

# English Literature and Composition

M/W 11:00 2023-2024

Instructors: Lori Peters & Jenni Buchanan

## Course Overview and Objective

This yearlong course aligns with the CCSS recommended curriculum for **9<sup>th</sup> graders** but is open to 8<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> graders who are proficient in foundational English skills (composition and grammar) and can read proficiently at or above an 8<sup>th</sup> grade level. Over the year, students will complete five classic novels, as well as several classic short stories, poetry, relevant articles and/or speeches. All reading will be accompanied by in-class reflection, discussion, note taking, critical analysis, and historical and cultural connections. At least two essays per session will be completed and assessed; lessons in composition skills will be included.

## Course Expectations:

- Attend all classes or follow up with required work if absent.
- **Check in on our online gradebook.** Work must be submitted by the due date.
- Arrive on time and prepared.
- **All required reading MUST be done prior to participating in the group discussion.** Please read only what is required, no more, no less. If you read ahead, do not share “spoilers” with the group.
- **Materials needed each week:**
  - Spiral notebook, folder, pencils/pens, **required reading** (short story/novel), and completed assignments

## Reading list:

If purchasing books in advance, please hold onto them until assigned. **Students should NOT start books** until preparatory activities have been introduced. A shared experience is best for all. Most of the selected texts (books, selected short stories, poetry and speeches) chronicle societal behavior, quests for power, cultural norms, and material desires. Together, we will ponder deep questions about humanity and our role in its web. Planned novels (may be adjusted pending reading pace of students):

- *Fahrenheit 451*, Ray Bradbury (1953). Please get the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition, as it has additional notes.
- *The Outsiders*, S.E. Hinton (1967)
- *The Good Earth*, Pearl Buck (1931)
- *Animal Farm*, George Orwell (1945)
- *Lord of the Flies*, William Golding (1954)
- *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Harper Lee (1960)

**Syllabus: This syllabus is subject to change dependent on student pace.** In addition to literary analysis and composition (direct instruction in writing the following essay genre: summary, response to literature, and argument), relevant vocabulary from each text will also be discussed.

## *Session 1*

**8/21, 8/23:** Introduction to class. Short story #1 (“The Scarlet Ibis” by James Hurst) introduced and discussed. Outline key ideas.

- Independent work: rough draft summary of short story #1.

**8/28, 8/30:** Literary devices, summary skills, collaborative review of last week’s summary. Short story #1 discussed: theme, connections, and characterization.

- Independent work: **Final draft summary** of short story #1.

**9/6 (no class on 9/4):** Introduce short Story #2 (“The Most Dangerous Game” by Richard Connell). Introduce checklist for literary response essay. Outline key ideas, writing to a thesis.

- Independent work: rough draft essay on short story #2.

**9/11, 9/13:** Discuss short story #2 and its literary devices. Clarify literary concepts in essays. Peer review.

- **Final draft essay** on short story #2.
- Make sure to have novel #1, *Fahrenheit 451* for next week. Do not start reading!

**9/18, 9/20:** Introduce novel #1, *Fahrenheit 451*. We will begin reading in class, and then discuss clues to novel's plot, theme, and message.

- Independent work: Reading and questions/ notes.

**9/25, 9/27:** Discussion of novel #1, chapter 1 analysis. Discuss major themes presented.

- Independent work: Read chapter 2, and prepare reading notes for chapter, including passage and vocabulary.

**10/2, 10/4:** Discussion of novel #1, chapter 2 analysis. Discuss major themes presented.

- Independent work: Read chapter 3, and prepare reading notes for chapter, including passage and vocabulary.

### *Session 2*

**10/16, 10/18:** Discussion of novel #1, chapter 3 and closure, including major themes and literary devices. Outline key ideas for a literary essay, and develop a strong thesis in class.

- Independent work: **rough draft literary response essay** of novel #1.

**10/23, 10/25:** Review rough draft essays in class, with revision.

- Independent work: 2nd draft/**final** draft of literary essay on Fahrenheit 451. Students may be asked to revise the essay again, if needed.

**10/30, 11/1:** Short story #3 (The Necklace" by Guy de Maupassant). Discuss applicable literary devices. Outline key ideas. Discussion of major themes presented, author's purpose, and context. Peer review of essays and revision.

- Independent work: **literary questions for** short story #3.
- Make sure to have novel #2, *The Outsiders* for next week. Do not start reading!

**11/6, 11/8:** Introduce novel #2, *The Outsiders*. Begin reading in class, and then discuss clues to novel's plot, theme, and message.

- Independent work: Reading novel #2, chapters TBA, and prepare reading notes.

**11/13, 11/15:** Discussion of novel #2- major themes presented, culture, context, and connection.

- Independent work: Reading novel #2, chapters TBA, and prepare reading notes. **Select passage to share.**

**11/27, 11/29** Discussion of novel #2: major themes presented, author's purpose, and context. Select a possible literary focus for essay. Discuss/predict outcomes. Outline key ideas.

