



Ms. Del Pino, RM# E6

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## LITERATURE SYLLABUS

### COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES:

Welcome to Literature! You have been reading works of literature since you were a small child, and you have studied novels and other literary texts for many years in school. However, this course is not your typical English class. You will be introduced to literature about cultures that may be foreign to you and be asked to grapple with perspectives that you have never before considered. In addition, you will be encouraged to step outside your comfort zone and consider the world from a brand new point of view, and evaluate this point of view alongside your own. Our goal is for you to develop the invaluable and essential skill of interpretation, so that you will become a better critical “reader” of your world, one who is able to question, examine, evaluate, and contribute to the world around you.

Literature is a foundational course in which you will begin to sharpen the tools that you will be using for the rest of your time in high school. Through our study of the world cultures of Australia, Mexico, South Africa, and China, you will strengthen your skills in reading, writing, speaking, and thinking in a variety of formats. We will focus heavily on critical thinking, and use this skill to translate your thoughts into writing across a wide variety of disciplines. In this course, we focus on two major elements of academic development:

#### I. LITERATURE

- Students will gain a deeper appreciation of language and literature
- Students will develop a broader understanding of the humanities
- Students will expand their cultural literacy
- Students will develop a variety of reading skills: vocabulary, syntax, audience, and purpose

#### II. WRITING

- Students will use the writing process to improve expository, persuasive, analytical, creative, and research writing skills
- Students will refine their writing mechanics, vocabulary, and grammar

While these objectives will run throughout the entire course, our year will be broken up thematically into five main units of study.

**MAJOR UNITS OF STUDY**  
**Underlying Theme for the Year:**

*Looking Beyond Ourselves: Understanding Who We Are and Our Responsibilities in a Changing World*

**I. An Interdependent and Globalized World**

Seeing the World through Different Lenses: The Role of Culture, the Environment, and Personal Experience in Shaping a Global Community

In this introductory unit, students will be introduced to the concept of globalization and begin to understand the responsibility they hold as citizens of a global community. As they grasp concepts such as ethnocentrism, and cultural sensitivity, students will see how the world in which they live is just one model of reality and that the study of other cultures must be done objectively. An additional topic of importance that we focus on is critical thinking, another crucial skill necessary for those living in a globalized world.

Main Texts:

Dumas, Firoozeh. *Funny in Farsi*. New York: Random House, 1994. Print.  
“Critical Thinking,” adapted handout from Jan Rehner  
“Globalization,” Thomas L. Friedman

Video(s):

*White Dawn*

Major Assessments:

Learning Writing through Writing,” Constructing a paragraph

**II. Australian Aboriginal Culture and Geography**

A Balanced World: Preserving Ways of Life through an Interdependent Relationship with the Environment

In the second unit, our main focus is on the study of a folk society and their characteristics that differ from industrialized societies. A folk society’s longevity, such as the Australian Aboriginals, is directly dependent upon their ability to uphold their defining characteristics and maintain a close and symbiotic relationship with their natural environment. This essential relationship will become evident as students study how the Australian Aboriginal people were able to survive both the unforgiving surroundings and the arrival of the Europeans who attempted to drastically change their culture forever.

Video(s):

*Rabbit Proof Fence*

Major Assessments:

Socratic Seminar- *Rabbit Proof Fence*  
*Rabbit Proof Fence* Essay  
IUE Preparation

### III. Mexican Culture, History, and Geography

Neither Victory Nor Defeat: The Role of Cultural and Geographic Environments in the Birth of the Mestizo Republic

The Mexico unit begins with a study of myths and legends that allow students to understand the rich origins of modern day Mexican culture. This culture comes to life in the coming of age novel, *Bless Me Ultima*, where the young protagonist, Tony Marez y Luna, faces some significant life decisions as he is caught between two conflicting cultures. Students use their knowledge of literary devices and central themes of the text to analyze how several of the characters handle both conflict and synthesis.

#### Main Texts:

“Corn Mother,” retold from nineteenth-century sources

“La Llorona,” adapted handout

“Vaquero,” Joaquin Miller

Anaya, Rudolfo. *Bless Me, Ultima*. New York: Warner Books, 1972. Print.

#### Video(s):

*Bless Me, Ultima*

*Mi Familia*

#### Major Assessments:

*Bless Me, Ultima* Literary Analysis Essay

IUE Preparation

### IV. African Culture, History, and Geography

A Struggle for Power: From Colonial Oppression to Self-Determination

This unit begins with a study of proverbs that establishes a foundation for an understanding of Africa’s rich culture. Students will also read selections from the novels, *Joys of Motherhood* and *Things Fall Apart*, to fully comprehend the concept of human dignity and dehumanization. These novels set up a context that allows students to delve into these issues with the play, *Les Blancs*, by Lorraine Hansberry. We conclude the unit with a focus on nonviolent resistance in South Africa in order to create an appreciation for an alternative way of reclaiming one’s dignity in the face of oppression.

