

**FAIRFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
FAIRFIELD, CONNECTICUT

**ENGLISH 41**

Board of Education Approved 05/23/2006

## **English 41**

### **Statement of Purpose**

English 41 is a yearlong honors course for seniors. The students taking this class are college bound and every one of them is on the verge of a major life change: graduation. Therefore, the course is intended to accomplish two primary tasks. First, the course is designed to cultivate the critical thinking, reading, writing, and oral skills required to succeed in college. Second, the class challenges students to recognize their power in shaping the course of their own lives.

By examining abstract concepts such as art, truth, ethics, and evil through an academic lens, students will develop a heightened awareness of their own ideology regarding these notions. With this heightened awareness, students become more reflective of collaborative and independent study, written and oral discourse, and the exploration of challenging texts and philosophical ideas. Students then emerge as bold, reflective, passionate academics.

### **Audience**

12<sup>th</sup> grade honors students

### **Prerequisites**

Successful completion of 11<sup>th</sup> grade English and the recommendation of junior year teacher

### **Design and 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.

### **Goals**

Students will:

- 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.
- demonstrate the ability to recognize their own unique, challenging, intellectual ideas, and thoroughly develop them.
- identify and experiment with stylistic elements in writing.
- 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)
- write formal papers that go through the writing process, including:
  - Creative non-fiction
  - Exploratory essay
  - Character analysis
  - Literary analysis
  - Personal process paper
  - Independent study writing component
- develop an aesthetic appreciation for literature and other art forms (painting, sculpture, film) as they connect with literature.
- expand vocabulary by compiling list and definitions of unfamiliar words.

### **Course Objectives**

Students will be able to:

- record ideas, key lines from texts, and questions from collaboration in an Independent Study Journal.
- identify and respond to a variety of visual art (paintings and sculpture) that connect to a concept represented in literature.
- 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 an introduction to the expectations for the final project.
- identify and analyze key lines from texts that demonstrate an understanding of the text and an acknowledgment of that text in a broader philosophical and cultural context.
- 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 (paintings and sculpture) that connects to a concept examined in the unit.
- develop a glossary of terms used to discuss visual art.
- participate in seminar by composing challenging questions and highlighting significant passages for discussion.
- analyze, through discussion and informal writing assignments, how Feminist theory offers interpretive possibilities for *The Bell Jar* or a similar text.
- extend classroom collaboration by including the “voices” of feminist literary critics.
- 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 passages.
- metacognitively, reflect on their ability to generate and follow through with their own ideas and questions when writing or planning a project.
- analyze, through discussion and informal writing assignments, how Psychoanalytic theory offers interpretive possibilities to *Oedipus* or a similar text.
- extend classroom collaboration by including the “voices” of psychoanalytic literary critics.
- research and present findings related to the cultural background of one of the unit texts.
- extend classroom collaboration by including the “voices” of Postcolonial literary critics.
- analyze, through discussion and informal writing assignments, how Postcolonial theory offers interpretive possibilities to *Cry the Beloved Country* and *Heart of Darkness* or similar texts.
- analyze rhetoric used in given texts, as determined by the audience and purpose of students’ speeches.
- use rhetorical devices to compose a speech intended for a student specified purpose and audience.
- discuss how literary characters illustrate evil as part of the human condition.
- use oral discourse and informal writing to develop a personal definition of goodness and evil.
- examine the existence of goodness and evil within themselves and the world around them through connections to literature.
- 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.
- apply Marxist critical theory to a unit text through informal writing and class discussion.

- conduct research regarding literary criticism.
- 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), reflects personal and societal mythology regarding ethics, goodness, evil, and truth.
- 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.
- develop a prospectus for their Independent Study Project and conference with their teacher for final approval.
- form and pursue a line of intellectual inquiry related to the literature and ideas examined in this course.
- 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.
- use technology to research, create a product, and present their independent study.
- extend their learning through community involvement.
- 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.

