

Required Pre-Course Assignments for ADVANCED PLACEMENT UNITED STATES HISTORY Holly Springs High School, 2009-2010

This course focuses on analytical and argumentative writing, thus emphasizing the study of U.S. history from all perspectives. Thus, the HSHS Social Studies Department has chosen required pre-course assignments that will offer a learning stretch and educational enrichment for AP-level students. The AP teacher will conduct additional activities that may include seminars, book talks, class discussions, group work, writing assignments, and additional related readings in conjunction with the assignments below. You may email Mrs. Waters at swaters2@wcpss.net if you have questions. **Assignments are required to be turned in to the Mrs. Waters no later than August 28, 2009.**

Assignment One: *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong Completely Revised and Updated Edition* by James W. Loewen.

1. Read *Lies My Teacher Told Me*. (highlight and make notes in the margins about things you do not understand or questions) as you read. If you do not own the book, use carefully placed post-it notes to accomplish your required annotations.
2. Complete the following specifications:
 - A. Answer these questions: (Not in any particular order)
 1. Can what Loewen calls "heroification" be justified in the telling of history? Use any character from *Lies My Teacher Told Me* to illustrate your answer.
 2. What is the method of "cognitive dissonance"? Describe it in terms of any character from *Lies My Teacher Told Me* and from your own life if you find you have used it.
 3. How would you portray Abraham Lincoln if you were writing a textbook?
 4. How would you handle slavery in Colonial American days if you were writing a textbook? Show how this differs from the standard treatment described in *Lies My Teacher Told Me*.
 5. How would you handle Native American culture if you were writing a textbook? Show how this differs from the standard treatment described in *Lies My Teacher Told Me*.
 6. Would you have filled in the percentages in Loewen's "Vietnam exercise" correctly? How does the ability to interconnect discrete facts contribute to getting it right?
 7. How would you describe the truths about Thanksgiving and the Plymouth Colony to children at the third, sixth, and twelfth grades, and at adult levels? Must they be protected from the truth? If so, what elements and why?
 8. Why is it difficult to get a true "picture" of Columbus?
 9. Why is ironic about President Woodrow Wilson?
 10. What does Loewen mean by racial idealism?
 - B. Write a two-page essay discussing your experiences in social studies class for the last two-three years. Focus on instances where you think you have been "lied to," given misinformation, and/or bored to tears. BE SPECIFIC!!! (Minimum of 2-pages and maximum of 3 pages for this part)

Assignment TWO: *The Devil in the White City: Murder, Magic, and Madness at the Fair That Changed America* by Erik Larson

1. Read *The Devil in the White City* by Erik Larson (highlight and make notes in the margins about things you do not understand or questions) as you read. If you do not own the book, use carefully placed post-it notes to accomplish your required annotations.
2. Read the instructions on the attached sheet and complete the questions!

Devil in a White Assignment

One of the summer reading assignments in AP US History is *The Devil in the White City*, by Erik Larson (2004). This book is about a serial killer on the loose during the Chicago World's Fair of 1893. As you read the book, take notes because there will be an in-class discussion for a grade. In addition, answer the following questions as you read the book. Remember to answer "Why" even if it is implied and to include facts and details from the book in your answers. To earn all points, your answer must be: grammatically correct, include evidence from book, show thought and analysis. **Answer ONLY 8 of the questions between 1 and 22 and answer ONLY TWO of the questions between 23 and 27.**

