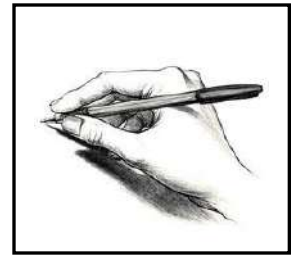


**Bloomington High School**  
**Advanced Placement English Literature and Composition**  
**Summer Assignment 2014**



**Thematic focus:** “Sacred violence”

Perhaps you’ve wondered questions like this:

- Why is our world so violent? Why are there wars? Why can’t people live peacefully? Is peace possible?
- How can people commit acts of violence against others or themselves?
- Are humans naturally good or evil? Does everyone have some bit of evil in them? (Or good?)
- What makes people “bad?” Is it “nature or nurture” – our genetic make-up or the way we are raised?

People throughout history have pondered these kinds of questions. Writers express their exploration of, reflection about, and conclusions to these questions in their works.

One author who explores these issues is Cormac McCarthy. This is one of his statements about the issues of violence, conflict, and bloodshed:

*“There is no such thing as life without bloodshed. The notion that the species can be improved in some way, that everyone could live in harmony, is really a dangerous idea. Those who are afflicted with this notion are the first ones to give up their souls, their freedom. Your desire that it be that way will enslave you and make your life vacuous.”*

There’s a great deal of complexity and richness to these four sentences! Wrestle with them and “unpack them” to decipher McCarthy’s points.

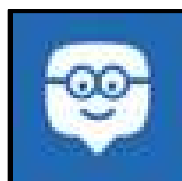
This summer we will study Cormac McCarthy’s highly acclaimed work, All the Pretty Horses, which has appeared on previous AP English Literature exams and contains some beautiful language. We’ll also study some poetry and art. Let’s get started!

**First: Join the AP English Literature & Composition Class of 2015 group.**

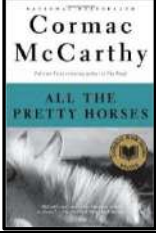

- Go to [www.edmodo.com](http://www.edmodo.com).
- If you don’t already have an account, create one. It’s free and secure.
- You’ll need our group code to join the class: **rdg2m9**.
- This group will be a place to submit your assignments, contribute to discussions, and ask questions. Check it regularly. You will enjoy and benefit from the Edmodo site much more if you create your account early and participate regularly (once a week at least).

If you are interested, there are iPhone and Android apps for Edmodo, and you can configure the settings to alert you when new assignments or comments are posted.

**\*\*Note:** Links to all of the websites mentioned in this document can be found on our Edmodo site so that you can just click to access the page rather than typing in the text.



**Second: Read our texts.** Annotate the text or take notes as you read so that you will be ready for in-depth discussions over the summer and in class.

Novel	<u><a href="#">All the Pretty Horses</a></u> by Cormac McCarthy 	Available in print, audio, and electronic form at local libraries and bookstores as well as online.  You can access or download the full text at this link: <a href="http://teacherweb.com/CA/EastlakeHighSchool/MrGillet/FULL-TEXT_cormac-mccarthy---all-the-pretty-horses.pdf">http://teacherweb.com/CA/EastlakeHighSchool/MrGillet/FULL-TEXT_cormac-mccarthy---all-the-pretty-horses.pdf</a>
Poetry	Focus on the poems of Wilfred Owen, British poet who lived during WWI.  “Dulce et Decorum Est”  “Anthem for Doomed Youth”	These poems are available in many places online. Do some of your own searching for audio recordings, background information, or video resources.  <a href="http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/dulce-et-decorum-est/">http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/dulce-et-decorum-est/</a>  <a href="http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/anthem-for-doomed-youth/">http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/anthem-for-doomed-youth/</a>
Artwork	“Guernica” by Picasso 	This famous painting can be found in many locations – online and in print. It’s been described as “modern art’s most powerful antiwar statement.”  Here’s a link to a PBS page which gives valuable background information: <a href="http://www.pbs.org/treasuresoftheworld/a_nav/guernica_nav/main_guerfrm.html">http://www.pbs.org/treasuresoftheworld/a_nav/guernica_nav/main_guerfrm.html</a>

**Third:** Answer the following questions. These questions are designed to stimulate your thinking and interaction with our texts and the ideas they explore. The writing assignments are a preface to the discussions, seminars, and essays we will hold during the first weeks of class. Thinking deeply, asking questions, and participating in online discussions will help you to prepare for these future assignments. You are also encouraged to explore other resources (research, criticism, commentary, and audio or video resources). Please share your findings with our class community on Edmodo.

