

English 9 + 10
Office Hours: 7:45-8:20 AM, room A304

Welcome to high school! I'm glad I get to embark on this journey with you and look forward to all we'll learn together this year.

The reason I love literature is because there are no absolute answers to the questions posed by writers. As we delve into different texts this year, we will get a glimpse of what makes humanity so unique and fascinating. Since each one of us has experienced life differently, we will note that interpretations, feelings, and insights will vary from person to person. Know that our classroom, whether it meets in the brick-and-mortar structure, or online, is a safe space where we will listen intently, respond kindly, and learn continuously.

Course Description- 9th Grade

What does it mean to be an individual? How does one's culture shape their identity? What does it take to be a hero? Our ninth-grade curriculum explores the individual's quest for identity, echoing the issue that many of us confront when entering high school. Together, we will concentrate on key topics throughout the year: defining humanity, the purpose of quests, attaining personal happiness, understanding our culture, and the role of family and friends. As we work together, this course will provide us with in-depth exposure to the English language through a study of great works of literature, expository and creative writing, grammar and vocabulary study, original research, group discussions, and presentations.

Works Studied (9th grade)

Choice of two (or more!) titles from the summer reading list:

- [*Daughter of Fortune*](#) by Isabel Allende (violence and sexual situations)
- [*American Street*](#) by Ibi Zoboi (profanity, sexual situations, and violence)
- [*The Poet X*](#) by Elizabeth Acevedo (profanity, sexual situations, and violence)
- [*The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time*](#) by Mark Haddon (violence)
- [*Lucy and Linh*](#) by Alice Pung (profanity and sexual references)
- [*Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe*](#)- Benjamin Alire Sáenz (profanity and sexual references)
- [*Little Women*](#) - Louisa May Alcott
- [*A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*](#) - Betty Smith (sexual situations, references to alcohol)
- [*Just Listen*](#) - Sarah Dessen (references to drugs and alcohol, sexual situations)

In-Class Works

- "Hills Like White Elephants" by Ernest Hemingway
- "The Lie" by Kurt Vonnegut
- "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been" by Joyce Carol Oates
- "Through the Tunnel" by Doris Lessing

- Excerpt from 'Cat's Eye' by Margaret Atwood
- *The Odyssey* - Homer
- *The Catcher in the Rye* - JD Salinger (profanity, sexual references)
- *The Kite Runner* – Khaled Hosseini (sexual violence)
- *Born a Crime* - Trevor Noah
- *A Doll's House* - Henrik Ibsen

Course Description- 10th Grade

We will read, write about, and discuss a wide selection of texts together as we build your language arts skills while exploring the complexities of the human experience and probing vast questions, including:

- Can an individual exist in society without coming into conflict with it?
 - What is the role of the individual in an unjust society?
 - Is ambition more likely to be the trait of a hero or a villain?
- How do we tell right from wrong? What are some forces for good and evil?
 - How does our language shape our identity or culture as a whole?
 - How can language influence us?
 - What makes a perfect society?
- What distinguishes a utopia from a dystopia?

Works Studied (10th Grade)

Choice of two (or more!) titles from the summer reading list:

- *True Grit* by Charles Portis
- *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens
- *Feed* by Matthew Tobin
- *Ship Breaker* by Paolo Bacigalupi
- *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding
- *The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes*- Suzanne Collins
- *The Grapes of Wrath* - John Steinbeck
- *The Book Thief* - Markus Zusak
- *The Rock and the River* - Kekla Magoon
- *Between Shades of Gray*- Ruta Sepetys
- *All the Stars Denied*- Guadalupe Garcia McCall
- *Tokyo Ever After: A Novel*- Emiko Jean

In-Class Works

- *Power of One* - Bryce Courtenay
- *1984* - George Orwell
- *The Shawshank Redemption* – Stephen King

- *Kindred* - Octavia E. Butler
- *Macbeth* - William Shakespeare

What You Will Need

- ❑ The school provided book/text we are studying that day
- ❑ A notebook of your choice
- ❑ A sturdy folder for handouts
- ❑ Lots of pens, pencils, and highlighters
- ❑ Small sticky notes and [sticky tabs](#)
- ❑ According to the school's guidelines, each student should bring their own device, charged and ready to be used in class.

