

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

**Course of Study**

**San Francisco Stories**

**I. INTRODUCTION: COURSE DESCRIPTION**

- A. This is a one-semester course for students interested in the literature of San Francisco and the Bay Area. This course provides students with an opportunity to read literature in several genres (novel, short story, poetry, essay, personal narrative, historical non-fiction, song, and journalism) that uses San Francisco and the Bay Area as a setting or subject. Students will read literature set in San Francisco at various points in the history of the region, from the Gold Rush to contemporary times. This course is intended for sophomores (who are concurrently enrolled in English 4 and have teacher consent), juniors and seniors interested in the topic.

This course was developed in order to meet the needs of students interested in learning more about the place that they live and the literature it has inspired. The focus will be literary and historical: Students will examine the ways in which the setting of San Francisco enriches and reveals meaning in literature, and the ways in which the literature reveals meaning in understanding the history of San Francisco.

This course will employ the same rigorous expectations as other upper division college preparatory electives in the English program. More specifically, this course will develop expository writing skills in major assignments involving traditional literary analysis, reports of information that incorporates observation, reflection, and controversial issue. The overall goal of this class is to engage the students' imagination through imaginative literature, and to engage the students' interest through the immediacy and relevancy of the topic to their lives.

- B. This course addresses the following District student learning outcomes which ask students to:
- #1. communicate articulately, effectively and persuasively, both orally and in writing;
  - #2. read/view and analyze material in a variety of disciplines;
  - #5. use technology to access information, analyze and solve problems and communicate ideas

- C. The goals for San Francisco Stories are:
1. Students will write for a variety of purposes and audiences, including the following major paper types: reflection (student's place within or meaningful experience related to the San Francisco Bay Area); controversial issue (argument regarding a controversial issue particularly relevant to life in the San Francisco Bay Area); report of information with observation (reporting on a landmark or neighborhood of San Francisco); interpretation (examination of the importance of setting to a piece of literature);
  2. Students will use brainstorming techniques, peer editing, and revision to complete each major paper/project assigned;
  3. Students will use technology in and out of the classroom to present historical information regarding the San Francisco Bay Area that is relevant to the literature or the topic under discussion;
  4. Students will research independently and present clearly and persuasively a point of view regarding some aspect of life in the San Francisco Bay Area;
  5. Students will participate in field trips to relevant destinations;
  6. Students will engage with visitors to the classroom, specifically, local writers and other storytellers, some of whom students will invite;
  7. Students will participate in class discussions of the literature, small group work, reports, and debates;
  8. Students will develop more independence in choosing topics for exploration and developing a point of view regarding the topic, as well as undertaking active investigations of people and places of note in San Francisco;
  9. Students will view documentaries relating to the people or places of the San Francisco Bay Area under study, and incorporate that information into the literature under consideration;
  10. Students will make oral presentations regarding the history and literature of San Francisco, as well as personal experiences

## **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, *précis*, 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:**

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).
6. Develop techniques that promote supportive, polite concern for the speaker, and learn the skills necessary to offer tactful, constructive criticism;
7. 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. UNITS OF INSTRUCTION

- A. Major Units of Instruction:** The following units are arranged chronologically, examining the major eras in the history of San Francisco. Alternatively, units can be organized and designed by theme or literary genre.
1. **Gold Rush:** This unit will explore the City as it was at the time of the California Gold Rush in 1849. Materials include journal writings from the period, photographs, essays regarding the Gold Rush, and Deeanne Gist’s novel, *The Measure of a Lady*. Writings center on the use of setting in the novel, and the background, personalities, and lifestyle of people of the time. (Suggested time: four weeks)
  2. **1906 Earthquake:** This unit will examine the city before, during, and after the cataclysmic event. Materials include personal narratives and journalism from the period, James Delassandro’s *1906: A Novel*, Dennis Smith’s *San Francisco Is Burning*, and Simon Winchester’s non-fiction *A Crack at the Edge of the World*. In particular, the unit will examine the continued characterization of San Francisco as a disreputable and dangerous city, riddled with corruption, on the one hand; and as a resilient, determined city intent on rebuilding, on the other. Writings center on the use of description to create tone (Suggested time: five weeks)
  3. **San Francisco and Immigration:** This unit will examine the city as a site of immigration, particularly from the Far East, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Materials include Dashiell Hammett’s *The Maltese Falcon*, Gus Lee’s *China Boy*, and material related to Angel Island as an entry point for Asian

immigrants, and the relocation of the Japanese during World War II. Writings center on examination of the diversity of culture in the San Francisco Bay Area. (Suggested time: five weeks)

