



Phillip O. Berry Academy

OFFICE HOURS: Tues/Thurs from
2:30pm – 3:30pm

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Course Introduction and Overview

What is English II...?

English II is a preparation class for college entrance exams and collegiate level writing. The course is also designed to prepare you for the writing component of the ACT/SAT, the Graduation Research Paper, and AP Language (should you decide to pursue the course).

Throughout the semester, you will study world literature, reading and analyzing both fiction and non-fiction pieces. Throughout our study of English II, you will compare/contrast the ways in which different cultures communicate, you will consider the various issues that may cause conflict within a culture, and above all, you will use world literature as a cultural lens through which you may consider the diversity and complexity of world issues – connecting global ideas and concerns to your own personal experiences. Each of you should, therefore, have high expectations regarding in-class discussions, your engagement of literature, and the overall improvement of your writing technique and ability.

Learning with the End in Sight...

The three purposes of English II:

- Improve and refine your ability to write comfortably, confidently, and competently in both formal and informal formats, using the full array of language resources: appropriate syntax, diction, tone, and other rhetorical strategies.
- Improve and refine your ability to read, analyze, interpret, and evaluate poetry and prose.
- Prepare you to compete and excel in both college and the workforce.

The English II Resume of Goals...

Throughout the course, emphasis is placed on helping you mature in your reading, writing, and communication skills, which is characterized by the following:

- analyzing and evaluating fiction, non-fiction, and visual text.
- synthesizing information from different sources in order to explore and explain principles at work in life and literature
- critiquing texts from various perspectives and approaches
- exploring a deeper understanding of world literature through extended engagement of texts
- applying conventions of grammar and language usage during the writing process

Supplies You Will Need to Succeed...

Please bring the following supplies to class:

- Paper and pencil/pen
- Highlighter(s)
- Optional: Binder (1" or 2")
- Optional: Binder Dividers

Specific Methods and Objectives

The Process of Putting it in Print...

People write in order to communicate, and the better a person writes, the more effective he or she is at conveying a message. In an age of digital media, this is extremely important. The following methods and objectives are designed to ensure that you improve in both the complexity of your thinking and writing:

- use the different stages of the writing process and become adept at the entire process necessary for creating a quality essay
- learn to craft a strong thesis and to effectively organize your ideas and paragraphs in order to support a thesis
- write in a variety of formats: formal papers, informal writing, imitation exercises, journal keeping, annotated notes, blogs, portfolios, etc.
- study style and grammar so that your writing continues to develop in its complexity
- write for different purposes: to explore, explain, or evaluate your ideas and your writing as well as the public ideas and writing of other authors
- write several drafts for an essay in order to appreciate the nuances of language and composition
- use rubrics and the feedback from both your peers and the teacher in order to assess your strengths, weaknesses, skills, and improvement

What You See Determines What You Get...

It is important to remember that people read in order to gain knowledge and to glean a greater glimpse of life. That knowledge or glimpse may only provide amusement, or it may result in a more provocative consideration of the human condition, and it may even shock people into social action as it reveals a need or an injustice. Literature, poetry, and non-fiction thus liberate people from their chaotic routines by amplifying the themes of life, allowing them to embrace and enjoy their humanity. To this end, how a person sees (pre)determines what that person may see, impacting that person's reading (and life). The following methods and objectives are designed so that you can navigate the ambiguity of language and read critically in order to excavate meaning from a text.

- learn and discuss various theories, concepts, and strategies in order to accurately and precisely interpret fiction, drama, and poetry
- study the meta-language of imaginative fiction and rhetoric
- study the use of language in different settings and situations in order to consider the meaning of an imaginative piece of fiction or its affect upon the reader
- read from a wide range of topics
- learn to scrutinize an author's writing to discover its meaning and the message(s) behind the text

English Standards and Expectations

Going the Distance...

Expect the following:

- Expect to write everyday – essays, drafts, blogs, journals, annotations, self-reflection, poetry responses, evaluations, arguments, interpretations, etc.
- Expect to write in different modes and for a variety of purposes.
- Expect to revise your writing through several drafts.
- Expect to read every night.
- Expect to discuss all outside reading during class.
- Expect to meet due dates.
- Expect to eliminate digital distractions during class.
- Expect to have fun. This is sure to be a rewarding experience.

What is in a Grade...?

The grading policy is as follows:

Grades will be weighted as follows:

Formal Grade – Tests & Projects.....	70%
Informal Grade – Homework/Classwork...	30%
Midterm – First Quarter.....	20%
Final Exam – Semester One & Two	20%

Grades will be scored as follows:

A	100 - 90
B	89 - 80
C	79 - 70
D	69 - 60
F	59 - 0

Zero Tolerance: *Plagiarism/cheating will result in a zero (makeup opportunity will not exceed a 50%).*

Measurement Methods...

