

English

Requirements:

Continuous enrollment in English, grades nine through twelve.

Grade 9 English 9 (ENGL 210)

Grade 10 English 10 (ENGL 220)

Grade 11 English 11 (ENGL 310)

Grade 12

- Senior Electives (ENGL 320)
- The New Community Project (ENGL 330)
- AP English (ENGL 401)
- Seminar in Literary Studies (ENGL 410)

English

Horace Mann's Department of English trains students to be strong readers: of texts, of the world around them, and, ultimately, of themselves. From ninth grade on, our students develop their analytical skills through the study of a broad range of challenging texts, lively and probing seminar style discussions, and focused, challenging critical and creative writing assignments.

"Show don't tell" is a familiar refrain in our classrooms, shorthand for our emphasis on working from particulars to a general theory. In that sense, we foster a culture of evidence rooted in close reading. We assign fewer texts in order to emphasize attention to the details that give a work of literary art its richness and complexity. Seminar style classes put students' critical engagement with the texts at the center of our practice. Such an approach also fosters our students' ability to empathize with, and truly listen to, a diversity of voices beyond their own. Furthermore, the department's continuing partnership with the Royal Shakespeare Company offers students opportunities each year to engage in rehearsal room techniques that revitalize their understanding of the ways in which their own lived experiences are intrinsically connected to human lives from across the centuries.

Grades nine, ten, and eleven have set curricula with specific texts determined by each teacher. Senior electives, including intensive one-semester and year-long courses carefully designed by faculty, culminate the study of English at Horace Mann. In addition, we offer one section of English AP. Admission is highly competitive.

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English Nine, Ten, and Eleven

In grades nine through eleven, the course of study in English is organized around the major literary genres: poetry, drama, and prose fiction. In their senior year, students take semester electives focused on authors, literary movements and themes, or creative writing. In the year-long courses freshman through junior year, individual faculty members develop their own curricula at each grade level and for each literary genre, with an eye to including a diversity of literary voices from a broad range of traditions, time periods, and cultures. This approach not only expands students' awareness of literature's multifarious scope, but also helps students identify key connections between complex, seemingly disparate works.

In past years, students have studied Shakespeare's *The Tempest* alongside Aime Cesaire's *A Tempest*, Genesis with *The Odyssey*, and *Frankenstein* with *The Turn of the Screw* and *Benito Cereno*. These juxtapositions broaden our awareness of the shared concerns and multifarious approaches to human phenomena across different literary traditions. Such exposure to multiple traditions, we believe, presents students with numerous ways of defining and engaging with a literary canon.

ENGL 210 - English 9

Full credit, meets 4 days/week

Prerequisites: None

All ninth graders begin their work in English with a structured writing unit that serves to welcome them into the vigor and vivacity of the English language. Students write every day, in class and at home, and in a variety of styles, ranging from dramatic dialogues to lyric poems, and from microfictions to longer personal narratives. Daily writing is accompanied by daily feedback. We teach writing as a continual process, one that is always "in progress." The writing unit is ungraded—taken pass/fail—a practice which allows us both to keep the focus on the students' work and the teacher's feedback, and to offer students space for risk-taking and experimentation with writing and revision. The rest of the year involves the close reading and analysis of literary texts—*Frankenstein*, *Annie John*, *Purple Hibiscus*, and *Julius Caesar* are but a few examples—and the study of grammar.

ENGL 220 - English 10

Full credit, meets 4 days/week

Prerequisites: English 9

Students in tenth grade continue their literary studies in courses designed by their teacher. Tenth graders experience greater independence in their engagement with texts, a fact reflected in the kinds of critical and imaginative writing expected of them during their tenth grade year. All tenth grade students study drama, poetry, and prose fiction—typical texts include *Othello*, *The Great Gatsby*, *The Odyssey*, and *Sing, Unburied, Sing*—and continue our grammar curriculum.

ENGL 310 - English 11

Full credit, meets 4 days/week

Prerequisites: English 10

In English 11, literary study intensifies with extensive units on the major genres, particularly lyric poetry. Additionally, all English 11 students complete a major research paper that brings together skills

they have been working on since the ninth grade: close reading, building from evidence to argument, comparative analysis, and independent critical thinking. Depending on the class, research engages students in comparative literary-critical analysis, individual author studies, or *New Yorker*-style profile pieces. Regardless of the project, students work step by step, from searching for, sorting, and synthesizing a range of primary and secondary sources to developing an extended critical-analytical study of their own from that material.

