivating look at the wonders and absurdities of human life...as only a dog could tell it.

Assignment:

- Your task is to read the assigned book *The Art of Racing in the Rain*, reading for and taking notes for characterization and plot. Your job when you return to school is to prove that you have read and understand the text.
- You will also be expected to **work with the list of literary terms (end of document)**, noting that we supply you with the definitions. Your assignment is to print the assignment and then **find and handwrite an example for EACH term**. You are not expected to find these examples in the assigned books; rather, you should research or give your own example. You will be required to **hand in the completed list of literary terms on the first day of class**. This list will be something you have for reference as we analyze the different texts we'll be studying throughout the school year. (Please find the list of terms at the end of this document.)

Part II asks you to read, watch, research, and present. These activities will prepare you for the rigorous expectations of the AP Seminar class. (Expected total time: 22 hours)

Part II: Anchor Texts (Read)

I. Read: AP Seminar Anchor Text: George Orwell's *Animal*

Farm (expected 4 hours) This novella, published in 1945, is an anti-utopian satire. A political fable based on the events of Russia's Bolshevik revolution and Joseph Stalin's betrayal of the effort, the book features farm animals who overthrow and chase off their human masters, but who also experience the downfall of democratic aspects of their efforts as they grapple with power. **Students must submit their books to the instructor on the first day of class to receive a grade on book annotations - please make in-text notes on items including: setting, characters (protagonist/antagonist), conflict, themes, symbols, climax and resolution, and highlight impactful passages. You can use stickies or write on the page itself. Students will need a physical copy of the book.**

Check when completed

II. After you read *Animal Farm*, think about the issue of power and government, and consider the following thematic question, which is based off of the theme of personal freedom and democracy explored in the novel:

Question: To what extent are Americans truly free in a society shaped by mass media?

Now ask yourself this guiding research question: → **Are the ideals of democracy working in our mediated American society?**

II. Read and Annotate: Articles on Democracy and Media (expected 3 hours) (To fully consider this question, **take notes on the following articles and videos - you will hand in these notes along with your presentation. Notes can be handwritten or typed. Any typed document must be submitted with editing privileges - beware of AI writing, which will not receive credit:**

These articles (along with *Animal Farm*, are called "stimulus materials" to *stimulate* your thinking. They should help you to think about the issue of democracy and media, and you should be able to use some of this information for your researched presentation.

Article 1: ["Mapped: The State of Democracy Around the World"](#) Visual Capitalist, May 13, 2024

Article 2: ["Young Adults and the Future of News"](#) Pew Research, December 3, 2025

Article 3: [Misunderstood mechanics: How AI, TikTok, and the liar's dividend might affect the 2024 elections](#)

Check when completed

Part III. Watch

Long Companion Videos (more stimulus materials - expected 4-5 hours)

(Take Notes to submit and to show you viewed - include in Works Cited if used.)

1. [Fights Over American Democracy Reach Back to the Founding Era | Retro Report](#)

Contributes to a documentary (2024) (9 mins)

2. [Dismantling Democracy: America, Land of the Free? \(2020\)](#)

“In the first of this three-part series, we dive into the history of democracy, its birth and the United States’ unique take on this form of government. The episode takes a look at some uniquely American challenges that limit American democracy such as hyperpartisanship, negative partisanship, institutional constraint.” (55 mins)

3. [Dismantling Democracy: The Way Forward \(2020\)](#)

“In the final episode of this three-part series, we explore what is needed and what may need to change to preserve American democracy. By looking at the basic pillars of a democratic society -- freedom of speech, free and fair elections and a focus on human rights -- we are challenged to rise to the occasion, participate in civic discourse and take action.” (55 mins)

4. [The Facebook Dilemma \(2018\)](#)

“The promise of Facebook was to create a more open and connected world. But from the company’s failure to protect millions of users’ data, to the proliferation of “fake news” and disinformation, mounting crises have raised the question: Is Facebook more harmful than helpful? This major, two-night event investigates a series of warnings to Facebook as the company grew from Mark Zuckerberg’s Harvard dorm room to a global empire. With dozens of original interviews and rare footage, *The Facebook Dilemma* examines the powerful social media platform’s impact on privacy and democracy in the U.S. and around the world.” (55 mins)

5. [Fake: Searching for Truth in the Age of Misinformation \(2020\)](#)

This PBS program discusses the media landscape and its impact on our ability to live out democratic principles. Fake news, social media, branding, and the need for media literacy are discussed. (56 mins)

Short Companion Videos (expected 45 mins)

1. [Tech, trust, and the competitive edge: Kat Duffy, Frank McCourt, Eli Pariser](#)

