

**American Literature Syllabus**

**Mrs. Sara Hopkins**

Room 309 (2nd period planning, 2nd lunch)

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**Literature:**

All units will focus on developing specific skills aligned with the requirements of the Common Core. Literature will be the raw material through which these skills are introduced, reinforced, or refined. The units will be taught in a chronological fashion beginning with literature from Colonial America and working towards more contemporary works. Possible selections for each unit are listed.

*Unit 1: Reinforcing Synthesis Writing and Literary Analysis: The Puritans*

The Crucible

Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God

Upon the Burning of Our House

A Narrative of Her Captivity

Young Goodman Brown/The Minister’s Black Veil

*Unit 2: Refining Rhetorical Analysis in Short Non-Fiction: The Age of Reason*

The Declaration of Independence

Speech to the Virginia Convention

Franklin’s Autobiography

Thomas Paine’s The Crisis

*Unit 3: Refining Argumentation and Persuasive Writing Through Non-Fiction: Romanticism*

Emerson’s Essays

Thoreau: Walden, Resistance to Civil Government

Romantic Poets: Holmes, Bryant, Whitman, Longfellow

Poe’s Short Stories & Poetry

*Unit 4: Refining Literary Analysis: Realism/Naturalism*

The Leader of the People

The Grapes of Wrath

The Autobiography of Frederick Douglass

Huckleberry Finn

The Open Boat

To Build a Fire

Barn Burning

*Unit 5: Refining Elements of Personal Style in Writing: Modernism*

The Great Gatsby

The Jilting of Granny Weatherall

The Life You Save May Be Your Own

The Secret Life of Walter Mitty

One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest

Rock and Roll Music as a reflection of history

**Writing:**

Essay writing of different styles, purposes, audiences, and levels of formality will be the main concentration in this class. The single major focus of the writing program at the junior level is synthesis, which means to meld multiple sources to create a convincing, effective piece of writing. All writing skills taught will be focused on the Common Core skills. The specific types of writing assignments will include the following:

* literary analyses of fiction and poetry
* rhetorical analyses of non-fiction pieces
* persuasive/argumentative pieces
* synthesis essays
* In-class, timed writings of various kinds, designed specifically to mirror the conditions and topics for both the SAT test and the Smarter Balanced Assessment.

**Grammar/Mechanics/Style**

*Grammar/Mechanics:*

* Grammar will not be taught in a systematic way. Rather, the intention will be to aim grammatical lessons at specific weaknesses demonstrated in student writing. Typical areas of address might include punctuation, types of clauses, types of sentences, etc.

*Style:*

* Improving word choice especially as it relates to the purpose and audience of a piece.
* Varying sentence structures to create meaning, rhythm, and emphasis
* Developing a true individual voice through making conscious stylistic and rhetorical choices aimed at making a piece effective for a particular audience

**Vocabulary:**

Vocabulary development will be addressed in a variety of ways:

* Regular units studied from a “canned” vocabulary book
* SAT word list
* Words in context from assigned readings

**Grading:**

*Categories*:

Each assignment in this course will fall into one of two categories:.

**Homework**: includes normal, routine, everyday type assignments such as the following:

vocabulary work and quizzes, reading logs, study questions, etc.

* 40% of overall grade

**Writing**: includes essays, projects, major tests, etc.

* 60% of overall grade

*Grading Scale:*

A: 93-100 C+: 78

A-: 90 C: 73

B+: 88 C-: 70

B: 83 D+: 68

B-: 80 D: 60

*Late Work Policy:*

Late work is not accepted for smaller, “homework” type assignments. Exceptions to this will be handled on a case by case basis at the discretion of individual teacher and **will only be considered in cases of significant difficult circumstances.** In the case of excused absences, students will be allowed as many days to make up work as days absent; however, it is expected that reasonable efforts will be made by students to keep track of and complete work during their absences by checking class websites.

For more important assignments which fall in the “writing” category, students may (in some cases) submit the work up to three days late, with each day late incurring a 10% penalty for the work. After three days, the assignment will be considered a “zero.”

*Accessing Grades On Line*:

Check your grade regularly via student/family access. (You must know your login and password to access).

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**Openers:**

Be prepared every day at the start of each class to: a) respond in writing to a prompt, b) sustain silent reading, c) engage in the activity, exercise or discussion provided, i.e., oral language & Rhetoric, SAT prep, vocabulary, quiz, etc.

**Accessing Assignments Online:**

Daily agendas and various other documents for student/parent access are available on my teacher website, **sarahopkinsla.weebly.com**

**Cell Phones/Mobile Devices**

My policy on cell phones or other devices is one based on respect: in that, they should never be a distraction. I understand that you are attached to your devices and feel like you can’t live without them. I know that you can, in fact, survive without looking at them constantly. To that end, I don’t mind if you have your phone out on your desk in plain sight and check it quietly from time to time. However, you must put it away if I ask, and if it ever becomes a distraction (you are focusing more on your phone than on your work) your privileges will be revoked. Also, I know every awkward posture/gesture/clothing adjustment that you *think* means you can use your phone anyway, so…

**Earbuds/headphones, etc.** should never be worn during class unless I have given special permission to listen to music. Even if you aren’t currently listening to music or your device is turned off, wearing earbuds gives the impression you are not listening and are not on task. Please be respectful and preemptively remove them before class starts.

**Bathroom Policy/Leaving Class**

Please ask permission before leaving class so that I know where you are going. If you leave too often, you will lose your privileges to leave. Be responsible. Please note: our classroom is in sight of the bathrooms: I can literally look out the window and watch whether or not you are going to the location you indicated.

**Seating**

At the beginning of the year, you will have assigned seats. I will, however, be moving/rearranging seating as the year goes on (I *may* even allow you to choose your own seats!). In addition, you will need to make sure that you are not creating a disturbance to your fellow classmates. If you do, I will be forced to relocate you.

**Understanding Scale**

I will be asking you to rate your understanding on a 1-4 scale regularly. Know the different numbers and be ready to ask questions. (4= Got it and can teach it to a friend, 3= I understand aka got it!, 2= Almost, just need some help to totally get it, 1= Not yet, need more help!)

**Tardies**

Be on time. You are on your way to being a responsible adult. I will treat you as such. If it becomes a problem, we will make arrangements for appropriate discipline.

**Standards Expected in this Course**

All written work (both formal and informal) must be submitted in MLA format (double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12 point font) with a proper MLA heading.

***Let’s make this a great year!***