

Film Literature / Mr. Williams / 2017

Welcome to Film Literature. This is a class that will challenge you to develop/refine skills relevant to the close viewing and study of films and film clips. It will also coalesce with close reading and writing skills. In light of this, each student must prepare him/herself to consistently strive for the highest level of critical thinking as applicable to the English language.

While I am excited to take a shared journey with you in this class, please be aware the course itself centers on more than just “watching movies.” In fact, we may spend multiple days each week working both independently and/or in small discussion groups connected to related English subject matter; this will include X-Y writing, characterization using ancillary readings, etc.

Daily Supplies: Two number 2 pencils, two pens (blue or black ink), and a notebook /binder with loose-leaf paper (no spirals). The notebook/binder is for taking notes, to keep handouts and to file returned assignments. Also, assigned readings/handouts must be brought to class every day unless otherwise noted (be prepared when the bell rings).

I firmly believe every student can be successful in my classroom. In fact, I expect every student will be successful in my classroom. In order to help each individual learner in American Literature Honors achieve this goal, I plan to implement the following:

- A positive learning environment where students feel comfortable to take risks in improving their reading, composition, communicating, and thinking.
- Instructing primarily from a student-centered approach to learning; this includes inquiry-based research, academic group work, projects, etc.
- The use of differentiated forms of assessment in my classroom.
- Creating an environment that is fair, where students feel comfortable approaching the instructor with any questions regarding the learning processes of this class.
- Developing a solid foundation of skills for students to build upon and apply in future high-level English classes.

While I believe the implementation of the above procedures will greatly assist you in achieving success, there are other factors that you are responsible for that are equally important:

- Students will abide by the district attendance policy. In addition, three tardies to class result in a detention with the instructor that must be served before or after school within two days. Also, other unexcused absences include any that are not validated by a parent/guardian or those that have not been prearranged with the instructor.
- As a general rule, homework is due at the beginning of class the next day unless otherwise specified by the instructor. I believe this is the best path to consistent success in the classroom. Additionally, late work is not the preferred policy of the classroom; if the student is/was legally absent on the day of a homework assignment, he/she must make prompt arrangements with the instructor to complete the task in a timely manner. Also, in other cases, I will make each decision on late work acceptability based on plausible extenuating circumstances presented by the individual student.
- As an addendum to the stated homework expectations, the standard make up time for an excused absence in the classroom follows district guidelines: no more than twice the number of days of the excused absence; however, students should strive to complete/turn in all major projects by the established deadline date.

- Plagiarism is cheating and constitutes an automatic grade of “0” on the assignment(s).

Other basics:

- ☉ **Rule #1: We respect the learning environment in this course. This is especially critical in a film class where you will need to be an actively engaged viewer and respectful of peers (and your teacher) who are in close proximity.**
- ☉ Generally speaking, no homework from other classes is permitted.
- ☉ **Please do not use your phone, tablet computers or other electronic devices in this class, except for approved academic tasks. This includes music, unless permission is granted by me.**
- ☉ No coats in the classroom.
- ☉ Hats are not allowed in the school hallways during the regular school day; needless to say, they are not allowed in this classroom. Additionally, no other head coverings are permitted, unless specifically approved by administration.
- ☉ No food or drink in the classroom.
- ☉ Please do not write on my desks.
- ☉ This course will require a significant amount of close reading both in class and as homework.
- ☉ It is an expectation students shall make every effort to complete their papers and homework assignments on a computer or an acceptable alternative technology (PCs are available for student use in the school’s media center or computer labs). There will be a number of exceptions to this rule, but I will let you know when this is applicable.

Grading: Grades will be calculated according to the number of points accumulated for each quarter grade. The two-quarter grades will be averaged in conjunction with the midterm or final exam to determine the grade at the end of the semester.

- ☐ **Expect potential unannounced quizzes to ascertain whether expected elements of class lessons or film viewing responsibilities have been followed.**
- ☐ **Expect note-taking/annotation requirements as a regular facet of class, both during film segments and during class presentations.**
- ☐ **Expect vocabulary quizzes that are ancillary to your regular work in this course.**
- ☐ **Expect journaling exercises on a regular basis.**
- ☐ **Expect in-class, timed “blue book” impromptus that will require preparation on your part before the assessment is administered.**
- ☐ **Expect inquiry-based assignments/learning both in the classroom and at home.**
- ☐ **Expect occasional skill-building assessments comparable to ACT/SAT standards to measure your mastery level(s) of English.**
- ☐ **Expect both minor and major projects anchored within the study of films (short clips, full movies, research) that will entail precision and hard work.**
- ☐ **Expect composition assessments that require close reading, thinking, and writing /typing .**

☐ Participation is expected in peer groups and/or collectively as a class.

☐ Regular attendance is important to maximizing your experience and outcome in this class.

Note 1: Each graded assignment receives an individual denominator value (e.g. – 10 points, 25 points, etc.). The denominator value is various. For instance, a content reading quiz may be worth 10 points, while a project may be worth 50 points. All denominator values are then added together. The student's overall numerator is then divided by the overall denominator to determine the grade range.

Note 2: Some teachers establish a baseline for minimum points on an assignment, irrespective of whether the assignment was submitted or not. With my courses, all students receive 40 percent of the points even if the assignment was not submitted. As an example, if a student receives 8 points (40%) on a 20 point assignment, this means the assignment was either never submitted or the student actually earned between 0 and 39% on the assessment. I believe using this baseline system helps to promote an overall positive and respectful learning environment for students; however, if you see less than 40 percent on any assignment (e.g. – 0 to 39%), this means in addition to obtaining an original low grade, a student's daily conduct is having a negative impact upon the learning environment (e.g. – disruptive, sleeping in class, texting constantly, etc.). Therefore, the actual percentage (below 40) that a student originally earned is assigned in Pinnacle.

Scores will be weighted to reflect the student's progression/effort/improvement over each quarter/the entire year; however, as a general rule of thumb, the grade range is as follows:

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
A+, A, and A-	90.0-100.0%
B+, B, and B-	80.0-89.99
C+, C, and C-	70.0-79.99
D+, D, and D-	60.0-69.99
E	0-59.99

(Your Signature)

(Date)

As a final thought, let me reiterate once again I will do everything I can to make sure you are successful in this class. I'm excited to have each of you as a student and expect we will have a great year together.