Contemporary Literature

Mrs. Mason

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# Contemporary Literature

The literature selected for this course is written by, written about, or expected to appeal to young adults. The themes and subjects within the novels often deal with contemporary issues. There is a heavy reading load in this course; you should consider reading deadlines as **nightly** homework. If you do not read or wait until the last minute to read assignments, you will not do well in this course. You will be expected to read and be prepared for check tests, and group and/or individual activities on the given due date.

In addition to the reading, you will be participating in units on speechmaking (including writing and delivering a speech), creative writing (reading selected creative pieces and creating a vignette portfolio and/or poetry portfolio), formal essay writing, and a research paper. These units are essential for all 12th grade English electives.

**List of available texts**:

*The Namesake*, Jhumpa Lahiri

*Their Eyes Were Watching God*, Zora Neale Hurston

*The Kite Runner*, Khaled Hosseini

*Song of Solomon*, Toni Morrison

*The Catcher in the Rye*, JD Salinger

*12 Angry Men,* Reginald Rose

*The House on Mango Street*, Sandra Cisneros

**Formal Essay Writing:**

Formal essay assignments will be inserted throughout the year. You will be required to complete formal essays of descriptive writing, persuasive writing, evaluative writing, and critical writing.

**Supplemental Materials:**

We will view several films and documentaries this year. The following is a possible list of films:

*Big Fish Osama Stranded – A Documentary*

*Dead Poets Society The Kite Runner Much Ado About Nothing*

*Twelfth Night Edward Scissorhands The Women of Afghanistan*

## Other potential units of study:

## 1) Personal Narrative: Finding Your Writer’s Voice

During this unit, you will be writing a personal narrative essay, which may be used for the college application process. We will study a variety of short personal essays with emphasis on voice and tone in writing.

**Potential Memoirs to be used:**

*The Glass Castle*, Jeannette Walls

*Smashed*, Koren Zailckas

*Hole in My Life,* Jack Gantos

*Angela’s Ashes,* Frank McCourt

*Needles,* Andie Dominick

*The Color of Water,* James McBride

*October Sky,* Homer Hickam

**2) Self and Society: Finding Your Place**

**Potential novels to be used:**

*The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time,* Mark Haddon

*Go Ask Alice,* Anonymous

*What’s Eating Gilbert Grape*, Peter Hedges

*My Sister’s Keeper*, Jodi Picoult

*Feed*, MT Anderson

*The Road*, Cormac McCarthy

**3) Short Story Unit**

For this unit, you will be required to read short stories and analyze them from a critical viewpoint. This unit will culminate in writing a critical analysis essay that explores a contemporary issue or subject.

**4) Public Speaking:**

During this unit, you will read, interpret, and analyze contemporary speeches; evaluate rhetorical techniques used in speech making; and make effective use of language and style to write and deliver a persuasive speech.

**Supplies:**

Folder or binder Planner or agenda

Loose-leaf paper or notebook Post-It Notes for annotations

Blue/Black pens Novel/Handout being used in class

Highlighter

**Grading Policies:**

## Class Work and Participation: 20%

This includes class work such as journaling, in-class assignments, and in-class projects. Students should be prepared for class each day. You are expected to bring the supplies listed above each day – **YOU WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO GO TO YOUR LOCKER FOR FORGOTTEN ITEMS OR ASSIGNMENTS.** You will also be encouraged to participate in large and small group discussions on a daily basis.

## Exams and Essays: 25%

\*The Final Exam for Contemporary Literature will count for 10% of your final grade. The grade will be on your report card and your transcript.

* **Reading and Writing Projects: 25%**

This includes individual and group projects that will be assigned throughout the year.

## Quizzes: 20%

* **Homework: 10%**

**Plagiarism**

* Plagiarism is “an act or instance of using or closely imitating the language and thoughts of another author without authorization and the representation of that author's work as one's own, as by not crediting the original author” (Dictionary.com).
* Plagiarism will be punished with a disciplinary referral and a zero for the assignment. If written up for plagiarism, a student jeopardizes induction into the National Honor Society and/or is subject to removal from National Honor Society.

**Examples of plagiarism include:**

* Copying from another student during a test, quiz, or a homework assignment, with or without his/her permission
* Taking ideas from another source and not giving appropriate credit via Works Cited page
* Paraphrasing the words of another, without due credit given, even if you change a few words
* Submitting a paper, or part of a paper, written by someone else
* Submitting a paper taken from another student
* Allowing another person to do your work and handing that work in under your own name
* Turning in identical or similar papers for credit in more than one class without permission from the teachers
* Copying an essay directly from an Internet source, in whole or in part, is plagiarism and will be subject to the consequences

**Classroom Policies for Contemporary Literature-Mrs. Mason**

* Attendance in English is mandatory. There are no “legal” skip days – “slept in” is not a legal excuse!
* A significant portion of your grade is based on class participation. You must be here to participate! Chronic absence (even once a week) will seriously impact your success in this course.
* You have three days after an absence to make up a test or a quiz. I may not remind you; it is your responsibility. This can be done in the Test Center during your lunch or study hall, or after school with me in room 1404.
* Reading is homework. Deadlines are firm. Check tests will often be given to check reading accomplishment.
* No late daily assignments will be accepted. The grade is a zero.
* If you are not in class but are in school for any part of the day, your homework/assignment is still due and you are responsible for any work assigned that day.
* Long-term assignments (essays, projects, etc…) will be penalized ten points for each day late.
* Formal assignments must be typed, double spaced, and use Times New Roman and 12 point font.
* Students not present for pre-scheduled presentations without a medical excuse will receive a grade of zero.
* There is no extra credit. Always do your best and come to class.

These rules are posted in the classroom. Please sign this form and have your parent/guardian sign it as well. This will count as a homework grade. Return by Friday, September 8th.

## Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_**

**MAKE A SOLID COMMITMENT TO DO YOUR BEST. PRACTICE BEING A SELF-DIRECTED STUDENT. CHALLENGE YOURSELF! RESEARCH SHOWS THAT STUDENTS WHO WORK HARD AND DO WELL THEIR LAST YEAR OF HIGH SCHOOL ARE MORE SUCCESSFUL IN THEIR POST SECONDARY STUDIES THAN THOSE WHO SLACK OFF AND JUST SLIDE BY.**