

Syllabus – Sophomore English Community

Central High Career Magnet Academy

Course Objectives: To prepare the student for college-level literacy skills through an intensive reading program, and to further the student's familiarity with the writing portfolio through the production of the various portfolio categories.

Introduction: What would happen if we were totally unable to communicate with one another? What kind of world would we live in? It would have been impossible for people to create our massive civilizations if language wasn't available as a tool. *The ability to transmit our thoughts and feelings to each other is the biggest key to the success of the human species.* Although we now know that other animals are capable of communication, they are nowhere near the complexity of our interactions. It is this complexity – the rules, meanings, and structure of our language – that makes it necessary for you to take English in some form throughout your K-12 years. You are a native of the information age. Your generation has been brought up surrounded by Dot Coms and hypertext. Today, more than ever, you need to hone your writing, reading, and speaking skills to perfection.

Requirements: Occasionally I will assign special projects, or we will read whole class novels, but for the most part there will be three standing requirements that will determine your grade. You are expected to meet these requirements every day.

Reading and Blog: We will read in class every day. I will choose two books during the course of the year for whole class readings. You will be allowed to choose books for independent reading once you have completed the class books. As a record of your reading, you will keep an annotated bibliography of your books. This year you will also keep a web log (blog) for class credit. We will create the blog in class, and you will have to write in it every week. I will post the assignments on my website, www.gilbertsclass.com, and you will respond on your blog for homework. I will read your blogs weekly to make sure you're you are keeping up. Reading and blogs will count as 20 percent of your grade.

Writing Assignments: You will write many papers during your sophomore year. Most of the writing assignments will be given as homework. The pieces will range from personal to academic, with a focus on crafting a structured essay. At the end of the year these pieces will be collected and added to the portfolio you started during your freshman year. The writing will count as 20 percent of your grade.

Classwork: Every day there will be classwork in the form of worksheets or written essays. Much of this work will focus on ACT preparation. This work will count as 20 percent of your grade.

Proficiency Assessment: You will take a series of diagnostic and proficiency assessments during each six weeks grading period as a part of the district's Project Proficiency program. These tests will make up 20 percent of your grade. Failing grades on the tests will allowed to be adjusted during after school programs.

EOC: In April, you will take the Evaluation of Competency Assessment (the new CATS test) consisting of multiple-choice and essay questions. Unlike the older state-wide exams, performance on this test will be recorded academically. It will make up the final 20 percent of your final grade.

Plagiarism: Copying information off the Internet or taking a paper from someone else and claiming it as an original is considered plagiarism. This is a form of cheating that is taken very seriously by colleges and universities where plagiarism can result in expulsion from all classes. I do an Internet check on each paper turned into me. If I catch you plagiarizing, I will fail your for the assignment and insist that it be put on your permanent record so that your future college can be warned. Plagiarism is stealing, and in many cases cheaters have had to face criminal and civil court cases. Don't do it.

Gilbertsclass.com: I keep a website, www.gilbertsclass.com, for my students and their parents to keep up with the class. I will update the class schedule and handouts on the site. Throughout the year I will direct you to visit the site for various class projects.

Course Schedule:

First Six Weeks:

Reading: *Things Fall Apart*, by Chinua Achebe
Writing: Memoir, poetry analysis

Second Six Weeks:

Reading: Independent reading, short stories
Writing: Short story analysis, responses to literature

Third Six Weeks:

Reading: Independent reading, informational articles
Writing: Rhetorical analysis

Fourth Six Weeks:

Reading: *The Catcher in the Rye*, by J.D. Salinger
Writing: Analysis of speeches

Fifth Six Weeks:

Reading: Independent reading, various essays
Writing: Literary analysis

Sixth Six Weeks:

Reading: Independent reading
Writing: Reflective, portfolio finalization

Required Materials for Class: You must bring reading journals and your selected book to class every day. Your agenda book and ID are required to use the computer labs.

Grading Breakdown:

Reading and Journals – 20%
Writing Assignments – 20%
Classwork – 20%
Proficiency Assessment – 20%
Evaluation of Competency – 20%

JCPS Grading Scale

<u>Letter grade</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Explanation</u>
A	93 – 100	<i>Exceeds Standards</i>
B	86 – 92	Meets Standards
C	79 – 85	Marginally Meets Standards
D	70 – 78	Below Standards
U	Below 70	Unsatisfactory Performance

How to Reach Me: Both you and your parents can contact me through email. My address is jim.gilbert@jefferson.kyschools.us. I read my mail at least three times per day.