4. **The Beats and the San Francisco Renaissance:** This unit will examine the city's literary renaissance in the 1950s as a result of the merging of the literary community of San Francisco with the East Coast Beats. Materials include the poetry of Lawrence Ferlinghetti, founder of City Lights Bookstore in North Beach in San Francisco, as well as the historic event of the first public reading of Allen Ginsberg's *Howl* in San Francisco, which catapulted the Beats onto the world stage. Writings center on examination of San Francisco as a city of protest and rebellion. (Suggested time: three weeks)
5. **The '60s and the Summer of Love:** This unit will examine the world of San Francisco in the volatile 1960s, including the Protest Movement that has been so vibrant in the Bay Area since the 1960s. Materials include James Fadiman's *The Other Side of Haight* and Tom Wolfe's *Radical Chic & Mau-Mauing the Flak Catchers*. Writings center on responses to the Music and Visual Images of the period. (Suggested time: four weeks.) (Note: This unit can be combined with Unit #4 to form one larger unit.)
6. **San Francisco Today:** This unit will examine the San Francisco of contemporary times, particularly the character of the city and its people. This unit can examine seminal events in the City's history from the 1970s to the present, including: growth of the downtown in the 1970s, the assassination of Mayor George Moscone and Supervisor Harry Milk, the AIDS crisis of the 1980s, the 1989 Earthquake, the DotCom boom and bust of the 1990s, and the changing character of San Francisco neighborhoods. Materials include visits by contemporary San Francisco writers and poets who comment on the city; walking tours of the City, newspapers and magazines dedicated to the San Francisco Bay Area; Vikram Seth's novel in verse *The Golden Gate*, which tracks contemporary relationships in the city; Pat Murphy's *The City, Not Long After*, which imagines a world in which San Francisco must fight for its survival. Student writing centers on student personal reflective narrative that incorporates a contemporary aspect of San Francisco. (Suggested time: four weeks)

## **B. Enduring Understandings:**

Students will understand how fiction writers utilize setting to develop themes  
Students will understand how fiction writers have utilized San Francisco as a setting to examine themes relevant to San Francisco  
Students will understand the variety of genres and styles a literary work might take to convey meaning as to the subject of the work  
Students will understand the literary tradition of San Francisco

Students will understand how the literary tradition of San Francisco fits within San Francisco history

Students will understand that cities, like human beings, have a character

Students will understand the character of the city of San Francisco and how that character has changed at particular points in time

Students will understand the relationship between an individual's personal story and the character of a city

Students will understand major events or trends in society associated with San Francisco

Students will understand the geographic and cultural history of San Francisco

Students will understand how writers use imagination to bring the historical past and the envisioned future to life

Students will understand how the city has changed through history

Students will understand to what degree current San Francisco reflects its past and to what degree San Francisco has been remade

**Essential Questions:**

In what ways does a fiction writer utilize setting to examine themes and characters?

In what ways have fiction writers utilized San Francisco as a setting to examine themes relevant to San Francisco?

In what ways does the genre and style of a literary work convey meaning as to the subject of the work?

How might one characterize the nature of the literary tradition of San Francisco? How does that tradition fit within the historical San Francisco?

Does a city have a character? How might one characterize the city of San Francisco at particular points in time?

In what ways might an individual's personal story help shape or stand in contrast to the perceived character of a city?

What major events or trends in society have been associated with San Francisco? What has been the geographic and cultural history of San Francisco? How has the literature used individual imagination to bring that past to life?

How has the city changed from one point in history to another?

In examining the city today, to what degree does it reflect its past history and to what degree has it been remade?

**C. Knowledge and Skills**

For students to be able to achieve understanding, the student must

1. Read carefully and analytically
2. Take notes during reading
3. Synthesize material to prove an assertion
4. Write reflectively, analytically, and persuasively
5. Engage in the process of writing one essay over an extended period of time

6. Accept and utilize peer and teacher feedback
7. Independently revise work
8. Speak clearly and coherently to present a story or convey information
9. Argue persuasively in regard to a controversial topic
10. Listen carefully to and take notes in response to teacher lectures and student presentations

**D. Student Assessment**

Students will be assessed through a variety of indicators, including homework, group work, class discussion, oral presentations, 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.

**E. Course Assessment**

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

**IV. METHODS AND MATERIALS**

**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. See the introduction to the Upper Division program for specifics on the writing modes.

