

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

**Course of Study**

**NONFICTION II  
Contemporary Strand**

**I. INTRODUCTION: COURSE DESCRIPTION**

- A. This is the second course in the nonfiction sequence. Students will polish their nonfiction and analytical writing through personal essays, more complex articles, persuasion, reviews, satires, and analyses. They will study writing techniques and style in such books as William Zinnser'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. These works will range from Jonathan Swift's "A Modest Proposal" to John McPhee's *Table of Contents*. They will then write compositions of some complexity based on in-depth study of these works. 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 a part of the course; they will also formally present their analysis of current issues in formal oral situations as well as in writing.

- B. Nonfiction II: Rhetorical Modes 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.

Nonfiction II 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. Goals

Writing:

1. to generate ideas from studying classical and contemporary literature and from observing the social environment;
2. to identify appropriate sources and to find facts, examples, and illustrations from published material, live sources, and personal experience;
3. to learn the difference between and be able to use primary and secondary sources;
4. to select the appropriate form of writing for given information;
5. to revise, revise and then revise again in order to produce a polished and publishable piece of writing;
6. to move from personal writing (the personal column, the “I” account) through advanced forms – reviews, satires, persuasion and particularly analytical writing at the college level;
7. to compose for a variety of audiences and purposes; for the instructor in order to receive advice for improvement and evaluation; for peers in order to receive advice and improve the writing for all involved; for the school community in order to inform on issues; for the Marin community (in local weeklies and dailies) to educate the public on school issues;
8. to develop further the ability to construct a clearly reasoned, well-organized essay with a tightly reasoned thesis;
9. to construct paragraphs that develop and support the paper’s main idea with facts, examples, reasons, descriptions, incidents, quotations, definitions, and analogies;
10. to organize paragraphs into a logical sequence so that the central idea of the piece is presented clearly and is developed to a logical conclusion;

11. to write sentences with precise and appropriate word choice for a given audience;
12. to distinguish between literal and figurative use of language, and to avoid jargon and cliché;
13. to know when and how to present one's own ideas as related to, but clearly distinguished from, the ideas of others, including the ability to attribute and document, and to avoid plagiarism;
14. to research for support of one's opinions and conclusions, including the appropriate use of evidence and attribution;
15. to use dictionaries, style books, thesauruses, and other reference materials for the purpose of checking words and facts used in one's writing;
16. to proof read for errors and omissions of both form and substance, to revise and restructure where ideas are poorly organized or where evidence is lacking, and to correct the draft for errors in capitalization, spelling, and punctuation;
17. to listen, take notes, and transcribe information accurately.

Reading:

1. to develop an understanding and appreciation for the nonfiction genre;
2. to recognize different purposes and methods of writing, to identify a writer's point of view and tone, and to interpret a writer's meaning inferentially as well as literally;
3. to separate one's personal opinions and assumptions from one's writing;
4. to vary reading speed and methods to suit the type of material and the purpose in reading;
5. to define unfamiliar words by decoding, by contextual clues, or by using a dictionary;
6. to move on to more challenging and complex works than those read in Nonfiction I;
7. to read such sources as "Week in Review" section of the *New York Times*, personal opinion columns, books, and periodicals and write a paper which will require both library research and primary sources, as well as interviews, using documentation, attribution, analysis and classification.

## Ethical Judgment

1. to present other sides of an issue by comparison and contrast, argumentation, and analysis;
2. to know current press law; to learn the importance of the ethics; to respect privacy in writing.

## 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).

### **III. ASSESSMENT**

#### **A. Student Assessment**

1. Students will do a number of 20 minute writes modeled after those in the SAT II Literature Examination;
2. Students will do several 90 minute analytical writes modeled after those in the University of California Subject A Examination;
3. Students will be expected to take an essay examination at the end of the semester that requires them to apply the thinking and writing skills to analyze material from major works studied during the semester.

