Reading 009 class will read *Tuesdays with Morrie* by Mitch Albom. The reading of this novel will be done independently by you. The book is kind of unique in that it is not organized by numbered chapters, but contains 26 sections with titles. For each of these sections you will have a set of questions to answer after reading it. These questions will require re-reading, being able to skim or scan the text for answers, and the different kinds of comprehension including inference, facts and details, determination of themes/main ideas, finding supporting details, the setting, characters, and how the section is organized. Each set of questions will have directions to guide you.

A rubric will be used to determine your answer response quality. Many of the questions will be answerable in different ways.

Good luck in your reading of *Tuesdays with Morrie*. Howard Taylor, Instructor
Section One of Tuesdays with Morrie: “The Curriculum”

The MAIN CHARACTERS:

MITCH ALBOM (right) is a 30-something sports writer and graduate of Brandeis University.
While he always wanted to be a jazz musician, Mitch instead leads the fast-paced life of a sports journalist, enjoying the success and adventure of being very good at what he does.

MORRIE SCHWARTZ (left) is a 70-something former professor of Mitch’s, recently diagnosed with ALS. Despite the terminal nature of his condition, he insists on living out each day to its fullest instead of just dying quietly.

TED KOPPEL -- One of the most famous living television interviewers, Koppel conducts three interviews with Morrie for the news show "Nightline." He is surprised when Morrie asks him personal questions just after they have met, though he immediately seems to like Morrie, and eventually grows to call him a friend. He is moved almost to tears during his last interview with Morrie, having deconstructed what Morrie had called his "narcissistic" television personality.

CHARLOTTE - Morrie’s caring wife, who, at his insistence, keeps her job as a professor at M.I.T. throughout Morrie’s illness.

JANINE - Mitch’s patient wife who willingly takes a phone call from Morrie, whom she has never met, and insists upon joining Mitch on his next Tuesday visit. Although she usually does not sing upon request, she does for Morrie, and moves him to tears with her beautiful voice.

PETER- Mitch’s younger brother who lives in Spain. Peter flies to various European cities seeking treatment for his pancreatic cancer, though he refuses any help from his family, who he has for the most part estranged himself from. He is reluctant when Mitch first tries to reestablish a relationship with him, but eventually warms.
Section One p.1 The Curriculum Questions

1. Use a dictionary and define *curriculum*. Write the definition here.

2. Who is the narrator of this story? Describe the life that Mitch was leading: What did he do? Where did he do it?

2. Why did Mitch consider his upcoming Tuesday meetings with Morrie as a class, and where did these classes occur? What significance did the small hibiscus plant in the window have?

3. In the first paragraph the subject of the class is stated. What is the subject?

4. How many students were in Morrie’s last class? What would the final graduation ceremony be?

5. What were some of the tasks Mitch had to do in the class: mental/responding and physical responding?

6. P.3 will take you back to 1979, when Mitch was graduating from Brandeis University in Walthem, Mass. Mitch describes his impressions about his favorite professor. Paraphrase his description into a short paragraph. You can write this paragraph on a separate page and attach to this section sheet.

Section Two p.5 “The Syllabus”

1. Morrie’s “death sentence” was pronounced in the summer of ’94. How did Morrie know that something really bad was happening to him? What did he have to stop doing?
2. p. 5-6, second paragraph describes the “healthy” Morrie’s dancing ability. Why would he “not” look like a professor with a doctor of sociology when he danced?

3. On p. 7, Morrie and his wife, Charlotte, got the official word about what was wrong with Morrie. Describe in a paragraph the many questions Morrie asked the doctor? What was ALS or amyotrophic lateral sclerosis?

4. Morrie was a deep thinker, and asked two questions, “Shouldn’t the world stop? Don’t they know what has happened to me?” Why do you think he asked those questions? Would he receive an answer soon?

5. p. 9, Morrie went to his last Social Psychology class and hobbled into the room. He warned his students that there was a risk in taking the class: “My friends, I assume you are all here for the Social Psychology class. I have been teaching this course for twenty years, and this is the first time I can say there is a risk in taking it, because I have a fatal illness. I may not live to finish the semester.” He smiled after telling them this. Why do you think he could smile?

