



Course Syllabus

Literature and Composition III

Eighth Grade

Instructor: Ms. Catherine Woner

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Course Overview

The purpose of this course is to enhance your skills in analyzing literature, grammar, and writing essays. During the course of this year, students will develop careful reading skill and form solid arguments based on the texts, expand their understanding of grammar usage and mechanics, increase their mastery of vocabulary, and compose five paragraph essays.

Class Materials

Each day, you will need to bring the following to class:

- A pencil *OR* a blue or black pen
- A red pen
- Loose-leaf paper *OR* a spiral-bound notebook
- Student planner
- A binder *OR* a section of a larger binder designated for our class
- The required consumable/textbook for class, as noted on the calendar

Course Objectives

Throughout the school year, students will develop, deepen, and practice thoughtful habits of reading, writing, and conversation. Students will expand abilities in two areas:

- **Literature**
Students will deepen understanding and enjoyment of texts, develop critical reading and thinking skills, and hone seminar discussion skills.
- **Composition**
Students will primarily practice analytic writing skills by writing several well-developed five-paragraph essays, founded on strong theses, with in-depth textual analysis, and containing course-appropriate grammar, mechanics, and vocabulary.

Course Materials

Required Readings:

Year-Round

Warriner's Handbook: Grammar-Usage-Mechanics-Sentences (Third Course)

First Semester

Beowulf

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight

To Kill a Mockingbird

Selected short stories and plays

Second Semester

The Merchant of Venice

Lord of the Flies

Canterbury Tales

All Quiet on the Western Front

The Chosen

Selected poems

Supplemental Readings / References:

- Students may require access to an online or print dictionary (preferably the Oxford English Dictionary) at home in order to complete vocabulary assignments.

Course Expectations

Class Conduct: Students are expected to arrive to class on time and prepared, to challenge themselves and their colleagues to remain focused and on-task while in the classroom, and to follow the instructor's directions and class procedures. As students prepare to enter high school, they will demonstrate their maturity and wonder for learning inside and outside of the classroom. There will be a time when you do not know what a word means or do not know the answer to a question. In school, we learn – we are not supposed to know everything; otherwise we wouldn't be here.

Homework: Students are expected to come to class prepared, with all appropriate course materials. Students will hand in all work on time (See **Late Assignment Policy**).

Class Participation: Students are expected to offer new ideas and ask genuine, focused questions about our course material and readings. As colleagues, students will treat one another with respect and support each other's academic progress.

Tutoring Hours

Please check my blog and signs posted in our classroom for updated tutoring hours.

Tutoring is open to everyone, and I encourage all of you to visit sometime during the year. The material in this course will challenge each student in different ways, and if ever you have questions that we do not have time to answer in class, you should schedule an appointment or visit me during Lyceum.

If you are spending more than 30 minutes on homework or having difficulty with grammar, reading, writing, vocabulary, or class participation, you may benefit from tutoring. As soon as you feel you are having difficulty, please come to see me; the earlier we address your questions, the more likely we are to resolve it quickly.

To make the most of our time during tutoring, please bring specific questions and your class materials.

Assignments and Assessments

Seminar Discussion (25% of semester grade)

Whether we are in lecture or seminar discussion, students will contribute in class by sharing their thoughts and asking questions, as well as tracking the conversation when others are speaking and taking notes (in other words, listening *actively*). Students will be evaluated on the quality of their comments, specifically in terms of their references to the text and their consideration of previous comments by peers. Students will lose points if they engage in side conversations and/or distract their classmates.

Preparedness & Decorum (15% of semester grade)

Come to class with all required materials and be ready to study new concepts and lessons with active engagement and positive demeanor. Annotate your texts and come prepared for a discussion. Be supportive of and respectful towards peers when responding to their comments and questions. Utilizing course resources like tutoring will also contribute to this category.

Quizzes (15% of semester grade)

Expect about two pop reading quizzes per week, as well as scheduled vocabulary and grammar quizzes two to three times per quarter.

Tests (20% of semester grade)

There will be a test on each reading unit in the course. Reviews will occur during class time, but students should also complete their own study guides and reviews of materials prior to each exam. Tests will normally be returned within one week.

