

ENG4U: Course Syllabus

Redeemer Christian High School
Mr. Vance (dvance@rchs.on.ca)

Semester 1
2018-2019

Introduction:

Welcome to the senior university-level English class. In this course, we'll be writing, listening, reading, and working on other communication skills. Works from various time periods, countries, and cultures will be analyzed, and excellent (beautiful, moving) essays will be written. Discerning the viewpoints of authors and comparing them to a Biblical perspective will be an *important* focus, especially as we peer into the darkness of the world, and the powerful, true, real hope for light and redemption.

In this course, a special emphasis will be placed on preparing students for university, which will be reflected in a greater emphasis on freedom *and* personal responsibility. Students will make choices regarding their evaluation options, and they will organize their time in order to have their readings completed for the assigned dates.

In all of this, we will learn to appreciate and respect each other's views, and of course, have fun!

Units of Study and Evaluation Plan

- | | |
|---|--------------|
| 1. Poetry and Society – Acknowledging What Happened | (22 periods) |
| 2. <i>Nineteen Eighty-Four</i> – Acknowledging the Darkness | (22 periods) |
| 3. <i>Hamlet</i> – Acknowledging the Confusion | (22 periods) |
| 4. SUMMATIVE: Literature Circles – Acknowledging the Hope | (22 periods) |
| 5. ISU (ongoing): Theme Comparison Essay | (ongoing) |
| 6. Grammar/Vocabulary | (ongoing) |

Assignments, Assessments and Evaluation:

Near to the beginning of the course you will be given an **Evaluation Plan** which will chart out the evaluations you will need to complete throughout this semester. This course recognizes that everyone learns differently and has varied interests, so there will be some choice in the types of evaluations and assignments you may complete throughout the course.

However, this course also recognizes that some skills are essential as you prepare for university: namely the ability to write essays and the ability to communicate your thoughts orally. As such, you will be required to write multiple essays and conduct multiple presentations during the semester.

Assessment OF, AS, and FOR Learning: At the end of each unit, the teacher will assess your mastery of the skills and concepts in the form of a test or another graded assignment. These are assessments **OF** learning; the grades you receive on them count towards your final grade. However, we will also use several informal feedback methods to help you (and me) understand how well you're learning the content. These informal checks are called assessments **FOR** learning, and they **do not** count towards your grade.

(Note the assessment box on the teacher's desk. If you would like FREE, targeted feedback on your work so far, deposit your in-progress assignment into this box. Make sure you do it well before the due date, and highlight which section you'd like me to assess – up to one section of the assignment, like the introduction or the first body paragraph. Note that you can do this as many times as you'd like – but you have to ask for it, and make the changes I suggest as you go along. I will try to give you feedback on your work within 24 hours.

Note that I will not comment on grammar and spelling – that's your responsibility to proofread – but I will give you big-picture feedback on where you are strong and what could use improvement. If you take the initiative to make use of this excellent assessment FOR learning, it is nearly guaranteed that you will produce stronger work than if you don't use it.)

Occasionally, the teacher will have you assess your own work – or the work of your friends – as a final check before you submit it. This is called assessment **AS** learning.

Phase	Categories	Relative Weights
Term Work	Knowledge/Understanding	18%
	Thinking/Inquiry	18%
	Communication	20%
	Application	15%
Final Evaluation	Final Exam	30%

Expectations and Classroom Routines:

- You will be in your seat and ready to learn before the bell rings. Your silent reading book will be open. And, of course, you will be incredibly excited to study excellent English literature!
- If you have questions to ask the teacher: Please do not crowd around his desk! Do not form a mob around him. Instead, sit quietly and politely at your desk with your hand raised. Your teacher will be moved by your respectful attitude and quickly come to help you. (Unless he doesn't see you.)
- You must **always** have a **prose** book on hand to read in class. We will begin each day with silent reading, and you will read this book if you finish early in any class activity. As such, it is mandatory that you bring a silent reading book to each and every class.
- What Grade 12 means: now that you're in Grade 12, we must prepare you for university. This means that **no additional time** can be granted on tests, since you will not receive extra time in university. In addition, we have much material to cover in this class. In each unit you will be given a schedule that outlines when specific chapters, short stories, etc. are to be read. *It is your responsibility to have completed the assigned reading for the day that it is due.* Occasionally, time will be provided for you to read in class; often you will have to complete the readings on your own time – just like in university.
- Homework: Homework will often be assigned to give you opportunity to practice concepts and to complete work that does not require the presence of the teacher (like reading a section of a book and answering comprehension questions). Completion of this work is *essential* for meaningful participation in class discussions. If you do not do your homework, you are robbing your class of your unique voice and insights, and that is not fair to anyone.
- Absences: If you are absent from a class, it is **your** responsibility to obtain the material from a fellow student or the teacher (outside of class time).
- Assignments: In an effort to guarantee order and consistency, all assignments will be **due on turnitin.com at the beginning of class** on the day that it is due.
 - In accordance with our late policy, if an assignment is marked late on turnitin.com, 10% will be deducted for each day that it is late, you will be sent to study hall until it is complete, and your parents will be contacted to notify them of the missing assignment.
 - | | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Turnitin.com information: | Class ID: 18946491 | Password: truth |
|---------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
- Extensions: Occasionally, things pile up. If you would like an extension on the due date of an assignment, the teacher will be favorably inclined to work with you if:
 - You ask at least **two** days ahead of time: I need to see that you are thinking about this in advance and not waiting until the last minute.
 - You send a polite, well-constructed **email** requesting that your deadline be moved to a specific date. You need to be able to explain both **why** this would be of benefit to you and you need to provide a **specific date** by which you will be able to provide your best work.
- At the beginning of the semester, each student will be given three Grace Passes. These are incredibly valuable slips of paper because each Grace Pass is a free pass in case (for whatever reason) you were unable to complete your homework. They also function as a one-day extension for major assignments. **The only times they do not work are if you are scheduled to do a presentation on a specific day, or for test/exams.** Do not lose them!