Various assessment techniques and strategies will be utilized in class such as group participation, homework, quizzes, tests, projects, e-learning, and quarterly tests.

A Little Note about Work and Responsibility...

It is not possible to learn and master the material if you are unwilling to meet due dates. The following policy will therefore be enforced concerning late work:

- **All work is due by the beginning of class.**
- **All late work will be penalized per the school policy.**
- **All assignments late by greater than ten school days will not receive greater than a five percent.**
- In the rare occasion of **your absence, you are responsible to follow up** with me, a friend, or on-line in order to learn what important material was covered and what work was assigned.
- If you miss any warm up activity at the beginning of class due to **being tardy, you will be responsible to make up that work** within five school days or receive a zero for that assignment.

Grading the Essay...

Essays will be graded via the following rubric and 9 point scale:

The A paper is a SUPERIOR paper in every way, marked by the following traits [9 – 8]

- Outstanding word choice
- Outstanding organization
- Outstanding syntax with a wide variety of sentence patterns
- Maturity of thought and language
- Clear purpose with detailed development, supported by examples, quotations, and indirect references
- No major errors in grammar, spelling or punctuation

The B paper is an EXCELLENT paper, marked by the following traits [7 – 6]

- Good word choice, sentence structure, organization
- Good maturity of thought and logic
- A stated purpose with less development, examples, and details, lacking the more mature style of the superior paper
- No major errors in grammar, spelling, or punctuation

The C paper is an AVERAGE paper, marked by the following traits [5]

- Average word choice, often simple, immature, inappropriate
- Adequate organization
- Good sentence structure but often simple and without variety
- Fair logic, clear enough to convey the paper's purpose
- Average maturity of thought but lacks adequate development
- A couple major errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation and/or several minor errors

The D paper is a BELOW AVERAGE paper, marked by the following traits [4 – 3]

- Poor diction, misuse of words, nonstandard expressions
- Some attempt at organization
- Garbled, fragmented, or unclear sentence patterns
- Little thought, resulting in poorly conceived, expressed, and developed ideas
- Various major errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation, mechanics and/or multiple minor errors

The F paper is a FAILURE, marked by the following traits [2 – 1]

- Poor and immature word choice
- Lack of organization
- Disconnected or garbled syntax
- Long, uncontrolled, short, or choppy sentence patterns
- Lack of logic which fails to conceive, state, or develop an idea
- Multiple major/minor errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation, and mechanics.

Note: Major errors consist of the following –

- Comma splices
- Lack of subject verb agreement
- Lack of pronoun antecedent agreement
- Unjustifiable fragment
- Run-on sentences
- Misuse of to, too; their, there; it's, its
- Misspelled words
- Misuse of punctuation

Year at a Glance

Topics and Timeline...

Semester One

- Goal 1: Essay Composition [U.6]
- Goal 2: Literary Elements [U.1-4]
- Goal 3: The Author’s Craft [U.5-6,8]
- The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks – Skloot
- When the Emperor was Divine – Otsuka

Semester Two

- Goal 4: World Classics [U.11]
- Goal 6: Research Project [U.12]
- Julius Caesar – Shakespeare
- Antigone – Sophocles

Important Policies

Time Plus Instruction Equals Learning...

Tardies hinder the entire classroom (not just the late student) because a consistently late student interrupts everyone’s time, instruction, and learning. The following policy will be enforced with reference to tardies:

- The first time is a warning.
- The second time is a call home.
- The third time is a class consequence.
- The fourth and all subsequent times are referrals to administration.

Final Thoughts

One of Your Biggest Fans...

I found myself wondering many times in college “why didn’t I learn that in high school?” Your experience in this class is sure to challenge you with new ways of reading texts, seeing life, and expressing yourself; many times you may even ask, “Why didn’t I learn that before?” As you wrestle with this question, I will help you move through a process of adopt, adapt, and adept: adopting reliable writing practices and styles, adapting them to your personality and tastes, and becoming adept at new techniques for reading and writing about literature and non-fiction prose.

Remember that the curriculum is designed to be more than just the study of world literature; it is also created to have application for today, enabling you to more fully understand yourself in the larger context of the world, and because my desire is to engage your mind in the larger context of the world, be prepared to appropriately consider and maul over difficult ideas, concepts, struggles, and realities.

Please know that *the syllabus is not written in stone*. I will be assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the class as the year progresses, and **I will adjust the curriculum, without compromising the class standards or expectations, in order to ensure all students are learning at their best.**

Above all, I am one of your biggest fans. I am fanatical about your success, and your growth as a person is equally as important as your grade in this class. Be prepared for the challenge and enjoy your learning amidst your full schedule.

I look forward to our year together.

Sincerely and Respectfully,

Patrick C. Ames
World Literature Educator