May 28, 2025 “As our online and offline worlds converge, trust in digital systems is breaking down. From fragmented platforms to rising polarization, today’s digital spaces fail to deliver their public promise. This conversation explores rebuilding trust and designing a digital future rooted in agency, connection, and shared purpose. Panelists will offer bold visions for what’s next, the systemic changes required to get there, and the role leaders across sectors must play in shaping more inclusive and resilient digital spaces.” (15 minutes)

2. Crash Course Media Literacy clips (26 mins)
 - a. [Introduction to Media Literacy #1](#) (2018) (10 minutes)
 - b. [Media and the Mind #4](#) (2018) (9 mins)
 - c. [Future Literacies #12](#) (2018) (7 mins)

Check when Viewing is completed

IV. Research (expected 4 hours): Conduct additional research of your own on issues related to **American democracy and how it is working in our mediated society.** (Annotate- include in Works Cited if used; use scholar.google.com for your research as a rule.)

1. NOW focus on some aspect of this summer's theme (highlighted) and research more specifically! Conduct research using Google Scholar (scholar.google.com). Research should not be done in regular Google UNLESS you are looking for a government website – .gov or .org. You may only use TWO reputable news sources max.
 - a. You can search terms like: Social Media and democracy, American media and surveillance, Media literacy and democracy, etc.
 - b. Notice the topics that come up with your searches. Choose your topic of interest from there and try to focus your answer to the question narrowly. (A few specifics related to democracy and media in America to get you started: Fake News, TikTok's role in voter turnout, Hacking elections, algorithms and surveillance...there are SO many topics related to democracy and the media in America. You must find at least **FIVE** sources on your own that speak to your narrowed topic of interest! These five sources should be annotated for the key messages you will use for your understanding. **THREE** of the sources should be from a research journal. You will submit your annotations. If the journal article is very long (some are 30 pages), you should at least read the introduction, results, and discussion sections so that you know what the researchers found and so that you can report their findings. If the research is not going to help you, don't annotate! Move on! Find something that WILL help.
 - c. Save and format your sources on a Works Cited page
To organize your research on your topic of interest:
 - i. Open a Google Doc - you will be giving me access to this document when we return to school
 - ii. Sign in to your Google Account through Xavier and research using scholar.google.com. You can star articles you want to save (see the save/star button under each article).
 - iii. Spend time only on articles that offer a full-text PDF. Abstracts are not allowed to count toward your sources.
 - iv. You can cite any article from Google Scholar in MLA format. Copy and paste the citation into your Works Cited page. Use MLA style for this.
 - v. Use the Tools → Citations tab on Google Doc to create citations for your Works Cited when you can't get the citation from the journal.
2. **Based on all you have learned and recorded: Are the ideals of democracy working in our mediated American society?** Your answer to the question should be complicated and should put forth either a problem that needs a solution OR a position you are taking that begs for a resolution of some sort. This is not just a report!
 - a. **MY EXAMPLE:** I am really interested in how news has migrated toward entertaining us rather than strictly informing us in recent years. I would do research to find out if there are links to voter turnout and political activism.. I don't know what I would find, and I might change my mind, but if I had to argue without doing the research, I would make the argument that entertainment journalism has contributed to a decline in democracy as people have started seeing world issues as less serious. If I am right, then this is a problem if voting has declined because democracy is built on getting people to participate. I need to suggest a solution: My solution would be guided by research, of course, but I might suggest early education programs for kids to teach them the

importance of civic engagement. Maybe there are ways our entertainment industry could do more to encourage people to take civic engagement seriously.

- b. **Tips:** Ask yourself: Who benefits? Who is left behind? Is the reality different from the ideal that people talk about? What is being done? What might be done better? Remember: You are making an argument. It is an argument if someone can disagree. You should speak to the counterargument, as well. Finally, what is a solution or a resolution for the problem you are arguing?

Check when completed

V. Create a Presentation on Your Findings (expected 3-4 hours): Your presentation must be professional and answer the question: Are the ideals of democracy working in contemporary American society? Remember there needs to be a focused aspect of American society that you can reflect on. Presentations will be delivered during the first week of school and must be no longer than 4 minutes long. (11-15 slides) – Try <https://slidesgo.com/research!>

