Welcome! We are excited to spend this school year as your teacher. We will spend the year learning and growing together with the overall goal of harnessing each individual’s true potential so that each one of us comes out more informed and a better critical thinker.

Overall Questions of the Course

* What is the American Dream?
* How does a community shape identity?
* What is the relationship between money and happiness?

General Overall Objectives

* Students will be able to construct essays and other writing tasks that implement effective structure, appropriate tone, correct writing conventions, relevant and effective textual support and examples, direct quotes and research when appropriate, and transitions and sentence variety.
* Students will be able to analyze works of fiction and non-fiction prose, drama, and poetry by examining all relevant literary devices and writing techniques, such as metaphors, characterization, syntax, rhetoric, etc.
* Students will be able to define new vocabulary words by either using context clues or external sources and apply those words in meaningful and appropriate ways in writing and speaking tasks.
* Students will be able to evaluate complex ideas presented in the materials read and compare and apply those ideas to aspects of their life.
* Students will be able to synthesize major themes, ideas, writing styles, etc. of works read and produce task-appropriate products portraying the synthesized material.
* Students will be able to research complex ideas using multiple resources (internet, text, etc.) and apply that research in the creation of a properly cited research paper that implements all necessary writing techniques for the task.

Basics to Succeeding

1) READ!

2) Do your work

3) Listen and be engaged in class

If you do the three items listed above, you will be successful in this class.

Materials

Required:

* One Three Ring Notebook (or equivalent)
* One Folder (for keeping loose papers)
* Pens and Pencils

Optional:

* Notecards
* Highlighters
* Colored Pencils

Works Read

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Required:   * McDougal Littell*: Literature: American Literature* textbook * *The Great Gatsby* * *A Raisin in the Sun* | Supplemental:   * *Retold American Classics* * *The Crucible* * *Death of a Salesman* * *Of Mice and Men* * *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* * *Into the Wild* * *Zeitoun* |

Class Rules

**Respect Yourself and Others!**

1. **Respect yourself** by coming to class every day ready to learn and being the best person you can be, working hard and putting forth the full effort you can on everything you do, not feeling insignificant about anything you say or do, and dressing appropriately for a high school environment.

2. **Respect others** by coming to class with an open mind, treating everyone as equals, speaking only when you are given permission to speak, not interrupting others, staying silent during activities that require you to stay silent (tests, quizzes, independent work, etc.), making comments that add to the discussion, not belittling anyone for who they are or what they say/do, and keeping your hands to yourself.

Grading Policy

Students are graded on a points system consisting of the elements below. The amount and types of assessments vary by unit, but the point values remain consistent. Final grades for the course are derived from averaging the four marking periods with the final exam and quarterly assessments.

General:

* Tests (80-100 Points)
* Quizzes (20-60 Points)
* Reading Check and Listening Check Quizzes (5-20 Points)
* Large Writing Assignments (60-100 Points)
* Short Writing Assignments (10-50 Points)
* Projects (20-100 Points)
* Classwork (5-25 Points)
* Homework (5-10 Points)
* Do Nows (25-50 points, collected at the end of the marking period)
* Participation (approximately 100 points a marking period)

Approximate Percentages of Marking Period Grades (note: these percentages will vary depending on the unit):

* Tests/Quizzes: 30-40%
* Writing: 20-30%
* Projects: 15-25%
* Homework/Classwork/Participation: 10-20%

Final Grade

* MP1 = 22.5%, MP2 = 22.5%, MP3 = 22.5%, MP4 = 22.5%, Final Exam = 10%

Classwork/Homework

1. **Class notes and handouts**: in order to achieve the best results in this class, it is highly recommended that you take notes and keep a notebook that holds all of these notes. All assessments are based on what you have read, notes taken in class, and handouts that are given to the class. Do Nows should be kept together in one place in the notebook, as they will be collected for a grade at the end of each marking period.

2. **Time on Task**: it is essential that you spend the entire class working on activity that is assigned. When working in groups, it is imperative to use the allotted time to complete the assignment as thoroughly as possible. Not staying on task will adversely affect your grade both through the participation grade and through poorer performances on assessments because of time lost during class.

3. **Homework Completion**: to succeed in this class, homework is one of the most important aspects. Often, homework will entail reading a text and completing a short assignment that accompanies the text. Whether it is graded or not, it is incredibly important to complete, as homework is meant to either reinforce something learned in class or will be at the center of discussion for the following day.

4. **My Website:** on my website (<http://www.nhvweb.net/vhs/english/mdavis/>) you can find the homework for the week, handouts and lectures that were given during the week, and information on where to find me and when. If you are absent, it is your responsibility to obtain from my website any handouts that you missed.

