

**TAMALPAIS UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**Larkspur, California**

Course of Study

**NONFICTION I**  
Contemporary Strand

**I. INTRODUCTION: COURSE DESCRIPTION**

- A. This is the first course in the Nonfiction sequence. Students will polish their nonfiction and analytical writing through personal essays, more complex articles, persuasion, reviews, satires, and analysis. They will study writing techniques and style in such books as William Zinsser's *On Writing Well*. They will improve the quality of their writing by writing extensive, structured papers, either expressive or analytical, and then by modifying or adapting these papers for publication at the end of the semester.

They will read nonfiction to improve their own style and to study the pieces as literary forms. Students will be required to think about and discuss critically the ideas in the literature and relate these ideas to current community and campus concerns.

Students will actively seek out and listen to speeches as part of the course; they will also formally present their analysis of current issues in formal oral situations as well as in writing.

Completion of the two semester sequence Nonfiction I and Nonfiction II will prepare students to take the Scholastic Aptitude Test II in writing,

- B. Nonfiction I addresses the following district outcomes:

#1: communicate articulately, effectively, and persuasively when speaking and writing;

#2 read and analyze material in a variety of disciplines

#3 use technology as a tool to access information, analyze and solve problems, and communicate ideas

#10 analyze and propose solutions to contemporary issues using a variety of perspectives;

Nonfiction will contribute to the attainment of the following Tam 21<sup>st</sup> Century Goals:

- acquire, manage and use knowledge and skills;
- think critically and creatively
- develop skills needed for effective teamwork;
- develop respect and understanding for the diversity of our community;
- understand individual and cultural differences;
- take responsibility for self and community;
- gain skills for success in the work place.

C. Nonfiction I: Rhetorical Modes presents students for Nonfiction II: Rhetorical Modes and Writing for Publication. It provides students with intense writing experiences that equip them for other writing challenges.

D. Nonfiction I is designed to help students achieve the following academic goals:

Writing:

1. to learn the principles of clear, direct writing;
2. to learn revision skills;
3. to learn a number of stylistic approaches to convey ideas and information to the read;
4. to learn the difference between a fact and opinion; to become aware of the effect of point-of-view and bias in writing observation; to be aware of purpose; to write persuasively;
5. to recognize the difference between primary and secondary sources and to use them appropriately;

Reading:

1. to read a wide variety of prose styles from many disciplines to gain understanding of the connections between interpretive skill in reading and writing;
2. to develop vocabulary through the study of nonfiction content, style, and diction;
3. to recognize opinion and assumption in nonfiction writing;

4. to recognize slanting in written accounts of issues and events;
5. to read for main and subordinate ideas;
6. to identify a writer's purpose, tone, point of view;
7. to foster a respect for the role of writers in a democratic society;
8. to appreciate the craft of nonfiction through close reading;
9. to understand the myth of objectivity and the importance of truth seeking.

## **II. STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

### **A. Writing:**

1. use the stages in the writing process, especially responding, revising, and editing (R/LAF W W/S 1.0; 1.9);
2. apply basic grammar and appropriate vocabulary in the context of their writing (R/LAF W W/O 1.0);
3. write well-developed essays using the thesis statement effectively to focus the essay, and practice patterns of organization, such as chronology, classification, and steps in a process, with appropriate transitional techniques, language and form to suit purpose and audience (R/LAF W W/S 1.3);
4. draw generalizations from recorded observation and experience—e.g., from stories, poems, journal entries, autobiographical and biographical pieces, descriptions and accounts—and support them with convincing evidence and examples (R/LAF W W/A 2.2);
- e. use deduction and induction, understand logical fallacies, know what constitutes evidence and authority, while distinguishing between primary and secondary sources (R/LAF W W/A 2.2);
- f. develop an interpretation that uses convincing textual evidence for support and explain the interpretation rationally to convince the reader of its soundness (R/LAF W W/A 2.2 a - e);
6. examine ideas and information from a variety of sources and draw conclusions about the point and purpose of that information and to evaluate the conclusions and determine whether or not they are sound (R/LAF W W/A 2.4 d);

7. analyze information from various sources through systematic notetaking, integrate material from outside sources into their own work, and acknowledge those sources (R/LAF W W/S 1.6).

B. Literature/Reading:

1. understand and use the language of literary criticism, such as setting, characterization, foreshadowing, symbolism, and metaphor; consult sources to enrich understanding; recognize the relationship of specific incidents to theme; understand an author's method of narration, i.e., who tells the story and how far the narrator is from the action; be aware of and understand shifts in point of view (R/LAF R L/RA 3.0 S/F 3.1; N/A 3.2, 3.3, 3.4);
2. put ideas in one's own words through such devices as paraphrase, precis, modeling, unscrambling sample passages, reading and interpreting maps, charts, and graphs; recognize that rereading enhances the reader's understanding and appreciation;
3. determine the author's point of view and distinguish his or her bias from established fact (R/LAF R C/A 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5);
4. recognize the importance of reading beyond the assigned works and use outside sources of reference; refine the use of research techniques;
5. develop a greater understanding of the contributions of ethnic groups by studying their traditions, their cultural stance, their similarities and differences (R/LAF R L/RA 3.5 b).

