

## English IV Honors

### Course Description

In English IV Honors, students explore a variety of themes from modern literature, including varied perspectives on discerning wisdom, discovering truth, and developing the self. Students develop their ability to read complex texts closely and deeply, analyzing themes and author's craft. Throughout the course, students are encouraged to share ideas and insights through narrative and creative works, expanding their writing skills by emulating the authors' styles studied through their readings. Students also compose and revise a variety of informative essays, beginning with the college admissions essay. As the year progresses, students hone their abilities to write varied, insightful compositions, including literary analyses and researched arguments. All student work is expected to incorporate the fundamentals of academic writing, including proper citation and attribution. At the honors level, students are required to read and analyze literary works independently and to engage in meaningful and prepared discourse in the classroom setting. Our study of literature provides a framework for guiding students to develop a compassionate understanding that will help guide their lives and help them positively influence the lives of others through a willingness to serve and make personal sacrifices for the betterment of their communities and families. In alignment with the school's *Portrait of the Crusader*, students learn to follow a moral compass rooted in respect, integrity, hope, and kindness. Students will practice respect for the beliefs of others, learn to value the uniqueness of every human being, and learn to advocate for justice.

### Essential Questions for the Course

#### Literature

- What techniques do authors use to create compelling stories and memoirs?
- How do authors use a variety of genres--poems, plays, memoirs--to share their insights?
- Why do written dialogues, letters and essays remain staples of thought and discourse?

#### Language

- What techniques do writers use to increase their clarity and persuasiveness?
- How do words transcend their literal definitions to convey deeper connotations and associations?
- How can we use language to create and convey a sense of self?

#### Life

- How does one develop a sense of self through experience, introspection and reflective writing?
- Why do we seek wisdom from the experiences of others?
- How can we use morality and wisdom to create a safe and loving home?

## Course Curriculum

### Unit 1 - Informed Perspectives

The study of well crafted memoirs and essays offers us inspiring examples to emulate when gaining perspective on our own lives through reflective writing. In this unit, students analyze memoirs and narratives that emphasize how personal experiences inform critical perspectives on our world. Students will read informative essays on the process of writing and its role as an important step on the journey to higher education. These readings will provide students exemplary models for their own narrative compositions, most notably, their college admissions and scholarship essays. Students will reflect on their own experiences from the perspective of a writer seeking to create a cohesive progression of experiences or events and elucidate its significance in their ongoing personal development.

#### Reading Prose

Reserved Reading Options: Born a Crime by Trevor Noah; “The Most Important Day,” Keller, Helen; “A View from the Bridge,” McDonald. “The Unforgettable Miss Bessie,” Rowan.

#### Skills:

- Read and analyze literary fiction and nonfiction for meaning and authors’ craft.
- Determine an author's point of view and the implicit purpose of a text.
- Analyze the author’s stylistic choices, especially where the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness, or beauty of the text.
- Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account (e.g., Noah’s critique of apartheid and lauding of the power of his mother’s faith.)

#### Reading For Information

Reserved Reading Options: “Be Specific,” Goldberg, Natlalie. “The Principles of Poor Writing,” Merrill, Paul. “Let’s Think Outside the Box of Bad Cliches,” Pence, Gregory; “Simplicity,” Zinsser, William; Selections from College Admissions Essays that Made a Difference. “The Creativity Crisis” Bronson & Merryman; “Slackers Beware,” Papano, Laura.

#### Skills:

- Learn and apply reading strategies to nonfiction texts in order to learn independently.
- Acquire and accurately use academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge.
- Consult general and specialized reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries), both print and digital, to determine or clarify precise meanings, parts of speech, etymology, and standard usage.
- Identify key concepts and strategies to apply to personal writing. Revise and edit work using these concepts and strategies to guide the review process. Acquire and accurately use general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

- Consult general and specialized reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning, its part of speech, its etymology, or its standard usage.

### Writing

#### Skills:

- Write routinely over extended time frames for reflection and revision and shorter time frames for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.
- Maintain a consistent point of view and appropriate verb tense when writing.
- Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation and its significance.
- Create a smooth progression of experiences or events.
- Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).
- Write a well-crafted college admission or scholarship essay.

### Summative Assessments

- **Short literary analysis** of works read in the unit.
- **Narrative essay** appropriate to the standards of a college admissions or scholarship essay.

### **Unit 2: Homeward Bound**

In this unit, students will observe the significance of literary representations of the home for families and for individuals. This unit foreshadows the “Weight of Expectations” unit, by presenting the complexity of balancing one’s obligations to their family while also remaining true to their own personal development. Students will be invited to analyze how social and economic conditions create tensions in people’s lives, and also observe how writers present the role of education in transcending these apparent limitations.