### **Skill Objectives**

Students will:

- avoid using the comma splice.
- use consistent voice in writing.
- correctly punctuate restrictive and non-restrictive clauses.
- demonstrate sophistication of style by appropriately varying sentence structure in writing (subordination and coordination, use of the sentence fragment, etc.).
- determine their four most common grammatical errors and, for duration of the school year, avoid each one in their writing, through individual conferences with their teacher.
- discuss academic integrity and demonstrates recognition of what constitutes plagiarism.
- demonstrate proficiency with MLA conventions.
- write an annotated bibliography for the literary analysis paper following MLA format.
- demonstrate proficiency with their four most common grammatical errors, as determined in an individual conference with their teacher.

### **English Standards**

***Exploring and Responding to Literature - Students read and respond to classical and contemporary texts from many cultures and literary periods.***

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

Students will explain and explore their own and others’ aesthetic reactions to texts.

**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 will create responses to texts and examine each work's contributions to an understanding of human experience across cultures.

**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 produce written, oral and visual texts to express, develop and substantiate ideas and experiences.*

**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 determine purpose, point of view and audience, and choose an appropriate written, oral or visual format.

Students will apply the most effective processes to create and present a written, oral or visual piece.

Students will revise texts for organization, elaboration, fluency and clarity.

Students will research information from multiple sources for a specific purpose.

Students will evaluate the validity of primary and secondary sources of information to authenticate research.

Students will publish and/or present final products in a myriad of ways, including the use of the arts and technology.

*English Language Conventions - Students apply the conventions of Standard English in oral and written communication.*

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

Students will demonstrate proficient use of proper mechanics, usage and spelling skills.

Students will use resources for proofreading and editing.

## **Information and Technology Standards – to be added**

### **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?
- 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 meaningful life?
  - Why do human beings create art?
  - What is aesthetic?
  - What is art?
- How do we discover and discern truth?
  - Why seek the truth?
  - Are all truths relative or are there universal truths?
  - How can truth be defined?
  - What is the difference between knowledge and truth, perception and truth, reality and truth?
  - What role does truth play in living a meaningful life?
  - How can literature be a portrayal of truth?
- 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?
  - How do societal concepts regarding good and evil dictate behavior?
  - How does the exploration of evil in literature provide insight into evil as part of the human condition?
- 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 ethical be resolved?
  - What must an individual sacrifice in order to live an ethical life and what can be gained?

- How does literature illustrate the complexity of living ethically?
- 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?
  - To what extent is my personal myth consistent with cultural myth?
  - What can one do if their personal myth and cultural myth are inconsistent?
  - In what ways can personal myth help identify one's heroic path?
  - How can one take steps to follow this heroic path?
- What questions must I ask to create personal meaning in life?
  - What ideas from this year of study have been most significant in my personal quest for meaning?
  - What class experiences have inspired me to pursue my Independent Study?
  - How can the creation of a product enhance my learning experience?
  - How can I shape my learning into a presentation that will be a unique and intellectual experience for my audience?



## UNITS of STUDY

### Unit 1: Introductory Unit

#### English Standards

*Exploring and Responding to Literature - Students read and respond to classical and contemporary texts from many cultures and literary periods.*

**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 produce written, oral and visual texts to express, develop and substantiate ideas and experiences.*

**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.

Students will revise texts for organization, elaboration, fluency and clarity.

*English Language Conventions - Students apply the conventions of Standard English in oral and written communication.*

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

Students will demonstrate proficient use of proper mechanics, usage and spelling skills.

Students will use resources for proofreading and editing.

#### 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?

#### Core Topic

- Introductory Unit

#### 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 text and an acknowledgment of that text in a broader context (personal life, human condition, cultural assumptions).

### **Skill Objective**

Students will:

- avoid using the comma splice.

### **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

### **Pacing**

3 weeks

## Unit 2: The Function of Art in Life

### English Standards

*Exploring and Responding to Literature - Students read and respond to classical and contemporary texts from many cultures and literary periods.*

**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 produce written, oral and visual texts to express, develop and substantiate ideas and experiences.*

**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.

Students will revise texts for organization, elaboration, fluency and clarity.

*English Language Conventions - Students apply the conventions of Standard English in oral and written communication.*

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

Students will demonstrate proficient use of proper mechanics, usage and spelling skills.

