English III College Prep

Course Syllabus

2015-2016

Mrs. McCook ★ Room 127 ★kmccook@littletonps.org ★kmccook.weebly.com

Welcome to English III! This course is designed around some of my favorite books of all time. Whether you count English among your favorite subjects or not, I believe you will find something that appeals to you this year. For now, you may be wondering how the class functions and what you will need to do to be successful.

**Discussion**

I believe discussion is the heart of a good English class. When students are willing to ask questions and share their ideas, the result is an energized learning environment. Our class will benefit enormously by listening to the contributions that each of you can make. I find that this kind of intelligent discussion is also more interesting than having the students sit back and listen to the teacher speak all the time. Most students agree. The skills of a good discussion will benefit you beyond this classroom in college seminars and workplace meetings, for example. We will discuss discussion in more detail soon.

**Reading**

We will naturally be doing a lot of reading in this class. Reading is hard work—there is no way around it. Like writing a paper or doing math problems or completing a science lab, reading requires an active mind struggling to make sense of what is on the page. I have chosen some of my favorite novels, plays, stories, poems, and nonfiction for this class to make the hard work more pleasurable. I will also give you strategies for working with the text, including using literary criticism. We will do some reading in class and some outside of class; we might try reading in groups and reading independently. There will be short reading quizzes to assess your comprehension. At the end of the day, you will have to read to be successful in this class.

**Writing**

Writing in this class breaks down into two main categories: informal writing and formal writing. Informal writing includes all the freewriting, note taking, journaling, and drafting that provides “a site for early thinkings-through” (Gillespie 34). We don’t need to worry too much about editing for grammar and spelling when we do informal writing. We will do this kind of informal writing in our Learning Logs several times a week. Formal writing, on the other hand, is polished work that represents a final product of what has been learned over an extended period. We will produce this kind of writing (usually called a “paper” or an “essay”) once or twice per quarter. We will also practice writing for specific occasions like the SAT and college admissions essays.

**Vocabulary**

Learning new vocabulary will be a daily habit with the Word of the Day. The Word of the Day will be posted on the board as a “Do Now” activity for the beginning of class. You will write your own meaningful sentence that demonstrates your understanding of the word. After we have finished a vocabulary list, there will be a quiz (about one quiz every two weeks). We will also learn vocabulary in context as we read novels, plays, short stories, poems, and nonfiction. You are encouraged to keep a vocabulary journal for these words. Vocabulary journals will be allowed on some reading quizzes. Extra credit will also be offered for well-kept vocabulary journals. More information on the vocabulary (including the words) is posted on the class website. I will distribute the first word list soon.

**Grammar**

## Grammar will be woven into our reading and writing lessons. I may take a few minutes to point out some grammar trick an author is using. I might use some student writing for a grammar lesson (always anonymously and with your permission). Occasionally we will take a class period or two to focus on a common error popping up in student writing. We will also identify and correct errors with SAT practice questions. (For starters: Can you spot the grammar “error” in the first sentence of this paragraph?)

## Materials

Please bring these materials with you to class *every day* to be successful.

* current class text
* blue/black pens
* pencils
* 3-ring binder (see attached “YOUR ENGLISH BINDER” sheet)
* 1-subject notebook (half for Learning Log & half for Vocabulary Journal)
* loose-leaf paper
* independent reading book

## Expectations

★Be respectful.

★Be responsible.

★Work hard.

★Participate.

