Honors English 9/10 Syllabus

Teacher: Ms. Goodhart
Room: Sangren Hall 3140
Schedule: Thursdays 1:20pm-3:50pm

Contact: abigail.m.goodhart@wmich.edu
Sunday Help Hours: Jess Fales 4-6pm in Sangren Hall

Course Description
The purpose of this course is to prepare you for college writing and to think analytically, creatively, and independently. This class fosters a workshop atmosphere with feedback from your peers. Class activities will focus not only upon reading but also on the process of writing: planning, drafting, and editing. Each polished draft will be graded and then revised to go into your portfolio. The portfolios will showcase the best of your work.

During the first half of the year, students will work on several formal essays: narration, description, process analysis, exemplification, cause and effect, comparison/contrast, definition, argumentation, and researched argumentation. Students will study and respond to several literary essays from various authors. Students will keep a journal in which they write directed entries. We will write about and discuss aesthetics and philosophy—specifically applicable to art/artist/process. We will use ELearning in which discussion over homework and other topics related to our class may be explored outside the classroom. Critical thinking skills, time-management, interpersonal, and metacognitive skills will be stressed throughout the course.

And for the last half of the year, students will write two short literary essays for Golding’s The Lord of the Flies and Orwell’s Animal Farm. After reading Orwell’s Animal Farm and The Lord of the Flies, students will develop ideas into a working thesis for their individual research paper topics. We will learn library research and Internet skills, proper MLA documentation, and how to balance in-text citation. Our class will read Shakespeare’s Much Ado About Nothing while keeping character diaries. We will discuss and explicate the text and students may also do individually researched presentations related to our reading. The final project will be a combination of fiction and poetry for a creative writing component. Our schedule is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.
The **Required Texts and Materials** for the course are:

- *Patterns for College Writing, 12th ed.* Laurie G. Kirszner and Stephen R. Mandell
- *Grammar Girl Presents the Ultimate Writing Guide for Students* by Mignon Fogerty
- *William Golding’s The Lord of the Flies*
- *George Orwell’s Animal Farm*
- *Shakespeare’s Much Ado About Nothing*
- *An in-class notebook for daily in-class writing and notes*
- *A 2” or 3” 3-ring binder to keep as your portfolio*
- *A folder to keep homework*
- *Dividers for the portfolio*

**Policies and Requirements**

**Papers and homework:** Hard copies are due at the beginning of class. Use proper heading: **Name, week number it is due, assignment** in the upper right corner. Interesting titles, centered one space below the heading are required.

**Late work policy:** Homework turned in late more than three times in a semester means that you may not earn an “A” in the class. For compositions scored on a check minus, check, check plus, plus scale, late work will receive no higher than a check. Late major essays will be penalized one full letter grade. If you have a late assignment, you will complete a “Sorry It’s Late” form which I will sign and send home with you. It must be signed by a parent and returned with the late work attached the following week. Exceptions will be made on a case-by-case basis for illness, family emergencies, etc. So, if life happens, it is your responsibility to communicate with me what is going on. Family vacations are not an excused reason for turning in assignments late.

**Handing in work via eLearning:** In order to provide you with another place to archive your work, I want you to **upload all of your assignments to the proper Dropbox folder in eLearning each week**.

**Attendance and Professionalism:** This is your willingness to take part in class activities, keep notes during class, help others, arrive to class on time, have solid drafts ready for peer editing, contribute to class discussion boards by both reading and responding to topics, work with classmates outside of class (virtually or in person) for group projects, meet schedules for assignments, stow electronics, seek help from either me or Jessie, our fabulous tutor, and basically contribute to the community of the class.

**Students with Disabilities and Special Needs:** WMU provides academic assistance for students with disabilities, including the emotional, technical and academic support necessary to achieve academic and personal success. Students are encouraged to tell the instructor if they need disability services.

- Please let me know whenever you feel overwhelmed. This class is meant to be challenging, but not crushing! Along with your parents, you have a support system in the tutors, the ATYP staff, and me.

**Electronics Policy:** During our class time together, I ask that you only use electronic devices when absolutely necessary - this includes break time. We need to be physically present for one another. Please ask before using any devices in class. Please also ask before taking a photo or recording a video.

**On the Event of a “Snow Day”:** During the regular class time, we will use the discussion space in eLearning (unless otherwise instructed) to create a dialogue about the material we had intended to cover. I will set things up under that week’s “Content” section. Just log in and start commenting on threads and even start some of your own based on your questions and observations. This worked really well last year! Deadlines will still apply to homework and be sure to look for the new homework handout, as well.
Student Expectations:
* Thoughtful, thorough, and timely completion of all assignments
* Close, careful reading of all the material
* Energetic participation and respectful attentiveness during class
* Conduct in keeping with university surroundings
* Articulation of ideas, beliefs, and opinions
* Respect for the ideas, beliefs, and opinions of others
* Communication. If something is affecting your class performance, please let me know and we can work on it together. Remember that I’m here to help you—keep in touch with me about your concerns, frustrations, suggestions, struggles, ideas, and triumphs. Never hesitate to ask for help.

Assignments
Weekly Writing Homework: Short 2-4 page papers and/or creative exercises will be assigned each week. Please use double spacing and 12 point Times Roman (or similar) font. These will receive the following marks: + (excellent); √+ (Strong); √ (Fair); √- (Weak).

Discussion Questions: Each week you will receive directed questions about the reading that should represent about 30 minutes of work. Single-spaced, 12 point Times Roman (or similar) font.

Notes: These will count toward your participation grade. You are required to keep a dedicated notebook for our class. Keep notes during class time—you will find it helps you retain important information and make greater connections that will come in handy when you compose your essays later. Listen to your classmates. They will have worthy insights. After each reading assignment, you will write down three questions you have about the readings or three points of interest/insight. You can draw from a combination of your questions and insights to help you prepare for class participation. I will ask to see your notes. (Don’t worry if you doodle in the margins, ha ha.)