6. p.10, tells of Morrie using the word wither, and confronted the question, would he be ashamed of dying. In the story he goes on stating his “final” project. What would be the theme or subject of his final project. Did he invite anyone to study with him?

7. p.11, Morrie had therapy in his home, medication increased, massage therapists were used, and in the first paragraph Morrie had special training in a new life-skill. What was the training. Look up the name of the training in a dictionary and write a definition.

8. p.11, Morrie’s bodily functions quickly deteriorated. Was he embarrassed all the time, or was he open and even light-hearted about his problems? Did he quit seeing visitors?

9. p.12, Morrie would be a person you would really like to talk to. Why was Morrie so popular, even while he was dying?

10. P.12-13, Morrie had a special ceremony or gathering with a lot of his friends and family. What was this special event, and how did Morrie and the invited guests handle it?

11. p. 13, while going through the process of dying, Morrie actually was going to live perhaps the most exciting events of his life. What do you think Morrie is going to do during his last months?
Section Three p.14 “The Student”

1. P.14, Mitch’s story from the time he left his college hugging old professor Morrie, to the time when he would re-unite. Mitch’s ideas about life after college had to be adjusting to live in the “world.” What does the narrator (Mitch) tell about his life in the world.

2. pp. 14-15, Mitch had a dream to start out with. What was that dream? Had he accomplished any of it yet? Death hits him hard. Describe who died and how it affected him.

3. p.15-16, Mitch changed his lifestyle. What does the last paragraph say about his former lifestyle to his new one? Make a list of descriptives the narrator uses.

4. P.17, Mitch was burying himself in his own accomplishments, as he states. He got married. How did Mitch find out about his old professor’s condition?

Section Four p.18 “The Audiovisual” w/paper assignment

1. Why do you think the title, “audiovisual” is used? What does that mean? What kind of word is audiovisual?

2. If you could have become an acquaintance of Morrie, how do you think you would have handled his discussions of death and dying? Would you be able to continue studying or visiting with him? Write a 2-page paper on the subject of life and death. You can describe an experience you have had with losing someone you really were close to. In the paper provide descriptions of your
feelings, experiences and events related to your subject person. Be sure to open the story with a beginning paragraph (Intro), lots of details to support the beginning paragraph, and then close with a summary. This will be a personal-thoughts type of paper, and will be shared with only whom you want it shared with, perhaps the instructor only. Let me know.

3. P.18-23, describes the interview of Morrie by famed news-man Ted Koppel of ABC’s Nightline program. Millions watched the show. Describe by listing, in order, how the interview went from when the reporter drives up to and enters Morrie’s house, to when the interview is over. Consider the attitude of Morrie on meeting Ted, what did Morrie do to Ted before the interview on-camera (reversed roles)?

4. p.21, Morrie describes Ted as a narcissist. Look up the word in a dictionary. Break the word into word parts (prefix/root/suffix) and then write the definition here. Did you know what the word meant when you read the chapter?

5. p.22, Ted got taken by Morrie’s “humility” about death was inducing. What do you think was getting to Ted the most? (check Morrie’s response in the 3rd paragraph)

6. p.23, Mitch was flipping channels when he heard the words “Morrie Schwartz? How did Mitch feel when he heard this name on national television?

Section Five p.26 “The Orientation”

1. P.24-25, of the previous sections tells of Mitch entering Morrie’s house for the first day of “class.” Why does Morrie state that someday maybe Mitch will consider him his friend? What do you think Mitch’s relationship was with Morrie at the meeting of the first class?

2. p.26, Mitch describes his lifestyle and work ethic. How did he describe his work ethic? What did he do and how did he do it? Was he in stress or relaxed about his work? Paraphrase these answers from what is said in the book.
3. p.27, Mitch describes Morrie at his first class meeting. How long had it been since Mitch had last seen Morrie? In your own words write a description of the appearance of Morrie, as Mitch saw him.

4. p.28, Mitch gets a hug from Morrie. Make a list of the details that Mitch describes through his senses, about this physical contact.

5. P.29, at Mitch’s first class with Morrie, he states that “our last class had just begun.” Why did Mitch make this contradictory statement? Explain your answer by reading again what comes before the last statement in the book section.

