

Curriculum Development
In the Fairfield Public Schools

FAIRFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
FAIRFIELD, CONNECTICUT

**LITERATURE OF THE
SUPERNATURAL**

Board of Education Approved 01/22/2008

LITERATURE OF THE SUPERNATURAL

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this semester course is to develop students as readers, writers, and thinkers as they explore a topic of interest to them.

Audience

Juniors and Seniors

Prerequisite

For Seniors, completion of Junior English course. For Juniors, an addition to full-year English course

Design and Description

Supernatural Literature is a semester English elective. The focus of the course is to analyze how the supernatural, as portrayed in literature, is reflective of the human condition. Cultures throughout place and time have written about the supernatural realm in order to contemplate life, death, and the universe. Students will read and discuss aspects of the supernatural in works from the past to the present by such authors as Dante, Hawthorne, Bradbury, Shelley, and Stokers. Through both written and visual texts, students will explore such concepts as ghosts, vampires, devils, witches, and the afterlife. Analytical and creative writing skills will be developed and consistently required. Critical thinking, classroom collaboration, and independent work are integral components of the course. Students will also complete a cumulative project examining how and why humanity's interest in the supernatural is both timeless and universal. In the fall, students will prepare for the college application process by writing a personal essay, which may be used as a college essay. In the spring, students will complete a senior English Independent Study Project.

Course Goals

Students will learn to:

- interpret and analyze what supernatural literature reveals about the nature of life, death, and the universe.
- examine the purpose and appeal of supernatural literature as a genre.
- consider how to evaluate whether to accept, believe, or reject the supernatural.
- write and research to deepen their understanding of supernatural elements.
- explore what supernatural literature reveals about the human condition.

Course Objectives

Students will be able to:

- define the supernatural.
- understand differences between supernatural literature, science fiction, and fantasy literature.
- explore concepts of fear, death, and afterlife and what constitutes humanity.
- identify and define the epistolary novel.
- consider why an author would choose an epistolary format.

- discuss and examine the nature of evil.
- analyze and deconstruct the supernatural novel focusing on characterization, theme and symbolism.
- pose an evaluative question and explore it using examples and/or reasons.
- display an understanding of the importance of *Paradise Lost* and its historical context.
- identify characteristics of the epic and epic hero.
- examine contemporary magic and its roots.
- interpret an allegorical text.
- examine the Faust legend.
- consider the historical and social significance of *The Inferno*.
- analyze different depictions of the afterlife.
- gather textual evidence to support an analysis.
- analyze the use of symbolism, color, and cinematic technique in film.
- deconstruct and analyze an allegory.
- conduct research to explore how different cultures throughout history have dealt with the supernatural.

Senior English Independent Study Project

- brainstorm possible questions to explore.
- determine personal question to explore.
- identify sources for research such as people to interview and texts to read.
- research their question through multiple sources.
- decide format for presentation, utilizing oral, written, visual, and/or technological components for effectiveness.
- determine audience.
- organize research for audience.
- write first draft.
- revise for audience.
- present project.

Skill Objectives

Students will:

- revise for redundancy and wordiness.
- recognize and avoid exaggeration.
- avoid sentence sprawl.
- revise for sentence variety.
- consider stylistic choices, such as beginning a sentence with a conjunction and the use of sentence fragments for emphasis.
- recognize and use gerunds and participles.
- avoid misplaced modifiers.
- avoid misplaced modifiers.
- use adverbial connectives for emphasis and transition.
- punctuate adverbial connectives, using a semi-colon and a comma with transitions such as therefore and however.

- use dash and ellipses.
- punctuate quotations within quotations, using single quotation marks.

State of Connecticut English Language Arts 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 identify the various conventions within a genre and apply this understanding to the evaluation of the text.

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.

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

Students will analyze and evaluate the basic beliefs, perspectives and assumptions underlying an author's work.

Students will analyze and evaluate themes and connections that cross cultures.

Students will interpret, analyze and evaluate the influence of culture, history and ethnicity on themes and issues in literature.

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 write to delight in the imagination.

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

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.

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

Students use knowledge of their language and culture to improve competency in English.

Students will read, listen to and tell stories from a variety of cultures, and identify the similarities and differences in the way language is used.

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

- What is natural?
- What is the supernatural?
- Are all supernatural occurrences necessarily sinister?
- Why would an author choose supernatural literature as a genre?
- Why is suspension of disbelief so important to supernatural literature?
- What is evil?
- What is the source of the spirit or soul?
- Why are so many cultures interested in the undead, living dead or reanimation?
- What are advantages of believing in a devil?
- Why would an author choose to cast Satan as an epic hero?
- Why has the concept of magic remained a consistent element in many cultures?
- What questions surround death?
- How have different societies and cultures attempted to answer these questions?
- Is it important to discover what will happen after death?
- How does one's conception of /attitude about death affect one's life?
- How and why is human interest in the supernatural both timeless and universal?

Units of Study

Unit 1: Introduction to the Supernatural

English Language Arts Standards

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

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

Students will analyze and evaluate the basic beliefs, perspectives and assumptions underlying an author's work.

Students will analyze and evaluate themes and connections that cross cultures.

Students will interpret, analyze and evaluate the influence of culture, history and ethnicity on themes and issues in literature.

Essential Question

- How does literature enrich our lives?