- Independent work: Reading novel #2, chapters TBA, and prepare reading notes. Select passage to share.

**12/4, 12/6:** Discussion of novel #2: major themes presented, author's purpose, and context. Develop thesis in class.

- Finish reading *The Outsiders* and prepare reading notes.
- Independent work: rough draft essay for novel #2.

**12/11, 12/13:** Share essays, reflections, and peer review/editing.

- **Final draft essay** for novel #2
- Make sure to have novel #3, *The Good Earth*, for Session 3. Do not start reading!

*Winter break*

### *Session 3*

**1/8, 1/10:** Introduce novel #3, *The Good Earth*. Begin reading in class, and then discuss clues to novel's plot, theme, and message. Discussion of historical context.

- Independent work: Reading novel #3, chapters TBD, and prepare reading notes. Focus on characters, cultural relevance, and plot development.

**1/17 (no class 1/15):** Discussion of novel #3: more focus on historic context, author's purpose, voice, and style. Read, write, and connect key ideas to real events.

- Independent work: Reading novel #3, chapters TBA, and prepare reading notes.

**1/22, 1/24:** Discussion of novel #3: historic context, author's purpose, voice, and style. Read, write, and connect key ideas to real events.

- Independent work: Finish novel #3, chapters TBA, and prepare reading notes.

**1/29, 1/31:** Discussion of novel #3. Reflection on novel's historic context, and author's purpose, voice and style. Select a possible literary focus for essay. Outline key ideas.

- Independent work: rough draft of essay on novel #3.

**2/5, 2/7:** Share rough draft essays and discuss core ideas from novel, including cultural and social implications.

- Independent work: **Final draft of essay** on novel #3.
- Make sure to have novel #4, *Animal Farm*, by next week. Do not start reading!

**2/12, 2/14:** Introduce novel #4 through history, *Animal Farm*. Begin reading in class, and then discuss clues to novel's plot, theme, and message. Discussion of historical context.

- Independent work: Historical context, real life vs book characters
- Independent work: Reading novel #4, chapters 1-3, and prepare reading notes. Focus on characters and plot development.

**2/21 (no class 2/19):** Discussion of novel #4: more focus on historic context, author's purpose, voice, and style. Read, write, and connect key ideas to real events.

- Independent work: Reading and questions/ notes.

**2/26, 2/28:** Discussion of novel #4: historic context, author's purpose, voice, and style. Read, write, and connect key ideas to real events.

- Independent work: Finish novel #4, chapters 8-10, and prepare reading notes.

**3/4, 3/6:** Discussion of novel #3. Reflection on novel's historic context, and author's purpose, voice and style. Select a possible literary focus for essay. Outline key ideas.

- Independent work: rough draft of essay on novel #4

### *Session 4*

**3/18, 3/20:** Share rough draft essays and discuss core ideas from novel, including symbols and social challenges brought forth by author ("Orwellian").

- Independent work: **Final draft of essay** on novel #4.
- Make sure to have novel #5, *Lord of the Flies*, by next week. Do not start reading!

**3/25, 3/27:** Introduce novel #5 *Lord of the Flies*. Begin reading in class, and then discuss clues to novel's plot, theme, and message.

- Independent work: Reading (chapters TBA) and questions on novel #5

### **Session break**

**4/15, 4/17:** Discussion of novel #5: Characters, conflict, author's purpose, voice, and style. Read, write, and connect key ideas to real events.

- Independent work: Reading and questions on novel #5.

**4/22, 4/24:** Discussion of novel #5: Characters, conflict, author's purpose, voice, and style. Read, write, and connect key ideas to social structures. Discuss possible focus for literary analysis.

- Independent work: Finish reading novel #5

**4/29:** Concluding discussion of novel #5. Discuss core ideas from novel, including symbols and social challenges brought forth by author. Develop possible thesis directions in class.

- Independent work: Literary response essay on novel #5.
- Make sure to have novel #6, *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

**Wednesday 5/1:** Context of Civil War/slavery. Introduce novel #6, *To Kill a Mockingbird*

- Independent work: Reading novel #6 and questions.

**5/6, 5/8:** Discussion of novel #6: Point of view, historical context, and cultural/gender norms.

- Independent work: Reading novel #6 and questions.

**5/13, 5/15:** Discussion of novel #6: Point of view, historical context, and cultural/gender norms.

- Independent work: Reading novel #6 and questions.

**Monday 5/20:** Discussion of novel #6: Point of view, historical context, and cultural/gender norms.

- Independent work: Reading novel #6 and reflective questions.

**Wednesday 5/22:** Final class. Compare and contrast common themes we've tackled and share viewpoints on the impact of various literature.