Participation

You will be graded on your participation in the class, which will be graded on a rubric. Everyone will receive two participation grades, totaling 100 points each marking period. These grades will be entered at approximately the middle and end of the marking period. The following aspects of participation are assessed:

* Preparation for Class: Student is in his/her seat before the bell rings with the appropriate materials already on his/her desk. The student is engaged with the do now before the bell rings.
* Respect: Does not interrupt, raises hand to speak, listens to classmates, remains positive, and never displays disruptive behavior.
* On-topic: is focused, enters the room and is ready for class, focuses solely on this class, and stays focused on the activity.
* Contributions to Class and Group Work: answers questions and adds thoughtful comments to the discussion, asks relevant questions, works well with others, and stays focused on the activity.
* Attitude: is never critical of a project or of work assigned and has a positive attitude about all tasks.

Late Policy

* **Major Assignments (20 points or more):** loss of 10% of the total score. After a week late, the grade becomes a zero. In order to get any credit, the student MUST fill out and hand in a responsibility sheet in lieu of the assignment that is due.
* **Homework:** late homework may be turned in the following day for half credit unless it is reviewed in class. After one day late, it becomes a zero.

Academic Honesty/Behavior:

* **Plagiarism:** Copying writing directly from any text without it being correctly cited (i.e. giving credit to the original author) is plagiarism. This extends to both the words being used and the structure and syntax of the sentences. Plagiarism will be discussed in more detail as the year progresses. Students who are caught plagiarizing will face all consequences, starting with a zero for the assignment, as detailed in your Student Handbook. Additionally, if any work is found to be copied from another student’s work, neither student will receive credit for the assignment.
* **Disruptions during class:** As detailed in the simple rules above, it is imperative for all students to act appropriately for the classroom environment. The following actions will be taken for disruptive behavior:
  1. Warning
  2. Teacher Detention
  3. Call Home
  4. Write-up
* **Talking During a Silent Assessment:** It is important to stay silent during silent assessments for two major reasons: 1) to ensure academic honesty, and 2) to provide an environment in which all students have the opportunity to perform to their fullest potential. The following actions will be taken for talking during a silent assessment:
  1. Warning is given to all students BEFORE the assessment is handed out
  2. Test taken from the student. If the student causes no further disruption, he/she may stay after school to re-take the test. If the student does not stay after, the test becomes a zero.
  3. Student loses half the score on the test but may still stay after to complete the test.
  4. Student loses all credit and receives a teacher detention.

Attendance and Absences

* **Absences:** Being in class is essential to growing to your full potential. As such, it is important to do the following if you miss class:
  + Email me to ask generally what was completed in class and complete any work that you are able to complete.
  + Schedule a meeting, either through the email or quickly at the beginning of class, to arrange a meeting before school or after school in order catch up on the material that was missed.
  + Ask another student in the class to help fill you in on what you missed.
* **Punctuality:** Being on time is important since the class starts at the bell. As per school policy, late students get one unexcused absence for every three times he/she arrives late to the class.
* **Bathroom Usage:** Since being in the room is essential to maximizing your potential, the bathroom is reserved for only emergencies. When you go to the bathroom, you will need to record your name in the bathroom log, and if a pattern of usage appears, students who abuse bathroom usage will not be allowed to leave the room.

Electronic Usage

* **Cell Phones:** using a cell phone in class will result in the student receiving a detention. Cell phones are not to be used in the classroom unless the teacher give permission to use them for a school-related task. Frequent offenders will suffer the full consequences as detailed in the student handbook.
* **Computers, tablets, etc.:** Unless permission is given, students may not use any device other than what is provided to them by the school.
* **Ebook Readers:** During silent reading activities, students may use these instead of a book. If a student is caught using the device for other purposes, he/she will lose the privilege to use the device indefinitely.

Emailing the Teacher

* **School Policy:** when contacting the teacher by email, all students MUST use their school-issued Gmail accounts. Per school policy, emails that are received from any other account may not be responded to, and as such, will not be responded to under any circumstances.
* **Appropriateness:** when contacting the teacher via email, students should get in the habit of using appropriate subject lines and using formal, appropriate language. Content of all emails should always be school-related.

Contacting Us

* **Email (**[**mdavis@nhvweb.net**](mailto:mdavis@nhvweb.net) **or** [**mbisco@nhvweb.net**](mailto:mbisco@nhvweb.net)**)**: this is our preferred contact method, as it will ensure a very prompt response from me.
* **Phone:908-638-2199 (Mr. Davis ext. 2254 or Mr. Bisco TBD):** Since we do not have a direct line, it is likely that you will reach our voicemail. If so, please leave your name, your child’s name and class, phone number, and the time at which you can be reached. Similarly, you may send an email with the same information, and we will call you at a mutually convenient time.

Parent + Student Signature

By signing below, you acknowledge that you have read and understand the expectations of this course.

Student Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent Contact

Email:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Best Phone:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (circle: cell, home, work)

Best Time(s) to Call:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

(note: if possible, please provide a specific time and please attempt to provide a time during school hours)