Students will use resources for proofreading and editing.

### 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 meaningful life?
  - Why do human beings create art?
  - What is aesthetic?
  - What is art?

- How do I make something appear beautiful, meaningful, and compelling?

### **Core Topic**

- What is the function of art in life?

### **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.
- develop a glossary of terms used to discuss visual art.
- participate in seminar by composing challenging questions and highlighting significant passages for discussion.
- analyze, through discussion and informal writing assignments, how Feminist theory offers interpretive possibilities to the *Bell Jar* or similar text.
- extend classroom collaboration by including the “voices” of feminist literary critics.

### **Skill Objectives**

Students will:

- use consistent voice in writing.
- correctly punctuate restrictive and non-restrictive clauses.

### **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

### **Pacing**

7 weeks

## Unit 3: How We Discover and Discern the Truth

### English Standards

*Exploring and Responding to Literature - Students read and respond to classical and contemporary texts from many cultures and literary periods.*

**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 produce written, oral and visual texts to express, develop and substantiate ideas and experiences.*

**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.

Students will revise texts for organization, elaboration, fluency and clarity.

*English Language Conventions - Students apply the conventions of Standard English in oral and written communication.*

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

Students will demonstrate proficient use of proper mechanics, usage and spelling skills.

Students will use resources for proofreading and editing.

### 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 truths?
- How can truth be defined?
- What is the difference between knowledge and truth, perception and truth, reality and truth?
- What role does truth play in living a meaningful life?
- How can literature be a portrayal of truth?

### **Core Topic**

- How we discover and discern the truth

### **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 passages.
- metacognitively, reflect on their ability to generate and follow through with their own ideas and questions when writing or planning a project.
- analyze, through discussion and informal writing assignments, how critical theory offers interpretive possibilities to *Oedipus* or a similar text.
- extend classroom collaboration by including the “voices” of psychoanalytic literary critics.

### **Skill Objective**

Students will:

- demonstrate sophistication of style by appropriately varying sentence structure in writing (subordination and coordination, use of the sentence fragment, etc.).
- demonstrate correct pronoun agreement

### **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 own ideas and questions when writing or planning projects)
- Individual performance in leading a seminar

### **Pacing**

6 weeks

## **Unit 4: What is Evil and Why Does It Exist?**

### **English Standards**

*Exploring and Responding to Literature - Students read and respond to classical and contemporary texts from many cultures and literary periods.*

**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 will create responses to texts and examine each work's contributions to an understanding of human experience across cultures.

*Communicating with Others - Students produce written, oral and visual texts to express, develop and substantiate ideas and experiences.*

**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.

Students will revise texts for organization, elaboration, fluency and clarity.

*English Language Conventions - Students apply the conventions of Standard English in oral and written communication.*

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

Students will demonstrate proficient use of proper mechanics, usage and spelling skills.

Students will use resources for proofreading and editing.

### **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?

- How do societal concepts regarding good and evil dictate behavior?
- How does the exploration of evil in literature provide insight into evil as part of the human condition?

### **Core Topic**

- What is evil and why does it exist?

### **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 evil as part of the human condition.
- use oral discourse and informal writing to develop a personal definition of goodness and evil.
- examine the existence of goodness and evil within themselves and the world around them through connections to literature.

### **Skill Objective**

Students will:

- 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.

### **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:

### **Pacing**

6 weeks



## Unit 5 : Living an Ethical Life

### English Standards

*Exploring and Responding to Literature - Students read and respond to classical and contemporary texts from many cultures and literary periods.*

**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.

Students will create responses to texts and examine each work's contributions to an understanding of human experience across cultures.

*Communicating with Others - Students produce written, oral and visual texts to express, develop and substantiate ideas and experiences.*

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

Students will research information from multiple sources for a specific purpose.

Students will evaluate the validity of primary and secondary sources of information to authenticate research.

*English Language Conventions - Students apply the conventions of Standard English in oral and written communication.*

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

Students will demonstrate proficient use of proper mechanics, usage and spelling skills.

