

English IV Course Syllabus

2014-2015 ~ Mr. Spagnolo

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The senior English V course at PHS is a combined composition class that strengthens student communication and a literature class that provides a survey of world literature, poetry, and drama. Although the course's curriculum is year-long, the semesters are separate and distinct. In fact, each quarter has a particular focus: Quarter 1: World Literature, Quarter 2: Written Communication, Quarter 3: Literature for Stage and Film, and Quarter 4: Oral Interpretation (speech). Listed below are the general topics and authors which may be covered throughout the year:

Composition:

- Semantics, Analysis Essays, Persuasive Essays, Compare/Contrast Essays, Internal Memos, Email, Personal Statements, Thank You Letters, Complaint Letters, Application Responses, Screenplay Writing, Blog & Website Creation, Speech Writing, etc.

Speech:

- Brown Bag Speeches, Commencement Speeches, Persuasive Speeches (rhetoric), Informative Speeches, Impromptu Speeches, Debate, Socratic Circles, Public Service Announcements, RadioLab Radio Productions, and formal presentations.

Literature:

- Study of materials from America, Asia, Africa, Britain, Latin America, and India.
 - Authors may include but are not limited to: Swift, Greene, Gordimer, Paton, Achebe, Neruda, Hemingway, Garcia-Marquez, Head, Orwell, Gandhi, Basho, Issa, Lao-Tzu, Williams, King, Shakespeare, Poe, Thurber, Chekhov, Tyler, Stockton, McCarthy, etc.

Ongoing Studies:

- Latin/Greek Roots to enhance vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension
- Reading, Writing, and Test-Taking Strategies
- Blogging and Website Construction using Google Apps for Education
- Spelling, Punctuation, and Grammar (SPAG)
- "Article of the Week" Analysis
- Properly Citing Sources

WHAT TO BRING: Though the class will be as paperless as possible, keep all of your handouts and assignments in a three-ring binder or folder. Daily, a college-ruled notebook, and whatever text we are working with (to be distributed at the appropriate times) will need to be brought to class. Obviously, you'll need to always have a pen and a pencil when you walk in the door. Finally, be sure to have access to headphones every day. If I feel that students are coming to class unprepared, I reserve the right to call "supply checks" for a handful of points.

GRADES: Grades will be based on a balance of daily work and homework, class discussions, essays and writing assignments, reader journals, quizzes/tests/exams, and projects/presentations. *Thoughtful class communication is expected in this course.* Intelligent/thoughtful questions, voluntary comments and reactions to the readings, *active* participation in small group discussions/work, and careful listening to your classmates, guest speakers, and me will all be assessed. **Simply being in class is not enough.**

If you have any questions regarding your grade (or anything else, for that matter), please, email me, stop by before or after school, during homeroom, during lunch, or during eighth hour. I'm more than happy to discuss your progress in class with you. Also, parents and students are reminded to check PowerSchool on a regular basis.

PREPARATION: In order to make our precious class time together productive, homework/ assignments are due at the beginning of class unless otherwise indicated. **Late assignments (rough drafts, reading assignments, homework, etc.) mean you lose an opportunity to fully take part in our learning for the day!** Students with excused absences are responsible for making up all missed assignments upon their return to class. Additionally, students who will be absent because of field trips, school functions, extended vacations, early releases, etc. must be prepared for class upon return. "I didn't know" is not a valid excuse—find out; see me before you leave and/or refer to your class calendar. Please see me, too, if there is something going on in your life that you think I should be aware of. An extension must be requested *before* a project is due—not after the fact.

Late assignments will be penalized 10% per day for five days. After the fifth day, the assignment, no matter how small or large, will receive a zero. Additionally, if you miss a test or a quiz, it is up to you to come in SOON to take it. As a rule, the longer it takes a student to make up a test or quiz, the more he/she struggles to do well on it when he/she finally does take it.

A course calendar is available at: <http://www.spagnolo.guru/home/english-iv/english-iv-2014-15-tentative-calendar>

PLAGIARISM: You will find information regarding plagiarism attached to this syllabus. Please, read it carefully. Plagiarized essays/papers/assignments will not receive credit and offenses can lead to administrative discipline. Simply put, don't do it.

