**AP Capstone Diploma Program

AP Seminar
Summer Reading

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Please be aware that summer assignments are due on the first day of the fall semester. If you choose to change this course over the summer, you will be held responsible for any summer assignment accompanying the replacement course on your class schedule as of Aug. 11, 2025. If you have questions regarding summer assignments, please contact the ELA department chair, Andrea Weaver at weavera@pcsb.org.

This AP Seminar summer reading assignment is designed to prepare you for the rigor demanded by AP Seminar, which is in turn designed to prepare you for the second component of the program, AP Research. The developers of the AP Seminar and AP Research classes work in concert to define and refine the academic skills critical to success in the advanced stages of high school, college, and professional life.

Students that earn a 3 or higher in both components and on 4 additional AP exams, earn the AP Capstone Diploma. Those two classes and that diploma - on both the Common Application and in transcripts - signal academic ambition and college readiness to private and public universities across the country - and around the world.  [Research](https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED603711) indicates that training in these courses correlates with - among other positives - early endurance in post-secondary studies and higher first year GPAs.

That said, welcome to AP Seminar! This year’s course promises to expand your intellectual horizons and enhance your critical thinking. I couldn’t be more pleased to preside over that process, and hope you find it as fun as you do rewarding.

Below, you will find three overarching theme sets for your summer assignment: **Technology and Ethics**; **Justice and Equality**; and **Environment and Sustainability**. For each theme set, there are two (*roughly*) countervailing groups of texts that provide differing or divergent perspectives on one or both of those themes in the theme set. Each text in each group belongs respectively to the following genres: fiction, non-fiction and scholarly article.

**Assignment**: You will select **one** of those theme sets, and **one** text from *both* Group A and Group B. In a double-spaced, circa 1,000-word analytical essay (with 12-point Times New Roman font and 1 in. margins) - written by you and *not* AI - you will compare the two texts, explaining the insights offered by each and how, taken together, they illustrate and illuminate the thematic issues under consideration. Again, the essay should be original and written by you in its entirety. Any suspected and/or detected use of AI may have consequences including, but not limited to, an assignment grade of zero and referral to administration.

You will also need to involve a brief analysis of at least **two** independently researched and reputable scholarly texts in support of each position/perspective. Outside the stacks of a physical library, those texts may be found, for example, by using a scholarly database like JSTOR or GALE; the digital public domain; or in a publication perhaps already in your possession. Use the Chicago Manual of Style for your citations and bibliography.

\*Please also note that any of the following fiction used by you for the purposes of this assignment is done voluntarily and without requirement. As with any literature, you may encounter in it mild profanity, violence, sexual situations or similar material that can be construed as controversial. Reader discretion is advised.

***NB*** All articles linked below can be accessed in full by creating a JSTOR account.

**Technology and Ethics

Group A**

1. ***Exhalation: Stories***
Chiang, Ted. *Exhalation: Stories*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2019.
2. ***The Age of AI and Our Human Future***
Kissinger, Henry, Eric Schmidt, and Daniel Huttenlocher. *The Age of AI and Our Human Future*. New York: Little, Brown and Company.
3. **“**[**Beyond the Productivity Paradox**](https://dl.acm.org/doi/pdf/10.1145/280324.280332)**”**
Brynjolfsson, Erik, and Lorin M. Hitt. “Beyond the Productivity Paradox.” *Communications of the ACM* 41, no. 8 (August 1, 1998): 49–55.

**Group B**

1. ***1984*** Orwell, George. *1984*. New York: Harvill Secker, 1949.
2. ***The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power***
Zuboff, Shoshana. *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power*. New York: PublicAffairs, 2019.
3. [**“The Future of Humanity”**](https://www.jstor.org/stable/26803993)
Bostrom, Nick. “The Future of Humanity.” *Geopolitics, History, and International Relations* 1, no. 2 (2009): 41–78.

**Justice and Equality**

**Group A**

1. ***Atlas Shrugged*** Rand, Ayn. *Atlas Shrugged*. New York: Random House, 1957.
2. ***Discrimination and Disparities*** Sowell, Thomas. *Discrimination and Disparities*. New York: Basic Books, 2018.
3. [**“Competition and Democracy”**](https://www.jstor.org/stable/724885)
Becker, Gary S. “Competition and Democracy.” *Journal of Law and Economics* 1, no. 1 (1958): 105–120.

**Group B**

1. ***Utopia***
More, Thomas. *Utopia*. Edited by Paul Turner. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1995.
2. ***The Spirit Level: Why More Equal Societies Almost Always Do Better*** Wilkinson, Richard, and Kate Pickett. *The Spirit Level: Why More Equal Societies Almost Always Do Better*. London: Allen Lane, 2009.
3. [**“The Law of Peoples”**](https://www.jstor.org/stable/1343947) Rawls, John**.** *The Law of Peoples*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999.

 **Environment and Sustainability**

**Group A**

1. ***The Overstory***Powers, Richard. *The Overstory*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2018.
2. ***The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History*** Kolbert, Elizabeth. *The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2014.
3. **“Trajectories of the Earth System in the Anthropocene”** Steffen, Will, et al. "Trajectories of the Earth System in the Anthropocene." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 115, no. 33 (2018): 8252–8259.

**Group B**

1. ***The Ministry for the Future***
Robinson, Kim Stanley. *The Ministry for the Future*. New York: Orbit, 2020.
2. ***Cool It: The Skeptical Environmentalist’s Guide to Global Warming***
Lomborg, Bjorn. *Cool It: The Skeptical Environmentalist’s Guide to Global Warming*. New York: Crown Business, 2007.
3. [**“The Risks of Climate Change to the United States in the 21st Century”**](https://www.cbo.gov/publication/61146)Congressional Budget Office. *The Risks of Climate Change to the United States in the 21st Century*. Washington, DC: Congressional Budget Office, December 2024.