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Themes in Contemporary Literature I

Summer Reading Essay

Ms. Luehrs (Baumeister)

Directions: Choose one of the following prompts and compose a five or more paragraph essay. Be sure that you include quotations and in-depth analysis. You will also need a works cited page with correct MLA citations throughout.

1. Although John Green wrote that *The Fault in Our Stars*, “is not a cancer book, because cancer books suck,” the novel does revolve around aspects of the grieving process. Taking what you already know about the grieving process, and the following stages, identify which stage had the greatest impact on a major character. Then contrast that idea with the stage that had the greatest impact on a minor character. The stages of grief are: Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression, and Acceptance.
2. Discuss the symbolic significance of the “literal heart of Jesus.” Why was it so important that the cancer support group had to meet at that location? Taking that idea in mind, how did it relate to Hazel and Augustus’ religious or philosophical views on life and death?
3. What is the significance of Van Houten? Why is it so important to Hazel and Augustus to meet this author? How did they change after traveling to Amsterdam? (Think beyond the obvious plot twist---i.e. the new cancer)…
4. The end of the book contains the last few lines of Augustus’ letter to Van Houten expressing his love for Hazel. He writes, “I like my choices. I hope that she likes hers.” Why was this such a heart-wrenching line in the book? What does this say about the idea of identity?