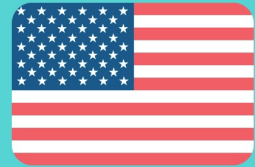


Cambridge First Language English

Fall 2015-Spring 2016



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Course DESCRIPTION

"The art of writing is the art of discovering what you believe." Gustave Flaubert

This year, we will be working together to beat the Cambridge First Language English Exam. This exam will ask us to respond to many different types of texts—letters, reports, journals, speeches, interviews, newspaper reports, magazine articles, and literary passages. The first section of the exam will require us to demonstrate our clear understanding of these texts in writing. The second section will direct us to respond creatively to an idea, to consider our targeted audience, and to choose the appropriate style of writing for the designated task.

With the exam always in mind, this course will act as a writing workshop. We will write every day. Together, we will examine many different pieces of writing that will act as springboards into different techniques and styles, including but not limited to: well-known and not so well-known writers of poetry, songs, newspaper columns, short stories, novels, plays, monologues, dialogues, reviews, montages, and stream-of-consciousness selections. Our goals will be met through a variety of reading, writing, and speaking activities.

Additionally, we must learn to willingly share our work; that is, we will both read aloud and share our ideas with the group. I will also be asking you to critique your work and the work of others in a positive and gentle manner. As a community, we will learn a great deal about each other by writing across various modes and describing how writing works and what it does through close examination of language.



Course GOALS

1. To become expert readers. Expert writers are first expert readers.
2. To respond to a text and analyze its meaning both literally and symbolically. We must describe and reflect on our reading, demonstrating an understanding of how writers achieve effects. To do so, we must become aware of the techniques of literary expression.
3. To become more self-aware and to devote attention to our craft of writing. To learn to brainstorm, to write, to evaluate, and to rewrite, and to employ an appropriate range of vocabulary and to accurately use a full range of sentence types, grammatical structures, spelling, and punctuation.
4. To create and revise our writing style to meet the demands of purpose, audience, and context. We must learn to be "writing chameleons" with a strong sense of audience and context.
5. To be able to both write and articulate ideas and opinions clearly and appropriately. We must train ourselves to write in well constructed paragraphs, using a full range of appropriate sentence types, and a wide and mature vocabulary.
6. To enjoy and to appreciate a variety of language and to develop a deeper understanding of ourselves and of others through reading and writing.
7. To listen actively and to respond clearly, making relevant and thoughtful contributions.
8. To use error as an invitation to improve. "We are all apprentices in a craft where no one ever becomes a master." (Ernest Hemingway)
9. To beat the Cambridge exam through the application of everything above that we have trained our minds to do.

Books we may read this year:

Holes by Louis Sachar

Night by Elie Wiesel

The Giver by Lois Lowry



Required Materials



A binder and dividers to make 6 sections



A "warm-up" notebook



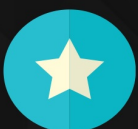
Pens of different colors, post-it flags, highlighters.

Sections will be labeled as follows:

- 1) Classnotes (includes handouts and annotated texts)
- 2) Vocabulary and Grammar (including graded quizzes)
- 3) Critical Terms
- 4) Assessments and Portfolio Work
- 5) Current Events & Speaking Activities
- 6) Cambridge Exam Prep Materials

Every class will begin with a warm-up writing, grammar, vocabulary, or speaking activity. Notebooks will stay in the classroom and will be graded each grading period.

You must show up to every class with at least one pen. Having a variety of note-taking materials is encouraged in order to make your notes and annotations visually interesting and memorable to you.



*You MUST write your name and the date on everything in and out of your hands.
You MUST keep your materials organized and well done as they will be checked and graded.
You MUST bring the texts we are working on in class. Failure to do so results in negative credit.*

Grading Policy*

WRITING

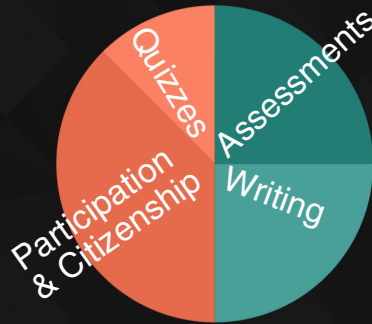
The most important objective in English class is to improve your writing skills, and so it follows that it must be an important part of your overall grade, equal to assessments. Writing includes any written work for homework.

Writing generally receives a coefficient of 2 or 3.

ASSESSMENTS

An assessment will follow a thematic unit or a novel study. Generally these assessments take the form of a timed essay response, like the ones you will encounter on the Cambridge exam. Oral presentations, book chats, interviews or creative projects may also be an alternative assessment of thematic units or novels.

Receives coefficient 2 or 3.



* Always remember, I do not GIVE grades ; you EARN them.

COMMENT ONLY GRADING
Sometimes, you will receive an assignment with my comments but without a grade.

You must fill in a reflection worksheet showing me that you've considered my comments before you are permitted to see your grade.

PARTICIPATION & CITIZENSHIP

We must think of literature less as a wall we must climb and more as an invitation into meaningful discussion.

If you are taking notes, contributing to class discussions, doing well on homework assignments and quizzes, working well in groups, and arriving to class on time with your texts and materials you are participating well.

Coefficient 3 or 4.

QUIZZES

Quizzes or short assessments will be given on assigned readings, key concepts, and vocabulary. From time to time I may give an open notebook quiz at the end of class to see how well you are taking notes.

Small (non-writing) homework and quizzes generally receive a coefficient of 0,5 - 1.

Late Work Policy

On the due date for an assignment, you must turn in SOMETHING.

There are special "Missing Work" sheets located in front of the classroom which must be filled in if you do not have your assignment.

Those who wish to benefit from teacher feedback must hand in their assignments on time. Other work will only receive feedback as time permits.

