

Crime in Literature Overview (12th Grade ½ Year Elective)

Course Description	This half-year course will examine the evolution of the true crime genre throughout American history. Our studies will dive deeper into the portrayal of crimes, the perception of criminals, the process of investigation, and the role that society plays within the literature of the time period. A wide range of literary works will be included, such as short and full-length works of fiction, nonfiction, poetry and other genres such as podcasts. Through informational, narrative and research writing, this analysis will serve as a way of engaging students and expanding their analytical skills in reading, fostering speaking and listening skills, as well as written and visual inquiry.
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Over the Course of The Semester	
Essential Questions	<p><i>A variety of the following essential questions will be covered to accompany selected texts and units throughout the course of the semester:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are the values, beliefs and ethics of a society reflected in its literature? • How has crime literature become such a popular genre? • How do we examine the psychology of people who engage in transgressive behavior that violates societal norms?
Skills/Standards/Topics	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Priority Standards Covered</u></p> <p><u>READING LITERARY TEXTS</u></p> <p><i>-Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what a text states explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain. (RL.11-12.1)</i></p> <p><i>-Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of a text. (RL.11-12.2)</i></p> <p><i>-Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story, poem, or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed). (RL.11-12.3)</i></p> <p><i>-Determine the figurative or connotative meaning(s) of words and phrases as they are used in a text; analyze the impact of specific words or rhetorical patterns (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place, how shifts in rhetorical patterns signal new perspectives). (See grades 11–12 Language Standards 4–6 on applying knowledge of vocabulary to reading.) (RL.11-12.4)</i></p> <p><i>-Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution, the choice to introduce a new tone or point of view)</i></p>

contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact. (RL.11-12.5)

-Analyze a case in which grasping point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, understatement, notable omission). (RL.11-12.6)

-Independently and proficiently read and comprehend literary texts representing a variety of genres, cultures, and perspectives and exhibiting complexity appropriate for the grade/course.

READING INFORMATIONAL TEXTS

-Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what a text states explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain. (RI.11-12.1)

-Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text. (RI.11-12.3)

-Determine the meaning(s) of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze how an author uses and refines or revises the meaning of a key term or terms over the course of a text (RI.11-12.4)

-Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness, or beauty of the text. (RI.11-12.6)

-Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., charts, graphs, photographs, videos, maps) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem. (RI.11-12.7)

-Independently and proficiently read and comprehend literary nonfiction representing a variety of genres, cultures, and perspectives and exhibiting complexity appropriate for the grade/course. (RI.-11-12.10)

WRITING

-Write arguments (e.g., essays, letters to the editor, advocacy speeches) to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence. (W. 11-12.1)

-Write informative /explanatory texts (e.g., essays, oral reports, biographical feature articles) to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content. (W.11-12.2)

-Write narratives to develop experiences or events using effective literary techniques, well-chosen details, and well-structured sequences. (W. 11-12.3)

-Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)(W.11-12.4)

-Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience. (W.11-12.5)

Use technology, including current web-based communication platforms, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products in response to

ongoing feedback, including new arguments or information. (W.11-12.6)

-Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation. (W.11-12.7)

-When conducting research, gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the task, purpose, and audience; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and overreliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation. (W.11-12.8)

SPEAKING & LISTENING

-Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively. (SL.11-12.1)

-Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, vocabulary, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks. (SL.11-12.4)

-Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., audio, visual, interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest. (SL.11-12.5)

-Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating a command of formal English when indicated or appropriate. (SL.11-12.6)

LANGUAGE

-Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking; retain and further develop language skills learned in previous grades. (See grades 11–12 Writing Standard 5 and Speaking and Listening Standard 6 on strengthening writing and presentations by applying knowledge of conventions.) (L.11-12.1)

-Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening. (L.11-12.3)

Resources

[EmPOWER Writing Program](#)- Writing process, organization and development

[CommonLit](#)- Standards Based Reading Comprehension

[Membean](#)- Differentiated Vocabulary Development

Common Writing Rubrics:

[Narrative Writing Rubric](#)

[Informative/Explanatory Writing Rubric](#)

[Argumentative Writing Rubric](#)

Core Texts

A variety of these texts will be used throughout the semester to accompany various units and essential questions.

- "On America's Obsession with True Crime" by Walter Mosley, from *Newsweek*
- "14 Reasons We Love True Crime, According to the Experts" by Erin McCarthy, from *Mental Floss*
- NPR's "The Psychology Behind America's Crime Obsession" podcast
- "Pillars of Salt" by Cotton Mather
- "A Murder of a Daughter" by Benjamin Franklin
- "The Dying Groans of Levi Ames"
- "The Murders in the Rue Morgue (Part One)" by Edgar Allen Poe
- "Edgar Allan Poe Tried and Failed to Crack the Mysterious Murder Case of Mary Rogers" by Angela Serratore
- "Roughing It" by Mark Twain
- "A Dash for the Timber" painting by Frederic Remington
- *Criminal's* "Pearl Bryan" podcast
- *The Devil in the White City* by Erik Larsen
- *In Cold Blood* by Truman Capote
- "Cold Blooded: The Clutter Family Murders" (2017 miniseries)
- "The Grisly, All-American Appeal of Serial Killers" by Julie Beck, from *The Atlantic*
- *My Friend Dahmer* by Derf Backderf
- Netflix "The Making of a Murderer", Episode 1
- *Serial: Season One* podcast