Creative Writing
Curriculum
Gr. 11/12

“There’s nothing to writing. All you do is sit down at a typewriter and open a vein.”

~ Walter Wellesley “Red” Smith

2007
New Milford High School
New Milford, Connecticut
New Milford Board of Education

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Creative Writing Curriculum

Introduction

Creative Writing is a course for students who enjoy writing in a variety of forms and aspire to improve their ability to create poetry, short stories, and play scripts. Units on developing the writer’s voice, understanding poetic forms, creating dialogue, and using the elements of fiction to write short stories that vary in length will help students develop a mature writing style and display their writing in both student publications and commercial arenas. Students are expected to complete a literary magazine of their work for the final project. All senior fall electives include “writing the college essay” assignment and instruction. Students are also required to complete the summer reading assignments.

Students read, discuss, write, and critique a variety of genres in creative writing. The course stresses revision using the basic elements of good writing while introducing students to the writer’s workshop experience. In addition to analyzing published pieces, the course emphasizes revision and exploration of genres outside of the student’s comfort zone, ensuring students are exposed to fiction, poetry, drama, and creative non-fiction. Students in the fall section of the course will also complete a unit on writing the college admissions essay.

For their final exam, students create a personal edition of a literary magazine using their best writing samples from the course. These samples must include a variety of genres that have been revised, work-shopped, and polished. In addition, students must include a series of mini-essays that reflect on their writing.

Through writing, critiquing, and interpreting literature in a variety of genres, students will be able to answer essential questions for each of the units of study. Instructional units on craft used to teach Creative Writing are described in this curriculum. These units are interchangeable in terms of the order of study. While the units are listed in terms of craft, the teacher may also choose to teach Creative Writing through a thematic design or perhaps by genre. These approaches would include skills taught in the independent units by using reading selections that relate to a common theme (like love, for example) or by a common genre (like poetry, for example). Thematic units or genre units may be taught in any order. The teacher may choose whichever approach appeals to him or her to fulfill Creative Writing requirements.
Objectives

As a result of successfully completing Creative Writing, students will have improved their ability to create poetry, short stories, creative nonfiction, and drama. As this course offers them the opportunity to express themselves in a creative way through words, students will begin developing an individual writing voice. For some, developing a greater understanding of poetic forms is the reward. For others, learning to create engaging and meaningful dialogue is the key. In addition, students will have worked toward a more mature writing style, which leads many to success in publication, and the completion of a unit on writing the college admissions essay often leads to admission to a college. The final project, the creation of a literary magazine to showcase their work, is the capstone effort of this course and a source of pride for many students, because it offers a tangible way to highlight their growth from the beginning to the end of the course.

Essential Course Questions

- How does the author use the elements of the short story to write the short story?
- How do literary themes, though they vary across cultures and times, relate to one’s personal experience as well as humankind’s universal experience?
- How are literary themes reflected in other disciplines?
- How does one’s own experience affect the meaning of a story?
- How do current events/trends affect literary development?
- How is the cultural environment, may include author’s life, reflected in the story?
- How does knowledge of different critical approaches help the ability to understand texts?
- How does writing improve literary analysis, understanding, and self-reflection?
- How do oral interpretation and expression improve reading and analysis?

Student Expectations

Creative Writing provides myriad opportunities for students to meet the following New Milford High School academic expectations and New Milford Common Core requirements:
• analyze, evaluate, and make connections between and among a variety of texts, and relate those texts to their lives and the lives of others.
• recognize literary and grammatical conventions and devices, understand their roles in the conveyance of meaning, and their standard usage.
• write to learn, reflect, respond and communicate ideas.
• communicate ideas orally, artistically, and creatively.
• respond critically and reflectively on the criticism and analysis of literary critics and peers.
• maintain a portfolio of writing and activities performed in this course.
• demonstrate skills using technology (PowerPoint, Internet research, word processing, blogging, bulletin boards, wikis, etc.).

Outcomes

In accordance with the New Milford Common Core of Learning, students should:

• be competent, effective, and adaptable communicators.
• apply reading skills that meet school standards, as well as for daily living and enjoyment.
• write clearly, correctly, and expressively.
• view literature in order to evaluate ideas and be critical consumers.
• speak fluently about ideas and information as well as design and deliver oral presentations.
• listen and evaluate information presented to them and listen to each other.
• pursue language arts for lifelong learning, work, and enjoyment.

