

Contemporary Literature

Ms. Walek

Room 318

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Course Description

Contemporary Literature is a one-trimester class that will fulfill the senior English requirement for our students. The class is designed to introduce students to the most prevalent genres in contemporary fiction and non-fiction. It will prepare students to use close reading tools and the writing skills they have previously developed to interpret and evaluate the pieces we study. This class is geared toward college bound students; therefore, your work will be held to a high standard. Finally, the class will offer experiences in contemporary literary criticism, including current reviews so that students may begin to develop critical skills of their own.

Course Outline

- I. The Initiation Novel
 - A. Definition and Samples
 - B. Historical Background
 - C. *The Catcher in the Rye* (J.D. Salinger) vs. *Girl, Interrupted* or *Mona Lisa Smile*
 - D. Quiz (100pts)
 - E. Novel Test (200pts)
 - F. Study Guide Packet (30pts)

- II. Modern Espionage Novel
 - A. History and Realms
 - B. Excerpt from *Night* by Elie Wiesel
 - C. Film *Out of the Ashes*
 - D. *The Odessa File* (Fredrick Forsyth)
 - D. Quizzes (1-6/65pts and 6-15/50pts)
 - E. Novel Test (100pts)
 - F. Study Guide Packet (30pts)
 - G. Project (Characters, Timeline, Travel Guide/100pts)

- III. The Utopian Novel
 - A. Definition of dystopia
 - B. Social Stability/Totalitarianism
 - C. Freedom of Choice/The Sanctity of Human Life/Dependence Upon a Higher Power/Need for Human Control of Technology
 - D. "Harrison Bergeron" by Kurt Vonnegut
 - E. *Brave New World* (Aldous Huxley)
 - F. Quizzes (1-7/65pts and 8-15/65pts)
 - G. Novel Test (100pts)
 - H. Study Guide Packet (30pts)
 - I. Extra Credit—optional (25pts)

- IV. Short Story Unit
 - A. Introductory story "A Worn Path" with sample student essays
 - B. Literary Elements of Literature—how to write about structure, plot, tone, mood, theme, etc.
 - C. Short Story Study (6-7)
 - D. Find compatible and discrepant texts for short stories
 - E. Exam = Short Story Essay (100pts) + Test (100pts) + New story with M.C. (24pts)
 - F. Study Guide Packet (45pts)

Course Expectations and Requirements

I. RESPECT

- I will not tolerate disrespect towards your peers, my colleagues, or me. Please note that this is one thing I will not budge on. I will treat you with the utmost respect and deserve the same. Failure to follow this rule will result in dismissal of the class and a referral. (This includes but is not limited to the following: insubordination, teasing, joking, or making anyone uncomfortable.)

II. Class Participation

- Attendance is expected and important. If a student must miss a class and is excused from that class, the assigned work must be made up within 48 hours—**No Exceptions!**
- Because much of the class time is spent in discussion of the works we are studying, students cannot afford to miss class; students who are absent on the day of a discussion are expected to get notes from another student. It is imperative that students keep organized notes with them for all classes.
- Students with unexcused absences will **not** be allowed to make up work/assignment/test. A zero will be entered in the grade book if such an absence exists.
- Arrangements for taking a test missed due to excused absence must be made immediately upon return to class.
- Whenever possible, students should make arrangements for missed work prior to an absence.
- There will not be an extension on work for school related absences; work must meet the scheduled due dates.

III. Class Requirements

- All major essays/projects are mandatory and required for credit in the class; failure to turn in even one will result in failure of the course. **These must meet the criteria developed in class in order to receive a grade. Failure to meet the criteria for credit will result in failure of this class.**
- All major essays/projects must be turned in **on the due date**; moreover, if you “choose” to miss class on that day and you make it to school for even one other class, you must turn in your essay/project; otherwise, it will be considered late. (Hint: I can see your attendance for all of your classes.)
- Tests/quizzes due prior to any of our various breaks (Holiday, Mid-Winter, etc.) must be completed before YOU leave for break; therefore, if you are taking an extended leave, your test must be taken before YOU leave. Obviously you know if this is the case, so make arrangements to complete the assignment on time.
- Required papers/projects that are turned in late will lose a grade for four days; after the fourth day, the paper earns an F, but it must be submitted and acceptable to earn credit.
- Periodically, students will be given time to read their books or other material from the class. Students are expected to use this time as directed. Failure to do so will result in being removed from the class and possibly with loss of credit.

IV. Evaluation

- Grades will be based on points for the following: tests, essays, impromptus, quizzes, journals, and presentations/class discussion.
- Grading scale is as follows:

A = 100-94	C = 76-73
A- = 93-90	C- = 72-70
B+ = 89-87	D+ = 69
B = 86-83	D = 68-66
B- = 82-80	D- = 65
C+ = 79-77	F = 64-0

Trimester grades are only rounded up at .5 and above!

V. Cheating/Plagiarism

- According to the school handbook, any incident of cheating or plagiarism will result in a zero for that assignment, a call home, and a note in your file; a second offense will result in failure of the course. Plagiarism includes copying of someone else’s work in or outside of the classroom. Please do not put yourself or others in this uncompromising position. Use academic honesty and integrity at all times.

COURSE OUTCOMES—High School Content Expectations (HSCE)

- The student will understand and practice writing as a recursive process
- The student will use writing, speaking and visual expression for personal understanding and growth
- The student will learn to communicate in speech, writing, and multimedia using content, form, voice, style appropriate to the audience and purpose
- The student will develop and use the tools and practices of inquiry and research—generating, exploring, and refining important questions; creating hypothesis or thesis; gathering and studying evidence; drawing conclusions; and composing a report
- The student will produce a variety of written, spoken, multigenre, and multimedia works, making conscious choices about language, form, style, and/or visual representation for each work
- The student will develop critical reading, listening, and viewing strategies
- The student will use a variety of reading, listening, and viewing strategies to construct meaning beyond the literal level
- The student will develop as a reader, listener, and viewer for personal, social, and political purposes, through independent and collaborative reading
- The student will develop the skills of close and contextual literary reading
- The student will read and respond to classic and contemporary fiction, literary nonfiction, and expository text, from a variety of literary genres representing many time periods and authors
- The student will use knowledge of literary history, traditions, and theory to respond to and analyze the meaning of texts
- The student will examine mass media, film, series, fiction, and other texts from popular culture
- The student will understand and use the English language effectively in a variety of contexts and settings
- The student will understand how language variety reflects and shapes experience