#### Main Texts:

Adapted selections from *Joys of Motherhood*, Buchi Emecheta

Adapted selections from *Things Fall Apart*, Chinua Achebe

Hansberry, Lorraine. *Les Blancs*. New York: Vintage Books, 1972. Print.

*White Man’s Burden*, Rudyard Kipling

*Brown Man’s Burden*, Henry Labouchere

“Writing a Research Paper,” adapted handout from *History: A Student’s Guide to Research and Writing*

“The Bench,” Richard Rive

Major Assessments:

*Les Blancs* Literary Analysis Essay

Research Project: Research Outline; Speech- Research Outline Presentation

IUE Preparation

**V. Chinese Culture, History, and Geography**

A Shrinking World: Bringing 10,000 years of Culture into the Twenty-First Century

We begin this unit with an analysis of Confucius' analects to gain a deeper understanding of his life and philosophy that greatly influenced Chinese traditions and culture. However, much of Chinese culture dealt with the conflict between preserving traditions and embracing progress that challenged the society through Mao's communistic rule. This transition impacted the lives of many Chinese citizens, which can be seen in the novel, *Red Azalea*, through the events of a young girl forced to find her identity under oppressive circumstances.

Main Texts:

"The Analects," Confucius, translated by Arthur Waley

"Confucianism," adapted handout from *The World's Religions*, Huston Smith

"The Story of Miss Li," Po Hsing-chien, translated by Arthur Waley

"A Visit from the Footbinder," Emily Prager

Min, Anchee. *Red Azalea*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1994. Print.

Video(s):

*The Last Emperor*

Major Assessments:

Confucianism Exam

IUE Preparation

## ASSESSMENTS

In-class discussion and active reading are regular components of this class. In addition, formal assessments are varied, and include, but are not limited to, the following:

Writing	Writing is a major component of this course, and you will be formally assessed on several essays throughout the year. This includes both <i>take home essays</i> that will consist of detailed preparation, peer editing, and revision, as well as <i>in-class essay exams</i> . Writing in this class will almost always include formal planning and reflecting in addition to the written essay itself.
Creative Projects	Creative projects in this class can take various forms, depending on the particular unit of study. You will be asked to participate in both individual and group projects, and specific details will be given at the beginning of that unit, well in advance of the project's due date.
Research Project	You will be engaged in a semester-long project that will lead you throughout the entire research process. You will be responsible for choosing a research topic, constructing a thesis, completing notecards, writing an outline, and presenting your findings to your peers.
Socratic Seminar	In this class we will hold Socratic Seminars, student-lead discussions that strive to answer/explore an essential question relating to a particular text or topic that we are studying. You will be provided with the question in advance of the seminar, and will be expected to arrive prepared with an argument. You must always be ready to hand in this preparation on the day of the seminar, which will be graded along with your speaking.
Speeches	A few times over the course of the year, you will be required to memorize and give a speech to your classmates, from texts and themes relating to those we are studying in class. These speeches are meant to refine your public speaking and presentation skills, which you will use throughout your time in the magnet program. You will be assessed on your presentation, including elements such as your volume, pace, physical demeanor, eye contact, etc.
Quizzes	You will have regular reading, vocabulary, and grammar quizzes in this class. Any and all quizzes are meant to support the learning that you are doing in this class. While you will be aware of most graded assignments long before their due dates, expect that I will also conduct some surprise quizzes and binder checks that will count toward your overall grade. This is to make sure that you are on task, and that you have full understanding of the material. These quizzes will allow me to see how I need to alter my teaching so that our class and your learning are happening most effectively.

## GRADING

Minor assignments, such as active readings are graded using a check system and converted into points:

Active Reading:  $\sqrt{+} = 20/20$   $\sqrt{+}/\sqrt{+} = 17/20$   $\sqrt{+} = 15/20$   $\sqrt{+}/\sqrt{-} = 13/20$   $\sqrt{-} = 10/20$

Major assignments, formal assessments such as Unit Portfolios and most homework assignments, are graded and converted into points depending on the assignment:

A+ 100%      B+ 89%-88%      C+ 79%-78%      D+ 69%-68%  
 A 99%-95%      B 87%-85%      C 77%-75%      D 67%- 65%  
 A- 94%-90%      B- 84%-80%      C- 74%-70%      D- 64%-60%  
 F 59% and below

