

Literary Explorations I

Course Objectives:

The purpose of this course is to develop students' processes for building knowledge through writing, discussion, speaking, and research. By developing skills of close reading, argument, rhetorical analysis, and research, students will deepen their knowledge of culture, literature, and current events. You'll be asked to read, think, and write with a critical eye, learning to interrogate texts the way we think of interrogating a living person. Such texts will include not just written documents, but also visual and technological artifacts, speeches, songs, and so on. You'll also become familiar with the language of rhetoric, a field that concerns itself with relationships between authors, audiences, and ideas, contexts for communication, and means of persuasion.

We will use presentations, papers, quizzes, research writing, and other forms of assessment to explore ideas, develop perspectives, and add to ongoing conversations about culture. Ultimately, it is the goal of this course to support and inspire inventive, insightful thinking in its students – the kind of thinking that is most valued not only at this institution, but in the wider world.

INSTRUCTOR:

Dr. Devon Madon

- Office: A111A. Drop in Mods 2+4 daily or email/chat with me/sign up for an appointment
- Telephone number: 603-907-5089
- Email address: dmadon@imsa.edu

Meeting Days, Time and Room

Mod 5: usually 1:20-2:15

“A,” “B” and “D” Day

(room A110)

Mod 3: usually 2:20-3:15

“A,” “B” and “D” Day

(room A110)

Texts:

March (trilogy) by Lewis, Aydin, and Powell; selections from *AmericanRhetoric.com*; and other news and informational sources.

Essential Content:

- Students will work collaboratively to come to an understanding of readings [English E.1-2, E.4-5].
- Students will develop greater autonomy as readers and writers by generating and responding to their own substantive questions about authors and literary works [English A.3-7, B.1, C.1, D.1].
- Students will experience writing as an incremental and recursive process by drafting, critiquing, and revising expository works [English B.2-3, C.3-5, D.2, D.4, E.3].
- Students will use research to provide an historical perspective on readings and to relate readings to contemporary issues [English A.8-9, C.2, D.1-4].
- Students will reflect upon literacy learning as a lifelong endeavor and set goals for themselves as literacy learners based on their strengths, needs, and aspirations [English C.1, D.1, E.3, E.5].

SSLs and Outcomes:

- I.A: Develop automaticity in skills, concepts, and processes that support and enable complex thought.
- I.B: Construct questions which further understanding, forge connections, and deepen meaning.
- II.B: Find and analyze ambiguities inherent within any set of textual, social, physical, or theoretical circumstances.
- III.A: Use appropriate technologies as extensions of the mind.
- III.B: Recognize, pursue, and explain substantive connections within and among areas of knowledge.
- III.C: Recreate the beautiful conceptions that give coherence to structures of thought.
- IV.A: Construct and support judgments based on evidence.
- IV.B: Write and speak with power, economy, and elegance.
- IV.D: Develop an aesthetic awareness and capability.
- V.B: Make reasoned decisions which reflect ethical standards, and act in accordance with those decisions.

Required Materials:

Your computers will be used regularly, as this class strives to keep paper use to a minimum, so be sure to bring it and your power supply regularly. Also, a copy of whatever our current reading is and a writing utensil for marking that reading and taking notes are crucially important.

Course Work / Assessment:

Papers: 60%

Presentations/Projects: 15%

Quizzes/Classwork/Homework/Presentation: 25%

Late work policy: I will accept, with penalty, late papers up to two weeks after the due date. In the first week, late papers receive a letter grade deduction. In the second week, late papers receive a two-letter grade deduction. **After two weeks, you will receive no credit on your paper;** you may still turn it in for feedback.

The best thing you can do to control your grade is to turn in finished work on time. If you struggle with deadlines, please let me know and I can help you manage your larger projects and papers.

Computer glitches are no excuse for late work, so be sure to save your work OFTEN (I would recommend every 5 to 10 minutes) and save it in several places (use the cloud, servers, and/or flash drives).