1. Slide 1: Include a Title slide to introduce the topic/issue you chose to research on your own and your name
2. Slide 2: Include a Table of Contents
3. Slide 3: Include your Research question – **To what extent are the ideals of democracy working in our mediated American society?** This can be a separate slide.
4. Slide 4: Stimulus Materials connection – from Parts 2 and 3 – To find your connection to your research argument, Include a theme from *Animal Farm* that is connected to our class question, as well as a connecting theme from two other stimulus materials from Parts 2 and 3 above. These stimulus materials should show how you have connected them through a common theme to help guide your *Animal Farm* (i.e., the surveillance from Big Brother through the telescreen). I could show a connection with *The Facebook Dilemma* and surveillance through algorithms and *Misunderstood mechanics: How AI, TikTok, and the liar's dividend might affect the 2024 elections*. Here I am connecting the idea that surveillance through social media platforms impacts voting negatively. With these stimulus materials in mind, I will identify the argument that Social media algorithms are set up to sway election outcomes and must be dealt with through legislation to protect democracy. Now I have an argument.
5. Slide 5: Specifically state your argument or thesis.
6. Slide 6: Include Context (i.e., background). Make sure you explain the importance or “so what” of the issue or problem you identified!
 - a. You will need to make sure you identify sources you are using and context for your research to bring credibility. These are visual or verbal citations to help your listener believe your statements. Visual citations appear on the slide, i.e., (Carr 2005). Verbal citations are spoken (i.e., Dr. Carr, a media researcher at the University of Georgia, says that a desire to maintain positive versions of corporate identity drives companies like Coca Cola to adopt prosocial advertising and environmental policies.)
 - b. You can include more than one slide to help explain context
7. Slide 7: Claim 1: The first reason supporting your argument - must use research throughout (visual or verbal) Include in Works Cited.
8. Slide 8: Claim 2: The second reason supporting your argument about your topic - - must use research throughout (visual or verbal) Include in Works Cited.
9. Slide 9: Claim 3: A counterclaim to address your democracy topic argument. You should offer your answer to the counterclaim - - must use research throughout (visual or verbal) Include in Works Cited.
10. Slide 10: A proposed solution or resolution that might work for your problem (found in research) but that you do not regard as highly as your final solution or resolution
11. Slide 11: Your determined solution or resolution to the issue you identified - this is the one you are arguing is the best. It can be a combination of a couple of solutions.
12. Slide 12: Conclusions you are drawing after the research. What limitations do you see, and what are implications if your solution is adopted? i.e., what would happen for the better?
13. Works Cited/Bibliography slide
 - a. Use hanging indent for works cited (see example below) - if you only provide links, you cannot receive full credit.

Check when completed

Formatting for Works Cited using Hanging Indent – Here’s How:

1. Alphabetize the entries. Highlight all entries and go to Format → Align & Indent → Indentation Options → Special Indent → Hanging (Works Cited will be properly indented/formatted)'

Example of Proper Formatting:

Works Cited

Dvořáková, Jana. "The Influence of the Spanish Civil War on George Orwell and his Novels Animal Farm and Nineteen Eighty-Four."

Rodden, John. "Decency and democracy: George Orwell, "the aspiring plebeian"." *Prose Studies* 12.2 (1989): 174-192.

Check when completed

Late work cannot be accepted in AP Seminar for the summer assignment. If you run into trouble with a part of the assignment, please feel free to reach out to me (email Dr. Carr at tcarr@xavierprep.org). I will be able to get back to you within a day or two. Students who do not complete the summer assignment will be asked to enroll in either English II Honors or English II. I look forward to seeing you soon! It will be a GREAT year!

Your teacher,
Dr. Carr

See below for Literary Terms assignment!

Name:

AP SEMINAR

Date:

Literary Terms with Definitions

The following is a list of 38 selected terms that could assist with literary analysis. Please keep this list available, if not memorized, throughout the year. **Find and handwrite an example for EACH term.** You are not expected to find these examples in the assigned book, but should research or give your own example. In any case, make sure that it is accurate and correct. You will be required to **hand in the completed list of literary terms ON THE FIRST DAY OF CLASS.** (Expected time: 1.5 hour)

Allegory: a story, poem, or picture that can be interpreted to reveal a hidden meaning, typically a moral or political one.

Ex:

Alliteration: the occurrence of the same letter or sound at the beginning of adjacent or closely connected words.

Ex:

Allusion: a brief and indirect reference to a person, place, thing, or idea of historical, cultural, literary, or political significance.

Ex:

Analogy: a comparison in which an idea or a thing is compared to another thing that is quite different from it. It aims at explaining that idea or thing by comparing it to something that is familiar. Metaphors and similes are tools used to draw an analogy.

Ex:

Anecdote: a short and amusing or interesting story about a real incident or person.

Ex:

Antagonist: the opposing force that brings conflict and is instrumental in the development of the protagonist, or main character.

Ex:

Aside: A term used in drama and theater, an aside happens when a character's dialogue is spoken but not heard by the other actors on the stage. An aside is typically a quick, short statement.

Ex:

Connotation: a meaning that is implied by a word apart from the thing which it describes explicitly. (Words carry cultural and emotional associations or meanings, in addition to their literal meanings or denotations.)

