

English I

Mrs. Kirk

Room 127

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Course Overview:

Welcome to English I! This course is required for all 9th grade students. We will explore a variety of literary genres from both classical and modern works, including fiction and non-fiction. Listening, speaking, reading, writing, visual, and technological skills are all emphasized.

My goal in this class is to prepare you for your future classes at North, and ultimately, life after high school. Along the way I hope to, if not pass along the love of literature, culture, writing, etc., generate an appreciation on your part for the events that shape our lives. This class is designed with a variety of different activities to appeal to many different learning styles, interests and intellectual abilities. My hope is that by the end of this year, you will have significantly improved your critical thinking and oral and written communication skills, as well as have a heightened sense of cultural literacy and sensitivity ... oh yeah, and of course ... learn a little about yourself and your world.

Major Readings for Language Arts will include:

The Odyssey
Please Stop Laughing at Me
The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet
To Kill a Mockingbird
Possibly some novels of your choice

Texts:

- Elements of Literature, Holt

To keep costs down and prolong the useful lives of the books, I will make a complete online version of this text available to you. Not only can this version be accessed from any internet connection, but there are also learning activities specific to this e-version that are not found in the hard copy version.

- Various primary and secondary source readings will also be provided for you where applicable

Materials:

In order to optimize your success in this class, I am going to insist that every student come prepared, every day, with the following items:

- Some kind of three-ring binder with tabs - We will spend a great deal of time this year working on organizational skills. I don't care how big the binder, or what brand, but it is crucial you have some method for managing your paperwork. You could also use folders for each class that you have - just make sure one is designated for English class!
- Notebook paper - There will be some writing in this class nearly every day. It is imperative that you have something to write on. You could also use a spiral-bound notebook. Just make sure you have something to write on!
- Writing utensils - Either pencil or pen, with blue or black ink, are permissible. Any assignment submitted in any other color, or by any other medium (marker, crayon, blood, etc.) will not be accepted.
- Planner - In order to be as organized as you can be, it is important that you have some method to track your assignments and other school and daily obligations. The school store will be selling low-cost planning books, but by no means am I requiring you to purchase something, as long as you have *something*. This could also be an app on your phone or a spiral notebook that you write down a to-do list in. I know you *THINK* you are able to remember everything, but please trust me, life is much easier if you have some way to keep track of your responsibilities. 😊
- Three-hole punch – while I will try to punch holes in your papers for you, I may not always get to it...

Please have available at home (or to bring to class as needed):

- Markers
- Colored Pencils
- Crayons
- Tape/glue
- Construction paper
- Poster board

Grading:

Each semester will be weighted in the following manner:

- 1st Quarter: 40%
- 2nd Quarter: 40%
- Final Exam/Project: 20%

The categories in which each student will be evaluated are:

- Exams (Tests & Quizzes)
- Assignments
- Projects
- Presentations
- In-class writing
- Journals
- Formal papers

Homework

No "D" Policy - In high school, there should be very few excuses for receiving D's as grades. In most cases, it is not because it is the best a student can do, but rather it is because the student is putting forth "D" effort. Keep the PowerPoint presentation in your mind – do YOU want to have the surgeon who got poor grades in medical school to be the one cutting you open some day???

Here is how my class is different from other typical high school classes. If you turn in your assignment on time, you have the opportunity to rewrite that assignment if you receive a grade lower than what you want. You may rewrite assignments until the end of each unit (longer extensions for end-of-unit projects and papers, which will probably be extended until the end of the quarter, as that's when your grades are "locked" and go on your grade card). You may continue to rewrite assignments as many times as you (or I) want during each unit. This allows you to learn from your mistakes and become a stronger writer. It also allows you to take some risks with your writing without your grade suffering. That being said, your grade is in your hands!

Assignments - There will be times when I will assign work for students to turn in to me for assessment purposes. Please turn in your work on time. Feel free to talk to me if you have questions or concerns.

Absences - If you have an absence that is excused by the attendance office, you will have as many days as you missed to complete all missed work without penalty. You may not make-up assignments missed due to an unexcused absence. MAKE-UP WORK IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY. To facilitate this, all assignments are clearly posted in the classroom and on the class website. You can find a calendar with due dates for assignments, information about what we did each day in class, as well as links to download assignments in case you lose them or are absent on my teacher website <http://www.wcsoh.org/olc/teacher.aspx?s=4649>. I will also post handouts on the same website (you will need to choose the correct classroom on the left side of the screen). Or, you can always email me at kirkj@wcsoh.org or contact me via Facebook (Jen Kirk) or Twitter (@kirk1109). I may also be using Google Classroom this year, in which case, I will provide you with more information when/if that occurs.

I will not chase after you, nor worry if you choose not to get it from me. As high-schoolers, I do not feel that it is unreasonable to expect that students take ownership in and responsibility for their education. I have provided you with multiple means of contacting me, so please use them!