Assessments- 9th grade + 10th grade

Below are the types of assessments you will encounter this year. The percentage values reflect how much these assessments weigh in the grade book every quarter. Larger assessments warrant larger weighted values.

- ➔ Essays, Socratic Seminars, and Tests- 45%
- ➔ Participation - 15%
- ➔ Quizzes & Presentations - 30%
- ➔ Homework & Classwork - 10%

Participation Scoring Guide

A - Students are not only consistently engaged but elevate our class discussions with scholarly insights and questions. They are always enthusiastic, well-prepared, and quick to help others. These students are also *brave* - taking risks by asserting opinions that may be controversial or unique.

B - Students are consistently engaged and enthusiastic. They are almost always prepared for class but may require some coaxing to participate from time to time. Their homework is almost always complete.

C - Students sometimes engage with others, but prefer to listen passively until called upon, and may require occasional reminders to stay on task. Homework may be incomplete or lack thoroughness.

D - Students are hesitant to discuss or listen to ideas, and usually participate only when called upon. Homework is often incomplete or lacking in thoughtfulness.

F- Students are disengaged or dismissive of others. These students are unprepared and may even decline to participate on occasion.

Important Considerations

Grades- Assignments have different point values. Your final grade will reflect the total points you have earned during the marking period.

Missing Class- All assignments will be posted on Infinite Campus and Google Classroom. Be sure to email me, or come by during extra help if you have any questions about what you missed.

Late Work- Late work will only be accepted when turned in directly to me during extra help. Major assignments that are one day late will receive a grade no higher than 90% of the total grade, each subsequent day will receive an added deduction of 5% of the total grade. Minor assignments, classwork, and homework will receive half credit and will not be accepted late without a valid excuse.

Cell Phones- Cell phones should remain inside bookbags unless otherwise instructed. Improper use of cell phones during class is not tolerated and will result in the confiscation of the device and directed to Mr. Lessane.

Extra Help- I'm available for extra help in room A304. In an instance where you are not able to attend extra help in the morning, contact me and a meeting can be scheduled.

Classroom Policy - Our room is a shared space among different students and teachers. It is important that an effort is made to maintain the room clean and organized. Foul language is not tolerated and, if used, will result in detention.

Online Learning - In case there is a need for remote learning during the year, note below the school-wide policy regarding online learning:

ZOOM SESSIONS (DURING HYBRID OR REMOTE):

The ZOOM sessions are an important component of Remote Learning (whether we are in a hybrid or a fully remote learning mode). They provide the needed interaction of a live traditional class. Given the constraints of the medium, all participants in the Zoom class sessions are expected to adhere to the following rules and best practices in order to ensure the best possible learning environment.

Preparation

- Never enter, or attempt to enter, a Zoom session fraudulently using the name of another student, faculty, or staff member.

- Only attend Zooms for your regularly scheduled classes and sections.
- Class meeting IDs are never to be shared with others outside of the class.
- The background for a Zoom session must be appropriate.
- Students should be logged on and prepared to begin working at the start of a Zoom. Do not wait until the start of a meet to log on.

Participation

- Arrive on time for the class session.
- Zoom is a virtual classroom; therefore, all classroom rules apply.
- The device being used should be identified by the student's full name. Changing your name to something inappropriate is unacceptable behavior and will be addressed immediately.
- Students should remain logged on and visible for the duration of the Zoom (camera ON). Students who are present for part of an online session will be marked absent.
- As expected of any class interaction, participants are to treat each other with courtesy and respect.
- Offensive or inappropriate language is not to be used in any form of communication. This extends to emails, discussion postings, group projects, and submitted assignments which may be part of or an extension of the Zoom interaction.
- Use of any profanity - written, drawn, displayed, or spoken - during a Zoom is unacceptable.
- Taking screenshots or screen recordings of virtual classrooms without explicit permission from the teacher and class members is unacceptable.

