

English: Contemporary Voices

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Office Hours in Room 953: By appointment, after school 2:15-3:00

The Constitution of the State of California requires that we provide a public education to you free of charge. Your right to a free education is for all school/educational activities, whether curricular or extracurricular, and whether you get a grade for the activity or class. Subject to certain exceptions, your right to a free public education means that we cannot require you or your family to purchase materials, supplies, equipment or uniforms for any school activity, nor can we require you or your family to pay security deposits for access, participation, materials, or equipment. You may be required to attend a fundraising event; however, if you are unable to raise funds for the event, you will not be prevented from participating in an educational activity. **For more information visit www.sandi.net/staff/studentfees**

Course Description

Contemporary Voices is an introductory course, focusing on literary analysis and *the thesis* essay. Students will be encouraged to define and support core beliefs. Students will be challenged to make thematic, social, and/or stylistic connections between texts, encouraging creativity and critical thinking. **In order to receive additional support, students must read text and write drafts prior to due date (not after the work has been submitted for evaluation).** Students who desire their best must write and read in advance. I highlight passages to support, not complete the process of comprehension. Students who are not earning their desired grade must attend after school tutoring, in the library, when it's offered. Our community of learners is the very best; they will support you with their knowledge AND experience.

Introduction:

This class is designed to introduce students to great contemporary writers and genres. Students will read a variety of authors and works, as they explore the human condition. Through literature, students will strengthen their critical reading and thinking skills, while further developing their own voice.

Parent and Student Communication

I am available period 4 and after school, for conferencing with students and parents, by appointment. Please contact me by e-mail or voice mail regarding any questions, concerns, or information you would like to share. My goal will be to get back to you within two working days.

Our goal is to improve the students' ability in the following areas:

Complex Thinkers:

Students have regular opportunities to exercise complex thinking abilities reading a wide range of challenging classic and contemporary fiction and nonfiction works. Students employ a variety of written **and** oral strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate and appreciate texts.

Effective Communicators:

Students comprehend and employ the stages of the writing process to apply knowledge of language structure and conventions and adjust their written and spoken language to communicate effectively in written and oral work. Students will have regular opportunities to develop effective communication skills, by sharing ideas and interpretations during daily class discussions (both small and large groups).

Responsible, Self-Directed Learners and Workers:

In response to the literature studied, students generate ideas and questions in small and large group discussions. Students will be prepared for class discussions and activities by promptly completing outside of class course readings and assignments.

Involved Citizens (see Student Handbook pg. 3):

Students contribute to the learning of others by making the classroom a safe and tension free environment through respectful and courteous behavior toward their fellow classmates and instructor. By practicing respectful behavior toward others and engaging in the exchange of ideas, students are a part of the learning community. The classroom is a positive environment where the ideas and opinions of others are valued. Through course readings, discussions and written and oral presentations, students develop a greater understanding of themselves and the world around them.

Instructional Methods and Types of Assignments

Grades will be derived from the following types of assignments:

- Intellectual Journal
- In-class writings
- Formal essays
- Improvisations
- Class discussions
- Quizzes and Tests
- Small-group work
- Dramatic monologues

Instructional Practices: Students engage in a variety of learning experiences, including: large and small group discussions: individual, partner and small group work, presentations; and direct instruction.

Types of Writing: Evaluative writing (including passage interpretations; thematic essays; comparative essays; analyses of fiction and nonfiction; timed in-class essays); personal narrative; persuasive writing; reading responses; creative writing; and critique of peer writing. Essay topics include: conflict, imagery, symbolism, foreshadowing, character or plot development (shifts, catalyst identification),

Students cannot retake, revise, or rewrite the midterm or the final. Students can revise one essay/assignment per semester, within one week of having the graded work returned. Resubmitted work can earn a maximum of a B+ letter grade.

Homework: Homework consists of: reading assigned literature and nonfiction texts, preparation for discussions, essay drafts, creative writing. Research and project preparation will be regularly assigned. In addition, students will complete evaluative essays (on-demand and process); personal narrative and persuasive essays. Individual and small group projects and presentations may be assigned.

Discussion: Factors that **may** contribute to a loss of points include: tardies, interrupting, electronics, and food/gum/soda. Students need to see themselves as young scholars. You, the student, are building a personal education that will affect every aspect of your future. Put your cell phones away. During our class sessions, your attention must be focused on the work at hand.

