***The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini (2003)**

**AND**

**Film Adaptation (**[**Mark**](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm1749112/?ref_=tt_ov_dr) **Forster, 2007)**

The English Department has carefully evaluated *The Kite Runner* and its film adaptation—each as a whole—and deemed them worthy for the 10th grade World Literature curriculum. However, the suggestive scene from chapter seven of the novel will be omitted from any class screening of the movie (which will only take place if time allows).

**I. PLOT SUMMARY**

Khaled Hosseini’s *The Kite Runner* is a story about two young boys growing up in Afghanistan during the Soviet occupation of 1978. Through a series of flashbacks interwoven with present day, Hosseini tells the story of Amir and his servant/best friend Hassan and how their choices have devastating effects on both of their lives. Hosseini presents not only a world under Taliban rule, but also a picture of Afghanistan’s golden age, filled with honor and beauty. The novel is ripe with examples of privilege, prejudice, and—most of all—the power of choice.

**II. RATIONALE AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

As with each text studied in this course, *The Kite Runner* unit is grounded in an examination of the book’s historical and cultural contexts, which is particularly relevant given the U.S.’s involvement in Afghanistan after the events of September 11, 2001. For students to understand today’s headlines about the Middle East, it’s crucial for them to understand not only how the Taliban rose to power but also that Afghanistan and its surrounding countries were not always war-torn regions, but were once prosperous empires. Because the protagonist comes of age during Afghanistan’s golden age, readers get a taste of the country and culture in its prime. We read beautiful, captivating descriptions of not only the landscape and architecture, but also of the people and traditions. And because Amir returns to his home country after the Taliban has seized control, readers also experience the stark contrast of the terror many people experience in the Middle East today.

Students will delve into the text to analyze the themes of ethnic prejudice, honor, betrayal, guilt, and redemption. As fifteen- and sixteen-year-olds, sophomore students are going to be dealing with increased social pressure, and they will be making important decisions and facing the consequences of those decisions. While *The Kite Runner* does tell a beautiful story of friendship, the core message of the text is that our choices can define us, for better or worse. For most of the book, Amir struggles with guilt over a poor choice he made as a child; but as an adult, he faces unbelievable odds to redeem himself for that mistake. Students come away with a better understanding of how their actions affect not only themselves but those around them, and not only now, but in the distant future as well.

Throughout this unit, we will focus on improving our academic discussion and literary analysis skills with this text.

**III. COMMON CORE STANDARDS**

**Reading Literature**

* Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. (9-10.RL.1)
* Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text. (9-10.RL.2)
* Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme. (9-10.RL.3)
* Analyze how an author’s choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise. (9-10.RL.5)
* Analyze a particular point of view or cultural experience reflected in a work of literature from outside the United States, drawing on a wide reading of world literature. (9-10.RL.6)
* Analyze the representation of a subject or a key scene in two different artistic mediums, including what is emphasized or absent in each treatment (e.g., Auden’s “Musée des Beaux Arts” and Breughel’s *Landscape with the Fall of Icarus*). (9-10.RL.7)
* By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 9–10 text complexity band independently and proficiently. (10.RL.10)

**Writing**

* Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
  + Introduce a topic; organize complex ideas, concepts, and information to make important connections and distinctions; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.
  + Develop the topic with well-chosen, relevant, and sufficient facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience’s knowledge of the topic.
  + Use appropriate and varied transitions to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.
  + Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to manage the complexity of the topic.
  + Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.
  + Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic). (9-10.W.2)

**IV. ADDRESSING SENSITIVE SUBJECTS**

Possible sensitive topics contained in *The Kite Runner:* profanity, sexual content, attempted suicide, and violence.

In the classroom, sensitive topics will be dealt with in a mature fashion toward an understanding of why this material is included in the novel and its film adaptation. In this text specifically, the sexual content is a product of the antagonist’s quest for power and domination. The scene is a critical turning point for the protagonist, Amir, who witnesses the rape of his friend. Students will be warned about the potentially upsetting nature of this scene; it will not be shown during screening of the film adaptation. Amir’s lack of action plagues him with guilt and opens the door to important classroom discussions about choices and consequences, including how and when to speak up for others (and how to access resources to help themselves and others in traumatic situations).

The English Department feels that the literary merit of the novel and its film adaptation more than compensates for the inclusion of this sensitive subject matter. Students are encouraged to express their beliefs and views openly within the classroom environment. If a student is uncomfortable at any time, the student should meet with the teacher to discuss his/her concerns.

