

INGL 3300-066--“**Post-Apocalyptic Literature and Film**” (UPRM, Fall 2015)
Assignment #1-- Journal Entry #1 (**Draft due Sept. 8; final draft due Sept. 15**)

OVERVIEW—PURPOSE OF THE ASSIGNMENT

Write a *personal response* (in an informal but grammatically correct style) on the connection between personal and social issues in *The Giver*. You may draw upon personal experience. However, the purpose is to get *inside the perspective of a character* in Lowry’s novel. As such, you should connect the character’s personal issues or dilemmas with their community. I.E., the personal decisions or challenges that an individual character faces cannot be separated from the structure of the community, its rules, the role that the character is expected to play, etc.

Format/requirements. Use at least one quote from the text. Cite it by Chapter/page number. You may also reference the film adaptation. Length: 250 words in 2-3 paragraphs, which will be *one double-spaced page*. Use Times New Roman 12 font with 1 inch margins. Bring a full draft to class **Tu Sept. 8** for peer review. The revised **final draft** is due **Tu, Sept. 15**, 2015 at the beginning of class.

TOPICS (choose one, and sign up with a group on Th, Sept. 4)

Note: *Develop the first two topics in debate style; you may not fully agree with either 1a or 1b, but develop an argument that one is more true than the other.*

1. Through “the choice to go to Sameness... We gained control of many things. But we had to let go of others.” (Ch 12). Choose one of the following ways to interpret The Giver’s words, using examples from the text:

1a. What was sacrificed had a largely utopian outcome. **OR**

1b. Too much had to be “let go,” and the sacrifices had primarily dystopian results.

2. Describe the purpose/impact of denying “relief-of-pain” to Jonas. What does it mean to have access to “instantaneous deliverance” from pain, and then to be denied it? Could this be an allegory on the investment in avoiding pain in the U.S., whether in the medical system, parental over-protection, etc.? (Ch 14)

3. Comment on The Giver’s view of Jonas’ Instructors in science and technology: “They know nothing.” Jonas had repeated his teachers’ views of the brain as “like a computer.” He reacts to The Giver’s words as “a terrible accusation.” (Ch 13)

4. Comment on the religious or quasi-religious dimensions of The Receiver’s “vital” role “to lift that burden” of suffering and pain from the community. (Ch 12) [i.e., he is like a “suffering servant”]

Note: The next two topics (#5 & 6) are inter-related. Be sure to discuss Jonas or Fiona in relation to the written and unwritten rules of their community.

5. Try to describe Jonas' *experience* of feeling sexual desire, when no one else in his community feels this. You could consider parallels to situations in other post-apocalyptic stories about the "last man on earth." Jonas is apparently the only human who is experiencing those desires. How does that make him feel/act?

6. Conversely, you could take Fiona's point of view, and describe/analyze the mix of emotions she feels when Jonas conveys, verbally or non-verbally, his desire.

7. Describe several changes that were made in adapting the novel to film. Why/how were they made, and to what degree did this reshape your understanding?

8. Why does Jonas become "irrationally angry" at his groupmates? Have you ever felt something similar, about those who are "satisfied with their [ignorant] lives"?

9. Discuss the differences between having "one-generation memories," and memories that have to be "tugged forward from many generations back" (Ch 11). How does that shape Jonas' world? What is the relationship to memory in your family/society?

10. Using clues from the text, try to describe the conflict that may have developed between the Giver and his wife, over time, when the Giver had to hide his books from her, and maintain secrecy about all his work.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"*The Giver* invites readers to experience a world without poverty, without suffering, without chaos. By presenting a seeming utopia, this sophisticated, multi-layered text engages readers in inquiry about how such a society functions and in the struggle to reconcile it with the reality they know" (Lea 2006: 51).

Lea, Susan G. "Seeing Beyond Sameness: Using *The Giver* to Challenge Colorblind Ideology." *Children's Literature in Education*, 37 (2006): 51-66.

"Lowry's citizens enjoy absolute stability, safety and freedom from any material want. . . . Levels of general satisfaction, civic participation and communal responsibility are very high in each community" (Hanson, 2009: 47)....

Hanson, Carter F. "The Utopian Function of Memory in Lois Lowry's *The Giver*." *Extrapolation*, 50.1 (2009): 45-60.

"Lowry shows that even **fragments of memory** not under state control can be] a source of considerable individual and **emancipating power**." (Hanson, 45)