English IV Creative Writing Syllabus

Mrs. Davis  Room V-1

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Course Description

**Course Overview:**

English IV Creative Writing is a yearlong course for seniors who wish to a) engage in creative self-expression through writing, and b) cultivate the habits, attitudes, and flexibility of a professional writer in a collaborative writing community. You will engage in the exploration of classic and contemporary literary works in order to gain an appreciation for the work itself and for the writer's craft. Models of literature will form the basis for lessons on elements such as diction, detail, characterization, and imagery. Emphasis is placed on effective pre-writing techniques, writing for a variety of purposes and audiences, and developing a personal style. You will engage in the process of workshop, which includes brainstorming, pre-writing, multiple drafts, peer editing, and publishing. You will present your own work individually and in groups. You will write daily, keep a journal, and participate in readings of your work.

**Course Content:**

English IV Creative Writing is organized by genre into eight (8) units of study:

**UNIT 1: Introduction to Creative Writing / Journaling**

Students will discover their own voices while reading and reflecting on the ideas and experiences of other writers. This unit lays the groundwork for students to develop trust in themselves and in their peers as vital and actively engaged members of a writing community.

**UNIT 2: Memoir**

Students will learn how writers tap into their own memories, and emotions about those memories, to create meaningful and engaging narrative portraits of their own lives.

**UNIT 3: Poetry**

The unit will begin with, and be infused with, wide reading of a variety of poems from various time periods and cultures, chosen for how they illustrate specific poetic devices and elements, and for how the poet finds language to convey complex thoughts and feelings that illuminate the human experience. These poems will serve as models for our own poetry writing.

**UNIT 4: Short Story**

Students will study the works of master short story writers while engaging in lessons and activities in characterization, dialogue, plot development, and structure. Included in this unit is a discussion/review of grammar rules that can and should be broken in fiction writing.

**UNIT 5: Travel Writing**

Students will study elements of structure, dialogue, descriptive language, detail, and tone in the works of successful travel writers. They will conduct research, take field notes, and examine some of the challenges and ethical questions that face travel writers.

**UNIT 6: Playwriting**

Students create an original story with believable characters and dialogue by collaboratively writing and revising an original one-act play. Prior to beginning the creative part of this unit, students will read and analyze *Macbeth.*

**UNIT 7: Writing for Children**

Students will reflect on stylistic and content elements of a favorite children's book (for ages 5-8). Nonfiction articles will expand their awareness of and appreciation for children's emotional and intellectual development and will guide creation of a story designed to provide children with enjoyment and learning. Students will produce an illustrated story for children in book format.

**UNIT 8: Documented Critical Essay (DCE)**

Students will read two novels by the same author and write both a character essay and an influence essay, incorporating database research of literary criticism, incorporation of expert voices, and proper citation of sources.

**THROUGHOUT THE FALL SEMESTER: Personal journal writing & college essay practice**

**Major Texts:**

*On Writing* Stephen King

*Persepolis* Marjane Satrapi

*Macbeth* William Shakespeare

Class Expectations and Guidelines

**Expectations:**

* Your active engagement, and your willingness to be fully present and open to new ideas, and your commitment to occasionally stepping outside your comfort zone, will enable you to grow as a writer.
* Participation is essential; this includes completing all assignments, forming thoughtful responses and opinions, and speaking out in class. You are encouraged to hold and express confident opinions, but please maintain a respectful manner at all times. You will be expected to share your work, accept feedback on your work, and provide feedback to other writers.
* You will read every short story, poem, article, play, or novel assigned. Reading the works of great writers is the key to becoming one yourself.

**Suggested Materials:**

* One 2-inch binder
* 8 dividers
* Loose-leaf binder paper (no jagged edges)
* Writer's notebook (journal style of your choice)
* Laptop

**Attendance:**

* Students should be in their seats and ready to work when the bell rings, or they will be marked tardy. Six (6) tardies or three (3) unexcused absences will result in a student being dropped from the class with a failing grade.

**Grades:**

* Writing, Reading, Vocabulary & Grammar 80%
* Speaking and Listening 20%

Grades will be assigned as follows: A 100-93, A- 92.99-90, B+ 89.99-88, B 87.99-83, B- 82.99-80, C+ 79.99-78, C 77.99-73, C 72.99-70, D+ 69.99-68, D 67.99-63, D- 62.99-60, F 59.99-0. *It is an Agoura English Department policy not to round up grades.*

**Make-up Policy:**

* Students will have **one week** after they return to school after an **excused** absence to make up any missed work including homework, quizzes, and in-class assignments.
* For any reason other than an excused absence, or if you are not absent but fail to turn in homework, work may be turned in the following day at Support for **half credit**. Work turned in more than one day late will receive no credit. *Deadlines are a normal and necessary component of scholarly and artistic production.*
* Be sure to check my website, contact a classmate, and/or see me at Support period immediately after you return from an absence so you know what you have missed. *Do not—if you miss class—ask me if you missed anything*. Come to Support Period for materials and instruction. Do not bypass Support and come to class with the expectation that I can bring you up to date with what you missed while I am actively engaged in conducting the current class. You will not receive the attention you need at such a time.

**Academic Honesty:**

* Cheating of any kind will not be tolerated. Cheating includes, but is not limited to: copying or looking at another student’s paper during a test or quiz, talking during a test, having information that is being tested visible during a test or quiz, copying another student’s homework, and plagiarism. Cheating will result in a zero on the assignment and referral for violation of Agoura High School’s academic honesty policy.
* Plagiarism will be discussed extensively in class, and the consequences of violating the policy will be explained verbally and in writing. You will receive a copy of this policy for your signature and that of your parents.

**Electronics:**

* Cell phones should be OFF and put away. Cell phone usage is a way to disengage from class, and in this class we are committed to being ALL IN. Please alert family and friends that you will not read or respond to texts during class time. Phones used in class without permission will be confiscated and taken to the attendance office, where they may be retrieved at the end of the day.
* Earphones should be stowed during class. We may listen to music as a whole group at times while engaged in pondering and writing.
* Please have a fully charged laptop ready to use in class every day. Most assignments will be assigned and submitted through Google Classroom.

**Communication:**

* Finally, please come see me about any class issue or if you just want to talk. My door is (almost) always open for students at lunch and often after school. My prep period is Period 6, and my email address is pdavis@lvusd.org.
* I look forward to getting to know you this year as writers and as unique individuals. Everyone has a story; what’s yours? ☺