REQUIRED TEXT

Before you leave for summer break, please stop by the library and check out a copy of Rudolfo Anaya’s novel, *Bless Me, Ultima.* This novel will be your required summer reading assignment. In order to accurately understand, and analyze, this novel, you will need to review quite a bit of background information. You can access an online presentation of this information by traveling to the following link: <http://prezi.com/zi-rtckzlkcn/bless-me-ultima-introduction/> Once summer begins, you can also visit our class website, [www.mrsvaliente.weebly.com](http://www.mrsvaliente.weebly.com) , and use the Honors English 10 link to more easily access the presentation (and find other resources worth browsing).

THE PLAN

When we return to school on Wednesday August 16th, we will address the syllabus and any quick concerns you have regarding your essay assignment.

Your final essay will be due by midnight on Thursday August 17th – we will spend this day together in the lab.

Friday August 18th, you will take a comprehensive exam over the novel.

ESSASY ASSIGNMENT

You will be responsible for drafting a formal essay about one of the following topics. Your final essay must be submitted to Turnitin. The information you’ll need to join our Turnitin classroom is on the reverse side of this handout.

*Bless Me, Ultima* Topics

* Both Ultima and Narciso are called “magic” by various characters in the book. Compare and contrast the characters of Ultima and Narciso. How does Ultima’s brand of magic differ from Narciso’s? How are they alike? In what sense might each character be called “magic”?
* In Maria’s view, how are sexuality, adulthood, and sin related? Why is childhood preferable to adulthood? How do these factors influence her desire for Antonio to become a priest? And how does Maria’s own childhood influence her current beliefs?
* What is the significance of the conflict between English-speakers and Spanish speakers that Antonio encounters at school? Why is language so important in the novel? In what sense does this conflict give Antonio perspective on the battle within his family?

*Bless Me, Ultima* vs *Catcher in the Rye* Topics

* Although both novels are narrated through first person, and both narrators are adolescent males, they are arguably at very different maturity levels. Both narrators tell a tale focusing on their journey through adolescence, but they do so in a drastically different way. Why did the authors portray these stories from such diverse perspectives? Is one portrayal more effective than the other? Are we supposed to gather completely different ideas from the stories or, ultimately, are they presenting the same morals? Discuss the coinciding effects of each author’s choice.
* Discuss the idea of education as it is presented in both novels. How does each boy view education and what effect does this have on their growth throughout the novel? Compare and contrast the different experiences each adolescent is familiar with and reflect on the influence these experiences have throughout the novel. Both novels are set in the same country, during (roughly) the same time period, but the views on education are incredibly different - why?
* Both novels use an adolescent protagonist to confront complex and demanding moral questions (somewhat typical of a bildungsroman). What might this be saying about the youth of America? Does it have something to do with the specific time period in which the novels are set? Both protagonists have to confront cultural barriers at some point in time. Again, what message does this deliver about our country’s youth? Is there anything to be said for the unique ways the authors confront these dilemmas?

FORMAL PAPER REQUIREMENTS

* 4-6 pages
* MLA formatting and documentation (first page, works cited page, in-text citations)
* Answer ALL parts of the discussion question (including the additional “why” questions; if I can say “Why?” to one of your explanations…you need to explain further!
* Textual evidence…support, support, support! (This means, depending on your topic, you might need to check out Catcher!)
* Outside examples (at least 2 outside sources)…support, support, support (using MLA documentation)! Use credible articles, reviews, and texts – something with more substance than Shmoop, Sparknotes, Bookrags, Cliffnotes, etc.
* Use correct, and sophomore appropriate, vocabulary, punctuation, and grammar

TURNITIN SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Your final assignment must be submitted to Turnitin.com by midnight on Thursday August 17th.

This means you must join our Turnitin classroom.

Class ID: 15293897

Class password: comets

MORE RAMBLING

Do not be overwhelmed! This is a chance for you to think, deeply, and provide your opinion about what you are reading. You are a smart cookie…show it off!

If you are preparing correctly, you *will* have questions for me. There are a couple different ways to contact me:

On the class website (see reverse side of this handout) there is a Contact Mrs. Valiente form. Fill out all spaces and submit your question. I will respond to you as soon as possible!

You may also email me directly at any time. Please use the school email listed on the website: danielle.valiente@rc255.net

Do not hesitate to contact me with ANY questions you may have! In addition, check out our class website if you get stuck! I will have multiple tools, ideas, and announcements posted that may just help you out of a bind!

Happy writing!