

2025-26 COURSE SYLLABUS AND POLICIES

British Literature/Honors British Literature

Teacher: Mr. Don Meyer

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Room: 205

Office Hours/Tutoring: 2:40-3:30 pm M-Th

- **Communication Policy**

- Please use my BFCS email address to communicate with me. I am usually very responsive and check my email multiple times during the day outside of normal school hours. Please do not hesitate to email--communication is essential.

- **A Note on the Syllabus**

- Each student is responsible for knowing the information outlined in this course syllabus. Please keep a copy of this document and refer to it regularly. Information may be subject to change; students will be notified by the instructor of any changes in course requirements or policies, and changes will be posted on the class website.

WELCOME TO BRITISH LITERATURE

This class is designed to explore and understand the branching paths of Western Civilization by using literature to guide us. Battles raging on the plains of heaven, scientific experiments gone wrong, and a son set to avenge his father are just some of the fabulous tales that we will engage with throughout the year. We will explore the big questions of the ages: How do we model our heroes, and why? Can man exist in both good and evil states at the same time? Do we know for a fact that we can trust our own senses? Where did our modern understanding of 'justice' and 'morality' come from, and how has the influence of Christianity shaped it from a historical perspective?

READING SELECTIONS

Due dates for books will be listed online approximately two weeks before they are to be brought to class. Students must have the book in class on the day it is due – please plan accordingly.

- *Hamlet*, William Shakespeare
- *Paradise Lost*, John Milton (Selections are in the 10th Grade Reader, but you may also purchase a copy of the book, if you wish.
- *The Curious Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, Robert Louis Stevenson
- *Pride and Prejudice*, Jane Austen
- *A Tale of Two Cities*, Charles Dickens
- *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Oscar Wilde
- *Heart of Darkness*, Joseph Conrad
- *The Time Machine*, HG Wells

HOMEWORK

Students should anticipate homework every night, as well as most weekends. It will mostly consist of reading and response writing and thus creates the foundation of the classroom discussion. As a result, sometimes homework assignments change with the pace of the class. The teacher reserves the right to change the assignments accordingly.

****Assignments will only be accepted when completed in cursive, neat handwriting or typed, as instructed.**

SUPPLIES

This class places special emphasis on critical reading skills, annotations, and literary analysis. For this, students will need:

- Two college-ruled spiral notebooks for daily use
 - One will serve as a dedicated journal (You may also use a composition notebook, if you wish.)
 - One will be used for daily class work and class notes
- A 3-ring binder. I suggest dividers: Grammar Notes, Literature Notes, Handouts, and Graded Work
- Black, blue, and red pens
 - **Pencil is allowed only for annotations**
- Highlighters (and an optional set of Sticky Notes) for annotations

GRADING

Grading is figured using a weighted system. Your grade per semester is the reflection of your work in the following categories, in addition to a cumulative final exam at the end of each semester. Your grade is accessible via FamilyLink online. Be sure to check your grade thoroughly and frequently. Grades will be updated weekly.

GRADING CATEGORY	WEIGHTED VALUE
Participation	8%
Discussion	16%
Homework	16%
Essays	20%
Tests/Quizzes	20%
Final Exam	20%

GRADING SCALE	
100% - 90%	A
89% - 80%	B
79% - 70%	C
69%- 60%	D
59% - Below	F

LATE WORK

Assignments are due at the beginning of the class period on the deadline provided by the teacher. **No late work is accepted.** Students are responsible for any material covered during an absence. That means that students must get the notes from another student and then meet with the teacher. Students must do this the day they return to school. If a student misses an in-class assignment, they must make it up within two days of their return to school. Any work a student misses shall be marked as a zero/Absent until make up work is received. The teacher is **not** responsible for reminding students of missed work.

*****Long-term assignments are to be turned in on the due date, regardless of student attendance, unless prior arrangements have been made with the teacher.***

ABSENCES

Excused absences allow the students two school days for every day absent to make up work and have it count for full credit.

