

# Honors American Literature

2009-2010

Ms. McCrate

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**Office Hours:** Tuesdays 2:45-3:30, and by appointment

**Location:** L6

## Course Description:

This course will provide an intensive introduction to significant works in American literature spanning the genres of fiction, drama, poetry, and prose. While designed to increase your knowledge of the major periods of American literature, this course will also focus intently on expanding your ability to read and think critically. It will also focus on developing your ability to express yourself effectively in writing.

## Academic Content Standards:

*The primary goal of the English department is to help students communicate effectively in both written and spoken English. Upon graduation from Immaculate Heart High School students will:*

1. Read critically and recognize literal and implied meaning in varied classic and contemporary texts, assigned and independently selected.
2. Write coherent and focused essays that convey a well-defined perspective and tightly reasoned argument. The writing demonstrates students' awareness of audience and purpose. Students will progress through the stages of the writing process as needed.
3. Write clearly and use formal conventions of the English language: grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, sentence structure, word choice, paragraphing, and figurative language.
4. Speak effectively and employ formal and informal conventions of the English language that are appropriate to a variety of purposes and audiences.
5. Respectfully discuss topics, evaluate alternative points of view, and recognize questions and issues raised in the works they read.
6. Recognize trends and developments in literature as an art form, including literary movements, styles, and conventions.
7. Find, evaluate, and synthesize information for specific purposes, using a variety of properly cited sources.
8. Apply knowledge of word origins to determine the meaning of new words encountered in reading materials and use those words accurately.

## Benchmarks and Performance Standards:

*Students who have successfully completed American Literature will:*

- Demonstrate in reading, writing, and discussion a more sophisticated understanding of literary texts (Content Standards 1, 2, 5).
- Refine the writing of expository essays that include three body paragraphs, an introduction, and a conclusion (Content Standards 2, 3).
- Participate in class discussions, oral presentations, and creative projects that encourage confident articulation of their perspective based on a deeper understanding of the text (Content Standards 1, 5).
- Demonstrate familiarity with the major periods and authors found in American Literature (Content Standard 6).
- Use reading comprehension strategies to critically explore various literary genres (Content Standards 1, 6).
- Use and properly cite appropriate text and Internet sources (Content Standard 7).
- Informally critique books of their own choosing for personal pleasure and enrichment (Content Standard 1).

## Required Materials:

The English Department requires that you bring to class before the end of the first week of school (or another specified date) **your own unmarked copies** of all the texts listed here. You must also ensure that you purchase the **specified edition** of each text. Please consult the Varsity Books website for each book's ISBN----an identifying number that will help you distinguish between different editions of the same text.

1. American Literature course reader, 2009-2010
2. Faulkner, William. *As I Lay Dying*. City: Random House, 1991.
3. Fitzgerald, F. Scott. *The Great Gatsby*. City: Simon & Schuster, 2004.
4. Hawthorne, Nathaniel. *The Scarlet Letter*. New York: Penguin Group, 1999.
5. Morrison, Toni. *The Bluest Eye*. New York: Penguin Group, 2000.
6. Wilson, August. *Fences*. New York: Penguin Group, 1986.
7. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, Seventh Edition
8. Composition notebook (**college ruled and 9 ¼ x 7 ½**)
9. 3-ring binder or folder for note taking and filing of papers
10. Lined paper (notebook or loose leaf)
11. Blue or black pens. Please do not use other colors of ink.
12. Pencils for scantron tests and marking in your texts.

**Recommended:** I suggest purchasing or locating a pocket-sized dictionary (Webster's, Oxford, etc.) that you can easily transport and have available to look-up unfamiliar words when reading, and to help you complete assigned vocabulary activities.

