

Senior English - Course Syllabus

COURSE OVERVIEW:

The class will be taught in Open-Ended Seminar style; I practice student-centered classrooms, and I will be doing much “Teaching With My Mouth Shut,” utilizing small discussion groups, prompting you into research and analysis, pressing you to discover your own Essential Questions (based on the **Big Questions** provided in class) that will personalize your study and create a foundation for future learning. On a personal level, you will be doing regular reading and writing in response to the literature you explore, to be evaluated and revised according to the writing principles we learn in class.

In the end, you will have gained sophisticated interpretation and communication skills that will prepare you for future academic rigors and help you become more intentional and thoughtful about the world around you, the true goal of all education.

GRADING:

Your FINAL GRADE will be a product of:

- Classroom Participation/Inquiry/Discussion –40%
- Writing (Papers) -- 30%
- Tests and Quizzes –20%
- Portfolio – 10%

DAILY ASSIGNMENTS:

We have two kinds of assessments in this class:

DAILY ASSIGNMENTS

- An exercise designed to reinforce the concepts taught in class.
- Assignments are worth **1-point**
- Knowledge is cumulative — the more I see, the better I can evaluate.
- I do not accept late work when it comes to daily assignments
 - Instead of homework, we do assignments in class
 - They are small, manageable, and designed to be completed in a short time

FORMATIVE ASSIGNMENTS:

- Designed to show student’s progress
- Assignments are worth more points (5 to10) than DAILY ASSIGNMENTS.
- I accept these assignments at a reduction (10% a day)
 - These assignments are a little longer
 - Must be handed in by the time class begins the next day.

DISCIPLINE AND CLASSROOM STANDARDS:

Because you are seniors, I want you to be able to move and act freely, but that freedom will not come without some demonstration of accountability to classroom expectations. Responsibility and Accountability will be the basis for your privileges.

Below are a list of CLASSROOM STANDARDS that I will enforce. Once read, these rules will stand as the mode of operations for our classroom. You will not be reminded of these standards, you will simply be expected to abide in them. Education is not about tolerating disobedience; it is about learning, and every student has a right to learn. Therefore, these rules are not for my sake (I'm not a big rules guy) or for your sake (student needs are too diverse); they stand so education can happen in the smoothest, safest way possible.

- Students will be in the classroom by the time the teacher starts the daily lesson. The classroom is for learning.
- Students are to show respect to everyone at all times and in all manners toward themselves, others, and staff. The judge in all situations will be the Mr. Thomas.
- Students are to be ON TASK; this means that you are working on the assignment in front of you - not work for another class.
- I do not argue with students. If you feel this or any other direction is unreasonable, you may arrange time to discuss it with me on your own time.
- I do not give warnings. This is your warning.

THE DISCIPLINARY PROCESS:

- **Removed from Class** - Handed a form with the teacher's observations.
- **Conference with Teacher** -- In the hallway before class ends.
- **15-minute Detention** -- Student will write a response to the teacher's observation

TEACHER COMMUNICATION: QUESTIONS and ASSIGNMENTS:

All assignments will be posted on the website, each student will be responsible for the downloading, completion, and turning the assignment in. Any questions not asked in class can be e-mailed: mrthomas2@me.com. A text message option is also available (for you and your parents), but only by personal request. With the text message option, your assignment can be sent directly to your phone, and your questions can be answered more quickly.

As for grades, they will be updated weekly via [Ren Web](#). Due to the conversational nature of the class, grades aren't always reflective of your performance. Occasionally we will have a few weeks where no assignments are due. Other weeks we will have two or three. If something about your grade does not look right, please contact me @ mrthomas2@me.com. Again, a text message option is available.

STRENGTHS-BASED EDUCATION:

Knowing a student's strength benefits the student in several ways.

- Creates a common language for teacher-student communication.
- Helps create alternative curriculum

- Empowers students to embrace, use, and advocate for their learning

TERMS TO KNOW:

Inquiry/Class Discussion:

Big Ideas = The question guiding each unit that each student must answer

Induction = Facts within a story, extracted by annotation

Deduction = Critical questions arising from the study of facts

Interpretation - Conclusions arising from further investigation of Deductions

Synthesis = Integrating and exploring facts as they relate to each other

Reading:

- **Annotation** - marking information as you read
- **Dialectical Journals** — Reading reflection journals
- **TPS-FASTT** — Poetry annotations designed to break a poem into pieces

Viewing:

- **OPTIC** — deconstruction exercise designed to understand a picture as a whole
- **Mise-en-Scene** — Examining piece of a film/show designed to understand picture as a whole

Writing:

- **Paragraph Structures**
 - **Abstract** = Boiling down facts into a dense, manageable summary; great for test-taking
 - **Deductive Response/Rule of Three** = Basic paragraph method used for extended essays
 - **Literal, Figurative, Moral** = Used primarily for poetry or evaluating abstract literature
 - **OCl:Observe, Consider, Interpret** = Short answer/essay method designed to do maximum evaluation in limited space
 - **Explications** = Line-by-Line, Section-by-Section review of literature
- **Rhetorical Modes** — methods of writing responses
 - *Analogy*
 - *Anecdote*
 - *Argument*
 - *Cause and Effect*
 - *Classification*
 - *Comparison-Contrast*
 - *Definition*
 - *Example*
 - *Narration*
 - *Metaphor*
- **Work-Over** = A one to two page report on research; consists of
 - **Abstract Paragraph** (Example, Summary)
 - **5-Critical Questions:** Level 1 (short answer), Level 2 (comp-cont, cause-effect), Level 3 (Open-Ended)

Mr. Thomas

- **Deductive Response** (10-11 sentence paragraph answering one of your Deductive/Critical Questions).