

English II – American Literature
Course Syllabus
2009 - 10

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In this course, you will

- read and respond to literature by a wide range of **American authors**, beginning with the Colonial period and moving toward the post-modern or contemporary period.
- learn to become a more critical and active reader of all types of text, including the texts you encounter in works of popular culture every day.
- develop a respect for multiple readings of a work of literature, as opposed to trying to uncover the “right” meanings.
- practice and refine essay-writing techniques, with subjects drawn from both literature and life experience.
- practice and improve timed writings .
- learn to revise formal essays by working through a series of drafts.
- write an MLA-style research essay in which you explore your own family’s heritage.
- compose creative works designed to enrich the experience of literature and language.
- participate in peer- and teacher-directed small and large group dialogue, using the Socratic method.
- build on previous study of grammar and usage conventions through error analysis exercises and games.
- continue study of vocabulary through in-context study and word games.

Required texts:

American Literature Anthology – provided in class.

Fitzgerald, F. Scott. The Great Gatsby. New York: Scribners, 1995.

Foer, Jonathan Safran. Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close. Boston: Mariner Books, 2005.

Hurston, Zora Neale. Their Eyes Were Watching God. New York: Harper Perennial, 1998.

Kingsolver, Barbara. The Bean Trees. New York: Harper Perennial, 1989.

Miller, Arthur. The Crucible. New York: Penguin, 2003.

Osburne, Elizabeth. Vocabulary from Latin and Greek Roots: A Study of Word Families. Clayton, DE: Prestwick House, 2005.

VanderMay, Randall et al. The College Writer: A Guide to Thinking, Writing and Researching. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2007. (You should have saved this from last year)

Williams, Tennessee. The Glass Menagerie. New York: The Dramatist's Play Service, 1998.

Required Materials:

Lined loose leaf paper.
USB flash drive (or jump drive)
1 ½" binder

Web Site:

My teacher site is an important tool for this class. Take a moment this week to bookmark my teacher site in your browser (or with your preferred bookmarking system). Whenever possible, I will post handouts as PDF's in the homework section of the site. There will be times when I post documents without providing hard copies. Understand that I will ask you to refer to these documents on the web site as you carry out various tasks.

Binder:

The English II curriculum poses special challenges because we are not using a standard textbook. Handouts have to be a large part of how the class works, for better or for worse. I will try to post handouts on my web site as PDF's whenever possible, but some items have to go out to you as hard copies. The purpose of a binder is to help you stay organized and keep track of handouts that I provide in class. You may use a section in a larger binder that you use for several classes. **You must bring your binder to class every day.** If you are not using a common binder, just get a small one for this class.

Binder Handout System. Each handout you receive will be three-hole-punched and numbered with a large number on the bottom of the page. Please keep handouts in numerical order in your binder. There may be occasional unannounced binder checks, so be ready for this! Occasionally you will be referred to a document on the web site to be used instead of handout. You may print these and place them in your binder if you wish, but they are not a part of the binder numbering system and you are not required to have them in your binder.

Assignments and Assessments

Reading Assignments and Reading Quizzes

- The average length of nightly reading assignments will be 15-20 pages, though occasionally some assignments will be slightly longer. I will make every effort to provide long-term reading schedules for the major works of literature assigned.
- There will be a **3-point** reading quiz at the beginning of most classes on which the reading assignment is due. The quiz will require basic recall of surface-level details; analytical work will happen in class discussion and longer, open-ended written assignments.

At-Home Response Writings

- Topics and guidelines will vary (not limited to literature response). These assignments will call for critical, expansive, and/or creative thinking. No worksheets!
- These are not fully-developed essays, but clarity of expression and solid support for ideas will be expected.
- Weight: 10 - 15 points.

Journal Response Writings

- Designed for uninhibited exploration of ideas, these are free form, and they will earn a small completion score. We'll do these occasionally in class.
- Topics will vary.