In accordance with the NMHS Academic Expectations for Student Learning, students should be able to:

• acquire and demonstrate effective communication skills in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing. (Exp. 1)
• acquire and demonstrate the skills necessary to use technology to enhance learning. (Exp. 3)
• Develop an understanding of the arts as part of the human experience. (Exp. 7)
• Develop and demonstrate creative and technical skills in the arts, as well as the ability to recognize the artistic achievements of others. (Exp. 8)
**Performance Standards**

Students will be able to demonstrate competence in accordance with performance standards taken from The Connecticut State Board of Education’s Position Statement on Language Arts, Connecticut’s Common Core of Learning, and the Connecticut Language Arts Framework, 2006, and New Milford High School Student Expectations. Students will be able to:

- apply strategies to comprehend, interpret, and evaluate a variety of texts. (1.11-12.4)
- apply their understanding of textual features. (1.11-12.8)
- apply collaborative skills to elaborate on concepts being addressed and to describe processes used in achieving results. (1.11-12.14)
- demonstrate command of mechanics: usage, sentence structure, punctuation, usage, and variety of spelling skills, and use effective strategies and appropriate resources for proofreading and editing in more complex forms. (3.11-12.1)
- read, view, and listen to key works of contemporary literature and create responses that critique the works’ principal elements. (4.11-12.2)
- determine criteria that define literary value and apply them to texts. (4.11-12.3)
- explain how literary conventions and devices are used by an author to create a style. (4.11-12.5)
- read, listen to, and view literary texts and identify and explain, with greater understanding of the human experiences they convey. (4.11-12.6)
- interpret and respond to their aesthetic reactions to literary works. (4.11-12.7)

**Key Terms and Concepts**

- Point of View
  1. Theme
  2. Plot
  3. Narrator/point of view
  4. Character/Characterization
  5. Conflict
  6. Language/Techniques
  7. Setting/atmosphere
  8. Tone
9. Style
10. The place of the author in the text

- Literary criticism, including:
  1. Formalist/New Critical
  2. Biographical
  3. Historical/new historicism
  4. Psychological
  5. Mythological (including archetypal)
  6. Sociological/ Marxist
  7. Feminist/gender studies
  8. Reader-response
  9. Ecocritical

- Short story origins/history/movements, including:
  1. Myth
  2. Legend
  3. Allegory
  4. Parable
  5. Fable
  6. Fairy tale
  7. Folk tale
  8. Tall tale
  9. Romance
  10. Realism
     - Local color
     - Naturalism
     - Magical realism
     - New realism
  11. Minimalism
  12. Modernism
  13. Post-modernism
  14. Hypertext fiction
  15. Genre fiction/formula fiction

**Units of Study**

1. Setting & Description
2. Elements of Fiction
3. Thematic Study
4. Modern Literary Movements
5. Critical Approaches
6. Literature and the Arts
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Setting &amp; Description</th>
<th>Approximate Time Frame: 1-2 weeks</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Essential Questions:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• How does setting help develop and establish the mood of a piece of writing?</td>
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<td>• How does “showing” and not “telling” strengthen writing?</td>
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<td>• How do sensory details create vivid images in the reader’s mind?</td>
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<td><strong>Suggested Readings:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Poetry</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. “Early in the Morning” by Li-Young Lee</td>
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<td>3. “The Colonel” by Carolyn Forche</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Fiction</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. “The Pie” by Gary Soto</td>
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<td>2. “Cotton Pickers” by Maya Angelou</td>
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<td>3. “I Stand Here Ironing” by Tillie Olsen</td>
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<td>• Drama</td>
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<td>1. Opening Scene of “A Streetcar Named Desire” by Tennessee Williams</td>
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<td>2. Opening Scene of “Bus Stop” by William Inge</td>
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<td>3. Opening Scene of “Good Will Hunting” script by Ben Affleck and Matt Damon</td>
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<td>• Creative Nonfiction</td>
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<td>1. “Beyond the Formaldehyde Curtain” by Jessica Mitford</td>
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<td>2. “Reflections” by Kenny Jackson</td>
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<td>3. “The Bridge” by Jason Holland</td>
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<td><strong>Sample Activities:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Students read a selection from the suggested reading list to determine the setting of the piece and explain how that setting contributes the mood of the piece.</td>
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<td>• Find one line in a suggested reading in which the author is “showing” the reading something and write a sentence that interprets what the author wanted to “tell” the reader.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Students highlight or circle every sense used in a suggested reading, and determine whether or not these senses contribute to an overall image or theme.</td>
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Sample Writing Assignments:

Using either fiction, poetry, drama, or creative nonfiction:

• Write a paragraph similar to ad copy from a travel brochure for two vacation spots. One should be popular and one should be completely unpopular. Each should use words to convey a clear mood.
• Complete the following sentence: Seven days ago, I ____________. Now, no one will talk to me. Then, on a separate piece of paper, write a piece that hints at what happened.
• Write about a sound that just won’t go away. The piece must include sensory language from at least three senses.

