 **English I Honors**

Course Syllabus

2014-2015

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Mrs. McCook

Room 127

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Office Hours: C Mod & by appointment

## Course Overview

Are you more than a little in love with language? Do you enjoy settling into a good book? Do you have a knack for writing? Do you go back and savor a good sentence when you find one? Are you looking for characters with whom to connect? Do you wonder about what it means to be human and/or the meaning of life? If this sounds like you, then you’ve come to the right place: English Honors. Here we do more than simply “get it”; we get fired up about it. Here we seek that book, character, line, or single word that inspires us. Our goal this year is to leave this room with our heads spinning and our hearts pounding, wanting to come back for more. Read on to learn what this experience entails.

## Course Objectives

## In this course, students will . . .

* Rapidly review and be assessed on their mastery of fundamentals of literacy introduced at the middle school level
* Understand and use grammar rhetorically, recognizing how specific grammatical choices enable writers to manipulate emphasis and meaning
* Combine and modify sentences so as to emphasize particular ideas
* Understand the function of a thesis in analytical arguments, how to support a thesis with evidence, how to analyze that evidence, and how to present quoted evidence effectively and accurately
* Recognize important distinctions between key rhetorical modes
* Write clearer, more specific, more complicated, and more comprehensive paragraphs, and assemble and link a series of paragraphs into a polished, sustained essay
* Read samples of most or all of the following genres: short lyric poems, an ancient play or epic, a Shakespearean play, a modern play, novels (classic and contemporary), non-fiction essays/arguments, and film
* Demonstrate their knowledge of the meaning and usage of real-life vocabulary

Most reading, drafting, and final revision of papers for this course will be assigned as homework. Class time will be largely dedicated to discussion and intermediate revision. Students can expect to complete 12-14 pages of formal, typed writing assignments per semester along with multiple informal and creative writing pieces.

## Units & Essential Questions

*Unit 1: Walking Around in Someone Else’s Skin*

*To Kill a Mockingbird,* Harper Lee

* How does our background and personal experience contribute to prejudice?
* Does the American legal system guarantee justice for all?
* What is the role of parents, teachers, and society in the moral education of children?

*Unit 2: Tradition vs. Change*

*Things Fall Apart,* Chinua Achebe

* What holds a culture together? What tears it apart?
* When is change constructive? When is it destructive?
* What does it mean to “be a man”? What are different cultural expectations for masculinity versus femininity?
* What is the role of religion within a culture?

*Unit 3: The Hero’s Journey*

*The Odyssey*, Homer (Robert Fitzgerald translation)

* What are the attributes of a hero or heroine? What is the hero/heroine’s role? Do they remain the same across cultures and over time?
* How do the decisions we make affect our lives and the lives of those around us?

*Unit 4: Star-Crossed Love*

*Romeo and Juliet,* William Shakespeare

* What is “true love”? What does it mean to be in love?
* At what age are we mature enough to have romantic relationships?
* How do the decisions we make affect our lives and the lives of those around us?
* How does fate control our lives? Do we have free will?

*Unit 5: Coming of Age*

*The Catcher in the Rye*, J. D. Salinger

* What does it mean to “come of age”? How do children’s and adults’ conceptions of the world differ?
* What does it mean to be “real” vs. “phony”? How can we lead authentic lives?
* What is the relationship of the individual to society?
* What are the rules we must follow? What happens when we break them?

*Unit 6: Society & Social Class*

*Pride & Prejudice*, Jane Austen

* How is our identity shaped by our social class and background?
* What does it mean to “be a lady”? What are the different cultural expectations for women versus men?
* Why do people marry? How has the institution of marriage changed over time?

We will also read non-fiction essays, news articles, short stories, poems, and films.

## Materials

current class text

blue/black pens

pencils

3-ring binder (see attached “YOUR ENGLISH BINDER” sheet)

loose-leaf paper

independent reading book

## Guidelines

* Work hard.
* Be nice.
* Keep an open mind.

