

FIRST COLLEGE ASSIGNMENT

This assignment includes reading *The Distance Between Us* by Reyna Grande and responding with an essay. Read the essay question options prior to beginning the book. Your essay must be submitted via email as an attachment to reading@avila.edu by **Tuesday, August 1, 2017**.

This assignment will be graded using three components

- 1) Respond thoughtfully to **one** of the three questions outlined below. Your response should demonstrate your knowledge of the book by using specific examples.
- 2) Demonstrate the following writing mechanics:
 - a) Consider focus, development, organization, style, tone and editing when writing.
 - b) The essay should be 3-4 pages in length. Format the essay with double spaced, Times New Roman 12-point font, and one inch margins.
 - c) Include both your full name on the front page **and the essay number to which you are responding.**
- 3) Utilize the following college-level writing expectations:
 - a) Choose either MLA or APA style and use consistently throughout the essay.
 - b) Use the last name when referring to the author. (Example: Grande, not Reyna)
 - c) Use the last name and page number when quoting, paraphrasing, or referring to a specific moment in the text.
 - d) Avoid slang or overly colloquial language. (Example: avoid :-(or "lol")
 - e) Use personal pronouns (I, we, us) sparingly. (Example: When reading the text, I felt...)
 - f) Be sensitive to labels as you write, particularly regarding disadvantaged or minority groups. (For example, the terms Mexican American, Hispanic, Latinx and/or Chicanx are acceptable in reference to those with Mexican ancestry, but other terms are outdated or offensive.)

Special Note

This memoir is an evocative read and discusses sensitive topics including domestic violence, alcoholism, abandonment, immigration, poverty and oppression. This reading could be difficult for those who have experienced past trauma. While there is an expectation that you read the book, please be warned before you begin that some of the material will be challenging, and prepare yourself. Please contact Dr. Paige Illum if you expect to experience difficulties finishing this reading.

Your essay should respond to **one** of the three following questions

- 1) From a worldview perspective it can be easier to identify differences between The United States and other countries and more difficult to discern the similarities. With the hope of identifying

how we are all similar, identify and explain three similarities between Grande's life experiences and your own. Cite specific examples from the book. Identify and explain what was most eye-opening to you about Mexico and Grande's childhood. What do you think others would find most eye-opening about The United States and your childhood?

- 2) Grande undergoes many changes related to her identity. Her identity is influenced by how she feels others perceive her, how she perceives herself, and by her age as she grows from a child to a woman in the book. Her identity is impacted by her living situations with grandparents, mother, father, mentor, etc., her citizenship, where she is living, her education, abuse, activities, etc. Identify and explain three specific examples from the book where Grande references her identity and struggles with it. How has your identity changed over the last several months and how might it change as you begin college?
- 3) This is a three-part progressive essay. You are expected to include the responses to each section. Together, the three sections should total 3-4 pages.
 - a) Before you read the book, consider your knowledge about immigration from other countries to America. What do you know about Mexico, poverty, immigration policy, legal and illegal immigration, etc.? Write out a short response considering your prior knowledge.
 - b) While reading the book (around the half-way point), consider what you are learning about Grande's experiences. How does this affirm or contradict what you knew before? What do you think will happen next? Write out a short response about the experience of reading the book.
 - c) After finishing the book, consider the impact of Grande's story on you. What have you reconsidered about the way you live your life and your values? How have your ideas or opinions changed regarding immigration since you wrote section A?