Disciplinary Action for Unacceptable Behavior

- Disruptions to a Zoom session may lead to the removal of the student from a remote learning session for part or the entire session.
- Students with an unexcused absence or who are removed from a Zoom session for disruptive behavior may not receive any credit for the activity, classwork, assessment, or participation that took place during his absence.
- Repeated disruption and/or unexcused absences and/or repeated latenesses will be reported to the Assistant Principal and may lead to suspension from Zoom class sessions altogether.

Students may face immediate suspension or expulsion from for any of the following major infractions:

- Entering a meeting fraudulently.

- Creating negative images of meetings using screenshots or screen recordings of any member of the faculty, staff, or administration.
- Using profanity or obscenities in any form.
- Verbal or physical abuse in the form of intimidation, harassment, or threatening behavior directed toward the teacher, fellow students, or administrative staff.
- Any student who is found plagiarizing or cheating will follow the rules and regulations set forth in the Academic Integrity Policy and have his/her/their grade for the assignment/assessment lowered or may fail the course.

Cheating and Plagiarism- We will follow the school's academic integrity policy as stated below:

The Bronxville School Academic Integrity

The Bronxville School strives to foster academic integrity for all school community members. Everyone in our community is responsible to help in upholding basic expectations for academic integrity. This is a shared duty that requires the understanding of all stakeholders. To this end, we will define some terms and conditions related to academic integrity that hold true across both the Middle and High Schools below. Everyone needs to have an understanding of the role they play in the maintenance of a fair and balanced academic environment.

Responsibilities of Students

The related tenets of academic integrity reflect the high value our community places on self-regulation, honesty, and always doing one's best. The Middle and High Schools take infractions of the basic rules regarding academic integrity seriously and there are consequences for any student who breaks rules related to collaboration, cheating, and plagiarism.

Collaboration - To work with others on a goal or product where the connection of members is known and approved and where each member shares responsibility for the outcome.

Our school recognizes the importance of being able to collaborate effectively as a life skill. There are moments where collaboration is encouraged and others where it is required. There are also times when collaboration is not allowed and if you work with others, it is a form of cheating. Unless specific permission is given to collaborate, assignments are given as assessments of your independent learning, including the completion of homework. Tests and quizzes, presentations, essays, and assignments are to be your own individual work unless otherwise noted.

It is your responsibility to check with the teacher if there is any question in your mind about how an assignment can be delivered. When submitting group or collaborative work, please list all member names. In the case of assignments where you received other outside help, you must let your teacher know what kind of help was given to you to complete the work (parent, friend, tutor, online resources, etc.) so that your teacher can better help you navigate future assignments.

Cheating - Anything that results in presenting work as your own that is not of your own individual effort is a form of cheating.

Allowing anyone else to do your work (peer, parent, friend, tutor) or presenting someone else's work as your own is cheating. Cheating includes misuse of online or other resources, or use of any unauthorized materials during testing, too. It is important to note that if you help someone to cheat including offering answers, sharing screenshots of completed work, sharing questions from a test between class periods, etc. you are equally responsible for breaking academic integrity and will be held accountable for your part in breaking academic integrity. Penalties for cheating may vary by class but will generally result in minimum or no credit being given for the object of the infraction, which is likely to lead to a significantly lower quarterly grade as a result.

Plagiarism- Presenting written work as your own when the ideas or content is either copied word-for-word or otherwise paraphrased without proper citation are forms of plagiarism.

It is your responsibility to present your own original writing every time you submit work. The importance of presenting your own thoughts in writing and how to properly quote, to paraphrase effectively, and how to correctly cite the ideas of others are part of what you learn more about each year in any number of classes. As your writing develops, so will your ability to use these components of written expression properly.

Learning to write and to perform research includes a large compendium of skills that are added to and refined through high school and beyond. MLA formatting is introduced in sixth grade. Proper citation and sophisticated writing techniques are part of the curriculum each year through middle and high school as well as learning ways to avoid copying or too closely mimicking the style of other writers is essential in becoming a self-reliant, sophisticated writer.

Incidental plagiarism may be the result of not knowing enough about a particular form of research or writing and should be considered a moment for focused learning. Your teacher may still require your work to be redone to match required conventions.

