John Colasacco’s Antigolf is not the opposite of golf or golf’s antithesis. It is the world as if the world were a kind of game. It is both extremely important and completely pointless. It will make you think you are dreaming while you are reading it. Let’s put things in a house. Now the house is full. Your mother is a tree. The piano fails as an instrument but fits nicely into the pool. And it’s terrifying.”

–Chris Kennedy, author of Encouragement for a Man Falling to his Death

TEACHING GUIDE

Antigolf

John Colasacco

978-1937865-45-0 / 282 pages / $15.95

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What “harmless” acts do you participate in that ultimately depress or harm you? Consider the thought processes that recur in you, and the way characters’ interior dialogues and images might echo or exaggerate your own.

2. When have you voluntarily sacrificed something very important to you? When do you see sacrifice/surrender happening in the scenes?

3. What do you know about your family’s past? If you are generally proud of it, say a few words about the parental or authority figures in the book. Do the same if you are among those less proud (neutral or worse.)

Recommended Classes:
- Creative Writing
- Novel / Short Story / Poetry Hybrid Forms
- Composition & Cultural Rhetoric
- Addiction & Recovery Psychology
- Religious Studies
- Gender Studies

Keywords:
Novel / Lyric Fiction / Prose Poetry / Fables / Early Childhood / Post-Traumatic Stress / Grief / Catholicism / Hegemonic Masculinity / Disordered Eating / Psychological Abuse / First-Generation Americans / Adolescence / Compulsive Behavior / Addiction / Self-Harm / The 2000s / Luso- & Italian-American Lit

Civil Coping Mechanisms
http://theaccomplices.org
4. Do you have a soul, or something you consider equivalent to that? If yes, describe any thoughts you have on the book’s structure. For those who answer no, or prefer not to answer, please weigh in too.

5. In what ways might you consider yourself superior to the average person? How do you acquire this feeling/status, and what can this process reveal about the power relationships in Antigolf?

6. What behaviors, actions, and pastimes did you enjoy early on in life that perhaps others did not? Is there a pattern to these behaviors? Do you engage in them currently? What is revealed when you consider the characters’ behaviors similarly?

7. Have you ever heard a newborn, pre-verbal infant pretend to cough, dishonestly, in order to be comforted? If so, what might that fundamental capacity imply about the rudiments/purpose of human speech, and, by extension, the kinds of dishonest speech that link the scattered events of Antigolf?

8. For the author, it was a goal to have the book increase, however temporarily, a reader’s belief in the possibility of being loved and understood. What passages of the book might serve as evidence of that goal, and to what extent does the effort succeed or fail?

Possible Assignments:
- Record a list of highly-specific things that you notice in the past 24 hours. What patterns do you see in your list? Attempt to use the items and patterns as material for a new piece.
- Make a list of ten thoughts that are either totally trivial or totally profound. Find a way to weave the best results into a cohesive narrative or lyric text.
- Do a piece of “bad writing,” in which you intentionally try to make the piece as awful as you can, in whatever way(s) you see fit.
- Make a list of ten highly specific things that you both love and hate at the same time. Use the list as a starting point for something else, or shape it into a stand-alone work.
- List ten ordinary behaviors you do in spite of yourself. Imagine an outside observer watching you, and write as though you are that person seeing you doing these things.
- Make a list of highly sensory images that are unexpectedly soothing somehow. Follow up with a list of images that are oddly/unexpectedly upsetting. Use this material toward your next piece.