

TAMALPAIS UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
Larkspur, California

Course of Study

CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE
Contemporary Strand

I. INTRODUCTION: COURSE DESCRIPTION

- A. Because contemporary writing techniques are often more difficult for students to understand than are the writing techniques of classical literature, because college English courses frequently devote a large proportion of their reading lists to the most recent literature, and because every District graduate -- college-bound or not -- needs help to develop into an avid and selective reader, this course will examine literature of the last twenty years and the most recent past in particular (the last three years) through the prism of critical reading and writing. This course often pilots the use of recently written literature and then transfers that literature to other classes.
- B. Contemporary Literature addresses the following District student learning 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;
 - #11. interpret, experience, create, and/or perform artistic work.

Contemporary Literature addresses the following Tam 21st Century Goals:

- acquire, manage and use knowledge and skills;
- think critically and creatively;
- develop respect and understanding for the diversity of our community;
- understand individual and cultural differences;

- take responsibility for self and community.

C. Contemporary Literature provides an opportunity to study in depth literature and themes that have been touched upon in previous course work at the freshman and sophomore levels. Contemporary Literature allows students to explore the most recent literature being written. The goals of this course include the following:

1. to become familiar with the very best fiction, nonfiction, drama, and poetry of the last twenty years;
2. to learn to deal with the most difficult elements in contemporary writing, such as shifts in time, style, and point of view;
3. to become knowledgeable and selective about the literature which reflects the world in which students are living;
4. to develop the tools necessary to read a work of contemporary literature critically;
5. to learn the differences between judging a piece of literature by subjective standards and by external standards;
6. to gain a better understanding of the techniques and ethics involved in using secondary sources;
7. to strengthen the ability to write critical exposition;
8. to understand the structure of contemporary literature by emulating literary models;
9. to become acquainted with the exceptionally rich literary resources in the Bay Area -- lectures, plays, writers, bookstores, poetry readings, etc.;
10. to learn how a piece of contemporary literature that is universal may become a piece of classical literature;
11. to learn to use critical thinking skills in analyzing and interpreting literature;
12. to establish the connection between writing and thinking through regular practice in the steps of the writing process;
13. to develop vocabulary through the use of literary terms and the author's diction.

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);
5. 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);
6. 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);
7. 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);
8. 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).

D. 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 other writing assignments.

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.

See the Contemporary Literature Resource Binder for sample assessments.

E. Course Assessment

Contemporary Literature will be assessed through formal and informal surveys of the students. Course and unit goals will be reviewed by teachers on a regular basis.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

A. Methods

Students will complete a variety of interrelated writing assignments adapted from the James Moffet writing sequence. More than one paper may be required for each assignment. In addition to four process papers per semester, minor papers will be assigned regularly.

Eight different writing types have been identified as the focus for the upper division writing program: observation, reflection, controversial issue, interpretation, evaluation, report of information, autobiography, and speculation.

B. Materials

Achebe, Chinua	<i>Arrow of Gold</i>
Adams, Alice	<i>Families and Survivors</i>
Alexie, Sherman	<i>Ten Little Indians</i>
Beattie, Ann	<i>Falling in Place</i>
Bellow, Saul	<i>The Dean's December</i>
Berriault, Gina	<i>The Infinite Passion of Expectation</i>
Bowen, Elizabeth	Collected Stories
Brown, Christie	<i>Down All the Days</i>
Calvino, Italo	<i>If On a Winter's Night a Traveler</i>
Carver, Raymond	<i>Cathedral</i>
Carver, Raymond	<i>What We Talk About When We</i>
	<i>Talk About Love</i>
	Stories
Cheever, John	<i>Fortress Marion</i>
Chilean, Tom	<i>Modern American Prose</i>
Clifford, John	<i>Ragtime</i>
Doctorow, E. L.	<i>The Name of the Rose</i>
Eco, Umberto	<i>Master Butchers Singing Club</i>
Erdrich, Louise	<i>Last Report on the Miracles at Little</i>
Erdrich, Louise	<i>No Horse</i>
	<i>Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close</i>
Foer, Jonathan Safran	<i>Rock Springs</i>
Ford, Richard	<i>Daniel Martin</i>
Fowles, John	<i>The Succession: A Novel of</i>
Garrett, George	<i>Elizabeth and James</i>
	<i>Land of Dreamy Dreams</i>
Gilchrist, Ellen	<i>Snow Falling on Cedars</i>
Guterson, David	<i>A Sorrow Beyond Dreams</i>
Handke, Peter	<i>Scoundrel Time</i>
Hellman, Lillian	<i>The Mind's Eye</i>
Hofstadter, Douglas	<i>The World According to Garp</i>
Irving, John	<i>House of the Sleeping Beauties</i>
Kawabata, Yasunari	<i>Soul of a New Machine</i>
Kidder, Tracy	<i>Animal Dreams</i>
Kingsolver, Barbara	<i>China Man</i>
Kingston, Maxine Hong	<i>Woman Warrior</i>
	<i>Rosie</i>
Lamott, Anne	<i>Hard Laughter</i>
	<i>The Dispossessed</i>
LeGuin, Ursula	Stories
Lessing, Doris	<i>The Journey of Ibn Fattouma</i>
Mahfouz, Naguib	<i>The Assistant</i>
Malamud, Bernard	"How Do You Know It's Good"
Mannes, Marya	<i>Chronicle of a Death Foretold</i>
Marquez, Gabriel Garcia	

Milosz, Czeslaw	Visions from San Francisco Bay
Moon, William Least Heat	<i>Blue Highways</i> **
Moore, Brian	<i>Cold Heave</i>
Morrison, Toni	<i>Song of Solomon</i>
Nabokov, Vladimir	Lectures on Literature
Naipal, V. S.	<i>Return of Eva Peron</i>
O. Henry Awards	Prize Stories 1979-1997
Pinter, Harold	<i>Old Times</i>
Prokosch, Ivan	<i>Housekeeping</i>
	Random House Handbook.
Russo, Richard	<i>Empire Falls</i>
Settle, Mary Lee	<i>The Scapegoat</i>
Sheehan, Susan	<i>Is There No Place on Earth for Me?</i>
Simon, John	<i>Singularities</i>
Singer, Isaac Bashevis	<i>Old Love</i>
Solzhenitsyn, Aleksandr	Nobel Lecture
Starr, Kevin	<i>Americans and the California Dream</i>
Stone, Robert	<i>Dog Soldiers</i>
Stoppard, Tom	<i>Arcadia</i>
	<i>Summer Before the Dark</i>
	<i>To See You Again</i>
Tomkins, Calvin	<i>Off the Wall</i>
Trevor, William	Other People's Worlds
	<i>Victory Over Japan</i>
	<i>Woman Warrior</i> *
Yglesias, Jose	<i>The Kill Price</i>

* World Literature also

** Literary Walkabouts also

IV. GENERAL INFORMATION

Contemporary Literature is a 5 credit course open to juniors, seniors and second semester sophomores.

A. Prerequisites. There are no course prerequisites

B. Requirements Met.

This course may be used in partial fulfillment of the English graduation requirement.

This course is accepted toward the "b" or "g" requirement for US admissions. It is also accepted for the CSU English requirement.

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