**Honors English Seminar: Insanity**

11/12 English Seminar

Ms. Harrison

Fall 2020

[Insert email here]

*“One person's craziness is another person's reality.”*

 *―*[*Tim Burton*](https://www.goodreads.com/author/show/5773.Tim_Burton)

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| **Course Description**Think about how often you say “That’s crazy” or “They are INSANE!”  In a society where we are becoming increasingly aware of the labels we use to identify ourselves and others, we still toss around these words fairly frequently. In this course we will explore insanity in many forms, from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and paranoia in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest* to mental illness in *Everything Here is Beautiful*, to conspiracy theories and anarchy in *Watchmen.* While all of these works tackle different manifestations of “insanity,” each centers on a central question: Can society drive an individual to a point of no return? Throughout this course we will draw parallels between these novels and modern society to analyze “insanity” in the context of and relation to current social norms. **Note: The texts for this class engage heavily with various aspects of mental illness. If you have concerns about the content of these texts, please check in with your English teacher or advisor.**  |

**Essential Questions:**

* How is a person’s sanity or insanity determined? Who decides what constitutes “crazy”? Is this definition standard for all people, or is the definition somewhat subjective?
* How does the mental health of an individual affect the people around them – family, friends, acquaintances?
* How is the definition impacted by various markers of identity (race, gender, class)? In what ways is the definition weaponized in racist, sexist and classist ways?
* Can an entire society be designated as insane? Who gets to assign the label? Is this something that can be fixed?

**Major Texts:**

* *Everything Here is Beautiful* by Mira Lee
* *Willow Weep for Me: A Black Woman’s Journey Through Depression* by Meri Nana-Ama Danquah
* *The Watchmen* by Alan Moore
* *The Metamorphosis* by Franz Kafka

**Films:**

* *Us* by Jordan Peele
* *Silver Linings Playbook* by David Russell

**Quarter 1 Assessments:**

* Seminars – 2/3x week
* Homework – 2x/week
* Summative Papers – 1
* On-Demand Writing Assignments – 2
* Group Presentation – 1
* Creative Writing Assignment – 1

**Quarter 2 Assessments:**

* Seminars – 2/3x week
* Homework – 2x/week
* Summative Papers – 1
* On-Demand Writing Assignments – 2
* Creative Writing Assignment – 1
* Group Presentation – 1
* Final Project – 1

**Additional Sections Teacher Should Add: Integrity Policy, Google Classroom Instructions, Essay Expectations, Office Hours, “How to Contact” Section**