PERSONAL STUFF: Please, take care of personal errands (picking up messages, phone calls, speaking with coaches, signing yearbooks, etc.) on your time—before or after school, during lunch, etc. Keep mp3 players, purses, backpacks, coats/hats, and food in your locker. Phones should be turned off and both headphones should be removed from your ears when you enter the classroom.

OUR CLASSROOM: The nature of this course requires respect and confidence in one another. As we learn together, let's remember how important it is to trust the other people in the room with us. Show kindness. Any kind of physical or verbal disrespect to anyone in or out of the classroom will be dealt with harshly.

Author Henry James (1843-1916) wrote, *"Three things in human life are important. The first is to be kind. The second is to be kind. The third is to be kind."* Let's learn together with humor, curiosity, respect, and kindness.

CONTACT INFO: Parents and students, if you have any questions, please, do not hesitate to email me at spagjam@prentice.k12.wi.us. Though this is my preferred mode of contact, I can also be reached via telephone between 2:30 and 3:45 PM most days.

Plagiarism is commonly defined as the use of the words or ideas of another writer without acknowledging the source, thereby suggesting that the words or ideas are original rather than 'borrowed.'

Along with the increased use and availability of a number of readily available research tools (SIRS, Facts on File, the Internet, BadgerLink, etc.) has come an increase in the amount of student plagiarism at the high school and college level s. As has always been the case, most plagiarism comes from the laziness and lack of integrity of the student; however, a lesser amount is the result of ignorance on the part of some students as to how to use outside sources and when / how to avoid plagiarism. Whether stemming from deception or ineptitude, however, plagiarism is always unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Students handing in papers or assignments that include plagiarized material, intentional or not, can expect to receive a grade of zero.

How do I avoid plagiarism? The basic guideline is very simple: if the material didn't originate in your mind, then the original source should be credited. (Some students say they just do a lot of reading on a subject and then write from the information in their heads. This is true – some students do write this way; nevertheless, it is plagiarism since the method of gathering the material doesn't matter. What matters is whether the source of the information is credited or not.)

How do I credit a source? A number of acceptable ways exist, but the two most common are these: 1) put identifying source material in parentheses following the borrowed material (specific details on this method can be found in many reference books and Internet sites); 2) mention the source within the essay itself (for example, 'According to Richard Corliss of *Time* magazine, . . .'). Note: we cannot simply say 'according to an Internet site'; this would be like saying 'according to a book in the library.' The specific site must be identified.

Everything I use from outside sources needs to be credited? Practically, yes; however, exceptions occur if the material is "common knowledge" among the audience of the essay. This can raise some questions (Does my audience know what stem cell research involves? Do they know that Lincoln's VP was Andrew Johnson? etc.), but the solution to the dilemma is simple: when in doubt, credit the source.

What if I don't quote material? Some people are under the mistaken impression that only quoted (word-for-word) material has to be identified. This is completely false! Plagiarism includes the use of quoted words (this includes paragraphs, sentences, phrases, or even individual words) but also includes the use of ideas (this includes concepts, opinions, and so on as well as organization, sentence patterns, etc.). The person who feels that he is covering himself by changing some of the words from a source and not crediting it is not only dishonest but is also ignorant. The difference in the handling of quoted vs. unquoted borrowing is also simple: quoted material must be credited and must be indicated by quotation marks; paraphrased or summarized material must be credited but will not have quotation marks.

Summary Guidelines for Avoiding Plagiarism (from *Writers Inc: Write for College*)

WHAT TO DO:

- Indicate clearly when you use anything from another writer's work, even if only a phrase or single key word, by using quotation marks.
- When summarizing or paraphrasing, distinguish clearly where the ideas of others end and your own comments begin.
- When using a writer's idea, credit the author by name and also cite the work in which you found the idea.
- Err on the side of caution by giving credit whenever you suspect you are using information other than general knowledge from a source.
- ASK

WHAT NOT TO DO:

- Do not use facts, details, or ideas from a source without indicating in some way that you are doing so.
- Do not confuse your own ideas with others' ideas discovered during your research.

