

Course Overview

Course: Humanities

Instructor: Mr. Bridges, Mr. Martin

Class Rooms: 223, lecture hall, 326

Class Periods: 1 and 2

Email: bridgesd@newlondon.org, martinj@newlondon.org

Contact time: Periods 4 and 6; after school most days

Course Design

Humanities is a multi-age, inter-disciplinary looping program combining the English and Social Studies credit programs for the freshman and sophomore years. Using a project-based curriculum, students integrate their English and history experiences during the first two years at NLHS. The course is made up of approximately 50 students from the Science and Technology Magnet School and New London High School proper.

The course's curriculum is based on quarterly themes such as man's search for truth, man's search for justice, philosophy, aesthetics, and others. In the humanities program, students are brought together in a 9/10 multiage "cohort", to focus on the seamless blending of English, social studies, art, math, science, and technology.

The Humanities is a two-year commitment and is considered a pre-AP level class. Each year, humanities will satisfy one English credit and either a student's American History or World History credit, depending on the year.

As a theme-based course, Humanities is organized into quarters, each with its own theme. The general outline of theme by year and quarter is as follows:

American Studies (2007-2008)

First quarter: Humans Suffering Through Art

Second Quarter: Humans Seeking Justice

Third Quarter: Humans and Aesthetics

Fourth Quarter: Humans Seeking the Truth

World Studies (2008-2009)

First quarter: Exploring Human Conflict

Second Quarter: Exploring Our Social Nature

Third Quarter: Exploring Our Spiritual Nature

Fourth Quarter: Exploring Our Moral Selves

Texts, Resources

In this course, we focus on a wide variety of texts and other resources. There is usually one extended reading per quarter, but we try and keep the reading short and widely varied to improve the pace of the course as well as the interest level. In addition to primary and secondary documents, the students will be reading literature, essay, news reports, and various internet sources. We also use a variety of video sources as well as guest lecturers and student-run classes.

Project-based curriculum

The Humanities integrates information from a variety of sources and requires the student to make connections beyond the strict boundaries of subject matter. As such, we believe that a student's expression is boundless as well. Therefore, most major grades come by way of individual and group projects. This includes the midterm and final exams. Projects will almost always give the student choices as to methodology and topic, and it is our hope that when people are given a choice in their methods of expression, the level of expression improves.

Cohort Days

Roughly speaking, days 3 and 7 will be cohort days in which we will get together as a whole group and meet for a double-length class period. This will allow us enough time to work on projects, view movies, have guest lecturers, and just about anything else that would benefit by having large group focused on a task for an extended time period.

Class participation:

Learning happens when ideas are shared. In this, students have ideas no one else in the class has. We expect students to share these. We will have class discussions based on student's ideas and on concerns of the day. It is essential that students feel free to share their opinions with the class and to participate in class activities. In exchange, they are being asked to respect the opinions of others and listen to what they have to say. While there will not be a "participation grade", there will be a subjective performance grade at the end of each semester.

Course Overview

Course: English II Honors

Instructor: Mr. Bridges

Class Room: 223

Class Periods: 5, 7

Email: bridgesd@newlondon.org

Contact time: Periods 4 and 6; after school most days

Welcome to Sophomore Honors English! This syllabus is intended to give you a guide to your second year as a New London High School English student. This course builds on the skills and habits of mind you developed in freshman honors English. As honors students, you have a responsibility to yourself and your school to excel and be the best students you can. In this class you will be pushed; you will be asked to produce work of superior quality and thought. You will be asked to do all your homework in a timely fashion and come to school prepared.

During this school year, you will be reading, (both inside the class and outside) writing, and discussing not only the literature itself but the ideas and concepts behind the literature. You will be responsible for a variety of assignments as well as to prepare to take the state's CAPT test in the spring. But most importantly, you are being asked to think globally and contribute to the classroom culture.

A representative example of the literature we'll be reading this year:

- William Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*
- George Orwell, *1984*
- Kurt Vonnegut, *Welcome To The Monkey House*
- Homer, *The Odyssey*
- Laurie Halse Anderson, *Speak*
- Lorraine Hansberry, *A Raisin In The Sun*
- Various short stories, poetry, and essays will support the reading and engage your verbal and written response skills.

You will be tested on these readings as well as be responsible for projects which creatively reflect your understanding of the book's concepts.

Independent reading:

---You will also be responsible for reading two novels of your choice in the first semester and two in the second. You will read these outside of class and write three page personal responses to be graded. (see separate handout)

Poetry Whomps:

--- We will be instituting a "poetry whomps" project in which each of you are going to be asked to find a poem of more than 25 lines and write a 1 ½ page formal analysis of the poem's theme and structure. Each week, two of you will present their poems and paper to the class as part of an oral

presentation. This will be graded based on your written analysis and oral presentation. (see separate handout)

Writing:

--- Writing is an essential part of expression in this class. You will be constantly writing using various forms throughout the year. Examples of writing assignments will include: Personal responses, Short papers, Journal entries, Peer review essays, Formal research papers and Creative writing. Implicit and explicit CAPT writing skills will also be covered throughout the year.

