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Creative Writing **(Semester) .50 credits**

Please keep this document in your creative writing notebook.

Focus and Objectives of this Course:

- To gain confidence as a writer in different forms and genres
- To understand that writing is a process
- To revise and proofread drafts of pieces
- To identify and analyze supporting details
- To understand and apply the strategies of description and narration
- To select an appropriate experience for a personal essay
- To keep a writer's journal and utilize it frequently
- To use the "Author's Chair" as a means to showcase creative work
- To participate in conferences to get one-on-one feedback for work
- To work cooperatively in writer's groups

An Overview:

There is power, beauty, and healing in the written word. Each and every person has the innate ability to create meaningful works that speak of individual expression. It is my job to facilitate your growth and to guide you as much as possible along the path of creative expression. It is my hope that through this course you will not only be able to improve your overall writing (both personal and scholastic) but also discover more about yourself as a person.

This class is workshop-based. In this course students function as members of a writing community that stimulates the generation of ideas and methods of artistic development. Each written piece should be viewed as a work-in-progress. Students are given time for peer revision, feedback, and shared ideas in small workshop groups. Additional instructional methods include large and small group discussions and presentations, audio-visual materials, and lectures.

Through this process-oriented approach (pre-writing, drafting, revision, peer critique, proofreading, publishing, and celebration), students will compose various formal essay types. Additionally, students will be given the opportunity to perform and publish various creative poems, short stories, and other forms of writing.

Daily Routine:

Each day for this class you will need:

- A daily journal that you hand write in
- A second notebook (or iPad) for larger assignments
- A writing implement such as a pen or pencil
- A highlighter

We will use our journals to write our way into the morning together. That means that each morning when you enter the room, you will start by journaling. Journals should be hand-written. Your journal time is free writing time. There will be a prompt on the board to help you find ideas. You can write to the prompt, or if you have something important on your mind that morning, you can write to that. (In other words, if you are stuck for ideas, use the prompt, but if your little brother irritated you by eating the last of the Cheerios, feel free to write about that.) Whatever you choose journal about, you will be expected to show up on time and to respect the silence of the room. After journaling you will have the opportunity to share what you have written.

Please start each morning entry with a fresh journal page and the date.

After we write into the morning, we will begin our regular writing unit. Our units will follow the same general structure. The teacher will present a detailed prompt or lecture. You will be given examples of the style we are working in. You will try your hand at that style of writing. You will prepare a draft to workshop with peers. You will then revise your writing and prepare it for a final submission. Once this cycle is complete, you will hand in a finished, typed hard copy of your work as well as brainstorming and draft copies, and then we will move on to another unit.

At times we may revisit previous work for another round of revision.

Grading:

The D-Y School District has invested significant resources to provide you with access to your grades. ***It is your responsibility to regularly monitor the Plus Portal, to keep track of your grades, and to see me about any concerns.*** If you are having trouble logging in to Plus Portal, immediately seek out someone (a teacher, an admin team member, etc.) who can help you solve the problem!

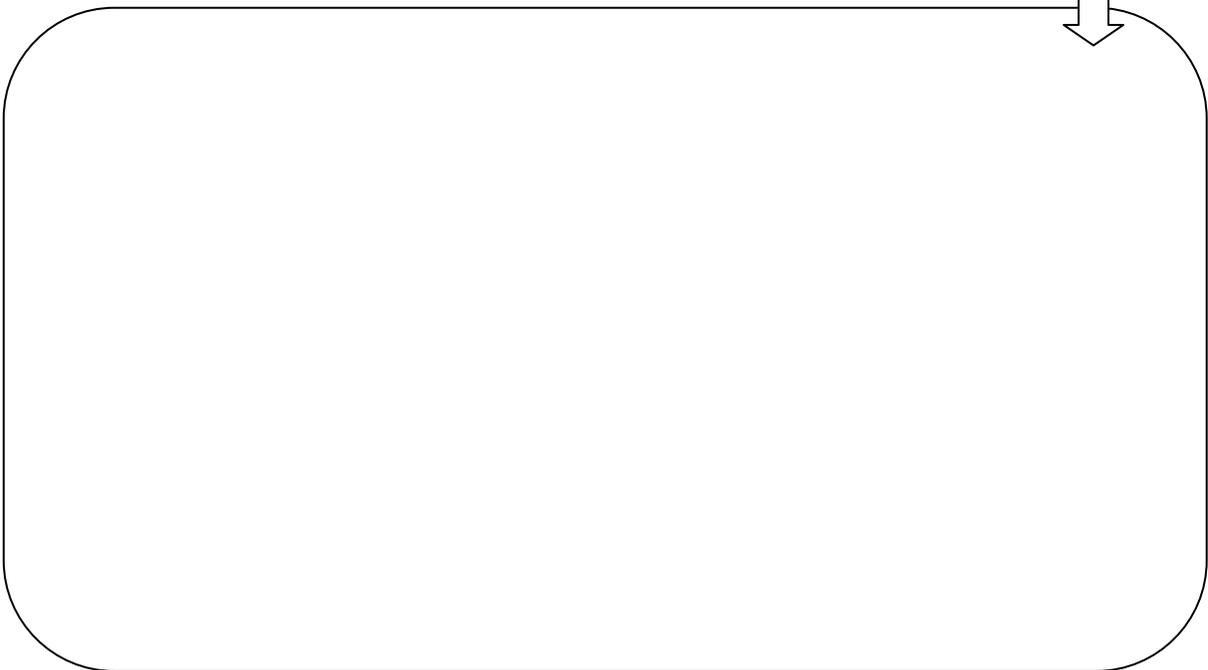
Your grade will be broken down as follows:

- **50% - Original Essays:** Finished drafts of your own writing, inspired by the forms we study. These finished drafts will be typed and submitted as printed copies, not submitted electronically.
- **10% - Evidence of Process:** Students turn in evidence of their writing process: brainstorm lists, early drafts, revision notes, workshop notes, etc. Much of this material will be generated using Google Docs, so make sure you save in multiple drafts!
- **20% - Workshopping:** In workshops you will share your work, gather feedback for revision, and offer feedback to other writers.
- **10% - Daily Journal:** Start each journal entry with a fresh journal page and the date. We will start each day with 5-10 minutes of journal writing to try and get our creative juices flowing. Most days there will be a writing prompt to guide you. You are expected to write for the full time allotted, and days missed for any reason will need to be made up.
- **10% - Performance:** Periodically during the semester we will celebrate by hosting an author's chair. You do not have to read each day, but you must read a portion of your work at least twice at the author's chair each term.

Expectations for Behavior:

The following list details the expectations that I have for student behavior in class. If at any time a student feels that s/he has been treated unfairly, I urge him/her to approach me to discuss the matter. In addition to these rules, students should familiarize themselves with the student handbook regarding school expectations for appropriate behavior.

1. **Personal Electronic Devices (cellphones, smartphones, iPods, etc.) should only be used for class purposes, and proper courtesy should be shown at all times.**
2. **All students are expected to show up for class on time.** *If you are tardy to class, please enter quietly and hand the teacher either 1) a yellow pass from a staff member or 2) a green tardy slip. The tardy slip should be filled out before you enter the classroom.*
3. **All students should access the media room using the main doors of the library and the doorway located at the back of the library near the writing lab.** *While this is a roundabout route, it is necessary for security reasons.*
4. **All students leaving the classroom must have a pass. All passes must be written in pen. Students should fill out the sign out log before they leave and sign back in when they return.**
5. **Respect the library!** *Maintain a respectful quiet. Be courteous of the librarians. Put things back where you found them.*
6. **Stay on task.** *For the most part, if you remain on task during class time, you will have minimal work to do outside of class.*
7. One of the primary objectives of this course is to create a community where students feel safe and comfortable sharing their writing with others. **In order to achieve that, all students must observe basic rules of respect and responsibility.** Those basic rules have been reinforced by your teachers all through elementary and middle school, and should be well understood by the time you reach the high school level.



Violation of the above rules will result in one or more of the following:

Verbal Warning
Adjustment of the behavior/participation grade
Detention
Parental Contact
Restriction of building privileges
Student-Teacher conference
Meeting with assistant principal/parent/counselor

While it is my habit to follow all the rules I ask my students to follow, I do make two exceptions. First, I will often keep water or lozenges on my desk while I lecture. This keeps my throat from drying out. I also use a laser pointer, which is prohibited for students by school policy, but which is a necessary tool when working with projection.

Privacy Policy:

1. Writing can be a very personal experience, and the exploration of your writing can bring up strong feelings. If another writer in the room shares something that is particularly personal, please honor that gift by not talking about it with others outside our writing community.

In other words, what is read in writing class stays in writing class.

2. You will never be forced to read aloud something that you are not comfortable sharing in the group. Keep in mind, however, that a portion of your grade will be based on the reading of your work to the class for feedback and for performance purposes. You may be encouraged to read, but if you have strong feelings against sharing a particular piece, just say so. If you would like to share the piece just with me, I would welcome that.

3. I will not share your writing with others without your consent unless it is under one of the following two conditions. First, teachers often share student work for the purposes of collaboration. We do this to improve our teaching and grading methods. In many cases, the shared work will not have your name on it, but if it does, rest assured that my colleagues are bound by the same confidentiality requirements that I am. Second, if your writing suggests that you may be a danger to yourself or others, that you are being abused by someone, or that you are engaging in illegal activity, I am bound by law to report it to the appropriate staff members (guidance counselor, assistant principal, school social worker, etc).