**Documentation**

Brown, Amanda Christy. “Teaching ‘The Kite Runner’ with The New York Times.” *The New York Times*, 8 Jan. 2015. learning.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/01/08/teaching-the-kite-runner-with-the-new-york-times/

***Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi (2001)**

**AND**

**Film Adaptation (**[**Vincent Paronnaud**](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm1749112/?ref_=tt_ov_dr) **and**[**Marjane Satrapi**](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm2277869/?ref_=tt_ov_dr)**, 2007, rated PG-13)**

The English Department has carefully evaluated both the text and film *Persepolis*—each as a whole—and deemed them worthy for the 10th grade World Literature curriculum.

**I. PLOT SUMMARY**

Marjane Satrapi’s graphic novel *Persepolis* is an autobiographical account of life in Iran during the 1979 Iranian Revolution. Satrapi recounts her life between the ages of nine and fourteen. Marji struggles to reconcile what she is being taught at home with what the government is imposing on her society and school. Students will examine the components of the graphic novel genre and analyze how Satrapi uses it to present historical facts within literature, specifically examining the Iranian and Islamic revolutions.

**II. RATIONALE AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

This unit is grounded in a study of the text’s cultural and historical contexts. Students conduct guided research about Iran and its Islamic revolution that occurred in the late 1970s as they begin reading Satrapi’s memoir. With what students are studying in World History, an emphasis during this unit will be placed on the idea of revolution—what pushes a society to revolt, how those revolts begin and evolve, and how the result of a revolution is often too far in the opposite direction (or back at the beginning).

Students also examine the use of conventional literary techniques in graphic novels—an unconventional genre that has received critical acclaim in academic/literary communities. We consider how writers use literary devices to generate meaning and influence interpretation not only in written novels, but also through images. To finish the unit, students demonstrate their comprehension of the text, understanding of its context, and learning about the graphic novel genre by using the format to tell the story of a revolution that has affected their own lives.

**III. COMMON CORE STANDARDS**

**Reading Literature**

* Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. (9-10.RL.1)
* Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text. (9-10.RL.2)
* Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme. (9-10.RL.3)
* Analyze how an author’s choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise. (9-10.RL.5)
* Analyze a particular point of view or cultural experience reflected in a work of literature from outside the United States, drawing on a wide reading of world literature. (9-10.RL.6)
* Analyze the representation of a subject or a key scene in two different artistic mediums, including what is emphasized or absent in each treatment (e.g., Auden’s “Musée des Beaux Arts” and Breughel’s *Landscape with the Fall of Icarus*). (9-10.RL.7)
* By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 9–10 text complexity band independently and proficiently. (10.RL.10)

**Writing**

* Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
  + Introduce precise claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that establishes clear relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.
  + Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly, supplying evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience’s knowledge level and concerns.
  + Use words, phrases, and clauses to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims.
  + Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.
  + Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented. (9-10.W.1)

**IV. ADDRESSING SENSITIVE SUBJECTS**

Possible sensitive topics contained in *Persepolis:* profanity, violence, vulgarity, and brief sexual references.

In the classroom, sensitive topics will be dealt with in a mature fashion toward an understanding of why this material is included in the graphic novel and its film adaptation. The sensitive topics in *Persepolis* help to make Marji’s experience growing up during the Iranian Revolution more realistic and relatable, which helps students better understand her story and its importance. One of the harshest scenes takes place during the early days of the revolution, when Marji’s independent and outspoken mother is violently threatened and insulted by a member of the new regime. This event causes Marji’s mother to sink into a deep depression. Such scenes will be discussed in light of the author’s purpose in including them, considering genre, themes, and character development.

The English Department feels that the literary merit of the graphic novel and its film adaptation more than compensates for the inclusion of this sensitive subject matter. Students are encouraged to express their beliefs and views openly within the classroom environment. If a student is uncomfortable at any time, the student should meet with the teacher to discuss his/her concerns.

***A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier* by Ishmael Beah (2007)**

The English Department has carefully evaluated *A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier* by Ishmael Beahas a whole and deemed it worthy for the 10th grade World Literature curriculum.

**I. PLOT SUMMARY**

*A Long Way Gone* recounts the author’s true childhood experiences during the civil war in Sierra Leone. After being separated from his home, family, and friends, and after running for the war for as long as he could, Beah becomes a soldier for the Sierra Leone Army fighting against the rebels, the Revolutionary United Front. Under the influence of drugs and manipulation by adults, Beah is forced into violence, but he eventually is rescued by UNICEF. He is successfully rehabilitated and becomes an advocate for children in wartorn areas. Thematically, this beautifully written account of a child soldier reveals the traits that make us human and how that humanity can be lost under the influence of violent leaders. Structurally, students will explore personification of nature and flashbacks as devices Beah uses to enhance the storytelling of his personal experience.