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| September | Social contractBlack Boy by Richard Wright (Chapter 13)Introduce literary criticismReader Response CriticismBiographical Criticism | Learning Log: Should we study literature?Criticism in everyday cultureWriting Assignment 1: Your Own Literary TheoryClass Anthology |
| October | Frankenstein by Mary ShelleyBiographical CriticismMoral CriticismSAT prep*Young Frankenstein* (film) | Writing Assignment 2: Frankenstein |
| November | The Great Gatsby by F. Scott FitzgeraldHistorical CriticismSAT prep | 1920s Mini-research Project |
| December | Argument | Writing Assignment 3: Argument Paper  |
| January | O Brother, Where Art Thou? (film)“Big Two-Hearted River” by Ernest HemmingwayArchetypal CriticismMid-year review | Disney Archetypes PresentationMid-year exam |
| February | Hamlet by William ShakespearePsychological CriticismVarious film adaptations of *Hamlet* | Personal Soliloquy AssignmentGroup Performance Scene |
| March | Hamlet | Hamlet Soundtrack ProjectFinal Performance Scene |
| April | Their Eyes Were Watching God by Zora Neale HurstonFeminist Criticism | Writing Assignment 4: Their Eyes Were Watching God |
| May | The Things They Carried by Tim O’Brien | Personal Symbol Project |
| June | Narrative essays:Student essays “Barriers” by Rolando Niella“Fish Cheeks” by Amy Tan“Us and Them” by David Sedaris“White Lies” by Erin Murphy“Shooting Dad” by Sarah Vowell *Serial* (podcast)Final exam review | College EssayFinal exam |

## Schedule

\*Please note: This schedule is subject to change based on the needs and interests of the class.

## Classroom Procedures

1. Arrive to class on time—before the bell rings—and go to your assigned seat to begin the Word of the Day in your notebook.
2. Raise your hand and wait to be called on when you would like to speak. Listen respectfully to others.
3. Use cell phones in class responsibly—when I have given you permission to use them for a class assignment.
4. Work only on English assignments while in English class. If you finish your work early, you may read an independent reading book, review vocabulary words, or begin the homework.
5. If you need to leave your seat, wait for a time to do it that will not disrupt the class.
6. To use the restroom during class, please get my attention quietly and sign out on the sheet by the door. *Do not leave the room without my permission.*
7. Wait to pack up at the end of class until I dismiss you with "Have a good day!"

**Assignment Procedures**

1. See the attached MLA Format sheet for heading and other guidelines.

1. Homework assignments should be typed and printed whenever possible. Hand-written work must be printed legibly and written in complete sentences to earn credit. Major assignments such as essays must be typed and printed before class. Assignments not printed before class will be considered late work.
2. You are responsible for making up missing work when you are absent. Check the class website or ask a friend and come prepared to class whenever possible. On your first day back to class, find an appropriate time to check with me about missing work.
3. Homework assignments must be submitted the day they are due at the beginning of the period. Anything submitted after this time is late work. Late work is worth 50%.
4. Extra credit will be offered on a limited basis. Vocabulary journals may be turned in at the end of the quarter for extra credit. Complete regular assignments to maintain your grade.
5. Don’t resort to plagiarism. See me for help if you are struggling. Plagiarism is a serious offense in Western culture. Plagiarism can include but is not limited to: copying or sharing homework; taking words or ideas from online sources (such as Spark Notes); having a tutor, parent, or friend write or revise your essay; and not citing sources within a paper or PowerPoint presentation. More detailed information will be reviewed in this class and can be found in the *Littleton Student Handbook*. The first instance of plagiarism will result in a zero on the assignment; future instances will result in further disciplinary action and documentation in your student file.

**Grading Policy**

Assignments and student grades are updated regularly on Aspen. Students and parents are encouraged to monitor students' progress on Aspen throughout the year. The following grade weight categories will be used to determine course grades.

 Participation 30%

Informal Writing, Homework, Quizzes 30%

Formal Writing, Projects, Tests 40%

Keep this syllabus in your English binder for easy reference. Please feel free to see me or email me with questions and concerns about the class. I am always here to help. I hope you are looking forward to English class this year as much as I am. Let’s make it a great year!

Works Cited

Gillespie, Tim. *Doing Literary Criticism: Helping Students Engage with Challenging Texts*. Portland, Maine: Stenhouse, 2010. Print.

\*\*\**THIS IS A MODEL ONLY. KEEP THIS SHEET ATTACHED TO THE SYLLABUS. ANOTHER COPY WILL BE GIVEN TO YOU TO INCLUDE IN YOUR BINDER.\*\*\**

Your Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Teacher’s Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Course Title:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Period: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**YOUR ENGLISH BINDER**

Keep your English binder well organized and bring it with you to class every day. A two-inch, three-ring binder is ideal. This binder should be used solely for English, not for other classes. Set up your binder in the following manner:

Page 1: “YOUR ENGLISH BINDER” sheet (this piece of paper)

Page 2: Course syllabus

Page 3: MLA Format sheet

Page 4-? Additional information

After these pages, divide your binder into sections using dividers with tabs. The five sections should be labeled as follows:

Section 1: Vocabulary

Section 2: Grammar

Section 3: Literature

Section 4: Writing

Section 5: Learning Log/Vocabulary Journal (a one-subject notebook kept in your binder)

In the back of your binder, you should have a good supply of loose-leaf paper.

