

# English 103/104: Introduction to Literature and Language

Mrs. Rickert: Hilliard Bradley High School

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

Each section of these first-year classes approaches the study of literature through the exploration of a single theme in texts drawn from a variety of literary genres (tragedy, comedy, lyric poetry, epic, novel, short story, film, autobiography, etc.) and historical periods. Students in each section are asked to work intensively on composition as part of a rigorous introduction to reading, thinking, speaking and writing about literary texts. During the semester, instructors will assign frequent essays and may also require oral presentations, quizzes, examinations and research projects.

## OBJECTIVES

- Investigate the methods that authors use to create fiction and poetry
- Enhance the ability to write at the collegiate level
- Develop self-awareness of strengths and weaknesses in reading and writing. Accept what we can't change and improve what we can
- Apply the style and stance of formal academic writing
- Develop the skills to write in a variety of styles and situations
- Appreciate the value of being a literate citizen and being an independent reader to a life of fulfillment and health
- Appreciate the value of classic literature
- Foster good work habits that promote success and learning

## REQUIRED TEXTS

The following texts will be covered in class. You may have hard copies or download the books onto your iPad unless I require you to have one or the other as noted below. You should be prepared to do some annotating in class every day, so you must have a copy of the book in class with you every day. Many of the works we will read in class are in the public domain and free versions are readily available in iBooks.

### First Semester (English 103)

- *Pride and Prejudice* - Jane Austen
- *Their Eyes Were Watching God* - Zora Neale Hurston
- Poetry (no purchase needed)
- Short Stories (no purchase needed)
- Choice of Classic

### Second Semester (English 104)

- *MacBeth* - William Shakespeare\*
- Poetry (no purchase needed)
- The short stories of Flannery O'Connor (no purchase needed)
- *The Help* - Kathryn Stockett
- Contemporary Classic

\*I have yet to find a good ebook version of the play that includes line numbers and definitions of old words, so we will use the Folger Library version of the play. (ISBN: 978-0743477109). Because this is a college level class NO FEAR versions are not permitted.

## COMMUNICATION

I teach all of my classes in Room B273.

Outside of regular school hours you can contact me through email at [julie\\_rickert@hboe.org](mailto:julie_rickert@hboe.org) or by using the Canvas app. Please be aware that I generally limit my use of email and devices after 9PM.

## CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE

- Respect everyone's opinions. Everyone has a unique way of seeing the world and that should be embraced.
- Be focused on what you are supposed to be doing. Be present.
- Belong in class. Regardless of why you are in this class, you should be because you are. Work at that level.
- Embrace a growth mindset.
- The use of headphones is prohibited in class at all times unless you are listening to an audio of the book we are reading.

## ELECTRONIC DEVICES

iPads will present us all with a new set of opportunities and challenges this year. I expect that we will be learning together as we go through the process. However, one of your responsibilities as a student is to manage your use of such devices. When in class you should not be on your cell phone at all and you should not be using your iPad for anything other than what you are currently asked to do. Everyone needs to develop a good sense of self control so that electronics and all the distractions that they present do not prevent us from getting our work done and, more importantly, enjoying all of the wonderful people and things around us. Every day we are given the opportunity to be completely focused on whatever you are doing or whomever you are with. View this class as one such opportunity to develop your ability to focus.

## FOOD AND DRINK POLICY

Food is not permitted in the classroom. This is a school rule. Water is fine.

## INDEPENDENT READING

We will begin each class period with ten to fifteen minutes of independent reading. By the second week of school this should be a habit - I should not need to tell you to start. You may use this time to select a book from the classroom library or, occasionally, from the media center. During this time I will be reading as well, but I may also use the time to conference with students. You are welcome to read whatever you want during this time. However, because you are in a college level class you will be strongly encouraged to pick books that are out of your comfort zone.

## ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS

My expectation is that you will do the work you are asked to do. This involves reading the assigned texts instead of reading online summaries, writing without plagiarism, and in general approaching everything we do with an open mind. Because you chose to take a college level class instead of a regular elective, you are expected to respond with the appropriate mindset.

Plagiarism is a serious offense. It is up to my discretion whether or not you will receive credit for plagiarized work, but at the very least you will be asked to rewrite the paper over and choose a different topic. The following are examples of plagiarism:

- Using work from other sources in your writing and not giving credit.
- Handing in someone else's work as your own.
- Using papers from online sources.
- Writing a paper that is inspired by something you have read online without giving proper credit.

In addition, I prohibit any use of study guides like Cliff's Notes or online resources such as Sparknotes or Wikipedia to complete your work. Trust yourself. You do not need them.

## ASSESSMENTS

### PARTICIPATION

Participation is a requirement for the class. You will need to actively participate within small group discussions, one-on-one conversations and whole class discussions. This means that you are not off-task during the class. Participation points should be easy to get.

Part of the participation grade will be online discussions that will take place on Canvas outside of class. If you do the minimum - start a discussion and respond to two others - you will receive a 20/25 for the week. If you go beyond this by responding more and checking in on the conversation a few times a week you may earn full points.

### TESTS AND QUIZZES

There will be occasional tests and quizzes over the material we study. Some may be unannounced.

### FORMAL AND INFORMAL WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

The majority of your assessments will be papers and short responses. We will do one paper each nine weeks with several shorter response throughout that will help prepare you for them. Very rarely will you be one your own for these. You will have opportunities to brainstorm in groups and will be required to do revisions after I comment on a first draft. Writing is an integral part of KAP. Writing assignments focus on the critical analysis of literature and include expository, analytical and argumentative essays. Although critical analysis makes up the bulk of student writing for the course, well-constructed creative writing assignments may help students see from the inside how literature is written. Such experiences sharpen their

understanding of what writers have accomplished and deepen their appreciation of literary artistry. The goal of both types of writing assignments is to increase students' ability to explain clearly, cogently, even elegantly, what they understand about literary works and why they interpret them as they do.

To that end, writing in this class includes attention to developing and organizing ideas in clear, coherent and persuasive language. It includes study of the elements of style. And it attends to matters of precision and correctness as necessary. Throughout the course, emphasis is placed on helping students develop stylistic maturity, which, for KAP, is characterized by the following:

- \* a wide-ranging vocabulary;
- \* a variety of sentence structures;
- \* a logical organization, enhanced by specific techniques of coherence such as repetition, transitions and emphasis;
- \* a balance of generalization with specific illustrative detail; and
- \* an effective use of rhetoric, including controlling tone, maintaining a consistent voice, and achieving emphasis through parallelism and antithesis.