C. Speaking and Listening:

When speaking, students will:

1. function effectively in class discussion by answering and asking questions coherently and by clarifying responses with clear explanations; conceive and develop ideas that are soundly reasoned and well supported;
2. become more proficient in the various roles in editing and response writing groups; learn new roles: for example, panel chair, panel member, large group discussion leader, recorder, resource person;
3. learn argumentation techniques that allow both sides of a question to surface; learn skills in logic and reasoning to support arguments on conflicting sides of a question (R/LAF L/S O/D 1.5, 1.6);

4. give careful attention to preplanning a speech; develop a regard for the audience with respect to gaining attention, sustaining interest, making efficient use of time; learn skills in organizing for various modes of presentation: analysis, persuasion, explanation, interpretation, direction, and comparison (R/LAF L/S O/D 1.7 A/E 1.13);
5. practice oral interpretation of literature, using the techniques of emphasis, expression, dramatic pause, inflection; practice parts in dramas, attempting realistic character identity, fluency in reading dialogue, and appropriate tone and mood (R/LAF L/S S/A 2.3 a—e; 2.5).

When listening, students will:

1. develop techniques that promote supportive, polite concern for the speaker, and learn the skills necessary to offer tactful, constructive criticism;
2. identify main and subordinate ideas presented in lectures and discussions, and evaluate them for sound reasoning and convincing support; take into account the nuances, the subtle shades of meaning (R/LAF L/S A/E 1.11—1.14).

C. Student Assessment:

Students will be assessed through a variety of indicators including homework, group work, oral presentations, visuals related to the reading, quizzes on the literature, essays and articles for publication.

Students will be expected to take an essay examination that requires them to apply the thinking and writing skills they have developed in order to synthesize and analyze material from three to four major works covered during the semester. Students will be expected to support their main ideas with specific examples from the works under discussion.

D. Course Assessment

Nonfiction I will be assessed through formal and informal surveys of the students. Course and unit goals will be reviewed by teacher on a regular basis.

### III. METHODS AND MATERIALS

A. Methods

Students will complete a variety of interrelated writing assignments. More than one paper may be required for each assignment:

1. students will read and discuss long and short pieces of nonfiction;
2. students will write essays, informal papers and various types of responses to the works read;
3. students will listen to a variety of speeches, write about them and present their own ideas on issues to the class in speeches;
4. students will utilize the school, the school library and the larger community for information for discussion and writing;
5. students will maintain a working folder of their writing that will continue with them into Nonfiction II and be available for possible publication, portfolios, college entrance and job interviews;
6. students will use technology to improve their research and writing throughout the course;
7. students will publish their best work at the end of the course, making full use of the various kinds of publication software.

## B. Materials

Every teacher of Nonfiction will teach a selection of the following titles to guarantee consistency throughout the district. Each student will read at least four major works per semester.

### Core Selections

Baker, Russell	<i>Good Times</i>
Bernstein, Carl and Bob Woodward	<i>All the President's Men</i>
Carson, Rachel	<i>Silent Spring</i>
Crane, Stephen	"The Open Boat"
McPhee, John	<i>Table of Contents</i>
Mitford, Jessica	<i>The American Way of Death</i>
<i>New York Times</i> reporters	<i>Children of the Shadows</i>
Schanberg, Signey	<i>The Killing Fields</i>
Strunk, William and E.B. White	<i>The Elements of Style</i>
Wagoner, David	<i>Popular Writing in America</i>
Weir, David	<i>Circle of Poison</i>
Welty, Eudora	<i>One Writer's Beginnings</i>

### Supplementary Readings

Alexander, Shana	<i>Talking Woman</i>
Baldwin, James	<i>The Fire Next Time</i>
Brady, John	<i>The Craft of Interviewing</i>
Bragg, Rick	<i>All Over But the Shoutin'</i>
Brown, Claude	<i>Manchild in the Promised Land</i>
Carroll, James	<i>Basketball Diaries</i>

Dillard Annie	<i>An American Childhood</i>
Fadiman, Anne	<i>The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down</i>
Fainaru-Wada, Mark & Williams, Lance	<i>Game of Shadows</i>
Hessler, Peter	<i>Rivertown: My Two Years on the Yangtze</i>
Hurston, Zora Neal	<i>Dust Tracks on the Road</i>
Kidder, Tracy	<i>Mountains Beyond Mountains</i>
Kovic, Ron	<i>Born on the Fourth of July</i>
Kozol, Jonathan	<i>Rachel and Her Children: Homeless Families in America</i>
Krakauer, Jon	<i>Into the Wild</i>
McBride, James	<i>The Color of Water</i>
McCall, Nathan	<i>Makes Me Wanna Holler</i>
Marquez, Gabriel	<i>News of a Kidnapping</i>
Rodriguez, Richard	<i>Hunger for Memory</i>
Sacks, Oliver	<i>The Man Who Mistook His Wife for A Hat</i>
Schell, Jonathan	<i>The Fate of the Earth</i>
Schlosser, Eric	<i>Fast Food Nation</i>
Susskind, Ron	<i>A Hope in the Unseen</i>
The Freedom Forum	<i>Death by Cheeseburger</i>
Weiner, Jonathan	<i>Beak of the Finch</i>
Wolf, Naomi	<i>The Beauty Myth</i>
Wolfe, Tom	<i>The Right Stuff</i>

#### Books for Teacher

Gadda, George  
(Subject A Chief Reader) *Teaching Analytical Writing*

#### IV. GENERAL INFORMAITON

- A. Nonfiction I is an upper division course in the Contemporary Stand which is open to freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors. (Freshmen must also take English 1 and sophomores must also take English 3 concurrently with Nonfiction I to satisfy graduation requirements.)
- B. The course satisfies the district graduation requirement for five units of English.
- C. This course is a prerequisite for Nonfiction II and Advanced Journalism.
- D. Nonfiction I is accepted for the University of California "B" or "F" requirement.

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