



Course Description

This sophomore/junior/senior level course focuses on literature and reading as well as writing about this lit and writing in linguistically appropriate styles. Speaking and listening will also be integrated into coursework and/or assignments. We will critically examine the writing of others, the world around us, and our own writing, all the while growing as readers, as writers, and as humans.

Course Objectives

Objectives to be met with alignment to the Common Core State Standards are available on the class website.

Common Conversations Texts

For this course, you will be reading independently throughout the semester. We will read shorter pieces, excerpts, articles, and essays as a class whole, and **one/two novels** will be read as book club or whole class studies. For the novels, students will be able to choose from a selected list (you may provide your own books or borrow from Mrs. C).

Materials Required

- A single subject writer's notebook for regular in-class writing (bring it EVERYDAY)
- Internet access – for completing online assignments and blog entries as well as submitting writing assignments via Google Classroom
- Recommended – a designated online folder via Google Drive or Dropbox to keep PDFs, MSWord docs, etc. for this course separate from work for other courses

The “Almost” Gradeless Classroom

Why do we grade? You have been conditioned to see grades as the only markers of academic success. But by nature, this system emphasizes competition over collaboration and compliance over engagement. Simply put, we don't learn this way—we just learn to play the game.

“This course will focus on qualitative not quantitative assessment, something we'll discuss during the class, both with reference to your own work and the works we're studying. While you will get a final grade at the end of the term, I will not be grading individual assignments, but rather asking questions and making comments that engage your work rather than simply evaluate it. You will also be reflecting carefully on your own work and the work of your peers. The intention here is to help you focus on working in a more organic way, as opposed to working as you think you're expected to.” – quote borrowed from Jesse Stommel, Prof. University of Mary Washington

While this may make you initially uneasy, when you learn to let go of a preconceived notion of what will earn an “A” and instead focus on what you have to say, how best you can say it, and what questions you have about how to move forward from there, you will be amazed at the progress you make. Your only competition here is yourself. Certainly, if you become anxious about your progress, please check in with me and I can address your concerns. If you are worried about your grade, you should do the regular notebook writing, complete and revise drafts as needed, and keep reading.

Even within this format, your work will be recognized as 35% formative/classwork (the journey of learning), 35% summative/assessment (writing and outcome of what you've learned), and 30% participation. This is in alignment with other sections of English 9-10 at GCHS.

Writing/Assignment Requirements

- Writing is expected to be complete, on time (within window and by deadline), and thorough.
- Penalties for missing deadlines will be at the teacher's discretion. Please keep moving forward.
- Assignments and class activities will be posted on the website. Be sure to check there often.
- At course completion, you may be asked to submit significant pieces of revised writing in a portfolio format.
- Reflective writings will be completed throughout the semester as well as semester's end.

Attendance

You will need to attend class in-person to be successful. In the event that you miss class due to illness (including quarantine) or other circumstances you are responsible for checking both the GClassroom and class website to stay as up-to-date as possible with course happenings. You will still need to submit any work scheduled unless we have discussed alternatives. Please communicate.

Attendance (if remote learning resumes)

You will need to "attend" class to be successful. Some work will be asynchronous. This means you will be able to access videos, assignments, tutorials, and basic assignments on your own without a set schedule. But it MUST be apparent through the work in your folders that you ARE taking part in this work. You will check the website EACH CLASS DAY for new items, updates, and target/deadline reminders. Sometimes we will meet synchronously—together in real-time—and you will be required to attend these meetings. Writing group work will take place in small zoom groups and periodic check-ins with Mrs. C for "office hours" will be required. Occasionally, we may meet as a larger group for important updates, info, or even to share and celebrate the writing we've been doing.

Cheating/Plagiarism – Mrs. C's Terms

Copying the work of others, claiming the ideas and/or words of others as your own is simply not acceptable. This includes words from essays/papers found online, papers of friends, siblings, previous students, online videos, social media posts, blogs, or any other outside sources. When you quote others, documentation is necessary to credit them properly and aid readers in finding additional information. The teacher's decision regarding these matters is final and can impact both your overall grade and your course credit/enrollment. Note that decisions to report plagiarism to the department chair, building principals, and/or NHS sponsors could negatively affect your own academic standing or club participation/membership. ALWAYS submit your own work as your own work. Submitting "original" work generated by AI/GPT programs is also cheating and will be regarded as such.

