

Ninth Grade English Studies I: Composition and Literature

Course Description and Syllabus

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Course Description:

English Studies I (Ninth Grade) is a course designed to develop the skills of students as mature readers and writers through the analysis of complex texts in the genres of fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and drama. Students will read and analyze a variety of works by numerous authors recognized as masters within each genre, highlighting various aspects of rhetorical strategy and stylistic approach that reflect the *Qualitative and Quantitative Dimensions* of the **Common Core State Standards** (CCSS). The course includes studies in each of the following areas: Critical Reading of Literary and Informational Texts (ccss.RL.1-10); Critical Writing and Analysis (ccss.W.4-W.10), utilizing essay structure and rhetorical strategy through the *Toulmin Model of Argumentation*; Speaking and Listening (ccss.SL.1-6) context and intertextuality through the concept that “No poet, no artist of any kind, has his meaning alone” (T.S. Eliot). Grammar and vocabulary studies will be integrated with textual studies through *close reading* and analysis. By examination of the purposes and means of critical and analytical reading and writing, students will develop their own written expression and improve their language awareness while discovering the depth and richness of literary studies. The course is designed to provide a sound foundation for further study in English Studies at the high school and college level.

Course Themes:

The course is divided into four major themes for each advisory:

1.) ***Honorable Actions and Honorable Words***: Students trace how the words and actions of characters shape and refine recurring themes in literature and history. Supporting historical fiction with historical fact through evidence-based written arguments, students compare and contrast how different points of view are represented in different versions of the same central event and how authors use *creative license* to explore actual historical events. (First Advisory: Anchor Text, the historical novel *The Killer Angels*, by Michael Shaara, supplemented by excerpts from the Ken Burns documentary, *The Civil War*, and the motion picture, *Gettysburg*, which is based upon Mr. Shaara’s novel).

***NOTE: The anchor text for this unit may be replaced by Ta-Nehisi Coates’s Graphic Novel *Black Panther*, pending the approval of the D.C. Public School System and will be supplemented by the film of the same name and the works of Chancellor Williams, Cheikh Ana Diop, John Henrik Clarke, Marimba Ani, George G.M. James, and Ivan Van Sertima, among others. The unit theme of “Honorable Actions and Honorable Words,” however, will be maintained with an emphasis upon how myth and legend shape cultural history and identity.**

2.) ***Tension in Society***: Students will examine the ways in which tension in society is conveyed through informational texts and literature. Students will explore how various authors create mystery, tension and surprise to engage readers through use of theme, conflict, characterization, plot, narrative structure, rhetorical strategy and style. (Second Advisory: Anchor Text, the play *Fences*, by August Wilson).

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3.) ***Identity in Literature***: Students will study the *Harlem Renaissance*, focusing on the ways in which writers and artists of this movement used art to represent and shape cultural identity. Students will read and study poems, works of visual art, and other works from the period. Students will complete an extended research project in which they will select a topic, use library resources to gather information, and synthesize their research into an argumentative essay. (Third Advisory: Anchor Text, the novel *Passing*, by Nella Larsen.

4.) ***Love and Madness***: Students explore love in literature and in life, reading essays, poetry, fiction and fact about the human need for love, and its sometimes bewildering effects on the human psyche. Through visual art, music, dance, theater and literature, students will examine the potential for love to cross into madness and obsession, even leading to death, through evidenced-based writing focusing on the effects of love on characters in literature and the arts and in real life. (Fourth Advisory: Anchor Text, William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, supplemented by the ballet, *Le Jeune Homme et La Mort*, by Roland Petit).

Additional texts will be used throughout the course to support the anchor texts of each unit in each advisory.

Course Goals:

The goal of the ninth grade course is to move students beyond an emotional, self-centered expression of ideas and away from a rudimentary and formulaic approach to composition and discourse to a more sophisticated and intellectually mature response, befitting the level of discourse and expectations of college-level courses. Students will be asked to produce their own original essays in a variety of forms and styles, on a range of topics. The ultimate goal of the course is to develop critical readers and effective writers who are able to produce thoughtful, meaningful written expression on a variety of subjects. Ultimately, the course seeks to produce serious writers and thinkers equipped to play a meaningful role in the public discourse of American thought and culture and in the larger, evolving global society.

Grading and Reporting Policy

- A =93-100
- A- =90-92
- B+ = 87-89
- B = 83-86
- B- = 80-82
- C+ = 77-79
- C = 73-76
- C- = 70-72
- D+ = 67-69
- D = 64-66
- F = 63 and below

(Grading and Reporting Policy, cont'd)

Grades will be noted and weighted in the *ASPEN* electronic gradebook as follows:

Participation	Warm-ups, class discussion, in-class reading, activities, etc.	10%
Practice and Application	Classwork, homework, presentations	50%
Assessments	Tests, Quizzes, Essays, Projects	40%

Make-up Work and Attendance Policy

“Students are responsible for completing all assignments, class work, exams, et cetera, missed while out of the classroom, whether the absence was excused or not. A student typically has three (3) school days to make up missing assignments, unless otherwise written within a 504 plan,” from page 23 of the **DCPS Grading and Reporting Policy** (DCPS GRP).

From page 24:

“Teachers must provide written communication to students regarding the make-up work policy. This can be fulfilled by, but not limited to, either the course syllabus or the student handbook. Each teacher shall specify a reasonable period of time for completion of make-up work, which shall be no less than one full calendar day for each day missed. Teachers may choose, in conjunction with the student, to schedule the make-up work for a time outside of class. It is the responsibility of the student to contact the teacher to make arrangements for clarification and/or materials. Students are also responsible for securing the make-up work as well as contacting the teacher.”

From page 25:

“Students must turn in any previously assigned written work (homework, papers, projects, etc.) by the end of the first school day of their return. Unless special arrangements have been made,

students have one day for each day missed (up to one week) from the last day of the absence to submit make up work. Students must be prepared to complete any quizzes, tests, or presentations at the start of the next class they attend.”

From page 26:

Attendance Policy and Grading : Grading and retention decisions related to student absences shall follow guidance articulated in DCMR Title 5, Chapters 21 and 22, and as described in the Attendance Policy. Secondary students with five (5) or more unexcused absences in any class during a single advisory shall receive a grade reduction in that subject. Secondary students with ten (10) or more unexcused absences in any class during a single advisory shall receive a grade of "FA" (failure due to absences) in that subject. Secondary students accumulating thirty (30) or more unexcused absences in a course within a full school year shall receive a failing final grade in that course with a resulting loss of course credit.”