

# ENGLISH 41

## Description

The Aesthetics of Living: Searching for Meaning Through Literature offers students a chance to explore philosophical concepts evident in literature and in the world today. Through the examination of classical and contemporary texts, students will consider the function of art and evaluate concepts such as truth, evil, ethics, and cultural myths as they are relevant to the human condition. Students are expected to be self-motivated and to actively participate in and lead seminar discussions. Additionally, the study of critical theory will expand students' capacity to analyze, discuss, and write about literature. The Independent Study Project, which includes extensive preparation and a dynamic presentation, is an integral part of the year. This course is an intellectual and philosophical inquiry driven by the underlying question of what makes a meaningful life.

## Course Overview

### Course Goals

Students should:

- understand philosophical concepts evident in literature.
- lead and engage in thoughtful, focused, and inquiry based seminar discussions throughout the year.
- interpret literature through the lenses of three critical theories. (e.g. feminist, Marxist, psychoanalytical, post colonial, historical/cultural)
- create an Independent Inquiry Portfolio that traces the continuous process of exploration and participate in a continuous process of exploration and reflection which will shape the inquiry for their Independent Study Project.
- develop their visual literacy by learning how to "read" paintings, sculpture, and film in order to interpret and evaluate them and the literary texts with which they connect.
- incorporate rhetorical devices in a text.
- identify cultural assumptions of a text and how they reflect and/or challenge their own assumptions.

### Essential Questions

- How does literature enrich our lives?
- How do we write, speak and present effectively?
- How do we use the English language appropriately to speak and write?

### Assessments

*Common Assessments*

*Skill Assessments*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrate the ability to recognize their own unique, challenging, intellectual ideas, and thoroughly develop them.</li> <li>• identify and experiment with stylistic elements in writing.</li> <li>• develop and pursue a line of intellectual inquiry, related to the literature and ideas examined in this course, by conducting independent research, creating a product, writing a formal piece, and delivering a presentation to further explore an idea or concept from the course. (Independent Study Project)</li> <li>• write formal papers that go through the writing process, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Creative non-fiction</li> <li>○ Exploratory essay</li> <li>○ Character analysis</li> <li>○ Literary analysis</li> <li>○ Personal process paper</li> <li>○ Independent study writing component</li> </ul> </li> <li>• develop an aesthetic appreciation for literature and other art forms (painting, sculpture, film) as they connect with literature.</li> <li>• expand vocabulary by compiling list and definitions of unfamiliar words.</li> </ul>		
<p><b><u>Content Outline</u></b></p> <p>I. <a href="#">Unit 1</a> – Introductory Unit</p> <p>II. <a href="#">Unit 2</a> - The Function of Art in Life</p> <p>III. <a href="#">Unit 3</a> - How We Discover and Discern the Truth</p> <p>IV. <a href="#">Unit 4</a> - What is Evil and Why Does It Exist?</p> <p>V. <a href="#">Unit 5</a> - Living an Ethical Life</p> <p>VI. <a href="#">Unit 6</a> - Building a House of Meaning</p>	<p><b><u>Standards</u></b></p> <p><a href="#">State of Connecticut English Language Arts Curriculum Frameworks</a></p> <p>Connecticut State Standards are met in the following areas:</p> <p><i>Exploring and Responding to Literature</i>  <b>Students read and respond to classical and contemporary texts from many cultures and literary periods.</b></p>	<p><b>Grade Level Skills</b></p> <p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>

	<p><i>Communicating with Others</i>  <b>Students produce written, oral and visual texts to express, develop and substantiate ideas and experiences.</b></p> <p><i>Applying English Language Conventions</i>  <b>Students apply the conventions of Standard English in oral and written communication.</b></p>	
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<b>Pacing Guide</b>									
1st Marking Period		2nd Marking Period			3rd Marking Period			4th Marking Period	
September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June
Unit 1	Unit 2		Unit 3		Unit 4		Unit 5		Unit 6
<u><a href="#">Introductory Unit</a></u>	<u><a href="#">The Function of Art in Life</a></u>		<u><a href="#">How We Discover and Discern the Truth</a></u>		<u><a href="#">What is Evil and Why Does It Exist?</a></u>		<u><a href="#">Living an Ethical Life</a></u>		<u><a href="#">Building a House of Meaning</a></u>
3 weeks	7 weeks		6 weeks		6 weeks		6 weeks		5 weeks

