



Syllabus English 4

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Thinking is the hardest work there is, which is probably the reason why so few engage in it.

~~Henry Ford

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General Information

I believe that the activities that you participate in (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) during your time in a language arts classroom provide the fundamental basis for all other subjects within the school curriculum. They are the bedrock that all other subjects build from. Central to all of these activities is thinking and not just the ordinary thinking like, "I wonder what's for lunch today," but critical and creative thinking. Without the ability to think in a logical and ordered manner, reading, writing, speaking, and listening suffer and learning suffers. To those ends, every activity and assignment in my classroom is designed to make you think and refine your thinking process. My favorite question is "why?" and you'll probably be very tired of hearing it by the time this semester is over. I don't care what you are thinking as long as you are also thinking of why you are thinking the way that you are and drawing the conclusions that you draw.

Overview

This class covers world and British literature. We will be studying various types of literature including Ancient and Classical literature, Gods and Heroes, Medieval Literature, The Romantics, Utopian / Dystopian writings, Existentialism, Realism and Naturalism, and others. This should be a fun and challenging course for you final year of high school.

Major Assignments and BOEs

Of course there will be assessments (BOEs). The state and district require them. There will also be other big assignments which could include essays, stories, presentations, projects, or other activities. Each major assignment may and probably will include more than one of these modes. Also they may be group assignments or individual. There will be more information to come as the class

progresses. Most major assignments will include an electronic component that will be uploaded to the class portal by the due date. Details on the class portal and journals will come at a later date.

Journals

I'm sure that you have done journals in you English classes before. This class will be a little different. We will have journals, but instead of the traditional spiral notebook, you will publish your journal entries electronically on a blog. There are two reasons why I require this. 1.) I feel that students should be familiar with electronic publication methods since it is such a large part of our lives now. 2.) In the past, I've noticed that journals receive an extraordinary lack of thought and effort. Students write nonsense and don't give the topic any serious thought. Teachers struggle with heavy boxes of journals and indecipherable student hand-writing. Basically, they are a big waste of time. With the electronic journal, they will be visible to other students to read and comment upon, they will be visible to parents to read, and they will be visible to the world at large. This should have the direct causal effect of student's putting more thought and effort into their journal entries. Also, it will allow teachers (me) to read and comment upon those entries faster and with more clarity. All in all, it should be a meaningful experience. More information will come in the days to follow.

Vocabulary

We will also be doing various vocabulary building exercises and have various policies designed to enrich our vocabularies. These exercises and policies will affect grades in a positive or negative manner. More information is to come on those as well.

In Class Writing / Assignments / Quizzes

These assignments will, usually, be worth 5 – 50 points and will be completed either, in the classroom, library, or computer lab. There will be writing, worksheets, group work, and quizzes.

After each assigned reading a short reading quiz will be given. The quiz will generally be quite easy if you've done the reading.

Additionally, there will be various in class writing and other assignments. Generally these will be due at the end of the class period. However, this is not set in stone and each assignment's due date may be extended based upon circumstances in class that day. Basically, if you work on the assignment during the time provided and still need more time, I will give it to you, but if you are not working and I notice it, I will not provide extended time. This is about responsibility.

Participation

I want you to participate in classroom and group activities and discussions. I do not believe in, nor like to lecture. Yes, there will be a limited amount of lecturing because, sometimes, there is no other way (introduction of new information, background information, etc.), but it will be minimal. The crux of the class relies on your participation and using your voice to express your reactions and opinions. You need never feel that I will reprimand or chastise you for expressing your opinion. I will, however, often ask you why you feel that way or why or how you came to that conclusion. I want to know your thinking processes and I want you to use and expand those processes. There are 100 participation points that I will award at the middle and end of the semester (50 points each time). Your participation during the beginning of the semester will not affect your participation during the last part of the semester and vice-versa.

Grading Scale

I use a standard grading scale that I'm sure you are familiar with. I grade on a straight points scale. Each assignment has a point value. Whatever your percentage of points earned is at the end of the semester is what your grade will be.

- A - 90% and above
- B – 80% - 89.9%
- C – 70% - 79.9%
- D – 60% - 69.9%
- F – 59.9% and below

Attendance

As with any other class in high school, attendance will be required. You will not be allowed to make up quizzes or in class work or turn in late work for full credit for unexcused absences (truancy), however accommodations will be made for excused absences.

Late Work

Late work will generally be accepted but there will be a deduction of 25% of the grade if it is turned in within two days of the due date. After that point, 50% of the grade will be deducted. 10 days, you will only receive 25% of your grade. It is generally better to turn something in late even if you will only get 25% of the credit than to not turn it in at all.

You have two free passes. I will give you each two forms that you can turn in to substitute for an assignment for two days. I don't care what the reason is that it is not done and there will be no questions asked. After two days, you must turn your assignment in. If you do not, it will then be considered two days late and subject to the above late work policy. A word to the wise – save these and use them when it is absolutely necessary. Don't waste them at the beginning of the semester—you will regret it.

Extra Credit

Extra credit assignments may be granted or they may not. It is not out of the question and requests for extra credit will be granted on a case by case basis. Occasionally, I might offer extra credit for the entire class for doing various extra assignments or tasks toward various portions of your grades. Extra credit assignments are not guaranteed and are at my discretion

Hall Passes / Leaving During Class

Library time will be provided during work time and at other times. You have 4 hall passes to go to you locker, the bathroom, or to take care of non-class related situations. Once you use those, you will not be allowed to leave the class for non-class related reasons. If you manage to get through the semester without using all of your hall passes, you will receive 10 extra credit points toward your grade for each hall pass that you don't use.

Food and Drink

There is a large amount of electronic equipment in the room as well as carpet. Please do not bring anything in here that is not water. If I see it, I will take it. Leave it in your locker.

Academic Dishonesty / Plagiarism / Cheating

Quite simply, I will not tolerate it. Cite your sources, do your own work, and provide your own answers to the quizzes. Any form of cheating, plagiarism, or other academic dishonesty will be dealt with swiftly and to the maximum that is allowed by school policy.

