

# Literary Explorations II

## Spring 2020 Course Syllabus & Policies

### **Course Description:**

This course introduces students to a variety of genres in literature, to the processes of effective reading, to the work of discussion and performance as a response to literature, and to the processes of writing in various forms for different purposes, but with an emphasis on critical essays. Students will explore readings of aesthetic and cultural significance primarily from American literature, focusing in particular on their thematic and historical connections.

### **Teacher: Ms. Erin Micklo**

**Office:** A109a (inside the Writing Center/A109)

**Contact:** [emicklo@imsa.edu](mailto:emicklo@imsa.edu) (630) 907-5489 (email will be quicker!)

**Class Website:** [www.edmodo.com](http://www.edmodo.com) (password needed to join our class group)

### **Meeting Days/Times:**

Mod 3: A, B & D days in room A119

Mod 7: A, B, & D days in room A110

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### **Required Materials**

**Texts:** A variety of articles, short stories, and novels will be distributed as needed.

### **Additional Materials:**

Your computers will be used daily, so be sure to bring it and your power supply regularly. Also, a copy of whatever our current reading is and a pen and paper. If you do not bring the necessary materials to class you will not receive credit for that day's work. Be prepared!

### **Essential Questions we will attempt to answer this semester:**

*How is 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century American culture reflected in literature?*

*How does the American Dream differ for different sub-groups of people in America? Is it still achievable?*

### **Essential Content:**

In the third quarter we will examine the "American Dream." Our readings will include a diverse assortment of American voices in novels such as *The Bluest Eye* and the play *A Raisin in the Sun*, and a variety of poetry, essays and short stories. Major assessments this semester will include an argument essay, a literary analysis essay, a creative essay (monologue), a final writing portfolio, and several presentations. Other assessments will include quizzes, smaller homework assignments, and participation.

### **SSLs and Outcomes:**

- Students will understand conventions of poetry, drama, and fiction as genres and be able to explain their uses and effects [English A.1-3, B.2-4, E.1; SSL IV.A-D].
- Students will evaluate the influence of historical context on form, style, and point of view [English A.4, A.7-8; SSL II.A].
- Students will work collaboratively to come to an understanding of readings [English A.5-6, C. 1-2, E.2, E.5; SSL I.A-B].
- Students will develop greater autonomy as readers and writers by generating and responding to their own substantive questions about authors and literary works [English B.1, D.1-3, E.3; SSL I.B].
- Students will experience writing as an incremental and recursive process by drafting, critiquing, and revising creative and expository works [C.3-5; SSL I.A, II.A, III.A, IV.A-D].
- 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 E.3; SSL II.A, III.B, V.C].

### **Instructional Design and Approach:**

The purpose of this course is to examine the history of the American experience through the lens of literature, paying special attention to what ideas, concepts, values, and problems follow this culture and its people through time. You will be encouraged to make connections between literature and history, your own lives, and the challenge presented in IMSA's mission statement to become ethical scientists who "advance the human condition."

This course is set up to develop your competence and confidence as writers, readers, speakers and listeners at an advanced level. Vocabulary, grammar and the mechanics of writing will be blended into writing instruction. Creative writing opportunities will also be tied into literature instruction.

We will use presentations, essays, quizzes, projects, creative compositions, debates, and other forms of assessment and homework to make the value of what we read and discover come alive. 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.

### **Student Expectations:**

**Late Work:** Assignments are always due at the BEGINNING of the class period on the day indicated, unless otherwise stipulated. If you will be absent on the day an essay or project is due, it must be e-mailed or delivered to me by class time on that day or it will be considered late unless you are sent home with an illness. If e-mailed, please send it as a Microsoft Word attachment, not as typed text into an e-mail. Drafts of essays that are not completed by the beginning of class on "draft days" will receive NO credit and will not be read by peer response groups. Late essays (final drafts) will be penalized with the paper losing one-half of a letter grade (5 points) for EACH day it is late. There are no extra credit assignments in this class (other than the Writing Center session extra credit once per quarter) and there are no make up assignments. While I understand that sometimes printers refuse to work properly and computers freeze up, refusing to release your work to you, these unforeseen problems CAN be avoided if assignments are done in a timely manner. Computer glitches are no excuse for late work, so be

sure to save your work OFTEN or use Google Docs which will automatically save it for you.

**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. Class begins promptly and if you are late--even one minute--you will be marked tardy. Please strive to make it to class on time daily!

**Academic Honesty Policy:** Plagiarism or cheating of any kind—even one time—will be punished. All work that you turn in to me must be your own. When in doubt, cite your source. The academic honesty standards for all IMSA students apply in this class. We will discuss plagiarism in more detail during class, but plagiarism will result in an F for that particular assignment, and disciplinary action may result as well. If a second academic dishonesty incident occurs, you will fail the class.

