



**Northview High School
Language Arts Department
Writers' Workshop
2017-2018**

Course Title: Writers' Workshop

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Course Description: This course is pitched at mature, self-motivated students who are comfortable with basic reading and composition techniques. Informed by the practical wisdom of renowned authors living and dead, it aims to acquaint students with the habits, tools, and knowledge necessary to pursue writing as a way of life far beyond the limits of the high school classroom.

Required materials: Chromebook, Google Docs, notebook + plenty of notebook paper, pens with black or dark blue ink, several highlighters (recommended). All available materials must be obtained by the end of the first week.

Assignment Categories and Weights:

- Final (Portfolio): 20%
- Summative Assessments: 40%
- Formative Assessments: 20%
- Journals: 20%

Assignment Explanations:

- *Journals:* Journal entries represent the class preparation and participation part of students' overall grade. Students are required to bring a notebook or journal to each class period, and will open each class with 5-10 minutes of silent writing. Students will use their journals as directed in order to respond to reading assignments, experiment with new techniques, or prepare for whole-class discussions. Entries will be spot-checked periodically in order to encourage class preparation and participation.
- *Formative Assessments:* While students will have considerable freedom regarding their choices of topics and styles, compositions will be assigned regularly throughout the course of each unit. One or more representative compositions will be collected intermittently in order to provide feedback upon students' works-in-progress and help them craft a summative piece for each unit. See *Summative Reviews* for note on grading.

- *Summative Assessments*: At the end of each of the four main units, students will submit a polished composition of their choice that represents their evolving maturity as writers. This piece will be assessed based on students' use of progressive "modes" like *description* or *dialogue* along with the quality with which students have mastered each mode. Since students are not expected to produce "A" level composition immediately, each successive formative *and* summative review will be an opportunity for them to demonstrate their developing skills as writers and will overwrite previous grades if progress has been made. Even though students' initial grades are not likely to be high, the absolute, non-punitive nature of this class's grading method will give students many opportunities to demonstrate their growing confidence as writers.
- *Final Portfolio*: At the end of this course, students will compile their compositions of highest quality and design a final portfolio to be ordered and professionally printed as a high school "memento." Students' final portfolios will be assessed for breadth of compositions included, *concentration around a recurring theme or motif*, and technical quality of composition.

Assigned Texts (Secondary Sources): All necessary excerpts and texts will be provided to students in digital form. It is highly recommended, however, that students purchase copies of the following secondary texts for their own ease of use and for future reference:

- *Several short sentences about writing* by Verlyn Klinkenborg
- *On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft* by Stephen King
- *Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life* by Anne Lamott

Assigned Texts (Primary Sources): Rather than "text-hopping," this course will return repeatedly to a set of short texts by authors widely recognized for their prowess in descriptive, narrative, dramatic, and reflective modes of writing. Students will have multiple opportunities to engage with these authors' work on deepening levels of complexity and to imitate them in their own writing.

- Ernest Hemingway: *Big Two-Hearted River, Hills Like White Elephants, The Snows of Kilimanjaro*
- Ursula K. Le Guin: *The Rule of Names, The Word for World is Forest, The Word of Unbinding, Vaster than Empires and More Slow*
- Annie Dillard: selected essays from *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*
- Anton Chekhov: selected short stories and plays, including "Gooseberries," *The Cherry Orchard*
- Mary Oliver: selected poems, selected essays from *Upstream*
- Rachel Carson: "The Marginal World" from *The Edge of the Sea*
- Richard Wright: selected poems including "Between the World and Me," selected haiku from *Haiku: This Other World*
- Andrew Wyeth: selected paintings, including *Christina's World, Wind from the Sea, Frostbite, and Winter 1946*.

Films: While visual mediums are not the focus of this course, films and short films may be shown intermittently in order to enhance students' powers of visual perception and depth of thematic understanding. Students will not be required to watch any film with a rating higher than PG-13 without parental consent. Selected films may include:

- *The Tree of Life*, directed by Terrence Malick
- *Stutterer* (short film), directed by Ben Cleary
- *Arrival*, directed by Denis Villeneuve

Note on Course Reading/Viewing: As in any literature class, both students and their instructor may occasionally encounter topics, viewpoints, language, or themes which they find objectionable. In the rare instances in which a selected text contains controversial material, it is because that text contains something non-replicable in other material and should be viewed as an opportunity to engage critically with challenging perspectives. Great care has been taken to select texts which handle their subject matters in tasteful and nuanced ways, and it is expected that students who have concerns about the material will advocate for themselves by approaching their instructor directly and respectfully.

