



Instructor: Mrs. Wall
Classroom: 132
Phone: 781-925-3000 x 2132
Email: kwall@town.hull.ma.us

Course Description: This course centers on the theme of the American Experience which we will study by looking at American traditions, values, and culture through the literature of our country. We will read a variety of short stories, essays, poems, dramas, and novels to explore central American ideals such as finding and creating personal identities, freedom and responsibility, moral choices, the human condition, and following the American Dream. Particular emphasis will be placed on critical thinking skills and writing effectively for a variety of purposes. In addition to the reading and writing aspects of the curriculum, we will also concentrate on vocabulary building and grammar conventions within the context of literary works, as well as through skill lessons.

Course Objectives: By the end of the year, students will:

- analyze, compare, and evaluate various works of literature, with particular emphasis on literary elements such as theme, character, and author's craft
- demonstrate serious engagement with the readings through close reading, critical lenses, and analytical writing
- demonstrate familiarity with the social and political forces shaping American culture during relevant time periods
- organize and develop initial reactions to assigned texts, through informal writing, peer critiques, and discussion
- reflect on personal writing skills, set goals, and evaluate personal progress through the steps of the writing process and creation of a writing portfolio

Course Content:

- Reading: critical analysis and interpretation of important works from various time periods and genres
- Writing: write in all content areas (expository, persuasive, literary response, and research)
- Speaking & Listening: periodic oral presentations and peer evaluations on other students' presentations
- Language: vocabulary building through literature and prep for SAT; literary terminology; conventions of standard English grammar and usage

Main Texts:

The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald; *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood; *The Road* by Cormac McCarthy; *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison; and *Outliers* by Malcolm Gladwell

Required Writing:

- Informal and On-Demand Writing: You should expect to write several times per week. The only way to improve your writing is to WRITE!
- Literary Essays: Periodic essays will be assigned on the literary texts we read.

Grading Policy: Grades are based upon the following categories:

| Activity | Percent |
|--|---------|
| ● Formal Writing/Projects | 30% |
| ● Tests/Informal Writing | 20% |
| ● Literature Quizzes/Socratic Seminars | 20% |
| ● Vocabulary Quizzes | 10% |
| ● Homework | 10% |
| ● Classwork/Class Participation | 10% |

Tests are given at the end of each unit. Opportunity for test preparation will be provided in class.

Essays and projects are assigned each quarter. Essays include, but are not limited to, outlining, peer reviewing, and drafting. These correspond with the units of study and comprise the formal writing grade.

Homework includes but is not limited to reading assigned selections as well as vocabulary activities. Class work includes but is not limited to group discussion of texts; plot, setting, character, diction/ style, and theme analysis; and analysis of figurative and literary language in texts.

Each day that a journal prompt is displayed on the board, students will be expected to begin class by responding to the prompt in a paragraph. The prompt will challenge students to reflect on their everyday lives as well as to the themes and motifs presented in the literature that is read. Journals will be reviewed and graded on test days. If a student is absent or does not complete a journal in class, it is his or her responsibility to get the journal prompts from the PowerPoint that will be connected to the Google Classroom page a few days before the journal check. These comprise part of the informal writing grade.

Vocabulary quizzes test students' understanding and application of vocabulary through parts of speech, definition, and usage. Reading quizzes may be given to assess reading completion and comprehension.

Class Rules and Expectations:

- All school policies and rules printed in the Hull High School Student Handbook will be enforced in the classroom.
- Come to class every day **prepared** to work. That means have your **charged** chromebook, reading book, and supplies with you.
- Be **polite** and **respectful** of all class participants – teacher, students, and other staff members in the class – at all times.
- Be **on time** and ready to work when the bell rings.
- Do not line up at the door. You must **remain at your desk** until the bell.
- No food or drink (except water) is allowed in the classroom.

Plagiarism: **Plagiarism** is defined as using another person's ideas, words, images or data without giving that person credit or proper acknowledgement. Plagiarism is a form of academic dishonesty, and as such it will not be tolerated. You have committed plagiarism when you:

- Use quotes, phrases, or ideas that are not your own;
- Paraphrase the work of another even though you may have changed the wording;
- Use facts or data not considered common knowledge;
- Submit a paper written for another class;
- Submit a paper from an essay service even though you may have paid for it;
- Submit a paper by another person even though he or she may have given you permission to use it.

Plagiarism is a serious issue, especially in an academic environment. Teachers must be able to rely on the integrity of a student's work in order to maintain a climate for successful learning. Plagiarism reflects on character; therefore, you should diligently avoid inadvertent plagiarism. When you are unsure if acknowledgement is needed, ask your teacher. The penalties for blatant plagiarism include loss of all credit for the assignment with no opportunity to rewrite, as well as disciplinary consequences per the HHS Handbook. This WILL significantly lower your final grade.

Late Work: Homework is to be turned in **before** class – either on Google Classroom or in the homework bin if the assignment was on paper. **No late homework will be accepted.** You have signed up for an Honors class and my expectation is that you have the work ethic to complete your homework on time. Homework is an easy way to earn points. Do yourself a favor and do every assignment! Long-term essays and projects that are turned in late will be marked down ten percent for each day that they are late. Long-term assignments are not given extra time due to absences except in extreme circumstances. Please talk to me BEFORE the due date if your assignment is going to be late. Since all long-term assignments will be submitted via Google Classroom, they are STILL DUE even if you are absent. Please note that computer problems are not valid excuses for late assignments so **plan ahead!** No papers will be accepted after 5 days late.

Make-Up Work/Tests: If you have an excused absence, it is **your** responsibility to find out what assignments you missed and to make them up. All assignments will be on Google Classroom the day they are assigned (or earlier). If you have any questions about missed work you must see me before or after class. If you missed a test or quiz for an excused absence, you must arrange a make-up by speaking with me upon your return to school. All assessments must be made up within one week (or arrangements made) or they will turn into permanent 0s.

To ensure that parents/guardians AND students are aware of the guidelines and expectations for this class, please sign, date, and return the bottom part of this page only with your student. Students receive homework credit for returning this sheet. I appreciate your time and cooperation.

Student

Print Name: _____

Student Signature: _____

Date: _____

Parent/Guardian

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Please complete the following information:

Do you prefer to be contacted by phone or email? _____

Best number to reach you? _____

Email address: _____

Is there anything you feel I should know about your child to help them be more successful in my class?