Course Description: English 7-8 is a survey of British Literature and English language arts skills. We will study various works from the genres of Fiction, Nonfiction, Poetry, and Drama. This class will strive to enhance each individual student’s ability to read, write, speak, listen, and think critically. We will strive to incorporate technology, music, art, and our everyday lives into our studies.

Instructional Philosophy: You matter. That’s not intended to sound sappy or touchy-feely, though I know it may anyway. Rather, it’s a reassurance. You matter to us as people. You matter enough to help, you matter enough to listen to, and you matter far too much for us to tell you that you’ve learned something when you haven’t. Success is earned. We will do everything we can to help you be successful, but ultimately, it’s up to you. Never hesitate to ask questions, and strive to communicate as well as you possibly can. I’ll do the same.

Major Units of Study

Course Topic: Conflict, Society, & Government

Quarter Themes:
- Quarter 1: HEROES/LEADERS
- Quarter 2: GOOD VS. EVIL
- Quarter 3: HUMAN FALLIBILITY
- Quarter 4: GLOBAL POWER, AUTHORITY, & GOVERNANCE

Content Standards

Reading: Students will read a variety of grade level texts fluently with accuracy, appropriate pace, phrasing, and expression.

Writing: Students will apply the writing process to plan, draft, revise, edit and publish writing using correct spelling, grammar, punctuation, and other standard conventions appropriate for grade level.

Speaking and Listening: Students will develop, apply, and refine speaking skills to communicate key ideas in a variety of situations.

Multiple Literacies: Students will research, synthesize, and communicate information in a variety of media and formats (textual, visual, and digital).

Course Expectations:

What you need EVERY DAY to succeed in this class:

1. A writing utensil
2. A notebook
3. Class novel
4. Choice reading book
5. Student ID
6. Desire to learn

Class Rules and Expectations:
- **LISTEN** to me and your classmates – RAISE your hand if you want to share your perspective
- **RESPECT** everyone and everything in the class – KEEP your hands and feet to yourself
  - I also don’t want to hear any negative language toward each other – no name calling, vulgar language, etc.
- **KEEP** your cell phones and personal electronics out of sight
- Bottles of beverages are fine, but nothing open-topped. Food of the non-noisy, non-messy, non-smelly variety is ok, but please don’t let it distract others.
- **VISIT** me when you are upset about something/don’t understand something/have a question/want to say hi
- **TAKE** creative, educational risks in the coursework and do not be afraid to try or **ASK** something new

Texts
You can plan to read the following in class at a rate of one per term:
- *Autobiography of Malcolm X*
- *Things Fall Apart*
- *Hamlet*
- *The Kite Runner*

Short stories, poems, newspaper articles, and other nonfiction pieces will also appear periodically.

Writing:
In this class, you can expect to do the following writing assignments:
- Write a daily journal
- Write a resume`
- Write college admissions essays
- Write a free-verse poem
- Write a research paper
- Write a sonnet
- And more!

Assignments:
In addition to the formal writing assignments listed above, you can also count on a variety of presentations, a Genius Hour project, and the opportunity to act out a Shakespearean play. Most of these grades are substantial, and most of them cannot be done for credit at the last minute. Pay close attention in class, and always ask when you have a question. I suggest you email me anytime you are absent. The next section is about communication.

Communication:
This is an expectation, a vital skill, yes in this classroom, but also in life. We will practice it daily. There are many instances in which good communication will dramatically improve your grade, and will help maintain professional and friendly relationships with others. As an example, if you miss class, it is up to you to reach out and find out what you missed, either from a classmate or from me. You can do this via email, or by visiting my room before school. “I didn’t know that was due” will never save you from a reduced grade – it is your responsibility to know what is due and when.

Similarly, if you are having a rare day, perhaps your sister is in the hospital about to give birth to your new baby nephew, and on this particular day you can’t focus and you just really need to have your phone out, that’s totally fine. All you have to do is to communicate with me. Didn’t get to sleep last night because you were playing Halo? Make better decisions. Didn’t get to sleep last night because the bus broke down on the trip back from Grand Island? Sure, you can put your head down – just so long as you communicate. If this isn’t making sense, please let me know. Thank you.

Reminders about class, changes to class schedules and due dates, and other crucial information will be provided to you both in class and by text message. Please take a moment to send the code Gudgel2020 to 81010 so that you receive class updates. I would also encourage your parents to do this so that they, too, are in the loop. Thank you.

OPS Secondary Grading Practices*
All coursework and assessments are judged based on the level of student learning from “below basic” to “advanced.” This course will provide multiple opportunities to achieve at the “proficient” to “advanced” levels. Students are evaluated based on a proficiency scale or project rubric. Proficiency scales for this course are available upon request (teacher will identify location such as portal, teacher website, attached, etc.)

There are three types of coursework*

- **Practice** – assignments are brief and done at the beginning of learning to gain initial content (e.g., student responses on white boards, a valid sampling of math problems, keyboarding exercises, and diagramming sentences, checking and recording resting heart rate). Practice assignments are not generally graded for accuracy (descriptive feedback will be provided in class) and are not a part of the grade. Teachers may keep track of practice work to check for completion and students could also track their practice work. Practice work is at the student’s instructional level and may only include Basic (2) level questions.