***Insanity* Calendar**

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| Day 1Intro to Course | Day 2Intro to Course | Day 3*Everything Here is Beautiful* 1 | Day 4*Everything Here is Beautiful* 2Seminar #1 | Day 5*Everything Here is Beautiful 3* |
| Day 6*Everything Here is Beautiful 4* | Day 7*Everything Here is Beautiful 5*Seminar #2 | Day 8*Everything Here is Beautiful 6* | Day 9*Everything Here is Beautiful 7*Seminar #3 | Day 10On-Demand Writing #1 |
| Day 11*Everything Here is Beautiful 8* | Day 12*Everything Here is Beautiful 9*Seminar #4 | Day 13*Everything Here is Beautiful 10* | Day 14*Everything Here is Beautiful 11*Seminar #5 | Day 15*Everything Here is Beautiful 12* |
| Day 16*Everything Here is Beautiful 13*Intro Group Presentation Task | Day 17*Everything Here is Beautiful 14*Seminar #6 | Day 18*Everything Here is Beautiful 15* | Day 19*Everything Here is Beautiful 16*Seminar #7 | Day 20Group Presentation Work Day |
| Day 21Group Presentation Work Day | Day 22Group Presentation Work Day | Day 23Group Presentation Work Day | Day 24Presentations #1 | Day 25Presentations #2 |
| Day 26*Us* Day 1 | Day 27*Us* Day 2 | Day 28Creative Writing Assignment Day #1 | Day 29Creative Writing Assignment Day #2 | Day 30Creative Writing Task Due |
| Day 31*Willow Weep for Me* Day 1 | Day 32*Willow Weep for Me* Day 2Seminar #8 | Day 33*Willow Weep for Me* Day 3 | Day 34*Willow Weep for Me* Day 4Seminar #9 | Day 35*Willow Weep for Me* Day 5 |
| Day 36*Willow Weep for Me* Day 6 | Day 37*Willow Weep for Me* Day 7 | Day 38*Willow Weep for Me* Day 8 | Day 39*Willow Weep for Me* Day 9 | Day 40*Willow Weep for Me* Day 10 |
| Day 41*Willow Weep for Me* Day 11Intro *Willow Weep for Me* Paper | Day 42*Willow Weep for Me* Day 12 | Day 43*Willow Weep for Me* Day 13 | Day 44Essay Writer’s Workshop #1 | Day 45Essay Writer’s Workshop #2 |
| Day 46Essay Writer’s Workshop #3 | Day 47Essay Writer’s Workshop #4Essay DueEnd of Q1 | Day 48*The Watchmen* Day 1 | Day 49*The Watchmen* Day 2Seminar #10 | Day 50*The Watchmen* Day 3 |
| Day 51*The Watchmen* Day 4 | Day 52*The Watchmen* Day 5Seminar #11 | Day 53*The Watchmen* Day 6 | Day 54*The Watchmen* Day 7Seminar #12 | Day 55On-Demand #3(Graphic Cartoon Option) |
| Day 56*The Watchmen* Day 8 | Day 57*The Watchmen* Day 9Seminar #13 | Day 58*The Watchmen* Day 10Introduce Group Presentations | Day 59*The Watchmen* Day 11Seminar #14 | Day 60Group Presentations Workday #1 |
| Day 61Group Presentations Workday #2 | Day 62Group Presentations Workday #3 | Day 63Presentations #1 | Day 64Presentations #2 | Day 65*Silver Linings Playbook* Day #1 |
| Day 66*Silver Linings Playbook* Day #2 | Day 67On-Demand #4Movie Response | Day 68 *Metamorphosis* Day 1 | Day 69*Metamorphosis* Day 2Seminar #15 | Day 70*Metamorphosis* Day 3 |
| Day 71*Metamorphosis* Day 3 | Day 72*Metamorphosis* Day 4Seminar #16 | Day 73*Metamorphosis* Day 5 | Day 74Creative Writing Assignment #2 | Day 75Final Project Introduced |
| Day 76Final Project Workday #1 | Day 77Final Project Workday #2 | Day 78Final Project Workday #3 | Day 79Final Project Workday #4 | Day 80Final Project Workday #5 |
| Day 81Final Project Workday #6 | Day 82Final Project Workday #7 | Day 83Semester Final Project Due |

**Sample Deeper Learning Task:**

***Everything Here is Beautiful* Group Presentations**

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| **Goal:** The goal of this assignment is to sharpen your analytical skills by comparing and contrasting a non-text or multimedia artistic work with our novel. |

**Directions:**

1. Locate a piece of media (film clip, song, artwork, dance performance, dramatic monologue, etc.) that in some way reflects the central themes that emerge in *Everything Here is Beautiful* about mental illness. (Ideally, choose a professional piece that has been published.)

2. Analyze the piece (both your written component and your Google Slides should be well-organized, not a list of answers to these questions.)

* What aspect of mental illness is the piece discussing addressing?
* Is there any historical context or artist’s biographical information that is necessary to understand the work?
* What message is the artist sending about the nature of mental illness? How can this piece help the class understand the topic of mental illness more deeply?
* What are the central connections between this piece and the themes that emerged in our novel? In what ways does this artist view mental illness similarly, and in what ways does the artist view it differently?
* Critique the artwork and/or the novel: in what ways do they portray mental illness effectively, or provide incisive commentary, and in what ways to they misrepresent mental illness?

3. Prepare your two work products: a written component that responds to one or more of the questions above (at least 300/words per group member) and a Google Slides presentation that does the same (3-5 slides).

4. Turn your written component and Google Slides presentation into a 4-6 minute group presentation. Be conscious that if you are “showing off” your piece of art first (e.g. beginning your presentation by playing a clip from a song), you must include that time in your 4-6 minutes.

**Sample Deeper Learning Task:**

***Everything Here is Beautiful* Group Presentations**

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