

Pre-IB English II

Ms. Morgan Derby
mderby@sturgischarterhschool.org
sturgisenglish10th.blogspot.com

Course Goals

The purpose of this course is to prepare students for IB-level English and, ultimately, college and life beyond. Students will be continually challenged to read and think critically, and to demonstrate these skills through mature written and oral communication. Throughout the year, students will also gain increasing appreciation for both language and literature as means of attaining understanding of the world they live in, of themselves, and of how the two can interact effectively and beneficially.

I believe that mastery of language can inform and enrich all other areas of life and study, that student achievement is a function of diligent effort and practice, and in the necessity of fostering an inclusive, empowering classroom environment through regular reflection and the cultivation of positive attitudes and work skills. Throughout what I expect will be a cooperative, collaborative journey, students will explore essential questions including: What is a text? What makes a text “literature”? What is the proper function of literature? To what extent is a work of literature effective? What role does literature play in people’s lives? Does literature tell the truth?

Course Objectives

This is to be a student-centered course, meaning that students will take responsibility for themselves and their classmates. I expect every student to come prepared to participate in class activities in a respectful and mature manner. Activities will focus on the honing of skills in literary analysis; the use of graphic organizers; public speaking; composition; research and MLA documentation; organization and time management; note-taking and study skills; appropriate use of technology; and self-advocacy and expression. The following texts will inform such study:

- *Boyhood* by J.M. Coetzee
- One of the following three elective summer reading texts:
 - *Caucasia* by Danzy Senna
 - *Sold* by Patricia McCormick
 - *The Glass Castle* by Jeannette Walls
- *How to Read Literature like a Professor* by Thomas C. Foster
- *A Separate Peace* by John Knowles
- *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald
- *Macbeth* by William Shakespeare
- *Vocabulary Workshop: Level E* by William H. Sadler
- Assorted essays, poetry, and multimedia

Readings will be rich in cross-disciplinary and cultural connections, especially in the fields of art and history. Particular attention will be given to the ways in which course texts enter into discourse on questions such as: To what extent and in what ways might the arts be regarded as a representation of reality? How does language facilitate, extend, direct or limit thinking? To what degree does language inform one's world and self view?

Teaching Strategies and Resources

With an aim towards fostering a diverse learning atmosphere, teaching strategies will vary. Class periods will regularly involve paired, group, and whole-class discussions facilitated by both the teacher and students. Regular practice for assessments will feature prominently in the course through the use of essay and graphic organizers, peer and self-editing, free writing, public speaking drills, and close-reading exercises. Supplementary activities may focus on creative writing or on utilizing the performing and visual arts. Technology will be one of your greatest resources this year. The course blog in particular (address listed at the top of the syllabus) will be a major source of information regarding assignments, course resources, etc. for both parents and students.

Assessment

Grades are based on a total points system, where each assignment receives a total possible point value and students can earn points up to the total. The total point value of a quarter varies since assignments and assessments vary. Weight of the total points depends on several factors, including how much time and effort is expected.

Grades for lower-weight assignments (e.g. short homework, "pop" quizzes) are typically based on effort and/or quality completion. Grades for higher-weight assignments (e.g. essays, oral presentations) are calculated using modified IB rubrics so that students learn the language of the IB. Grading criteria for other assignments is provided before assessment.

Every student receives a participation, effort and attendance/preparedness grade at the end of every quarter, which counts for approximately 25% of the quarter grade.

End of year grades are determined by percentages. Each quarter counts as 20% of your end of year grade and the mid-term and final exams each count as 10%.

Students are responsible for making up all work missed due to absence. If a student is absent for one day, they must turn in the homework originally due that day at the beginning of the next class period they are present for. Any student that has been absent must speak privately with Ms. Derby within the first day of their return to class so that arrangements for getting caught up on course work and content can be made.

Work not handed in on time will not be allowed to receive full credit. An incomplete will be given until the work is made up. Students who have missing work will be given the opportunity to attend MULT (make-up learning time) until the work is completed. However, the later the work, the less credit possibly earned.

Required Daily Materials:

- All texts – both major and minor – that we are currently working with
- All homework to be turned in that day
- Student agenda – students will be expected to keep track of assignments
- 3-ring binder with tabs OR an expandable file - to organize handouts and homework
- Spiral notebook – students will be expected to take notes daily
- Highlighter – students will be honing skills for taking notes within texts
- Black or blue pen – for all regular note and writing
- Red pen – for self and peer editing
- Any additional materials necessary for work that day
(e.g. a poster, if working on a group presentation)

Please speak with me privately or via email if you foresee or experience any difficulty in procuring these materials.

Important Notes on Technology Use:

The course will have a significant in-class and at-home technological component. Students without access to a computer and/or the internet and/or computer skills should speak with Ms. Derby privately by the end of the first full week of school.

As computers can be both a distraction and a disruption within the classroom environment, students will not be generally permitted to use a laptop or other similar technological device during class time except when given explicit, prior permission by the instructor. Students will be given advance notice when personal laptops or laptop carts from the library may be used for in-class work on specific assignments. Students who require regular laptop use for note taking should speak with Ms. Derby privately by the end of the first full week of school.

Ms. Derby's Room Schedule:

Room 209: English B, English C, English F

Room 212: Advisory, English G, Study E

Please Note:

Extra help will be available during lunch and after school by prior arrangement, or during weekly “office hours”.