Sundries:

---We will also spend considerable time throughout the year working on grammar and vocabulary in the form of daily language workouts, homework, and quizzes.

Class participation:

---Learning happens when ideas are shared. In this, you have ideas no one else in the class has. Please share them. We will have class discussions based on your ideas and on concerns of the day. It is essential that you feel free to share your opinion with the class and to participate in class activities. In exchange, you are being asked to respect the opinions of others and listen to what they have to say. While there will not be a “participation grade”, consider it part of your duty in this class.

Have Fun.

COURSE SYLLABUS

INSTRUCTOR: David Bridges

OFFICE: New London High School, Room 223

OFFICE HOURS: Periods 4 and 6; after school most days

E-MAIL ADDRESS: bridgesd@newlondon.org (school)

CLASS: Room 223, Period 3

DESCRIPTION

The ECE UNCONN 111 Seminar in Literature is designed for highly successful New London High School English students who have completed their Junior year advanced placement classes with a “B” or better average and who have demonstrated an appropriate level of commitment and ability. This is a senior honors class that will result in four University of Connecticut English credits (given a final grade of “C” or better).

Developing a relationship between a reader and a literary text is at the core of the ECE class. The course encourages a complex, and organic written conversation between the text and the student. This conversation is one of inquiry, focus, and bringing life into the readings. Only through the lens of a student’s experience and understanding does literature become something more than information and this UCONN ECE class strives to present the tools, practice, and support necessary for a student to engage in a thoughtful relationship with complex texts.

The pace of this course is intense and the reading difficult. The expectations are high and students are expected to approach this course with the seriousness incumbent of a college English class.

Students are expected to engage thoughtfully and thoroughly with the subject matter and the classroom experience offered by this course, and in this, the student should be willing to enter into a process by which they read, workshop, read again, write, discuss, revise and write again. In this way, the class will focus (especially earlier in the semester) on the process of writing before finally addressing the product.

The result of this writing process will be at least thirty (30) pages of revised and edited formal prose at a publishable level. In addition to this requirement, there will be a plethora of informal writing and mechanical practice, including vocabulary and grammar, citations and formatting.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The ECE 111 course at New London High School follows the learning goals set forth by the University of Connecticut. The following learning goals are from the University of Connecticut English Department's *Statement of Pedagogical Principles and Practices* by Thomas Recchio:

In order to contextualize and coordinate the goals of our Freshman English seminars with the goals of first year writing programs across the country, we have organized those goals according to the four broad categories established by the Council of Writing Program Administrators in 1999 and disseminated widely in College English (63.3, January 2001) under the heading "WPA Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition."...What follows, organized under each of the four categories, is a specific list of official English Department goals for learning outcomes in the Freshman English Program at the University of Connecticut.

The student:

Critical Literacy

- * understands that academic writing is grounded in inquiry*
- * demonstrates the ability to distinguish one's own ideas from the ideas in readings*
- * demonstrates the ability to integrate one's own ideas with ideas from readings*
- * understands how academic argument works*
- * works with writing assignments as a series of intellectual tasks*

Rhetorical Knowledge

- * understands the power dynamics in particular writing situations*
- * understands reader expectations*
- * negotiates the demands of reader expectation and writing purpose*
- * responds appropriately to assignments*

Logic and Use of Academic Writing Conventions (as reflected in finished papers)

- * demonstrates a central idea or controlling purpose (a thesis) that requires detailed argument and development*
- * demonstrates careful contextualization of the thesis in light of the readings that ground the assignment*
- * creates paragraphs that develop the thesis in any number of ways, from offering examples with explanations, to citing authorities, to critically examining a claim from the reading, to comparing/contrasting, to offering a logical chain of reasoning, to defining and redefining terms, etc.*
- * crafts paragraphs that relate to each other in an intellectually coherent and logically competent way*
- * crafts sentences that move fluently and fluidly in sequence*
- * uses sources that are properly documented and quotations that are properly punctuated*
- * produces typed prose edited for expression and proofread for correctness*

Writing and Reading Processes that Work for the Student (or what students should understand about writing and themselves as writers)

- * understands their characteristic strengths and weaknesses as writers*
- * understands the writing processes or strategies that work for them*
- * grasps the possibilities and limitations of collaboration in reading and writing*
- * makes the connection between writing and academic inquiry*
- * realizes the need to continue to work on their writing throughout their academic careers*

ORGANIZATION

This class is organized as a seminar in literature and writing instruction. As such, students will develop advanced critical reading and writing skills through the exploration of literature and both high and low-stakes writing assignments. Students will examine various rhetorical methods through the framework of process writing, analysis, class discussions and group work. Writing assignments will emphasize interpretation, argumentation, and reflection as well as constant revision of formal assignments and instruction on grammar, mechanics and style.