Ex:

Denotation: refers to the literal, dictionary definition of a word.

Ex:

Diction: word choice.

Ex:

Double Entendre: literary device that can be defined as a phrase or a figure of speech that might have multiple senses, interpretations, or two different meanings, or which might be understood in two different ways. Often, a double entendre will include an innuendo as one of the interpretations.

Ex:

Euphemism: refers to polite, indirect expressions that replace words and phrases considered harsh and impolite, or which suggest something unpleasant.

Ex:

Exposition: the writer's way to give background information to the audience about the setting and the characters of the story.

Ex:

Foreshadow: literary device in which a writer gives an advance hint of what is to come later in the story. It often appears at the beginning of a story, or a chapter, and helps the reader develop expectations about the coming events in a story.

Ex:

Hyperbole: from a Greek word meaning "excess," it is a figure of speech that uses extreme exaggeration to make a point or show emphasis. It is the opposite of understatement.

Ex:

Idiom: refers to a set expression or a phrase comprising two or more words. An interesting fact regarding the device is that the expression is not interpreted literally. The phrase is understood to mean something quite different from what individual words of the phrase would imply. It is also known as a figure of speech.

Ex:

Irony: There are three types of irony. Verbal (also known as sarcasm): the use of words to mean something different than what they appear to mean. Situational: the opposite of an expected outcome occurs. Dramatic: the audience knows what will happen before the characters.

Ex:

Juxtaposition: a literary technique in which two or more ideas, places, characters, and their actions are placed side by side in a narrative or a poem, for the purpose of developing comparisons and contrasts.

Ex:

Malapropism: the mistaken use of a word in place of a similar-sounding one, often with unintentionally amusing effect.

Ex:

Metaphor: a figure of speech that makes an implicit, implied, or hidden comparison between two things that are unrelated, but which share some common characteristics. In other words, a resemblance of two contradictory or different objects is made based on a single or some common characteristics.

Ex:

Monologue: a typically long speech spoken by a single character but addressed to the other characters on stage.

Ex:

Motif: any recurring element that has symbolic significance in a story. Through its repetition, a motif can help produce other narrative (or literary) aspects such as theme or mood.

Ex:

Onomatopoeia: a word that sounds like the common sound of the object it is describing.

Ex:

Oxymoron: a figure of speech in which two opposite ideas are joined to create an effect. The common oxymoron phrase is a combination of an adjective proceeded by a noun with contrasting meanings

Ex:

Paradox: a statement that contradicts itself and still seems true somehow.

Ex:

Parody: an imitation of a writer, artist, subject, or genre in such a way as to make fun of or comment on the original work. Parodies are often exaggerated in the way they imitate the original in order to produce a humorous effect.

Ex:

Personification: a form of figurative language in which something that is not human is given human characteristics. This device is often used in poetry to enhance the meaning and beauty of poems

Ex:

Plot: a literary term used to describe the events that make up a story, or the main part of a story. These events relate to each other in a pattern or a sequence.

Ex:

Protagonist: the central character or leading figure in poetry, narrative, novel or any other story.

Ex:

Pun: A play on words that produces a humorous effect by using a word that suggests two or more meanings, or by exploiting similar sounding words that have different meanings.

Ex:

Sarcasm: a form of verbal irony that mocks, ridicules, or expresses contempt. It is a Latin word that translates as "to tear the flesh."

Ex:

Satire: a technique employed by writers to expose and criticize foolishness and corruption of an individual or a society, by using humor, irony, exaggeration, or ridicule.

Ex:

Simile: a figure of speech that makes a direct comparison, showing similarities between two different things. A simile draws resemblance with the help of the words "like" or "as."

Ex:

Soliloquy: monologue given by a character in a play who is usually alone on the stage. During a soliloquy, a character might reveal key thoughts, feelings, and opinions to the audience members. However, other characters in the play do not hear the soliloquy (even in the rare cases that other characters are on stage).

Ex:

Symbol: a literary device that contains several layers of meaning, often concealed at first sight, and is representative of several other aspects, concepts or traits than those that are visible in the literal translation alone.

Ex:

Syntax: the way in which words and sentences are placed together in the writing. Usually in the English language the syntax should follow a pattern of subject-verb-object agreement but sometimes authors play around with this to achieve a lyrical, rhythmic, rhetoric or questioning effect.

Ex:

Theme: the central topic of a text. Themes can be divided into two categories: a work's thematic concept is what readers "think the work is about" and its thematic statement being "what the work says about the subject". A text may have several themes.

Ex:

Understatement:

a figure of speech employed by writers or speakers to intentionally make a situation seem less important than it really is. An understatement is opposite to hyperbole, which is an overstatement.

Ex:

Check when completed