

American Literature Syllabus
Pless
2017-2018

Course description

This course will focus on significant texts in American literature across a variety of genres. Students will examine short stories, novels, a play, and poems. The themes encountered in this class will be analyzed in regards to the discipline of literature, the story of American history and culture as well as Biblical truth. In developing a respect and love for words, our ultimate hope is that students will grow in their love for God, the Word and the author of all such beauty.

Essential questions/goals

What shared themes do we see within the stories of American Literature and the story of American history?

How do we identify truth, beauty, and goodness in fiction?

Understanding, recognizing, and appreciating literary devices in all we read

Primary texts

To Kill a Mockingbird (summer reading), Washington Irving short stories

The Great Gatsby

Fahrenheit 451

The Crucible

Poetry Unit: Walt Whitman, Emily Dickinson, Langston Hughes, Robert Frost, Robert Lowell, Elizabeth Bishop, William Carlos Williams, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Maya Angelou, Adrienne Rich, and E.E. Cummings

Short Story Unit: Nathaniel Hawthorne, Edgar Allan Poe, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner, Richard Wright, Flannery O'Connor, and Eudora Welty

Grading

Grades in this course will be determined via a true point system. While exact points will vary per quarter, grades will consist of increasingly more papers (writing-based assignments) as the year progresses rather than just tests, regular quizzes to gauge reading comprehension and keep up with important material, and Harkness discussions. Smaller contributing grades will be determined based on completion of homework or class work.

Homework

The essential work of this class, reading and writing, must at times be solitary activities. While I will attempt to provide class time to begin such work, I will often require that students complete this work outside of class. Though each student's pace is different, I hope that the average amount of homework per night will not exceed 20-30 minutes. However, students will perhaps need to ration more time during weeks when they are completing a major writing assignment. Please do not hesitate to speak with me if the homework load becomes unbearable.

General

If a student misses a day of class, it is the student's responsibility to check with the teacher to see what he/she missed. Students should be ready to make up quizzes upon returning to class. If a missed quiz or Minor Grade assignment is not made up within two class days, the quiz will be recorded as a zero. Exceptions can be made for special circumstances. In regard to major grades such as papers, for each day the paper is late I will deduct 11% from the final grade.

Students are expected to keep and organize all their notes, handouts, and assignments throughout the year. Notes, handouts, and assignments should always be brought to class. Be sure to keep all quizzes, tests, paper preparation work such as drafts and completed papers. Do not throw them away.

Students should practice marginalia in their books as they read. We will discuss what this means. Please keep up with your books and keep them as you will need to refer back to them on our semester exams. Students may keep their books at the year's end.

Plagiarism and academic honesty

The MLA Handbook notes that the word plagiarism comes from the Latin word for kidnapper ("plagiarius"). Plagiarism refers to the act of kidnapping of another person's words or ideas and then disguising them as your own. Students must proactively work to avoid plagiarism. To avoid plagiarism, you must be careful to follow citation rules especially when producing academic writing. We will follow the MLA Handbook's guidelines for citations. Plagiarism will typically result in a zero on the assignment in addition to any other consequences that the administration deems necessary.