

College Writing — Mr. Smythe

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Course Objectives—

- Students will read, write and speak for a variety of different occasions and audiences while mastering Arizona State Standards in language arts:
<http://www.ade.state.az.us/standards/language-arts/default.asp>
- Students will use basic statistics and other math skills in the reading and writing of research. These skills are part of Arizona State Standards in mathematics:
<http://www.ade.state.az.us/standards/math/default.asp>
- Students will use various technologies including the internet, blogs, wikis, word processing, spreadsheets, and presentation software to enhance their mastery of the language arts and mathematics skills above. These activities encompass some of the Arizona State Standards in technology: <http://www.ade.state.az.us/standards/technology/default.asp>

Textbooks and materials—

The Catcher in the Rye Salinger

The Tipping Point Gladwell

Varies articles and websites from the internet

Other materials supplied I will supply

Please note: These texts and materials reflect modern writing using themes and language some students/parents may find offensive. The intent is not to challenge or insult anyone's beliefs, but rather to reflect the literature used by many colleges and universities. Students/ parents who have concerns about these texts are encouraged to enroll in either regular English 12 or AP Literature and Composition as these courses generally use more "traditional" selections.

Materials, Access and Agreements—

- Students should come to class prepared with paper and blue or black *pen* (not pencil).
- Three different color highlighters
- Access to Microsoft Office (we use Word, PowerPoint, and Excel) and Internet using a minimum of Netscape Navigator 4.x or Microsoft Explorer 5.x. All these are available in the CDO Library.
- Access to a web (or e-) mail account capable of sending and receiving attached documents.
- Signed Electronic Information Resource Agreement allowing access
- Agreement to allow grades to be posted on the internet with password protected access
- Agreement to allow minor assignments (each less than 2% of semester grade) to be scored by peers

Basic assignments —

- Essays — The focus of this course is on writing, so writing reflects approximately 75% of the total grade for the course. You will also be asked to reflect on re-work one or more of your portfolio pieces. All final drafts must be **typed**. Several assignments will be submitted electronically each semester.

To see true growth in writing skills, all students should do more writing than a teacher can thoroughly assess. CDO English teachers will provide substantive feedback on two writing assignments per semester. Formal writing assignments are often rated against rubrics that provide specific feedback within them. Other informal assignments will be checked for completeness. Students who wish to have more individual commentary on a piece of writing are encouraged to attend tutoring.

- Homework and classwork — You will have extensive reading mostly from the internet or handouts and some written assignments. I randomly collect written work, so it pays to be consistent. This is approximately 5% of your semester grade. **NOTE:** Students are *required* to attend a minimum of two (2) out-of-class writing conferences with me per semester. These may focus on specific assignments or general writing techniques. I will discuss times these are available.
- Outside reading—You are also required to complete one book each nine weeks of reading from the 12th grade list. Outside reading is approximately 5% of the total grade.
- Quizzes and Tests — In-class essays or objective quizzes will be given over reading and vocabulary. These are approximately 5% of your semester grade.
- Speaking — Expect oral presentations each semester. You may also anticipate being video-taped several times during the year. Large and small group discussion may also be scored. This is approximately 10% of your semester grade.
- Extra-Credit — Extra credit can be earned by entering various writing contests available each semester This can be up to approximately 5% added to your semester grade.
- Late assignments — *I do not accept late homework*. **Essays are expected to be turned in, and in the appropriate format (electronic or printed), on time regardless of whether you are in school or not.** A student or parent *must* contact me if there is an emergency that prevents an essay being turned in on time. School related absences do not constitute an emergency. You may use your NQA (see below) pass as needed to avoid penalties.

Grades —

- I use a 97=A+, 93=A, 90=A-, 87=B+, 83=B, 80=B-, etc. scale for overall grades. I do round scores up (i.e.: 69.5% is a C). The scale may be adjusted for some assignments, but it will never be “curved” to put students in competition.
- I use letter grades for final written and speaking work. Here the scale is: A+=98, A=95, A-=91, B+=88, B=85, B-=81, etc.
- There are no final exams in this course, but students will have assignments to complete during final exam times.
- Questions or concerns about grades should be addressed to me as soon as possible; I cannot help you if you don't let me know what you are thinking and feeling.

- Your grade summary will be made available on the web page approximately every two weeks, and you may ask to see your grades at any appropriate time.

Attendance and tardies — Being absent or tardy is a disruption to both you and your class. Although almost everyone is occasionally absent or tardy, it is important to be in class on time and ready to work every day. Tardiness is defined as not being in your seat with the necessary work materials when class begins.

- In accordance with the policy in your student handbook, work missed for unverified absences cannot be accepted (even with a NQA pass).
- Students with planned school or family absences should make arrangements for make-up work prior to missing class. Previously assigned work is due on return to class.
- Students missing seven classes in a semester will not be given make-up assignments and will be dropped automatically.
- Students who are tardy will lose the opportunity to earn points for that period (i.e.: quiz, worksheet, etc.), but may turn in any previously assigned work.
- I will accept notes from parents explaining tardies once each semester.
- If you are tardy (even with a note), please remind me after class to change your attendance. Failure to do so may result in your being marked absent.

Make-up assignments — If you cannot avoid an excused absence, you should do the following in order to make up the work:

- Check the website for assignments, etc.
- See me for additional instructions, quizzes, etc. and due dates. Make up will take place during the tutoring period and not during class.
- Double check the clipboard to make sure that your absence is excused.
- Hand all make up assignments directly to me.
- You will not receive additional time for previously announced quizzes/tests if you have been present for all materials (even if you missed a review).
- If your absence is the result of a suspension from school, all work must be made up on your return; I do not give homework during the suspension.
- If you are absent for an oral presentation, a written assignment may be required as an alternative.

Other Policies — Respect for each other and ourselves is the guiding principle of our classroom behavior.

- Please make comments that are supportive and respectful; avoid put-downs and rudeness or profanity.
- Please help maintain a serious academic atmosphere: this is your workplace.
 - Do not wear hats, sunglasses, apply makeup, brush your hair, etc.
 - Turn off cell phones, pagers etc. (note: Use of electronic devices during quizzes, tests, etc. is forbidden.)
 - Follow the dress code.

- Do not eat or drink in class except for bottled water.
- Please respect school and personal property. Don't write or carve on desks; don't take things from the desk, office, etc. without my permission.
- Please respect my responsibilities for the class and you individually. Get permission before you leave the classroom.

Because we are all only human — We all make mistakes, and each of us needs to treat one another (including me) with tolerance. Here are some efforts I make to easily forgive students' human imperfections. (And please forgive mine!!)

- You will receive an NQA (No Questions Asked) pass. This may be attached to any essay or assignment for scoring without penalty. An NQA is good for one school day, not meeting time.
- You may earn extra credit through various assignments throughout the semester worth up to approximately five percent added to your semester grade.
- You can talk to me confidentially about any situation that may be affecting your performance.

I am genuinely interested in you and your life outside our classroom. Please share your activities, interests, triumphs (and defeats), etc. with me and/or the class. The more I know about you, the more I can help you perfect your writing skills and, more importantly, the more we all can enjoy each other this year.

Generally, I find that those who people who keep their own best interests at heart, while remembering their responsibility to others, do well academically and socially in our class. I truly look forward to getting to know you and helping you to gain power and soul in the language of your self expression.

Language is the blood of the soul into which thoughts run and out of which they grow.
— Oliver Wendell Holmes