

Name: _____

Period: _____

United States History
Summer Reading Assignment
Michael Shaara's *The Killer Angels*



Overview:

The Battle of Gettysburg was fought from July 1–3, 1863, in and around the town of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. The battle resulted in the largest number of casualties of the entire Civil War. Union Maj. Gen. George Meade's Army of the Potomac defeated attacks by Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia, ending Lee's attempt to invade the North. Because of the significant number of casualties and due to Gen. Lee's changing the Confederacy's overall approach to the war as one of defensive in nature afterwards, many historians point to the Battle of Gettysburg as the most important, and perhaps the turning point, of the entire Civil War, even though Lee's surrender at Appomattox Courthouse will not occur until April 1865, after almost 2 years of further bloodshed.

This summer you will be reading Michael Shaara's excellent book, *The Killer Angels*, which is a work of "historical fiction." Published in 1974, it won the Pulitzer Prize and is considered one of the best historical fiction novels ever produced. Shaara's goal in writing this book was to take historical documents and sources such as letters, diaries, memoirs, oral accounts, and so forth to create a human sense of the battle, including conversations, strategy-making, thoughts and emotions, and so on, to give the reader not only an idea of **what** happened at Gettysburg, but also **how** the main characters dealt with the difficult decision-making, joy, anger, fear, jealousy, friendship, camaraderie, homesickness, and other human emotions that were part of their everyday lives during the Civil War.

Your assignment is to read the entirety of *The Killer Angels* and complete the following written components: (1) short answer questions (40 points) and (2) 2 analytical essays (30 points each). These will be assessed as a **Test Grade** upon your return for the Fall Semester.

Learning Objectives:

- Understand the human element of the Civil War and that the figures in the history books are real men and women.
- Understand the underlying causes of the Civil War.
- Understand the nature of the war and the importance of leadership at all levels of the conflict.
- Understand the importance of religion to the participants of the Civil War.

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St. Thomas Honor Code Acknowledgment

“As a man of St. Thomas, I uphold our honor through goodness, discipline, and knowledge, and I lead my brothers to do the same.”

I acknowledge the Honor Code, set expectations for test taking and the responsibility to be academically honest in my responses on this exam.

Signature

Grading Rubric

<i>The Killer Angels</i> Questions:	_____ out of 11 =	_____	Points
Essay #1 (Lee/Longstreet):	_____ out of 30 =	_____	Points
Essay #2 (Meade’s Victory):	_____ out of 30 =	_____	Points
		<input type="text"/>	Total

Part 1: Short Answer Questions (40 points)

Using *The Killer Angels*, answer the following questions thoroughly and analytically. Be sure to respond to **ALL** parts of the question.

1. Who wrote *The Killer Angels* and when did he write it? How do you think it was received at the time?

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5. What was Lee's objective during the Gettysburg campaign? Was he successful? What implications did this have for the Confederacy?

6. How critical to Union victory was Chamberlain's defense of Little Round Top?

7. Why did Longstreet disagree with Lee over the progress of the battle? Is it the duty of a subordinate to question his leader if he disagrees? How did this disagreement affect "Picket's Charge"?

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8. How would you define Lee's leadership? Was his style of leadership successful? What could he have done differently and what would you have done differently?

9. Who is your favorite character? Why?

10. Who is your least favorite character? What don't you like about him?

11. If you were in one of the Civil War armies that fought at Gettysburg which leader would you want to fight under? Why?

