

Boston Collegiate Charter School

American Literature – Ms. Veeder

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Teaching: 2nd, 3rd, 4th periods and 6th on Mondays

Tutoring Hours: lunch on Tuesdays (MS 140) and Weds. after school in _____

COURSE OVERVIEW

Students in American Literature will seek to answer the following essential guiding questions during this yearlong college preparatory English course:

- 1. What’s the “So-What?” What is the author’s purpose in writing this text?**
- 2. What is the relationship between American society and individual identity?**
- 3. How does American literature function as a social commentary?**
- 4. What does the literature studied in this course suggest about what it means to be American? What is the “American Dream”?**

Students focus on critical thinking, reading and writing by continuing to explore five fundamental literary genres: novels, short stories, poetry, drama and nonfiction. Students will examine the literature of the United States from the mid-19th century to the present, looking in particular at the tension between the self/individual and the nation, and the attempt of the individual to define the self within an American context. The texts should not – indeed, they cannot – be read in isolation of each other. Rather, students will make connections between them and consider the question of the American Identity, both its cohesiveness and its conflicts. The course incorporates poetry and short stories that help to reveal the cultural and/or thematic context of the major text for each unit.

Students should expect daily reading assignments. Students will respond to daily readings via dialectical journal entries, reading logs, discussion questions, weekly papers and student-led seminars. Many homework assignments will be long-term in nature with a focus on revision. Quizzes and exams will range from reading quizzes to passage identifications to essay tests. Longer analytical essay papers will focus on close, primary (textual) readings of the texts. Reflective pieces or personal essays, creative projects such as debates and trials, and other coursework, including research, will be assigned throughout the year. Finally, as juniors, students will develop their vocabulary, critical reading, analytical writing and test-taking skills in service of the SAT examination and will draft a college essay in preparation for the college application process. Vocabulary will be cumulative throughout the year.

Students will receive bi-weekly grade reports to help them monitor their progress in this class. To change enrollment from an English College Preparatory course to an AP course in 12th grade, a student must have a current year to date average of 90 (A-) or above at the time of course selection (usually late May or early June).

SYLLABUS

THE SO WHAT?: BY REFLECTING ON THE PAST, WRITERS ATTEMPT TO SHAPE A DIFFERENT FUTURE.

Please note: Texts/works and dates are subject to change.

August Summer Reading reflection and assessment

Why are you here?

September “Waiting for Superman” (2010) film
“Let Teenagers Try Adulthood” Leon Botstein

Hysteria and witch hunts

“The Yellow Wallpaper” by Charlotte Perkins Gilman (1892)
“Young Goodman Brown” by Nathaniel Hawthorne (Written 1835, Set: 1690’s)
The Crucible by Arthur Miller (Written 1953, Set: 1692-3)

Meet the Mother and Father of American Poetry

October Emily Dickinson (1830-1886) and Walt Whitman (1819-1892)

What does it mean to be “Civilized”?

October - November “Flowers” by Alice Walker (Written 1988, Set: post-Civil War 1865-mid 1900’s)
The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain (Written 1884, Set: pre-Civil War, 1835-45)

December “Hills Like White Elephants” and “The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber” by Ernest Hemingway (1927)

Poetry of Robert Frost (1874-1963)

MIDTERM EXAM – Wednesday January 11th 2012
Internship: Tuesday January 17th-Friday January 27th

The American Dream

February *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald (1925)

Finding a Voice

March-April Poetry of Langston Hughes (1902-1967) and Gwendolyn Brooks (1917-2000)
“How It Feels To Be Colored Me” Zora Neale Hurston (1928)
“Letter from a Birmingham Jail” Martin Luther King Jr.