Adapted from:

Sebranek, Patrick. *Writers INC, Write for College*. Wilmington, MA: Great Source Education Group, 1997.
Print.

THEME REQUIREMENTS

These are the standard theme requirements for essays and assignments for Mr. Spagnolo's English classes (and for most other classes as you progress through your educational endeavors). Please form a habit of using the following format for all assignments unless otherwise indicated. Deviation will result in penalties. **NO EXCUSES.**

PAPER: Use standard paper (8.5" x 11") when typing. Standard-sized, college-ruled notebook paper when handwriting.

Trim all ragged edges from notebook paper.

Use only one side of the paper on final drafts.

INK: Use blue or black ink (regardless of typing or handwriting). Do not write final drafts of essays in pencil.

HEADING: Unless otherwise instructed, include your name, period, date and assignment in the upper-left corner of the page. This is probably different from what your other teachers have asked, but it's the way college professors ask for it to be done (I recently graduated and wrote about a trillion essays, so I know this). Keeping your name near the staple makes it easier for teachers to flip through a stack quickly find a particular student's essay.

TITLE: Must be same size font and same style font as rest of page. The title should not be **bolded** or underlined.

FORMAT: Double-space all typed essays. Do not double-space handwritten essays.

Margins: All should be set to one inch.

Use standard font size (11 or 12-point) throughout the entire assignment.

Use standard font type (Times New Roman or Arial) rather than a decorative one. Impress with what you say rather than how eye-catching it is.

Clearly indent paragraphs (**do not skip an extra line between them**).

Do not include a cover sheet or a plastic cover unless it is specifically requested for the assignment. Most writing will be submitted digitally, so this shouldn't be a problem.

Firstname Lastname
Course, Hour
Assignment
Date Assignment is Due

Centered Title in the Same Font/Font Size as the Rest of My Essay

This is where I grab the readers' attention. Words fill up this space to communicate my ideas to a reader who knows something, but not everything, about the subject. I will write with clarity and precision, making sure to check my spelling and punctuation. At or near the end of my introductory paragraph, I will write a thesis statement (otherwise known as a statement of purpose).

I will never skip a line between paragraphs. I will always indent at the beginning of a new paragraph. I will not use exclamation points or ALL CAPITAL LETTERS to make my points STRONGER!! Instead, I will revise my sentences to make them express my thoughts more powerfully. I will always use 11 or 12-point, Times New Roman or Arial font. I will double-space all of my work (even block quotations, which are indented ten spaces), and my margins will always be set at one inch.

I will avoid using *I think*, *I feel*, and/or *I believe*. Use of *I think*, *I feel*, and *I believe* is weak language that causes the reader to lose trust in me. I am the expert on the subject and will write in a confident voice that conveys this fact. Additionally, I will avoid using the pronoun *you* because it makes assumptions about the reader, and I will not use contractions because they are too informal for an academic paper.

I will follow these formatting guidelines because I want to communicate to my reader(s) that I am aware of advanced academic writing conventions. I will italicize or underline titles of works that can stand alone. I will put titles of works that are part of a collection in quotation marks. If I fail to follow these guidelines, I may confuse my reader(s) or have them lose confidence in my expertise.

In the conclusion paragraph, I will summarize what has been discussed, I will restate my thesis (or statement of purpose), and I will establish some sense of closure, look to the future,

suggest further discussion, and/or link back to the introduction. I will carefully proofread all of my work before turning anything in to Mr. Spagnolo.

(Please sign and return the slip below. Place this syllabus, the plagiarism information sheet, and the Theme Requirements in your binder.)



Return this slip to Mr. Spagnolo by Monday, September 8, 2014.

Each of the individuals below has read and understands this syllabus as well as the attached information on Theme Requirements and plagiarism.

Student Printed Name: _____

Student Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Parent Printed Name: _____

Parent Signature: _____ **Date:** _____



Parent/Guardian Phone Number(s):



Parent/Guardian Email(s):