Sample Outcomes:

• Students are able to explain how the description and setting contribute to the mood of a piece of writing.
• Students write pieces that “show” and don’t “tell” information to become stronger writers.
• Students recognize that sensory details enhance a reader’s experience.

2. Metaphor & Symbol

Approximate Time Frame: 1 to 2 weeks

Essential Questions:

• How does the author use the elements of the short story to write the short story?
• How does writing improve literary analysis, understanding, and self-reflection?
• How do oral interpretation and expression improve reading and analysis?

Standards:

• demonstrate an understanding of literary and aesthetic appreciation of text, authors’ style, and textual features. (1.11-12.3)
• apply their understanding of textual features. (1.11-12.8)
• read, view, and listen to key works of contemporary literature and create responses that critique the works’ principal elements. (4.11-12.2)
• explain how literary conventions and devices are used by an author to create a style. (4.11-12.5)

Suggested Readings:

• Poetry
1. “A Woman Is Not a Potted Plant” by Alice Walker
2. “Harlem (A Dream Deferred)” by Langston Hughes
3. “A Silken Tent” by Robert Frost

- Fiction
  1. “The Cathedral” by Raymond Carver
  2. “Hills Like White Elephants” by Ernest Hemingway
  3. “The Maypole of Merrymount” by Nathaniel Hawthorne

- Drama
  1. “The End of the Duel” (Jorge Luis Borges)
  2. “Hills Like White Elephants” (Ernest Hemingway)
  3. “Sonny’s Blues” (James Baldwin)

- Creative Nonfiction
  1. “A Party Down at the Square” (Ralph Ellison)
  2. “Roman Fever” (Edith Wharton)
  3. The Secret Sharer (novella) (Joseph Conrad)

**Sample Activities:**
- Define terminology and apply during a close, guided reading.
- In small groups students analyze how the author emphasizes particular elements for his or her intended effect and purpose in a story.
- Students create individual charts to track “elements” for selected stories and write a response to the effect certain elements have in developing the story.

**Sample Writing Assignments:**
- Define terminology and apply during a close, guided reading.
- In small groups students analyze how the author emphasizes particular elements for his or her intended effect and purpose in a story.
- Students create individual charts to track “elements” for selected stories and write a response to the effect certain elements have in developing the story.

**Sample Outcomes:**
- Students are able to effectively discuss orally and in writing the elements of fiction and how they work in varied short stories.
- Students recognize the importance of the elements in defining an author’s style and voice.
- Students can write a short story that includes elements studied.
### 3. Theme

**Approximate Time Frame:** 2 to 3 Weeks

**Essential Questions:**
- How do literary themes, though they vary across cultures and times, relate to one’s personal experience as well as universal human experiences?
- How are literary themes reflected in other disciplines?
- How does one’s own experience affect the meaning of a story?
- How does writing improve literary analysis, understanding, and self-reflection?
- How do oral interpretation and expression improve reading and analysis?

**Standards:**
- read, listen to, and view literary texts and identify and explain, with greater understanding of the human experiences they convey. (4.11-12.6)
- use prior knowledge and experience to examine, analyze, and evaluate text as they formulate an enhanced critical stance. (1.11-12.2)
- explore and defend multiple interpretations of fiction. (1.11-12.13)

**Suggested Readings:**
Teachers may select from many stories that share broad themes or use excerpts from longer works:

- **Poetry**
  1. “The Red Convertible” (Louise Erdrich)
  2. “The Sky is Gray” (Ernest J. Gaines)
  3. “Shooting the Elephant” (essay) (George Orwell)

- **Fiction**
  - “Silverwater” by Amy Bloom
  - “Bernice Bobs Her Hair” (F. Scott Fitzgerald)
  - “The Dummy” (Susan Sontag)

- **Drama**
  - “The Chrysanthemums” (John Steinbeck)
  - “The Moths” (Helena María Viramontes)
  - “The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky” (Stephen Crane)

- **Creative Nonfiction**
o “The Yellow Wallpaper” (Charlotte Perkins Gilman)
  o “Oranges” (poem) (Gary Soto)
  o “What We Talk About When We Talk About Love” (Raymond Carver)

Unit can also be supplemented with films, narrative poetry, songs, and other media.

