True Stories Curriculum

Course Overview: Students in this semester literature course analyze the elements of nonfiction storytelling and distinguish between literary truth vs. non-fictional truth. Students will be presented a variety of contemporary non-fiction works (from multiple genres and in multi-media) that exposes them to a diversity of life experiences and will offer the opportunity to examine author's craft in conveying truth in narrative form.

Intro to Literary Non-fiction Overview: In this unit, students will be introduced to the genre of literary nonfiction and learn that it is a type of prose that uses literary techniques usually associated with fiction or poetry to tell a story about people, places, and events in the real world *without altering facts*.

Standards: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.6: 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. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.3: 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 characters are introduced and developed). CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.5: Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.10: By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literary nonfiction in the grades 11-CCR text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend literary nonfiction at the high end of the grades 11-CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Essential Questions: What is literary non-fiction? How are fiction and literary non-fiction similar? How are they different? How is informational non-fiction and literary non-fiction similar? How are they different? How does author's tone and bias affect the reader's understanding/interpretation of literary non-fiction?

True Crime Unit Overview: In this unit, students will be introduced to a potentially new non-fiction medium for them: the podcast. Through the podcast *Serial* (season 1), students will analyze (through listening, discussing, and writing) the story-telling techniques the author uses to investigate the 1999 murder of high school student Hae Min Lee and the ensuing conviction of ex-boyfriend Adnan Syed for that crime. Students will also conduct their own research on a famous criminal and complete a project using narrative techniques to tell their criminal's story.

Standards: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1: 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. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.3: Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, assessing the stance, premises, links among ideas, word choice, points of emphasis, and tone used. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.4: Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks.CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.5: Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.1:

Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.5: Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.6: Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products in response to ongoing feedback, including new arguments or information. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.7: Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.8: Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the task, purpose, and audience; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and over-reliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.9: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.10: Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Essential Questions: Why is True Crime so intriguing? How reliable is human memory? How does people's perspective and background shape their judgment? How is an author's story-telling technique effective? Where is it limited?

Social Justice Unit Overview: In this unit, students will read Bryan Stevenson's book *Just Mercy* and focus on justice and mercy - what does it look like and who deserves it? Students will analyze an author's organization of an analysis of a series of ideas/events and identify and analyze the strategies an author uses to advance a particular point of view and purpose.

Standards: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.1: Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.6: Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products in response to ongoing feedback, including new arguments or information, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.7: Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.8: Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the task, purpose, and audience; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and overreliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.9: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.10: Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.1: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.2: Determine two or more central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text., CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.3: Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term or terms over the course of a text (e.g., how Madison defines faction in Federalist No. 10), CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.5: 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, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.6: 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, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.10: By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literary nonfiction in the grades 11-CCR text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend literary nonfiction at the high end of the grades 11-CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1: 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, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.2: Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) in order to make informed decisions and solve problems, evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.4: Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.5: Make

strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.6: Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating a command of formal English when indicated or appropriate., CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.3: Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, assessing the stance, premises, links among ideas, word choice, points of emphasis, and tone used, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.4: Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.5: Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.6: Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating a command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

Essential Questions: What is social justice? What does justice and mercy mean in our country - who can expect it? What roles do power and privilege play in it? How are prejudice and bias created? How do we overcome them? What are the responsibilities of the individual in regard to issues of social justice? How can literature serve as a vehicle for social change?

Triumph of the Human Spirit Unit Overview: Students will read, study, and explore Tara Westover's *Educated*. The focus of this unit will be on studying the craft of memoir writing and the ways in which the author uses elements of fiction to bring parts of her story of personal growth and achievement to life.

Standards: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.1: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.2: Determine two or more central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text., CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.3: Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term or terms over the course of a text (e.g., how Madison defines faction in Federalist No. 10), CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.5: 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, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.6: 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, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.10: By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literary nonfiction in the grades 11-CCR text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend literary nonfiction at the high end of the grades 11-CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently,CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1: 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.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.4: Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.5: Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.6: Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products in response to ongoing feedback, including new arguments or information. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.9: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.10: Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Essential Questions: What makes memoirs effective? How does education transform? How does regional contrast influence America? How does mental illness affect families? Can there be multiple truths to the same story? What does it mean to change one's life, and what are the costs of real change?