Writing (25% of semester grade)

Writing assignments will take the form of informal, in-class writing and formal, take-home essays. A formal essay will be assigned for each major work of literature we read. Writing will be graded based on focus, conventions, style, and organization. As this course emphasizes developing writing skill, constructive feedback will be given for all writing assignments and students will occasionally have opportunities for re-writes.

Turning in Assignments

All major assignments (e.g. essays) should be brought to class on the day that they are due, typed and stapled. All worksheets and homework should be neat in appearance and writing (no notepaper “fringe”). There will not be an option to email a Word document or PDF version of any assignment.

Late Assignment Policy

Absences and Missed Work: If you are absent, you are responsible for any missed assignments and must complete them in a timely manner. The general rule is one extra day for each day absent, although lengthy absences of three days or more will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. You are also responsible for obtaining notes from the missed days from a fellow classmate. If you miss a reading quiz during an excused absence, it will be noted as excused and will count neither for nor against you. If you miss a test or a vocabulary quiz, it is your responsibility to speak to me when you return to arrange a make-up time. Major quizzes and tests must be made up within a week of the original absence, barring extraordinary circumstances; if they are not made up in that time, the assessment will receive a zero.

If there is an issue with an assignment due date, please see me as soon as possible outside of class to discuss it in advance; we may be able to work out a new due date.

Late Work: Late work not resulting from an absence will be accepted with the following penalties from the original grade:

- Minor assignments (e.g. vocabulary work) will be deducted by 50% regardless of lateness.
- Major assignments (e.g. essays) will be deducted by one letter grade for each day that the assignment is late (e.g. if a B+ essay is turned in two days late, it will instead be given a B-).

You may not email late assignments for full credit; hard copies will be accepted in class, and electronic copies may be warranted for some formal essays.

Course Grading

Student work will be graded based on this scheme:

Course Work	Percentage
Seminar Discussion	25%
Preparedness & Decorum	15%
Quizzes	15%
Tests	20%
Writing	25%
TOTAL	100%

Academic Policies and Institutional Resources

Academic Policies and Procedures

All student work (tests, quizzes, homework, projects) will be returned within one week of submission, with minor exceptions. Essays will be returned within two weeks of submission. Please refer to Scottsdale Prep's Family Handbook pp. 26-38 for more information on the academy's policies.

Additional Course-Level Specific Information

Distance Learning 2020 Addendum

During the period of Distance Learning at the start of the 2020-2021 school year, students will still be required to adhere to the expectations for class conduct and study, whether in synchronous class time or in asynchronous video lectures and completion of assignments. Students will be graded using the scheme written above. We will strive to keep up a rigorous pace during distance learning, and along with learning on the still new platforms of Google Classroom and Zoom, students should reach out even more often if they are having any struggles with the material or technology. If you have any questions about how the details of this syllabus might change while learning remotely, please contact me over email or in Zoom tutoring.

Distance Learning Tardy Policy

The expectation for students while using Zoom for class is that they will be in waiting room at beginning of class so I can admit them at the start of class time. If a student arrives in the waiting room after the class start time, this first tardy will simply earn a warning. Upon a second tardy, the student's parent and the Assistant Headmaster will be notified. On the third violation, the student will lose participation points for any subsequent tardies, and on the fourth violation, the Assistant Headmaster will log these tardies.

Distance Learning Late Assignment Policy

In order to ensure students are diligently completing online assignments, the school-wide late assignment policy is as follows: student homework submitted by the deadline (normally, 11:59 PM on the date the work was

assigned) is eligible for full credit. Student homework submitted one day late is eligible for up to half credit. Student homework submitted more than one day late is not eligible for credit.

Distance Learning Tutoring

During Distance Learning at the start of the 2020-2021 school year, I will be available for tutoring on Thursdays from 3:05-3:30 over Zoom and by appointment. Please use to the Zoom link in our Google Classroom to join tutoring. Upon our return to in-person learning, updated tutoring hours will be posted on my blog and in the classroom.

Timed Writes

In order to be promoted from the eighth grade, all students must complete and pass a timed five-paragraph essay at the end of the third quarter. All students will be provided with several practice timed-writes during the school year. There will also be two opportunities to pass the timed-write. Parents will be notified if there is a failure of the first timed-write. Students who do not pass the final timed-write must complete a summer school "Comp Camp" program. This program is not intended to punish the student, but to make certain that he or she is prepared for success in the high school Humane Letters class.

Additional course-level specific information may be provided throughout the school year.