A Course Study of British Literature

Senior English – MR. KELLER

Claudia Taylor “Lady Bird” Johnson High School

2016-2017

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Course Description:

Students in British Literature: A Course Study will integrate all the language skills gained throughout their education. The curriculum both affirms these skills and equips the students to be life-long learners. Students continue to explore expressive, expository, argumentative and literary contexts with a focus on British Literature. Students will read, study, evaluate, and analyze British Literature ranging from the 400’s to the present.

This is an integrated course of literature, grammar, and composition. Great emphasis will be placed on critical thinking and reading, understanding literary elements, language skill, oral communication, study and listening skills, and different types of writing such as essays (literary analysis, research, personal narrative, etc.) and journal entries**.**

Throughout the course of the year, we will explore common themes like courage, honor, hypocrisy, social criticism, humor, lusting for power, and through these overarching ideas, we will create a basis of learning that will extend into the many, and varied, opportunities that lie ahead for our seniors.

I have very high expectations for each one of my students. We are all here to succeed. I expect a great deal, but I also balance it with fun, curiosity, and enjoyment because I feel that we excel when we *enjoy* what we are doing!

**Materials:** For this class, you will need a binder (or a section), pens, pencils and a spiral notebook. You must bring your binder and notebook to class every day.

**Compositions:** All compositions other than in-class essays (the vast majority of our essays) must be typed in MLA format, including a title and heading.

**Assignments:** I will devote a section of the agenda each class period to homework. This section will inform you of what is due the next class period and provide future due dates for reading assignments, compositions, projects, etc. Daily agendas can be found on the “Agendas” page of my website. It is your responsibility to check the agenda for homework assignments each day.

**Absences:** When you are absent, obtain assignments and handouts by checking my website and be sure to get necessary instructions and handouts that are unavailable on the web page from me before leaving class.

**A Note on Printing:** If for some reason you are unable to print an essay or other assignment, you must either email it to me ([jkelle6@neisd.net](mailto:jkelle6@neisd.net))—I will not print for you. Be sure to label each assignment with your name and the name of the assignment.

**Grading Policies:**

* Late Work: Students are expected to turn in work on the due date. However, late work will be accepted within the current three-week grading period and prior to the unit assessment; a 20% deduction will be taken from the earned grade for late assignments. In the case of an extenuating circumstance, discuss with me the possibility of an extension prior to the due date.

**Categories:**

* SAT/WARM-UPS/Daily Class Work/Homework: 25%
* Quizzes/Study Questions/Group Assignments 30%
* Tests/Papers/Projects 45%

**Tutoring:** If you feel like talking, need extra help, or believe you are falling behind, please see me for tutoring as soon as possible. I will be available for tutoring before school every day and after school if you make arrangements with me. Tutoring will be held in A 303. Please let me know in advance if you plan to come in so that I can be sure to make myself available. Parents and students, please e-mail me with questions and comments. (I can check e-mail more often as it is in my classroom.) I am happy to hear from you.

Syllabus

**The Beginning:**

We will begin the year with an overview of the course, looking specifically at the themes that we will work with for the remainder of the course. The purpose of this unit is to have each student identify and identify with the overarching ideas.

* Introduction ( Syllabus; Senior Wall; Website)
* Recurring Ideas in Literature
* Recurring Themes in Literature
* “The Lady in the Looking Glass” Virginia Woolf
* “Inside Me vs. Outside Me” Writing

**Early British Literature (Anglo Saxon): (428 A.D. – 1100):**

Written in Anglo-Saxon, or Old English, sometime between the 5th and 11th centuries, ***Beowulf*** is an epic poem that reflects the early medieval warrior culture of Europe. Beowulf has given historians insight into the old Germanic way of life; in fact, Beowulf has come to be recognized as the foundational epic of English and British culture, in much the same way that the Iliad and the *Odyssey* are the foundational epics for ancient Greece. The ageless themes of good versus evil, searching for identity, strength and skill (physical and mental), courage and mortality are abundant in this classic piece of British Literature.

*Beowulf*

* Old English
* Historical and Biographical Backgrounds
* Kenning Practice
* “Epic Boast” Writing
* Study Questions
* Hero’s Journey
* Literary Analysis Writing (Theme Assertion Paper)
* Literary Analysis Writing (Hero’s Journey/Structure Analysis)
* Chalk Talk – Themes and Motifs in Beowulf
* Final Exam (MC & Essay)

**Medieval Literature (1100 – 1500):**

The Middle Ages saw the beginnings of a rebirth in literature. Wandering scholars and poets traveling to the Crusades learned of new writing styles. Courtly Love spawned a new interest in romantic prose. Troubadours sang in medieval courtyards about epic battles involving great kings and knights. Literature exploded from the universities as scholars began to question convention and write social commentary.

