Plainsong

Reading Assignments

You will read the novel in three sections, averaging about 100 pages for each read. After each read, please respond to the following prompts in at least **a page** of **typed** writing. You will need to use **specific examples** from the text to support your ideas. I will randomly choose responses to collect from each of you, so be prepared for every assignment.

Assignment #1: Read pages 1-99. Due_____
Written response: In the initial chapters of the book, the reader is introduced to all of the major characters: Tom Guthrie, Ella Guthrie, Ike and Bobby Guthrie, Victoria Robidoux, Maggie Jones, Raymond and Harold McPheron. You need to provide **at least** two characteristics of each character and support your ideas with evidence from the text. Begin your paragraphs by stating who the character is and then explain his/her personality traits with the required evidence as proof. I expect to see **6** different paragraphs.

Assignment #2: Read pages 100-199. Due_____
Written Response: Identify each of the different familial situations present in the novel (there are at least 4). Answer the following questions for each family: Who is in the family? What kind of family are they? How effective are they as a family? (defend your reasoning). Why do you think Haruf included them in the novel? What do they represent outside of the novel?
Answer all of these questions, using textual support when necessary, for each of the families you reveal in the novel.

Assignment #3: Read 199-end of novel. Due_____
Written Response: Why might Kent Haruf have chosen **Plainsong** as the title for this novel? What meaning, or meanings, does the title have in relation to Haruf's story and characters? In essence, I want you to defend the title of the story as well as explain why we read this book. What is Haruf attempting to prove through his novel? Be sure to use specific examples to answer this question. (Help: think about the complex imagery in the novel—how does the detail of the story add or subtract from the title?)

Assignment #4: Empire Falls
Questions and Comparative written assignment. Answer the following question: How are the two plot lines and characters connected? What similarities are there in the book and movie? Use specific examples from each to illustrate your comprehension of their relationship.