Students will use resources for proofreading and editing.

### 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 ethical be resolved?

- What must an individual sacrifice in order to live an ethical life and what can be gained?
- How does literature illustrate the complexity of living ethically?

### **Core Topic**

- Living an ethical life

### **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 speech intended for a student specified purpose and audience.

### **Skill Objectives**

Students will:

- discuss academic integrity and demonstrate recognition of what constitutes plagiarism.
- demonstrate proficiency with MLA conventions.
- write an annotated bibliography for the literary analysis paper following MLA format.
- demonstrate proficiency in two of the four grammatical errors individually determined with their teacher.

### **Assessments**

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

### **Pacing**

6 weeks

## Unit 6: Building a House of Meaning

### English Standards

*Exploring and Responding to Literature - Students read and respond to classical and contemporary texts from many cultures and literary periods.*

**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 will create responses to texts and examine each work's contributions to an understanding of human experience across cultures.

*Communicating with Others - Students produce written, oral and visual texts to express, develop and substantiate ideas and experiences.*

**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.

Students will revise texts for organization, elaboration, fluency and clarity.

*English Language Conventions - Students apply the conventions of Standard English in oral and written communication.*

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

Students will demonstrate proficient use of proper mechanics, usage and spelling skills.

Students will use resources for proofreading and editing.

### *Technology Standards*

**Student will define their information needs and identify effective courses of action to conduct research and solve problems using technology.**

**Students will understand and demonstrate information skills and strategies to locate and effectively use print and non-print resources to solve problems and conduct research.**

**Students will demonstrate the responsible legal and ethical use of information resources, computers, and other technologies.**

### **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?
- 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?
  - To what extent is my personal myth consistent with cultural myth?
  - What can one do if their personal myth and cultural myth are inconsistent?
  - In what ways can personal myth help identify one's heroic path?
  - How can one take steps to follow this heroic path?
  - What questions must I ask to create personal meaning in life?
  - What ideas from this year of study have been most significant in my personal quest for meaning?
  - What class experiences have inspired me to pursue my Independent Study?
  - How can the creation of a product enhance my learning experience?
  - How can I shape my learning into a presentation that will be a unique and intellectual experience for my audience?

### **Core Topics**

- Building a House of Meaning
- Independent Study Project

### **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.
- 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.
- develop a prospectus for their Independent Study Project and conference with their teacher for final approval.
- form and pursue a line of intellectual inquiry related to the literature and ideas examined in this course.

- 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.
- use technology to research, create a product, or present their independent study.
- extend their learning through community involvement.
- 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.

### **Skill Objective**

Students will:

- continue to demonstrate proficiency in four individually determined grammatical errors.

### **Assessment**

- “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
- Written component of Independent Study
- Presentation and product of Independent Study

### **Pacing**

5 weeks

### **Text**

The Power of Myth by Joseph Campbell

### **English Standards**

*Communicating with Others - Students produce written, oral and visual texts to express, develop and substantiate ideas and experiences.*

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

Students will determine purpose, point of view and audience, and choose an appropriate written, oral or visual format.

Students will apply the most effective processes to create and present a written, oral or visual piece.

Students will revise texts for organization, elaboration, fluency and clarity.

Students will research information from multiple sources for a specific purpose.

Students will evaluate the validity of primary and secondary sources of information to authenticate research.

Students will publish and/or present final products in a myriad of ways, including the use of the arts and technology.

*English Language Conventions - Students apply the conventions of Standard English in oral and written communication.*

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

Students will demonstrate proficient use of proper mechanics, usage and spelling skills.

Students will use resources for proofreading and editing.

