

## Course Description

This course focuses on high interest social issues that impact our modern society. Students will explore a variety of topics by viewing modern documentaries and reading nonfiction articles, books, and essays. The class writing will focus on creating and defending an argument and other expository modes helpful for college writing. Students will also have the opportunity to research an independent social issue.

## Instructional Activities will vary, but may include

- Documentary Viewing
- Assigned Reading
- Writing
- Lecture
- Group work
- Presentations/Speeches
- Discussions
- Vocabulary and Grammar
- Independent Research

## Possible Texts and Films

- *Patterns for College Writing* Textbook
- *50 Essays* Textbook
- Selected articles and essays
- *Sentenced Home*
- *One Day on Earth*
- *What's Your Calling*
- *Craigslist Joe*
- *20 feet from Stardom*
- *Bully*
- *Miss Representation*
- *American Dreamers*
- *Bee People*
- *Stories we Tell*
- *Too Fat to Live*
- *The Big Lie*
- *Hot Coffee*
- Other documentaries TBA
- News reports as applicable

## Standards Addressed

Documentary and Social Issues will be assessing the common core standards for English which include the subcategories of: writing, reading literary texts, reading informational texts, speaking and listening, and language. For more information please consult pinnacle or <http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy>.

## Grading and Assessment

Student grades will be calculated from summative assessments – examples include tests, labs, speeches, projects, or other measures of student learning. Coursework intended as practice for learning may be assigned and recorded in Pinnacle with a 0% weighting – examples include in-class assignments, homework, participation, and other learning activities.

## Grading Categories

A = 90%-100%

B = 80%-89.9%

C = 70%-79.9%

D = 60%-69.9%

No Credit = 59.9% or Below

Note:

- Grades will not be rounded
- You're responsible for keeping track of your own grade on Pinnacle.

Reading/Writing 20%

Film Journals/Notes 20%

Speaking/Presenting 20%

In-Class Activities 20%

Academic Behavior 20%

*Academic behavior includes coming to class prepared, participating in classroom activities, citizenship, adherence to class and school rules, respect of classmates and teacher*

## Language Arts Departmental Grading Policy

- Due dates are important. Only work that is turned in at the beginning of the class period on the day it is due can receive up to 100%
- Late work will only be accepted ONE class period after the due date and will not be accepted after that.
- Late work can only earn up to 80%
- Students who demonstrate a pattern of late or missing work will be assigned to mentoring and after school tutoring.

The main tip to passing this class and having fun is to:

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**Come to class prepared. Do your best work. Turn your assignments in on time.**

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If you follow these guidelines, you will succeed in this class. However, I know that life sometimes gets messy, so I'll present a few possible complications and their solutions:

1. *What if you're absent when an assignment is due or assigned?* Easy solution: email it to me or send it with a friend. If you are absent when something is assigned **check pinnacle in the narrative tab**.
2. *What if you miss a due date?* Get the assignment to me as quickly as possible or contact me to explain why it is late. **Don't skip class** if you have failed to complete an assignment because then you will have the lower grade for the missed assignment, and you will also miss what the next assignment is. The best thing is to come and talk to me right away so that we can figure out what the best course of action might be.
3. *What if you're struggling with an assignment?* Talk to me. I'll help you ... that's what teachers are for! It might be possible to work out an extension, but the arrangements must be made ahead of time.

### **Plagiarism Policy**

The school Plagiarism Policy will be followed in this course. A first offense will result in a zero on the assignment and inclusion of the offense in the student's file. A second offense will result in a zero in the class.

### **Attendance and Tardy Policy**

**Attendance is mandatory. It is important not just to be present in body, but in mind, and to actively participate in the daily activities.** An unexcused absence or three tardies, according to school policy, will result in a lunch detention. Every subsequent absence or tardy will result in a detention. Multiple detentions may lead to after school work crew.

### **Class Rules & Expectations**

- You are expected to be in the room, ready for class when the bell rings.
- The room is cold so please come prepared as I won't let you leave to get a coat or more clothing
- We will be watching films quite a bit so you are welcome to bring a blanket to wrap up in and then keep it in a cupboard in the theatre, but if you don't take it with you at the end of class it will be donated to Goodwill or put in the props department.
- Phones and other electronics must be kept turned off and put away during class.

### **Materials Needed**

The following items need to be brought to **every** class:

- Pencil or pen
- Paper you are working on at the time, book you are reading etc. Always have something to do!
- A three prong/ two pocket folder filled with lined paper (color to be assigned in class)
- A binder or other place to keep papers neat and wrinkle free.

This course will require a strong commitment to attendance, participation, and hard work. My goal is not to overwhelm you, but to challenge you in regard to what you believe you can accomplish. If, at any time, you feel that you are struggling, overwhelmed, or falling behind, I encourage you to meet with me so that we can find a solution. In addition, I expect that we will treat each other with a sense of respect and compassion. I am happy to have you in class, and am looking forward to our year together