Chaucer’s Canterbury Tales. The unfinished work, which was begun about 1486 and written during the last 14 years of its author’s life, is considered a masterpiece of Middle English. In the Canterbury Tales, Chaucer weaves together stories told by 28 pilgrims whom the storyteller met at an inn. The pilgrims represent all facets of English social life. This complete and unabashedly honest look at each societal class and the demands, customs and language of each, is one of the reasons why this work is a classic and a necessary part of British literature.

* Knight’s Code of Chivalry
* Middle English Riddles
* Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales* (*General Prologue; The Wife of Bath’s Tale; The Pardoner’s Tale*)
* Chaucer Character Chart
* Chaucer Timed Write – Literary Analysis
* Middle English
* “Sir Gawain and the Green Knight”
* *Merlin*
* King Arthur
* Literary Archetypes
* Historical and Biographical Backgrounds

**College Unit:**

* Nobel Questions
* College Essay
* Letters of Recommendation Etiquette
* Résumé Writing
* College Application Process

1st 9 weeks Assessment:

**Renaissance British Literature ( 1500 – 1660):**

The Renaissance was an awakening; the promise of material and spiritual gain abounded. The overwhelming spirit of the times was optimism, an unquenchable belief that life was improving for the first time in anyone’s memory. The steady rise of nationalism, coupled with the first flourishing of democracy, a middle class beginning to gain power in the cities, trade and commerce becoming full enterprises in their own right, are all landmark issues during the Renaissance and those ideas are reflected in Renaissance literature.

Hamlet, Shakespeare’s longest and most revered play, provides a rich text for students to explore the depths of the human experience: love, hate, revenge, rage, dysfunctional relationships, mental illness, desperation, ennui, friendship, and despair. In addition to studying the tragic formula, dramatic structure, and tragic hero, students will also engage in a close reading and analysis of this extremely challenging and multi-dimensional drama. Writer’s response will be both formal and informal during this unit.

Elizabethan Renaissance: Sonnets & *Hamlet*

* Original sonnet writing—emulating a model
* Shakespeare bio/literary, historical, and cultural context of Hamlet
* Close reading and text analysis of Hamlet
* Sonnet study
* Structural issues—discussion of tragic formula, dramatic structure, tragic hero
* Quotables—identification and analysis of significant quotations from the play
* Theme/motif tracking—throughout reading of the play to provide information for upcoming literary analysis essay
* Close annotation of selected soliloquies
* Viewing/discussion of video presentation of play

Note: We will continue to study Renaissance Literature 2nd semester.

Semester Two

**Renaissance: Metaphysical Poets:**

Metaphysical poetry is concerned with the whole experience of man. The intelligence, learning, love, and about man's relationship with God. Metaphysical poems are lyric poems; the poems are brief but intense meditations, characterized by striking use of wit, irony and wordplay. Metaphysical poems are brief and intense reflections on the shared aspects of life.

* John Donne
  + “Song”
  + “A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning”
  + “Death Be Not Proud”
  + “Meditation 17”
* Ben Jonson
  + “On My First Son”
  + “Song: To Celia”

**Renaissance: The Cavalier Poets:**

Cavalier Poetry uses direct language which expresses a highly individualistic personality. This type of poetry reflects every thought as they are supposed to be understood along with their motto "Carpe Diem" meaning "seize the day".

* Robert Herrick
  + “To the Virgins, to Make Much of Time”
* Andrew Marvell
  + “To His Coy Mistress”

**The Restoration & Neoclassical Period (1660 – 1798):**

Neoclassic and Restoration Literature represents a reaction against the optimistic, exuberant, and enthusiastic Renaissance view of man. Neoclassic and Restoration literature saw man as an imperfect being, inherently sinful, whose potential was limited. They emphasize order and reason, restraint, common sense, and religious, political, economic and philosophical conservatism.