**Texts such as:**

**Unit 1**

- “Allegory of the Cave”
- *Man’s Search for Meaning*
- *Life is Beautiful*
- *Cool Hand Luke*

**Unit 2**

- *The Bell Jar (Feminist)*
- Creative Nonfiction model essays
- Selections from a poetry anthology
- Film – Lars and the Real Girl

**Unit 3, 4 & 5**

- *All My Sons*
- *Hamlet (psychoanalytic)*
- *One Hundred Years of Solitude (any theory) or Crime and Punishment (Marxist)*
- use at least one film text:
  - Matrix
  - Motorcycle Diaries
  - Antoine Fisher
  - Lost In Translation
  - Apocolypse Now
  - Crash
  - Frida
  - Waking Life
  - Life as a House
  - Othello
  - Evita

Three of the following:

- Excerpts from Aristotle, Plato, and other philosophers
- *Oedipus (psychoanalytic)*
- *Cry, The Beloved Countr (Post Colonial)y*
- *Heart of Darkness (Post Colonial)*
- *A Doll House(Feminist / Psychoanalytic / Cultural-Historical)*
- *Candide(Psychoanalytic/ Cultural-Historical)*
- *The Stranger(Psychoanalytic)*
- *9 Short Plays*
- Excerpts from Milton and Dante
- *Frankenstein(Feminist / Psychoanalytic)*
- *Love in a Time of Cholera (Cultural-Historical)*
- *Ivan Ilyich (Post Modern)*
- *The Metamorphosis (Post Modern)*
- *Hunger Artist (Post Modern)*

**Unit 6**

- Excerpts from *The Power of Myth* (personal, cultural, and historical myths)

- Excerpts from *Don Quixote*
- Students will read and research a variety of texts that they will select independently



## TWELFTH GRADE LOOK AT THE LEARNER

The twelfth grader is unique in the high school setting by virtue of age and rank. This sort of superiority, which is synonymous with the term “senior”, is a status symbol of immediate pride. The seniors enter their senior year with a sense of accomplishment in the mere fact that they have become “Seniors at Last”, that they have jumped the hurdles of ninth, tenth and eleventh grade and are ahead in the race toward life after high school. However, this initial confidence based on the high school hierarchy is soon replaced with fears about the future. They often feel insecure and benefit greatly from learning experiences which build their confidence in themselves. Still, more than other classes, the seniors have a strong sense of community and respect for individual differences that is evident in the classroom in their lives outside of the classroom.

One problem facing the great majority of seniors in today’s society is the college application process. Most students continue their education beyond high school and must look to their future early on in the senior year. Even the population that is not applying to college takes part in an application process whether for the military or for the business world. Seniors often feel compelled to decide upon lifelong career plans before January of their senior year. They are faced with the application process that demands that they evaluate themselves in intensive ways. The college application essay, the resume, the search for the “right” school or job, the final round of the SAT’s, the demand for teacher recommendations, and the fear of rejection are pressures which have an impact on instruction. Also, there is a double edge to the application process. After acceptance into college and after future plans are established, students may develop a lackadaisical attitude toward learning. It is important to engage seniors in projects that continue to challenge their intellectual development. On the other hand, many seniors go about the business of senior year studies with greater clarity after the college process is completed.

A pitfall for the teacher of seniors, then, is to become too preoccupied with their students’ preparation for the world beyond high school. Recognizing that it is indeed a responsibility to prepare seniors for college or the world of work, teachers need to remember their essential responsibility to focus on students’ academic and developmental needs. Because of the students’ sense of community and greater tolerance for individual differences, the teacher can capitalize on their assumptions about life and learning and strive to broaden their perspectives as they explore ideas outside of their cultures. The teacher can increase their sophistication as collaborators who can be critical without being judgmental and who are more open to others’ views. Seniors are often comfortable with ambiguity and realize that a thoughtful reading of a sophisticated text often generates more questions at the conclusion of the reading than they had at the beginning. Seniors often consider their senior year as the “last chance” to learn concepts and skills before they enter into “real” independence; thus, the teacher should offer them opportunities to go beyond the curriculum and to experiment in order to establish personal and academic goals.

The curriculum offers students the opportunity to independently explore a substantive question related to the course content, which gives them autonomy as learners as they begin their transition from high school. The English classroom is a place where seniors can broaden their worldviews and clearly recognize new territory for discovery. Working with the students, English teachers can help to make the complexities and chaos of being a “Senior at Last”, which is at once exciting and perplexing, a metaphor for a lifelong approach to learning.