1. Why do you think the author begins his book in conjunction with the sinking of the Titanic? What symbolism, if any, may be inferred?
2. "It was this big talk, not the south westerly breeze, that had prompted NY editor Charles Anderson Dana to nickname Chicago 'the Windy City.'" - "The Trouble is Just Begun" (chapter from *The Devil in the White City*) What did the boastful perceptions of "success" and "size" have to do with Chicago's desire to host the Columbian Exposition? How did Chicago regard New York City and the Eiffel Tower?
3. What was Frederick Law Olmsted's vision for landscape architecture? How much time did he feel was necessary to do an excellent job?
4. "Chicago's fair, unlike any other before it, would be primarily a monument to architecture." - "Pilgrimage" (chapter from *The Devil in the White City*) What vision of Chicago was Burnham trying to promote through the fair? What image of Chicago did he hope to overcome in the public mind?
5. "Five of history's greatest architects" were on their way to Jackson Park in Chicago. Had they been told the truth about the "landscape," would they have come? Why did they continue with the project after seeing the repulsive and remote site?
6. Do you agree that "function" should be the only or the primary consideration in a building's construction? This was Sullivan's, and later, Frank Lloyd Wright's opinion; if this policy had been adopted, what might the Fair buildings have looked like?
7. Larson contends that the Fair possessed a "transformative power nearly equal to that of the Civil War." What have you read in the book so far that suggests this might be true?
8. Olmsted was concerned about the purpose of the Fair. What should have been the purpose and was it ever stated? What is the purpose of any World's Fair?
9. Do you understand the difference between AC and DC electricity and why the AC bid by Westinghouse was cheaper and helped change the history of electricity? If that was so, why did the Wizard of Menlo Park, Thomas Edison, urge the Fair's officials to use DC when he came to visit the grounds?
10. Would modern young women be as naive as those that were seduced and flattered by Holmes? Explain your answer using examples from the book and today.
11. The numerous setbacks that caused such devastation at the Fair were either the fault of Burnham's haste, contractors' shoddy work, or nature. Which, in your opinion, was to blame?
12. The author has relied heavily on articles in the *Chicago Tribune* for many of the facts in this book; however, could he have known all these details or are some of them, necessarily, fictionalized?
13. What were Olmsted's worries prior to Opening Day of the fair? Burnham's? What was your reaction to the Opening Day ceremonies? Why?
14. Were you surprised that so many exhibits of the fair still remained incomplete AFTER Opening Day? What work still had to be done?
15. Immediately after the fair opened, the nation went into an economic decline. What methods did Daniel Burnham and Frank Millet use to try to increase public attendance?
16. Why did the refusal to grant Buffalo Bill Cody a concession within the fairgrounds prove to be a very expensive mistake?
17. What made the Ferris Wheel so popular and spectacular to the fairgoers? What advantages would have accrued to the Exposition if the Ferris Wheel had been approved earlier and completed earlier?
18. The wonderful chapter "Rising Wave" is chock full of marvelous anecdotes, famous names and the "feel" of the turn of the century. What caught YOUR attention? Why?

19. Do you feel that it was fair to charge Daniel Burnham with responsibility for the terrible Cold Storage Tower fire?
20. Did you read the chapters of Holmes' murders and the last chapter wherein he was found guilty? Would the book have been popular without the addition of a serial killer?
21. Is the fact that our population has increased many times since then a reason why we are besieged by such horror stories in the media? Every evening on TV there are stories of such murders. Is this healthy? Do you watch many of these programs?
22. The chapter "The Fair" cites the impact the Fair had on people, places and dates. In your opinion, which of the many on the list would you consider the most important to America and to your own life? Why?

Devil in A White City Assignment continued

Choose TWO of the following to answer:

23. In what ways does the Chicago World's Fair of 1893 change America? What lasting inventions and ideas did it introduce into American culture? What important figures were critically influenced by the Fair?
24. What is the total picture of late nineteenth-century America that emerges from **The Devil in the White City**? How is that time both like and unlike contemporary America? What are the most significant differences? In what ways does that time mirror the present?
25. After the Fair ended, Ray Stannard Baker noted "What a human downfall after the magnificence and prodigality of the World's Fair which has so recently closed its doors! Heights of splendor, pride, exaltation in one month: depths of wretchedness, suffering, hunger, cold, in the next" [p. 334]. What is the relationship between the opulence and grandeur of the Fair and the poverty and degradation that surrounded it? In what ways does the Fair bring into focus the extreme contrasts of the Gilded Age? What narrative techniques does Larson use to create suspense in the book? How does he end sections and chapters of the book in a manner that makes the reader anxious to find out what happens next?
26. How was Holmes able to exert such power over his victims? What weaknesses did he prey upon? Why wasn't he caught earlier? In what ways does his story "illustrate the end of the century" [p. 370] as the Chicago Times-Herald wrote?
27. In describing the collapse of the roof of Manufacturers and Liberal Arts Building, Larson writes "In a great blur of snow and silvery glass the building's roof—that marvel of late nineteenth-century hubris, enclosing the greatest volume of unobstructed space in history—collapsed to the floor below" [p. 196–97]. Was the entire Fair, in its extravagant size and cost, an exhibition of arrogance? Do such creative acts automatically engender a darker, destructive parallel? Can Holmes be seen as the natural darker side of the Fair's glory?

Adapted from:

"Devil and the White City." *Senior Net: SeniorNet Readers Guides*. 2006. 22 May 2007.
<http://www.seniornet.org/php/readerguide.php?GuideID=45&Version=0&Font=1>

"The Devil in the White City." *ReadingGroupGuides.com*. 22 May 2007.
http://www.readinggroupguides.com/guides3/devil_white_city1.asp