## Unit 1: Introductory Unit, 3 weeks [top](#)

### Standards

#### *Exploring and Responding to Literature*

**Students recognize and appreciate that contemporary and classical literature has shaped human thought.**

Students will:

- discuss, analyze and evaluate how characters deal with the diversity of human experience and conflict.

#### *Communicating with Others*

**Students prepare, publish and/or present work appropriate to audience, purpose and task.**

Students will:

- apply the most effective processes to create and present a written, oral or visual piece.
- revise texts for organization, elaboration, fluency and clarity.

#### *Applying English Language Conventions*

**Students use Standard English for composing and revising written text.**

Students will:

- demonstrate proficient use of proper mechanics, usage and spelling skills.
- use resources for proofreading and editing.

### Unit Objectives

Students will be able to:

- establish guidelines for discussion and seminar and the roles of participants and leaders.
- select and analyze ideas and questions from given texts that will focus units of study for the year.
- organize a reflective journal for the Independent Study, based on expectations for the final project.
- record ideas key lines from texts, and questions from collaboration in an Independent Study Journal.
- identify and analyze key lines from texts that demonstrate an understanding of the

### Essential Questions

- How does literature enrich our lives?
- How do we write, speak and present effectively?
- How do we use the English language appropriately to speak and write?

### Focus Questions

- How and why does one search for meaning in life?
  - How can the study of the course's essential questions drive the pursuit of a meaningful life?
  - What are the qualities of a noble and meaningful life?

### Assessments

- Reflective essay about how one has created meaning in life up to this point.
- First entry of the Independent Study Portfolio
- Graded seminar based on the unit texts

text and an acknowledgment of that text in a broader context (personal life, human condition, cultural assumptions).		
		<p><b><u>Skill Objective</u></b>  Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• avoid using the comma splice.</li> </ul>

## Unit 2: The Function of Art in Life, 7 weeks [top](#)

### Standards

#### *Exploring and Responding to Literature*

**Students recognize how literary devices and conventions engage the reader.**

Students will:

- explain and explore their own and others' aesthetic reactions to texts.

#### *Communicating with Others*

**Students use descriptive, narrative, expository, persuasive and poetic modes.**

Students will:

- use the appropriate features of persuasive, narrative, expository or poetic writing.

**Students prepare, publish and/or present work appropriate to audience, purpose and task.**

Students will:

- apply the most effective processes to create and present a written, oral or visual piece.
- revise texts for organization, elaboration, fluency and clarity.

#### *Applying English Language Conventions*

**Students use Standard English for composing and revising written text.**

Students will:

- demonstrate proficient use of proper mechanics, usage and spelling skills.
- use resources for proofreading and editing.

### Unit Objectives

Students will be able to:

- analyze model creative nonfiction for stylistic elements.
- demonstrate sophisticated nonfiction writing strategies such as effective description (sensory language), diction (connotation, denotation), figurative language, zoom focus, dialogue, developed conflict, and implied thesis.
- identify and respond to a variety of visual art that connects to a concept examined in the unit.

### Essential Questions

- How does literature enrich our lives?
- How do we write, speak and present effectively?
- How do we use the English language appropriately to speak and write?

