

Mrs. Mai
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9th Grade English Honors
Briar Woods High School

Course Description:

Welcome to 9th Grade English Honors. In this course we will be studying various genres of literature, drawing on material from outside reading books and the textbook. In addition, we will work on improving our writing skills. As this is an Honors class, I will expect more from you than a grade-level English class, and it is my goal to challenge you to think beyond the surface level. Many of the reading and writing assignments will be completed outside of class, leaving more time for discussion and debate in class. Tests and essays will assess how well you synthesize, evaluate, and analyze rather than simply testing knowledge about plot. We will move through all the reading at a fast pace, and in order to do well in this class you must stay on top of the reading. You will be expected to take notes on what we discuss in class as a form of habit. I look forward to a wonderful year of learning and challenging you to think critically.

As determined by our English Department, an honors student exhibits the following “Habits of Mind”:

- Read widely and often
- Seek answers
- Make connections
- Reflect thoughtfully
- Refine my thinking
- Develop my capacity for analysis
- Write widely and often
- Revise deeply
- Demonstrate originality
- Work diligently

Materials Needed:

- **Black or blue pens or pencils**
- **Notebook, paper, dividers (to help you stay organized)**
- **Flashdrive/thumbdrive**
- **8 ½ X 11 UNLINED notebook, spiral bound is most likely best option**
- **Highlighters in pink, yellow, green, blue, orange (grammar work)**
- **Post-it notes, any size (to annotate in school/library books)**

Classroom Rules of Courtesy:

1. No cell phones, iPods, MP3 players or any other unapproved device will be allowed during my class. Please keep them off and in your backpacks or locker. If I see it, it gets sent directly to the office where you and/or your parent will have to pick it up at the end of the day.
2. Be punctual. Be ready to work on the warm-up when the bell rings.
3. Respect each other and the classroom. Do not talk at inappropriate times. At the first sign of disrespect in my classroom, I will call your home.
4. Follow the Briar Woods Honor Code at all times and BE TRUE.
5. Come to class prepared every day with class materials.
6. Clean your area of the classroom at the end of class before you leave.

Assessments:

Homework: You can expect daily homework and assignments. Homework policy for our department: due at the start of class and ***no late homework accepted***. Place homework in the homework bin.

In Class Activities: Most in class assignments will be related to the assigned reading from home. We will be using journals, discussion, worksheets, and group work. Your effort counts and will be evaluated.

Quizzes and Tests: You will have two major assessments per quarter as per our department policy. Quizzes will be given typically on a weekly basis and will include our readings, grammar, and vocabulary.

Projects: You will be responsible for a variety of writings, including creative pieces and research and analytical papers. You will also be responsible for presentations as they pertain to your learning and development. These projects will require you to apply the skills you have learned and sometimes be part of a team.

*** You will be required to submit some of your creative writing to various contests, typically once per quarter. More detailed information will be available at a later date.**

Policies and Expectations:

What if I'm absent?

The amount of days you are absent will equal the amount of days you have to make up your work. If you are absent for more than three days you need to schedule an appointment with me so that we can come up with a plan.

Check my webpage. I post all electronic documents regularly. I will also have a folder outside of my classroom door for documents not online.

Can't I turn in an assignment one day late?

Larger projects and papers are expected to be turned in on time. The final grade on the assignment will be dropped 10% for every day the assignment is late.

What if I'm too busy due to performances or sports?

I can be reasonable, if approached at least one week in advance of a due date. Please keep in mind, however, that I believe extra-curricular activities should be planned *around* regular school work, not the opposite.

What if something unforeseen occurs?

You should always approach me about your dilemma as soon as possible and we'll be able to work out a plan that is fair for the both of us.

***Grading scale follows Loudoun County guidelines**

Literature:

This list reflects the major reading materials used in English 9. I highly encourage students to purchase their own books because we will be making extensive annotations, however, post-it notes can be used for borrowed books. Students do **not** need to purchase the books listed with an asterisk as we have classroom copies.

Of Mice and Men by Steinbeck
Mythology by Edith Hamilton*
The Odyssey by Homer*
Anthem by Ayn Rand*
Selected short stories, essays, poems, and excerpts for literature circles*

Everybody Sees the Ants by A. S. King
Fahrenheit 451 by Ray Bradbury
Romeo and Juliet by Shakespeare*
Something Wicked This Way Comes by Ray Bradbury
***Last novel TBD**

Extras:

This year you will learn what I hope will be a fun and memorable way to take notes in class. You will be learning how to ***sketchnote***, an innovative technique which combines both the visual and the verbal. Your unlined notebooks will be used for this style of note-taking and journaling. Feel free to visit my website for more information and examples.