**II. RATIONALE AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

We begin our exploration of this text by examining the conditions in Sierra Leone that led up to the country’s civil war, and students will be encouraged to make connections to the Iranian Revolution we explored in the previous unit. Beah’s story offers students a first-hand recent account of the persistent tragedy of child soldiers. While this is a difficult subject to face, it’s a reality that many teens their age are forced into elsewhere in the world. It’s an issue most students become particularly passionate about because this book is the first time they hear about it, yet it’s a massive, widespread problem.

Beah recounts his transition from a child running from war into a vicious soldier and through rehabilitation with brutal honesty. *A Long Way Gone* allows students to recognize the importance of their own childhood innocence, to question the identification of a clear enemy, and to explore the resilience of the human spirit. In this unit, we will focus on literature’s role in spreading awareness and fostering resilience. We will explore how Beah’s story and the way he tells it spreads the message about this important issue as well as how his personal story can inspire resilience.

**III. COMMON CORE STANDARDS**

**Reading Literature**

* Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. (9-10.RL.1)
* Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text. (9-10.RL.2)
* Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme. (9-10.RL.3)
* Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone). (9‐10.RL.4)
* Analyze how an author’s choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise. (9-10.RL.5)
* Analyze a particular point of view or cultural experience reflected in a work of literature from outside the United States, drawing on a wide reading of world literature. (9-10.RL.6)
* Analyze the representation of a subject or a key scene in two different artistic mediums, including what is emphasized or absent in each treatment (e.g., Auden’s “Musée des Beaux Arts” and Breughel’s *Landscape with the Fall of Icarus*). (9-10.RL.7)
* Analyze how an author draws on and transforms source material in a specific work (e.g., how Shakespeare treats a theme or topic from Ovid or the Bible or how a later author draws on a play by Shakespeare). (9‐10.RL.9)
* By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 9–10 text complexity band independently and proficiently. (10.RL.10)

**IV. ADDRESSING SENSITIVE SUBJECTS**

Possible sensitive topics contained in *A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier* by Ishmael Beah:violence, drug use, profanity, and references to sexual violence.

In the classroom, sensitive topics will be dealt with in a mature fashion, toward an understanding of why this material is included in the memoir—to show readers the brutal reality of war as it affects children and young adults around the world and encourage them to work to prevent it. For example, drugs are introduced as a method used to brainwash and numb the children into the compliant, violent soldiers the commanders need. Class discussions will focus on why it is important that we hear Beah’s story and the unpleasantness it includes: so we can prevent other children from having to endure it.

The English Department feels that the literary merit of the memoir more than compensates for the inclusion of this sensitive subject matter. Students are encouraged to express their beliefs and views openly within the classroom environment. If a student is uncomfortable at any time, they should meet with the teacher to discuss their concerns.

***Kony 2012* by Invisible Children (2012)**

The English Department has carefully evaluated the *Kony 2012* documentaryas a whole and deemed it worthy for the 10th grade World Literature curriculum.

**I. PLOT SUMMARY***Kony 2012* is a short documentary film that became the most viral video in history when it was released on YouTube in 2012. The video intended to spread awareness about the atrocities committed by warlord Joseph Kony and spark a movement demanding his arrest. The non-profit organization Invisible Children, which created the video, explains the crimes committed by Kony and his rebel group, the Lord’s Resistance Army, through central Africa. Kony’s extensive recruitment of child soldiers is emphasized in the video and will help students to realize the issue exists beyond the pages of *A Long Way Gone* and affects thousands of children.

**II. RATIONALE AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

We will watch this documentary in class, along with excerpts from follow-up videos by Invisible Children, after reading *A Long Way Gone*. Students will analyze the video for its effectiveness and use of rhetoric, comparing it to Beah’s memoir. We will further connect both texts in a discussion of white saviorism. To complete the unit, students will choose an issue they are passionate about and choose a medium that will most effectively spread awareness about it.

