

“The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you’ll go.” – Dr. Seuss

Honors English III: American Literature

Course Description:

This class is a rigorous course in which we cover literature and language in depth. The material will be covered at a rapid pace in which almost all of the reading will be completed at home. You will be expected to know how to analyze literature and informational texts and write provocative, compelling essays conveying ideas and meanings found in the literature. You will continue to improve your grammar and writing skills as well as further develop your vocabulary. Since this class is now an honors course, the course will focus on preparation for the American Literature CLEP test, as well as the American Literature component of the AP Literature and Composition test.

Teacher Contact:

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Summer Reading Assignment:

You will be reading two novels this summer and completing specific written assignments to go with each one of them. The assignments from the summer will be worth major grades and will be addressed during the first two weeks of school. You must come to class with the assignments on the first day. For every day an assignment is late, I will lower the starting letter grade. Please purchase the novels listed below. Some are going to be available for checkout through the school library; they will be noted as such.

Supplies:

- Binder with loose-leaf paper and 5 tab dividers
- Highlighters (green, blue, yellow)
- Ink pens black or blue and #2 pencils
- Sticky Notes
- Books

The following are needed for the class. We are asking students to purchase the actual books.

Summer Novels

The Things They Carried by Tim O’Brien

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain

First Marking Period (needed by the first day of school)

The Crucible by Arthur Miller (The School has copies. First come, first serve.)

The Scarlet Letter by Nathaniel Hawthorne (The School has copies. First come, first serve.)

Second Marking Period (needed by the end of September)

The Sound and the Fury by William Faulkner

Our Town by Thornton Wilder

Third Marking Period (needed by the end of December)

The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald

A Raisin in the Sun by Lorraine Hansberry (The School has copies. First come, first serve.)

Fourth Marking Period (needed by the end of February)

Invisible Man by Ralph Ellison

The Road by Cormac McCarthy

All summer reading and writing is due on the first day of classes. Please read and follow **ALL** directions carefully. If at any point during the summer, you are confused about your assignment, please feel free to email Mrs. McBroom (hmcbbroom@mylpsd.net). You should purchase the following novels for your summer assignment:

- *The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien
- *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain

ASSIGNMENT #1: *The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien

Directions: This book is a collection of interrelated stories. It is a war novel, so you need to expect the characters to speak as if they are in war. Your assignment is to read the entire book, although the assigned journal entries are responses to six key stories. For each of the stories listed below, you must choose **one** topic. For your final entry, you may choose from two possibilities. Your responses should be thoughtful including specific quotes/references to the text (cited evidence). **This assignment is due on the first day of school. You will be responsible for all chapters once we return to school.**

“The Things They Carried”

- Identify the “things” each of the 9 characters carries. In the margin annotate (take note) of what these items may reveal about each character.

“On the Rainy River”

- This chapter is perhaps the moral center of the book. What does Elroy Berdahl do that leads O'Brien to call him “the hero of my life?” Why doesn't Elroy ask him why he is there?
- On the second page of this story, O'Brien defines *courage*. Comment on how this relates to other situations in the book.
- Agree or disagree – A person can enter a war as an act of cowardice. Prove your answer.
- O'Brien is ashamed of this story. What is the role of shame in these soldiers' lives? What is the relationship between shame and courage, according to O'Brien?

“How to Tell a True War Story”

- O'Brien defines a “true war story.” What are the qualities of a “true war story” according to the author? What do you make of O'Brien's definition of “truth?”
- Which of the stories that are told qualify as “true war stories?” Which do not? Explain your reason(s) for your choices.
- What does O'Brien mean when he says that true war stories are never about war?
- What does he mean when he tells us, “That's a true story that never happened?”

“Sweetheart of Song Tra Bong”

- What transforms Mary Anne into a predatory killer? Does it matter that Mary Anne is a woman? Explain your reason for your answer.
- The story Rat tells in “Sweetheart...” is highly fantastical. Does its lack of believability make it any less compelling? Do you believe it? Does it fit O'Brien's criteria for a true war story?
- In *Heart of Darkness*, the author Joseph Conrad writes of “the fascination with the abomination.” How does this story illustrate the quote?

“Speaking of Courage” and “Notes”

- What is the effect of “Notes,” in which O’Brien explains the story behind “Speaking of Courage?” Does your appreciation of the story change when you learn which parts are “true” and which is the author’s invention?
- Choose two details from Norman’s life at home that you feel prove he is either a sympathetic or a pathetic character. Explain your choice.
- Aside from Chapter 1, “Speaking of Courage” is the only story written in the 3rd person. Why are these stories set apart in this manner? What does O’Brien achieve by doing so?

“The Ghost Soldiers”

- Contrast O’Brien’s view of war in this story with his view in “On the Rainy River.”
- Has your opinion of O’Brien changed throughout the book? How do you feel about his actions in “The Ghost Soldiers?”
- “The Ghost Soldiers” is one of the only stories in which we don’t know the ending in advance. Why might O’Brien want this story to be particularly suspenseful?

“The Lives of the Dead”

- Linda is a significant person in O’Brien’s saga. What does she represent to him and the book as a whole?
- This story isn’t about Viet Nam: it’s about life and death. Why does O’Brien choose to end with this story?

*** Choose your 7th journal entry from one of the following two possibilities:

1. Your final entry must be from a chapter other than those discussed above. Choose another chapter, write a journal prompt, and answer it. Be sure to write the title and the prompt in your journal.
2. Watch a war film of your choice. Using “How to tell a true war story” as your criteria, write an entry proving or disproving that the film you watched is a “true war story.” Make specific references to the film and O’Brien’s definition(s).