**\*\*It is imperative that you bring your supplies and the text that we are studying every day!**

## Classroom Expectations:

- **Participation:** Students are expected to come to class prepared and ready to actively participate. Both the students and teacher should listen attentively to others and contribute thoughtfully and enthusiastically to the efforts of the group. A respectful attitude is always expected while in the classroom. Please refer to the English Department rubric for class discussion to understand what is expected of you. Your final grade in this class may be raised ½ a letter grade for excellence in this area. It may be lowered ½ a letter grade for deficiency.
- **Web Pages:** The syllabus and the daily work of this course may be found on my web page. I expect you to check this page daily.
- **Make-Up Work:** It is always advised to avoid tardiness and unnecessary absences. However, if absent, **you are responsible** to find out about and make up what you have missed, and you can do so by checking the assignment pages posted on my webpage. You have one day to make up work missed due to an absence. If you are absent on an exam day, please come prepared to take the exam immediately upon returning to school. If absent for multiple days, please plan on meeting with me so that we can discuss an appropriate make-up schedule for your work.
- **Late Work:** My late work policy will be explained in detail during the first week of class. You will be given three “goof slips” that you may use for a variety of circumstances, including turning in a homework assignment late. Once you have run out of slips, however, you will receive zeros on late work. These passes **may not** be used for formal writing assignments, projects, or presentations. However, I do realize that certain situations may arise that result in late work, and if you have need of a **legitimate** extension, please see me IN ADVANCE OF the due date so that we can work something out.
- **Academic Integrity:** Plagiarism is the *intentional or unintentional* use of someone else’s WORDS or IDEAS without giving proper credit. This includes paraphrasing a source without giving due credit. See the MLA Handbook, 7<sup>th</sup> Edition for an exhaustive discussion of this matter. As you know, plagiarism is a serious breach of academic integrity and any assignment containing plagiarism earns a zero.
- **Test Return Policy:** English teachers keep summer reading tests, vocabulary tests, and objective exams so that assessment questions are field tested and can be revised when necessary. This practice allows the department to reuse most parts of an exam for comparison of achievement from year to year and to adjust the emphasis of instruction when required. Students may access their past tests by making arrangements with their teacher.
- **Other classroom rules:** Generally, students may not leave the classroom unless they have an appointment to see an administrator, a counselor, or permission from me. Goof slips may be used to excuse yourself from class in order to retrieve homework or class materials from your locker.

All classroom rules and regulations regarding conduct, attendance, dress code, grading, plagiarism, etc. shall be implemented and followed as stated in the school handbook.

## Types of Assignments:

- **Writing:** You will respond in writing to most of the major and some of the minor works we study. You will also write timed in-class essays. You will work on various projects and presentations that involve writing. All essays must be word-processed and include a *properly formatted works cited/consulted page*. Please refer to the English Department rubric for essays for a more detailed understand of what is expected of you.

You must upload all essays and any other specified assignments to the website: [www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com). You will need to set up a user profile using a valid email account. You will also need the appropriate class ID

number and enrollment password designated for your class period. **You must upload all your written work to Turnitin or you will not received credit for your work.** Keep the digital receipt you receive to prove you uploaded your work.

Period	Class ID	Enrollment Password (case sensitive)
3	2783270	Hester
6	2783271	Addie

- **Author Project:** From early September to mid-March, you will work on completing an in-depth study of an American writer. This will involve reading, researching, and writing about their life and work. Further details about the project will be given in class.
- **Homework:** You should plan on spending about an hour per day reading, writing, revising work, or completing homework for this class. Some days will be heavier than others will----especially if you do not plan ahead on long-term assignments. Do plan ahead!
- **Vocabulary Development:** You will work on developing your vocabulary because it is essential for reading comprehension and effective writing as well as for the PSAT & SAT. It is wise to always have your pocket dictionary with you in class. Periodically, you will be tested on vocabulary words.

## Grading Policy:

Grades are computed on a point system with, for example, essays worth 100; exams, 50-100 (excluding the final exam); quizzes, 5-25; timed writings, 25; projects, 20-80; and homework, 5-10. As noted above, participation can raise or lower this grade by one half (e.g. B to B+ or B-).

## Grading Scale

100-93 A	89-87 B+	79-77 C+	69-67 D+	59-0 F
92-90 A-	86-83 B	76-73 C	66-63 D	
	82-80 B-	72-70 C-	62-60 D-	

## Thematic Course Chronology:

FIRST SEMESTER	SECOND SEMESTER
Summer Reading and Introduction to the Author Project	The American Woman <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Novel study: <i>As I Lay Dying</i></li> </ul>
American Quilt: What is America?	Author Project due
The American Dream <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Novel study: <i>The Great Gatsby</i></li> </ul>	Issues of Race and Ethnicity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Novel study: <i>The Bluest Eye</i></li> </ul>
Between Religion, Nature, and Self <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Novel study: <i>The Scarlet Letter</i></li> </ul>	American Tragedy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drama study: <i>Fences</i></li> </ul>