### Focus Questions

- What is the function of art in life?
  - What is the power of artistic expression?
  - How can one exhibit a unique and exceptional vision of the world?
  - What inspires art?
  - How do experiences with art contribute to a

### Assessments

- Creative nonfiction essay / College essay
- Analytical essay utilizing a critical lens in response to a visual or literary text 2-3 pgs
- One Independent Study Portfolio Entry 1-2 pgs

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• develop a glossary of terms used to discuss visual art.</li> <li>• participate in seminar by composing challenging questions and highlighting significant passages for discussion.</li> <li>• analyze, through discussion and informal writing assignments, how Feminist theory offers interpretive possibilities to the <i>Bell Jar</i> or similar text.</li> <li>• extend classroom collaboration by including the “voices” of feminist literary critics.</li> </ul>	<p>meaningful life?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Why do human beings create art?</li> <li>○ What is aesthetic?</li> <li>○ What is art?</li> <li>○ How do I make something appear beautiful, meaningful, and compelling?</li> </ul>	
		<p><b><u>Skill Objectives</u></b>  Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• use consistent voice in writing.</li> <li>• correctly punctuate restrictive and non-restrictive clauses.</li> </ul>

**Unit 3 - How We Discover and Discern the Truth, 6 weeks [top](#)**

**Standards**

***Exploring and Responding to Literature***

**Students recognize and appreciate that contemporary and classical literature has shaped human thought.**

Students will:

- discuss, analyze and evaluate how characters deal with the diversity of human experience and conflict.

**Students recognize that readers and authors are influenced by individual, social, cultural and historical contexts.**

Students will:

- analyze and evaluate themes and connections that cross cultures.

***Communicating with Others***

**Students use descriptive, narrative, expository, persuasive and poetic modes.**

Students will:

- use the appropriate features of persuasive, narrative, expository or poetic writing.

**Students prepare, publish and/or present work appropriate to audience, purpose and task.**

Students will:

- apply the most effective processes to create and present a written, oral or visual piece.
- revise texts for organization, elaboration, fluency and clarity.

***Applying English Language Conventions***

**Students use Standard English for composing and revising written text.**

Students will:

- demonstrate proficient use of proper mechanics, usage and spelling skills.
- use resources for proofreading and editing.

**Unit Objectives**

Students will be able to:

- develop a personal definition of truth, using informal writing and classroom discourse.
- make connections between works of fiction and philosophical readings about the nature of truth.
- lead seminar by composing challenging questions and highlighting significant

**Essential Questions**

- How does literature enrich our lives?
- How do we write, speak and present effectively?
- How do we use the English language appropriately to speak and write?

**Focus Questions**

- How do we discover and discern truth?
  - Why seek the truth?
  - Are all truths relative or are there universal

**Assessments**

- Exploratory essay/ close reading of a sentence, based on an individually generated question about the nature of truth, which includes interpretation of at least three of the unit texts 4-6 pgs
- One Independent Study Portfolio Entry:
  - one related to personal growth in students' ability to generate and follow through with their



<p>passages.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• metacognitively, reflect on their ability to generate and follow through with their own ideas and questions when writing or planning a project.</li> <li>• analyze, through discussion and informal writing assignments, how critical theory offers interpretive possibilities to <i>Oedipus</i> or a similar text.</li> <li>• extend classroom collaboration by including the “voices” of psychoanalytic literary critics.</li> </ul>	<p>truths?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ How can truth be defined?</li> <li>○ What is the difference between knowledge and truth, perception and truth, reality and truth?</li> <li>○ What role does truth play in living a meaningful life?</li> <li>○ How can literature be a portrayal of truth?</li> </ul>	<p>own ideas and questions when writing or planning projects)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual performance in leading a seminar</li> </ul>
		<p><b><u>Skill Objectives</u></b>  Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrate sophistication of style by appropriately varying sentence structure in writing (subordination and coordination, use of the sentence fragment, etc.).</li> <li>• demonstrate correct pronoun agreement</li> </ul>

**Unit 4 - What is Evil and Why Does It Exist?, 6 weeks [top](#)**

**Standards**

***Exploring and Responding to Literature***

**Students recognize and appreciate that contemporary and classical literature has shaped human thought.**

Students will:

- discuss, analyze and evaluate how characters deal with the diversity of human experience and conflict.
- create responses to texts and examine each work’s contributions to an understanding of human experience across cultures.