Grades are to be interpreted in the following manner:

A (90-100%) = Exceeds course requirements

B (80-89%) = Meets course requirements

C (70-79%) = Credit awarded, needs improvement

D (<70%) = Does not meet course requirements; no Academy credit awarded

I = Incomplete

WF = Withdrawal from course with failing grade; no Academy credit awarded.

W = Withdrawal from course; no Academy credit awarded

Revision Policy:

You may revise most major essays (the exception being essays at the end of the grading period).

Your grade will improve only when you revise, not if you proofread or simply edit.

Proofreading corrects casual mistakes, mechanical errors or other such “polishing”. To revise you must reconsider and improve the argument of your paper; substantial rewriting of content, style, focus and organization need to be undertaken.

Most Essay Revisions will be due between 1 and 2 weeks after you receive your graded first draft. **You must complete a “Revision Log” for each revision.** I will discuss requirements for revision in more detail.

At times, if the criteria for the essay is not met, students may receive a grade of “MUST BE

REVISED,” which means you will receive a grade of “60” in PowerSchool until you have met with me (within a week of receiving your essay back from me). Once we have met, you will have one week to revise the essay. Failure to meet with me and revise will result in a permanent “60” (not passing) grade for the essay.

When you revise an essay, I will average together the point value of the original grade and the subsequent revision grade for your recorded grade.

Remember to use all the resources IMSA makes available to help you do the best job you can when you first start writing. The Writing Center can provide one-on-one tutoring sessions, from brainstorming through proofreading; in addition to daytime hours in the Writing Center, Writing Center tutors will also be available in the IRC and one res hall during most evenings. Peer tutors will work with you on a one-to-one basis on a variety of activities and projects. These activities might include narrowing a topic, focusing a thesis, deciding on strategies, and revising.

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Please Note: It is the policy of this instructor, and the policy of the English department at IMSA, not to round quarter or term grades. Do not ask to have your grade rounded, as the instructor cannot ethically comply with that request.

Policies and Expectations:

Consistent attendance.

Whether or not you are present in class, you are responsible for class activities, presentations, and assignments. You may need to get the class notes from one of your classmates, and I would recommend emailing me as soon as possible after the absence to find out exactly what you missed.

Participation

My expectation is that, at least once per class, you voluntarily respond to a question or comment from your teacher or another student. I want this class to be based on your questions and discussions about them.

Respectful behavior. The success of this class relies upon students treating their peers and their ideas with courtesy and respect. You should challenge each other, argue points, and of course be willing to challenge me, but remember to do so in a way that reflects your own dignity and intelligence.

Academic Honesty. Please refer to the Academic Behavior Code on page 11 of the Student/Parent Handbook. Cite your sources. Do your own work. Seek out help when you need it. Not sure if you are plagiarizing? Come ask me!

Course Content Sequence:

 (All assessments underlined below)

Unit 1: Developing critical questions with *March*

- Establish classroom protocol for discussion of *March*.
- The intersections of fiction and nonfiction in *March*.
- Discussion of historical images and sources as compared to *March*.
- Developing critical questions about *March*: interactions between verbal and visual storytelling; questions of interpretation; refining questions and identifying strategies for pursuing them.

Unit 2: Writing the Essay (verbally and visually)

- Using critical questions to plan/outline an argument.
- Finding examples of evidence in the text.
- Drafting an argumentative essay.
- Close-reading (“verbal essay” presentation)
- Revising ideas and using feedback.

Unit 3: Rhetorical analysis and persuasion

- Review basic principles of classical rhetoric.
- Practice rhetorical analysis skills using a variety of documents and texts.
- Rhetorical analysis writing.
- Persuasive speaking/debate

Unit 4: Semi-independent research project

- Identifying topics of interest and expertise.
- Finding and documenting a variety of sources about your topic of interest.
- Move beyond expository thinking to argument that advances knowledge.
- Synthesizing varied sources into a cohesive argument.
- Assembling an annotated bibliography.
- Developing core ideas and arguments through prewriting.
- Communicating specialized information and ideas to broad audiences.
- Describing one’s project through a written abstract or “pitch.”
- Drafting essay on research topic.
- Reformulating research for a new context, form, or audience.