An assignment may be handed in only up to FOUR DAYS (including weekend days) after it is due. Late work will lose FOUR POINTS/day.

As mentioned before, all assignments must have your name and date marked in order to receive full credit.

Your parents will be contacted when you have missing work.

Make Up Work Policy

It is the student's responsibility to make up for missed work. Missed work must be made up within two days of due date.

Handouts will be kept in designated folders in the classroom and students are expected to quietly locate these materials themselves. Notes should also be copied from a buddy and the class blog consulted.

When turning in make-up work, the student should include a note to remind the teacher about the date and nature of his/her absence on the date of the assignment. Failure to do so may result in a deducted points.

If work is not made up or continues to be missing, your parents will be contacted.

If you feel that you are getting close to the edge, please let me know. I prefer you talk to me in person, or send me an email if need be. Nothing, not even my course, is worth the loss of your good health.

A NOTE ON PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING

Taking credit for work that is not your own is plagiarism. This includes paraphrasing without attribution, and copying internet material. You will receive a zero on any plagiarized assignment (which includes copied homework) and I must report the theft to administration.

DO NOT CONSULT OUTSIDE RESOURCES OR COLLABORATE UNLESS SPECIFICALLY INSTRUCTED TO DO SO. I want you to learn to THINK FOR YOURSELF!

"INSIST ON YOURSELF; NEVER IMITATE. YOUR OWN GIFT YOU CAN OFFER WITH THE CUMULATIVE FORCE OF A WHOLE LIFE'S CULTIVATION, BUT OF THE ADOPTED TALENT OF ANOTHER, YOU HAVE ONLY AN EXTEMPORANEOUS, HALF POSSESSION."

- Ralph Waldo Emerson



Instructional Philosophy

In order to be successful in this course, students are expected to be active, motivated, trying-their-best participants. It is my goal to provide a positive and engaging classroom where all students have the opportunity to learn, succeed, and share their thoughts and opinions verbally without fear of embarrassment or ridicule.

As I want this class to be one of the best in your schedule, I must insist that we are kind to each other and respect each other. If you humiliate or attempt to humiliate another, I will have no other choice but to ask you to leave immediately.

Expectations

1) Be respectful.

Treat everyone with proper consideration, regardless of whether he/she is in the classroom at the time. Use respectful language, in writing as well as in discussions. Show respect for your environment by keeping the classrooms clean and neat.

2) Be responsible.

Arrive at class on time and with all necessary materials. Complete assignments on time, ask questions when necessary, and stay aware of deadlines. Be prepared for the start of class each day. Do what is right, regardless of what everyone else in class is doing.

3) Be appropriate.

Conduct yourself as a mature, well-mannered young adult. Think before speaking, and make sure all contributions to the class dialogue should be meaningful and pertinent. Take care of personal business when the time is appropriate. Use your privileges wisely.

4) Be involved.

Participate to the fullest extent that you can. Stay awake. Take part in discussions. Ask questions. Answer questions. Stay on task. Take notes. Keep your head up. Do your homework. Use class time efficiently. Listen. Watch. Participate.

5) Be honest.

Do your own work. Do not cheat, and do not plagiarize. Do not attempt to sneak around the rules. Avoid inventing excuses to cover up for your mistakes. Accept consequences for your mistakes, and learn from them.

My 'pet peeves'

*Do not talk when I'm talking.
Do not make excuses.*

*Do accept responsibility for your actions.
Do ask lengthy personal questions after class or after school.
Do take notes.*

Do complete group work and work in general seriously and with care.



Food and Drink Policy



Food and drink are allowed as long as they do not become a distraction and you can show me that you are paying attention, taking notes, etc.

Students must be sure to clean up after themselves. All wrappers etc. must end up in the trash and tabletops cleaned.

This privilege may be revoked at any time, for individuals and full classes who abuse it, at the teacher's discretion.

Cell Phone Policy



Cell phone use is not permitted during class. Unless you have received explicit permission from me, I should not see or hear your phone from the moment you enter the room to when I dismiss you from class.

If I see your phone, I will take it.

Music Policy



When students are working on group activities, I like to play music while you work. Sometimes I like to choose the music to introduce you to new things. Other times I'm happy for students to quietly choose the music (as long as it is in English and is appropriate). You may also listen to music with headphones during individual activities (but not assessments).

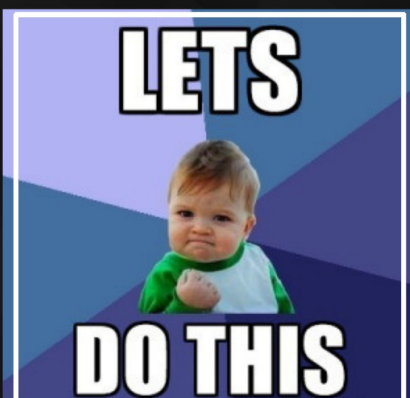
This privilege may be revoked at any time for individuals or full classes if I see that it takes away from their focus in class.

"He most honors my style who learns under it to destroy the teacher." (Walt Whitman)

A NOTE ON LIFELONG LEARNING

My hope is that you do not need me after you leave this classroom and years from now you will read often, think about what you read, and talk about what you read. I also hope that whenever you are called upon to write, you may do so without fear. If you leave here wanting to read and writing with confidence, you have honored my style.

You will be tested on the contents of this syllabus. Please review it with care and note the date of the assessment. You and your parents must also sign a contract which says you have reviewed the syllabus together and that you will behave according to its rules. This will remain on file in the classroom.



Lastly, NEVER LOSE THIS SYLLABUS!

Let's conclude by reflecting on this question: how could this course be useful for your present life and your life beyond St Denis? What do you want to get out of this class?