10. Tests:

- a. Test dates: In university, test dates are firm and final, regardless of students' individual life situations. In an effort to prepare you for this reality, **no extensions will be granted for tests**. Part of your challenge as a student this year will be to anticipate crunch times and to prepare well in advance so that you will be prepared to write the test on the day that it is scheduled.
- b. Missed tests: If you know you will be away for a test, discuss this with the teacher at least **two class days ahead** of the scheduled test day. Tests missed due to illegitimate absence (skipping) will be recorded as zero. **Tests missed due to legitimate absence will be written on the very next day, during lunch.**

11. This is going to be a great year. I'm really excited to explore this literature with all of you. It will be intense, but it will also be really good. Let's treat each other with grace and respect and enjoy studying together!

Rules for Classroom Discussions¹

Ground rules:

Ephesians 4:29, 31 (see below)

Romans 12:10, 18, 21 (see below)

We are all made in the image of God and have equal value as people created and belonging to God:

- So we must avoid hating/dehumanizing any individual or group. No exceptions. Let's be kind, especially when others are not.
- If you perceive hatred/anger in yourself toward another person or group, or become aware of a desire to dehumanize or harm (verbally or otherwise) seek help to find the root of those emotions in order to get healing.

Principles:

1. Disagreement does not equal dislike or disrespect.

- We need to be able to disagree with each other respectfully. This is good training for university discussions as well as life in general.

2. Stay Engaged.

- It's important that you try to stay present in the room. Pay attention to when you are shutting down. Discomfort and anxiety are normal parts of important and honest conversations.

3. Speak Your Perspective.

- We often avoid speaking our perspective for fear of what others might say. It's important that we create a safe environment where everyone is free to speak openly.
- Keep in mind that people are in different places with any issue. In order for us to grow, it's important that people are able to share their thoughts in a way that's comfortable for them. When we share our thoughts, it often creates an emotional reaction from others. Being able to speak your perspective does not mean that people will not respond emotionally. Be prepared to experience the discomfort that tough conversations bring.
- Speaking our perspective does not mean stomping on others' heads. Before speaking, think about what it is that you want others to know. How can they best hear you?
- Remember that everyone does not communicate in the same way that you do. If someone gets loud in the room, it doesn't mean they are angry. If they are angry, it doesn't necessarily mean they are angry with you. If they are angry at something you said, it doesn't mean that that person no longer has a relationship with you. Often times these conversations bring up a lot of emotions from past and present experiences. Try and allow others to experience their emotions without your shutting down.

¹ This list has been significantly adapted from principles created by Micah Elson as well as G. Singleton. See: Singleton, G. and Curtis Linton. *Courageous Conversations About Race*. Corwin Press, Inc., 2005.

"Norms for Facilitating Courageous Conversations." *Cultures Connecting: Addressing Race Relations in the Twenty-First Century*. <http://www.culturesconnecting.com/docs/Norms.pdf>.

4. Experience Discomfort.

- One way to think about this is, “Be comfortable with being uncomfortable”. In other words, discomfort is to be expected.
- If you are not feeling any sense of discomfort in the dialogue, ask yourself, Are you fully engaged? Are you giving of yourself fully and taking risks?

5. Expect and Accept Non-closure.

- We often want to feel some sense of closure, regardless of the issue. Engaging in significant, honest conversations means there will be times of no closure. This is on-going work that does not necessarily leave one walking away feeling like everything turned out the way you hoped. Be willing to take risks and accept that much of this is about changing yourself, not others.

6. Listen for Understanding.

- Try and understand where another person is coming from as best you can.
- Be careful not to compare your experiences with another person’s. This often invalidates or minimizes a person’s experiences.
- Listen without thinking about how you are going to respond.
- Stay present in their pain and your discomfort as you listen.
- If someone is pointing out how what you said left them feeling, try not to explain or rationalize what you said or why you said it. For example, sometimes it’s necessary to just say, “I didn’t realize what I said was inappropriate...or hurt you in that way, I’m sorry,” etc.
- Think about your comments before saying them. Resist the need to explain. Sometimes positive intent is not enough (intent vs. impact).
- Be careful not to lose the opportunity to just listen by putting the focus back on you.

Ephesians 4:29

Do not let any unwholesome talk
Come out of your mouths,
But only what is helpful for building others up
According to their needs,
That it may benefit those who listen.

Ephesians 4:32

Be kind and compassionate to one another,
forgiving each other,
just as in Christ
God forgave you.

Romans 12:10, 17a, 18, 21

Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honour one another above yourselves.
Do not repay anyone evil for evil.
If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.
Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Ask myself these questions when speaking to myself and others:

1. Is it wholesome?
2. Does it build the person up?
-based on their needs
3. Would someone else also benefit from hearing this conversation?
4. Is it kind?
5. Is it compassionate?
6. Does it offer the opportunity of forgiveness/reconciliation?