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<th>Sample Activities:</th>
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<td>• Students keep a journal of their reactions and reflections to the reading</td>
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<td>• Students explore recurring themes and write a formal (expository, argumentative, or narrative) essay by comparing the variations on themes in several stories.</td>
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<td>• Students chart and discuss thematic similarities across one author’s body of work.</td>
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<td>• Students write a descriptive essay describing how the theme studied has been experienced in their own lives.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample Outcomes:</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Students draw connections between stories and their themes and their own (and others’) cultures and times, relating the literature to their personal experience as well as humankind’s universal experience.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Students understand the thematic universalities common across art forms/media.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Students recognize the influence of the reader’s own experience in determining the meaning of a story.</td>
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<td>• Students understand and can articulate how literature mirrors human experience.</td>
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<th>4. Style &amp; Tone</th>
<th>Approximate Time Frame: 2 to 3 Weeks</th>
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<tr>
<td>Essential Questions:</td>
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<tr>
<td>• What are characteristic of each literary movement and how are they used in the text?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• How do events/trends affect literary development?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• How is the cultural environment or actions in the author’s life presented in the story?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• What types of research can be used to understand literary techniques?</td>
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<th>Standards:</th>
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<tr>
<td>• evaluate, think divergently, and respond critically with greater comprehension. (1.11-12.3)</td>
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</table>
• apply strategies to comprehend, interpret, and evaluate a variety of texts. (1.11-12.4)
• apply collaborative skills to elaborate on concepts being addressed and to describe processes used in achieving results. (1.11-12.14)

**Suggested Readings:**

- **Romance:**
  - “The Birthmark” and “Young Goodman Brown” (Nathaniel Hawthorne)
  - “The Mortal Immortal” (Mary Shelley)
  - “The Lady of the Manor of Longeville, or a Woman’s Revenge” (Donatien Alphonse Francois Compte de Sade)

- **Realism**
  - **Overview**
    - “The Death of Ivan Ilych” (Leo Tolstoy)
    - “The Swimmer” (John Cheever)
    - “Araby” (James Joyce)
  - **Local Color**
    - Mark Twain, Kate Chopin, and William Faulkner stories
    - “Damballah” (John Edgar Wideman)
  - **Naturalism**
    - Stephen Crane or Jack London stories

- **Modernism**
  - **Power of the unconscious**
    - “The Grave” (Katherine Anne Porter)
  - **Point of view/distorted experiences**
    - “Kew Garden” (Virginia Woolf)
    - “Axolotl” (Julio Cortazar)
    - “A Rose for Emily” (William Faulkner)
  - **Transnational focus**
    - Ernest Hemingway, Katherine Anne Porter Porter, and W. Somerset Maugham stories
  - **Experimentation**
    - “The Dummy” (Susan Sontag)
    - “Metamorphosis” (Franz Kafka)

- **Post-modernism**
  - David Foster Wallace, John Barth, Donald Barthelme, and Joyce Carol Oates stories

- **Magical Realism**
  - “A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings” (Gabriel Garcia Marquez)

- **New Realism**
  - “Cathedral” (Raymond Carver)
  - “What Was Mine” (Ann Beattie)
Sample Activities:
• Conduct a cultural case study of an author and his/her works. Use resources like pictures, letters written by and to the author, newspaper accounts, historical events, songs, film, and other works published during the same time period. Project should explain how an author was influenced and reflected his/her time period. Project should be a portfolio composed of multi-genre sources.
• Choose one movement/technique and apply the definitions to selected works. Write a paper showing how those particular works are representative of that particular technique.
• Conduct a mock interview with an author. Role-play the interview with a partner using a question and answer format. The topic should focus on how the author used a particular technique (realism, etc.) in specific works. What influenced his/her writing?
• Write an original short story (or one-act play) modeling one of the literary movements/techniques studied in this unit.

Sample Outcomes:
• Students identify works within a particular literary movement and relate that to the techniques used.
• Students gain a broader perspective by understanding what influences writers and how those influences affect writing.
• Students understand that writing styles evolve and improve their critical understanding of works of literature.

5. Plot

Approximate Time Frame: 3 to 4 Weeks

Essential Questions:
• How does knowledge of different critical approaches help the ability to understand texts?
• How does text interpretation change by looking at the text through different critical lenses?
• Explain why there are so many types of critical perspectives and why this is healthy and productive for literature.

