

# Nicolet High School

## Fictional and True Crime Literature and Composition Syllabus

*Accelerating Achievement for Every Student, Every Classroom, Every Day*



### Instructors

**Ms. Jennifer Weddel**

Phone: 414.351.8166

Email: jennifer.weddel@nicolet.us

**Mr. John Christensen**

Phone: 414.351.8392

Email: john.christensen@nicolet.us

**Ms. Emily Schmidt**

Phone: 414.351.7577

Email: emily.schmidt@nicolet.us

### Course Description

Why do real crime stories fascinate us? How did the idea of a true-crime podcast inspire a popular show series? What keeps us coming back to this genre for more? Through the exploration of both fictional mystery and suspense stories and true crime, this course will allow students the opportunity to trace the evolution of the mystery genre. We will examine what is revealed about human nature and society by this evolution, by the continued popularity of the genre, and by how fear and guilt, crime, detection, punishment, and moral responsibility are treated in these texts and their adaptations. Through the study of true crime stories, podcasts, and articles, students will familiarize themselves with the elements essential to the mystery genre. Students will analyze these elements as they determine the way in which authors leverage plot sequencing, suspense, and anecdote to engage the audience in the story. Come read, write, and dissect crime stories with us! Throughout the analysis of text and film, students will explore the relationship between setting and mood, learn how to develop characters through narrative writing, and develop research skills by researching self-selected topics.

### UNIT SCOPE AND SEQUENCE:

#### Semester Time Frame

Unit 1: The *Serial* Effect

Unit 2: Origin of the Mystery Genre: *And Then There Were None*

Unit 3: Fear, Justice, and the Experience of Modern True Crime: *12 Angry Men*

Unit 4: True Crime Obsession

Unit 5: Unsolved Mysteries

*Ongoing throughout the semester: Vocabulary, bellwork, and independent reading.*

### ***Materials Needed:***

- A school issued Chromebook (fully charged each day)
- Writing Utensil (pen/pencil)
- Core Text (the book we're talking about in class)
- Earbuds (will be used occasionally for teacher-directed activities)
- Independent Reading Text (the book you can't stop reading)
- Assigned text (the text we're reading in class)
- Always bring your student ID or another form of identification for scanning your attendance each hour.

## ***Course Requirements***

Students are expected to adhere to all guidelines specified in the Nicolet Student Handbook.

### **PROTOCOLS AND POLICIES**

- Hall passes may not be given during the first or last ten minutes of class, and only one student may be out of the room at a time. You will be asked to hand in your cellular device when you obtain a pass.
- Chromebook loaners will only be given for Chromebooks that need repairs. You may ask for one in the library before 7:50am, after school, or during Enrichment with a pass from your teacher.
- Books for independent reading - bring a book with you to class every day!
- Earbuds and headphones are not to be used during instruction unless directed by your teacher. You may be required to remove your hood/hat during reading time, during instruction, or during an assessment to ensure that earbuds are not being used.
- Cell phones should be neither seen nor heard during class. They will be taken if they are an issue!
- **Attend Class Every Day.** If you must be absent, please provide the courtesy of alerting your teacher in advance of the absence, just as you would need to do in a work environment. This allows your teacher to plan for the class session and adjust any group activities that would be affected by your absence.
  - If you are absent, you are responsible for finding what you missed on Canvas and completing all assignments in a timely manner. You are also encouraged to reach out to your classmates or teacher if you have questions.

## ***Academic Honesty and Integrity***

You are expected to submit work that is yours, is original, and that was composed for this class. You are required to credit the source of any material that is paraphrased and/or copied from another source. Please see the Nicolet Student Handbook for more information about the Academic Honesty policy at Nicolet High School.

## ***Artificial Intelligence Syllabus Statement***

Learning is an active process that engages students in the development of new skills and knowledge, therefore students may use AI **only when they have been given permission by their teachers and use AI to support active learning**. This permission is given with the expectation that students will use Artificial Intelligence **effectively** and **responsibly** and that it will be used to **augment** learning and not replace it.

Copying and pasting of Artificial Intelligence output and presenting it as original work is considered plagiarism and constitutes a violation of the Nicolet District Academic Integrity policy. Teachers who give permission for the use of AI may require citation or other documentation and may provide additional expectations of what approved use of AI looks like in their course.

