

SUNY NEW PALTZ DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH COMPOSITION PROGRAM

COMMON SUMMER READING PROGRAM FAQ

What is the Common Summer Reading selection for 2011?

The Composition Committee and One Book (a community reading program) have selected Sherman Alexie's collection *War Dances* (2009). Students can purchase the book at the campus bookstore.

Why does the SUNY New Paltz Composition Program require first-year students to read a book over the summer?

SUNY New Paltz, like many colleges and universities across the country, has implemented a common summer reading program for several reasons. We want to reinforce the principle that engaging in critical reading is an important part of being a member of an academic community. To that end, we have posted discussion questions and writing assignments online to help students think about Alexie's *War Dances* as they are reading. We also hope that this program will provide a means by which our incoming students become part of the academic community here at SUNY New Paltz, as well as the larger community. By encouraging first-year students to engage in critical reading, discussion, and thinking about a shared text—whether in their Composition classrooms or in extracurricular settings—the reading initiative invites dialogue among students as well as between students, faculty, and locals. We are currently coordinating extra-curricular programming (in previous years, we have sponsored a photography exhibit, author speaking engagements, film screenings, and residence hall discussion groups), to be announced in Composition classes this fall.

Does every first-year student read *War Dances*?

No. Only those students enrolled in Composition courses in the fall will be required to read the book. However, we encourage those students who are in General Honors English to read it and to take part in related discussions and events.

Where do students find the background material, discussion questions, and writing assignments associated with *War Dances*?

Throughout the summer, first-year students can visit the following link to introductory materials: http://www.newpaltz.edu/orientation/firstyear_summerreading.html

When students come to SUNY New Paltz for orientation, they will be issued a computer ID and password. Once they have received their ID and password, they can log into our campus Blackboard site where they will find the complete Common Summer Reading Program material by clicking on the "Community" tab at the top of the page, then "English Comp I." The materials are posted under "Content" on the left side of the page. (Please note: this site is not accessible without a computer ID and password.)

If you have any questions, email Joann K. Deiudicibus, Composition Program Staff Assistant: deiudicj@newpaltz.edu