



Reynolds High School

Contemporary American Literature

Building Relationships for Academic Success

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LA 11

Required Textbooks/Materials: Every student will be required to have a binder that contains a section for this class. Paper, a pencil, a pen and a highlighter, the class text, as well as a Student Planner (hall bathroom pass in here), are required every day. Students should also bring a book of choice each day to read for SSR. We will go to the library to pick out books. For the first month of school students should bring their name tag that they make in class to place on their desk. Behavior grade will go down if the student does not do this. Name tags or plates will help me and your peers memorize names quicker. Sometimes students will need their chromebook. This will be announced. Students will need a journal for the second quarter.

Introduction and teaching philosophy: I graduated from Lewis & Clark college with my MA in teaching. I also have a MA in Writing. This is my 5th year teaching at RHS. Before RHS I taught at an all- boys school with the boys just out of Juvenile Hall or foster care. I believe in student centered activities and choice. I want to get to know you and create engaging lessons that you enjoy. I want you to read texts that you can relate to and I want you to have fun. I want ALL of you to pass and provide what you need to be successful. I also want to challenge you. Please let me know your interests and needs in this class. Please let me know what works for you and any suggestions. I am always willing to change some things based on your needs. Let me know what you need to be happy and successful. I am here to help you succeed. I believe in the mind growth set and that you can achieve anything you believe. Please respect each other. I believe in creating a safe space where ALL students feel welcomed. ALL degrading remarks are not allowed in this classroom. We will collaborate on class rules and lessons. I will ask for your input throughout the year. I value your opinion and needs. Lets have fun and learn. May all your goals come true. You got this!

Course Description – In this year long course, students will study modern and contemporary American literature through a variety of texts. We also read young adult literature. Most the texts will be about teenagers and their experiences. Students will have the opportunity to use the writing process for effective writing in pieces developed over time. This will result in a collection of writings for a variety of audiences and purposes. Students will also have the opportunity to develop vocabulary and play fun games that develop their literary skills. Language Arts classes are developed by using the skills and concepts listed in the Common Core Standards, designed to ensure that students are exposed to the skills that they need to prepare for college and life and to have fair access to college-level and other advanced courses. This course will use student-centered lessons, focusing on critical and creative thinking skills, reflection, high level questioning, and application of knowledge and skills in new situations. Students will also develop knowledge of figurative language, elements of fiction and academic vocabulary.

Course Description

Essential Questions:

What is your identity?

How do we figure out who we are?

What does it mean to be an American?

What is your heritage?

What is family?

What does it mean to be a teenager?

How can I like who I am?

How can we embrace our identity and accept others?

Why are dreams and goals important?

How do we heal from trauma or overcome obstacles and reach our goals?

How do we make important decisions?

How do we trust people?

How do we have courage?

Course Requirements – – All students will be held to a high standard. In this course, we will read and write a variety of texts, including spoken word, poems, news articles, novels, short stories, narratives, journals, essays, and informational texts. We will apply critical thinking skills. We will watch some films and ted talks. Students will write spoken word, poetry, essays, as well as short, informal reflective and creative pieces. There will be quizzes, tests ,or creative assessments on the texts we've read. Students will create a writing portfolio. Students will be expected to read, write, and speak daily.

Grading Policy Description — Your grade will be based on proficiency in the state standards for this course. Your grade will be determined by both formal and informal assessments in the four domains of language: reading, writing, speaking and listening, including: classwork, homework, quizzes, exams, and projects. Your final grade will be reported on a traditional A-F scale:

Your categories you are graded on are the following:

Mastery 70%

Classwork 20%

Behavior & Participation 5%

Homework 5%

You will get points on your worksheets, quizzes, and tests. You will get points for each one correct. This is to assess your understanding of the material. You will be looking at figurative language, poetic devices, imagery, elements of fiction, character, plot, theme, text evidence, etc.

Your MASTERY grade (most your grade/ 70%) will be GRADED based on meeting the objectives on your FINAL WRITING PROJECT/PORTFOLIO piece or MIDTERM and FINAL. You will vote on what we do. You are to save ALL writing for the class. You will pick pieces to revise and edit as your final projects each quarter or take an exam. Students will vote on either doing a project or exam.

Points on final poems, essays, narratives and participation look like this:

5 points = A

4 points = B

3 points = C

2 points = D

1 point = failing

M = missing 1 point

You will read 15 minutes a day for SSR (silent sustained reading) a book of your choice. You read at the start of class. You can read any book or comic that you like. Your grade will be lowered in the participation area if you do not quietly read. We can increase or decrease reading time based on if the class enjoys this time or not. Eventually ALL the classes

can vote on it. At the end of each quarter you will be required to do a project based on the book you read.