***Communicating with Others***

**Students use descriptive, narrative, expository, persuasive and poetic modes.**

Students will:

- use the appropriate features of persuasive, narrative, expository or poetic writing.

**Students prepare, publish and/or present work appropriate to audience, purpose and task.**

Students will:

- apply the most effective processes to create and present a written, oral or visual piece.
- revise texts for organization, elaboration, fluency and clarity.

***Applying English Language Conventions***

**Students use Standard English for composing and revising written text.**

Students will:

- demonstrate proficient use of proper mechanics, usage and spelling skills.
- use resources for proofreading and editing.

**Unit Objectives**

Students will be able to:

- research and present findings related to the cultural background of one of the unit texts.
- extend classroom collaboration by including the “voices” of literary critics.
- analyze, through discussion and informal writing assignments, how critical theory offers interpretive possibilities to chosen texts.
- discuss how literary characters illustrate

**Essential Questions**

- How does literature enrich our lives?
- How do we write, speak and present effectively?
- How do we use the English language appropriately to speak and write?

**Focus Questions**

- What is evil and why does it exist?
  - What is the relationship between goodness and evil?
  - Can evil be universally defined?
  - Why do good people commit evil acts?

**Assessments**

- Character analysis essay, focusing on how literary characters (one from each of the unit texts) illustrate evil as part of the human condition 4-6 pgs
- One Independent Study Portfolio Entry:

<p>evil as part of the human condition.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• use oral discourse and informal writing to develop a personal definition of goodness and evil.</li> <li>• examine the existence of goodness and evil within themselves and the world around them through connections to literature.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ How do societal concepts regarding good and evil dictate behavior?</li> <li>○ How does the exploration of evil in literature provide insight into evil as part of the human condition?</li> </ul>	
		<p><b><u>Skill Objective</u></b> Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• determine their four most common grammatical errors through individual conferences with their teacher and, for duration of the school year, avoid each one in their writing.</li> </ul>

## Unit 5 - Living an Ethical Life, 6 weeks [top](#)

### Standards

#### *Exploring and Responding to Literature*

**Students recognize and appreciate that contemporary and classical literature has shaped human thought.**

Students will:

- compare/ contrast and evaluate ideas, themes and/or issues across classical and contemporary texts.
- create responses to texts and examine each work's contributions to an understanding of human experience across cultures.

#### *Communicating with Others*

**Students prepare, publish and/or present work appropriate to audience, purpose and task.**

Students will:

- research information from multiple sources for a specific purpose.
- evaluate the validity of primary and secondary sources of information to authenticate research.

#### *Applying English Language Conventions*

**Students use Standard English for composing and revising written text.**

Students will:

- demonstrate proficient use of proper mechanics, usage and spelling skills.
- use resources for proofreading and editing.

### Unit Objectives

Students will be able to:

- demonstrate their recognition of how cultural assumptions have shaped their concepts of ethics.
- articulate the characteristics of an ethical life within the context of their own culture.
- analyze the conflicts evident in unit texts as a basis for discussing the relationships between morality, justice, and ethics.
- analyze rhetoric used in given texts, as determined by the audience and purpose of students' speeches.
- use rhetorical devices to compose a

### Essential Questions

- How does literature enrich our lives?
- How do we write, speak and present effectively?
- How do we use the English language appropriately to speak and write?

