

AP English Literature, Ms. Mathes
Required Summer Reading
“How to Mark a Book” an essay by Mortimer J. Adler
***How to Read Literature Like a Professor* by Thomas Foster**
***Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley**

This summer you’ll read two books and one essay that will help establish the framework for our work all year. Let me say at the outset that you are taking a college-level class, and I have high expectations for your level of engagement with reading, annotation, discussion, and writing. You must complete **and review** the reading by the start of the first week of class. If you don’t remember details from the reading or can’t talk about it in a thoughtful, critical way, it’s the same as never having done the reading at all.

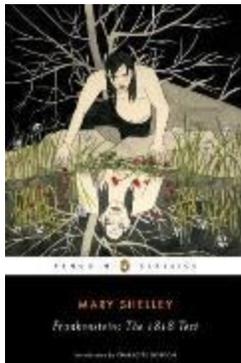
Which Edition of the Books Should I Get?

In years past, students have been very frustrated at the beginning of the year because they read editions of *Frankenstein* that turned out to be filled with errors, incorrectly sequenced chapters, missing text, and a host of other problems. All of these texts were purchased through Amazon and published by the same company: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform. This company produces multiple versions of several of the books we’re reading this year.

As a result of these experiences, I am requiring you to get the exact copies of the books I specify. Any other edition of the book is NOT acceptable. Electronic copies of texts (ebooks, Ibooks) are also not acceptable in my class unless I say otherwise.

How to Read Literature Like a Professor by Thomas Foster: ISBN-13: 978-0062301673

Frankenstein: The 1818 Text—Penguin Classics, January 2018: ISBN-13: 978-0143131847



Optional Assignment: Do you have your reading buddy?



If you would like, before summer break or sometime this summer, reach out to one or more classmates, and make a plan to use Zoom (assuming social distancing is still mandated) to meet to discuss the reading as often as you like. Here are some discussion skills you might practice:

- What's one thing (a quote or idea) from the reading that really resonated with you, challenged you, raised a question for you, etc.?
- Ask and answer each other's questions about the reading.
- Discuss the questions I assigned for each reading, and encourage each other to support ideas with evidence from the reading, read more closely, ask clarifying questions, etc.
- End each meeting by articulating new understandings and questions that you have.

Assignment Part 1: "How to Mark a Book"

Please read Mortimer J. Adler's essay "[How to Mark a Book](#)" before you read either of the two books. **Come to class having written a 1-1 ½ page reflection on the following question:**

- In the past, what has doing your reading *for a class* (as opposed to pleasure reading) "looked like"? In other words, what are your reading habits? Where do you do your reading, when, and how? What about your approach to reading is working for you? What are the drawbacks to this approach?

Here are the questions we'll discuss in class:

- **According to Adler, what does it mean to "own" a book, and what should reading "look like"? What aspects of our culture today make this kind of reading and engagement challenging?**
- **In addition to annotating, in what other ways can we be active, engaged readers who "own" the books we read? In particular, how might we use 21st century technologies to engage more deeply with what we read?**

Assignment Part 2: *How to Read Literature Like a Professor*

After you've read Adler's essay, read and annotate *How to Read Literature Like a Professor*, an overview of prominent themes, motifs, styles, and genres in Western literature. This text will

help you broaden your critical lens in preparation for our study of literature, giving you new ways to “see” the works you read. **Use this book to practice engaging with the author using some of the techniques Adler suggests in his essay. Screen shot some of your most engaged annotations to share in class.**

Come to class prepared to discuss two chapters from this book that you found interesting and that you can apply to books you’ve read or films you’ve seen. Also come to class prepared to discuss one chapter that you struggled with or have questions about.

****Foster references numerous texts to illustrate his points, some of which you will be familiar with and some of which you won’t have heard of. Please don’t dismiss Foster’s insights as far-fetched just because you’re not familiar with the examples he uses. Keep an open and critical mind!**

Assignment Part 3: *Frankenstein*, the 1818 edition

Finally, I would like you to read and annotate Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, first published in 1818 with a second, revised edition published in 1831. This course focuses on the literary and cultural functions of monsters, and *Frankenstein* provides an excellent starting point for that discussion. You will write a timed essay on *Frankenstein* that you revise into a longer paper. **As you read *Frankenstein*, annotate evidence in the book that helps you arrive at an answer to these essential questions. These annotations will serve as pre-writing for your paper.**

- In this class, we will use the definition of “monster” that comes from the Latin word *monstrum*—that which teaches, shows, or warns. We will also talk about how monsters embody the fears of the culture that produces them. Based on your reading of *Frankenstein*, how can we see both Victor Frankenstein and the Creature he creates as monsters? What cultural fears related to science, nature, religion, knowledge, social class, and race do they seem to teach about, warn about, or reveal?
- Choose an idea or motif you were introduced to in Foster’s *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* and that you see evidence of in *Frankenstein*: nature, weather, geography, illness, “politics,” intertextuality/allusions, symbolism, or situations that are all about sex—except they’re not about sex? How does this idea or motif function in *Frankenstein*?

Optional assignment: *Frankenstein* is a story with a rich cinematic and theatrical history. Watch one or more film adaptations of *Frankenstein*, and keep an informal journal of the ways in which these versions adhere to or depart from Mary Shelley’s novel. How do the changes directors and screen writers make change the meaning and function of the story?