



# 2021-2022

## **COURSE CATALOG**

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# ENGLISH



## **COURSE OFFERINGS: ENGLISH**

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### **GENERAL INFORMATION**

**Interim Dept. Chair: Brian Zalasky– [bzalasky@sch.org](mailto:bzalasky@sch.org)**

Our English program cultivates a lifelong passion for reading and writing and promotes student discovery and engagement. SCH students learn to think, read, write, and speak with clarity and conviction. They identify questions and share opinions about texts, wrestle with complex ideas, build persuasive arguments and interpretations, and use writing as a means of creative expression. Students will examine classic and contemporary literature, as well as diverse forms of media.

The courses in our required sequence (9th–11th) emphasize close reading and analytical writing. Twelfth grade English consists of semester-long electives or AP English. The department's electives offer students the opportunity to investigate a new and specific realm of study. As schedule and space permit, juniors may enroll in selected electives in addition to their core English course. In grades 10-12, the department offers Honors and AP options. Placement in Honors and AP is determined by the department.

Summer work is required for all English courses, and students who change their English electives after reading materials have been distributed must contact the English Department to be sure they do the appropriate summer assignment. Also, it is the expectation that any students who add a course during the add/drop period will complete the summer work for the added course.

### **REQUIRED CLASSES**

#### **THE INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIETY (Freshman English)**

*Required; full-year course; 1 credit*

*Summer reading required*

This course helps students read texts closely and unpack multiple levels of meaning in order to deepen and complicate their understanding of themselves in relation to the world around them. Students learn to see writing as a collaborative process that involves drafts and revisions, and they strengthen their skills and confidence in written and oral expression. The course is writing-intensive in nature and will incorporate close study of paragraph and essay structures as well as grammar, mechanics, and vocabulary. In order to give students meaningful opportunities to learn and develop, this course will incorporate

the following: group projects, formal writing assignments, Socratic seminar discussions, project-based learning experiences, and portfolios of creative work. Texts are drawn from a range of genres (novels, plays, short stories, poetry, and nonfiction) and may include *In the Time of the Butterflies* (Alvarez), *Antigone* (Sophocles), *Fahrenheit 451* (Bradbury), and *Another Brooklyn* (Woodson).

## **READING THE WORLD (Sophomore English)**

*Required; full-year course; 1 credit*

*Summer reading required*

In Reading the World, students explore questions of identity, community, gender, race, and class through a focus on global voices. This course continues the arc of 9th grade by asking students to take their new competencies in close reading, critical thinking, student-led discussions, and persuasive writing into challenging works that experiment with literary form. Texts are drawn from a range of genres (novels, plays, short stories, poetry, and nonfiction) and may include *Persepolis* (Satrapi), *Macbeth* (Shakespeare), *Night* (Wiesel), *The Joy Luck Club* (Tan), and *Things Fall Apart* (Achebe).

## **Honors READING THE WORLD (Sophomore Honors English)**

*Required; full-year course; 1 credit*

*Summer reading required*

In Reading the World, students explore questions of identity, community, gender, race, and class through a focus on global voices. This course continues the arc of 9th grade by asking students to take their new competencies in close reading, critical thinking, student-led discussions, and persuasive writing into challenging works that experiment with literary form. At the honors level, students are guided to unpack more complex texts and develop more nuanced writing. Texts are drawn from a range of genres (novels, plays, short stories, poetry, and nonfiction) and may include *Persepolis* (Satrapi), *Macbeth* (Shakespeare), *Night* (Wiesel), *Behind the Beautiful Forevers* (Boo), *The Joy Luck Club* (Tan), and *Things Fall Apart* (Achebe).

## **AMERICAN STORIES (Junior English)**

*Required; full-year course; 1 credit*

*Summer reading required*

Students learn how to read literary works with greater accuracy and interpretive skill and how to write analytical and personal essays with more polish, persuasiveness, and coherence. The literature studied over the course of the year comprises novels, short stories, essays, poetry, and plays. There is a focus on the literary elements and structure of these works and on a thematic study of the American dream and the invention of the self. Major literary works may include *The Things They Carried* (O'Brien), *The Great Gatsby* (Fitzgerald), *Song of Solomon* (Morrison), *Little Fires Everywhere* (Ng), and *Angels in America* (Kushner).