### Focus Questions

- What are the challenges of living an ethical life?
  - What does it mean to live ethically?
  - What forces determine what is or is not ethical?
  - What is the relationship between morality, justice, and ethics?
  - To what extent can conflicting perceptions (cultural, personal, societal) of what is

### Assessments

- Speech: Importance of Ethics as related to an important issue connected to focus questions
- Independent Study Portfolio Entry

<p>speech intended for a student specified purpose and audience.</p>	<p>ethical be resolved?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What must an individual sacrifice in order to live an ethical life and what can be gained?</li> <li>○ How does literature illustrate the complexity of living ethically?</li> </ul>	
		<p><b><u>Skill Objectives</u></b>  Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• discuss academic integrity and demonstrate recognition of what constitutes plagiarism.</li> <li>• demonstrate proficiency with MLA conventions.</li> <li>• write an annotated bibliography for the literary analysis paper following MLA format.</li> <li>• demonstrate proficiency in two of the four grammatical errors individually determined with their teacher.</li> </ul>

**Unit 6 – Building a House of Meaning, 5 weeks [top](#)**

**Standards**

***Exploring and Responding to Literature***

**Students recognize and appreciate that contemporary and classical literature has shaped human thought.**

Students will:

- discuss, analyze and evaluate how characters deal with the diversity of human experience and conflict.
- create responses to texts and examine each work’s contributions to an understanding of human experience across cultures.

***Communicating with Others***

**Students use descriptive, narrative, expository, persuasive and poetic modes.**

Students will:

- use the appropriate features of persuasive, narrative, expository or poetic writing.

**Students prepare, publish and/or present work appropriate to audience, purpose and task.**

Students will:

- apply the most effective processes to create and present a written, oral or visual piece.
- revise texts for organization, elaboration, fluency and clarity.

***Applying English Language Conventions***

**Students use Standard English for composing and revising written text.**

Students will:

- demonstrate proficient use of proper mechanics, usage and spelling skills.
- use resources for proofreading and editing.

**Unit Objectives**

Students will be able to:

- develop a sophisticated and deep definition of the term “myth” through written and oral discourse.
- reflect in writing how myth plays a role in their own lives.
- identify ways in which art (literature and visual texts), ethics, concepts of goodness, evil, and truth reflect personal and societal mythology regarding ethics, goodness, evil, and truth.

**Essential Questions**

- How does literature enrich our lives?
- How do we write, speak and present effectively?
- How do we use the English language appropriately to speak and write?

**Focus Questions**

- What myths shape my perception of my self and the world around me?
  - What is myth?
  - What role do myths (personal, cultural, historical) play in my life?

**Assessments**

- “Building a House of Meaning” - Narrative essay, exploring a conflict between student’s personal myth and a societal myth. 2-3 pgs
- Prospectus
- Independent Study Journal Entries reflecting on how this Independent Study Project has extended their thinking and learning and how their work reflects who they are as academics and as human beings

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• explore their own personal mythology and explain what they want to keep of it and what they want to change, given their emerging adult lives.</li> <li>• develop a prospectus for their Independent Study Project and conference with their teacher for final approval.</li> <li>• form and pursue a line of intellectual inquiry related to the literature and ideas examined in this course.</li> <li>• conduct independent research, create a product and a processed written piece, and deliver a presentation to further explore an idea or concept from the course.</li> <li>• use technology to research, create a product, or present their independent study.</li> <li>• extend their learning through community involvement.</li> <li>• reflect on how this Independent Study Project has extended their thinking and learning and how their work reflects who they are as academics and as human beings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ To what extent is my personal myth consistent with cultural myth?</li> <li>○ What can one do if their personal myth and cultural myth are inconsistent?</li> <li>○ In what ways can personal myth help identify one's heroic path?</li> <li>○ How can one take steps to follow this heroic path?</li> <li>○ What questions must I ask to create personal meaning in life?</li> <li>○ What ideas from this year of study have been most significant in my personal quest for meaning?</li> <li>○ What class experiences have inspired me to pursue my Independent Study?</li> <li>○ How can the creation of a product enhance my learning experience?</li> <li>○ How can I shape my learning into a presentation that will be a unique and intellectual experience for my audience?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Written component of Independent Study</li> <li>• Presentation and product of Independent Study</li> </ul>
		<p><b><u>Skill Objective</u></b> Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• continue to demonstrate proficiency in four individually determined grammatical errors.</li> </ul>