Socratic Seminar

- Graded Socratic seminar will occur roughly once or twice per quarter. This is a group dialogue session focused on a text that has been read and studied by group members in advance of the seminar.
- Weight: 15 points, based on oral contribution.

In-Class Essays

- Units of literature study will lead up to an in-class essay in which you will, in most cases, provide analysis, interpretation and/or response to the literature. This is a traditional thesis-driven essay.
- Essay prompts will not be provided in advance, but class discussion and homework will be designed to prepare you for the essay.
- Essays in response to the literature will occasionally be "broad topic," which will allow you to discuss an idea within the literature as it applies to your own life.
- Practice, feedback and direct instruction should help you prepare for these timed writings. Always ask for individual help when you need it.
- Weight: 50 - 60 points.

Formal Essays

- The topics and modes (categories of writing) will vary, but most of our formal essays will be personal-level writings, which will give you a chance to write about your own observations, reflections, and interests.
- At least one major writing assignment will be a work of fiction (or combined fiction and poetry).
- Revision will be a critical part of the process.
- Any grammar concepts covered prior to formal essay must be observed in the essay.
- You may request individual help after school and in class during workshop sessions – for after-school sessions, just make an appointment well in advance of the due date.
- Weight: 80 - 120 points, including a portfolio of drafts and lead-up assignments.

Vocabulary

- In class, don't hesitate to ask about a word I'm using that you don't understand. I'm always happy to explain unfamiliar words. You may also use a dictionary from our classroom set at any time. There is one under your desk.
- Keep a dictionary near you at home for use with reading assignments. Make annotations in margins about words that are new to you.
- We will shoot for one vocab unit test every two weeks.
- Practice with the textbook word lists will include in-class competitions for prizes.
- Weight of vocabulary tests: ~ 20 points, including a grammar section (see below).

Grammar

- We will not diagram this year, but your diagramming experience will help you with our analysis of common usage, syntax, and punctuation errors.
- Short error correction exercises will occasionally be assigned for homework.
- Grammar assessments will occasionally be combined with vocabulary assessment (see above for weight).

Late Work Policy

There will be a **5% per day deduction** for late work. Any work handed in *after class begins* on the due date will be counted late.

Acceptable excuses for late work without deduction: death in the family and extreme illness. **It's unlikely that I will accept a "computer issues" excuse unless you are having major system problems and a parent can confirm it over the phone.** Most "computer disaster" excuses I hear are actually simple file mismanagement issues that could have been avoided. If you have had this kind of problem in the past, don't panic! Just read the following carefully.

When working on your computer, **save your document every five minutes**, pay attention to **WHERE (which directory or folder and which drive) you are saving**, and **back up your work** (there are many ways to back up your work, including saving to a flash drive).

If you are **not able to print your work at home** for any reason, you have two basic options:

1. **Save the work to your flash drive**, open it on a computer at school, and **print it out BEFORE you arrive to my class.** The desktop computer in your classroom is not available for student use.

OR

2. **Immediately email the document to me as an attachment.** Do not simply cut and paste the text of your document into an email. To email a file *as an attachment*, click the "attachments" button in the "compose" or "new email" window of your email account. A window should open that will prompt you to browse the file directories on your computer. Browse to the appropriate folder, find the document, and select it. Click "attach." When you are back in view of your new message, write me a short message and send it on. It's really easy. You must email the attached document to me *at the time the printer problem occurs*, not after you've come to class with no work. **"I didn't know I could do that," is not an excuse, because it's right here in your syllabus.**

Plagiarism

Those of you who attended Sion last year have received instruction in avoiding plagiarism. I expect you to abide by the definition and explanation of plagiarism provided on pp. 478 - 483 of The College Writer. Plagiarism offenses will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, but in most instances the result will be a 0 on the assignment and a conference with me, your counselor and the academic dean. A second offense will result in more serious action. When in doubt about the correct way to use a source without committing plagiarism, consult with me before the assignment is due.