The American Nightmare

May “Every Little Hurricane” by Sherman Alexie (Written 1993, Set: 1976)
Long Day’s Journey into Night by Eugene O’Neill (1956)

FINAL EXAM – Friday, June 15, 2012**PERFORMANCE STANDARDS**

By the end of this course, students will have further developed their ability to:

- ❑ Understand and use correctly standard grammatical conventions, including sentence structure, punctuation, capitalization, parts of speech, and spelling
- ❑ Acquire and use an advanced vocabulary of English words in writing and speech
- ❑ Identify and discuss the main idea, characters, facts, and themes of works of literature, poetry, and plays, both read and heard
- ❑ Identify and analyze tone, imagery, mood, audience, and literary devices such as simile, alliteration, and metaphor in works of literature, poetry, and plays
- ❑ Write well-organized, well-developed papers using appropriately chosen evidence and details in various genres, including informational, persuasive, expressive, and analytical writing
- ❑ Use effectively standard English conventions in editing, revising, and proofreading writing
- ❑ Speak effectively in a variety of settings and environments including making oral presentations and dramatic recitations
- ❑ Analyze the role and place of standard American English in speech, writing and literature
- ❑ Analyze how a work of literature can be shown to reflect the period, ideas, customs, and outlooks of a people living in a particular time in history
- ❑ Conduct close readings of texts using the terminology of literary criticism and present interpretations based on specific evidence from the text
- ❑ Locate and analyze such elements in fiction as point of view, foreshadowing and irony
- ❑ Apply knowledge of the concept that the theme or meaning of a selection presents a view or comment on life, and locate evidence in the text to support their understanding of an identified theme
- ❑ Identify how an author's use of words creates tone and mood, and analyze and evaluate how the choice of words advances the theme or purpose of the work
- ❑ Relate specific works of American literature to their contemporary contexts or historical backgrounds
- ❑ Formulate original, open-ended research questions, gather information, analyze and evaluate the quality of the information obtained, and use it to answer questions
- ❑ Analyze, evaluate and explain how authors use the elements of nonfiction to achieve their purposes
- ❑ Identify and analyze types of dramatic literature and the dramatic conventions used
- ❑ Use effective rhetorical techniques and demonstrate understanding of purpose, speaker, audience and form when completing expressive, persuasive or literary writing assignments
- ❑ Consider the social and historical values a text reflects and embodies

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Absences: If you are absent, please arrange for a colleague to collect handouts for you and to advise you of the class notes for that day. Additionally, file folders for each class containing

handouts for the week are in the classroom. **You must also meet with the teacher during lunch to discuss any work or notes you missed.** It is your responsibility to initiate this conversation.

Homework: Late homework is not accepted and will result in a 0. If the homework is part of a larger assignment (e.g., potential thesis statements for an essay), I will likely require you to complete the homework assignment, but not for credit, and continue assigning 0s until you complete the work.

Late Work and Makeup Policy: Please see the BCCS 11th grade Absence and Late Submission Policy.

Open Rewrite Policy: Students will generally complete two submissions of major written pieces, incorporating feedback from their first submissions in their second submissions. Students who wish to rewrite second submissions are encouraged to do so, after scheduling a conference with the teacher, and will receive the average of their two second submission grades.

Finally, please refer to the BCCS Student and Family Handbook for additional policies regarding attendance, behavior/code of conduct, plagiarism and homework expectations.

ASSESSMENT/GRADES

Classwork **15%**

Classwork may include, but is not limited to, Do-Now's, participation, student seminars, and grammar and vocabulary exercises.

Participation **10%**

English class hinges upon consistent participation from you. Each day you will earn points for both the quantity and quality of your contributions to class.

Homework **15%**

Homework may include, but is not limited to, reading logs, discussion questions, seminar preparation and essay outlines or drafts.

Major Assessments **35%**

Tests, essays and long-term projects/presentations

Minor Assessments **25%**

Other assessments may include, but are not limited to, quizzes, seminars, diaries, debates, seminars, projects and recitations.

The above will compose 80% of your final, yearly grade. You will also take a midterm exam which will count for **7%** of your yearly grade and a **final exam** which will count for **13% of your yearly grade.**

SPECIAL MATERIALS/SUPPLIES NEEDED

- ☐ One pack of index cards

- ❑ One hard-bound **diary**, lined, that will be collected once per quarter. I will provide additional guidelines around the diary, but for now, purchase one that you really like and that will inspire you to write at least twice a week.
- ❑ One small **binder** used only for English class with the following 3 sections labeled: Current Unit, Do-Now's, Notes. We will archive materials into portfolios (stored in the classroom) at the end of each quarter.