If you love reading literature -- novels, dramas and poetry-- in their original artists’ forms, this course is for you!
If you’re interested in comprehending not just the meaning of a story or poem, but how an author crafts that meaning, this course is for you!
If you’re curious about the ways narrative and storytelling influence reality, this course is for you!
If you’re wondering “What is reality other than the stories we tell ourselves?” -- this course is for you!
If you’re wondering if master storytellers are also masters of their own realities, this course is for you!

This summer, we need a jumpstart!

What’s the use of stories if they aren’t even true?

**Step 1:** Read Salman Rushdie’s engaging, “seemingly” light, page-turner, *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* to determine his answer to that question. Granted, like any good storyteller, Rushdie doesn’t flat out “tell” you the answer, but he shows his readers some inferrable possibilities.

**Step 2:** Write a *bold* journal entry, wherein you assert what you believe Rushdie’s answer is to that question (“What’s the use of stories if they aren’t even true?”), based on his novel’s tale. Use *specific* details from *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* and also several aptly selected direct quotations to support your claim. In this journal, feel free to use first person “I,” and also to draw some connections to your own experiences related to the question or to Rushdie’s ultimate takeaway point about the use of stories “that aren’t even true.”
**Step 3:** With Rushdie’s “What’s the use of stories if they aren’t even true?” in mind, engage a rigorous* reading of Helena Maria Viramontes’ novel *Under the Feet of Jesus*. As you read her tale, strive to notice what aspects of how she tells her story resonate in one, two or more ways with Rushdie’s points about the value(s) of storytelling and the ways stories come to be.

*rigorous: i.e. you’re not only reading to “find out what happens,” but also to pay attention to HOW Viramontes is telling her story.

**Step 4:** Write a 2nd journal entry, this time on Viramontes’s novel, wherein you make a claim about HOW this author tells her story, and perhaps (if you can) how some of Rushdie’s points about storytelling “turn up” in Viramontes’ tale. Include in this journal entry a specific passage (no more than a page in her novel, but certainly more than 3 sentences from it!). Hand type this passage into your document, as you’ll notice more about it in the physical act of retyping it, and follow the copied passage with a full discussion that illustrates your claim as to how Viramontes’s writing craft “works” (in that particular passage). Conclude your journal entry with any ideas (half thoughts or full ones!) you have regarding connections you perceive between Rushdie’s message(s) or truths and Viramontes’s tale.

By 8 pm, Monday, August 9th, PLEASE SUBMIT YOUR TWO JOURNAL ENTRIES TO: www.turnitin.com

(If you have never used turnitin.com before, you’ll need to open an account - just go to their website to do that, and then “add” the Class ID below. If you already have an account in www.turnitin.com, you simply need to “ADD a Class” using the class ID/Enrollment key below.)

While these are “relaxed” writing pieces, treat them as summatives in terms of your discipline to produce and submit quality material in a timely fashion (8 pm Mon Aug 9).

Class ID for AP Lit & Comp: Narrative Reality: 29605186
Enrollment Key: APLitRocks

**STEP 5:** For our first class meeting, Wednesday, Sept 1, please write a DRAFT of your college essay using one of the prompts from the 2021-22 Common Application. (If your first college has a unique question to answer, feel free to substitute that, but please include the prompt you’re responding to!) Bring a hard copy to class to submit in person :-), or a google doc you’ll be able to share once we have our Google Classroom established.

The full set of Common Application essay prompts for 2021-2022 → →
The full set of Common Application essay prompts for 2021-2022

1. Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.

2. The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?

3. Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?

4. Reflect on something that someone has done for you that has made you happy or thankful in a surprising way. How has this gratitude affected or motivated you?

5. Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.

6. Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find so engaging that it makes you lose all track of time. Why does it captivate you? What or who do you turn to when you want to learn more?

7. Share an essay on any topic of your choice. It can be one you've already written, one that responds to a different prompt, or one of your own design.