## ***Short-Term Virtual Learning Information***

If Nicolet shifts to a virtual learning day because of weather or other short-term reason, we will continue our learning on Canvas. All the information that you will need for this class on a virtual learning day will be found in the announcement that will appear in our Canvas course. You must submit the work assigned for this day by 11:59 to verify your attendance, but we encourage you to begin your work early enough so that you can use the designated office hour time during the school day for any questions that you might have.

## ***Assessment and Grading***

Students in True Crime and Mystery Literature will work toward Mastery of the specified outcomes for the course. You will benefit from frequent assessment and feedback along the way. Two types of assessment will be used to monitor and guide your progress in this course:

1. **Formative Assessment:** Formative assessment is the daily work you will complete to practice skills and receive feedback to improve. Because Formative work accounts for 15% of your semester score in the class, this work provides a low-risk, low-stakes opportunity for you to explore and experiment with new techniques and ideas without worrying about how those early attempts will affect your grade. Completing this practice and engaging in the workshop community of the classroom will help you to build on your strengths and improve as a reader and writer. You are expected to complete all assignments with your best effort as an investment into your own progress. Please remember that you will be receiving feedback on your formative assessments to better prepare you for your summative assessments!
2. **Summative Assessment:** Summative assessments allow you to demonstrate your ability to apply the skills we have been working on throughout the unit. Through the formative work you have done, you will have received many opportunities to practice, reflect on, and revise your work. The work you submit for the summative will be the culmination of that formative practice - and your opportunity to present your learning to an authentic audience, which may include your instructors, your classmates, your parents and guardians, and, in some cases, a wider audience.

## ***Attendance/Late Work/Makeup Work***

Your final grade, which comes from your growth as a reader, writer and speaker, is earned through a demonstration of what you know and can do. Missing opportunities to grow in these areas and demonstrate evidence of learning impedes your ability to master learning outcomes. **If you are absent, check with Canvas, another student, or me to get your missing work.** If you are unable to attend class for an extended time, you will be expected to continue to progress in your learning asynchronously using Canvas. You will receive a 0 for work that is not done.

- All formatives must be submitted before the summative due-date
- In order to revise a final summative, all formatives must be complete prior to the summative
- Summative revisions must be completed no later than the next unit's introduction of the summative
- Due to the ability to revise summative assessments, no "extra" work will be given to receive extra credit

## ***Assessment Scale:***

The rubric for each summative assessment is aligned to the outcomes for the course. Rubrics will be provided via Canvas at the start of every unit. Throughout the unit, you will receive feedback from yourself, your classmates, and your instructors as you monitor your progress toward mastery of each outcome.

***Honors Distinction:***

|  |  |
|--|--|
| What is it?  | A designation on a student's transcript that indicates that they have met the requirements for Honors Distinction in one of Nicolet's Seminar Courses.   |
| Who is eligible?   | Students who consistently receive "stretch" or "advanced" on summative rubrics throughout the entire semester are eligible to work toward the Honors Distinction.  |
| What do I need to do <i>beyond</i> scoring "stretch" or "advanced" on summative rubrics in order to earn honors distinction? | On every rubric, there is a "stretch" category that states, "student's work exceeds the standard, and the student is able to articulate the choices they made and the way in which their work moves beyond the expectations for Advanced." |

To earn honors distinction, you must complete the following for every summative assessment in the course:

- Initiate conferencing with the teacher throughout the summative process.
- Create a detailed plan indicating what you will do to exceed the expectations of the assessment.
- Explain how and why you've exceeded the expectations placed upon you.