Oral Participation and active engagement (raising thoughtful questions, listening respectfully to one's peers, etc.) are graded according to the attached rubric:

(Evaluated at both the 10 and 20 week)

	A (Exemplary)	B (Proficient)	C (Developing)	D (Beginning)	F (Unsatisfactory)
Frequency and Quality of Class Participation	<i>Attends class and <b>regularly contributes</b> to the discussion by raising thoughtful questions, analyzing relevant issues, building on others' ideas, synthesizing across readings and discussions, expanding the class's perspective, listening respectfully, self-regulating oral participation and appropriately challenging assumptions and perspectives.</i>	<i>Attends class and <b>contributes</b> to the discussion in the aforementioned ways; however, there is room for improvement.</i>	<i>Attends class and <b>sometimes contributes</b> to the discussion in the aforementioned ways.</i>	<i>Attends class and <b>rarely contributes</b> to the discussion in the aforementioned ways.  Does not attend class regularly, but participates when present.</i>	<i>Attends class and <b>never contributes</b> to the discussion in the aforementioned ways.  Does not attend class regularly.</i>

## CLASSROOM PROCEDURES

Procedures are a part of life. We follow procedures for searching the internet, boarding an airplane, approaching a traffic light and attending a concert. The reason we have procedures in life is so that people can function efficiently in society.

Likewise, there are procedures in this classroom to help ensure that we have a positive and productive school year. Most of the CORE procedures and policies are written in the parent/student letter (please look over it again!). Our procedures are as follows:

### At the beginning of class:

1. Everyone is responsible for bringing his/her own materials to class, i.e. CORE notebook, handouts/books, homework, etc.
2. When you walk into my classroom, you enter a sacred space. Tardiness is unacceptable, and consistent lateness will lower your participation grade. Be in your seat when the bell rings!
3. Immediately upon entering the room, write the date, copy the homework, and begin the Quickwrite for the day (provided there is one).
4. You may use the bathroom and drinking fountains before and after class ONLY.

### During class:

5. **NO** eating or drinking in class (water bottles are permitted).
6. This class moves quickly, so it is important that you keep up with the conversation and are free from distractions. **No cell phones, iPods, iPads, or personal computers may be used during class.** Exceptions to this rule will be made at the teacher's discretion.
7. Whether you are answering a question, making a comment, asking for permission, etc., to be acknowledged you must raise your hand.
8. It is very important that we respect each other's right to speak. In other words, while one voice is on the others are off.
9. Talk within groups must be work related and kept to a minimum tone.
10. When we have visitors, you are to continue working quietly.
11. If I am out of the classroom, you are to stay on task.
12. In order to be successful in CORE, you must have a voice. Because of this, you will receive a grade for **participation**.
13. The grade you receive in English is based on the number of points you accumulate. Therefore, receiving 5 out of 10 points is better than receiving 0 out of 10 points.

### At the end of class:

14. I dismiss you, not the bell. **DO NOT** begin packing up your materials until you are told to do so.
15. Upon dismissal, all materials are to be put in their proper places and all trash is to be picked up from the floors and thrown away OR recycled.

### Policies about work:

16. All assignments must include your name in the upper left hand corner of the page. No name, no credit!

17. You **MUST** date all handouts.
18. All work is to be neat, legible, and typed! Homework and written assignments are due at the beginning of class. An assignment turned in at any point after it has been collected may be considered late.

**Policies about absences and late work:**

19. You are responsible for finding at least two study buddies- students who you feel you can depend on to give you missing assignments when you are absent or can call with questions you may have about homework.
20. **VERY IMPORTANT:** When you are absent, you are responsible for the work you missed, including the Quickwrite and all notes taken that day. Contact your study buddy for missing assignments.
  - a. If you are absent you must email me *the night before*. Please write your name, “English,” and period number in the subject line (for example: William Shakespeare, English Period 3). In the body of the email, explain the reason for your absence.
  - b. When turning in late or absent work you must fill out a *Form* (as stated in the Parent/Student Letter) and attach the sheet on top of your late or absent work. This does not mean you will be excused for the tardiness of your work, however it is an efficient way to keep track of the work you hand in past the due date.
  - c. Late work will result in half-credit. Better to turn in work late, than not at all!
  - d. Absent work can also result in half credit if you do not follow the above procedures for absent work!

**One final policy:**

21. Finally, each of you is *required to make one appointment with me per semester*, so that we may discuss your progress or simply take time to chat.

I look forward to this school year;  
Let's make it a good one!

I have read and understand the syllabus and procedures for Ms. Del Pino's Literature class.  
I agree to follow these procedures, so that I will ensure a positive and productive school year.

Print Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_