

School Year 2021-2022: English 11 ACP

“Our Society and Ourselves”

Instructor: Mr. Joseph
E-mail: josephd@wellesleyps.org



Course Overview: Your main objectives this year will be to develop your reading, writing, and communication skills. As close readers, you'll be asked to analyze texts actively—striving not just to comprehend literary elements, but also to evaluate a text's language, style, and themes. Building upon your close readings, this year's writing tasks will sharpen your ability to use both your written talents and critical reading skills to craft eloquent and powerful compositions. You'll also use your skills of persuasion to enhance your ability to craft an argument. As participants in class discussions and collaborative activities, you will combine with your peers to debate, disagree, concur and, most importantly, co-construct knowledge. These expectations hold you to high standards. However, it is a journey that you will undertake as part of a community of learners. Thus, remember that you don't need to walk it alone.

The Texts: Our selections this year will span across time periods, continents, styles and genres. You will be exposed to the works of a diverse group of both classic and contemporary writers, each with a unique voice and worldview. However, despite the differences in these texts, each of these writers unfolds their novel, memoir or tale within the framework of the constant struggle between the individual and society, a tension that we are continually reconciling as it dances with our day-to-day existence.

The below sequence is a broad sketch of what our class will study this year. It is subject to change based on book availability, course pacing, etc.

Summer Reading

- Wes Moore, *The Other Wes Moore* (2010)

Unit 1: Man, Woman, Family

- Toni Morrison, *Song of Solomon* (1977)
- Michael Patrick MacDonald, *All Souls: A Family Story from Southie* (1999)

Unit 2: Living in Conflict

- George Orwell, *1984* (1949)
- Ken Kesey, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1962)
 - o 1975 film adaptation, directed by Miloš Forman
- Art Spiegelman, *Maus I & II* (1980-91)

Unit 3: Tragic Origins

- Shakespeare, *Macbeth* (c. 1606)
- Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* (1958)

Unit 4: Comedy as Critique

- Kurt Vonnegut, *Welcome to the Monkey House*
- Texts in other media: *The Daily Show*, *The Colbert Report*, *The Onion*, etc.

Required Materials:

Please bring the following class materials each day.

- Pen/pencil and highlighter
- The current text we're studying
- Your Device
- An organized notebook AND/OR binder with loose-leaf paper. Your notebook/binder is where you record class notes and keep important handouts. Your binder/notebook should have four sections:
 1. Class Notes
 2. Assignments
 3. Vocabulary and Literary Terms
 4. Miscellaneous handouts

Course Activities and Expectations:

In keeping with our mission for the year, we will be largely consumed with the following pursuits:

- 1) **Active Reading:** Read with a pen and notebook in hand, annotating, analyzing and engaging with the text. Your observations could be on a micro level (i.e. What is Winston's relationship with Julia?) or, hopefully, a macro-level (i.e. how does Orwell's depiction of the teleprompters in his dystopian world relate to our own society?)
- 2) **Read it again.** Without fail, you'll pick up new insights after re-reading a poem, passage, page or chapter. Don't be afraid to delve deep into the text.

- 3) **Think independently.** We're in this for your thoughts, not the thoughts of online reading companions such as Shmoop or SparkNotes. For our purposes, It's **not** important that you come up with a consensus answer. It **is** important that you engage with the text on a personal and independent level. For more on Academic Integrity and Plagiarism, see below.

Academic Integrity:

The Academic Integrity section of the WHS Student Handbook indicates, "Plagiarism is copying or adopting any part of a literary, musical or artistic composition, a computer program, any electronically received data, or the work of another and publishing it as one's original composition or work."

The school outlines a clear method for handling academically dishonest work—which includes work reliant on SparkNotes, Shmoop, etc. Please be familiar with this policy. If the assignment requires you to cite sources, you must do so in MLA format unless otherwise specified. If you have questions about citation and sourcing, please do not hesitate to ask.

2 . Written Work

This course seeks to equip you with skills that will come in handy not only during your junior and senior years at WHS, but after you graduate as well. As such, the course will require you to write frequently— from low-stakes journaling and free-writes either in class or at home, to high-stakes formal essays. The best way to get better at writing is...to write. You will also engage in peer writing workshops and actively collaborate with your classmates, pushing each other to become better writers.

3. Class Participation

This class requires you to:

- Listen Attentively
- Contribute thoughtfully and respectfully
- Engage with classroom activities and collaborative activities
- Contribute to a healthy and respectful learning environment

Effective participation will broaden our discussions and deepen the collective understanding of a given text. Drawing relevant connections and contributing a unique perspective is essential for a strong contributor. Remember, disagreements happen, particularly when dealing with sensitive subject matter. These debates can, and will, strengthen our discourse if handled respectfully and appropriately. Hence, encouraging your classmates and treating them with the respect they deserve is the most important element of strong participation. Class participation does constitute a portion of your grade, so please come prepared and ready to contribute as much as possible. If you feel uncomfortable talking out during a particular class, please see me to discuss alternate forms of participation.

Grading:

Grades are based on a cumulative point system and are calculated by dividing total points earned by the sum of all possible points. You will not have points removed- you can only earn them from your starting point of 0 out of 0. Each assignment is a blank slate and a new opportunity. Expect a total of 300-350 total points in each quarter, although this sum may be variable. Common point values include:

- Homework (1-10 points)
- Reading Quiz (5-20 points)
- Online Forum (10-20 points)
- Quiz (25-50 points)
- Test (50-100 points)
- Paper/Project (75-100 points)
- Class Participation (50 points)

Other Policies and Procedures:**Attendance**

You should attend all classes, arriving on time and prepared to participate. If you miss class due to foreseen or unforeseen circumstances (including school sponsored events):

- Email me and check your homework calendar for what you missed.
- Be prepared to submit missing work on the next class day.
- If absent for an exam: make arrangements with me (via email or in person) to retake it, and be prepared to do so as early as the next class day.
- If absent for an extended period: keep an open line of communication with the appropriate administrator and me. Let's all work together to ensure you're kept on track.

Laptops + Cell Phones

Phones should be away for the duration of class. Laptop use must be relevant to the work at hand. When a lesson depends upon phones or laptops, I will let you know that it's an appropriate time to utilize them. This is obviously dependent on if you're in school! Make sure your devices are charged and ready to go if it's a Zoom day.

Self-Advocacy

It's a key skill to possess, so do it without hesitation. I encourage you to be your own best advocate. If you need something—from another handout, to clarification of directions, to extra help, etc.—come and talk to me. I am happy to discuss grades on essays and projects for further clarification, but will not do so on the day they are passed back. Please make an appointment with me and I'll gladly discuss previously graded assignments.

Submitting Work

All work is expected at the beginning of class on the due date. Class policies on late work:

- Homework serves either to practice skills on which we've been working or to prepare you for our next class. For this reason, you must always complete it. Late assignments can still earn partial credit.
- If a major project or paper is late, it will be marked down a full letter grade on the first day (e.g., from B to C). Earnable credit will continue to decrease with each passing day. If there are extenuating circumstances surrounding a late assignment, please communicate with me proactively.
- **Extension Policy:** All extension requests must be made at least three days before a stated deadline and done in-person, not via email. I am pleased to hear all requests, but extensions may not be granted due to teacher discretion. Exceptions can, of course, be made in the case of family emergencies or other extenuating circumstances.