The class will rely heavily on the teacher facilitating the process of discovery while the student works alone and in groups to critically engage the texts. The students will be grouped in writing groups of four for the semester and will rely on their teammates for the peer review and process writing activities. Additionally, each student will meet with the teacher at least once a semester in individual conferences regarding the revision process.

As a class, we will have a variety of class discussions regarding both the texts and the writing process. These discussions—as well as the pace of the reading, will emphasize depth of understanding over breadth of coverage.

COURSE ACTIVITIES

The course will cover the following activities as a way to empower the student's tools for rhetorical response and critical analysis of literature:

- Review of literary techniques of character, theme, plot, setting, point of view, conflict, style, symbolism, and tone.
- Review and extend the student's understanding of written rhetorical devices such as:

Analysis
Description
Classification
Comparison and Contrast
Cause and Effect
Process Analysis
Argument

- Discussing assigned readings, either in preparation for a writing assignment, as part of revising drafts, or to illustrate rhetorical principles and generic features.
- Writing brief, exploratory in-class essays, for example, a 15-20 minute focused free-write in preparation for discussion of a reading assignment.
- Revision, individually and in groups. Revision exercises as follow-ups to finished papers.
- Writing workshops for drafting.
- In-class essay exam practice, journal writing, and other informal, low-stakes assignments.
- Small group (four students) tutorials with the teacher.
- Individual conferences with the teacher.

TEXTS AND REQUIRED SUPPLIES

The texts for the course will be varied and challenging. Most of the reading will be done outside of class and you are expected to complete the reading before the class convenes. Your participation, as well as our in class work will be based on your familiarity with the assigned reading.

Below is a general list of the texts covered in the course. It is by no means all inclusive or final.

Novels

The Heart of Darkness—Joseph Conrad
The Road—Cormac McCarthy
Fahrenheit 451—Ray Bradbury

The Stranger—Albert Camus
The Farming Of Bones—Edwidge Danticat
Tar Baby—Toni Morrison

Plays:

Othello—William Shakespeare
Waiting For Godot—Samuel Beckett

Oedipus Rex—Sophocles
Death Of A Salesman—Arthur Miller

Short Stories

Just a few of the short stories we will be reading:

The Occurrence at the Owl Creek Bridge—Ambrose Bierce
The Open Boat—Stephen Crane
The Snows of Kilimanjaro—Ernest Hemingway
The Man With Enormous Wings—Gabriel Garcia Marquez
The Dead—James Joyce
Lost in the Funhouse—John Barth

A&P—John Updike
The Hunger Artist—Franz
Kafka
Sonny's Blues—James Baldwin
The Swimmer—John Cheever

Essays:

To support the literature of the class, we will be reading a large selection of non fiction essays from two primary texts:

The Writer's Presence; Bedford St. Martin
Press
Frames of Mind; Thompson Wadsworth
Press

- In addition to the above reading, we will cover current events and quite a bit of poetry and visual texts to support our class decisions.
- Required supplies include access to a computer, notebook, and a pen. You need to bring the day's reading to class as well.

GRADING PLAN

Coursework will be weighted as follows:

1. In-class and informal writing assignments, journals, vocabulary quizzes: 35%
2. Formal essay PBAs: 30%**
3. Final exam: 20%
4. Attendance / Participation: 15%

**All formal essays are to be typed and double spaced. Nothing else will be graded.

CLASSROOM CONDUCT, YOUR IDEAS, SUGGESTIONS FOR SUCCESS

It goes without saying that conduct should be professional, serious, and open. This is a student-centered course and student participation on many levels is at the heart of the ECE Seminar. I expect students to come to class prepared, excited, and ready to participate.

Ideas are moved and culture is created when each citizen advances his own thoughts and responses. As such, the interest and excitement of this class will largely depend on your preparation and willingness to share and contribute in class discussions. All ideas are welcome and need to be celebrated.

I also expect you to understand that even though this class is taking place within the walls of a high school, it is not a high school class but a college course. You are college students with all the rights and academic support incumbent upon a main campus UCONN undergraduate. Your conduct and contributions in this class should reflect this.

Success in this course is mainly dependant on your preparation for the day's activities. Being current on your reading and completing homework will enable you to come to class relaxed and ready to participate. Participation (hence attendance) is fifteen percent of your final grade and easily the number one key to succeeding in this course.