

Council Grove High School
American Literature (elective)
Grades 10-12, .5 Credit (one semester/trimester)

This is NOT a repeater course

Course Description:

American Literature provides an opportunity to read and write critically by surveying culturally diverse and historically significant literature from the colonial period to the present. Course objectives include vocabulary expansion, increased reading comprehension and critical thinking skills, increased ability to analyze and interpret literature, as well as writing for a variety of purposes with attention to revision and the writing process.

Course Goals/Essential Questions:

1. What are some major themes in American literature?
2. How do texts both reflect and contribute to the cultural and societal values of the time in which they are written/created?
3. How do writers use rhetorical techniques to convey ideas and information?

9-10 Literature Standards Covered in the American Literature Course:

RL.9-10.1 – Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

RL.9-10.2 – Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

RL.9-10.3 – Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

RL.9-10.4 – Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).

RL.9-10.5 – Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.

RL.9-10.6 – Analyze a particular point of view or cultural experience reflected in a work of literature from outside the United States, drawing on a wide reading of world literature

11-12 Literature Standards Covered in the American Literature Course:

RL.11-12.1 – Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

RL.11-12.2 – Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.

RL.11-12.3 – Analyze the impact of the author’s choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).

RL.11-12.4 – Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful.

RL.11-12.5 – Analyze how an author’s choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.

RL.11-12.6 – Analyze a case in which grasping a point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).

RL.11-12.9 – Demonstrate knowledge of eighteenth-, nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century foundational works of American literature, including how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes or topics.

9-10 Writing Standards Covered in the American Literature Course:

W.9-10.1 – Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence

W.9-10.2 – Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content

W.9-10.3 – Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences

W.9-10.4 – Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. {

W.9-10.5 – Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

W.9-10.6 – Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products, taking advantage of technology’s capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically.

W.9-10.9 – Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

W.9-10.10 – Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

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W.11-12.6 – Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products in response to ongoing feedback, including new arguments or information.

W.11-12.9 – Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

W.11-12.10 – Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes

9-10 Speaking/Listening Standards Covered in the American Literature Course:

SL.9-10.1 – Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

SL.9-10.3 – Evaluate a speaker’s point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, identifying any fallacious reasoning or exaggerated or distorted evidence.

SL.9-10.6 – Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate. (

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SL.11-12.1 – Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

SL.11-12.3 – Evaluate a speaker’s point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, assessing the stance, premises, links among ideas, word choice, points of emphasis, and tone used. Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas SL.11-12

SL.11-12.6 – Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating a command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

Units/Movements in Course:

Colonialism (approx. 2 weeks) (1600-1800)

- Diaries and histories, which expressed the connections between God and their everyday lives.
- Saw religion as a personal, inner experience.
- Used a plain style of writing

Potential writers associated with this period include: William Bradford, Anne Bradstreet, Jonathan Edwards

Romanticism (approx. 3 weeks) (1800-1860)

- Feeling, intuition, idealism, and inductive reasoning.
- Faith in inner experience and the power of the imagination.
- Shunned the artificiality of civilization and seek unspoiled nature as a path to spirituality.
- Championed individual freedom and the worth of the individual.
- Saw poetry as the highest expression of the imagination.

- Dark Romantics: Used dark and supernatural themes/settings (Gothic style)

Potential writer's associated with this period include: Washington Irving, Emily Dickinson, Walt Whitman, Nathaniel Hawthorne

Realism (approx. 3 weeks) (1850-1900)

- Feelings of disillusionment
- Common subjects; slums of rapidly growing cities, factories replacing farmlands, poor factory workers, corrupt politicians
- Represented the manner and environment of everyday life and ordinary people as realistically as possible (regionalism)
- Sought to explain behavior (psychologically/socially)

Potential writers associated with this period include: Mark Twain, Jack London, Stephen Crane, Ambrose Bierce, Kate Chopin

Harlem Renaissance (approx. 2 weeks) (1920-1940)

- Black cultural movement in Harlem, New York
- Some poetry rhythms based on spirituals, and jazz, lyrics on the blues, and diction from the street talk of the ghettos
- Other poetry used conventional lyrical forms

Potential writers associated with this period include: Zora Neale Huston, Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen, Claude McKay

Postmodernism (approx. 2 weeks) (1950-present)

- Influenced by studies of media, language, and information technology
- Sense that little is unique; culture endlessly duplicates and copies itself
- New literary forms and techniques: works composed of only dialogue or combining fiction and nonfiction, experimenting with physical appearance of their work

Potential writers associated with this period include: Alice Walker, E. E. Cummings, Maya Angelou, Richard Wright, Sandra Cisneros, Amy Tan