



Course Syllabus For English 11  
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## Course Overview

This course will focus on an in-depth study of American documents and literature. Students will examine attitudes, behaviors and ideas that create universal themes that reflect not only the American culture and its people but also the struggles to obtain or live the American Dream.

The content of this class will cover and analyze the writings during American History from Puritanism and Colonialism; Romanticism and Transcendentalism; and Neo-Realism and Contemporary in order to understand and interpret what the American Dreams means through the lenses of race, class and gender. At its core, this course will focus on exploring the vast range of possible answers to the essential question: “What is the American Dream?” There is no simple answer and as we explore this question we will consider the following ideas about America from a variety of people, from different backgrounds, and stated during different time periods in American History:

“In the unlikely story that is America, there has never been anything false about hope.” –Barack Obama

Europe will never be like America. Europe is a product of history. America is a product of philosophy.” –Margaret Thatcher

“There’s the country of America, which you have to defend, but there’s also the idea of America. America is more than just a country, it’s an idea. An idea that’s supposed to be contagious.” –Bono

“America is not merely a nation but a nation of nations.” –Lyndon B. Johnson

“I see America through the eyes of the victim. I don’t see any American dream; I see an American nightmare.” –Malcolm X

“When asked by an anthropologist what the Indians called America before the white man came, an Indian said simply, ‘Ours.’”  
– Fr. Andrew SDC

“We sing, but oh the clay is vile...Beneath our feet, and long the mile, But let the world dream otherwise, We wear the mask!”  
–Paul L. Dunbar

“What happens to a dream deferred? Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun? Or fester like a sore-...or does it explode?” –  
Langston Hughes

We will reflect upon, and synthesize these diverse reflections on the American experiences and the American people. Students will see that literary philosophies are dictated by the historical, social, and cultural conditions under which American authors write by way of history informing the narrative.

## Course Requirements

Students will learn the application of rhetoric to evaluate, interpret and synthesize American literature including photos and speeches. Students will also cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including making the determination where the text leaves some ideas unclear or uncertain.

Students will identify two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account while providing an objective summary of the text. Students will also analyze the impact of the author’s word choices and choices made in the development that relates to the elements of a story, speech or other documents. Students will examine the meaning of words and phrases that are used in pieces of literature, including figurative, connotative and technical language; analyze how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term or terms over a course of a text using literary devices. In addition, students will draw inferences and conclusion on an author’s point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective while analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness or beauty of the text.

Students will analyze 17th through the 21<sup>st</sup> century documents, speeches, and photos of historical and literary significance for their themes, purposes and rhetorical features.

### Reading List for 11<sup>th</sup> Grade Honors

*The Crucible*, George Miller

*The Scarlet Letter*, Nathaniel Hawthorne

*Kindred*

*Their Eyes Were Watching God*, Zora Neale Hurston

*Inherit the Wind*

*Raisin in the Sun*

*The Joy Luck Club*, Amy Tam

In addition to the novels, selections include poems, various primary documents and historical photos.

Puritanism/Colonialism

- Native American works
- Mayflower Compact
- “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God” by Jonathan Edwards
- Letters from Abigail and John Adams
- “Give me Liberty or Give Me Death” by Patrick Henry

Transcendentalism/American Classic

- from *Civil Disobedience* by Henry David Thoreau
- “What the Black Man Wants” by Frederick Douglass
- “Gettysburg Address” by Abraham Lincoln
- “This Sacred Soil” by Chief Seattle
- “I Will Fight No More Forever” by Chief Joseph
- “Of the Meaning of Progress” by W.E.B. Du Bois

Neo-Realism/Contemporary

- Neo-Fascism George Orwell
- “Letter from the Birmingham Jail” Martin Luther King
- President Obama DNC Speech 2004

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS, ATTENDANCE AND SPECIFIC GRADING POLICY

Students are held responsible to bring all their supplies and needed texts each and every day. Homework is due on the date given; any late homework may be accepted with an excuse absent for full credit; any late homework may be accepted without an excuse for ½ the credit.

#### Materials Needed

1. (2) Three Section Notebooks (Journal/notes/assignments)
2. Binder and binder paper
3. Text and novels will be provided by the teacher

Assignment Categories: All assignments will be weighed as shown below.

1. Classwork (CW) 10%
2. Homework (HW) 10%
3. Warm ups (P) 10%
4. Quizzes/Tests (QT) 20%
5. Essays, Projects, Presentations (WA) 20%
6. Final Exam (FX) 30%

#### Grading Scale

A= 90%	B= 80%	C= 70%	D = 60%	F = 59%-0%
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All late assignments must be turned in a week before the quarter ends.

The John F. Kennedy English Department does not tolerate plagiarism of any kind. Students who are caught representing another writer’s thoughts or words as his or her own should expect to receive no credit for the assignment and a U in citizenship.

#### **Final**

Using the speeches and literature that we have analyzed during the school year students will answer the following questions: What does the American Dream mean to you? How will this meaning shape your beliefs and expectation of your generation? The students will demonstrate their understanding of English 11 Common Core Standards as covered during the school year by competing the final essay and exam.

Parent and student signatures, phone numbers and/or email addresses is a requirement for this course.

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Parent Signature

Date

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Phone Number and Email Address

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Student Signature

Date

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Student's Email Address