Otterbein’s Common Book Program, one of the University’s signature programs, offers a shared reading experience for all incoming first-year students, faculty, staff, and other members of the Otterbein community. Our 2013 Common Book, Little Princes: One Man’s Promise to Bring Home the Lost Children of Nepal, by Conor Grennan, is a memoir, an adventure, and a romance. In preparation for New Student Week and your first semester at Otterbein, you’ll read Grennan’s book and write an essay. Your essay, about 500-words (no more than about 2 double-spaced typed pages but not noticeably less), will provide an analysis in response to one of the thesis statements below.

Directions for the Common Book Assignment

Defend one of these two thesis statements. After reading Little Princes, you’ll see that these main ideas overlap; however, they approach the book differently, the first focusing on Grennan’s development, much like a character analysis, and the second on external factors that distinguish the country of Nepal. In addition to these different emphases, the two thesis statements suggest different patterns, or ways of organizing your ideas in writing. Choose the one that interests you more, the one you can analyze most effectively.

1. Little Princes is a story of transformation, portraying Grennan when he first comes to Nepal as privileged, adventure-seeking, and carefree, but by the end of the memoir as humbled, driven, and committed to a mission.

   OR

2. To appreciate Little Princes fully, readers must understand Nepalese culture, the civil war in Nepal, and the complicated dilemmas of the children in orphanages in Nepal.

Be sure to analyze and not summarize, or simply re-tell the story. Support your essay with specific illustrations from the book, at least one of which is a direct quotation. Cite pages and include a Work Cited entry. In this assignment, we are interested in your response as a critical reader, and so you should not use any sources other than Little Princes in writing your essay.

For additional information, see the Index, An Update on the Children of Little Princes, and the Questions for Discussion, all at the end of the book. Also, refer to these two handouts: Rubric for the Common Book Essay and Document Design.

Save your essay to a USB flash drive and print a copy. Bring both the flash drive and a printed copy of your essay to New Student Week, August 21-25, 2013. Your essay will be the first writing that you submit to your ePortfolio (an electronic archive of your academic work) as an Otterbein student. You will receive instructions on how to add your essay to your Otterbein ePortfolio during New Student Week. The paper copies of your assignments will be collected and discussed during your FYS course meetings on Thursday, August 22 and Friday, August 23.

Questions on the Common Book Assignment? Contact Regina Kengla at rkenega@otterbein.edu.

See you at New Student Week!