**III. COMMON CORE STANDARDS**

**Reading Informational Text**

* Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. (9-10.RI.1)
* Analyze how the author constructs an analysis or series of ideas or events, including the order in which the points are made, how they are introduced and developed, and the connections that are drawn between them. (9-10.RI.3)
* Analyze in detail how an author’s ideas or claims are developed and refined by particular sentences, paragraphs, or larger portions of a text (e.g., a section or chapter). (9-10.RI.5)
* Determine an author’s point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that point of view or purpose. (9-10.RI.6)
* Analyze various accounts of a subject told in different mediums (e.g., a person’s life story in both print and multimedia), determining which details are emphasized in each account. (9-10.RI.7)
* Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; identify false statements and fallacious reasoning. (9-10.RI.8)
* By the end of the year, proficiently and independently read and comprehend informational texts and nonfiction in a text complexity range determined by qualitative and quantitative measures appropriate to grade 10. (9-10.RI.10)

**Writing**

* Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
  + Introduce precise claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that establishes clear relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.
  + Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly, supplying evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience’s knowledge level and concerns.
  + Use words, phrases, and clauses to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims.
  + Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.
  + Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented. (9-10.W.1)

**IV. ADDRESSING SENSITIVE SUBJECTS**

Possible sensitive topics contained in *Kony 2012*:violence, disturbing images, and references to sexual violence.

In the classroom, sensitive topics will be dealt with in a mature fashion, toward an understanding of why this material is included in the documentary—to show viewers the brutal reality of war as it affects children and young adults around the world and encourage them to work to prevent it. The English Department feels that the literary merit of the video more than compensates for the inclusion of this sensitive subject matter. Students are encouraged to express their beliefs and views openly within the classroom environment. If a student is uncomfortable at any time, they should meet with the teacher to discuss their concerns.

***The Tempest* by William Shakespeare (1623)**

**AND**

**Film adaptation (Julie Taymore, 2010, rated PG-13)**

The English Department has carefully evaluated *The Tempest* and its film adaptation—each as a whole—and deemed them worthy for the 10th grade World Literature curriculum.

**I. PLOT SUMMARY**

*The Tempest* is set on a remote island where Prospero, the rightful Duke of Milan, plots revenge and plans to reclaim his dukedom using illusion and skillful manipulation. He conjures up a storm, the eponymous tempest, to lure his enemies to the island. Once there, they are subject to his whims through the spirits and slaves who are tasked with his bidding. Thematically, students focus on the themes of revenge and forgiveness in this play, making connections to the other texts we’ve read in this semester.

**II. RATIONALE AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

*The Tempest* is unlike all other texts in the World Literature curriculum in that its study is not rooted in historical context, but rather thematic exploration. The entire play revolves around different characters’ desires for and plots to get revenge, but it ends with forgiveness. Further, the characters are each trapped in prisons, some literal and some more metaphorical. Students will explore those prisons--how and why they are created--as well as how Shakespeare develops the theme of forgiveness and connections they can make to other books we’ve read in the second semester.

As Shakespeare’s last play, and as a play within a play itself, *The Tempest* is often seen as Shakespeare’s farewell to the stage. Students will be encouraged to analyze that connection as we say farewell to our year together in our last unit of study.

**III. COMMON CORE STANDARDS**

**Reading Literature**

* Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. (9-10.RL.1)
* Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text. (9-10.RL.2)
* Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme. (9-10.RL.3)
* Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone). (9‐10.RL.4)
* Analyze how an author’s choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise. (9-10.RL.5)
* Analyze a particular point of view or cultural experience reflected in a work of literature from outside the United States, drawing on a wide reading of world literature. (9-10.RL.6)
* Analyze the representation of a subject or a key scene in two different artistic mediums, including what is emphasized or absent in each treatment (e.g., Auden’s “Musée des Beaux Arts” and Breughel’s *Landscape with the Fall of Icarus*). (9-10.RL.7)
* Analyze how an author draws on and transforms source material in a specific work (e.g., how Shakespeare treats a theme or topic from Ovid or the Bible or how a later author draws on a play by Shakespeare). (9‐10.RL.9)
* By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 9–10 text complexity band independently and proficiently. (10.RL.10)

**IV. ADDRESSING SENSITIVE SUBJECTS**

Possible sensitive topics contained in *The Tempest*: mild sexual references, drunkenness, and violence.

In the classroom, sensitive topics will be dealt with in a mature fashion, toward an understanding of why this material is included in the play. For example, the drunkenness occurs only in scenes with the jester and butler, foolish characters the audience was supposed to laugh at and mock; the mild sexual references occur in a speech Prospero makes to his daughter and her new fiance, warning them not to sleep together before they are officially married.

The English Department feels that the literary merit of the play more than compensates for the inclusion of this sensitive subject matter. Students are encouraged to feel comfortable in expressing their beliefs and views openly within the classroom environment. If a student is uncomfortable at any time, they should meet with the teacher to discuss their concerns.