



## Reynolds High School

### 11<sup>th</sup> Grade Creative Writing 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  
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11<sup>th</sup> Creative Writing--

**Required Textbooks/Materials:** writing journal for everyday use, favorite writing utensils, and assigned textbooks. You will also need an active mind, willing writing muscles, and eyes that embrace beautiful, powerful, and sometimes sorrowful words.

**Course Description:** Our 11<sup>th</sup> grade Creative Writing class will address the Common Core Standards for 11<sup>th</sup> grade English Language Arts 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. 11th grade Creative Writing is a participatory class and everyone's voice will be welcome and required.

**Course Requirements:** 11<sup>th</sup> Grade Creative Writing will focus on writing. Our writers will create poetry, narratives, songs, a possible a scene from a play, maybe a myth, a children's book—all are welcome. We will play with words, lean on writers, and examine what thoughtful writing sounds like in our classroom and the world. Students will be required to share their words in class, to support the writers in class, and to risk with abandon. That is a lot. 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

10-10: 55-word essay daily writing

#### A Narrative collection:

10-14 to 10/28 "A First" "Head or Heart", "A Fight", "Innocence" and others

Reading Novels of choice, short stories, student samples

Final Narrative Due: 10/28

10/29 to 11/28 We will transition to short stories, plays, and myth (possibly a children's book). Students will read, analyze writing, and share techniques that work. We will write our short stories in conjunction with writer's we admire.

11/28 Book Share presentation: Students will share books that work for them and the writing that captures their hearts. This is an on-going activity in class.

**First Semester Final:** 1-27/28 Expository essay: Writer will explain their writing process and its growth through the first part of the year.

2/1-2/14 Second semester we will focus on poetry and music. We will use similar techniques as in previous units to uncover what makes a song or poem work. We will examine and analyze poetry and music to write our own. Then, we will share our words with the class.

2/14 – 3/21 Students will research a writer of choice and share the writer’s history, story, and writing process. The unit will access interviews, critiques, history, and style. When complete, students will present their author to the class.

4/4-5/31

We will continue to read and play with words. We will discuss and analyze how writing can be effective and true. We will revise and edit complete pieces and revisit past writing to see if anything has changed. We will be sharing words in small group and with the classroom. We will also participate in the creation of a school magazine to celebrate the stories, brilliance, and truth of students at Reynolds High School.

Final: 6/14 Expository essay: In an expository essay, explain the qualities of a thoughtful writer and explain the skills required to write well.

### **Grading Policy:**

We use a traditional grading system in 11<sup>th</sup> Language Arts: 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 Junior year? It wasn’t that long ago, and our stories will help guide our young ones into adulthood. Thanks again.

Mr. Marty O’Brien