"Extra Time" and Other Special Accommodations – Very Important!

If you have been diagnosed with a learning disability, ADD/ADHD, or any other disorder that might affect your performance in this class, please make an appointment with me as early as possible so that we can discuss accommodations and strategies. I will be meeting with your counselor as well, but hearing from YOU about your own learning history is more meaningful and helpful than hearing about it from a third party.

Note that documentation that allows for extra time on timed writings must be submitted in accordance with the student handbook guidelines. In addition, for this class you must **arrange in advance for use of extra time.** Missing part or all of your next class because of the extra time can put you in a disadvantage, especially when new material is being introduced in your other class. I assure you that you will have the full amount of extra time that school guidelines allow, and I will try to remind you to make the needed arrangements when timed writings are coming up.

General Rules and Expectations

1. You will treat your teacher and your peers with courtesy and respect at all times.
2. You come to **each class meeting** prepared with:

your English binder
the text of any assigned reading (this generally includes your anthology or a paperback)

*3. If you are absent for any reason, you will refer to my web page to find out what you have missed. The web site will generally be updated by 5:00 each day; always check the web site before approaching me about what you have missed, so that we can avoid unnecessary repetition.

4. You will arrive on time for class. You must use the restroom before class – no bathroom breaks after the bell.

5. You will be in uniform when you walk in the door.

6. You will not eat or drink anything except water in this room.

7. You will communicate with me when you have any questions or concerns. You can write me an email, call me, make an appointment to meet with me, or drop in after school.

Units of Study

First Semester

Weeks 1-3 Course Introduction, Summer Reading

Literature: Summer texts, short readings from the anthology / handouts

Major Writings and Assessment: reading quiz, Socratic seminar, in-class essay

Weeks 4 - 6 Puritanism in New England

Literature: Jonathan Edwards, *The Crucible* by Miller

Major Writings and Assessment: Character trials, Socratic seminar, in-class essay

Week 7 Formal Essay – Personal Essay, Descriptive

Literature: Sarah Vowell, David Sedaris, Annie Dillard, and others from anthology and/or The College Writer

Major Formal Writing: Personal Essay

Weeks 8 - 11 Romanticism and Transcendentalism

Literature: Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Edgar Allan Poe, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Walt Whitman

Major Writings and Assessment: Socratic Seminar, in-class essay, café dialogues

Week 12: Personal essay #2

Literature: TBA

Major Formal Writing: Personal essay on a given topic

Weeks 13 - end of semester: Harlem Renaissance, Zora Neale Hurston, and Poetry Out Loud

Literature:

Poetry of Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen, Claude McKay;

Their Eyes Were Watching God by Zora Neale Hurston

Poems selected from Poetry Out Loud Anthology

Major Writings and Assessment: TBA

Second Semester

Weeks 1 - 3: Poetry Out Loud Continued

Literature: Longfellow, Whitman, Dickinson, Cummings, Stevens, others t.b.a.

Major Writings and Assessment: original poem writing, memorization of a poem selected by student

Week 4: Modern Drama -- The Glass Menagerie by Tennessee Williams

Literature: The Glass Menagerie

Major Writings and Assessment: Performance at KC Rep, symbolism analysis, in-class essay

Weeks 5 - 7: Research Essay

Texts: The College Writer, assorted handouts

Major essay: Family History Research Essay, MLA style

Weeks 8 - 10: Modern Novel -- The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald

Literature: The Great Gatsby

Major Writings and Assessment: Socratic Seminar, American Dream podcasts

Weeks 11 - 13: Voices of Contemporary American Women

Literature: The Bean Trees by Barbara Kingsolver, other readings t.b.a.

Major Writings and Assessment: Socratic seminar, Personal essay #3

Weeks 14 - 18 Experimentation with Form: Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close by Jonathan Safran Foer

Literature: E.L. and I.C. by Jonathan Safran Foer, other readings t.b.a.

Major Writings and Assessment: Multimedia short story

