

History Honors Seminar, 2010-2011
Summer Assignment

I. Active Summer Reading

Find a copy of Thomas Friedman, *Hot, Flat, and Crowded 2.0* (ISBN 978-0312428921).

One of the greatest challenges (and most important skills) for college prep students is reading a text well. Part of the reason for our summer reading is to get some practice with doing this. As you read, remember that in reading any text for academic reasons, the key is to be able to *use the information, and your critical analysis and evaluation of it, later*. To do this, you must read actively, interacting with the text as you read (questioning it, evaluating it, responding to it, being in dialogue with it) and you must create a record that allows you to draw on that interaction intelligently later (e.g., in class discussion and writing). What kind of record you create is up to you; it should certainly suite your way of thinking and working, and be something that you can sustain all year next year as you work with other texts. I encourage you to make it electronic, but above all it has to feel natural for you, so that you will actually do it. You might underline key points in the texts, and write summaries and questions in the margins. You might make brief outlines of each section of the text. You might make a Inspiration diagram of the text. You might read the text electronically (as in a Kindle or other ebook reader) and annotate. Whatever you do, you should be interacting and asking questions, and you should leave a framework that will be accessible to you later when you discuss and write about the text.

During our first class session in the fall, *I will want to see the evidence of your active reading* (this evidence will be our first grade) and you will draw on it for discussion and for writing during the first week of school. Your evidence must be something you can show me, and it *must include questions you have asked of the text*.

I also want you pick two examples that Friedman uses in the book, and know them very well. You should be able to explain them to your classmates, and in your explanation, you should be able to connect them with the thesis of the book, showing why Freidman uses the examples to support his argument in the way he does.

Some questions to think about as you read actively (and document your active reading):

Who is Thomas Friedman? What else has he written?

What edition of the book is this?

What is the significance of the book's title? (Think about what it means to *signify* . . .)

What is the point of view of the author? Does his particular bias affect his presentation or interpretation of facts?

Can you state the book's thesis succinctly?

What are the key issues that the book grapples with?

Our first essay in class, after we discuss the book, will be based on this text. In that essay, I will ask you to analyze and evaluate Friedman's argument. Your documentation of the text should help you to do this well.

II. Technical Preparation

Before school begins, you need to set up some digital research tools that we will use frequently in class. Please create accounts with the following services before the first day of school. Remember your passwords so that the first time I ask you to use them, you can do so without incident. We will have a training session, but I expect you to have the first step--account creation--completed. If you can take some time to play with these tools, all the better.

[Delicious](http://delicious.com) (delicious.com)

This is a social bookmarking service. It's a silly name, but the service is very useful, as it allows you not only to share bookmarks of internet sites of interest, it allows you to search the bookmark collections of others to find information faster.

[Google Docs](http://docs.google.com) (docs.google.com)

Google docs is a document sharing service that allows you to share documents with others online. You will use this to turn your essays in without the hassle of e-mail, and I will make edits and comments and post them for your review. Please use your CCS e-mail address for this account (it will make sharing easier!)

[Evernote](http://evernote.com) (evernote.com)

Evernote is a digital note-taking service. You can use it entirely on the web, thus hitting your account from any computer, or you can download and install the free client software (I recommend this) on one computer. Evernote allows you to quickly and easily capture entire web pages (including the URL and the date accessed), annotate them, and tag notes by topic. It also allows you take notes in general, or screenshots.