



Reynolds High School

12th Grade Contemporary Literature Syllabus—2023/24

Martin O'Brien—Reynolds High School Language Arts teacher since 1996--that's a long time.

1997-2014 Continuing Education courses at Lewis and Clark University
1997 Master of Teaching—Lewis and Clark University
1991 Bachelor of Arts—University of Iowa

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12th Contemporary Literature --

Required Textbooks/Materials: writing journal for everyday use, favorite writing utensils, and assigned textbooks. The following novels/play will be provided: *A Raisin in the Sun*, *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe*, *Book of Choice*, *There, There*

Course Description: Our 12th grade Contemporary Literature class will address the Common Core Standards for 12th grade English in reading literacy, writing, and speaking. We will use student narratives and story to build basic background knowledge for our understanding of literature and the community where we live and learn, and we will demonstrate our understanding of text through poetry, various essays, daily writing and class discussion. 12th grade Contemporary Literature is a participatory class and everyone's voice will be welcome and required.

Course Requirements: 12th Grade Contemporary Literature focuses on the individual living in a complex--and sometimes unjust--society and the social, cultural and family influences that help us determine who we are--or who we will be--as adults. Within this context, students will be responsible for the following written assignments due on the projected dates (Dates liable to change):

Community Building

9-19 "Name" poem

10-3 "Autobiography" poem

A Raisin in the Sun: Lorraine Hansberry

10-14 "Neighborhood" narrative

10-21 "Two Voices" poem—using poetry to understand theme

11-7 "Jim Crow" definition essay

Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe by Benjamin Aliere Saenz

11-28 Narrative: "Head or Heart"

1-6 "Graffiti" presentation

1/19 Final discussion *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe*

First Semester Final: 1-27/28 Narrative essay: Share a first-time story. We will develop some ideas as a class. Or in an expository essay, analyze a theme from *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe* and explain its significance in your life.

Independent Book Project: Choice from a collection of novels

2-14 “Standing Up” or “Struggling to Stand Up”: A Narrative

3-10 Reflective Art project and Artist statement essay.

There, There by Tommy Orange

4-3 Narrative: “Left Out” or “Being Included”

4-14 “Things We Carry” poem

5-15 WS “Back Pack” or “Things We Carry” Expository essay

Poetry reading and celebration

5-22 A list poem

5-26 Hyperbole poem

5-29 “The Road between Here and There” reflective poem

Finals: 6-7 and 8 “Autobiography” project—A celebration of the last four years

Grading Policy:

We use a traditional grading system in 12th grade Contemporary Literature: A=100-90, B=89-80, C=79-70, D=69-60 and 59-0=F. Grades will reflect student understanding of material and their willingness to stretch their own learning through discussion, written essays, and poetry. Late assignments will be accepted with a working plan established by teacher and student.

To the parents and guardians and anyone who looks out for our shared student: I am looking forward to learning, creating, writing, reading and laughing with your children this year. I appreciate your trust and support as we continue this thoughtful, wacky, intentional, playful and incredible High School journey together. Remember Senior year? It wasn't that long ago, and our stories will help guide our young ones into adulthood. Thanks again.

Mr. Marty O'Brien