### Reading Fictional Prose and Drama

Reserved Reading Options: The House on Mango Street, Cisneros. A Room of One’s Own, Woolf, Virginia; Raisin in the Sun, Hansberry; The Glass Menagerie, Williams, Tennessee; “The Barrio” Ramirez, Robert; “On Being 17, Bright, and Unable to Read,” Raymond, David;

#### Skills:

- Explore the strengths and uniqueness of each literary genre.
- Determine how setting and point of view shape the work.
- Delineate the narrative arc and analyze how the author reveals plot and conflict to engage the reader.
- Analyze the motivations/choices of main characters and trace how these characters develop over the course of the text. Recognize characters as round, flat, static or dynamic.
- Determine how literary elements combine in the text to illustrate the theme.
- Discuss how specific literary works portray the complexity of balancing one’s obligations to their family while remaining true to their own personal development.
- Interpret literary devices and evaluate how they enhance the text.
- Compare and contrast the writing styles of two or more authors.
- Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama.

### Reading Nonfictional Prose

Reserved Reading Options: “Black Men and Public Space” Staples, Brent; “You are What You Search,” Boutin, Paul. “Friends, Good Friends--and Such Good Friends,” Viorst, Judith; “My Name,” Cisneros. “The Corner Store,” Welty, Eudora. “My Favorite Teacher” Friedman, Thomas L.; “Of My Friend Hector and My Achilles Heel,” Kaufman, Michael T.; “A House of My Own” Cisneros, Sandra.

#### Skills:

- Use informative text to expand interpretations of a literary work, citing specific evidence.
- Determine the author's thesis (main idea) and supporting evidence.
- Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
- Recognize the components of the author's style: word choice, sentence structure, and text structure in order to convey ideas and use this information to enhance comprehension.
- Determine the primary theme(s) of each work and trace the development of theme(s) and character over the course of the text.

### Reading Poetry

Poetry: (Select modern poems that complement readings of prose and drama)

#### Skills:

- Explore the characteristics, forms, and themes of modern poems.
- Read and analyze poetry for narrative voice, meaning, and development of theme throughout the poem.
- Interpret the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on mood and tone, including language that is particularly engaging or beautiful.
- Recognize and analyze literary devices that enhance the impact of the poems.
- Recognize sound devices and evaluate how these impact the reader/listener.

### Writing

#### Skills:

- Write well-structured responses and analyses of the literary works studied in the unit.
- Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products in response to ongoing feedback, including new arguments or information.
- Vary syntax for effect, consulting references (e.g., Tufte's *Artful Sentences*) for writing guidance as needed.
- Use appropriate and varied transitions and syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.

### Summative Assessments

- **Written assessment** on literary works read in the unit.
- **Cross-textual literary analysis:** timed, in-class writing.

### Unit 3: The Weight of Expectations

In this unit, students will continue to read literary works centered in the home and the family, and analyze how author's use characters and events to convey themes of the pressures of unbridled expectations--within the family and within the self. Students will read various essays that explore these topics, including essays of literary criticism. Students will compare and contrast their literary readings and compose a work of literary analysis that includes the cited use of literary criticism and the literary works themselves.

#### Reading Fictional Prose and Drama

Reserved Reading Options: The Metamorphosis, Kafka ; "Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Eachother," Turkle, Sherry; "The Company Man" Goodman, Ellen; "The Magic of the Family Meal" Gibbs, Nancy; "Death of a Salesman," Bernofsky, Susan; Death of a Salesman, Miller, Arthur.

#### Skills:

- Trace the narrative arc and identify linear, parallel, and flashback plot lines.
- Analyze the motivations and choices of main characters and how these characters develop over the course of the text.
- Analyze a case in which grasping a point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., sarcasm, irony, or understatement).
- Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., The choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.
- Analyze literary elements that are unique to drama. Recognize dramatic irony and analyze its impact on the audience.

#### Reading Poetry (Select modern poems that complement *The Metamorphosis*)

#### Skills:

- Interpret meaning and explore themes of specific poems.
- Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on mood and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful.
- Recognize poetic forms and sound devices. (e.g., stanza-breaks, line-breaks, alliteration, assonance, rhyme.)
- Recognize and analyze literary devices that enhance the impact of the poems.

#### Writing

#### Skills:

- Write short analytical responses to support critical evaluation of texts.
- Write a creative literary work to illustrate a specific theme which follows the conventions of the genre.
- Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.
- Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.
- Incorporate the fundamentals of academic writing, including proper citation and attribution.

## Summative Assessment

- **Original Creative Work** - create of a work of literature (drama/poem/story) that explores a topic and theme of student interest and follows the conventions of its genre.