## **HONORS AMERICAN STORIES (Junior Honors English)**

*Full-year course; 1 credit*

*Summer reading required*

*Prerequisite: Departmental approval*

Students learn how to read literary works with greater accuracy and interpretive skill and how to write analytical and personal essays with more polish, persuasiveness, and coherence. At the honors level, they learn to assume greater ownership in discussions, independence in writing, and creativity with their intellectual curiosity. The literature studied over the course of the year comprises novels, short stories, essays, poetry, and plays. There is a focus on the literary elements and structure of these works and on a thematic study of the American dream and the invention of the self. Major literary works may include *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (Hurston), *The Things They Carried* (O'Brien), *The Great Gatsby* (Fitzgerald), *Song of Solomon* (Morrison), *Little Fires Everywhere* (Ng), and *Angels in America* (Kushner). Honors students are expected to analyze literature in greater depth and write with nuance and precision. They are encouraged toward greater independence in their writing and to take greater ownership by investigating topics that spark their intellectual curiosity.

## **ENGLISH ELECTIVES AND AP ENGLISH**

*Please note: The English Department's elective offerings are subject to change depending on faculty availability and student sign ups. Asterisk (\*) denotes NCAA-approved English elective.*

### **INTRODUCTION TO CREATIVE WRITING\***

*Grades 10–12; elective; fall semester; ½ credit*

*Summer reading required*

Good writing in any form—stories, poems, essays—reaches across the gap between writer and reader and makes the reader gasp in surprise, laugh with delight, consider new perspectives, feel, and think in new ways. But good writing doesn't just fall from the sky or spring, fully formed, into its creator's mind; it is the product of conscious choices. In this class, students will focus on these conscious choices, studying the hows and whys of successful fiction, nonfiction, and poetry. Students will read works by a variety of writers and investigate how each of the authors' choices affects the finished work. Students will write short pieces, long pieces, exercises, polished drafts, and everything between, with the goal of stretching our imaginations and becoming better writers. Course texts may include *Bird by Bird* (Anne Lamott), *The Making of a Poem* (Eavan Boland), and numerous short stories, poems, and personal narratives.

### **ADVANCED CREATIVE WRITING\***

*Grades 10-12; elective; spring semester; ½ credit*

*Prerequisite: Introduction to Creative Writing*



“Fiction that isn’t exploring what it means to be human today isn’t art.”

~ David Foster Wallace

This course builds on the foundational skills students developed in Introduction to Creative Writing and allows them to delve deeper into their craft. In this cross-genre course, students will focus on those elements that make for vivid, effective writing: significant detail, lyrical language, and memorable images; inventive metaphor and simile; resistance to cliché; and authentic voice, dialogue, and characterization. Students will be challenged to reflect on their growth as writers and work to see themselves as part of a community of writers through Writer’s Workshops, peer edits, and the use of a portfolio. The course will focus on fiction, poetry, and/or nonfiction. Course texts may include *Vampires in the Lemon Grove* (Karen Russell), *The Making of a Poem* (Eavan Boland), and numerous short stories, poems, and personal narratives.

## **RADICAL LOVE IN AFRICAN AMERICAN LITERATURE: READING AND WRITING NONFICTION AND POETRY\***

*Grades 11, 12; elective; spring semester; ½ credit*

What is it to love radically? In this course, students will be asked to remember and re-envision love through reading works by black cisgender women authors of the 20th and 21st centuries. Beginning with bell hooks’ *All About Love* as a foundation, students will continue on to read works by Audre Lorde, June Jordan, Alice Walker, and Warsan Shire. We will culminate our reading with a viewing of Julie Dash’s “Daughters of the Dust” and Beyoncé’s “Lemonade.” Through actively engaging with these works, students will be asked to discuss queer and hetero romantic love, matrilineal love, sisterly love, and love within communities. Through our discussions and analytical writing, students will inquire about and discover the power that love has to create social change. To further consolidate and expand their understanding of the various manifestations of love, students will be asked to write personal essays and poems about their own experiences with love, specifically reflecting on its ability to create personal and greater change, influenced by and infused with the readings.

## **MONSTERS AND THE MONSTROUS IN LITERATURE\***

*Grades 11, 12; elective; fall semester; ½ credit*

*Summer reading required*

In this course, we will explore the figure of the monster in myth, literature, and film, keeping in mind the cultural and historical background of various tales, as well as some central questions: What makes a monster? What distinguishes human from monster? What

can monsters tell us about the values, anxieties, and fears of the cultures in which they emerge? Through extensive in- and out-of-class reading, writing, and project-based activities, students will investigate what the cultural politics of monstrosity have to tell us about what it means to be human. Course texts may include *The Odyssey* (Homer), *Beowulf*, *Frankenstein* (Shelley), *We Have Always Lived in the Castle* (Jackson).