Focus Questions

- What is natural?
- What is the supernatural?
- Are all supernatural occurrences necessarily sinister?
- Why would an author choose supernatural literature as a genre?
- Why is suspension of disbelief so important to supernatural literature?

Core Topic

- Defining Terms

Unit Objectives

Students will be able to:

- define the supernatural.
- understand differences between supernatural literature, science fiction, and fantasy literature.
- explore concepts of fear, death, and afterlife and what constitutes humanity.

Assessments

Pacing

1 week

Unit 2: Non-Natural Beings (Vampires, Werewolves, Monsters, Zombies)

English Language Arts 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 identify the various conventions within a genre and apply this understanding to the evaluation of the text.

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 write to delight in the imagination.

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

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

Applying 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?
- What is the source of the spirit or soul?
- Why are so many cultures interested in the undead, living dead or reanimation?

Core Topics

- The Nature of Evil
- Exploratory Essay
- Personal Narrative (College Essay)

Unit Objectives

Students will be able to:

- identify and define the epistolary novel.
- consider why an author would choose an epistolary format.
- discuss and examine the nature of evil.
- analyze and deconstruct the supernatural novel focusing on characterization, theme, and symbolism.
- pose an evaluative question and explore it using examples and/or reasons.
- brainstorm ideas for personal narrative.
- develop clear and consistent voice in their narrative writing.
- write for a specified audience (college admissions officer) and a specific purpose.
- develop unity and coherence in their narrative writing.

Skill Objectives

Students will:

- revise for redundancy and wordiness.
- recognize and avoid exaggeration.
- avoid sentence sprawl.
- revise for sentence variety.

Assessments

- A personal narrative, which can be used for a college essay
- Creative writing from Dracula's point of view
- Responses and quizzes on major texts
- Process piece: Exploratory essay on evil

Pacing

6 weeks

Unit 3: Devils, Witches, Black Magic and White Magic

English Language Arts 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.

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.

Essential Questions

- How does literature enrich our lives?
- How do we write, speak and present effectively?

Focus Questions

- What are advantages of believing in a devil?
- Why would an author choose to cast Satan as an epic hero?
- Why has the concept of magic remained a consistent element in many cultures?

Core Topics

- Evil
- Magic
- Research

Unit Objectives

Students will be able to:

- display an understanding of the importance of *Paradise Lost* and its historical context.
- identify characteristics of the epic and epic hero.
- examine contemporary magic and its roots.
- interpret an allegorical text.
- examine the Faust legend.

Senior English Independent Study Project

- brainstorm possible questions to explore.
- determine personal question to explore.

- identify sources for research such as people to interview and texts to read.
- research their question through multiple sources.

Skill Objectives

Students will:

- avoid misplaced modifiers.
- use adverbial connectives for emphasis and transition.
- punctuate adverbial connectives, using a semi-colon and a comma with transitions such as therefore and however.

Assessments

- Responses and quizzes on major texts
- Student research and presentation, examining why the concept of magic has remained a consistent element in many cultures

Pacing

3 weeks

Unit 4: Death and the Afterlife

English Language Arts Standards

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

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.

Students will interpret, analyze and evaluate the influence of culture, history and ethnicity on themes and issues in literature.

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

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

Students use knowledge of their language and culture to improve competency in English.

Students will read, listen to and tell stories from a variety of cultures, and identify the similarities and differences in the way language is used.

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 questions surround death?
- How have different societies and cultures attempted to answer these questions?
- Is it important to discover what will happen after death?
- How does one's conception of /attitude about death affect one's life?
- How and why is human interest in the supernatural both timeless and universal?

Core Topics

- Death and After-life

- The Supernatural Across Cultures

Unit Objectives

Students will be able to:

- consider the historical and social significance of *The Inferno*.
- analyze different depictions of the afterlife.
- gather textual evidence to support an analysis.
- analyze the use of symbolism, color, and cinematic technique in film.
- deconstruct and analyze an allegory.
- conduct research to explore how different cultures throughout history have dealt with the supernatural.

Senior English Independent Study Project

- decide format for presentation, utilizing oral, written, visual, and/or technological components for effectiveness.
- determine audience.
- organize research for audience.
- write first draft.
- revise for audience.
- present project.

Skill Objectives

Students will:

- use dash and ellipses.
- punctuate quotations within quotations, using single quotation marks.

Assessments

- Research on how varied cultures view death and/or the afterlife
- Analytical essay
- Senior English Independent Study Project

Pacing

7 weeks

Texts such as:

Unit 2

- *Dracula*- Bram Stoker
- “Born of Man and Woman” – Richard Matheson
- *Frankenstein* - Mary Shelley
- Author studies (such as Mary Shelley, Anne Rice, Bram Stoker)

Suggested “Share Alike”
“Mrs. Amworth” – E.F. Benson
“The Man Upstairs” - Ray Bradbury

Unit 3

- *Paradise Lost* (selections from Book 1) – John Milton
- “Young Goodman Brown” - Nathaniel Hawthorne
- “The Devil and Tom Walker” – Washington Irving

Suggested *Bedazzled* - Film
The Picture of Dorian Gray – Oscar Wilde

Unit 4

- *The Sixth Sense* - Film
- *The Divine Comedy* (overview with emphasis on *The Inferno*) – Dante Alighieri
- *What Dreams May Come* - Film

Suggested “Prey”
“The Jam”
“This Isn’t Exactly How I Expected It”
“The Good Neighbor”