## **Unit 4 - Education of the Self**

Formal education, with its many teachers and mentors, cannot supersede the active role of the learner in their development. In this unit, students will be introduced to characters and concepts that promote the importance of developing the independence to break boundaries and teach themselves through conducting research, through learning from new perspectives and new experiences. While continuing to read literary works that embody this theme, students will choose a topic of interest for their own research in order to compose an informative work that synthesizes sources into a cohesive presentation of their informed perspective. Students will be encouraged to choose from topics across and beyond the curriculum of their high school experience. Students will also draw from their narrative writings throughout the year to compose a senior retrospective that reflects on what they have learned through their academic and personal experiences.

## Reading Fictional Prose and Poetry

Reserved Reading Options: Siddhartha, Hesse, Herman; *The Allegory of the Cave*, Plato; "The Lesson," Bambara, Toni Cade; "The Soul Selects," Dickinson, Emily; selections from *The Tao Te Ching*)

### Skills:

- Interpret literary elements while reading; trace the narrative arc of the text; determine how setting and point of view shape the text; analyze conflict and character development.
- Examine how each text explores themes of self-awareness and self-development.
- Define and analyze the components of the author's style: word choice, sentence structure and arrangement, effective use of descriptive techniques and other literary devices.
- Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).
- Interpret literary devices: allusion, foreshadowing, symbolism, irony, mood, tone, figurative language, metaphor, simile, personification, hyperbole.
- Determine the central themes of specific poems and relate to other works of literature and themes explored in the unit.

## Reading and Listening For Information

### Skills:

- Read articles of known authorship from journals and periodicals on students' chosen topics. Determine main and supporting ideas; synthesize information across texts.

## Writing

### Skills:

- Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the task, purpose, and audience; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and overreliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation.

- Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
- Write a well-structured research-based essay to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
- Incorporate the fundamentals of academic writing, including proper citation and attribution.

### Summative Assessment

- **Argumentative Research Essay** - A well-structured researched argument using purposeful rhetorical strategies to persuade the reader. Topics will be selected by students as the unit progresses. MLA format.

### **Unit 5 - Dreams and Delusions**

The literary critic Harold Bloom made the bold claim that William Shakespeare invented our modern day concept of the human being. In this unit, students explore the poems and plays of Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, in particular, to inform their observations and beliefs about the existential nature of the human condition, psychology and spirituality. From a skills perspective, students learn and interpret the elements of drama and poetry. Later in the unit, students experience the writings of Miguel de Cervantes, the author of *Don Quixote*, a novel that is widely viewed as the first modern novel. Here, students study Cervante's use of characters to act as literary critics, philosophers, theologians and poets, and they compare the mindsets and spirituality of the characters *Don Quixote* and *Hamlet* to discover how the authors illustrate the nature of being.

### Reading Drama, Fictional Prose and Poetry

Reserved Reading Options: Hamlet, Shakespeare, William; Don Quixote, de Cervante, Miguel; select poems from Shakespeare.

#### Skills:

- Analyze how literary elements interact to engage the reader and illustrate character and theme.
- Examine how each text explores the human condition.
- Define and analyze the components of the author's style: word choice, sentence structure and arrangement, effective use of descriptive techniques, and literary devices.
- Interpret literary devices and evaluate author's craft.
- Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).
- Read and interpret the poetry of Shakespeare. Determine the central themes of specific poems and relate to other works of literature and themes explored in the unit.

### Writing

#### Skills:

- Write a literary analysis to support an original claim, using purposeful structure, relevant evidence, and valid reasoning. Draw evidence from literary and informational texts to support individual analysis and reflection. Use accurate MLA format.

- Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.
- Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.
- Incorporate the fundamentals of academic writing, including proper citation and attribution.

### Summative Assessment

- **Literary analysis** using literary works studied in the unit and scholarly literary criticism.
- **Senior Retrospective:** a portfolio of original works that includes reflective pieces on the students' experiences.

### **Grading Practices - Percentage Breakdown of Assessments:**

#### **I - Mastery/Summative Assessments (40%)**

- Essays and Original Writing
- Tests
- Projects and Presentations

#### **II - Formative Assessments (40%)**

- Reading quizzes focused on close reading and literary engagement
- Reading responses written, peer-reviewed, and presented
- Annotations, notes, and independent preparation
- In-class and homework writing assignments
- Independent, focused research assignments

#### **III - Engagement/Participation (20%)**

- In-class discussion and discussion board participation
- Active engagement in one-on-one meetings as a means of seeking additional feedback
- Displaying the engagement and awareness to ask questions
- Respectful consideration of all ideas.
- Understanding the classroom setting as a place of scholarly discourse and engagement.
- Self-advocacy.