"In-Class" Cell Phone Policy

Cell phone use should be kept to a minimum unless being used for class purposes. Respectful attention should be paid to those speaking in the classroom/zoom room whether an instructor, guest speaker, or fellow classmate. This also includes distracting use of devices during online group work, office hour meetings, class meetings, or other synchronous learning. Please do not allow your own cell phone to become a distraction to your learning.

Contacting the Teacher/Conferencing

Email is welcome. Writing conference times can be set up based on availability. Since this is a high school course, students should make an effort to speak with the teacher about any issues before contact with a parent takes place.

Contact Mrs. C at jennifer.connolly@gcsd9.net, Check grades through Skyward,
Daily info at www.mrsconnollysclass.com

Possible Topics of Study

- Independent Reading w/ some focus on rhetoric and writer's craft
- Essay – what is it, really? unraveling “5 ¶ Myths”
- Read Like a Writer techniques and practice
- Intro / review of MLA format (for all papers)
- Peer group interaction and productive peer group work
- Constructing portfolios – self-selecting work, reflective letter, abstracts
- Zoom in for detail & Zoom out for “why does it matter?”
- Voice – where's yours? (even in academia)
- Reading / analyzing example papers (throughout semester)
- Notebook writings to generate topic ideas / reflect on topics & learning
- Writing & Reading in multiple genres
- Examination and Reading of relevant texts written by a variety of authors
- Writing Invention Strategies
- Audience and Rhetorical Context (that is, how reader, writer, language, and subject matter interact)
- Pursuit of Identity through lit./reading
- Development of Controlling Idea with sufficient and appropriate detail
- Organization/Arrangement of material to support purpose and affect audience
- Prose Style/Expression tailored for the intended audience and purpose
- Revision as a holistic re-envisioning of the text
- Incorporation of ideas and quotations from other sources
- Editing strategies to identify and eliminate most significant surface errors in edited American English

Peer Group Expectations

Because revision is easier to attempt when feedback, opinion or critique, is provided, students will regularly work on their writings in peer groups. Known as WRITE CLUB, this peer group time is an important part of how we learn to read from a writer's perspective and how we grow as writers ourselves. For each peer group session, students will be expected to bring the designated piece of writing (enough copies for all group members), read his/her own piece aloud, ask questions regarding his/her own writing, graciously receive feedback from peers, as well as provide feedback for and ask questions of other writers in the group. Critical yet constructive feedback about content issues (not just correctness) will be required. (Preparedness and participation in WRITE CLUB group work will be a component of the written work portion of the course grade).

Revision Guidelines / Policy

As revision is an integral part of a writer's process, students will be able to continually revise all work until portfolio completion and final deadlines at end of semester. Feedback is important, revision is expected, and students will be able not only to revise but to reflect on their writerly progress and explain how that revision has taken place. We are always working toward our best writing, and no assessment is final until semester's end.

Statement on Language Use & Censorship

As we study the use of language for communication and pursuant of a variety of goals, material used for class purposes will not be censored to simply eliminate profanity. Words have meaning and nuance, and writers choose them deliberately to make statements as they see fit to achieve their purpose. That said, students will never be asked to personally use words they are uncomfortable with or have objection to and are always welcome to opt out of reading such words aloud in book talks, presentations, etc. Also, in efforts to emphasize an anti-racist, anti-bias focus, note that racial slurs are unacceptable in student speech, and profanity should not be aimed at or leveraged against classmates or the teacher. Books chosen for independent reading will not be censored by the

instructor for content or language but should be chosen with care by the reader with input from caregivers/parents if needed.

Online Platforms

- **Google Classroom** – for updates, submitting written work, collecting survey information, and to send out bulk email (just a homepage)
- **Flipgrid** – for video access, both videos I create for you to watch and video and audio you submit sometimes to just teachers and sometimes for a larger audience of your peers.
- **Google Meets** – if needed for class meeting, small group meetings, and instructor “office hours”