**REQUIREMENTS: ABSURDIST/EXISTENTIALIST SHORT STORY PROJECT (DUE 3/26 BY 11:59 PM TO ITSLEARNING)**

**Grade Breakdown:**

1. Major Grade: Five parts
   1. Intro – information about the author’s background and time period regarding the impact it had on the story (research)
   2. Theme analysis – written or creatively interpreted
   3. Literary criticism assessment (based on either the short story itself or the author’s body of work/style)
   4. Style analysis (structure/voice/diction/syntax/other elements that make up the author’s style)
      1. All will be submitted through ItsLearning (together in one attached Word document – NOT PDF. You can also copy and paste your work into the ItsLearning text box when you submit if you don’t have Word.)
      2. AND as hard copies in class (packet with rubrics on top)
   5. Discussion (split into two days – two stories one day, two stories the next day)
2. Daily Grade: Reflection on project as a whole (process and products)

**You will read a story by Franz Kafka (Austrian/Czech), Albert Camus (French/Algerian), Jean-Paul Sartre (French), or Nikolai Gogol (Ukrainian/Russian). After reading (and annotating) your story, you will complete the following tasks.**

Part One: (15 pts.)

You should do some brief research on the author’s background and the time period to get a sense of how those impacted your story. You can approach this as a reflection regarding HOW this information impacts your reading of the story. CITE your information from a CREDIBLE source. 2+ sources, 200+ words. (MLA citations at the end of this section – you may use EasyBib. Please also use in-text citations when using direct quotes.)

Part Two: (15 pts.)

TWO OPTIONS: 1) Write a paragraph based on what YOU think the overall theme of this story is (i.e., what is the author’s purpose in writing this story? What message is he trying to get across to his audience? How does Existentialism and/or Absurdism factor into the theme?) Use at least 4 embedded quotes to back up your assertions. 200+ words. 2) Come up with a creative response to the thematic questions posed in #1. This could be a comic strip, a drawing, a sculpture, a painting, a video, a poem, etc. You could also find and analyze a poem that connects to the same theme as your short story. This creative interpretation must be ORIGINAL and THOUGHTFUL (not lazy, and I have high standards). If you choose this option, I would like you to pitch it to me first, which you may do to my face or via an email (PRE-SPRING BREAK). On the back of your artwork (or somewhere within your creative piece), you must incorporate 4 relevant quotes from your text in some way.

Part Three: (25 pts.)

You will then read some literary criticism based on your story and write a short essay analyzing the merit of that criticism based on your reading and interpretation of the story. You may agree with some things and disagree with others, or agree/disagree with the criticism entirely. Regardless, you’ll need to ADD to the critic’s argument using your own ideas and supplemental textual support (for example, if you agree, you can’t just say, “I agree with this. I also agree with this. This is good, too. Mobled queen is good.” You need to defend WHY the critic’s assessment is accurate and supply support). 400+ words. (Use the **school’s databases** to look for lit crit BEFORE resorting to Google; if you can’t find something on just your story, look for lit crit on the author’s work in general.) CITE your lit crit at the end of this section.

Part Four: (25 pts.)

You will also analyze your story based on style and structure: since this is arguably the hardest aspect of literature to complexly analyze, we want to get some more practice. Analyze your story on a close-reading level based on diction, syntax, and other stylistic elements (for example: the inclusion of dialogue versus the omission of dialogue, or the length of paragraphs or sentences). See the back of this page for guidelines on writing about style. 400+ words.

Part Five: (20 pts.)

The graded discussion will last one class period. It will be more like an open seminar than a Fishbowl, as it will include everyone in your group (meaning, everyone reading your story). You may bring prepared notes based on the guiding questions, but they are not required, and you do not have to turn them in. You must meaningfully participate at least three times to get full credit (this should be easier than the fishbowl, as your groups will not be very large). Seminars will be divided over two days (2 stories one day, 2 stories the next day) so that I can sit in on all four without having to bounce around from one to the next. Those who go on the second day will be doing other work on the first, and the same goes for the group that goes on the first day while the second group has their seminar. You may use the guiding questions, but if you’d like to go rogue and take your discussion in different directions, that is up to you and your group, as long as you maintain the focus on in-depth analysis or argument regarding your (perhaps varied) interpretations of the story! In that case, the questions can provide assistance if there’s a lull in the discussion.

Part Six: (Daily Grade)

Short reflection based on your experience with the project after the discussion is done and everything has been turned in.

**GUIDELINES FOR STYLE ANALYSIS: SHORT STORY/BOOK PROJECT**

Analysis of style is only valuable when the analysis is connected to the MEANING of the work. The author’s diction and syntax is not accidental, nor should other elements (devices) of style be considered in isolation. For your short story project, you will analyze the style as a whole. For your book project, you’ll choose a passage that can range from 1 paragraph to 1 page (and you’ll also consider style outside of your chosen passage).

BROAD questions to analyze style:

* How does the content of the novel dictate the form of the work?
* How does the author’s diction and syntax contribute to the reader’s understanding of plot, theme, character, and setting?

More specific questions to consider when writing about an author’s style:

* What is the narrator’s attitude toward the scene or event he is describing? How do you know? What reason can be seen for this attitude? (The narrator is NOT the author.)
* Note any bitterness, sarcasm, or irony and explain how you know. What is the tone, and what seems to be responsible for the tone?
* If setting is emphasized, what contributes to its mood? If there is a significant relationship between the setting and the characters, describe what it is and how it is revealed.
* Examine the diction that particularly enhances the mood or reveals the narrator’s attitude. Examine how verbs are used, and whether the tense has an impact on the pacing of the scene (present, past, or future).
* Examine how syntax contributes to the work’s effect. Note juxtapositions of different styles, or whether the style remains the same throughout the whole piece. Is the syntax elaborate, complex, or simple?
* What figurative language is used? Simile? Metaphor? Personification? Allusion? Etc… Analyze their significance and their relationship to the total passage.
* What sensory impressions are evoked and how (if any)?
* Identify and comment on any significant use of contrast or comparison.
* Identify and comment on the use of repetition of words, phrases, images, or sentence structures.
* How is the passage organized? How do the paragraphs relate to each other and to the work as a whole (this is more in regards to your book project).
* How do these elements complement the theme or help reveal it? (You can comment on theme as much as you’d like to for your short story analysis, but make sure you’re not getting redundant in your book project, since theme is a section of its own.)
* USE TEXTUAL EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT YOUR ARGUMENTS AS MUCH AS YOU CAN.