Course Title: English 4 - Short Stories

Course #: 1268-1269

Course Description: The focus of the first semester of English 4 is the writing process as well as conventions of grammar and style appropriate to college-level expository writing.

During the second semester, students integrate critical thinking, reading, and writing within the framework of selected works of major writers in short stories. Students will read and view short narratives, including short stories, flash fiction/microfiction, one-act plays, poems, cartoons, commercials, short films, etc. The course discusses the elements that make up short narratives and will teach multiple strategies for finding meaning in literature and visual storytelling. In addition, students will explore human nature, philosophical thought, and social commentary.

UC/CSU Approval: “b” approved

Grade Level: 12

Estimated Homework Per Week: 3-4 hours, depending on the type of assignments and student’s reading/writing stamina

Prerequisite: Completion of English 3, 3 Honors, or AP English Language/Composition

Recommended Prerequisite Skills:
- Reading fluency
- Competency in writing 5 paragraph essays
- Basic grammar skills
- Time management and organizational skills

Course Grade Categories:
Fall:
- Formal Writing (50%)
- Reading, Informal Writing, Quizzes (30%)
- Final Exam (20%)

Spring:
- Classwork/Homework/Tests/Quizzes (20%)
- Formal Writing and Projects (60%)
- Informal Writing (20%)
Major Assessments/Units/Topics:
Fall: Students will complete the following major assessments during the fall semester: Memoir Essay, Definition Essay, Compare and Contrast Essay, Argument Research Essay, and Multi-media Presentation.

Spring: Students will complete the following major assessments during the spring semester: Process Essay, Literary Explication, On-demand Essay, Creative Writing Project, and Multi-Media Presentation.

Fall Semester: Expository Writing

Unit 1: Description and Narration - Reading and Writing the Personal Memoir: Students will work on the necessary writing skills to incorporate descriptive writing in a personal narrative.
  ● Major Assessment: The College Essay

Unit 2: Comparison and Contrast - Negotiating News Sources: Students will look at how to evaluate and compare/contrast different viewpoints on topics in the news.
  ● Major Assessment: In-Class Essay
  ● Reading Selections may include: Up to date news articles on a variety of topics pulled from mainstream and alternative media sources (CNN, Fox, MSNBC, Huffington Post, Breitbart, etc)

Unit 3: Definition Essay: Students will learn how to craft a definition essay, where they define an abstract word.
  ● Major Assessment: Definition Process Essay
  ● Reading Selections may include: “US Prison System is a Costly and Harmful Failure: Report”; “Slavery in the US Prison System”; “America’s Prison System in Inhumane”; “Halden Prison”

Unit 4: Argument - Social Justice: Students will learn how to craft an argument, research paper.
  ● Major Assessment: Process Research Essay
  ● Reading Selections may include: “Old and on the Street: The Graying of America’s Homeless” by Adam Nagourney; “America, we have a problem: Homelessness is out of control” by Lucas Jackson; Plus, 5 self-selected articles on a social justice topic of choice

Semester Final Exam: Multi-Media Presentation on Argument Research Essay
Spring Semester – Short Stories

Unit 1: Identity: Students will read/view and analyze short narratives focused on the themes of identity
  ● Major Assessment: In-Class Essay

Unit 2: Science-Fiction: Students will read/view and analyze science fiction short narratives.
  ● Major Assessment: Creative Writing Assignment
  ● Reading Selections may include: Vonnegut, “Harrison Bergeron”; Assimov, “Rain, Rain, Go Away”; Spark, “The Seraph and the Zambesi”; Bradbury, “A Sound of Thunder” (other selections TBD)

Unit 3: Fantasy and Magical Realism: Students will read/view and analyze fantasy and magical realism short narratives.
  ● Major Assessment: Process Literature Analysis Essay
  ● Reading Selections may include: LeGuin, “The Wife’s Story”; LeGuin, “The One’s Who Walk Away From Omelas” (other selections TBD)

Unit 4: Psychological Mysteries and Gothic/Horror: Students will read and analyze psychological mystery short stories.
  ● Major Assessment: Multimedia Group/Partner Research Project and Presentation