

Syllabus for English IV Spring 2026

Mrs. Reece

Introduction:

This is the final English course before graduation. The purpose of this course is to model and prepare students for after high school careers and activities. For many, this means a transition for students to be responsible for their academic well-being. This course will ask students to learn not only the usual skills in a literature class (such as reading skills, analytical thinking, grammar, etc.), but also to learn skills that are necessary for success in future endeavors in adult life. These skills include public speaking, task completion, working within a group, and arguably the most important--communication. Please note that this is the initial syllabus for the course. I will give as much notice as possible on any major changes.

All assignments will be due within 5 days of the initial date. Everyday following the 5 day window will result in 5 points off each day that it is late. I understand that there will be situations that are exempt from this rule but you MUST discuss it with me in order to change it!

Unit 1: European Literature: Middle Ages

· Beowulf and the Canterbury Tales

- I can analyze how medieval literature exhibits many tendencies rather than a single set of characteristics.
- I can note the literary elements (e.g., allegory, farce, satire, and foil) in medieval literary works and identify characteristics of medieval literary forms
- I can explain how literary elements contribute to meaning and author intention.
- I can explain how medieval literary and artistic forms reflect the writers' and artists' philosophical views.
- I can examine the literary, social, and religious satire in Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*.
- I can explain the role of the framed narrative in Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*, Dante's *Inferno*, and other works.
- I can compare works of medieval literature and art, particularly their depiction of character and their focus on the otherworldly.

Unit 2: European Literature: Renaissance and Reformation

· Ben Jonson, John Donne, Sonnets, Informational Text – Meditation 17

- I can read novels, literary nonfiction, stories, plays, and poetry from the Renaissance era, observing the continuity from the Middle Ages as well as the departures.
- I can identify and investigate allusions to classical literature in Renaissance texts.
- I can explain how a concept such as symmetry or divine proportion is expressed both in literature and in art.
- I can analyze Renaissance conceptions of beauty and their literary manifestations.
- I can describe how Renaissance writers took interest in human life and the individual person.
- I can analyze the playful, satirical, irreverent aspects of Renaissance literature—in particular, the writing of Rabelais, Boccaccio, and Shakespeare.
- I can explain how literary forms and devices reflect the author's philosophical, aesthetic, or religious views.
- I can write an essay in which they (a) compare a literary work with a work of art; (b) compare a Renaissance work with a medieval work; or (c) relate a literary work to a philosophical work.

Unit 3: European Literature: Seventeenth Century

- Shakespeare: Macbeth, Much Ado About Nothing, Othello
- I can read literary and philosophical works from the seventeenth century, with particular attention to questions of reason and emotion.
- I can explain the idea of reading literature as a quest—for truth, for beauty, and for understanding.
- I can analyze two philosophical works of the seventeenth century for their treatment of an idea related to human reason.
- I can write literary and philosophical analyses with a focus on clarity and precision of expression.
- I can conduct research, online and in libraries, on a particular seventeenth-century author, work, or idea.
- I can analyze the relationship between reason and emotion as illustrated in literature of the seventeenth century.
- I can explain the use of satire as a technique to reveal authorial intent.

Mini Unit Non-fiction: European Literature: Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Century

- Jonathan Swift, Periodic Historical Documentation, Romantic Style Poets
- I can read fiction, drama, poetry, biography, and autobiography from the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.
- I can consider the relationship between art and nature in these works.
- I can observe narrative digressions, idiosyncrasies, exaggerations, and biases.
- I can consider the dual role of the narrator as a character and as a storyteller.
- I can consider the role of the supernatural in the literary works read in this unit.
- I can write a story in which they practice some of the narrative devices they have observed in this unit.
- I can explore and analyze some of the philosophical ideas in the literary texts—questions of free will, fate, human conflict, and loss.
- I can consider the difference between natural and forced language, as explained by Wordsworth.
- I can consider both the common tendencies of works of this period and the contradictions, exceptions, and outliers.
- I can participate in a seminar discussion in which a philosophical question is explored in relation to a specific text.