Follow this system to set yourself up for a successful year!

**MLA Format**

The rules of the Modern Language Association (MLA) will be applied to all assignments. Students will be responsible for the MLA rules they have been taught up to this point in high school, including the rules listed below. Go to the Online Writing Lab (OWL) at Purdue University for a helpful MLA resource: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>

**Paper**: For handwritten work, use white, college-ruled, 8 ½ by 11-inch paper. Do not submit pages obviously torn out of a spiral notebook. For typed work, use plain white 8 ½ by 11-inch paper.

**Fonts**: Use 12-point font. Avoid ornate fonts; use standard fonts such as Times New Roman or Arial. Use *italics* for titles of longer works like books (*To Kill a Mockingbird*), films (*Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*), plays (*Hamlet*) and long poems (*The Odyssey*). If you are writing by hand, use an underline instead of italics. Never use both italics and an underline. Use quotation marks for titles of shorter works like articles and essays (“Why We Crave Horror Movies”), short stories (“The Lottery”), and short poems (“A Dream Deferred”). Capitalize the first and last word of a title, plus key words; this is called “title case.”

**Format**: Leave one-inch margins around the entire text of your paper. You may have to adjust the margins manually to do this. Paragraphs should be indented half an inch; longer quotations (more than four typed lines) should be indented an inch from both margins; these are called “bloc quotations.”

**Spacing**: Any typed work should be double-spaced. Do not add extra spaces between paragraphs.

**Stapling:** Do not trap assignments in a binder, folder, or cover sheet. A staple in the upper left-hand corner will suffice. You may use the stapler on the back table, but always staple before class begins.

**Documentation**: Each time quotations are used in your text, you must document them. Sources that have influenced you must also be documented. Quoted passages should follow this format: "Ever since my mother left us that April, I knew they would all leave eventually, one by one" (59).

When quoting more than one source in a paper, include the author's last name before the page number: "Ever since my mother left us that April, I knew they would all leave eventually, one by one" (King 59).

The book’s full title should be listed in a list of works cited at the end of the paper. Do not use “p.” or “pg.” to cite your sources.

**Heading & Title:**



September 2, 2015

Dear parents and guardians,

One of the most important keys to student success in school is a clear understanding of the classroom expectations and grading policy. Today in class, I reviewed the requirements of your child’s English class. Please review the course syllabus I have sent home with your son or daughter and sign below.

If anything is unclear to you, I am more than happy to clarify. The best way to reach me is through email: **kmccook@littletonps.org**. I also invite you to visit our class website throughout the year at **kmccook.weebly.com** where you will find each class period’s social contract, assignments, handouts, resources, and a little bit about me.

**How to Help Your Student With His/Her Work:**

* Read the books your student is reading and discuss them together. Share your thoughts and ask for his/her thoughts.
* Be aware of upcoming due dates and assignments (see the class website). Help your student work in steps and avoid procrastination.
* Encourage your student to attend tutoring if he/she needs help. I am available during E Mod, G Mod, and after school by appointment.

**A Special Note on Helping with Essays:**

* Avoid the temptation to rewrite your student’s essay – even one sentence!
* If your student would like your help, read the essay and comment on the quality of the thesis, the clarity of ideas, use of supporting evidence, clarity of explanation, and completeness. Check her/his work against the assignment requirements.
* Identify grammatical errors, but do not fix them.
* Constructive feedback will benefit your student, but rewriting sections of their essay will not help them learn.

Thank you for your support at home. I look forward to working with your child this year.

Best,

Kate McCook

Littleton High School English Department

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Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

***I have reviewed the course syllabus with my student. I understand the course requirements, deadline policies, and grading policies.***

Parent/Guardian Name (please print): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Contact Number: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_