Standards:
• interpret and respond to their aesthetic reactions to literary works. (4.11-12.7)
• read and respond to classic and contemporary literature; identify, analyze, and evaluate to determine political and social ideas that characterize those works. (4.11-12.8)
• analyze the various factors that may have influenced authors and
take a critical stance on the connections between author and text. (4.11-12.9)
- determine, access, and evaluate the primary and secondary sources appropriate to the task and integrate and elaborate upon information effectively in a final project. (2.11-12.3)

**Suggested Readings:**
- Reader-Response Approach
  - Since this approach allows the reader to determine meaning, any author/story can be used.
- Formalist/New Critical Approach
  - Since this approach uses only the text to form an interpretation, any author/story can be used.
- Biographical Approach
  - Ernest Hemingway, Sherman Alexie, and Raymond Carver stories
- Historical/New Historical Approach
  - “Patriotism” (Yukio Mishima)
  - Tim O’Brien stories
  - “The Death of Ivan Ilych” (Leo Tolstoy)
- Psychological Approach
  - “The Grave” (Katherine Anne Porter)
  - “A Telephone Call” (Dorothy Parker)
  - William Faulkner, Tillie Olsen, D.H. Lawrence, and James Joyce stories
- Mythological/Archetypal Approach
  - “Gimpel the Fool” (Isaac Bashevis Singer)
  - “A Worn Path” (Eudora Welty)
  - “The Point” (Charles D’Ambrosio)
- Sociological/Marxist Approach
  - “And of Clay We Are Created” (Isabel Allende)
  - “Lullaby” (Leslie Marmon Silko)
  - “Spunk” (Zora Neale Hurston)
- Feminist/Gender Studies
  - “I’m Working on My Charm” (Dorothy Allison)
  - “Tiny, Smiling Daddy” (Mary Gaitskill)
  - “Boys and Girls” (Alice Munro)
- Ecocritical
  - “Storyteller” (Leslie Marmon Silko)
  - “The Chrysanthemums” (John Steinbeck)
  - “Newton” (Jeanette Winterson)
- Structuralist/Post-structuralist
  - “The Story of an Hour” (Kate Chopin)
  - “Yellow Woman” (Leslie Marmon Silko)
Sample Activities:
- Students write a persuasive paper arguing why interpretation through critical approaches enhances understanding of literature.
- Each student selects one critical “lens” of his/her choice to analyze a story, which the teacher has assigned to the class. In groups, students compare the results of their different critical approaches. Present results in graphic form and share with group peers.
- Apply one critical approach to a story, work of art, poem, architecture or any other different type of creative expression. Find the common characteristics and write a “report” of your findings.
- Critique the critics. Respond to one or two critics with whom you agree or disagree with in terms of their critical approach to a work or works.

Sample Outcomes:
- Students express and support their position on how critical approaches enhance their understanding of literature.
- Students learn how different approached applied to the same story can still be valid.
- Students synthesize secondary criticisms to learn how to model critical writing techniques.

6. Dialogue

Approximate Time Frame: 2 to 3 Weeks

Essential Questions:
- How do literary themes, though they vary across cultures and times, relate to one’s personal experience as well as humankind’s universal experience?
- How are literary themes reflected in other disciplines?

Standards:
- interpret and respond to their aesthetic reactions to literary works. (4.11-12.7)
- analyze and evaluate language used in both written and oral tasks for its suitability for audience and purpose and apply appropriately. (3.11-12.3)
- use the most effective process to create and present a written, oral, or visual piece at a mastery level. (2.11-12.4)

Suggested Readings:
- Anton Chekov stories and one-act play The Bear
- Sherman Alexie stories, poetry, and film Smoke Signals
• Raymond Carver stories and Hopper paintings
• James Baldwin stories, Langston Hughes poetry, and Charlie Parker/other jazz

Sample Activities:
• Students research and select art works (painting, sculpture, and/or music) they find relates to a particular story
• Students prepare a PowerPoint presentation that shows the art works and explain the relationship to the short story or series of stories by one author
• Students create a work of original art they believe is representative of the story(s) and present the work to the class
• Students write a song or poem taking one theme from the story(s) they read
• Students research culture, period from which the story(s) are written and connect the author’s style to the trend/fashion during that period
• While reading the story, students keep a journal in which they draw, illustrate, paste pictures, or artifacts that represent their response to the story

Sample Outcomes:
• Students articulate the connection and relationships between writing and the arts
• Students demonstrate an understanding of relationships between works through presentation to an audience
• Students discover that a work of fiction can bring meaning to their lives beyond the text extend

7. Shapes & Forms

Approximate Time Frame: 2 to 3 Weeks

Essential Questions:
• How do literary themes, though they vary across cultures and times, relate to one’s personal experience as well as humankind’s universal experience?
• How are literary themes reflected in other disciplines?