Week 1: How, When, & Where

- **Questions For Consideration:** *How do physical and temporal considerations affect the way I write? What are some achievable goals for our writing this semester?*
- **Topics:** music, medium, time, place
- **Texts:** “Before a Rendezvous with the Muse, First Select the Music” by Edmund White, “How Sleep Makes Your Brain More Creative” by Tom Stafford, “Dixie Snow” by Rick Bragg, *Christina’s World* (painting) by Andrew Wyeth

Weeks 2-5: It Was a Dark and Stormy Night

- **Mode:** descriptive
- **Technical focuses:** concreteness, abstraction, generality, specificity, generative grammar, perception, quality, detail, comparison, cumulative sentence patterns
- **Unit assessment:** descriptive prompt

Weeks 6-9: Suddenly, a Shot Rang Out

- **Mode:** narrative
- **Technical focuses:** tension, desire, motive, plot, arrangement, suspensive/periodic sentence patterns, showing & telling, objective correlative, time, sequence
- **Unit assessment:** descriptive + narrative prompt

Weeks 10-13: What Happened to the Love That We Said Would Never Die?

- **Mode:** dramatic
- **Technical focuses:** dialogue, characterization, voice, artificiality, naturalness, cliches, speech, silence, tone
- **Unit assessment:** descriptive + narrative + dramatic prompt

Weeks 14-17: If I Remember Correctly, It Was a Dark and Stormy Night

- **Mode:** reflective
- **Technical focuses:** theme, reflection, message, explanation, perception, knowing, not knowing, memory, advanced sentence patterns

- **Unit assessment:** descriptive + narrative + dramatic prompt

Week 18: Final

Absences

Attendance is mandatory. Students are responsible for any material covered during an absence. Frequent absences negatively impact students' grades.

Students must notify the teacher of school-related absences prior to the absence, or the assignments due or covered on that day will not be accepted. Field trips, club meetings, athletic activities, and other functions neither excuse work due, nor postpone the due date. Put simply, each student is responsible for attaining all material covered in the course regardless of absences.

Make Up Work

The student is responsible for approaching the teacher for make-up work the day s/he returns from an absence. Make up work is defined as any work assigned during an absence. Remember that any work assigned before an absence is still due on the assigned due date. Students are expected to self-advocate; it is not the teacher's responsibility to approach the student.

Fulton County Policy—Provision for Improving Grades

Opportunities designed to allow students to recover from a low or failing cumulative grade will be allowed when all work required to date has been completed and the student has demonstrated a legitimate effort to meet all course requirements including attendance.

Students should contact the teacher concerning recovery opportunities. Teachers are expected to establish a reasonable time period for recovery work to be completed during the semester. All recovery work must be directly related to course objectives and must be completed ten school days prior to the end of the semester.

Teachers will determine when and how students with extenuating circumstances may improve their grades.

Recovery Policy

1. Recovery is for students who, despite a conscientious effort and communication with their teachers, have failed to demonstrate satisfactory understanding of course standards. It is not for the student who has been failing for many weeks and then wishes to recover during the final days of the course. Opportunities for students to recover from a 74 or below cumulative average will be provided when all work required to date has been completed and the student has demonstrated a legitimate effort to meet all course requirements. Students who have not attempted to complete all course requirements are not eligible for recovery.
2. Students may initiate recovery on major assessments starting with the second major assessment of the semester as long as they have made a legitimate effort to meet all course requirements including attendance. Unexcused absences may prevent this opportunity.
3. So that students stay focused on the content at hand and don't become overwhelmed and fall too far behind, they must initiate recovery on a major assessment within five school days of being informed of the grade on that assessment. Recovery work must be completed within ten school days prior to the end of the semester. The nature and type of recovery assignment is given at the discretion of the teacher.

Grading guidelines for recovery assignments will vary by department. It is the responsibility of the student to fully understand the grading guidelines/highest possible score for completed recovery work.

Honor code

As explained in the student handbook, cheating is defined as "the giving or receiving, in any form, information relating to a gradable experience." Violations of the honor code will result in a zero for the assignment, plus an honor code violation form placed in the student's disciplinary file. Read the handbook carefully to fully understand what constitutes a violation.

Northview HS English Department Plagiarism Statement

Plagiarism is presenting another's words or ideas as though they are entirely one's own.

Plagiarism is an Honor Code Violation.

Acts of plagiarism can include, but are not limited to:

1. using words or ideas from a published source or the internet without proper permission;
2. using the work of another student (e.g., copying another student's homework, composition, or project in entirety **or** in part;
3. Using excessive editing suggestions of another student, teacher, parent, tutor, or paid author.

