

EXPLORATIONS IN READING

Course Syllabus

"It is not so important to have all the answers as to be hungry for them." Carol Ann Tomlinson

"To be a well-favored man is the gift of fortune, but to write and read comes by nature." William Shakespeare

"We need to be the authors of our own life." Peter Senge

I. EXPLORATIONS IN READING:

Communication, collaboration and creative skills are enhanced as students engage in the works of significant, self-selected readings from a variety of genres: fiction, non-fiction, biography, classics, short stories, essays, drama, mass media, graphic novels, history, best sellers, etc. Self-awareness and cross-cultural skills develop as we explore various themes in literature through selected poets, essayists, dramatists, and novelists. Writing skills advance as we discuss and reflect on literary criticism, conduct research, analyze and synthesize.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- A. Readers explore the complexities in literary works in order to more effectively interpret the interaction of characters and events both in and out of the fictional world.
- B. Scholars identify and analyze the capacity of authors to provide moral insight, while learning to recognize and appreciate the entanglements, glories and limitations of human behavior.
- C. Students create compositions, original works, and events identifying the importance and characteristics of the works explored.
- D. We discover relationships between history, language, and literature, while exploring the social, political, and artistic ideals reflected in both past and contemporary writings.

III. REQUIREMENTS:

A. Course Materials-

Various texts, a binder/folder for handouts and notes, and a writing implement will be required. Your folder will contain all in-class assignments, research, old handouts, as well as all completed assignments.

B. Outside Research/Reading Sources-

Assignments, writing and project topics will vary, but research and outside reading texts will be required. Suggestions will be made in class, and final choices must receive the approval of the instructor.

IV. GRADING & EVALUATION:

A. Grading Policy-

- A = Prompt completion of every assignment, consistent improvement and effort in all areas, initiative and concern for quality of work above reproach at all times. Your participation in class is of vital importance as a means of evaluating your progress.
- B = No more than one zero or incomplete assignment, directions and corrections used and improvements made, consistent effort and initiative above normal.
- C = Less than three incompletes, follows directions, effort at normal level, initiative and concern below expectations.
- D = Three or more unacceptable projects, doesn't take direction, inconsistent effort, excessive tardies or absences.
- E = Work and effort at an unacceptable level.

Significant, personalized feedback is conveyed on a regular basis through individual conferencing, written observations, coordinated assessments and classroom displays. Grades will be available and updated at approximately three week intervals on Pinnacle. When an assignment is given, it takes about a week to ensure that everyone has taken, re-worked or made up the task, and from one to five days to accurately reflect and assess it. Only then will I update your effort from the past few weeks. This ensures that your status is indicative of your actual progress - not just a reflection of a single outstanding project or a distressing test. Please see me with questions or concerns.

*** Each one of you can earn an "A" if you are willing to put forth the effort.

B. Make-up/Late work-

When a presentation, project, test, etc. is missed due to an EXCUSED absence, you have one day for each day absent to make up the work. If you fail to take the initiative for make-ups or fail to turn in an assignment, it receives a "0". Remember, it is your responsibility to make arrangements for all make-up work. **Reminder – absences do not change long-term assignment deadlines!**

An UN-EXCUSED absence means an automatic "E". Unexcused absences and tardies, both forms of non-participation, will adversely affect your success in this course. You generally receive 5 points per day for in class work and productive class participation. Tardies will be dealt with by losing class pts.; the later you are, the more you lose. Be here!

I DO NOT EXCEPT LATE WORK...you snooze, you lose! For extenuating circumstances (accepting a Nobel Prize, unexpected time travel), see me. For printer breakdowns, late games, my dog ate it, etc. PLAN AHEAD!

C. Midterm/Final Exam - You must receive passing grades to pass the course. This counts 20% of your final grade.

D. Approximation of points received for individual assignments -

Attendance/Participation	1 – 5
Classroom events/Quizzes	5 - 10
Minor Written Assignments/Presentations/Assessments	10 - 25
Major Papers/Projects/Tests	25 - 60

100-99% = A+	89-88 = B+	79-78 = C+	69-68 = D+	
98-93 = A	87-83 = B	77-73 = C	67-63 = D	
92-90 = A-	82-80 = B-	72-70 = C-	62-60 = D-	59 and below = E

*It is your responsibility to save all assignments, papers, projects, etc., to avoid any grade discrepancy disputes later in the term. Keep everything!

V. CLASSROOM POLICIES/EXPECTATIONS:

- * A Positive Attitude and Productive Participation are essential.
- * Approx. ½ - 2 hours of homework a week; plan on it.
- * *Deserve respect; expect respect.*
- * Bring all necessary supplies, attend regularly, punctually, and behave responsibly.
- * **NO gum, unauthorized electronic use, food, beverages, vulgarity, insubordination, harassment, etc. allowed in class. Infractions will negatively impact your grade.**
- * One trip out of class per semester (restroom, drink, locker, etc.), is available; use it judiciously. If you forget materials, fail to plan ahead, etc., it will affect your grade - see that it doesn't.
- * Do not pack up or get up until the bell; it does not dismiss you, I do.
- * **Plagiarism is the unauthorized use or close imitation of the language and thoughts of another author and the representation of them as one's own original effort.** Research wisely, paraphrase selectively, and attribute accurately; always cite your source. Start early; make it personal; do your own work!

VI. OTHER:

I am available Monday, Wednesday & Friday from 7:15 – 7:50 a.m. or after school by appt.; my room # is 401 and my email is dunhamm@gpschools.org, which is the best way to reach me. Please engage in your success now. Ask for help when you get stressed, behind, or befuddled. I am not that scary. Please review the information in this syllabus with your parents.

Welcome - now let's have a great semester!