Class participation is part of your grade! Participation, in both class and group discussion, is an important part of this course. Being up-to-date on the reading and writing assignments and participating in class are mandatory. Asking and answering questions, challenging ideas, and offering interpretations are a few of the ways you can contribute to class discussion AND raise your grade. Students are expected to come to class ready to share their thoughts and feelings about the works under investigation. **ALL participation, with the above recommendations, will be considered before final grades are submitted.**

Workshop: Students will have workshop time, throughout the course. This will include opportunities to work independently, conference with me or with other students, in class. Peer editing and evaluating are an essential part of the class, allowing students more opportunities to gauge their progress. If a student has a concern regarding a peer edit or evaluation, then that concern must be addressed **within the week** the assignment was returned.

Scholarship

Work in this course will be assessed with: letter grades, percentages, and point systems, as well as informal observations and conferencing. Most homework will be between 5-20 points, while larger assignments will range from 50-150 points. Students will receive progress reports every 6 weeks. Grades will reflect the quality of text comprehension, written assignments, reading responses, and group and individual projects and presentations. Final percentages will be entered on a traditional grade scale: 100-90%= A; 89.9-80%= B; 79.9-70%= C; 69.9-60%= D; 59.9% or less= F. Scores may be entered as letter grades, points, OR percentages. Equivalent points/percentages will reflect letter grades in Power School. **If a weekly grade reads “missing”, on Power School, but does not have a zero, the assignment has not been graded and is NOT negatively effecting the overall grade. A zero in the grade book is the only factor that could constitute a missing assignment.**

Power School is a progress report. Power School provides an indication of the grade your student is *most likely* to earn. ****ALL final grades will be subject to review.****

If a student turns in an essay that is a summary, or retelling of the plot, the maximum letter grade is a C+. Students must engage in critical analysis, synthesis, and/or persuasive writing genres.

During this course, students will keep an Intellectual Journal/ Notebook as a repository for their thinking throughout the year. The journal will house students' musings, reflections, analyses, ponderings, and classroom notes. Students will receive instruction on the major writing modes used at the high school and university level, which includes: Analytical Essays, Thesis Essays, MLA Research Papers.

All long-term and final draft writing assignment must be space-and-a-half. All other work must be labeled with student name, date and assignment title and typed or neatly written in blue or black ink. Except for textbook and in-class notes, assignments written in pencil or ink other than blue or black will **NOT** be accepted. Work turned in without a name is not given credit.

*****Policy on Late Papers:**

******Not attending to these requirements can easily lower a student's semester grade 10% !!!***
All assignments are due at the beginning of the class period and will not be accepted late, unless prearranged with the teacher. It is the teacher's discretion to allow for late work, due to a non-illness. Students will not be allowed to make up work for an unexcused absence (Pg.5 of the student handbook). **A student who has an excused absence has one week to make-up the missing work, including in-class essays and tests.** The student needs to learn from classmates what assignment(s) are missing. Then, if there are questions, the student can schedule an appointment to meet with me, after school. **The student with an excused absence must staple proof of the excused absence to the assignment via POWER School.** If the work is not turned in, the student will receive a zero. The student needs to be aware of this responsibility. **The responsibility to make sure this work gets completed on time belongs to the student.**

Problems with computers and technology will not be accepted as excuses for not submitting assignments, or for submitting them late. Students may e-mail me completed assignments (alaverty@sandi.net)

This is a semester course. The end of Fall semester is Friday, January 25, 2019. Extra assistance is limited in the month of January and can not be guaranteed. Please address needs, concerns, and support *proactively*, in advance, rather than reactively. Extra credit should not be expected, yet may be requested. My grading period/ "extra" support usually ends three weeks before final grades are due. This is required to give myself adequate time to grade essays and conference with students about final grades (in addition to pacing the curriculum). Grades are not "rounded" to the closest percentage. The same expectations apply to the second semester.

Citizenship evaluations are determined by students' preparation of materials for class, punctuality (see student handbook, school-wide tardy policy, pg.7), class participation, AND interaction with classmates and instructor. To ensure individual student success and create a dynamic and challenging intellectual environment, it is essential students are willing to make a personal commitment to be prepared to participate in class each day. Citizenship will be calculated separately for each 6-week period of the semester. To maintain an atmosphere of academic inquiry, and mutual respect for our studies, and one another, multitasking (working on homework for another class, reading non-class materials, private conversations, etc.) is NOT acceptable and will result in a loss of points in the academic participation grade and a lowered citizenship.