ENGL 320 - Senior Electives

Full credit, meets 4 days/week

Prerequisites: English 11

With the exception of those students enrolled in our Advanced Placement English course, all seniors take either two semester-long electives, one year-long elective--Seminar in Literary Studies--or The New Community Project course, which combines literary study and analysis with real-world service opportunities. With the permission of the Department, senior electives may be taken by eleventh grade students in addition to English 11.

Students have a good deal of freedom in choosing their electives. The offerings each semester cover a diverse range of literary periods and movements, themes, and genres. Some courses stress expository or analytic writing; others engage students in writing original poems or short stories. The Department varies its electives according to its own evolving interests and to its understanding of the needs of our students.

A sampling of semester-long senior electives recently offered:

Man's Search for Meaning
Literature of Puzzles, Games, and Mysteries
Psychological Realism: George Eliot and Virginia Woolf
How to Do Things with Books
Intro to Translation Studies
Toni Morrison
Satire
Short Masterpieces of Russian Literature
Shakespeare On Its Feet
British Romanticism: Visions and Revisions
Money in American Literature
Short Fiction: A Writing Workshop
Emily Dickinson
Reading Chang-Rae Lee
Melville's *Moby Dick*
Writing Nature, Writing Ourselves
The Serious Pleasures of Detective Fiction
The Poetics of Hip-Hop
Poets of Moment: Billy Collins, Pablo Neruda, and Naomi Shihab Nye
Americas: Other Voices in American Fiction

Literature and Film: the Art of Redemption
Bad Girls: Exploring Female Misbehavior
Youth in Revolt: Social, Cultural, and Political Resistance in American Fiction
Posthumanism: Freaks and Cyborgs

ENGL 330 - The New Community Project

Full credit, meets 4 days/week

The New Community Project is a year-long social justice course that uses the study of literature as the foundation for understanding, analyzing, and making meaningful impact for our local communities. Specifically, we will partner with a local non-profit organization that addresses a pressing community need and analyze them as a “living text.” We will ask: *What are our non-profit partner’s passions, motivations, and ambitions? Who are their main characters? Who is the antagonist? In what ways does setting impact the conflict? Does the story have a clear resolution? Where do we see the intersectionality of race, class, gender, religion, sexuality etc?* We will also read traditional texts (novels, short stories, poetry, films, & songs) with themes that are relevant to our partner. By having “living texts” in conversation with traditional texts, we will practice the language of empathy for the complex human concerns that shape and continue to shape the spaces around us. At the end of this process, we will propose and develop tangible projects that will aid our partner non-profit organization’s mission. In this way, this course hopes to inspire and empower young people to tangibly impact their communities through critical thinking, mindful collaboration, and meaningful action.

ENGL 401 - AP English

Open to seniors only in 2020-21

Full credit, meets 5 days/week

Prerequisites: English 11, departmental approval.

The department offers one section of Advanced Placement. Admission is highly competitive. For consideration, students should have grades in English which average closer to A- than B+, as well as the permission of the department. Applicants must also provide a writing sample.

The curriculum of AP English consists of readings in poetry, Shakespearean drama, the essay, and prose fiction. Works considered in the current school year include *The Turn of the Screw*, *The Tempest*, *Heart of Darkness*, *To The Lighthouse*, *Beloved*, *King Lear*, and *Waiting for Godot*, among others. Major units cover satire in its various forms and contemporary critical theory. Extensive written work accompanies the texts and emphasizes analysis of literary

themes, styles, and techniques. Students in AP English are required to take the AP English Literature exam.

ENGL 410 - Seminar in Literary Studies

Full credit, meets 4 days/week

Prerequisites: English 11, departmental approval.

Seminar in Literary Studies is a year-long senior elective open to all seniors interested in an *intensive* study of literature and literary scholarship. SLS is designed with the most inquisitive English student in mind, the reader for whom extended, year-long study of a particular period or genre of literature appears as a thrillingly liberating prospect rather than as a graduation requirement to be satisfied.

Some distinctive aspects of every SLS course include, but are not limited to, the following:

- *Year-long immersion in the literary field/s of a teacher's choosing;
- *Four essays (at least two of 5+ pages) and one longer presentation required *per semester*;
- *Required reading of literary criticism and/or theory.

For the 2020-2021 school year, SLS will be offering "LA LA Lit: Los Angeles, California, and the American Imagination."