Extra Credit - In my experience, students usually do not receive the kind of grade they hope for because they fail to either turn in required work or put forth the requisite time studying the material. It is my strong belief that it is unfair to those students who have been diligent about their responsibilities to offer extra-credit to those students who have not. Therefore, I do NOT offer any extra-credit on an individual basis. However, because I understand that sometimes students legitimately struggle with certain material, I do permit students to rewrite assignments to improve their writing and their grade.

PowerSchool, PowerTeacher, PowerParent - Students and their parents have the opportunity to track their grades and check on missed assignments from any internet capable computer. Please see me if you have any questions...

Class Policies:

Unlike the rest of this syllabus, I would like to keep this short and sweet. Students are expected to follow the school's Code of Student Conduct. You are expected to reflect the maturity and responsibility that will be demanded of you now and in the future. No inappropriate actions will be tolerated. Other than that, I have four standing rules:

1. Time is short and we have a lot to cover so we will always strive to start on-time. It is my belief that by accommodating late-comers, I would be, in essence, rewarding them for being late. To that end, you must be in the classroom before the tardy bell rings. At that time, I will close the door and you will be marked as absent and/or tardy to class. If you are late to class without an excuse from another staff member or me, you will receive a warning. The third unexcused tardy will result in a detention to be served during your lunch period. Each additional tardy after that will warrant another detention. Excessive tardies will result in parent communication and/or referral to the front office.

2. Falsely claiming another's work as your own is called plagiarism. I consider it to be the **gravest** educational offense, and will deal with it harshly. At the least, you will receive zero credit for that particular assignment. Seriously, don't do it.
3. I expect you to come to class prepared - every day. This means you have your notebook, relevant texts, paper, a writing utensil, etc. Once again, I do not believe it is too much to ask from you as high-schoolers to start to take responsibility for your learning.
4. The foundation of the Warrior Way is built on the idea that RESPECT IS A TWO-WAY PROPOSITION. Please show all of your colleagues and me the same consideration that you would wish to receive, and we will reciprocate. I do NOT tolerate disrespect towards my students or myself.

Conferences:

This course should be somewhat challenging, but not overwhelming, tedious, boring, or anxiety-producing. If you have a problem, it's best to talk it over with me. Don't let my forthrightness frighten you. Most of the time we can find a solution and the problem will pass. Don't put it off. Talk with me. I think you'll find that I'm very laid back and will help you the best I can. I'll be available in the classroom before school, during 5th and 7th period, and after school. My door is always open, and I'm happy for you to visit with a question, a problem, a joke, or even a good debate.

Communication:

It is vital that the student, parent and teacher all work together towards the goal of a student's education. I passionately believe that communication plays a vital role in reaching that goal. To that end, students and parents can please feel free to contact me at their leisure.

The very best way to get in touch with me is through e-mail. I have voice mail at school, but because I don't have a flashing beacon alerting me to a voice-mail entry, I cannot promise that I will hear your message the same day. I am, however, constantly in touch with my e-mail accounts and will always try to respond the same day. My email address is listed at the top of this syllabus.

If you do not have reliable internet access, you may still leave a voice mail and I will get back to you as soon as I get your message.

Final Thoughts:

I am really excited to start this school year and share some great experiences with you. Please know that I am here to help you, so don't be afraid to talk to me! ☺



Sign up for important updates from Ms. Kirk.

Get information for 2nd Period English I right on your phone—not on handouts.

Pick a way to receive messages for 2nd Period English I:

- A** If you have a smartphone, get push notifications.

On your iPhone or Android phone, open your web browser and go to the following link:

rmd.at/kirk2

Follow the instructions to sign up for Remind. You'll be prompted to download the mobile app.

A diagram of a smartphone screen displaying the Remind sign-up interface. At the top, the URL "rmd.at/kirk2" is shown. Below it, the title "Join 2nd Period English I" is centered. There are three input fields: "Full Name" with a sub-label "First and Last Name", "Phone Number or Email Address" with the placeholder "(555) 555-5555", and a third empty field at the bottom.

- B** If you don't have a smartphone, get text notifications.

Text the message @kirk2 to the number 81010.

If you're having trouble with 81010, try texting @kirk2 to (704) 209-9973.

A diagram of a smartphone screen displaying the text message sign-up interface. It shows a "To" field with the number "81010" and a "Message" field containing "@kirk2".

Don't have a mobile phone? Go to rmd.at/kirk2 on a desktop computer to sign up for email notifications.

Parents,

This syllabus is a little longer than most you may see in high school. I've found that by making my expectations explicit at the beginning of the class, fewer confusions and problems arise over the course of the year.

To that end, to ensure that all students and their parents have read and understand this syllabus, I am asking your help in filling out the portion below and returning the whole page to me.

Student's name:

Parent or guardian:

Daytime phone: _____ Evening phone: _____

Parent e-mail:

Please sign below to indicate that you and your child have both read and understand the syllabus and return this page to Mrs. Kirk by Monday, August 22, 2016..

Student signature

Parent signature

