

Mrs. Helzer
Room 116

English 12 Syllabus 2009-2010

This document will provide you with a description of the course, an outline of what we will be studying throughout the year, as well as my expectations and policies. I highly recommend that you keep this document until the end of the school year.

Course Description:

This semester long course will prepare students for introductory-level college composition courses. Our time will be spent on composition with the second/fourth quarter being designated for the research paper/presentation.

Basically, in this course you should expect to write quite frequently. Before groaning too loudly, please know that I will try my hardest to engage you in every activity and I will have a purpose behind everything we learn.

The way we go about learning in this class may be different than what you are accustomed to. You will need to be an active participator in class, in order to emphasize this I have come up with a variety of methods we will be using:

1. **Cooperative learning:** Working cooperatively with others in order to accomplish certain tasks. I would like us to be more of a team than a class, and I would like to be more of a coach than a teacher. Be prepared to work with others!
2. **The incorporation of technology:** We will frequently use the electronic whiteboard board, our laptops, the Nebraska Writing Project writing forum, podcasting, blogging, and a variety of websites as learning tools.
3. **An emphasis on social action/community involvement:** We are going to take our language and communication skills into the community. This may come in a variety of forms: using our voices (in writing and/or public speaking) to address a school/community issue that the class is concerned with and/or putting on events that bring literature/writing to the community (poetry performances, book clubs, writing nights, etc.) are just a few ideas.
4. **Critical thinking:** You will be asked to really think about the literature we read by applying it to your own lives. Our key question when studying literature will be: how does this relate to our society?

Course Topics:

Areas of study will be (but are not limited to):

1. **Necessary grammar in conjunction with writing**
2. **Writing skills with a focus on the 6 Traits of Writing**
 - a. Journal writing
 - b. Blogging

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- c. The writing process (pre-writing, writing, revising, editing, peer-editing, etc)
- d. Review of the 6 Traits
- e. Personal narrative
- f. MLA citations
- g. Persuasive
- h. Informative
- i. Research based writing (We will read excerpts from Fast Food Nation and will watch the film "Supersize Me" when preparing for this project)
- j. Reflection pieces
- k. Inquiry notebooks (thanks to a grant from UNL)

3. Practical writing

- a. Resume creation
- b. Scholarship essays/applications

4. Writing with technology

- a. Each student will create his/her own blog as a way to communicate his/her thoughts and publish his/her writing.
- b. We will experiment with podcasting as a way to publish our writing and study the transformation that occurs from the written to the spoken word.
- c. We will use Google Docs as a storage device as well as to share writing with classmates and/or other Nebraska students.

5. Speaking skills

- a. Oral presentations on literature, grammar, writing, etc.

What to Bring to Class Each Day

- 1. Writing utensil
- 2. Your laptop (charged!)
- 3. Notebook
- 4. 3-ring binder to keep notes, graded assignments and handouts (I would recommend that this be only your English binder and that you would organize it with dividers)
- 5. Book

Classroom Rules

- 1. Respect yourself, others, and the classroom.
- 2. Be responsible for your own learning.
- 3. Abide by all school handbook rules/policies.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is considered to be academic dishonesty and occurs when a person uses someone else's work and claims it as his/her own. When using someone else's words, information, or ideas, you MUST give credit to the author using the Modern Language Association (MLA) format (unless otherwise noted). During the first semester of English 12 and continued into the second semester,

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you will be extensively educated on plagiarism (what it is, avoiding it, paraphrasing, source citations, etc.). You will be provided with all of the necessary materials and education to avoid this act of academic dishonesty.

It is very easy for me to notice plagiarism. Scholastic dishonesty is a violation of the code of conduct and results in suspension. Please refer to our school's policy on what is considered fair use.

OHS Internet Safety & Copyright and Fair Use Policy

See pages 37-43 in the school handbook.

Computer Use

During this course, you will be expected to use computers frequently. I will provide some time for you to work in class when use of the internet is necessary. However, work on your own time is expected. If you do not have access to the internet, please plan accordingly.

If you are caught using non-curricular social networking websites (facebook, myspace, hotmail, etc) in class, you will lose computer privileges for the day. If you are caught more than once, you will be sent to the principal.

Assignments

All assignments must be turned in. However, I will not give a grade for every assignment. Only two or three assignments a week will be assigned a grade on Infinite Campus. The remaining assignments will receive a + if it is finished or a - if it is unfinished. I will keep track of these on a spreadsheet and will be happy to share this with parents/guardians and students upon request. If students receive a - sign at any time during the semester they will **NOT** be eligible to receive any extra credit.

All assignments without names will receive a zero or a -!

Grading

I use a point system for grades. This means your grade will be determined by how many points you earn out of the total points possible.

To pass, you must receive a 70% for the semester. The semester grade is an average of the previous two quarters. Semester two will start with a clean slate. Grades will include (but will not be limited to): tests, quizzes, projects, discussions, papers/essays, journals, daily assignments, pop quizzes, speeches, posters, etc. I will occasionally take a participation grade. However, I expect every student to contribute to class discussions. The breadth of the individual assignment will determine the point value of each of these assignments.

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Late work

If an assignment is late, I will deduct 25% for each day it is late. This means that students have one day to get a passing grade on an assignment and three days before it is counted as a zero.

Makeup Policy

If students know in advanced of an absence (games, competitions, doctors appointments, etc), all work must be completed and turned in **PRIOR** to the student leaving. If a student is gone without prior notice (illness, family emergency, etc), he/she will be given two school days for each day of absence to complete the work. If you have any questions regarding this policy, please contact me.

I will also fill out a make-up form for each student that is missing. It is your responsibility to pick it up from the metal basket and follow all the directions.

Extra Credit

I am not an advocate of extra credit. However, I may offer extra-credit from time to time based upon the situation. I will **NOT** offer or accept extra-credit at the end of a grading term.

Extra Help

If you need extra help for any reasons, please come and see me. There are some times where I cannot sense if you are struggling. Please take the initiative to come in for help.

If you are struggling with an assignment, please do not come to me at the beginning of the class to tell me you didn't understand the assignment, so you didn't do it. A better and more productive option would be to come in and discuss this with me **PRIOR** to class. Be prepared for class when the bell rings!