

Welcome to Honors English 4A

Course Content and Classroom Policies and Procedures
2014-2015

Course Content

The major goals of this course are for students to develop independent, critical thinking and to practice the communication of complex ideas and information using a variety of increasingly sophisticated formats. As students prepare for life after high school, reading and writing assignments support the practice of interpretation, analysis and synthesis of ideas. British and World Literature selections are the cornerstones of literary exploration in this course.

Core Idea: Our focus this semester will be on actively reading both literary and informational texts and working to master the written argument and the personal statement. Reading selections and writing prompts will be tied to the theme of finding one's place in the world. Students will be given opportunities to explore their own strengths and weaknesses as learners and to use this reflection to prepare for life beyond high school.

Essential Questions:

- What are my strengths and weaknesses?
- How do I define myself in relationship to society?
- How can I best use my strengths to overcome my weaknesses?
- How do writers and speakers craft effective arguments?
- How can I use rhetorical moves to develop and defend a claim fairly and thoroughly?

Assessments*:

All students in this course will be assessed through:

1. Two summer reading test during the week of September 2nd, 2014
 - Two grades averaged and weighted as one test grade
 - Evaluation Criteria: These are an objective, multiple-choice test
2. Unit 1 (weeks 1-5): English Traditions
 - Argumentative essay: The Importance of Reputation (test grade)
 - Weighted as one test grade
 - Evaluation Criteria: Argument Writing Rubric
 - Personal Statement/Resume (Intended for use in college or career application)
 - Weighted as 20% of first quarter grade
 - Evaluation Criteria: Personal Statement/Resume Rubric
 - Outside Reading Assessment – Students are expected to read one additional literary work outside of class during this unit of study. Teachers choose an appropriate assessment tool (test or writing assignment).
 - Weighted as one test grade

3. Unit 2 (weeks 6-16): Shakespearean Drama

- Two Short Literary Analyses: Responses to Reading
 - Weighted as test grades
 - Evaluation Criteria: Argument Writing Rubric
- Literary Devices/Drama Exam
 - Weighted as one test grade
 - Evaluation Criteria: This is an objective, multiple choice test
- Literary analysis essay
 - Weighted as 20% of second quarter grade
 - Evaluation Criteria: Argument Writing Rubric
- Outside Reading Assessment – Students are expected to read one additional literary work outside of class during this unit of study. Teachers choose an appropriate assessment tool (test or writing assignment).
 - Weighted as one test grade

4. Unit 3 (weeks 17-20): The Novel

- A fictional narrative related to the study of the novel
 - Weighted as one test grade
 - Evaluation Criteria: Fictional Narrative Rubric

5. Other formative assessments as determined by the teacher

These may include, but are not limited to, tests, quizzes, writing assignments, short and long term projects and presentations.

*Assessments are subject to some modification. Any changes will be communicated to students well in advance of due dates.

Texts:** (subject to some change)

Beowulf (abridged)

“Gawain and the Green Knight”

“The Wanderer” and “The Seafarer”

Shakespearean Drama: *Othello*, *Macbeth*, *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Measure for Measure*, or *Merchant of Venice*

Novels in the genre of British and World Literature (*Grendel*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, *Great Expectations*, *The Alchemist*, *Persepolis*, or texts of similar complexity)

Supporting Texts and Resources:

Each core text will be supplemented with **3 to 4 short literary works** (short stories, memoirs, poems), and **2 to 3 informational texts** (literary nonfiction, speeches, essays, articles, transcripts). Other forms of media will also be used in support of the course learning objectives.

**Lowell High School is committed to providing students with reading material that is challenging, engaging and age appropriate. We have worked hard to establish an inventory of literary works that span from classic to contemporary. Some of these works contain mature language and content. Reading selections are addressed in the context of key ideas, craft, structure, and connection to essential questions. Parents are encouraged to read along with students. In the event that a parent objects to a specific title used in class, the students will be provided with an alternative, comparable reading selection.

Content Objectives and Expectations:

The content of this course is aligned with the *Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for ELA and Literacy*. While our classroom practices reflect all areas of these frameworks, the following standards will be the focus of this semester's work.

By the end of this semester, students will be able to:

- Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence (11-12 W.1)
- Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events, using effective techniques, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences (11-12 W.3)
- Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience (11-12 W.4)
- Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what a text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including where the text leaves matters uncertain (11-12 RL/RI.1)
- Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure an author uses in his or her exposition or argument, including whether the structure makes points clear, convincing and engaging (11-12 RI.5)
- Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem (11-12 RI.7)
- Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness, or beauty of the text (11-12 RI.6)
- Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the character are introduced and developed.) (11-12 RL.3)
- Analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama, or poem (e.g., recorded or live production of play or recorded novel or poetry), evaluating how each version interprets the source texts. (Include at least one play by Shakespeare and one play by an American dramatist.) (11-12 RL.7)
- Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively (11-12 S.1)
- Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices or meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening (11-12 L.3)