

A STUDENT AND PARENT GUIDE TO AMERICAN LITERATURE

2011-12

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Welcome to American Literature and a new school year! I look forward to working with you. Please review the following classroom information which outlines supplies, policies and the course of study. Students may schedule appointments before or after school, or during study hall to have questions answered; help sessions are always available. Parent conferences are welcomed throughout the year. By working together, we can build a successful, rewarding year. After reading this information, please sign and return the last page. Thank you.

Goals:

- Gain an understanding of literature's links to real life
- Increase students' understanding of their world
- Develop critical thinking skills
- Enhance interpersonal skills
- Prepare students for higher education

Expectations:

- Arrive in class on time and with proper materials.
- Read and complete homework assignments on time.
- Be attentive throughout class – no completing assignments for other classes, texting or sleeping.
- Participate in class discussions.
- Remain seated and on-task for the entire class.
- Treat classmates with respect.

Homework Policies

- Complete all assignments neatly and on time. Late work will *NOT* be accepted for credit, as we often go over the homework answers during class.
- When you return after an EXCUSED absence, you must find out and write down any assignments you missed, obtain any handouts needed and complete makeup work. For each excused absence, you have one school day to make up the work missed.
- A zero will automatically be given for each assignment that is not handed in on time.
- If an absence is UNEXCUSED, any work missed will be entered as a zero. No make-up work will be allowed.
- Since assignments and tests are announced in advance, you will be expected to turn work in or to take tests as scheduled, even if you have been absent the day(s) preceding the assignment or test.
- Major papers are collected at the beginning of the period on the day they are due. Since these are *always* given at least one week in advance, your paper is due, **even if you are not present**. You may send it with a friend or parent; if you forget and your paper is not turned in on time, it will be accepted, but you will lose one letter grade for every day the paper is late.

Tardiness (Tardy = **any** arrival after the bell has rung)

Class begins when the bell rings and continues until the end of the period. Accumulation of tardies will follow the consequences outlined in the Cougar planner.

Cougar Planner/Handbook

All students are to have their Cougar planner with them every day. You must have a planner if you expect to get a hall pass.

Restroom Use

An occasional trip to the restroom is completely understandable. However, making a daily habit of using the restroom during my class is unacceptable. A parade of students flowing back and forth in front of the class, as I strive for continuity in my lesson doesn't work. Students will be allowed three trips to the restroom per semester.

Printer Use

I do not have a printer in my room, so printing out an assignment moments before it is due for my class is not an option. Optimally, you should print out assignments at home. If you need to print one of my assignments at school, see me before school starts, and I will write you a library pass.

Sub Policy

Substitute teachers are guests in our building. If your name makes the sub's notes, for any reason, you will receive a demerit. Do not try to prove the sub was wrong, as I regard the sub's word as almighty.

Supplies

- Loose-leaf notebook paper (no fringe)
- Pens/Pencils
- Covers for books

Assignment Guidelines

Work is to be completed in blue or black ink on standard 8.5 X 11, **fringeless**, loose-leaf paper, unless otherwise specified. Major papers must be typed. If you need help with this, ask me about using the school computer lab.

Evaluation

Your grade will be computed by dividing your total points earned by the total points possible.

Quizzes will be given frequently. They serve as motivation to read assignments and to reward students who are completing tasks on time. These quizzes are meant to enhance the grades of those who are prepared for class.

A participation grade will factor into your grade each quarter. This grade will take into account your daily performance and behavior in class.

Occasionally, we will exchange papers and grade them in class. This will give you immediate feedback of your performance and clarify your progress.

Tools for Success

Facebook: Many students have Facebook accounts, and use them as a primary means of communication. With this in mind, I use Facebook as a way to help students. I have created a Facebook identity, "Dan Greenberg-teacher." This is my school profile where students can "friend" me. I use this profile to communicate with students and parents, when they have questions about assignments, upcoming tests, academic progress, etc. My daily "status update" is the homework assignment for each of my classes. I also post links that may be relevant to the completion of an assignment.

Starting this school year, in accordance with soon to be implemented district recommendations for social networking, I will not be accepting students as “friends” on my personal account. If you are already friends on my personal profile, you will not be removed.

Moodle: Through a site called “Moodle,” I have created a webpage that will provide useful resources for class. Through the course of the year, you will find Powerpoint notes, which were used in class lessons, as well as guidelines for assignments. The following is a link to Sylvania’s Moodle homepage, from which you can access my American Literature page:
<http://moodle.sylvaniaschools.org/>

Online Textbook: Our textbook publisher provides the school with an online version of our book. To use this online resource following these steps:

1. Go to <http://my.hrw.com>
2. Enter the username: *student12838*
3. Use the password: *12345*

Extra Credit: Every quarter, I offer different books students can read for extra credit. Depending on the book, students either have to write a review or take a test over the novel, as well as meet with me to discuss the book. If a student is failing at the end of a quarter, but is close to earning a D, I will not consider changing the F to a P (pass), unless the student read an extra credit novel. Students can read only one extra credit novel per quarter.

Course of Study

Below is an outline of the basic requirements of the American Literature course. Special projects may also be assigned throughout the year. To be responsible, you, the student, must take responsibility for your work. Your success depends, not only on your ability, but also your ambition and effort.

Vocabulary

Vocabulary will be comprised of two components. First, as we read short stories and novels, you will be responsible for knowing the vocabulary that accompanies these literary works. Secondly, we will be studying foreign expressions which are used in our language.

Journal

Journal writing will be practiced on a regular basis. Students will use the journal to respond to class discussions, literature and various topics.

Literature Based Writing Philosophy

Each quarter, a variety of published compositions will be required. Often, these compositions will be responses to our literature study, with an emphasis on the writing process.

Literature

We will read short stories, novels, nonfiction, dramas and poetry. Scenes from plays will be read or dramatized in class.

Novels

We will read the following novels this year. Those books marked with asterisks need to be purchased/borrowed for use during class. There is no specific edition needed for each book, so feel free to purchase a used copy online through Amazon or another company.

- The Great Gatsby
- Catcher in the Rye
- One Flew over the Cuckoo’s Nest
- The Things They Carried **
- The Narrative of the life of Fredrick Douglass **

Please sign and return this portion after reading my classroom policies. Comments are welcome any time. I look forward to working with you. Thank you for your support.

Dan Greenberg

Parent name

Parent signature

Student name

Student signature