Vocabulary: As you read (both for class and not), you will complete a selection of literary terms and devices assignment. You will have 2-3 terms each week which you will define and for which you will find examples from your readings.

Weekly Reading Quizzes: Each week, you will take a short reading quiz over the assigned readings for the week. These quizzes will be taken on ELearning. You may use any notes or even your text for these quizzes, but they are timed. So, you will need to read ahead of time.

Unit Essays: At the conclusion of each unit, students will hand in a formal essay related to the technique or topic studied in that unit. These essays will be longer and more polished than the weekly writings and journals. You will first receive an evaluation from among the following: weak, fair, strong, or excellent. All essays will be revised. Depending on the nature of the essay, plan on 4-7 hours of work.
Tentative Schedule

Unit 1: Summer Reading ~3 weeks
Unit 2: Narration ~3 weeks
Unit 3: Description ~2 weeks
Unit 4: Exemplification ~3 weeks
Unit 5: Process Analysis ~3 weeks
Unit 6: Cause & Effect / Compare & Contrast ~5 weeks
Unit 7: Definition ~2 weeks
Unit 8: Animal Farm ~3 weeks
Unit 9: Lord of the Flies ~4 weeks
Unit 10: Research Essay ~4 weeks
Unit 11: Shakespeare ~4 weeks
Unit 12: Creative Writing ~3 week

Grades
At any given time, your grade is a snapshot of where you are at that moment. However, our class is graded based on your progress from the first draft to the final draft. You almost always have the chance to revise, often multiple times, to improve. To be clear: your grade is in flux until the final portfolio evaluation. As noted above, each essay will be given a minimal grade (Excellent, Strong, Fair, Weak) based upon the particular areas of content, style, mechanics, and organization when you turn it in for its first evaluation, after which, it will be reconsidered as part of a holistic letter grade for the entire portfolio. These minimal grades will give you an idea of where each essay stands on its own. I understand that most of you will not be used to having words as grades and may feel a bit anxious about where you stand grade-wise at the beginning of the course. Fear not! I will contact you if your overall course grade approaches B- level.

Our University grading system does not allow plus and minus grades. Letter grades are: A, BA, B, CB, C, DC, D, F. We request that home schools “err on the side of generosity” when calculating grade point averages. So, a “BA” should translate to your report card as a “A-“.

The requirements for the Portfolio: All assignments, revisions, previously graded papers with my comments, and other class materials should be kept in your portfolio, unless otherwise noted. It is a good idea to put your work as it is handed back to you directly into its proper section in your portfolio. Trying to organize this at the last minute will be quite a trial. I will collect portfolios at the end of each semester so I can look at all of your work as a whole before assigning a course grade. There may be spot checks during the semester, as well.

Notes about revisions for the Portfolio: If your weekly writing earns a √+ or higher, then you will not be required to revise it. All essays must be revised, even those with highest marks. If your vocabulary assignments receive a mark lower than a √, then they must be revised and re-uploaded to Elearning. All revisions must be accompanied by the original paper with your instructor's marks—otherwise, how can we tell any revision has been made? All revisions must be TRACKED or HIGHLIGHTED.

Semester Grade Calculation after viewing the portfolio: Unit Essays (40%), Weekly Writing (15%), Discussion Questions (15%), Grammar (10%), Reading Quizzes (10%) Vocabulary and Logical Fallacies (5%), and Participation and professionalism (5%) (Please consider this rough math!) The grading scale changes slightly second semester. Keep in mind that the learning experience that you gain should always remain more important than any particular word or letter grade.
Misc details for class:

- If you MUST be absent or leave early, please notify me via email as soon as you know. Missing a day of class is the equivalent to missing an entire week of class at your home school.
- If you must leave early, the adult picking you up needs to come in the building to our classroom.
- Please arrange to be picked up immediately after class (3:50 pm). I will do my best to release you on time.
- Please arrive by 1:15 so we can begin promptly at 1:20. I will be in our classroom at 1pm to address any questions or concerns you may be having.
- As you discover cool things (i.e. helpful websites, quotes, etc.) please share them by emailing them to me. I’ll share or ask you to share with your classmates after I preview.
- All class assignments can be found in Elearning.
- Feel free to bring snacks and drinks to class. Our class is long. You will have one break. You may have food and water in class AS LONG AS YOU CLEAN UP AFTER YOURSELVES. If I have to clean up, I will suspend eating and drinking in class. All beverages MUST have a sealed top.

Keep in mind, I can only help you if you let me know that you need help. Hard working students will attend tutoring on Sundays with our tutors (who are amazing!), email when confused, ask questions, take risks, and stay on top of homework. Please email me when you need help.

Pep Talk
This class, I hope, will be like nothing you’ve experienced before. It will be tough, but manageable. The discussions we have will brighten your soul. There will be times when you leave class invigorated, and there will be times when you just want to quit. Both are okay. (But, give it six weeks and TALK TO ME before you consider dropping.)

The best learning happens when you are in what educators refer to as a “moderate state of challenge.” The tough part is that it doesn’t always feel comfortable when you are challenged. In fact, I’d argue that the best things I’ve learned have been when I’m fairly uncomfortable.

I am looking forward to working with each of you. Your classmates and I want your input and insight. Be sure to ask questions and contribute to class discussions and listen to your classmates, your instructor, and yourself. Think about what others are saying when they review your work so that you can consider the counsel of others along with your own. And lastly, take some risks. Try new ways of approaching assignments. Explore. You will very likely surprise yourself. Good luck!

“It is better to know some of the questions than all of the answers.”
-James Thurber