## Procedures

***Classroom***

* Entering the Classroom: Please enter quietly, go to your assigned seat, and begin the Daily Language Workout (DLW). During the DWL, we will work on our grammar and writing skills by correcting sentence errors, combining sentences, and completing short writing prompts.
* Class Discussion: Please participate; this is a good way to develop your voice. I want to hear what you have to say. Make all questions and comments relevant to the current discussion. If your question is off-topic, write it down and ask later. Respect others by listening and giving them a chance to speak.
* Technology Use: Please abide by the “PHONES OUT / PHONES AWAY” blue sign posted at the front of the room. When it reads “PHONES AWAY,” please keep all electronic devices (phones, iPads, MP3 players, laptops, etc.) turned off and stored in your backpack during class. After one warning, I will have you put your device on my desk if you are using it and/or it goes off during class. I will then write a disciplinary referral and Mrs. Temple will follow up with additional consequences.
* Food & Drink: Eating and drinking is not permitted in class. The only exception is water; you may drink plain water only.
* Tardy Arrivals: Please enter quietly, place your pass on my desk, and begin working.
* Finishing Classwork Early: You may choose to work on unfinished English assignments (not work for other classes), read an independent reading book, review vocabulary words, or start working on that night's English homework.
* Leaving Your Seat: If you need to sharpen your pencil or throw something away, please find an appropriate time to do it that will not disrupt the class. Plan to use the restroom between classes. If you must 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.*
* Early Dismissal: Please let me know at the beginning of class if you will be dismissed early and show me a pass. When the time arrives, quietly raise your hand to get my attention. Pack up your materials and leave quietly at the scheduled time.
* Ending Class: I will dismiss you; the bell will not. Please do not start packing up prior to the bell. Wait until I finish and officially dismiss you with "Have a good day!"



***Assignments***

* Format: See the attached MLA Format sheet for heading and other guidelines.
* 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 or shared with me via Google Docs before class. Assignments not printed or shared before class will be considered missing.
* Late Work: Homework assignments must be submitted the day they are due at the beginning of the period. Late work will lose 10% of the possible points each day it is late. It is your responsibility to complete late work and submit it to me. Once a homework assignment has been returned and/or reviewed in class, you can no longer earn credit.
* Extra Credit: Extra credit will be offered on a very limited basis. You must demonstrate a strong effort to complete the regular assignments before extra credit will be considered.
* Excused Absences: Please check the class website to complete homework assignments and come to class prepared whenever possible. On your first day back to class, find an appropriate time to check with me about missing work. Ultimately, it is your responsibility to catch up on missed work. Make-up work for unexcused absences is not available.
* Academic Integrity: 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 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.

Following these guidelines and procedures will result in a pleasant and productive learning environment.

Not following these guidelines and procedures will result in 1.) a verbal warning 2.) a discussion with me after class about how to improve the behavior 3.) parental contact 4.) a disciplinary referral and detention.

***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 & Classwork 10%

Homework 20%

Quizzes & Tests 20%

Essays & Writing 30%

Projects & Presentations 20%

Keep this syllabus in your English binder for easy reference. Please feel free to see me or email me at any time 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 have a great year!



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\*\*\*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**

You must 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: Grammar

Section 2: Literature

Section 3: Vocabulary

Section 4: Writing

Section 5: Quizzes & Tests

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

Your English binder will be collected and graded periodically. I will announce the first binder check, but not the later ones. So bring your English binder to class every day to ensure yourself 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 like 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.

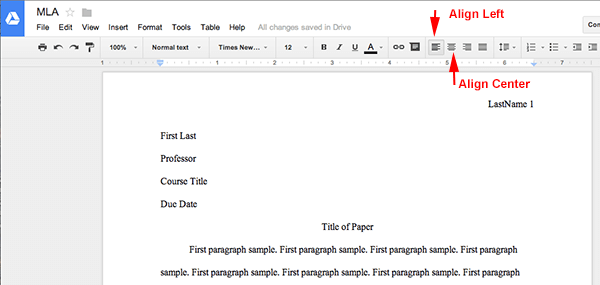
**Stapling:** Do not trap assignments in a binder, folder, or cover sheet. A staple in the upper left-hand corner will suffice. You may use the stapler on the back table, but always staple before class begins.

**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 3, 2014

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](mailto:kmccook@littletonps.org) I also invite you to visit our class website throughout the year at **kmccook.weebly.com** where you will find assignments, handouts, resources, and a little bit about me.

**How to Help Your Student With Her/His 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 she/he needs help. I am available during C Mod and before 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

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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: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_