BEHAVIOR PLAN

For the sake of an orderly classroom and quality educational experience, it is necessary to expect students to conform to a uniform standard of conduct. The goal of school discipline is to correct undesirable behavior. When a student refuses to amend behavior while on school grounds, corrective action may be needed. In most circumstances, the following disciplinary process will be followed:

Classroom Level Corrective Actions		
1st level	Reminder from teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student is notified that behavior is not meeting expectations. • Student is given the opportunity to correct the behavior.
2nd level	Teacher-directed corrective action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student is given additional direction and strategies to meet expectations with a confidential student-teacher conversation. • Student is given the opportunity to correct the behavior. • Additional teacher-directed corrective actions may be implemented.
3rd level	Teacher-directed corrective action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student may be assigned to detention. • Additional teacher-directed corrective actions may be implemented. • Parents are notified.

The teacher reserves the right to skip forward in the process if the student's actions are serious enough to warrant more serious corrective action, which may include administrative level actions.

ATTENDANCE AND TARDY POLICY

Students who miss school time lose valuable classroom instruction. It is essential for students to attend school daily. There may be times when a student must be absent due to illness. Parents should make every effort to schedule appointments after school to prevent students from missing essential elements of their education.

Arizona State law requires that parents ensure that their children between the ages of six and sixteen attend school. On the fifth unexcused absence or 18 total excused/unexcused absences, regardless of the reason, the parent or guardian of the child could be issued a citation for a violation of an Arizona Revised Statute §15-803. For the purpose of awarding credit, attendance is tracked on a semester basis with interventions.

Students are expected to arrive to class on time and be working on bell work when the final bell rings. Habitual tardiness will result in detention after the 3rd tardy and for each tardy accrued, thereafter.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND PLAGIARISM

"It is more honorable to fail than to cheat." – Abraham Lincoln

Academic integrity is not just an educational matter but a moral one as well. A major aspect of classical education is instruction on growing in character and our goal of becoming a virtuous person. With this in mind, BFHS takes very seriously the willful misrepresentation of another student's work as their own. This includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism (intentional or unintentional), cheating on exams, and copying the work of other students.

Every effort will be made by the teacher to discern intentional plagiarism from unintentional plagiarism. In the case of the latter, remediation will take place between student and teacher in order to review how to properly cite others' work. This is not a punitive measure but rather an opportunity for the student to understand and correct his/her

citation skills. On the other hand, intentional plagiarism and cheating will result in a zero on the assignment, suspension, removal from extra-curricular activities or leadership positions held in the school, and, in the case of repeat offenders, corrective action.

BFHS uses a variety of tools to uphold academic integrity via plagiarism similarity reports and generative AI probability. Any papers submitted with a plagiarism similarity report of 25% or more and/or returned as 25% or more of “qualifying text...[being] determined to be generated by AI” may not be accepted for credit. Suspected papers will be reviewed by the teacher and could result in a conference with the student and/or parent. Consequences can include but are not limited to referral to administration and a score of 0 on the paper. Students are encouraged to draft all of their written work using their school Google account and Google Drive. This allows teachers the ability to check version and revision histories to help mitigate plagiarism (intentional or unintentional) as well as the use of generative AI on a portion or all of the writing assignment.

FOR PARENTS

In an effort to help your child be more successful in class and as a part of our BFHS community, I would like you to use the following parent tools:

PowerSchool: Student grades and attendance are housed here; please note that grades are updated a minimum of once a week.

Teacher web site: Features a weekly agenda with due dates, classwork/homework, and resources.

TEACHING LITERATURE RHETORICALLY

At Benjamin Franklin High School, the English department strives to select literature that touches on deep themes and profound moral truths that relate directly to the human condition. As such, we, as a school, adamantly seek to lead our students to that which is true, good, and beautiful. However, for students to be able to fully recognize that which is true, good, and beautiful, sometimes they need to be able to see its inverse.

We have a moral obligation to learn from the human experiences of the past; we cannot understand where we are going unless we know where we have been. We do that by studying past humans who have lived, how they addressed their current issues, and how they imagined their futures. The best way to do that is to read what they wrote and to try to understand it from their time period.