Good citizenship ensures the best environment for learning. Therefore, students are expected to adhere to the following classroom rules:

- Be seated, prepared, and ready to participate with the necessary materials, when the bell rings
- Passes are for emergencies only; take care of personal business, restroom, before class
- Do not talk (have side conversations) while others are talking
- No gum, food or drink (with the exception of water) is to be consumed in the classroom (Pg.8 of the student handbook).
- Hats/headgear worn in the classroom will be confiscated, and returned by administration
- Working on assignments, for other classes, will result in confiscation
- **The honesty policy of Scripps Ranch High School (Pg.28 of the student handbook) will be strictly followed. Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated and will be dealt with swiftly.**

Cell Phone/Pager & Other Electronic Signaling Devices: Cell phones, iPods, and other personal electronic devices must be turned off and put away during class. Students may use these devices on campus before school begins, after school ends, and during the lunch period. These devices must be kept out of sight and turned off during the instructional program. (Passing periods are included as part of the instructional program). Unauthorized use of such devices disrupts the instructional program and distracts from the learning environment. Therefore, unauthorized use is grounds for confiscation of the device by school officials, including classroom teachers. Confiscated devices will be returned to the parent or guardian. Repeated unauthorized use of such devices may lead to disciplinary action.

Code of Ethics:

I consider each student a young adult with a bright future. My goal is to help you reach your "personal best", in the field of arts and letters, creating opportunities for the future to open before you, in terms of scholastic possibilities and adventures. Students are expected to attend my class regularly, be on time, and carry themselves with style and sophistication. Immature behavior has

no place in the classroom, and poor discipline on your part will result in dismissal from the class. It is my expectation all students will read every assigned reading, and come to class prepared to discuss them. **Please do not use Sparknotes (or other such study aids) in my class. Should I discover a student using them (either in lieu of reading or as ideas that show up in your writing), the student may receive a zero on the assignments in question.**

Conference Hours:

I am available period four or after school, by appointment.

Final thoughts:

I have taught English for 20 years. I have worked with amazing students. I look forward to introducing you to great works of literature. Best wishes to each of you!

Course Syllabus: Contemporary Voices
2018-19
Scripps Ranch High School
Mr. Laverty, English, Room 953

Student Name: _____
(print)

If you do not have internet access or a computer, you must inform me now; otherwise, ALL current grades / progress reports will be posted to Power School. It is imperative you access Power School for student's progress. Power School functions as up-to-date communication, regarding all grades.

Please detach and return to me by Friday, August 31. **By signing this, you are acknowledging you have read and understand the attached syllabus.**

Student signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent name(s): _____
(print)

Parent signature(s): _____

Parent(s) contact information:

Home phone: _____ Work phone: _____ Cell: _____

Email: _____

Is there anything you would like to tell me or feel I should know?

Mr. Lavery- English - Late Work Policy

Within the defined guidelines/rules, for late work, accommodations *CAN* be made for students. **However, Late work (without an excused absence is NOT accepted. Thank you.**

Due dates are deadlines; once they are missed, I am not planning on individualize pacing, for “x” number of students. SRHS boasts one of the highest attendance rates, at approximately 95% daily attendance. On average, I have 165 students, which equates to approximately 8 absences a day, or 40 student absences a week. When a student has an excused absence, I have a lot of work to individualize; I am happy to include that job, as one of my responsibilities. Thank you for your understanding. **Please do not ask me to bend the rules for unexcused absences or missing work.**

Thank you.

1. Students, who have an excused absence, have 5 school days to complete the work and submit the work, **WITH** an attached printout of their excused absence (available on PowerSchool).
2. Students can use one “rewrite” per semester. “Rewrites” are not offered in the last 4 weeks of each semester; typically, this is not enough time for me to regrade the work. Thank you. Students, who do not have their work, when it is collected (“lost” but then found in backpack, in another class, in their car, in their printer, at home, etc...), **CAN** use their one “rewrite”. A “rewrite” allows a student a second chance. Each student is given one “rewrite” per semester, to be used on missed work, or work which received a low grade.
3. If a student is organized and can foresee a “busy” schedule ahead, I can offer a “due date” extension. Extensions must be requested 72 hours in advance.
4. Medical emergencies, and other extenuating circumstances, will be thoughtfully, humbly, and empathetically considered. The NO LATE WORK policy is not meant for true emergencies.

Due dates are deadlines, and once they are missed, they can not be made up.

** One, glaring obstacle is when we have: Socratic seminars, whole-class, or small-group presentations or discussions. These assignments can not be individually made up, in isolation. Few, but some evaluations require “group” participation. If a student is absent on one of these days, the student will receive a zero. Respecting all students’ rights, to advance the curriculum, without delay, is important. Daily attendance is important; advance notification, of absences, when possible, is important.

After teaching for 20 years, I’ve had a lot of “special” requests. I am happy to listen. The information, above, is my policy. I will strive to maintain this policy is **fair and equal for all students**.

Please feel free to contact me via e-mail at alaverty@sandi.net, if you wish to clarify any points.

Respectfully,

Mr. Lavery

Student name _____

Student signature and date _____

Parent name _____

Parent signature and date _____