

St. Mary's College High School

Course Description

Mrs. Aschinger

"What a Piece of Work is Man." (Hamlet, III)

Introduction:

The literature in this course, including prose, drama, poetry and film, depicts the "human condition" in dramatic stories of human beings in titanic struggles with self, with others, with nature, or with society. These works can lead the responsive reader to a more critical consideration of what it is to be human, and to a deeper recognition of those complexities of our nature that we share with all humanity, both in the distant past and in our present. Imaginative literature can, thus, serve as a humanizing force, and the student who fearlessly encounters these works may experience that force.

Works:

In *Hamlet*, a classic of English literature, Shakespeare dramatizes both a search for revenge and for "truth" – Prince Hamlet, challenged by both rational and irrational aspects of life, memorably confronts complexities of the human condition. The cult classic, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, by Robert Louis Stevenson, asks the ultimate question, "What is evil?" and explores the dangerous side of humankind through the use of scientific advances. And, William Golding's, *Lord of the Flies* viscerally examines facets of human nature and society basic to an expanding view of "the human condition." *The Secret Life of Bees*, by Sue Monk Kidd, vividly captures the coming of age of a teenage girl who has experienced powerful personal loss, psychological abuse, alienation and fear, but regains a sense of self, and much more, through her alliance with three sisters and a "black Madonna." Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is inspired by many of the author's own experiences as a riverboat pilot, the novel tells of two runaways—a white boy and a runaway slave—and their journey down the mighty Mississippi River.

Course Texts: Including but not limited to...

Hamlet, William Shakespeare (English Literature)

The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, Robert Louis Stevenson (English)

The Lord of the Flies, William Golding (British Literature)

The Secret Life of Bees, Sue Monk Kidd (American Literature)

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, Mark Twain (American Literature)

*Poetry/Essays/Articles/Handouts -

O'Connor's "Good Country People", Golding's "Thinking as a Hobby"

Edgar Roberts –"What is Literature and Why Do We Study It,"

Audio-visual materials related to course:

1. Lord of the Flies - Film (1960)

2. Hamlet - film

Outcomes and Assessment:

Reading:

Students will write about and discuss "the human condition" through an analysis of works read critically.

- will produce various examples (essays/tests/quizzes) of their reading comprehension and analytic and critical thinking.
- will read “actively” to develop a fuller understanding of a given work’s structure, its unifying themes, its unique use of language, and its author’s contribution to a revelation of the human condition.

Writing:

- Students will produce journals and “reading logs”
- will produce various examples of analytic writing including formal analytic essays with thesis, body, and conclusion.
 - will employ “The Writing Process,” which includes utilization of pre-writing strategies such as brainstorming, clustering, “mind-mapping,” rough-drafting, self and peer-editing, proof-reading, final drafting, and “publishing.”
 - will also participate actively in the writing process as peer-editors and reviewers with their classmates in small-groups or as partners.

Teaching Methodology:

- Teacher led discussion/lecture
- Presentation formats in mixed media
- Students participate in small-group preparations and presentations
- Students serve as Peer- editors of student writing
- Students regularly recite; read aloud, “act” in play reading

Assessment:

Student work will be assigned a point value and letter grades will be calculated at the end of each 6-week grading period. The **semester grade** will be divided into three categories: 15% homework and participation (being prepared for class: having books, paper, journals, and homework completed and ready to discuss), 40% tests and quizzes, and 45% essays and projects. The average grade of assignments in each category becomes the grade for that category. The average grade in each category is the grade for the course.

GRADING SCALE

	B+	87-89	C+	77-79	D+	67-69	
A	95-100	B	84-86	C	74-76	D	64-66
A-	94-90	B-	80-83	C-	70-73	D-	60-63

Make-up Work: In ALL circumstances it is the students’ responsibility to inquire about missed work and set up appointments for make-up tests and quizzes. An unexcused absence on the day ANY assignment or test/quiz is given results in no credit for that assignment.

- ✓ Any essay may be re-written under the condition that the essay was complete and turned in on the day that it was originally due. If an essay is turned in late, the grade will be dropped one letter grade every day that it is late.
- ✓ Once a homework assignment has been graded and passed back, no make-up work will be collected.

Behavioral Expectations

- Exercise self discipline, critical thinking, and thoughtful listening
- Demonstrate your desire to learn, ask questions, challenge ideas, however, avoid judgmental, stereotypical language
- Respect your self, your classmates, your teacher, and your school

(Check your student handbook for the RULES!)

To Parents or Guardians: Please review, sign and return form with your son/daughter. For more effective and timely communication, please contact me through E- mail when possible. Thanks. . .

Comments/Questions: _____

E-Mail caschinger@stmchs.org
V- Mail (510) 526-9242 ext. 425

Parent Signature: _____

Thanks again, Catherine Aschinger