

British Literature Syllabus

Mrs. Leute

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2015/2016

Course Overview

This course offers an overview of the British classics, from Medieval literature to contemporary British literature. Students will study an anthology of British literature, including epic poetry, King Arthur Tales, and Shakespeare. They will also look at major works of Gothic fiction as well as dystopian literature, among other novels. All major reading will be followed by an analysis essay and/or writing-intensive comprehension test. Students will be encouraged to develop their own voice in writing assignments. They will work independently as well as in literature circles and whole class discussion. Frequent vocabulary tests from the readings will be given.

Reading Assignments

Students will be required to read both in and outside of class. Most reading assignments will be accompanied by some sort of comprehension check (questions, reading log, etc.) and may be followed by a reading quiz. It is really important to keep up with the reading, or classwork will become quite difficult.

Writing Assignments

Throughout all writing assignments in this class, students will work to develop a more sophisticated writing style, including writing with a unique voice; consideration of audience and appropriate register; varied sentence structure; and correct grammar, usage, and mechanics. Students will work on organization through the use of pre-writing organizers, such as essay outlines and graphic organizers. Each time a student writes to defend a thesis, it must be supported with textual evidence, both general and in the form of specific quotations.

- Portfolio: Students will be expected to keep all of their writing over the course of the year. They will use this as evidence of meeting specific standards. Each student will create a digital portfolio, using Blogger. Students will be able to choose their best work as well as that which shows the most growth to demonstrate their learning.

Google Classroom

Many assignments will be made available to students as well as collected through the online Google classroom. This will also be a place for students to collaborate and give feedback to one another, as well as receive feedback from me.

Assessment

This year, I will be using a proficiency-based grading system. This means that students will need to meet certain standards in order to move on to the next area of study. Understanding that all students will work at different paces to achieve the standards, a student's grade will be broken down into the following categories:

Product (75%)

The product grade reflects whether or not the student has met the standard. It includes any activity that is collected and graded (tests, quizzes, projects, presentations, essays, and some homework assignments). Larger assignments will be worth more points than smaller assignments. All assignments in this category may be revised, as long as the student does so before the end of the semester. Since I am looking for proficiency, a low grade is not a sign of "failure" - it is a sign that the student has not yet met the standard.

- Students may redo an assignment or make revisions only if they show significant effort on the first attempt.
- Students will be REQUIRED to redo certain assignments if they do not meet the standards being assessed. A grade of "incomplete" will be given as a place holder until revisions are made.
- Students who show significant effort on an assignment will not earn a grade lower than 50%, though they will be REQUIRED to make corrections and/or complete some review assignments.
- A grade on an assignment will always reflect what a student KNOWS or CAN DO. That means that I will always take the highest score on revisions, and I will not deduct points from the product grade for late work or work that needs to be revised.

Process/Progress (25%)

An important part of a person's success, both in school and in the work place, is the ability to display certain habits of work. These include putting forth significant effort, persevering in the face of a challenge, being responsible, and respecting others. The process grade reflects just this: the process by which a student achieves his or her goals, and the progress s/he makes in getting there. Self-assessments will aid in the formulation of a student's grade in this category.

Things that will POSITIVELY affect the process grade are:

- Getting right to work
- Working through a challenge (not giving up)
- Actively participating
- Encouraging or assisting others
- Putting in consistent effort
- Asking for help
- Respecting others

Things that will NEGATIVELY affect the process grade are:

- Handing in assignments late
- Not doing homework
- Being tardy to class
- Off-task behavior and disruptions
- Not following class rules
- Not being prepared for class

Course Planner/Student Activities

SEMESTER ONE:

Medieval Literature

Students will read excerpts from the epic poem *Beowulf* and various King Arthur tales and be able to:

- Identify and discuss the characteristics of an epic hero and epic poem
- Compare and contrast the definition of hero over the years
- Discuss how the tradition of chivalry is reflected in Medieval British Literature
- Compare and contrast different interpretations of the same story
- Produce a polished essay and/or take a cumulative unit test to show mastery of the skills and concepts acquired during the unit

Shakespeare

Students will read *Hamlet*, Shakespearean sonnets, and excerpts from other Shakespearean works, and be able to:

- Identify and discuss the characteristics of a Five Act Play
- Recognize and discuss the figure of Tragic Hero in literature
- Explain how the social and historical context in which Shakespeare lived and wrote influenced his plays
- Understand and analyze various themes
- Translate important passages and act out various scenes
- Produce a polished essay and/or take a cumulative unit test to show mastery of the skills and concepts acquired during the unit
- Engage in an interest-based research project that connects with Elizabethan England

Midterm Week

Students will update their digital portfolios with evidence of having met specific standards and will choose an item to present to the class.

SEMESTER TWO:

Dystopian Literature

Students will read either *Brave New World* or *1984* and be able to:

- Identify and discuss the characteristics of a utopia/dystopia
- Discuss some effective means of social control used and abused by leaders
- Discuss the kinds of power the masses have in society
- Produce a polished essay and/or take a cumulative unit test to show mastery of the skills and concepts acquired during the unit

Gothic Literature

Students will read *Dracula* or *Frankenstein* and be able to:

- Discuss the characteristics of Gothic literature and explain how these novels exemplify the characteristics
- Identify and discuss ways in which authors can use language to convey a specific mood
- Understand and analyze various themes
- Produce a polished essay and/or take a cumulative unit test to show mastery of the skills and concepts acquired during the unit

Final Exam

The final exam will be set up much like the midterm. Students who earn a 90% or higher in quarters three and four will be exempt from the presentation part of the exam (but will still need to submit a final portfolio for a class grade).

***** Please sign and return THIS PAGE ONLY *****

I have read and reviewed the syllabus for British Literature with my parent/guardian(s) and understand what is expected of me as a student.

Student Name

Student Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Name

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date