Restoration Literature

* John Milton
  + “How Soon Hath Time”
  + “When I consider How My Light is Spent”
  + from *Paradise Lost*

Neoclassical Literature

* Jonathan Swift
  + “A Modest Proposal”
  + from *Gulliver’s Travels*
* Alexander Pope
  + “The Rape of the Lock”
* Lady Mary Wortley Montagu
  + “Letter to Her Daughter”

**Romantic Period (1798 – 1837):**

Romanticism has very little to do with things popularly thought of as "romantic," although love may occasionally be the subject of Romantic art. Rather, it is an international artistic and philosophical movement. The Romantics tended to define and to present the imagination as our ultimate "shaping" or creative power. Wordsworth defines Romantic poetry is the “spontaneous overflow of emotion”.

* Thomas Gray
  + “Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard”
* Robert Burns
  + “Auld Lang Syne”
* Mary Wollstonecraft
  + From *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*
* William Wordsworth
* Samuel Taylor Coleridge
  + “Rime of the Ancient Mariner
* William Blake
  + “A Poison Tree”
  + “The Lamb”
  + “The Tyger”
  + “London”
  + “The Chimney Sweeper” – Songs of Innocence
  + “The Chimney Sweeper” – Songs of Experience
* Mary Shelley
  + *Frankenstein*
* Lord Byron
  + “She Walks in Beauty”
* Percy Blythe Shelley
  + “Ozymandias”
  + “Ode to the West Wind”
* John Keats
  + “La Belle Dame Sans Merci”
  + “When I have Fears that I may Cease to Be”
  + “Ode on a Grecian Urn”

**Victorian Period (1837 – 1901):**

Victorian literature forms a link and transition between the writers of the romantic period and the very different literature of the 20th century. The 19th century is often regarded as a high point in British literature.

* Charlotte Bronte
  + *Jane Eyre*
* Alfred Lord Tennyson
  + “Ulysses”
* Elizabeth Barrett Browning
  + “Sonnet 43”
* Robert Browning
  + “My Last Duchess”
  + “Porphyria’s Lover”
* Alexander Dumas
  + *The Count of Monte Cristo*
* Matthew Arnold
  + “Dover Beach”

**Realistic Period 1870-1914:**

Realism presents the world as it really is.  Since it tries so hard to be truthful, realist literature never feels overblown, the way a fairy tale or a parable might, and it's rarely sentimental or emotional.  It just reads like a plain and sensible account of whatever action it's describing. Oscar Wilde uses Realist literature to unveil the social inanity and hypocrisy of the time.

* Oscar Wilde
  + *The Importance of Being Earnest*
  + “Apologia”

**Modernist & Contemporary Periods 1914-now:**

Modernism is characterized by the reexamination of existence from every possible angle. Frequent themes in modernist works are loneliness and isolation, and a significant number of writers tried to capture that sense of solitude by engaging in stream-of-consciousness writing. Open form and free verse are distinguishing characteristics of modernist poetry.

Contemporary literature is comprised of literature written since about 1950. Contemporary Literature purports that personal traumatic experiences and the ensuing hope it can create becomes a shared experience between many individuals and through this, they a sense of peace and hope.

* Franz Kafka
  + *The Metamorphosis*
* Pablo Neruda
  + “If You Forget Me”
  + “I Do Not Love You Except Because I Love You”
* Gabriel Mistral
  + “To See Him Again”
* Kate Chopin
  + “The Story of an Hour”
* James Joyce
  + “Eveline”
* D.H. Laurence
  + “The Rocking Horse Winner”
* Saki
  + “The Open Window”
* William Golding
  + “Thinking as a Hobby”
* William Carlos Williams
  + “The Use of Force”

**Researched Literary Analysis Assignment:**

**Semester Exam:**

NOTE: Grammar and vocabulary will be taught in context with the literature

**RULES & EXPECTATIONS**

1. Come to class on time and prepared. You will not be allowed to rely on your classmates for materials. I keep paper and pens in the room in case you forget on occasion. However, coming to class unprepared on a regular basis will result in a parent contact and/or an N or U for conduct. This is important when it comes to exemptions and membership in some clubs and organizations.
2. All electronic devices should be off and left in your backpack or purse. These have become quite a distraction in class, and all items will be confiscated and turned into the main office without additional warnings. If something comes up and you need to make a call, ask me, and I will allow you to go to the office to use the phone.
3. No one will be allowed to interrupt the learning of others. If your behavior is disturbing me or others, I will give you an opportunity to correct that behavior. If you cannot or will not correct it on your own, your parents, administrators, and I will work together to correct it for you.