1. Identify three scenes in the novel in which the author either uses the imagery of blood to describe the landscape or a character’s real blood is a major part of the scene. Why do you think blood so frequently comes up throughout the novel? How does this motif relate to the themes in the novel?
2. What is John Grady Cole’s code? What is Blevin’s code?
3. Is John Grady Cole a hero? Would he consider himself to be a hero?
4. Discuss the role of women in the life of John Grady Cole. How does an analysis of women contribute to the romantic and coming of age themes that are so prevalent in the novel?

5. What is the significance of the title “All the Pretty Horses”? The title is based in part upon a classic lullaby (below)

### **All the Pretty Horses**

Hush-a-bye, don't you cry,  
Go to sleepy little baby.  
When you wake, you shall have,  
All the pretty little horses.

Blacks and bays, dapples and greys,  
Go to sleep you little baby,  
Hush-a-bye, don't you cry,  
Go to sleepy little baby.  
Hush-a-bye, don't you cry,  
Go to sleepy little baby,  
When you wake, you shall have,  
All the pretty little horses.

Way down yonder, down in the meadow,  
There's a poor wee little lamby.  
The bees and the butterflies pickin' at its eyes,  
The poor wee thing cried for her mammy.

Hush-a-bye, don't you cry,  
Go to sleepy little baby.  
When you wake, you shall have,  
All the pretty little horses.

6. What is the contradictory promise of this lullaby?
7. Near the beginning of the novel's final chapter, John Grady Cole stops for lunch and to rest his horse outside the Mexican village of La Vega and talks to some children. What does he tell them? And how does this episode relate to both the novel's title and the poem that influenced it.
8. Write your own topic for discussion regarding the novel. In preparation for our class discussions, what obvious themes or messages stand out to you in the novel?
9. Respond to Owens' poems. Summarize each in a paragraph. What lines, images, or phrases are the most striking to you? Explain your answer.
10. What do you observe about Picasso's "Guernica?" Which of the elements of the painting are the most striking to you? Would you hang this painting in your house? Explain your answers.

**A note:**

We encourage you to use resources such as Sparknotes, Shmoop.com, the movie based on the book, and other internet, print, and audio resources. However, these should be **supplemental** resources to enhance your reading of the book. Nothing can substitute for the reading process and the experience of reading the novel in its original form.

**Here are a few comments about *All the Pretty Horses*:**

From Sparknotes.com

McCarthy's great epic *Border Trilogy*--whose first novel, *All the Pretty Horses*, has become McCarthy's most famous--tells the story of cowboys in the middle of the twentieth century, men who pursue a romantic Western idea that has vanished and turned from history into myth. McCarthy writes about the dark and unseen side of the Western idea: you will read in McCarthy's novels what you will never see in most Western movies, stories about tragedy, cruelty, and blood without a heroic or redemptive ending. The irony of *All the Pretty Horses* is that it exposes characters desperately trying to inhabit the cowboy myth--to subscribe to the cowboy code of stoicism, understated nobility and great physical skill--in the realities of exploration in a savage and uncivilized land. What emerges is a picture of what the West might really have been, together with a picture of the human spirit under awesome moral pressure.

From Amazon.com

The national bestseller and the first volume in Cormac McCarthy's **Border Trilogy**, **All the Pretty Horses** is the tale of John Grady Cole, who at sixteen finds himself at the end of a long line of Texas ranchers, cut off from the only life he has ever imagined for himself. With two companions, he sets off for Mexico on a sometimes idyllic, sometimes comic journey to a place where dreams are paid for in blood. Winner of the National Book Award for Fiction.

**Questions?**

Please feel free to contact one or both of us. You may e-mail us directly or send a message through Edmodo.

Mr. McAdams                      michael\_mcadams@cjusd.net

Ms. Padilla                      lisa\_padilla@cjusd.net

We look forward to an exciting and productive year of learning with you!