- **Formative (35% of the final grade)** – assessments/assignments occur during learning to inform and improve instruction. They are minor assignments (e.g., a three paragraph essay, written responses to guiding questions over an assigned reading, completion of a comparison contrast matrix). Formative assignments are graded for accuracy and descriptive feedback is provided. Formative work may be at the student’s instructional level or at the level of the content standard. Formative assessments/assignments will have all levels of learning – Basic (2), Proficient (3), and Advanced (4), which means that for every formative assessment/assignment, students will be able to earn an Advanced (4). Teachers will require students to redo work that is not of high quality to ensure rigor and high expectations. The students score on a formative assessment that was redone will be their final score.

- **Summative (65% of the final grade)** – assessments/assignments are major end of learning unit tests or projects used to determine mastery of content or skill (e.g., a research paper, an oral report with a power point, major unit test, and science fair project). Summative assignments are graded for accuracy. Summative assignments assess the student’s progress on grade level standards and may not be written at the student’s instructional level. Summative assessments/assignments will have all levels of learning – Basic (2), Proficient (3), and Advanced (4), which means that for every formative assessment/assignment students, will be able to earn an advanced (4).

To maintain alignment of coursework to content standards, which is a key best practice for standards-based grading, teachers will utilize a standardized naming convention for each of the standards within a course. The content standard will be marked on each assignment entered into Infinite Campus (District Grading Program) using all capital letters followed by a colon. After the colon will be the title of the coursework.

At the end of the grading period, scores are converted to a letter grade using this grading scale.

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\begin{align*}
A &= 3.51 - 4.00 \\
A- &= 3.01 - 3.50 \\
B &= 2.51 - 3.00 \\
B- &= 2.01 - 2.50 \\
C &= 1.51 - 2.00 \\
D &= 0.76 - 1.50 \\
F &= 0.00 - 0.75
\end{align*}
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Redoing/Revising Student Coursework*

1. Students are responsible for completing all coursework and assessments as assigned.
2. Students will be allowed redos and revisions of coursework for full credit as long as they are turned in during that unit of study while a student still has an opportunity to benefit from the learning. When time permits, teachers should allow the redoing or revising of summative assessments.
3. Students are expected to complete assessments when given to the class, or if a student was justifiably absent, at a time designated by the teacher.
4. Redoing, retaking or revising will be done at teacher discretion in consultation with the student and parent(s). Teachers may schedule students before, during, or after school to address needed areas of improvement if not
convenient during class. The time and location for redoing, retaking or revising will be done at the teacher’s discretion in consultation with the student and parent(s).

5. Scores for student work after retaking, revising or redoing will not be averaged with the first attempt at coursework but will replace the original score.

Make-up work
Make-up work – and redos or revisions – will only be accepted until the end of the unit in which it was assigned. Late work will only be accepted if it is accompanied by a completed and signed late work application form (attached). It is your responsibility to make up any work you miss. As always, see me for help.

Final Note
If life could speak to you, it would tell you simply that you are entitled to nothing. You have to earn success – however you define it, and that takes hard work. Your teachers, in this class and in others, are here to help you when you need it, but ultimately the onus of being successful is entirely on you. To one student, success may mean admission to an Ivy League college, or to an HBCU, or to the University of Nebraska or Metro Community College. To another, it may mean landing a good job, or getting a promotion at the one you already have. It might mean traveling Europe for a year, or becoming an apprentice to a skilled craftsman, or recording an album, or being a great dad. It may be many, or even all, of these things. Only you get to define success, but I can help you do it, and if you want me to, I’d love to help you become successful. Please communicate well, and never doubt that your best is good enough.

Please take this (your education) seriously, and understand that it is my deepest desire to see you succeed, yet also that I respect you too much to put you in harm’s way – if you don’t succeed, if you can’t meet deadlines, if you can’t demonstrate functional reading and writing skills, if you can’t handle what awaits you outside the Nerf world of high school, I’m not about to lie to you. You have to have this class to graduate. Show up every day with that in mind. If you can’t do that, you can retake it in June - but not from me. Remember also that while I suspect you have the ability to earn an A and I hope you do, you can pass with a D. I’m not encouraging you to slack off, but I know you’re busy with sports, speech, jobs, family, friends, other classes, and more, and while I hope you do killer work in this class, I respect those students who “get by” as much as I do those who “kill it” because I know that mine is not your only class. I will always do my best to be understanding.

You matter. I’m not about to stop saying it. You matter to me and to the world at large. You can’t hear that enough. Take advantage of your opportunities. Make your senior year something worthwhile, memorable even, and approach it in such a way that no matter what you aspire to do come June, it vaults you in the direction of success. I’m honored to be your teacher.

Sincerely,

Dr. Mark Gudgel
mark.gudgel@ops.org

*Indicates standardized language

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