**B. Literature**

Every teacher of San Francisco Stories 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.

**Potential works as listed below, pending selection and approval:**

**Core Works**

**Novels:**

Castleman, Michael *The Lost Gold of San Francisco*  
Dalessandro, James *1906: A Novel*  
Dana, Richard Henry *Two Years Before the Mast*  
Daniel, David *White Rabbit*  
D'Erasmus, Stacey *A Seahorse Year*  
Dick, Philip K. *The Man in the High Castle*  
Dick, Philip K. *The Transmigration of Timothy Archer*  
Donnelly, Nisa *The Love Songs of Phoenix Bay*  
Dorst, Doug *Alive in Necropolis*  
Fadiman, James *The Other Side of Haight*  
Gold, Glen David *Carter Beats the Devil*  
Greer, Andrew Sean *The Confessions of Max Tivoli*  
Greer, Andrew Sean *The Story of a Marriage*  
Hammett, Dashiell *The Maltese Falcon*  
Kerouac, Jack *Dharma Bums*  
Kerouac, Jack *Subterranean Blues*  
Lee, Gus *China Boy*  
London, Jack *Martin Eden*  
Maupin, Armistead *Tales of the City*  
Moore, Christopher *Bloodsucking Friends*  
Murphy, Pat *The City, Not Long After*  
Norris, Frank *McTeague*  
Payne, C. D. *Frisco Pigeon Mambo*  
Plate, Peter *Fogtown*  
Richmond, Michelle *The Year of Fog*  
Seth, Vikram *The Golden Gate*  
Toland, James *Maleficus*

**Poetry:**

Anthology *The Portable Beat Writer*  
Kerouac, Jack *San Francisco Blues*  
Ferlinghetti, Lawrence Selected poems  
Wilentz, Elias & McDarragh, Fred *The Beat Scene*  
Local Poets Selected poems  
- Addonizio, Kim (*Lucifer at the Starlite*)  
- Haas, Robert  
- Hirshfield, Jane  
- Ryan, Kay

**Non-Fiction**

Eggers, Dave *A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius*

Fitzgerald, Frances *Cities on a Hill*  
Miller, John (editor) *San Francisco Stories: Great Writers on the City*  
Shilts, Randy *The Mayor of Castro Street*  
Smith, Dennis *San Francisco Is Burning*  
Winchester, Simon *A Crack in the Edge of the World*  
Wolfe, Tom *Radical Chic & Mau-Mauing the Flak Catchers*

**Miscellaneous:**

Newspapers & Magazines  
McSweeney's magazine  
Historical texts  
Maps  
Photos  
Research materials

**C. Technology**

In this course, students will utilize online forums for discussion (Moodle), basic word-processing for production and revision of essays, PowerPoint for in-class presentations, photographic equipment for recording of field trips, audio/video equipment in recording interviews.

**D. School to Career Goals**

In this course, students will have ample opportunity to explore the lives of the people of the San Francisco Bay Area. In doing so, students will better understand the career opportunities offered by the City.

**E. Suggested Instructional Time Allocation**

See end of units previously described for suggested time allocation.

**V. ANCHORS OF STUDENT WORK**

Cornerstone assessments include:

1. PowerPoint presentation of some aspect of contemporary San Francisco
2. Extended essay on the use of setting in a novel
3. Analysis of an image, song, or poem
4. Personal narrative paper (based on San Francisco experience)

## **VI. TROUBLE-SHOOTING GUIDE**

This course offers many avenues to the teacher as to texts, activities, field trips, and class presentations. One issue for the teacher to consider is the breadth and depth of materials that can be absorbed by the student and effectively utilized by the teacher. The suggested units earlier in this Course of Study lists several materials one might use with each unit, and the Core Works contains additional readings. The teacher might be well served to circumscribe the focus of each unit.

## **VII. COURSE ASSESSMENT**

This course can be assessed through teacher evaluations of the material and student evaluations of the experience. One unique aspect of this course is the updating necessary to keep pace with the changing “story” of San Francisco. Also, because this course does focus attention on materials relevant to San Francisco and thereby constrains breadth often found in literature classes, a thorough and shared assessment of the book list is particularly important.

## **VII. GENERAL INFORMATION**

- A. San Francisco Stories is a five-credit course open to second-semester sophomores, juniors, and seniors. There are no prerequisites.
- B. The course meets half of the District requirement for two Classical Strand courses.
- C. This course satisfies the U. C. entrance requirement for an upper division English class.

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