***Excessive editing note:** Students learn to write well through practice and independent exploration of language manipulation. This effort, like any learning experience, often requires persistence and "perspiration." Well-meaning parents, siblings, tutors, and others who contribute their own ideas, words, phrases, and revisions to a student's writing, not only cause that student to miss the opportunity to achieve self-reliance, but also inhibit the student from presenting his own voice.*

Positive ways to help a student grow in his writing process include reading the paper or writing exercise and marking areas that need clarification, punctuation, elaboration, or more precise wording, allowing the student to figure out the error and correct it independently. Oftentimes having the student read the paper aloud will greatly help in error identification. Cues such as, "What exactly do you mean?" or "This sentence seems awkward" are also very appropriate.

Plagiarism on any project or paper at Northview High School will result in a zero for the assignment and an Honor Code Violation. Unless directly stipulated by the teacher, collaboration on written work is not acceptable. Students who willingly provide other students with access to their coursework or homework are also in violation of the Honor Code.

Northview High School 2017-2018 Syllabus Signature Sheet

Student Name

(Printed) _____

Date _____

Teacher:

Subject:

Please read the teacher's full-length syllabus. Log on to www.northviewhigh.com then click on the syllabus link to locate the teacher's name. Sign below if you have read the online syllabus.

Student Signature _____

Parent Signature _____

Parent Email Address (PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY) _____

Recovery Policy

Recovery is for students who, despite a conscientious effort and communication with their teachers, have failed to demonstrate satisfactory understanding of course standards. It is not for the student who has been failing for many weeks and then wishes to recover during the final days of the course. Opportunities for students to recover from a 74 or below *cumulative* average will be provided when *all* work required to date has been completed and the student has demonstrated a legitimate effort to meet all course requirements. *Students who have not attempted to complete all course requirements are not eligible for recovery.*

Students may initiate recovery on major assessments starting with the second major assessment of the semester as long as they have made a legitimate effort to meet all course requirements including attendance. Unexcused absences may prevent this opportunity.

So that students stay focused on the content at hand and don't become overwhelmed and fall too far behind, they must initiate recovery on a major assessment within five school days of being informed of the grade on that assessment.

Recovery work must be completed within ten school days prior to the end of the semester. The nature and type of recovery assignment is given at the discretion of the teacher.

Grading guidelines for recovery assignments will vary by department. It is the responsibility of the student to fully understand the grading guidelines/highest possible score for completed recovery work.

Sign below if you understand the recovery policy.

Student Signature _____ Parent Signature _____

HONOR CODE: Cheating has been defined as giving or receiving information relating to a gradable experience including the use of sources other than those specifically approved by the teacher. Plagiarism and the related act of allowing another student to use one's work are not to be considered inconsequential pranks. Such acts involve serious moral implications; they constitute lying and stealing. They are unjust to teachers who spend valuable time evaluating the paper. They are ultimately harmful to the student committing the act, who is deliberately undermining his/her integrity, destroying his/her reputation, and breaking the trust that must exist between a student and teacher. An honor code violation results in a zero on the assignment, no opportunity to make up the work, and disciplinary action. For the complete honor code policy, visit the Student Handbook on www.northviewhigh.com.

Sign below if you understand the consequences of cheating at Northview High School.

Student Signature _____

Parent Signature _____

TECHNOLOGY POLICY: Northview computers and Chromebooks are only for school research and projects. The Internet may not be used for personal reasons. Any unauthorized use of the internet will be grounds for disciplinary and/or legal action as well as loss of Internet privileges.

Attempts to log into the internet using another person's password, falsely posing as a school system administrator, or other security violations are grounds for termination of privileges and disciplinary measures. Computer vandalism (including food/drink in a lab) is prohibited and will result in immediate termination of Internet and computer access as well as appropriate disciplinary action.

Violators are subject to criminal prosecution. For the complete technology policy, visit Student Handbook on www.northviewhigh.com.

It is a violation of the above policy:

to download or install any executable programs (such as games, MP3 players, video players, chat programs, FTP programs, music or video sharing programs, etc.) to a school computer, or on to any student's share folder (Z drive).

to store any files (documents, pictures, videos, etc.) on any student's share folder (Z drive) that are not directly used in an assignment or teacher directed work; no personal documents, pictures, music videos or other files.

to use the school computers and internet connection to access email, games, chat rooms, sharing sites, ecommerce sites, etc, unless specifically directed by the teacher.

If this form is not signed by the student and a parent or guardian by Monday, August 21, the student's computer account will be disabled until the form is signed. Sign below if you understand the Northview technology policy.

Student Signature _____

Parent Signature _____

Please review BOTH sides of the Syllabus Signature Sheet. Verify that you have signed your understanding of the three policies listed: Recovery, Honor Code, and Technology.