Standards:
• interpret and respond to their aesthetic reactions to literary works. (4.11-12.7)
• analyze and evaluate language used in both written and oral tasks for its suitability for audience and purpose and apply appropriately. (3.11-12.3)
Suggested Readings:
- Anton Chekov stories and one-act play The Bear
- Sherman Alexie stories, poetry, and film Smoke Signals
- Raymond Carver stories and Hopper paintings
- James Baldwin stories, Langston Hughes poetry, and Charlie Parker/other jazz

Sample Activities:
- Students research and select art works (painting, sculpture, and/or music) they find relate to a particular story
- Students prepare a PowerPoint presentation that shows the art works and explain the relationship to the short story or series of stories by one author
- Students create a work of original art they believe is representative of the story(s) and present the work to the class
- Students write a song or poem taking one theme from the story(s) they read
- Students research culture, period from which the story(s) are written and connect the author’s style to the trend/fashion during that period
- While reading the story, students keep a journal in which they draw, illustrate, paste pictures, or artifacts that represent their response to the story

Sample Outcomes:
- Students articulate the connection and relationships between writing and the arts
- Students demonstrate an understanding of relationships between works through presentation to an audience
- Students discover that a work of fiction can bring meaning to their lives beyond the text extend

8. Sound

Approximate Time Frame: 2 to 3 Weeks

Essential Questions:
- How do literary themes, though they vary across cultures and times, relate to one’s personal experience as well as humankind’s universal experience?
- How are literary themes reflected in other disciplines?
- interpret and respond to their aesthetic reactions to literary works. (4.11-12.7)
- analyze and evaluate language used in both written and oral tasks for its suitability for audience and purpose and apply appropriately. (3.11-12.3)
- use the most effective process to create and present a written, oral, or visual piece at a mastery level. (2.11-12.4)

### Suggested Readings:
- Anton Chekov stories and one-act play *The Bear*
- Sherman Alexie stories, poetry, and film *Smoke Signals*
- Raymond Carver stories and Hopper paintings
- James Baldwin stories, Langston Hughes poetry, and Charlie Parker/other jazz

### Sample Activities:
- Students research and select art works (painting, sculpture, and/or music) they find relates to a particular story
- Students prepare a PowerPoint presentation that shows the art works and explain the relationship to the short story or series of stories by one author
- Students create a work of original art they believe is representative of the story(s) and present the work to the class
- Students write a song or poem taking one theme from the story(s) they read
- Students research culture, period from which the story(s) are written and connect the author’s style to the trend/fashion during that period
- While reading the story, students keep a journal in which they draw, illustrate, paste pictures, or artifacts that represent their response to the story

### Sample Outcomes:
- Students articulate the connection and relationships between writing and the arts
- Students demonstrate an understanding of relationships between works through presentation to an audience
- Students discover that a work of fiction can bring meaning to their lives beyond the text extend

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plot</th>
<th>Approximate Time Frame: 2 to 3 Weeks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Essential Questions:**
- How do literary themes, though they vary across cultures and times,
- How are literary themes reflected in other disciplines?

**Standards:**
- interpret and respond to their aesthetic reactions to literary works. (4.11-12.7)
- analyze and evaluate language used in both written and oral tasks for its suitability for audience and purpose and apply appropriately. (3.11-12.3)
- use the most effective process to create and present a written, oral, or visual piece at a mastery level. (2.11-12.4)

**Suggested Readings:**
- Anton Chekov stories and one-act play *The Bear*
- Sherman Alexie stories, poetry, and film *Smoke Signals*
- Raymond Carver stories and Hopper paintings
- James Baldwin stories, Langston Hughes poetry, and Charlie Parker/other jazz

**Sample Activities:**
- Students research and select art works (painting, sculpture, and/or music) they find relate to a particular story.
- Students prepare a PowerPoint presentation that shows the art works and explain the relationship to the short story or series of stories by one author.
- Students create a work of original art they believe is representative of the story(s) and present the work to the class.
- Students write a song or poem taking one theme from the story(s) they read.
- Students research culture, period from which the story(s) are written and connect the author’s style to the trend/fashion during that period.
- While reading the story, students keep a journal in which they draw, illustrate, paste pictures, or artifacts that represent their response to the story.