## **RHETORICAL THEORY: PERSUASION IN PROSE AND POETRY\***

*Grades 11, 12; elective; fall semester; ½ credit*

*Summer reading required*

This course aims to study rhetorical traditions and rhetoric's application in the composition process through the prisms of short nonfiction, speeches, and music. Rhetoric, the art of effective or persuasive communication, is practiced around us daily: on television, on the web, in our conversations, and on our iPods in our favorite songs. One of many goals in this course is to encourage students to be more aware and analytical of the messages broadcasted around them, and know that the "knowledge of rhetoric can help us to respond critically and appreciatively to advertisements, commercials, political messages, satires, [and] irony...of all varieties" (Corbett and Connors, 25). Texts: Course reader with selections from *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student*, excerpts from Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, President Kennedy's Inaugural Address, "The Allegory of the Cave," "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," in addition to excerpts from scholarly essays and song lyrics.

## **DYSTOPIAN LITERATURE\***

*Grades 11, 12; elective; spring semester; ½ credit*

This course will investigate the art of dystopian literature and short stories. By definition, a dystopia is a society in which oppressive social control is maintained through the illusion of a perfect society. Authors have created countless societies whose founding principles or end goals seem noble and just, but the end result is the opposite. Part of the brilliance of the dystopian form is its ability to cultivate a discerning eye; as the reader dives deeper into this imagined world, harrowing elements of his or her own reality may be illuminated. Through reading a variety of dystopian literature, students will identify and analyze how authors inspire their readers to question the world around them. In short, how do authors make a statement about the real world through an exploration of the imagined? In addition to close reading and analysis, students will create several of their own dystopian societies that illuminate a social issue of concern. Texts include *1984* (Orwell) and several dystopian short stories, ranging from Shirley Jackson's "The Lottery" to Philip K Dick's "Minority Report."

## **FILM AS TEXT: THE ANALYSIS OF CINEMATIC LANGUAGE**

*Grades 11, 12; elective; spring semester; ½ credit*

This course offers a critical understanding and deep appreciation of one of the most influential of modern popular art forms of our time. The beginning of the course serves as

an introduction to cinematic language and techniques, and then we will survey the styles, genres, and history of landmarks in American cinema. In order to begin looking at films more analytically and perceptively, we will look at each film through a variety of interpretive, stylistic, and theoretical frames, exploring the relationship between culture and the movies. Through extensive in-class and out-of-class reading and writing, film viewings, and lively class discussion, students will also explore issues such as the relationship of film to narrative fiction and to dramatic literature. Texts may include *Adaptations: From Short Story to Screen* (ed. Stephanie Harrison) and *Looking at Movies: An Introduction to Film*, 3rd ed. (eds. Richard Barsam and Dave Monahan).

## **INTRODUCTION TO JOURNALISM\***

*Grades 11, 12; elective; fall semester; ½ credit*

*Summer reading required*

French philosopher and journalist Albert Camus said that “journalism can never be silent: that is its greatest virtue and its greatest fault. It must speak, and speak immediately, while the echoes of wonder, the claims of triumph and the signs of horror are still in the air.” The goal of the journalist is to illuminate the world, both its beauty and its horror. In this course, students will be able to understand what makes a story newsworthy, as well as craft a variety of journalistic formats including news stories, editorials, and personality profiles. Texts include *The Influencing Machine* (Gladstone), selections from *In Fact: The Best Of Creative Nonfiction* (Gutkind), *Writing Tools* (Clark), in addition to excerpts from news and media outlets.

## **NARRATIVE NONFICTION\***

*Grades 11, 12; elective; spring semester; ½ credit*

This course explores short creative nonfiction essays written by a diverse range of authors spanning from the 17th Century to today, such as Jonathan Swift, Frederick Douglass, George Orwell, Jhumpa Lahiri, Zora Neale Hurston, David Foster Wallace, David Sedaris, and Joan Didion. The selected essays will examine topics such as cultural analysis, nature and the environment, personal opinion, sports, and food among other topics. Students will conduct their own discussions on the elements that make this style of writing captivating, persuasive, and informative. Students will also compose their own creative personal essays and keep daily journals to practice their own voice and style on topics gathered from their own personal experiences.