You will get points/grades each week based on participation and behavior. Part of participation is reading quietly, following directions, listening to me when I give instructions, being quiet during videos or writing/reading time, and sharing your writing with the class or speaking up in class when questions asked, etc. You are free to talk with peers when you work on worksheets, but not when reading or writing. There will be games and other active activities where you can talk with your peers. You will lose points on behavior if you are on your cell phone and grade will go down. Please use your hall pass for bathroom breaks.

Letter Grade Description & Percentage Breakdown

(The following is our current language in the course catalog)

Grade Percentage	Letter Grade	Description
100% - 90%	A	The student fully understands the content and the course objectives have been mastered.
89% - 80%	B	The student understands the content and course objectives at an above average level.
79% - 70%	C	The student understands the course content and course objectives at an average level.
69% - 60%	D	The student understands the course content at a below average level and a minimum of course objectives are met.
59% - 0%	F	The student has not met a sufficient number of course objectives to pass a minimum level and receives no credit.

Late Work/Retake Policy

You can hand in late work late if needed but please discuss with me. All in class writing of poems, narratives, essays should be completed in class during the assigned writing time if possible. You can retake ALL assignments and tests except for a FINAL at the end of the year. Need to discuss this with me if needed.

Course Schedule/Outline of Units

Course Schedule/Order of Books (books may change if not available or class votes on different books)

Junior Units and Texts: SSR (book of choice for each quarter)

1st Quarter: Slam poems, poetry, figurative language, descriptive writing, short stories, urban legends & cryptids, short films, elements of fiction, Hero or ancestor narrative essay, and SSR (book of choice). Agree/disagree etc

2nd Quarter: *Freedom Writers Diary* and movie, journal writing, journalism or opinion piece writing, book of choice, argumentative essay

3rd Quarter: *With The Fire on High* Novel by Elizabeth Acevedo, book of choice, essay

4th Quarter: *I am not your perfect Mexican Daughter* by Erika L. Sanchez, book of choice, essay

Class Expectations : Practice POWER (prepared, engaged, writing, organized, Respectful)

It is the **student's responsibility to find out what assignments they missed in class.** Late work **will** be accepted. Students with excused absences will have one extra day to hand in work missed during their absence. Please try to meet deadlines.

1. **Be in your seat, prepared to work when the tardy bell rings.** Have all your materials out on your desk and be ready to give me your attention. (*Starting class on time is important to me.*)
2. **Be kind and try hard!** Be kind and respectful to everyone in this class, *even when you don't feel like it.* Do your best work, even if you don't like the activity. **No derogatory language. No bullying.**
3. Put your phones away BEFORE walking into class. Phones need to be **TURNED OFF and PUT AWAY.** You will be out of touch with the outside world during class time. I will LET you know when devices are allowed for projects. **I expect you to focus on Language Arts work for the whole class period.** Your parents/guardians may call the office if they need to reach you during class time. (*Student caught using their phone in class without permission will have grade lowered and guardian may be contacted if continued issue*)
4. **Keep your backpack and/or purse OFF your desk or lap.**
5. **Use Planner bathroom Hall pass and have me sign if need bathroom or break**
6. **Always clean up after yourself** (put books etc in correct spot/part of behavior points) and **EATING and DRINKING IS PERMITTED but clean up after yourself. I also like to have food prizes.**

Incentive Awards:

Each quarter you will have a chance to earn a board game party with food day at near end of the quarter. If students follow all rules they will be rewarded as a class with a party free food day. Each time the class is too loud or too many on cell phones or not doing what suppose to do then class gets a strike or X. Three strikes equals OUT or don't earn the party. I'll tell you deadline/dates. Also, students have a chance to individually when prizes or food or gift cards if they are doing what they should be doing.

Some weeks if students doing what they are supposed to be doing I'll have half a class of playing language arts board games and board games instead of lessons.

Feel free to come to me if you need help with anything. I care. Feel free to have lunch with me in my class during 1st lunch. I sometimes will have food available.

** Please see the Student Code of Conduct on **pages 4-20** in your Planner, including cheating and **plagiarism on page 7**. Don't cheat.*

Student Signature _____ Period _____ Date _____

Student email address: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ Date _____

Parent/Guardian email address (or phone number): _____