Course Title: English 4 Honors

Course #: 1287-1288

Course Description: In British Literature Honors, we will study the different periods and styles that influenced British literature from the early modern period onward. We will closely study and analyze poetry, drama, novels, and essays to better understand how and why literature evolved in Britain and the Anglophone world over these centuries. With particular emphasis on 19th and 20th centuries, we will focus on why literature reflects a specific social and cultural moment and how authors adapted to and challenged ideas in their contemporary moment. We will focus on the role of the individual and how that changes through major historical periods and their corresponding philosophical movements including the Enlightenment, 19th century industrialization, 20th century modernization, and post-World War II/post-modernism. In addition to reading literature, students will be expected to write in-depth analytic essays on different texts and topics and work on in-class projects and activities throughout the year.

UC/CSU Approval: “b” approved

Grade Level: 12

Estimated Homework Per Week: 4 hours, depending on pacing of assignments and student’s reading/writing stamina

Prerequisite: Completion of English 3, English 3 Honors, AP English Language/Composition with a grade of B or higher

Recommended Prerequisite Skills:

- Effective time management and organizational skills
- Proficiency in writing a multi-paragraph essay
- Commitment to the study of literature and ability to formulate mature and perceptive responses to assigned reading and discussion
- Ability to work both independently and cooperatively
- Open-mindedness to new authors, literature and projects

Course Grade Categories:

- 20% - Tasks
- 20% - Assessments/Projects
Major Assessments/Units/Topics:
Unit One: Introduction to Aesthetics and Literary Study

Students will consider how literature can be used as an entry point to understand social issues and philosophy; we will consider the relationship between an author and a reader, aesthetics, and the goal of literature as an artistic endeavor. We will discuss the importance of aesthetics for social critique and discuss the broader issue of artistic generation and how a contemporary text uses important literary devices such as the Gothic to critique contemporary social issues. Students will delve into how British literature is still relevant for contemporary society. In addition, students will be introduced to texts' ability to offer important philosophical and historical ideas and learn to close read texts in more sophisticated ways that go beyond plot summary or character analysis.

Texts May Include: Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*; Helen Oyememi, *White is For Witching*; selections from Kant's *The Critique of Judgement*

Key Assessments:
- On Demand Literary Essay
- Debate on Aestheticism and the role of artist/viewer

Unit Two: The Early Modern Period

This unit covers the period from approximately 1500-1650. Students will consider the changing socio-economic conditions in England at the time, the role of religion and the state, and the effects of the Renaissance in England. We will examine shifting notions of church versus state, divine right, and the beginnings of individualism and Protestantism. We will examine the influence of ancient Greek and Roman classics on early modern poetry.


Key Assessment:
- Analytic Essay on *Hamlet*
- Poetry Explication

Unit Three: The Long 18th Century

This unit covers the period from approximately 1660 when King Charles II was restored to the throne through to the French Revolution. Students will consider the changing socio-economic conditions in England at the time, with the population’s increasing
prosperity and widening literacy. The rise of Empiricism will be considered, along with the increased importance on the individual. Finally, the rise of the novel will be considered. We will also discuss the role of the personal essay and how elements from the 18th century are used in contemporary writing. We will compare the principles of the personal essay to a sample of a contemporary essay.

Texts May Include: Excerpts from Gulliver's Travels, A Modest Proposal; selected poetry from Alexander Pope, John Milton, and Margaret Cavandish; selections from Aphra Behn and Samuel Johnson

Key Assessment:
- Personal Essay
- Oral Presentation

Unit Four: The Romantics

Students will examine the influence of historical events, including the French Revolution, the Reign of Terror, and the Industrial Revolution, on the rise of Romanticism. Students will examine Romanticism's reaction to the Enlightenment and the political philosophy of the period. An in-depth analysis on poetry will be included, as well as the lasting influence of the Romantics on subsequent literary periods. Gothicism will be included in this unit with the short story, "The Old Nurse's Story." We will also consider how the sublime relates to the Gothic and the influence of the Gothic on contemporary literature and film

Texts May Include: The poetry of Blake, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Keats, and Shelley; essays from Coleridge; Elizabeth Gaskell's "The Old Nurse's Story"

Key Assessments:
- Romanticism Essay
- Poetry Workshop

Unit Five: Social Realism, Victorian Liberalism, and the 19th Century

This unit will cover the rise of the middle class and the politics of the 19th century, particularly Victorian Liberalism. It will consider Britain's rise to world dominance, Victorian propriety, and the increasing impact of industrialization. The popularity of serialization will be examined, with particular consideration to Dickens, and the relationship between social realism and Victorian Liberalism. We will read selections from Darwin to better understand the increased importance of science and technology and its impact on culture.

Texts May Include: Jane Eyre; A Tale of Two Cities; poetry from Tennyson, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, and Robert Browning; selections from Charles Darwin
Key Assessments:
- Oral Presentations on Historical Significance in selected pieces (ie: *Jane Eyre*)
- Process Essay on selected novel (TBD).

**Unit Six: Modernism**

Students will analyze the lasting change WWI had on British literature and culture, including a thorough examination of the loss of many British citizens’ faith in institution, cultural, and political foundations that had provided stability in Victorian society. The decolonization of the British Empire will be examined with *Heart of Darkness*. Students will also study the continued effects of industrialization, urbanization, and individual alienation on literary and artistic generation. We will also compare various literary works to paintings of the period to better understand the formal innovations in art and literature from 1900-1950.

Texts May Include: *Heart of Darkness*; the poetry of Yeats, Auden, Pound, and Eliot; selections from Virginia Woolf's *A Room of My Own* and James Joyce's *Dubliners*; Katherine Mansfield selected short stories

Key Assessments:
- Modernist Art Project
- Comparison Essay

**Unit Seven: Postmodern, Postcolonial, and Contemporary Literature**

In this unit, students will be exposed to the rapidly changing world of contemporary British literature. Beginning with Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, students will consider the effects of WWII and the Cold War on individuals understanding of the world. We will examine postmodernism, futility, and the general angst of the post-war years. We will also examine the decolonization of the British Empire and the incorporation of postcolonial writers into British literature through Caribbean and Irish writers. We will examine the contemporary stories of Zadie Smith to understand how globalization has changed British identity and social structures. We will also return to concepts from the early modern period and examine how they continue to influence contemporary literature.

Texts May Include: Tom Stoppard, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*; Jamaica Kincaid, *Annie John*; the poetry of Derek Walcott, Seamus Heaney, and Carol Ann Duffy; short stories by Zadie Smith

Key Assessments:
- Synthesis Essay
- Media Presentation