## Fictional and True Crime Literature and Composition Essential Outcomes

### Reading Outcomes:

**R.11-12.1:** Cite relevant textual evidence that strongly supports analysis of what the text says explicitly/implicitly and make logical inferences, including determining where the text is ambiguous; develop questions for deeper understanding and for further exploration. (RI&RL)

**R.11-12.3:** In literary texts, analyze the impact of the author's choices. (RL) In informational texts, analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop. (RI)

**R.11-12.6:** Analyze how authors employ point of view, perspective, and purpose to shape explicit and implicit messages (e.g., persuasiveness, aesthetic quality, satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement). Explain how an author's geographic location, identity, and culture affect perspective. (RI&RL)

### Writing Outcomes:

**W.11-12.2:** Write text in a variety of modes: a. Write arguments and literary analysis to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts. Establish the significance of the claim(s) using valid reasoning, literary theory and relevant and sufficient evidence which introduce precise claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that establishes clear relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence. Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly, supplying evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level and concerns. b. Write informative texts that examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content by introducing a topic; organizing complex ideas, concepts, and information to make important connections and distinctions; including formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension; thoroughly developing the topic by selecting the most significant and relevant well-chosen facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, and other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic. c. Write narratives that develop real or imagined experiences or events using relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences that organize an event sequence logically. Engages and orientates the reader by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator or characters; using techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, and reflection, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.

**W.11-12.3:** Create writing that utilizes: a. Organization: introduce a topic; organize complex ideas, concepts, analysis, information and claims, so that each new element builds on that which precedes it to create a unified whole. Establish and maintain a structure and conventions consistent with the mode of writing. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the topic, themes, and experiences presented in the text. b. Transitions: use appropriate and varied transitions and syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts. c. Word Choice (including domain specific): use culturally-sustaining language and domain-specific vocabulary to manage the complexity of the topic. Use techniques such as metaphor, simile, and analogy to manage the complexity of the topic.

**W.11-12.5:** Develop and strengthen writing (collaboratively and individually) 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.11-12.7:** Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem that is rhetorically authentic and culturally-sustaining; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating an understanding of the subject under investigation.

**W.11-12.8:** 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.

### **Speaking and Listening Outcomes:**

**SL.11-12.1:** Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on topics, texts, and issues, listening actively, and building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly. a. Come to discussions prepared, explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic, text or issue. Support analysis by making connections, paraphrasing, clarifying, or explaining the evidence. b. Work with peers to promote civil, democratic discussions and decision-making and set clear goals. Reflect on progress as an individual and as a group. c. Propel conversations by posing and engaging with questions that probe reasoning and evidence; ensure a hearing for a full range of positions on a topic or issue; clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions. Promote and seek to understand multiple, divergent, and creative perspectives. d. Engage thoughtfully with diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.

**SL.11-12.4:** Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying perspective, such that listeners can follow the reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives addressed, and the organization. Intentionally utilize development, substance, and style appropriate to purpose, audience, and situation.

### **Language Outcomes:**

**L.11-12.3:** Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings. • Determine the denotative, connotative, and figurative meanings of words and phrases used in texts; analyze nuances in the meaning of words with similar denotations. • Analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on the meaning, tone, and effectiveness of a response; consider words with multiple meanings, language that is particularly engaging or beautiful, and reading, writing, and speaking situations that seamlessly integrate linguistic diversity, ideas, and cultures.

**L.11-12.1:** Demonstrate an understanding of how language functions in different cultures, contexts, and disciplines; apply this knowledge to comprehend more fully when reading and listening, and make effective choices when composing, creating, and speaking. • Recognize that standardized English is only one dialect of many and has a specific history that is implicated in power relationships. • Develop communicative competence by effectively determining and appropriately responding to the language demands of varied situations (i.e., effectively consider the relationship between your intent as an author and the context, purpose, genre, and audience needs when writing and speaking). • Develop metacognitive awareness as writers and speakers, justifying and evaluating the effectiveness and appropriateness of language and genre choices. • Recognize standardized guidelines and style manuals exist for various disciplines (e.g., MLA in English; APA in Education, Science, and Psychology); write and edit work so that it conforms to the expectations of the discipline and writing situation. • Apply an understanding of syntax to the study of complex texts when reading; vary syntax for effect when writing.

**L.11-12.6:** Demonstrate contextually appropriate use of the conventions of standardized English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing. Discern when and where it is appropriate to use standardized English. Appropriately use and explain the intended purpose in conventions with: • Use sophisticated punctuation and capitalization techniques as appropriate to situation and genre (e.g., brackets and italics in research; capitalization expressing extended meaning in poetry). • Spell correctly.