

American Literature

Course Syllabus

2010-2011

Name _____

Date _____

Period _____

KGSmith, Instructor

Looking Ahead

American Literature is designed with the intention of developing upon the foundations laid in the *Literary Genre* course. Its goal is to help the student to expand his/her knowledge of, and to develop appreciation for, examples of traditional literature drawn from the American writers throughout our country's history. Students will study major works, and will devote considerable time to reading, analyzing, and discussing themes, characters, plot, etc. Students will demonstrate their mastery of material by means of written examinations, essays, oral presentations, and thorough in-class discussions. A personal stance toward literary works and themes, as well as the ability to articulate this stance, will be further refined and developed.

Statement of Goals for the Course: **American Literature's** goals include, but are not limited to, each of the following:

- A. The student shall become exposed to a wide variety of excellent American authors and writings of all literary periods.
- B. The student shall be encouraged to continue to look beyond simple plot considerations at the greater issues covered within a piece of literature.
- C. The student shall develop a sense of shared experience, common identity, and pride as an "American", when viewing representative literary pieces.
- D. The student shall review and enhance his/her knowledge of standard grammar and vocabulary, so that he/she may speak and write more "correctly", according to the standards of American society.
- E. The student shall reinforce his/her attitude of inner confidence, springing from the knowledge that he/she can write well, provided he/she has a personal investment in the work.
- F. The student shall experience encouragement regarding his/her originality and creativity in written and spoken expression.
- G. The student shall consider written expression as a means of creativity and emotional venting.
- H. The student shall continue to develop an internal, personal standard by which he/she evaluates his/her own work and the work of others.
- I. The student shall accept his/her role as responsible for a classroom commitment toward him/herself, his/her peers, and his/her instructor.
- J. The student shall increase his/her self-confidence and poise when presenting information in front of his/her peers.
- K. The student shall review and enhance his/her knowledge of grammar and vocabulary through weekly assignments.
- L. The student view the importance of faith in Jesus Christ in assessing the world around him/her.

“Honors” Component. Students who wish to enhance their English studies are encouraged to enroll in the “Honors” version of the course through the school’s Registrar. Students who do add this component will be expected to read four (4) additional texts during the year and complete culminating papers/projects on each one.

Examinations. The best way to assess whether a student is completing his/her assignments and understanding the concepts involved is through the use of examination. Many formal examinations are scheduled for each semester and are duly noted on the course’s *Semester Calendar*. Examinations for the course will usually feature a combination of objectively- and subjectively-evaluated materials. The ability to articulately express knowledge and opinion will count heavily toward the student’s overall grade.

Quizzes. Students should anticipate **daily** reading quizzes covering material assigned for that class period. At the instructor’s discretion, quizzes may occur **before** or **after** class discussion of the material.

Research Paper. A student-produced research paper is an expectation of this course. It should serve as the culmination of the student’s English training to date. As such, anticipations as regards to contextual, stylistic, and mechanical excellence are rather high. More specific details with regards to this Second Semester assignment will be forthcoming.

Projects. Occasional projects will be assigned to encourage each student to delve deeper into the material than a simple reading can allow. Due to the in-depth nature of these assignments, large grades will be assigned. It is, therefore, in the students’ best interests to complete these assignments on time and at a level commensurate with his/her ability.

Discussions. Literature is meant to be discussed as well as read. Class discussions, therefore, are essential. To this end, students may be assessed a subjective “participation grade” as a normal portion of their academic evaluation.

Films. As a portion of the course, films will occasionally be shown. These films are chosen to complement the theme under study. As a result, they **are** considered as worthy of testing as the books that will be read. In short, pay attention!

American Literature reflects the heart and soul of our nation and helps to define who we are as citizens of the United States. I hope that you are as excited about immersing yourself into it as I am.

I’m anticipating an adventure of learning this year for each of us!

Kevin G. Smith, Instructor
August 2010