To that end, we teach literature rhetorically:

From literature, we learn about the transformative power of stories, the gift of imagination, the pleasures of reading, and the importance of craft. From rhetoric, we learn about critical reasoning, the structure of arguments, the tools of persuasion, and the significance of context. Combining the two gives students the best of both worlds. (Jennifer Fletcher, Teaching Literature Rhetorically)

Through explicit guidance, our teachers provide students with a controlled environment in which they can carefully guide their students through difficult themes. Where other schools may shy away from such a task, our students get to confront and develop healthy and correct responses to and/or rejections of hatred, selfishness, bigotry, and rage. Studying novels wherein the characters have experienced those traumas, we inoculate our students and inculcate them with ideals of wisdom, self-control, respect, and love for those around them.

Upon our students' graduation, it is our hope the literature and philosophical concepts we have discussed will have prepared them to enter the world as virtuous adults, adults who cling to what is good while knowing how to identify and firmly reject what is morally unjust.

RELIGION IN THE CLASSROOM

At Benjamin Franklin High School:

- We understand each student brings his or her own personal belief system to the classroom. We seek to help them understand history as part of the human experience; we do not seek to change belief systems
- We recognize the distinction between devotional expression/belief and the study of diverse devotional expressions
- We understand religions are internally diverse
- We acknowledge religion is embedded in the human experience
- We recognize how and why political, economic, and cultural lenses are intertwined within religion
- We accept our knowledge claims are "situated;" they arise out of particular social and historical contexts which are not the same as universally accepted claims/truths
- Studying religion, in context, allows us to analyze world events and character decisions

PARTICIPATION

Participation is required of all students and accounts for 30% of your overall grade.

Your class Participation grade will be based on:

- Bringing required materials to class
- Frequency and quality of participation
- Being prepared for classroom discussions by having done assigned reading/studying
- Making relevant comments based on assigned material
- Being engaged and not disrupting class and or discussion
- Taking complete and neat notes that are required
- Handling comments in class and possible disagreements with the teacher and other students with maturity and sensitivity
- Showing an interest in and respect for others' contributions

And you may lose points for:

- Raising of the hand in an attempt answer every question whether or not you have anything of quality to offer
- Interjecting in class discussion purely to be "seen" or "counted"
- Talking incessantly, rambling, or making tangential comments
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CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS

All school rules will be upheld in this classroom. For further details not covered in this syllabus, please refer to the Family Handbook.

You will find the instructor holds all students accountable, and expects:

- Positive language at all time (there is a ZERO tolerance policy for discriminatory language)
- Contribution to class discussions
- Appropriate input and involvement in group tasks
- Attentiveness and preparation for presentations
- Preparedness for minor tasks that build towards larger tasks
- Appropriate, professional, respectful behavior during engaging discussion and class activity

- Respect for the opinions and property of each of your classmates

Daily Class Expectations

- Class begins as soon as the bell rings. Please be **in your seat** when the bell rings.
- At your seats, you should have all required materials including: the day's reading, your two notebooks, pens, and any homework due that day.
- The class agenda and goals will be posted on the board so that you are aware of what we will be accomplishing during class.
- Each class period there will start with Bell Work. It could be a quote, a prompt, or a poem; it might be a grammar exercise; it could be an unusual word you need to try to define. I may think of others. You will, unprompted by me, complete the posted Bell Work.
- Please begin the Bell Work as soon as you are in your seat. You must complete the exercise or write for the entire time posted. You cannot stop, take breaks, only partially complete the work. We will often open class with a short discussion on our responses.

BATHROOM POLICY

Students are expected to remain in class for the duration of the class, so please use passing periods to use the restroom. However, in emergency situations, if you wish to go to the bathroom, please indicate by raising your hand. If given permission, you must sign out, take the bathroom pass, and visit the restroom nearest the classroom and return immediately and directly. Please note, the teacher reserves the right to ask you to wait so the educational process is not disrupted.

*****Acknowledgment*****
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Please click this [link to open a Google Form](#) to complete, thus acknowledging your receipt of this syllabus.