

**Teacher: Andy West****Course Description/Overview:**

This course examines American Literature including pieces from a variety of time periods and a diversity of voices. Students study major writers and their works by drawing connections and extending understanding from the text to themselves and the world... The course is designed to help students develop critical thinking skills, view reading and writing as meaningful processes, understand the importance of discussion in academic and social communities, and take control of their literacy development.

**Learning Goals and Objectives: *Students will...***

- Better understand themselves and their world through literature
- Develop their intellectual and emotional enjoyment of great art, especially literature
- Demonstrate their ability to analyze a literary work and the ability to synthesize aspects of several works, making connections regarding theme, style, and/or structure.
- Produce increasingly complex expository, persuasive and narrative writings.
- Demonstrate the ability to develop an original claim about a text and support that claim with specific textual evidence.
- Demonstrate proficiency with Standard English prose as per department writing rubrics. (establishing ***claims, developing*** claims with evidence, utilizing ***cohesion***, crafting impactful ***introductions and conclusions***, using appropriate ***style and conventions***).
- Demonstrate an ability to think critically about philosophical, cultural, religious, political, economic, and social issues.

**What you might want to know about me and my teaching:**

--In class, I mix acting personal, fun, and funny, with expecting mature, rigorous academic work  
--I try to be spontaneous and responsive to student input  
--I'm good at regularly updating my school web pages  
--this is my 22<sup>nd</sup> year teaching high school English; my 19<sup>th</sup> at West Linn HS  
--I love the outdoors, especially doing things with my family  
--I ride my bike to school year-round

**Class Expectations:**

1. I ask that students focus on *learning* first and not *grades* first.
2. I ask students to *own* their learning.
3. I ask students to stay off the internet in almost all ways related to class.
4. I ask students to not plagiarize.
5. I ask students to not talk about quizzes, tests, or assignments with other students who have already taken it/ completed it etc.
6. I have a fairly quick grading turn around, unless it is the end of a grading period, or the work was turned in substantially late
7. I am good about posting (non-copyrighted) handout on my English 11 web page.
8. I am flexible about deadlines and make up / replacement work if students ask in advance, don't take advantage of this flexibility and proceed in good faith.

**Grading policies/practices:**

- Grades are calculated on a point system, with no weighting for individual categories of assignments. The number of points for an assignment is based on the relative importance of the assignment. Typically, a homework assignment might be worth 25 points, a test 100, and an essay 100. We average about 1200-1500 points per semester. By far the most common cause of lower grades is missing assignments.
- I give frequent 3-point reading quizzes. If students read their homework, they'll do well on these.

**My approach to teaching writing:**

- I believe writing is a process, consisting of several different and distinct intellectual skills.
- I believe that prewriting is the single most under-developed skill for student writers; having something to say often solves many of the typical student-writing problems
- using the internet, even "just for some help reviewing," is ultimately counter-productive
- I conceive of the writing in this class as practice, and of college writing as the "real world"
- I prioritize analytic writing over creative or personal writing

**Major works of Literature we will read this year:**

*Black Boy* (Richard Wright), *The Great Gatsby* (Scott Fitzgerald), *The Awakening* (Kate Chopin), *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (Zora Neale Hurston), *The Catcher in the Rye* (JD Salinger), *A Sand County Almanac* (Aldo Leopold), "The Crucible" (Arthur Miller)

**Hints for success:**

Students must read all assigned work, and must complete all assigned homework. I encourage students to be creative, active, and interested. Students who communicate with me personally about their writing are the ones who develop the most as writers. If something in class is uninteresting, I appreciate students who offer ways to make it interesting. I encourage active learners, not passive ones.

***Thanks for coming. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.***

**Contact Information:**

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Most handouts, assignments, schedules, and homework are found on my school web site