



AP English Literature, Ms. Mathes
Required Summer Reading
Moon Palace by Paul Auster and
How to Read Literature Like a Professor by Thomas C. Foster

Please note that Foster has published another book titled *How to Read Novels Like a Professor*. **Don't get that one (unless you want to read both!)

Part I

This summer you'll read *How to Read Literature Like a Professor*, an overview of prominent themes, motifs, styles, and genres in literature. This text will help you broaden your critical lens in preparation for our study of literature this year, and I think you'll find that Foster writes in an accessible and engaging, if goofy, fashion.

As you read each chapter, take sufficient notes on the **traits of each genre or motif** and *review these notes over the first few days of class* so that you can effectively discuss the material. **In your notes, identify a book you've read or film you've seen that exemplifies the concepts Foster discusses.** For example, in the chapter on the significance of food and eating, I might write an annotation about how J.K. Rowling's descriptions of the feasts and daily meals in the Harry Potter books underscore the sense of community at Hogwarts and contrast the lack of physical and emotional "sustenance" Harry suffers on Privet Drive.

Part II

Use the ideas you take from Foster's book to inform your reading of our second summer reading book, Paul Auster's *Moon Palace* (1989), and, in your annotations, identify explicit examples of some relevant themes and motifs Foster describes; be prepared to discuss them in class.

Moon Palace blends together several themes of your first three years of English classes at Jesuit: the transformative power of the hero's journey, the struggle between culture and identity, and the American experience in literature.

Marco Stanley Fogg, the novel's protagonist, is an orphan, a child of the tumultuous sixties, and an explorer tirelessly (and often aimlessly) seeking a connection with his cloudy past. As with many great characters in literature, the goal of Marco's quest is nothing less than the discovery of his own nature and identity, a quest made more significant by its parallels to the social turmoil of America in the 1960s. As Marco journeys from the man-made canyons of Manhattan to the lunar-landscape deserts of Utah, he encounters a cast of characters and a series of events as strange and surprising as any in modern fiction. Beginning during the summer men first walked on the moon, and moving backward and forward in time to span three generations, the action of *Moon Palace* is propelled by a strange combination of desire, desperation, chance, coincidence, and memory.

Expectations for Completing Your Summer Reading

- You must complete **and review** the reading by the first day of class. I am not assigning a reading journal, but I expect you to engage with the text and record your reflections in some form.
- Active, engaged reading is imperative in this class, so underline passages (be selective; don't underline everything!) and annotate in the margins about significant developments in **character, conflict, theme, and symbolism**.
- During the first weeks of class, you will have 40 minutes to write an in-class essay on *Moon Palace* based on an AP-style prompt, and you will write a short response paper on some of the ideas from the Foster text.

Suggested Topics for Consideration in *Moon Palace*:

- **Motifs and Symbols:** repeated ideas, places, events, objects that take on a connotative meaning
- **Conflict and Character Development:** Source(s) of conflict, how conflict contributes to character development, evidence of character growth (or lack of growth)
- **Landscape and Meaning:** What do the various settings of the novel (physical, cultural, and geographic) symbolize to Marco, and how do these settings function in the story?

If you have any questions, please try to email me early in the summer, as I do not check email frequently during vacations, and it may take me some time to get back to you!

I hope you enjoy a wonderful, safe summer! I'm looking forward to working with you next year!