



**2011-2012 - Summer Assignment – CGS AP Language and Composition: Writing as Social Change  
Students entering Grade 11  
Ms. Parham – [parhamj@norwalkps.org](mailto:parhamj@norwalkps.org)**

Revolution hasn't always looked like a text message. The fact that it can—well, that's pretty cool. The fact that revolution can even look like someone sitting down with a pen and paper—how delightfully old-fashioned!—is pretty cool, too. This course will examine the people who seek social change, the cultures affected by that change, and the writing—non-fiction and fiction, historical and cultural, text-message and presidential speech—that effects change.

Like all courses, this course is political. However, we are unique in our efforts to lay bare the agenda of writers, because we seek to expose not only politicians and spin doctors, but academics and teachers, as well. To do so, we must first unmask our own agenda: students in this course agree to accept the idea that universal social justice is a worthy goal, and students in this course agree to actively write to promote social change. This does not mean that we will all agree about the particulars of what social justice looks like, but it does mean that we agree to wish no harm upon individuals or groups of people, and that only after understanding a culture, a policy, a religion, or a belief is it appropriate to evaluate it.

I applaud your decision to take a college-level course as an eleventh-grader. Enrolling in this class is a commitment to applying yourself diligently and earnestly and seeking actively to improve your reading, writing, and thinking skills. Let's start right now.

**What to read**

Nickel and Dimed by Barbara Ehrenreich

A Small Place by Jamaica Kincaid

An article of your choice that relates to a social issue in Nickel and Dimed and A Small Place.

**What to write**

A 2-page argument in MLA format responding to a social issue present in both Nickel and Dimed and A Small Place. Find a current news article that also pertains to this social issue. Please have a print copy of the article. (Please select an article befitting a college-level course. Use sources with a writing/reading level comparable to *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The New Yorker*, *Harper's Magazine*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, and so on.) Write a thesis statement elucidating your position on this issue, and use the three summer reading texts as evidence to support your position.

**What to expect in August**

On the first day of school, be prepared to hand in your thesis for the argument paper. Bring a print copy of the article you have chosen. On the third day of school, be prepared to submit the writing assignment and take a detailed reading quiz on both of the long texts. **Those who choose not to complete the summer reading for this course will be dropped down to honors.**

**A Few Thoughts on Summer Reading**

My expectations are that you will approach this course and its assignments with energy and enthusiasm, wit and wisdom, gusto and chutzpah. Summer reading is no exception. The texts and writing assignment listed above should be challenging but not overwhelming. When the assignment asks you to discuss a "social issue," it is asking you to consider power relationships. Think of power relationships between groups of people (such as race/gender/class), between people and nature (environmental concerns), between individuals and corporations, between groups of people and institutions, and so on. If you have questions about the readings or the writing assignment, I will be available via email before July 25. Feel free to send me a line: [parhamj@norwalkps.org](mailto:parhamj@norwalkps.org). Ask me a question, tell me how much you love the texts, tell me how much you despise the texts, send me a quote of the day—whatever. I'm available until July 25 and would love to hear from you. Have a great summer. Happy reading.