Grading Guidelines: Follow these directions carefully. If you have questions, please ask.

Format:

- Select Times New Roman for this assignment, using 12pt. font.
 - Heading: (5 pts.) Left hand side
 - Name
 - Pre-AP English III
 - Period ____
 - Date (9 August 2017)
 - Title: (5 pts.)
Journal Assignment: *The Things They Carried* (centered, **BOLD**, 14 pt font)
 - For each journal entry include the chapter/story name (correctly punctuated) (3 pts each)
 - Write the prompt you are responding to for each journal entry. Both the chapter title & prompt should be **BOLD** and in 12 pt. font. **Skip a line between the prompt and your response.** (2 pts each)
 - Responses will be graded for content and facility of language (0-10). All responses should be typed in a 12 pt. font and should be ½ -1 page, double spaced in length. It should be noted that the length requirement does not include the chapter title or prompt, but rather the response only.

ASSIGNMENT #2: *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain

***This novel is set pre-civil war era, so the language that Twain uses follows the historical context of that time period. Although the slaves are referred to by the N-word, by no means does this novel glorify slavery or the use of that derogatory term. In fact, Twain's purpose of the novel is the exact opposite, he uses satire in order to bring attention to the issue of slavery and The South.

This assignment has several parts: Part 1: The students will read and annotate for tools of satire; Part 2: Notes on themes in Twain's novel, to be completed during the summer; Part 3: An essay on Twain's novel, to be completed in class during the first week of school.

SATIRE: A written poem or prose work which ridicules a person, tradition, social institution, or human nature with the intention of raising awareness or effecting change. It is a literary manner that blends critical attitude with humor and wit.

Part 1: Tools of Satire: A satirist may use any or all of the following literary devices:

- **Exaggeration**-To enlarge, increase, or represent something beyond normal bounds so that it becomes ridiculous and its faults can be seen.
- **Incongruity**-To present things that are out of place or are absurd in relation to their surroundings.
- **Parody**-To imitate the techniques and/or style of some person, place or thing.
- **Wit**-denotes a kind of verbal expression which is brief, deft, and intentionally contrived to produce shock of comic surprise
- **Humor**-may be ascribed to either a comic utterance or to a comic appearance or mode of behavior. [This differs from wit in that wit is intended by the speaker to be serious whereas humor is intended by the speakers to be serious. For example, the Nurse's chatter in Romeo and Juliet is verbose, and humorous to the audience but not to the speaker.]
- **Irony** (dramatic, situational, verbal, or cosmic)
- **Sarcasm**-is a form of irony, but is more crude and taunting in its apparent praise for dispraise. "Oh, you're God's great gift to women, you are!" The difference between irony and sarcasm is that sarcasm is more biting and has an exaggerated inflection in the speaker's voice.
- **Mockery** -ridicule; scorn; disdain; humorous or satirical mimicry
- **Mock-heroic** - of or pertaining to a form of satire in which trivial subjects, characters, and events are treated in the ceremonious manner and with the elevated language and elaborate devices characteristic of the heroic style.
- **Caricature**- exaggerates or distorts, for comic effect, a person's distinctive physical features or personality traits. This may be in verbal description or graphic art.
- **Stereotype**-to categorize individuals or groups according to an oversimplified standardized image or idea; label; typecast
- **Absurdity** - a ludicrous folly; completely devoid of wisdom or good sense
- **Overstatement**-making to seem more important than it really is
- **Understatement** -a statement that is restrained in ironic contrast to what might have been said; a statement below the truth

Part 2: Themed Notes Assignment:

1. **Cruelty:** As you read the novel, take notes on 6 examples of cruelty, covering the beginning, middle, and end of the text. For each example, type well-developed ½ -page paragraph, summarizing the example of cruelty, explaining how it reveals character and theme, and selecting a specific quotation that illustrates your ideas. Begin your paragraph with a topic sentence and write in complete sentences. Use MLA format: font 12, double space. Bring your notes and copy of the novel to class the first day of school.
2. **Conscience:** Identify seven instances in the novel where Huck's conscience is evident—times where he struggles between doing right and doing wrong, times where he feels bad about something he is doing, times when he feels bad about what other people are doing, or times when he feels compassion or sympathy for something he has witnessed. Next, write a sentence summarizing the instance of conscience. Then, cite a passage/quote that represents the instance. Include the number of the chapter from which it came at the end of your quote.
3. **Self-Actualization:** List at least five internal forces for Huck that prevent self-actualization and five external forces (circumstances outside his or her control) that prevent self-actualization. Then, list at least five internal and five external forces that advance or aid in Huck's self-actualization. Briefly explain how each force limits the character by identifying a

negative mindset or character, a plot point or the limiting circumstances. Note that physical characteristics such as being small, plain, or young are not personality traits.

IMPORTANT

- For Assignment #1, you will turn it in on the first day of school. You should have it printed and ready to hand in. Please do not come to class asking to print your assignment!!
- Assignment #2 you will turn in your novel complete with annotations on the first day of school. These will be thoroughly checked and graded then returned to you. You should also have your typed notes printed and ready to hand in. Please do not come to class asking to print your assignment!!
- Your first essay writing assignment in this course when school begins will be a topic that focuses on one of the themes from your notes on *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, and there will be a Socratic Seminar during the first week of school on *The Things They Carried*, so it is imperative that you read the novels carefully and complete the assignments carefully in order to have a full understanding of the works of literature.
- Failure to complete your summer assignments will result in 3 F's to begin the marking period (Summer Assignment #1 + Socratic Seminar, Summer Assignment #2, First Essay)!!