**Sample Outcomes:**
- Students articulate the connection and relationships between writing and the arts.
- Students demonstrate an understanding of relationships between works through presentation to an audience.
- Students discover that a work of fiction can bring meaning to their lives beyond the text.
### 10. Dialogue

**Approximate Time Frame:** 2 to 3 Weeks

**Essential Questions:**
- How do literary themes, though they vary across cultures and times, relate to one’s personal experience as well as humankind’s universal experience?
- How are literary themes reflected in other disciplines?

**Standards:**
- Interpret and respond to their aesthetic reactions to literary works. (4.11-12.7)
- Analyze and evaluate language used in both written and oral tasks for its suitability for audience and purpose and apply appropriately. (3.11-12.3)
- Use the most effective process to create and present a written, oral, or visual piece at a mastery level. (2.11-12.4)

**Suggested Readings:**
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- Sherman Alexie stories, poetry, and film *Smoke Signals*
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- While reading the story, students keep a journal in which they draw, illustrate, paste pictures, or artifacts that represent their response to the story

**Sample Outcomes:**
- Students articulate the connection and relationships between writing and the arts
- Students demonstrate an understanding of relationships between works through presentation to an audience
Students discover that a work of fiction can bring meaning to their lives beyond the text extend

Course Materials:
For each unit, teachers will select a relevant variety of stories from:


Films/Videos
Teacher may use selected films and videos to augment the instructional units.

Supplements
Teachers will use selected essays, short stories, poems, articles, excerpts from longer works and other appropriate materials to augment each unit found in anthologies and the collection of works of author(s) studied.

Assessment:
Students are assessed using a variety of performance and traditional methods:

- Being prepared for class activities by having read the stories, complete a note taking sheet (see appendix A) or other homework assignment; have their own written notes from their reading
- Homework, short writing, and other assignments
- Active participation in class/group discussions and activities is assessed by the teacher from observations, by students in self-evaluation, by the quality, timeliness, and whether or not the project met goals.
- Reading quizzes designed on varying levels of difficulty
- Written work, including personal, analytical, creative, and research writing in varied forms including journal responses, essays, research
papers, reviews, letters, summaries, and original short stories and poetry. Rubrics are tailored to the individual project (see Appendix B, C, D samples) or English Department rubrics are used.

- Unit tests
- Group and individual projects
- Final exam (see attached prototype)
Worksheet Sample
Appendix A

SHORT FICTION
Elements of a Short Story
NMHS

Name: ____________________________ Date: ____________

Complete this form for each short story assigned and bring it to class as it will assist you in class discussion.

Title:
Author:
Theme:
1. What is the setting (place, time, social conditions, mood, atmosphere)

2. Who are the characters?
   Protagonist: ________________________________
   Antagonist: ________________________________
   Make notes about their names, appearances, personalities, relationships, etc.

3. What is the plot? (sequence of events or incidents, include notes on the CONFLICT: clash of actions, ideas, desires or wills may be physical, psychological, external, internal, etc.)

4. What point of view does the story use? (1st person, omniscient (limited or unlimited), innocent eye (child), stream of consciousness)

5. What would you consider controversial and disturbing about story? What is ironic?
6. What is unique or interesting about the author’s style?

### PowerPoint Rubric
This rubric may be used for self-assessment and peer feedback.  
A - Exemplary: 40-44 points; B - Proficient: 36-39 points; Not proficient, less than 36

