I'm really grateful to have had this experience. Being in a classroom setting with prisoners was definitely an experience not everyone is able to have. It was interesting to see how much the prisoners care about literature and how knowledgeable they are about analyzing different pieces of literature. I just sat there in awe at everyone's different interpretations of Robert Frost's poetry. Many of the things they pointed out were aspects of the poems that I myself would never have come up with. You see them as real people and not just prisoners
stuck in a cell for committing crimes. You see that they genuinely care about learning literature and becoming something more than just a prisoner. Thank you for giving me this opportunity!

Audrey

Dr. Higinbotham,
The slam of the entrance gate knocked a few realizations into me this past Friday. The main truth that I came to realize was the actual punishment of prison: the wasting of one’s life. Now I might have been able to tell you this prior to my visit, but the actuality of it did not click until Friday. It’s comparable to when we are young, and our parents put us in time-out beside the pool. We are forced to watch our friends play and splash, but we are restricted to the side lines. We know what we are missing, but we cannot do anything about it without invoking the wrath of our parents. Prison is obviously world’s away in truth to this example, but our visit made me think of it. It made me think of all the things that I plan to “one day do,” and all the opportunities that we here at tech hope to accomplish. Men and women in that prison can’t plan for the immediate future, because that future is restricted to the property line of the prison. Now, I will say that when it comes to things like murder, a person should have their life restricted after they extracted the life from someone else. However, with many of the petty crimes that overcrowd jails today, I can’t help but think about all that missed opportunity!
There is a quote in George R.R. Martin’s series, Game of Thrones, that I was reminded of in prison.
Jojen Reed says, “A reader lives a thousand lives before he dies. The man who never reads lives only one.”

The prisoners that participate in your program are searching for the thousand lives that can replace their absent one. These books pick them out of their entrenched lives and allow them to walk freely behind a novel’s protagonist. This idea is beautiful to me, and I admire all that you do for them. I would love to go back one day.
Thank you, so much, for this opportunity.

Best, 
Liam

Hey Dr. H,

First off, I want to start by thanking you, Dr. Higinbotham, for giving me the
opportunity to visit the prison. It was an experience of a lifetime, and I will certainly not forget it. The men in the classroom were among some of the most intelligent individuals I have ever spoken to. They were so welcoming and thankful for our being there. I am so thankful they allowed us to join them in their classroom. I was amazed at some of the ideas and insight that the men brought to the table. The conversations, disagreements and agreements, were so interesting and really challenged my mind to see different perspectives on the same topic. My favorite part of the visit was when it was time for us to depart and none of the GT students hurried to get up. We all stood around and continued to carry on conversations to learn more about the men that had generously allowed us into their classroom. Not once while I was there did it cross my mind that those men were any different than the men I encounter everyday. It was great seeing the joy in the faces of the men as Dr. Higinbotham personally engaged with each and every student. I could see their appreciation and respect towards her. I have told so many people of my experience in the past 5 days and I will continue to do so. I would encourage any and everyone to participate in similar programs and I commend those who work so hard to make the program happen. I am so appreciative to the prison students, the prison staff and Dr. Higinbotham for allowing me this humbling and mentality-changing experience.

Thank you again!
Kelly

I was extremely impressed by all of the students in class for numerous reasons. The first was their willingness to participate and obvious enthusiasm to learn. Students were never hesitant to speak up and there was never a lull in conversation. In fact, with each poem we discussed, Dr. Higinbotham had to cut conversation short because we didn’t have nearly enough time to hear the many opinions of the class. It is very clear that the students love the class and relish the opportunity to learn. There were no groans when Dr. Higinbotham mentioned that the day’s lesson was on poetry, as there likely would have been in the classroom at my university.

The second thing that impressed and honestly surprised me was the general level of intelligence of the class. The students were all extremely well spoken with impressive vocabularies. More than once, a student referenced a word in the poem that most of the Tech students didn’t know. When giving their opinions, students often pulled from other literary sources and made astute connections.

The prison students treated all of the Georgia Tech students with great respect, standing and shaking our hands when we walked in, saying they were glad to have us and making sure they used our names as well. After class, one student
enthusiastically told us about his research paper that discusses the similarities between Hamlet and his Native American roots and his hopes of getting his paper published.

I genuinely hope I am able to return to hear what the students have to say about the last poem we never finished discussing.
Megan Turner (Andy)