Blatant plagiarism is cheating. Work that has been copied from any source and presented as one's own will result in a student receiving a zero on the assignment until it is redone. The redone assignment, if accepted and based on effort by the student, will be recounted at a maximum of 64%.

Keep in mind that teachers have a wide range of tools available to them to help spot plagiarism. Turning in work that has been done by someone else including peers, siblings, parents, or tutors is always breaking the rules related to academic integrity.

Consequences for Cheating or Plagiarism

The consequences of breaking the rules related to Academic Integrity are not a single class issue. If a student breaks the rules, the consequences follow that student across the three years they are in middle school and then reset again for the four years of high school. The consequences are cumulative and are in place to remind all students that the potential outcome related to cheating or plagiarizing are not worth the associated risks. Cheating and plagiarism are often cause for dismissal at the college

level and if a student doesn't internalize the importance of Academic Integrity while in our school, they will likely pay a very high price. Below are leveled consequences for cheating or plagiarizing in our middle and high schools.

First Offense: The first offense of our Academic Integrity policy will result in the student receiving a zero on the assignment, test, or other assessment. Only after parents have been notified and a meeting held with a counselor or other school official will the student be allowed to rewrite or retake an assessment to receive a revised score not to exceed 64%. This very low score will be averaged into the quarterly grade for the class.

Second Offense: A second instance of cheating and/or plagiarism in the same or any other class will result in a student having parents notified and a meeting held with a counselor or other school official. The outcome of this meeting will be an academic intervention plan to help the student to produce their own work and to ensure that they are not making bad decisions related to Academic Integrity. Only then will a student be allowed to rewrite or retake the assessment for credit. If the work is deemed acceptable by the teacher, the resulting grade for the quarter will be reduced by a full letter grade in that class.

Third Offense: A student who breaks Academic Integrity three times will require a meeting with district officials, school administration, teachers, and parents. The outcome of this type of meeting may vary depending on circumstances, but will include interventions such as: Issuing a report to all teachers that there is a need for specific oversight for the student in testing situations, student tests may have to be taken in more controlled locations, the student may be required to pre-submit work to teachers in stages or in advance of deadlines, the student may need to attend ongoing academic counseling, and other related examples of interventions that may be recommended for the student.

Parent Responsibilities for Supporting Academic Integrity

It is critical that parents are aware that school is a process where growth is the goal, not perfection. By supporting your child's experience in school, you are also helping them to make good decisions when faced with choices that may have negative consequences. Helping your child to cope with competing demands and being conscious of how much time your child is booked with activities that may interfere with relaxation and schoolwork is an essential part of helping your child develop a connection to academic integrity. Working to attain higher goals will necessarily include moments where improvement is slow, and failure can be essential for future gain. Helping your child to navigate moments of concern about progress can be critical in reassuring them that progress is not always linear and that it is always preferable to present your best effort, even if it is somehow lacking.

Communication with Teachers

When you sense that your child is routinely reaching frustration when working on material for a class, it is important to communicate this with your child's teacher. If your child spends an inordinate amount of time on a subject, this is also important for a teacher to know. When there is a strong home-school connection, the temptation to look for shortcuts to work that may lead to consequences decreases.

Tutoring

Parents should let teachers know if a student is receiving tutoring in their subject area. Parents who engage the services of tutors should make clear what the intent of these sessions will be with the tutor as well. If the intent is to help with the completion of homework, this should be noted on the assignment so that the teacher knows extra help was given and that the assignment was not completed independently. While teachers will not communicate directly with tutors, it is important that teachers are aware of the kind of help students receive outside of school.

Encourage Attendance at Extra Help

Tutoring is not a substitute for extra-help, and it is critical that your child cultivate good working relations with teachers outside of class, too. This is a life skill that will pay dividends in future academic and job arenas and is another important connection that reduces the allure of taking the risk to act dishonestly.

Teacher Responsibilities for Supporting Academic Integrity

Teachers in The Bronxville School must always act with academic integrity. The source of content used in classes must always be properly described for students as part of the ongoing training students receive about the importance of citation. At the start of any new course, teachers will make every effort to ensure that specific rules regarding what constitutes plagiarism and cheating are reviewed with students for that class.