Unit 4: European Literature: Nineteenth Century

- Romanticism and Victorian poetry, short works, non-fiction, and novel
- I can explain the tension between art for art's sake and art as a response to social and cultural conflict, as expressed in the works of this unit.
- I can closely analyze a key passage from a novel and comment on how it illuminates the work as whole.
- I can contrast two works by a single author.
- I can observe common tendencies, contradictions, outliers, and subtleties of the romantic and Victorian periods in literature.
- I can contrast the moral conflicts of characters in two works of this unit.
- I can consider how the poetry of this period reflects both on the human psyche and on the state of civilization.
- I can analyze how the forms of the poems in this unit contribute to their meanings.
- I can explain how the works of this period show signs of early modernism.
- I can identify elements of romanticism and gothic romanticism in works of literature.

Unit 5: European Literature: Twentieth Century

· Novel – Huxley, Orwell Periodic Historical Informational Works

- I can read works of the twentieth century, focusing on the earlier decades.
- I can consider aspects of modernism (such as anxiety) in their historical context.
- I can explain both the breakdown and affirmation of form and meaning in modernist literature.
- I can analyze dystopian literature, considering the problems inherent in fashioning a perfect person or society.
- I can explain how poems in this unit reflect on poetry itself and its possibilities.
- I can examine the implications of modern versions of classical works.
- I can identify and explain the musical allusions and their meanings in twentieth-century poetical works in seminars.
- I can pursue focused questions in depth over the course of one or two class sessions.
- I can explain absurdist and existential philosophy as it applies to literature and theater.

GRADING SCALE:

Six-weeks:

Major Grade (Tests, Projects)	40%
Minor Grade (Classwork, Homework)	60%

Final Grade:

1st Six-weeks	25%
2nd Six-weeks	25%
3rd Six-Weeks	25%
Final Exam	25%

Detailed explanation of grades:

Classwork: Normally, these will count as one Minor Grade, but may count more depending on the amount of time expected for the assignment to be completed. Most of these assignments will include questions, quick evaluations, worksheets, short writings, and other short assignments.

Homework: Most of the time for this class, homework will actually be classwork that has been given the night to finish if needed.

Projects: These are major grades that are extended assignments that will be worked on over a period of time. These will often be considered a part of the assessment of the unit involved. Projects will focus on the ability of students to create a product of some sort to show how they understand the selections covered.

Tests: These are major grades that will assess student knowledge in various forms. The most common forms will be multiple choice, short answer, and essay.

Cell Phone Usage: Cell phones are a distraction to the learning environment. For this class, students will be required to place their cell phones into hanging pouches when they enter the classroom. Attendance will be taken by cell phones in the appropriate location (in the event you do not have a cell phone on a day, please make sure to put a slip in place of your cell phone). Cell phones must remain in pouches throughout the class period (unless an assignment is deemed appropriate to use them as an aid) and will be allowed to retrieve them at the end of class. Cell phones may be used before and after school, during class change, and at lunch.

Food and Drink: I do not mind if you bring food or drink into the classroom as long as it is not a distraction. If you make a mess, it is your job to clean it up.

Attendance:

Below is listed the updated attendance policy as stated in the Student Handbook:

Any student absent more than six (6) days, excused or unexcused, in any class in a semester will need to follow the protocol below to ensure they do not fail due to attendance.

- Students with greater than 6 absences, but less than 10 absences will need to complete make-up time for absences 7, 8 and 9 during the attendance make-up blocks provided by the school.
- Students with 10 or more absences must make up time for absences 7, 8 and 9, and complete an appeal form to be considered by the attendance appeal committee.

note: The only way to make up time for this class is through the make-up sessions. I will not be able to offer other options. This will be explained in class. Please reach out if you have any questions concerning this.

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