Dear SUPA Student:

Welcome to Writing 105 (WRT 105), Practices of Academic Writing, the introductory writing course required of all first-year students at Syracuse University. We hope that you will find this college writing course enjoyable, challenging, and useful.

1. In preparation for the year, we are asking you to read Where You Go Is Not Who You’ll Be: An Antidote to the College Admissions Mania by Frank Bruni.

According to Amazon reviews, “[o]ver the last few decades, Americans have turned college admissions into a terrifying and occasionally devastating process, preceded by test prep, tutors, all sorts of stratagems, all kinds of rankings, and a conviction among too many young people that their futures will be determined and their worth established by which schools say yes and which say no.

That belief is wrong. It's cruel. And in WHERE YOU GO IS NOT WHO YOU’LL BE, Frank Bruni explains why, giving students and their parents a new perspective on this brutal, deeply flawed competition and a path out of the anxiety that it provokes.

Bruni, a bestselling author and a columnist for the New York Times, shows that the Ivy League has no monopoly on corner offices, governors' mansions, or the most prestigious academic and scientific grants. Through statistics, surveys, and the stories of hugely successful people who didn't attend the most exclusive schools, he demonstrates that many kinds of colleges-large public universities, tiny hideaways in the hinterlands-serve as ideal springboards. And he illuminates how to make the most of them. What matters in the end are a student's efforts in and out of the classroom, not the gleam of his or her diploma.

Where you go isn’t who you'll be. Americans need to hear that—and this indispensable manifesto says it with eloquence and respect for the real promise of higher education.”

As you read, please annotate the text in order to be prepared for a group presentation on the various topics examined in the text. The presentation requirements will be discussed when we return to school.

We hope you will enjoy this summer reading experience.
2. In addition to reading the book, please complete a 650-word typed draft of your college essay. The common application essay prompts for 2019-2020 are as follows:

1. Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.

2. The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?

3. Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?

4. Describe a problem you've solved or a problem you'd like to solve. It can be an intellectual challenge, a research query, an ethical dilemma - anything that is of personal importance, no matter the scale. Explain its significance to you and what steps you took or could be taken to identify a solution.

5. Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.

6. Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find so engaging that it makes you lose all track of time. Why does it captivate you? What or who do you turn to when you want to learn more?

7. Share an essay on any topic of your choice. It can be one you've already written, one that responds to a different prompt, or one of your own design.

Please write the number count and limit on the bottom of the essay as well as which question you're responding to. Be ready to submit your draft and sign up for at least one conference with a senior English teacher. This will be discussed further when you return to school in September.

Please email us at ryakrug@bergen.org or stecir@bergen.org if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Mr. Ryan Kruger and Ms. Stephanie Cirone