

Welcome to American Literature A!

In this course students read, discuss, and write about prose and poetry selections from early American authors. Students also study vocabulary and grammar. This class focuses on the Romantic and Realistic literary eras, though since not all students in this class will be in American Literature B, the curriculum will also include some contemporary counterparts.

Office hours: Monday – Thursday, 3:30-4:00, or by appointment

Units and curriculum - American Literature A

Native American literature (1)

American Indian Myths and Legends – focus on Oregon tribes

“Yellow Woman,” by Leslie Marmon Silko

“Fleur,” by Louise Erdrich

Nonfiction – essays (2)

“The American Scholar,” by Ralph Waldo Emerson

“Civil Disobedience,” by Henry David Thoreau

“Letter from Birmingham Jail,” by Martin Luther King, Jr.

Student choice

Fiction – short stories (3)

“The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids,” by Herman Melville

“The Tell-Tale Heart,” by Edgar Allan Poe

“Cannibalism in the Cars,” by Samuel Clemens

“A White Heron,” by Sara Orne Jewett

Student choice

Poetry – Edgar Allan Poe, Emily Dickinson, Walt Whitman, Allen Ginsberg

The Harlem Renaissance

Units and curriculum - American Literature B

The Harlem Renaissance

Drama – *Death of a Salesman*, by Arthur Miller (1)

“Two Kinds,” by Amy Tan

Fiction – *The Color Purple*, by Alice Walker (2)

for colored girls who have considered suicide / when the rainbow is enuf, by Ntozake Shange

Fiction – *The Bell Jar*, by Sylvia Plath; *The Great Gatsby*, by F. Scott Fitzgerald; *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest*, by Ken Kesey (student choice) – (3)

Fiction – short stories

“A Clean, Well-Lighted Place,” by Ernest Hemingway

Drown, by Junot Diaz

Student choice

Poetry – Robert Frost, E.E. Cummings, William Carlos Williams, Sylvia Plath, Joy Harjo

A formal writing task will be connected to each of the three main units (1-3). For each unit, students will choose which mode to write in: expository essay, argumentative essay, or narrative. Students must write in each of the three modes. Prompts will be provided.

Grading

50% - Assignments – reading packets, outlines and rough drafts, etc.

25% - Assessments – tests and quizzes

25% - Formal Writing Tasks – final drafts - Expository essay, Argumentative essay, Narrative

Grades will be determined using a standard point system and letter grades tied to the following percentages: A = 90-100%, B = 80-89%, C = 70-79%, D = 60-69%, F = 59% or less.

Appropriate modifications and accommodations will be made for identified special needs.

All work should be turned in on time, unless it is due to an excused absence, in which case it must be made up promptly according to the student handbook. Missing work will be entered as zero points. Late work may or may not be accepted, at the discretion of Mr. Cantwell. Do not expect late work to be graded in a timely manner; late work gets graded late! Plagiarism (the use of another person's work, ideas, or wording without attribution) will result in loss of points and possible disciplinary action. Do your own work!

I will post grades on StudentVue/ParentVue every week or two. I maintain a class website that I update on Mondays with my best guess for the week. Since things change depending on student progress, a daily agenda will be recorded on the front white board. The "A. Lit - Links" page of my website will have relevant links and printable versions of important handouts. Here is my site, which is linked from the bottom of the SEHS homepage: <http://blogs.4j.lane.edu/cantwell/>.

Classroom Expectations

- Be on time – in your seat and ready to work when the bell rings
- Be prepared – organized binder, completed work, writing tools, reading text
- Be on task – independently or when contributing to group and class discussions
- Be nice – The Platinum Rule: do unto others as they would have you do unto them
- Put away and silence your electronic devices – unless you have specific permission

Another way of looking at it:

- Does what I'm doing help or hinder my learning?
- Does what I'm doing help or hinder other students' learning?
- Does what I'm doing help or hinder the teacher's ability to teach?

Consequences for not following classroom expectations will be based on frequency and severity and may include verbal warning, time out of the room, detention, parent contact, referral to counselor and/or office, and report card comments. Cell phones must be put away or lodged in my "Cell Hotel." Phones out without permission will be confiscated for the period or the day. This is the language from this year's Student/Parent Handbook: "Cellular phones must be turned off and out of sight during class unless otherwise specified by teacher policy, or they may be confiscated by staff members and held until the end of the school day."

I look forward to working with you!

Parents and guardians, today I sent you an e-mail using our district communication system, so if you didn't receive that, we'll need to get it straightened out through the front office. If you have any questions or concerns, please e-mail (cantwell@4j.lane.edu). I can be reached by phone (541-790-8038) and in person before or after school on most days. Please sign below.

Student signature: _____

Parent/Guardian signature: _____