**AP Lit. & Comp: Representative Worlds**

**Paper #2, 3-5 pages, 100 Pts**

**Assigned Readings**

*Inferno* by Dante Alighieri, Trans. John Cirardi or Wordsworth

*Beowulf* by anon, Trans. Seamus Heaney

**Directions:**

Develop your own specific topic based on either an expressive, objective, or persuasive approach to the Inferno and Beowulf. Your paper should engage both of the assigned readings in some depth. Research to supplement your own commentary is strictly optional, but if you do include researched material from a source other than the text, you are responsible for documenting it correctly using MLA style parenthetical documentation.

Topic Approaches (These notes are meant to be suggestive, not exclusive.)

**EXPRESSIVE**

Develop a paper that explores your own understanding of the relevance of each of these works. Discuss your personal opinions, responses, and feelings about the themes, characters or situations you encounter in the readings. Explore ways in which these works resonate with your understanding of contemporary American culture.

**OBJECTIVE**

Develop a paper that analyzes or interprets the meaning of one or both of the works assigned (Inferno and Beowulf).

* Write a comparative analysis.
* Trace the development of a common theme through both works.
* Present an objective cultural interpretation of both works.
* Write a thematic analysis of both works.
* Write a critique evaluating the literary merit of both works.

**PERSUASIVE**

Identify the ambiguity in at least one of the works on the reading list and then argue for a particular interpretation. Acknowledge other interpretations but prove, by your close analysis of details in the text, that your interpretation is a strong one. Argue for a particular reading of one or more of the works we studied.

**CREATIVE**

* Create and describe the complete “media package” for a hypothetical “INFERNO” film franchise. Include trailers, IMDB entry, toys, posters, publicity events, spin off items/shows, “happy meals”, Halloween costumes, etc.
* Create and describe an alternative telling of Beowulf, either from another perspective, as interpreted by another narrator, or as a different genre (eg: BEOWULF: the musical). Do not alter the story significantly.
* Other (dance, sculpture, photo essay, painting, musical score) as approved. Works must be original, not previously created/learned, or amalgams of existing works.

***Suggested* Topics: Paper 2**

(Meant to inspire you to create a topic by example. However, you may choose a topic listed.)

Expressive:

* What seems eerily familiar to you about *Beowulf*? What connections can you make between the world of Beowulf and our own present society?
* Does the moral order Dante establishes in the *Inferno* satisfy your own moral consciousness? How might you personally rearrange the hierarchy of “sins” to be punished, or change the punishments themselves to better suit our modern world?
* You can respond expressively to literary criticism and opinion regarding Inferno and Beowulf .
* You can establish expressively how the Epic heroes of *Inferno* and *Beowulf* are enacting the story of their people, and so of us, as Westerners and descendants of their societies, and how this is relevant to us, today, in modern America.

Objective

* + Compare/contrast the theme of individuality, free will, or rebellion in Beowulf and the Inferno.
  + Contrast Dante’s friendship with Virgil in the *Inferno* with Beowulf’s lack of personal connections in *Beowulf.*
  + Trace the digressions in both works and discuss their relevance to the theme/meaning of the work.
  + Identify and compare/contrast the role of women in *Inferno* and *Beowulf*
  + Interpret the use of mythological creatures in both stories and their impact on each as Christianized moral tales.

Persuasive

* + Argue that Dante’s *Inferno* may still be relevant for modern readers who may reject its Christian theology and medieval cosmology.
  + Argue that the system of “punishments” described in the *Inferno* does or does not represent a form of “perfect justice.”
  + Argue that *Beowulf* is a handbook of Western leadership skills.
  + Argue for or against Beowulf as a Christian story.
  + Argue whether these classics are, in fact, still imparting relevant thematic lessons to our society, or if their time and usefulness, their universal themes, are outdated and the stories ought not to be taught any longer.