### **Assessment Practices, Procedure, and Processes:**

The main credit-bearing work for this course falls into a few categories: Essays, Reading Quizzes & Homework, Participation, and Presentations/Projects.

**ESSAYS:** Your essays will be evaluated with a numeric grade (worth 100 points). If outside sources are used, a photocopy or printout of your source(s) must be attached to each essay unless the essay you've used is from our class text. Most papers will be graded holistically (without a rubric). For assignments that will be graded with a rubric, I will share the rubric with you in advance; the rubric may vary from assignment to assignment. Late essays will be marked off one half of a letter grade (5 points) per day late, including weekend days.

**QUIZZES** are always in-class and may be open-book/note; however, I may not give you warning that they are coming and the questions I ask are usually too complicated to just “look up” without actually having read the text. They are nearly always short-essay format, and will require you to cite the text specifically. Be sure to keep on top of the reading load. You may want to form discussion and study groups outside this class to help stay on top of things. You can expect 2 or more quizzes each quarter.

**HOMEWORK** assignments may not be turned in late, as we will usually be working with them (peer edit, discussion, etc.) on the day they are due. If you are absent on the day it is due, please email me the assignment by the start of class to avoid receiving a zero.

**PRESENTATIONS & PROJECTS** will be performed in-class and may be done individually or in groups. There are one to two of these per quarter. I'll explain how each presentation or project will be assessed at the time it's assigned or shortly after.

A **PARTICIPATION** grade will also be determined by me at the end of the quarter (100 points). Your participation in class discussions, group projects and peer writing and response groups is a crucial part of this course. Meeting with me outside of class and discussing your writing—both

the process you go through as you write and your final product—is a key ingredient to improving your writing skills and can boost your grade. You will be able to give me written input on your participation grade each quarter.

**Your grade will be weighted by category**, so your quarter and semester grades will be tabulated from scores in the following areas:

Essays	60%
Projects/Presentations	15%
Homework/Quizzes	15%
Participation	10%

English Department Grading Guide:

- A = Exceeds course requirements (90-100%)
- B = Meets course requirements (80-89%)
- C = Credit awarded but needs improvement (70-79%)
- D = Does not meet course requirements: no Academy credit awarded

***It is the English Department policy to NOT round grades at the end of the term. Your grade, as calculated by PowerSchool, is the grade you will receive.***

**Essay Revision Policy:** You may revise most major essays (the exception being essays at the end of each grading period and the final sophomore writing portfolio). If you receive a “C” grade (score of 70 to 79) and you wish to revise your paper, you **MUST** meet with me within one week of receiving your graded essay to discuss the paper, then you will have one more week to revise and resubmit it after our meeting. Remember, simply correcting mechanical errors or other such “polishing” is not sufficient to insure a higher grade; substantial revisions of content, style, focus and organization may need to be undertaken. If you receive a “B” grade (score of 80 to 89) and you wish to revise, you must have a session with a Writing Center tutor and provide proof of that tutoring session with your revision. The same deadlines apply.

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.

**Late papers will not qualify for the revision benefit.**

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 this school makes available to help you do the best job you can when you first start writing: The Writing Center @ IMSA 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 the res halls during most

evenings. **You can earn 3 points extra credit per quarter for visiting the Writing Center** (these will be considered “homework” category points) if you bring me a “proof of tutoring” form. You will NOT receive extra credit for a visit to the Writing Center for a “B” grade revision tutoring session (see above).

### **Policies and Expectations**

#### ***What I will require from you:***

Consistent attendance and significant participation in class (both in person and online). If you come unprepared, are disruptive to the class, or are unwilling to speak when called upon, I reserve the right to mark you absent for the day.

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.

Timeliness and honesty. All assignments should be turned in on time. I do not tolerate plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty. You will receive a "zero" grade and disciplinary action for cheating or plagiarism of any kind. All academic dishonesty will be reported to the IMSA administration and your parent/guardian(s).

#### ***What you should expect from me:***

Help and Guidance. I want you to succeed in my class, and am willing to work with you both in and out of class to make that happen. If you are confused by an assignment or are struggling with something we are doing in class, stop by my office or email me and we can talk about it. I am more than willing to help you with things you don't understand, but be sure to ask me for assistance in advance. Showing up to class with an incomplete assignment “because you didn't understand” is not a valid excuse for missing work. Plan ahead so if you need help, you have time to get it!

Flexibility and respect. Just as I expect you to treat each other with interest, compassion, and civility, I strive to do the same for you.

High standards. Grades in my class are not “given,” they are *earned*. At IMSA a “B” means that you have met expectations for a class. A “C” grade means that you did not meet expectations, and an “A” grade means you exceeded expectations. I am happy to spend time with you helping you improve your performance and meet the standards you set for yourself.

### **Sequence of Units for Literary Explorations II :**

Harlem Renaissance	<i>The Bluest Eye</i>
<i>A Raisin in the Sun</i>	20 <sup>th</sup> Century Poetry
Short Fiction	



