

B.M.C. Durfee High School

Pre-AP English Syllabus

Mrs. Bernier (Room 483/434)
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Items to be brought to class regularly:

- Textbook
 - Notebook
 - Pens(blue or black only) or pencils
 - Homework
 - Positive attitude and work ethic
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Course Description

A Pre-AP English course engages students in the careful reading and critical analysis of literature. Through the close reading of selected texts, students deepen their understanding of the ways writers use language to provide both meaning and pleasure for their readers. As they read, students consider a work's structure, style, and themes as well as such smaller scale elements as the use of figurative language, imagery, symbolism, and tone. The course includes intensive study of representative works from various genres and periods, concentrating on works of recognized literary merit. We will discuss with verve and insight every provocative question we can come up with and in the fourth term, we will embark on the Poetry Project, for which you will write five two-page essays in a little over two weeks and then one 10-page essay, all on single poems by an author of your choice.

Instructional Philosophy

This course will prepare students to be life-long learners by building communication skills required in every walk of life. The course will be organized around best practices in English language arts instruction, including literature circles, performance, reading and writing process, strategies to improve writing, student presentations, and the Socratic Seminar. Students will be expected to complete all assignments both in class and out of class. These assignments will include extended projects requiring research and reading over a period of time. Being a part of the classroom community means participating in discussion and sharing insights and interpretations with classmates and the teacher. Most classes will begin with a short opening activity, followed by class discussion, intensive writing practice, and/or performance activities. There will be substantial out-of-class reading. Both teacher and students will strive to build community, comprehend and create text, then reflect on that process.

Required Text and Materials

In the Pre-AP course, required texts will be provided to each student. However, the student may consider obtaining a personal copy of the various novels, plays, epics, poems, and short fiction used in the course. Having your own personal copy of a text will better allow you to “mark” the text via notes and comments in the margins. This, however, is not required.

Because this is an advanced course, expectations are appropriately high, and the reading workload is challenging. Students are expected to come to class with the works read and annotated. Because of the length of some pieces, careful planning and time management is essential to success in the class. Careful reading leads to in-class discussion which reveals a student’s in-depth understanding and evaluation of the piece and contributes towards the strengthening of his/her own composition ability.

Literary Analysis

Students will improve their facility in the interpretation and analysis of various literary genres. In line with a greater expectation that students become astute readers of nonfiction, there will be frequent use of newspaper and magazine articles that will not, due to their timeliness, appear below. Reading will be divided into the following four units:

UNIT ONE: UTOPIAS/DYSTOPIAS

Essential Question: Is man essentially good or evil? How does society seek to control or support the individual? What defines a utopia? What defines a dystopia? Why do the best of intentions sometimes fail?

UNIT TWO: JUSTICE

Essential Question: What is justice? How do sexism, racism, stereotyping, and prejudice affect the individual, the community, and society as a whole and make justice nearly-if not completely-impossible?

UNIT THREE: COMING TO TERMS/BREAKING OUT

Essential Question: How do individuals make peace with or break out of the confines from which they are born? How does the environment in which they are raised define them? Are they more defined by their nature or how they have been nurtured?

UNIT FOUR: FREEDOM VS. RESPONSIBILITY

Essential Question: What is freedom? Does freedom carry consequences? How do we define responsibility? What sacrifices must be made for freedom?

Independent Reading

Readers are more apt to be successful students. In fact, the number of words for success has been measured at 1,000,000 words. That is equal to approximately twenty-five books. Therefore, it is important to read about thirty minutes a night. You will be expected to read a minimum of **four** out of class assignments per year.

Classroom Rules and Policies

Classroom rules are simple: respect and responsibility. If one respects himself, he will respect fellow students and teachers as well as their property. Respect the rules of the school. Above all, take responsibility for your actions.

Organization

Materials for this course must be organized in a **3-Ring Binder**. All binders should be divided into the six following sections: timed writing, grammar/vocabulary, literature, rhetoric, writing, and resources. All handouts and notes should be placed in the appropriate order and section. A 3-hole-puncher will be available to all students each day in order to keep binders up-to-date and organized. Binders will be checked and graded periodically throughout the semester. In order to receive complete credit, all notes, in-class assignments, homework assignments, and handouts must be in order and included. Binder checks will be unannounced.

Homework

Homework is a necessary part of your English curriculum and is essential to mastering the skills needed to pass this course. Homework will be a daily event, will be meaningful and will count for **10%** of the overall grade. A homework assignment may represent grammar, reading, writing, or vocabulary. Completing homework on time is essential. ***Late homework will receive no credit.*** Further, if you are unprepared for in-class activities due to incomplete homework, you will not receive a grade for those activities (excluding incomplete work due to absence).

Missed Work

All students are responsible for missed work. It is **your** responsibility to find out about any missed work due to an absence from class.

- All missed work should be made up within one day per each day missed.
- If you are absent for any quiz or test, you will be expected to make it up on the day you return to school **or** after school within two days *if* in-class time is not available. If I am out for any reason or school is canceled, any scheduled work/assessment for that day will take place the day we return.
- Make-up work/extra help may be done Tuesdays immediately after school in room 483 or in the English computer lab. If you are unable to stay after school to make up missed work, work may be made up before school on a limited basis. Please check with me ahead of time for a pass.

Late Work

- Late papers lose one-half grade if handed in the same day, one grade if handed in the next day, one-half grade thereafter up to two grades.
 - Students are responsible for all electronic work. All students should set up and know the username/password for their www.fallriverschools.org account. Any materials that need to be printed out should be saved to your Google account and printed out by you **prior** to class. **I will not print out essays that are sent to my account.** Assignments not handed in in-person will be considered late and will lose credit as stated in the late policy above.
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Grading

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| • Common Assessments/Final Exam | 15% |
| • Tests/Projects/Essays | 45% |
| • Quizzes | 15% |
| • Homework/Preparedness/Participation | 25% |

Preparedness

- Bring appropriate items to class: writing tools, books, notebooks, homework.
 - Bring a positive attitude: common purpose to learn, applied effort, cooperation, respect for self and others.
 - Complete assigned homework.
 - Preparedness/Participation represents 25 % of the overall grade (10% of preparedness grade is earned through homework).
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Please ask your parents to read this document and sign the attached page. Return of the signed portion of the document will represent your first homework grade (100).

I have read the above document from my child's English teacher, and I have discussed with my child the need for punctuality and preparedness for class.

Student's Name _____

Parent's Signature _____

Date _____