

American Literature

Ms. Callie Webb

cwebb@immaculateheart.org

Office Hours: By appointment at break or lunch

Location: Administration Bldg

Course Description

This course explores significant works in American literature, covering the genres of fiction, poetry, drama and prose. The class also focuses on developing a broader love of reading, writing, and thinking critically about texts and what they say about American traditions and culture. Special emphasis is placed on building effective writing and discussion skills as a foundation for further learning.

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 and complex classical, contemporary, and multicultural 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 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 writing and discussion a more sophisticated understanding of literary texts (Content Standards 1, 2, 5).

- Refine the writing of effective 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 them to confidently articulate their points of view based on a deeper understanding of the text (Content Standards 1, 4, 5, 6).
- 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, 8)
- 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 Standards 1).

Required Materials

The English Department requires that you bring to class before the end of the first week of school 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 for each book's ISBN --- an identifying number that will help you distinguish between different editions of the same text.

IH American Literature Course Reader

The Scarlet Letter by Nathaniel Hawthorne

The Crucible by Arthur Miller

The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald

The Catcher in the Rye by J.D. Salinger

MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, Seventh Edition

Blue or black pens

Paper

3-ring binder or folder for taking notes and filing papers

Composition notebook (preferably college-ruled)

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

Classroom Expectations

- **Participation:** Daily, active participation in class discussion provides you – as well as the rest of the class – incalculable benefits. 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 grade for excellence in this area. It may be lowered ½ grade for deficiency.
- **Assignments:** All assignments must be completed on time for credit and to pass this class. Late work receives **zero** credit.
- **Make-Up Work:** If a student is absent, it is **the student's responsibility** to find out what work was missed and how to make it up. You can consult my webpage for all assignments and classroom work covered. Please keep unnecessary absences to a minimum. If you have a legitimate need for an extension on an assignment, please see me before the due date.

- **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 your Student Writing Handbook 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 final 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.
- **Honor Code:** At all times, students are expected to adhere to and respect the school's Honor Code. On all your work, your name affirms your honor.
- **Other classroom rules:** Students should be seated in the classroom when the bell rings. No food or drinks (with the exception of water) are allowed in class. Students are expected to follow all school rules and regulations as outlined in the Immaculate Heart High School Student Handbook, as well as exhibit mature and appropriate behavior.

Types of Assignments

- **Writing:** You will respond in writing to each 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 understanding of what is expected of you.

You must upload all essays and any other specified assignments to the website: 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 receive credit for your work.** Keep the digital receipt you receive to prove you uploaded your work.

Period	Class ID	Enrollment Password (case sensitive)
	3345490	gatsby

- **Author Project:** As a rite of passage for sophomores, you will be reading, researching, and writing about the life and work of an American author. This project will begin in August and will be completed in early April. More information will be provided with specific project details.
- **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! You will have regular homework assignments involving reading, writing, and other activities.
- **Final Exams:** In addition to the written final, students should expect a cumulative objective response final during the last week of the semester. Be sure to take thorough notes throughout the semester to help you prepare.

Grading Policy

Grades are computed on a point system with, for example, essays worth 100; quizzes, between 5-25; projects, between 20-80; and homework, between 5-20. The final exam will be worth 20-25% of your grade. The semester grade will be computed by equally weighing the two quarters and the final exam. As noted, participation can raise or lower this grade by one half (e.g., B to B+ or B-).

Grading Scale

98-100 A+	87-89 B+	77-79 C+	67-69 D+	0-59 F
93-97 A	83-86 B	73-76 C	63-66 D	
90-92 A-	80-82 B-	70-72 C-	60-62 D-	

Course Chronology:

Depending on the progress we make, some works may be omitted or, if time permits, some may be added. You will be informed when or if any changes are to be made to the course schedule.

First Semester	Second Semester
<p><i>Kindred</i> Test (multiple choice) and mini-essay</p> <p>American Dream:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Everyday Use” • Quilt activity: What does America mean to me? • Poetry: Whitman, Hughes, de Hoyos • <i>The Great Gatsby</i> (Fitzgerald) • “Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” • Benjamin Franklin: Excerpt from <i>The Autobiography</i> <p>Religion in American Life:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poetry by Anne Bradstreet • Metaphors (tenor and vehicle) • <i>Sinners</i> by Jonathan Edwards • “The Birthmark” by Nathaniel Hawthorne • <i>The Scarlet Letter</i> (Hawthorne) <p>Humans and Nature</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Iroquois Constitution • Transcendentalists: Emerson, Thoreau • “Big Yellow Taxi” Joni Mitchell • “A White Heron” S. Jewett • “The Open Boat” S. Crane <p>Final Exam: Essay on <i>The Scarlet Letter</i></p>	<p>Politics and Voice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slave narratives: Equiano, Jacobs, Douglass • Declaration of Independence • Thoreau, “Civil Disobedience” • Martin Luther King, Jr. • Harlem Renaissance poetry and short stories • 1950s Presentations • <i>The Crucible</i> (Miller) <p>Gender Relations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Sweat” Zora Neale Hurston • “The Story of an Hour” Kate Chopin • “Sexual Politics of Sickness” <p>American Adolescence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Catcher in the Rye</i> J.D. Salinger • <i>Ordinary People</i> (movie) • Salinger documentary <p>Final Exam: <i>The Catcher in the Rye</i></p>