

Advanced Placement Literature & Composition

Summer Reading Assignment 2017

(C. Adams, K. Jucker, V. Poole)

Read the novel, *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood, a futuristic novel set in the Christian fundamentalist Republic of Gilead, located in what was once the northeastern part of the US. In Atwood's satire, far-right ideals have been carried to extremes. The resulting society is a feminist's nightmare: women are strictly controlled, unable to have jobs or money and assigned to various classes: the childless Wives, the housekeeping Marthas, and the Handmaids, who bear offspring for the upper classes. The tale is told by Offred, a Handmaid who recalls the past and tells how this chilling society came to be. As you read, annotate your text, take notes, and be prepared for class discussions.

Note: Be sure to read the *Historical Notes*; this is actually the last chapter and crucial to your understanding of the novel.

Essay Assignment: Select **one** of the following themes/motifs and write a well-organized essay in which you discuss Atwood's development of the motif/theme and how it contributes to the meaning of the novel as a whole. Avoid plot summary.

Requirements:

- MLA format—Times New Roman font, 12 point
- Formal style, third person point of view
- Textual support, documented correctly—author and page number. Ex.(Atwood 28)
- Typed, double spaced, 3-4 pages
- Hard copy to be turned in on the **first day of class**
- A digital copy to be submitted to Vericite on eCampus

Themes/Motifs:

Subjugation of women
Lack of Voice/the power of language
Resistance, rebellion, and defiance
Treachery and betrayal
Conformity/complacency
Patriarchal society/Gender Roles
Fertility/sterile, soulless theocracy
Hypocrisy

****Be prepared** for a Check Reading test (50 points) early in the first week of class.