#### **B. Course Assessment**

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

### **IV. METHODS AND MATERIALS**

#### **A. Methods**

1. Students will continue their study of nonfiction literature begun in Nonfiction I; they will read, annotate, analyze, discuss, research and write about the works;
2. students will write analytical essays;

3. students will write critical essays on books, drama, film and other topics that they can evaluate according to a standard;
4. students will attend, discuss and write about speeches; they will also make speeches of their own on school and community issues;
5. students will write reflective pieces on issues they have researched;
6. students will maintain a working folder of their writing that will continue with into other courses and be available for possible publication, portfolios, and college entrance and job interviews.
7. students will use technology for research for their writing and speaking;
8. students will publish their best work at the end of the course – on campus and in Bay Area newspapers – making full use of various kinds of publication software.
9. read, discuss and write about nonfiction literature;
10. write analytical essays about nonfiction literature;
11. write at least six essays which go through the various steps of the writing process,
12. analyze to persuade on current issues such as the proposal to install metal detectors at all school entrances;
13. explore a controversial issue through analysis of various positions on topics such as the death penalty;
14. evaluate a live production or written work such as a play or new book;
15. write a paper in which students recount a personal experience in an exciting or interesting manner, using such techniques as narration, classification and example;
16. write an article of reflection on personal essays by writers such as Ellen Goodman, Anthony Lewis and Clarence Page;
17. write a satire or ironic opinion column using such techniques as parody and unexpected logic using Jonathan Swift’s “A Modest Proposal” as a model;
18. publish selected writing from the course in school and/or local newspapers at the end of the semester.

B. Materials

Every teacher of Nonfiction II 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, with required reading including a variety of short stories, poems, novels, and nonfiction.

Core Readings

Capote, Truman	<i>In Cold Blood</i>
Decker, Randall E.	<i>Patterns of Exposition</i>
Dinesen, Isak	<i>Out of Africa</i>
Douglass, Frederick	<i>Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass</i>
Halberstam, David	<i>The Amateurs</i>
King, Jr., Martin Luther	<i>Letter from the Birmingham Jail</i>
McPhee, John	<i>Table of Contents</i>
Swift, Jonathan	“A Modest Proposal”
Wagoner, David	<i>Popular Writing in America (Also used in Nonfiction I)</i>
Zinsser, William	<i>On Writing Well</i>

Supplementary Selections

Allende, Isabel	<i>Paula</i>
Bradlee, Ben	<i>A Good Life</i>
Cheng, Nien	<i>Life and Death in Shanghai</i>
Graham, Katherine	<i>Personal History</i>
Cronkite, Walter	<i>A Reporter’s Life</i>
Dorris, Michael	<i>Broken Cord</i>
Eiseley, Loren	<i>The Immense Journey</i>
Gates, Henry Louis	<i>Colored People: A Memoir</i>
Gleick, James	<i>Chaos</i>
Goodall, Jane	<i>The Chimpanzees of Gombe</i>
Mailer, Norman	<i>A Fire on the Moon</i>
Morris, Jan	<i>Journeys</i>
Read, Piers Paul	<i>Alive</i>
Ryan, Joan	<i>Little Girls in Pretty Boxes</i>
Schell, Jonathan	<i>The Fate of the Earth</i>
Shilts, Randy	<i>And the Band Played On</i>
Staples, Brent	<i>Parallel Time: Growing Up In Black and White</i>
Tateishi, John	<i>And Justice of All: An Oral History of the Japanese-American Detention Camps</i>

Theroux, Paul  
Turler, Studs  
Wolfe, Tom

*Riding the Iron Rooster*  
*The Great Divide*  
*The Right Stuff*

## V. GENERAL INFORMATION

Nonfiction II is 5 credit course open to freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors.  
(Freshmen must also take English 2 and sophomores must also take English 4  
concurrently with Nonfiction II to satisfy graduation requirements)

- A. Prerequisites. Nonfiction I is the prerequisite for this course.
- B. Requirements Met. This course may be used in partial fulfillment of the English graduation requirement. It is a Contemporary Strand Course.

The course is accepted towards the "b" and "g" requirement for UC admissions. It is also accepted for the CSU English requirement.