

Rationale

Twenty-first century culture is not as strongly rooted in print as was the culture of earlier centuries. Twentieth century developments of radio, film, advertising, television, computers, and the Internet have all impacted culture to the point where a huge proportion of the information we are exposed to is screen-based, not paper-based and image-based, not word-based. In a time when the base of our culture has expanded so greatly, we can not claim to be studying our culture unless we provide a prominent place in the school curriculum for the kinds of literacy needed to understand all media. The skills of thinking critically about mass communication are essential survival skills in a technological, consumer society asch as ours. The purpose of this class is not only to assess the student's abilities to think critically when analyzing media, but beyond that, the experience and knowledge the student acquires from their study of media literacy will be applicable in all subject areas, in all careers, and in their daily lives.

Course Description

This English Language Arts course is designed to teach the skills necessary to analyze a variety of media messages in society. The student will study print and television advertisements, movies, television, music, news, and social media. Using these media as text, the student will determine how media shapes and influences our society. In addition to numerous nonfiction articles, critical thinking skills will be applied in order to "read" advertisements, TV shows, and films. Additionally, the student will complete three major projects, one presentation, and various short writing assignments during the semester.

Prerequisites

Successful completion of English I and II

Course Objectives

1. The student will participate in formal and informal oral discussion and presentations, including Socratic Seminars, collaborative projects, and student-led class dialogues, analyze speaker's purpose, as well as focus on speaking skills including tone, volume, eye contact, etc., and complete a minimum of one developed, formal multi-media presentation.
2. The student will engage regularly in academic and personal research, distinguish among sources based on quality, practice academic honesty, utilize style guides (including MLA), and produce a minimum of three formal researched products such as essays, presentations, projects, etc.
3. The student will read daily, including a required anchor text of substance (such as a novel, memoir, informational text) of sufficient text complexity to prepare students for college-level texts, with a minimum expectation of 75 pages of reading per week (including research).
4. The student will write daily (including journaling, creative pieces, summary, short response, etc.), engage in the writing process (including pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing, and conferencing with the teacher), with a minimum expectation of 3-4 finished pieces of substance produced each semester (such as essay, narrative, argument, script, etc.).
5. The student will identify and analyze how different media messages create meaning.
6. The student will study and analyze the various elements of visual literacy and design and also create visual images and messages using these rules and techniques.
7. The student will analyze, interpret, and create advertising messages and media.
8. The student will analyze filmmaking techniques to understand how they influence our understanding of characters, mood, plot, and theme as well as the impact and reflective nature of film and culture.
9. The student will study and analyze the impact of the internet and social media on American culture and personal identity.

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