

"The free, exploring mind of the individual human is the most valuable thing in the world." -John Steinbeck

**MMACHS - 10th Grade English Language Arts Syllabus
Honors American Literature
Mr. Nathan Green**

Email: green.nathan@westada.org **Schoology Code:** _____

Dear Students and Parents,

In sophomore English at MMACHS, we will learn to see American literature as a window into our culture — and ourselves — within a historical **context**. As such, we will frequently wrestle with questions about American values and identity, trying to find answers through thoughtful **close reading** of influential American authors.

In addition to analyzing great works of literature, students will also develop their oral and written communication skills. Through class debates and writing assignments, they will learn to express their ideas more effectively, honing their abilities to use emotion, logic, and **credibility** to form persuasive arguments.

Ultimately, students in this course will succeed when they see themselves as active collaborators in learning. Rather than sitting back and passively receiving information, they should take ownership over their own education. I expect them to strive to make the readings, discussions, and writing projects their own.

With hard work and kindness, we will strive to become more competent, confident, and creative readers, writers, speakers, **listeners**, and thinkers. As their teacher, I will do my best to provide them with the tools and guidance they need to succeed.

Sincerely,

Nate Green

Unit Sequence

Unit 1 - Visions of a New World: Focuses on 19th century American Romanticism to answer, “How does perspective shape our world?” Texts include writings by Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David **Thoreau**, Walt Whitman, Edgar Allan Poe, Emily Dickinson, and Frederick Douglass. As a unit project, students will “perform” a close-reading.

Unit 2 - Dreams (and Nightmares): Focuses on the early 20th century from World War I through the Great Depression to answer, “What is the American Dream?” Texts include F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby* and John Steinbeck’s *Of Mice and Men*. As a unit project, students will participate in a Socratic Seminar.

Unit 3 - Defense Against the Dark Arts: Focuses on advertising and political speech to answer, “How can we persuade others to think and act?” Texts include television ads and speeches by John F. Kennedy and Ronald Reagan. As a unit project, students will collaborate on an advertising campaign.

Unit 4 - Sting Like a Bee: Focuses on the period from World War II through the Vietnam War to answer, “What is American (counter)culture?” Texts include Sue Monk Kidd’s *The Secret Life of Bees* and protest music by Bob **Dylan**. As a unit project, students will take a stand on a controversial issue in American culture.

Unit 5 - Dystopian Futures: Focuses on the 1950s to the present, through the lens of **science fiction**, to answer, “What do we fear and desire in the Postmodern age?” Texts will include short stories by Ray Bradbury, Isaac Asimov, and Octavia Butler. As a unit project, students will publish a short story.

Grading: Assignments will be evaluated on a point system that reflects their difficulty and time commitment. Homework, classwork, and quizzes will be worth 5-25 points; major essays, projects, and tests will be worth 50-100 points.

Participation: A dynamic English class requires engagement in all activities. As such, each student’s participation will count toward 25 points for each unit.

	“Harvard’s on the Phone!” (A)	“Nice Job!” (B)	“Almost there” (C)	“Frowny Face” (D-F)
Attitude	Always shows respect towards self and others; demonstrates a love for learning.	Usually shows respect towards self and others; demonstrates a desire to learn.	Often shows respect towards self and others; sometimes demonstrates a negative attitude.	Often fails to show respect and demonstrates a negative attitude for learning.
Teamwork	Consistently collaborates with other students to reach common goals. Always offers meaningful contributions to discussions and projects.	Usually collaborates with others to reach common goals. Offers contributions to discussions and projects.	Sometimes collaborates with other students. Offers minimal contributions to discussions and projects.	Rarely offers positive contributions to discussions and projects.
Work Ethic	Strives to be highly efficient with class time. Acts as a role model for productivity and high standards.	Usually strives to be efficient with class time. Shows productivity and high standards.	Sometimes tries to be efficient with class time; shows some productivity and high standards.	Often fails to complete work, distracts other students, or shows low standards.

Absences and makeup work: An absent student should check the class website and ask classmates what was missed. The student must hand in the missing work within **one week** of the absence to receive full credit.

Missing or late work: Assignments should be ready at the beginning of class. Late assignments will lose **25%**, and those missing more than five days will receive a zero. *Remember: it’s better to tell me about potential problems with an assignment before it is due.*

Plagiarism: Stealing the ideas of another person without giving proper credit is a serious academic offense and will not be tolerated. Copying information from the internet or another source without **CITING** the source may result in severe consequences.

****Note: Mr. Green reserves the right to revise classroom curriculum and policies to best serve student learning.**

Required Supplies:

- A college-ruled composition notebook, especially for English class
- A glue stick or paste
- Highlighters (three different colors recommended)
- Sticky notes (3”x3” recommended)

*For further details about expectations and consequences, please consult the MMACHS Student Handbook.

Homework: As part of a rigorous high school English course, students will be expected to read all assigned texts and write all assigned papers. Students will often need to complete work at home. *Parents can assist students by setting aside quiet study time without access to television, cell phones, or*