## **VIOLENCE AS ART: AN ANALYSIS OF CRIME STORIES IN LITERATURE AND NONFICTION\***

*Grades 11, 12; elective; spring semester; ½ credit*

From Edgar Allan Poe's 1841 "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," to television's *CSI*, America has nurtured an age-old fascination with crime stories. In this course, we will look at some old and new examples of this genre and analyze what makes them work, how they inform culture, and the nature of the social critiques woven into their narratives. We will examine how the authors and directors of crime stories use the genre to investigate the elements of society and of human nature that can lead someone to become a criminal, a murderer, or the sort of person who wants to go around picking up and putting together the pieces. Students will compose both analytical and creative work. Authors may include Truman Capote, Edgar Allan Poe, Flannery O'Connor, Arthur Conan Doyle, Raymond Chandler, and Patricia Highsmith. Ready yourself to delve into some dark places!

## **INTERTEXTUALITY: CONVENING AT THE INTERSECTION OF LITERATURE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE \***

*Grades 11, 12; elective; fall semester; ½ credit*

*Summer reading required*

When we dig beneath surface level meanings, what is literature? What is social justice? In what ways do literary works cause us to wrestle with questions of social justice and civil disobedience? This course will examine the ways in which literary works challenge or validate dominant ideologies, provide a framework for the formation of social and economic oppression, and elicit emotions that serve as a catalyst for social justice and change. Through a variety of texts relating to race, class, gender and sexuality, we will explore techniques employed by the author and ask the question *why* as it pertains to the coloring of societal views and understandings of social justice issues as well as answer the *how* in terms of what we may do, as readers and writers, to emulate such techniques and apply them to another social justice issue. We/You will explore other aspects including, but not limited to, the role of the media, storytelling and personal testimonies in shaping our understanding of these issues. In addition to close reading and critical analysis, students will select a social justice issue to illuminate through writing of their own. Texts will include *Queer History of the United States for Young People* (Michael Bronski, Richie Chevat), *Panther Baby* (Joseph), *Kindred: A Graphic Novel Adaptation* (Duffy) and supplemental texts such as *Why I Write* (Orwell), *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (Morrison) and "Civil Disobedience" (Thoreau).

## **ADVANCED JOURNALISM\***

*Grades 11, 12; elective; spring semester; ½ credit*

*Prerequisite: Introduction to Journalism*



For students who have taken Introduction to Journalism, this course builds on refining one's journalistic skill set, such as finding the story, writing in a variety of formats, and capturing a scene with intricate details. Students will be required to pitch their own story ideas based on the principles of News Value and produce a variety of content including news pieces, editorials, and features in the form of a student publication. Readings will include selections from major news organizations including *The New York Times*, *Sports Illustrated*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *The New Yorker*.

## **AP LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION\***

*Grade 12; elective; full-year course; 1 credit*

*Prerequisite: Departmental approval*

*Summer reading required*

*AP students may also enroll in additional English electives each semester if space permits.*

This yearlong course focuses on works from the three genres highlighted on the Advanced Placement Literature and Composition examination: poetry, drama, and narrative.

Students read and interpret a wide range of texts written in varied styles and chosen from different centuries. Works studied may include novels and plays by Dickens, Chopin, Woolf, Conrad, García Márquez, Morrison, Shakespeare, Euripides, and Wilde, as well as poetry dating from the Renaissance to the 21st century. Students will also improve their writing skills through work on carefully argued, supported, and polished analytical essays. At the end of the course, students are prepared to take the AP Literature and Composition exam.

## **AP LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION\***

*Grade 12; elective; full-year course; 1 credit*

*Prerequisite: Departmental approval*

*Summer reading required*

*AP students may also enroll in additional English electives each semester if space permits.*

AP Language and Composition provides students with the opportunity to study the way rhetoric, the ancient art of persuasive speaking and writing, shapes our lives and our world. By reading and writing various forms of nonfiction, students will cultivate an understanding of author as architect, as well as the ability to analyze and articulate the way language operates in any text. Possible texts include works by Jonathan Swift, George Orwell, E.B. White, Annie Dillard, Martin Luther King, Zora Neale Hurston, and Judith Ortiz Cofer. Possible writing assignments include written response journals; letters; speeches; and personal, analytical, and persuasive essays. At the end of the course students are prepared to take the AP Language and Composition exam.