Section Six  p.32 “The Classroom”

1. Why is the section title “Classroom” used to describe Mitch’s visits to Morrie’s home each Tuesday?

2. p.30-31, Mitch takes his first class with Morrie. Describe what kind of teacher Morrie is. Is he a tough grader, and hard to pass? Is he kind and considerate to students, or could he care less? Would you like to get a teacher like Morrie? Why?

3. p. 31, what nickname does Mitch come up with for his professor?

4. p.32, who is Connie? You may have to skim back to find out.
5. P.33-34, Mitch describes his changes during the 80’s and 90’s. What were some of the changes he writes about? List them.

6. p.35, Mitch is asked a series of questions by Morrie. Write the four questions and try to answer them for your own life.

Section Seven p. 41 Taking Attendance

In their first visit Morrie had said that our culture “does not make people feel good about themselves.” Instead of buying into the culture, Morrie rejected popular culture and developed his own culture. What things are important in the culture Morrie developed?

What important things were included in Mitch’s culture?

Think about this quote: “So many people walk around with a meaningless life... The way you get meaning into your life is to devote yourself to loving others, devote yourself to your community around you, and devote yourself to creating something that gives you purpose and meaning.” What do you think about Morrie’s statement? How can you apply it to yourself? How can such a statement “change” the world?
What circumstances change in Mitch’s life that allows him to make another visit to Morrie?

**Section 8  p.48  The First Tuesday**

Through his illness, what has Morrie discovered is the most important thing in life to learn? Explain what he means.

**Section 9  p. 55  The Second Tuesday**

What is Morrie’s perspective on self pity?

In what ways do you agree or disagree with Morrie’s perspective?

**Section 10 p.62  The Third Tuesday**

What does Morrie suggest that we should do to avoid having regrets?

**Section 11 p.69  The Audiovisual, Part Two**

**Section 12  p.73  The Professor**
Section 13 p.80 The Fourth Tuesday

“Learn how to die, and you learn how to live.” What does this statement mean?

Section 14 p.90 The Fifth Tuesday

How is Morrie’s family important to him?

According to Morrie, why is family important?

In what ways is your family important to you?

Section 15 p.100 The Sixth Tuesday

Section 16 p.109 The Professor, Part Two

Write a statement said by Morrie that you find to be important. Explain why this statement is important to you. THE PROFESSOR

What kind of professor was Morrie?

Section 17 & 18 p.115 The Seventh Tuesday/The Eighth Tuesday

Pick one idea from one of these two chapters to reflect on it.

Section 19 p.130 The Ninth Tuesday

What does Morrie plan to have written on his tombstone?

What does Morrie mean when he says, “I believe in being fully present?” How is Morrie’s belief different from what the culture teaches?
How does Morrie’s father die?

Section 20 p.142  The Tenth Tuesday
Who does Mitch bring to visit Morrie on this Tuesday?

What do you think makes Morrie such a likeable person?

Section 21 p. 152  The Eleventh Tuesday
What does Morrie mean by, “People are only mean when they’re threatened....and that’s what our culture does.” Explain how you find this statement to be true.

Section 22  p. 160  Audiovisual, Part Three
Morrie tells Ted Koppel that he’s less afraid of dying now than earlier. What does he pay less attention to? What does he pay more attention to?

When Ted Koppel asks Morrie if he wanted to say anything to the audience, what did Morrie say? What is Morrie’s mantra?

What did Morrie admit for the first time?
Section 23  p. 164 The Twelfth Tuesday

What is Morrie’s concept of forgiveness?

How can you apply Morrie’s concept of forgiveness to yourself?

What does Morrie mean by “the tension of opposites?”

Section 24  p.171  The Thirteenth Tuesday

According to Morrie, how are we different from plants and animals? Do you agree with him? Explain why or why not.

According to Morrie, what are the important questions?

What do you see as the important questions?

Morrie describes his perfect day as an ordinary day. What is a perfect day to you?

Section 25  181 The Fourteenth Tuesday

What did Morrie and Mitch tell each other the Mitch’s last Tuesday visit?

Section 26  p.187 GRADUATION / CONCLUSION

After years of distance from his brother, Peter, Mitch finally reaches his brother. How does his brother respond?

From the impression left on you after completing the book, what are those things that make life worthwhile?