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>Exemplary</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Partially Proficient</th>
<th>Incomplete</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research and Note taking</strong></td>
<td>6 points</td>
<td>4 points</td>
<td>2 points</td>
<td>0 points</td>
<td>No notes or outline submitted with project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes and outline indicate research from a rich variety of credible sources.</td>
<td>Notes and outline indicate research from a few sources, from credible sources.</td>
<td>Notes and outline indicate minimal research. Cannot determine source reliability.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pre-production Plan</strong></td>
<td>6 points</td>
<td>4 points</td>
<td>2 points</td>
<td>0 points</td>
<td>No storyboard of presentation presented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storyboard presents an overview with thumbnail sketches of each slide. Narrative comments highlight the presentation.</td>
<td>Storyboard presents an overview of the presentation with incomplete thumbnail sketches or too little narrative about the presentation.</td>
<td>The thumbnail sketches on the storyboard are not in a logical sequence and/or have incomplete information.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong></td>
<td>3 points</td>
<td>2 points</td>
<td>1 point</td>
<td>0 points</td>
<td>No introduction given.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction presents the overall topic and draws the audience.</td>
<td>Introduction is clear and coherent and relates to the topic.</td>
<td>Introduction does not create a strong sense of what is to follow.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content</strong></td>
<td>8 points</td>
<td>6 points</td>
<td>4 points</td>
<td>0 points</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Text Elements</strong></td>
<td><strong>3 points</strong></td>
<td><strong>2 points</strong></td>
<td><strong>1 point</strong></td>
<td><strong>0 points</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The content is well written and edited. There are smooth transitions between main points and examples. Information is considered reliable.</td>
<td>Sometimes the fonts are easy-to-read, but in a few places the use of fonts, italics, bold, long paragraphs, color or busy background detracts and does not enhance readability.</td>
<td>Overall readability is difficult with lengthy paragraphs, too many different fonts, dark or busy background, overuse of bold or lack of appropriate indentations of text.</td>
<td>The text is difficult to read with long blocks of text and small fonts, distracting contrasting colors and format.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Layout</strong></th>
<th><strong>3 points</strong></th>
<th><strong>2 points</strong></th>
<th><strong>1 point</strong></th>
<th><strong>0 points</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The layout is visually pleasing and contributes to the overall message.</td>
<td>The layout uses horizontal and vertical white space appropriately.</td>
<td>The layout shows some structure, but appears cluttered and busy.</td>
<td>The layout is cluttered. Text is unclear and confusing.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Citations</strong></th>
<th><strong>6 points</strong></th>
<th><strong>4 points</strong></th>
<th><strong>2 points</strong></th>
<th><strong>0 points</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>References are properly cited so that the audience can determine</td>
<td>Most sources of information use proper MLA citation.</td>
<td>Some omissions of references. Does not use proper MLA</td>
<td>No way to check validity of information.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Graphics, Sound and/or Animation</strong></td>
<td>3 points</td>
<td>2 points</td>
<td>1 point</td>
<td>0 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The graphics, sound and/or animation assist in presenting an overall theme and enhance understanding.</td>
<td>The graphics, sound and/or animation visually depict material and assist the audience in understanding the flow of information or content.</td>
<td>Some of the graphics, sounds, and/or animations seem unrelated to the topic/theme and do not enhance the overall concepts.</td>
<td>The graphics, sounds, and/or animations are unrelated to the content. Graphics do not enhance understanding.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Writing Mechanics</strong></th>
<th>6 points</th>
<th>4 points</th>
<th>2 points</th>
<th>0 points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The text is written with no errors.</td>
<td>The text is written with one or two errors.</td>
<td>Several errors detract from readability.</td>
<td>Errors repeatedly distract</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sample Creative Assignment

Author Study: Raymond Carver
Writing Assignment

ROUGH DRAFT DUE: _________________________
FINAL DRAFT DUE: __________________________

As your final writing assignment for our study of Raymond Carver, you will write a short story mimicking the minimalism and new realism favored by Carver.

Your task is to use an Edward Hopper painting as the setting for a scene reminiscent of one Carver would have written. You may choose any of the Hopper paintings you like. You can add any details you want; you may move the painting to our town. For example, if you choose “Night Hawks” as your setting, you may place the diner in our town and use familiar surroundings. Please indicate on your final draft which painting you used.

The objective of the assignment is not to judge Carver’s writing; rather, the objective is to use your own creativity to demonstrate you awareness of the elements that make up a typical Carver story.

For peer editing next week, your story does not have to be complete; it may be a 2- to 3-page excerpt. Whether a complete story or not, however, your writing should reveal your understanding of the characters Carver would include in his stories. Rather than tell the reader everything, show the reader what happens through the characters’ actions and dialogue. Have fun making your story unfold.

Your story excerpt for peer editing should be 2 to 3 pages long, typed, 12-point font, and double-spaced. Your final story, due ___________ should be a complete story.

The following rubric, created from your work yesterday, will be used to assess your writing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expectations</th>
<th>Possible Points</th>
<th>Points Earned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Effective Title</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hopper painting identified on first page</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characters faithful to Carver’s characters</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dialogue and action used to reveal</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>characters’ personalities and conflict(s)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict appropriate to Carver story</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme(s) typical of Carver story</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language: “commonplace, precise language” used to reveal character, conflict, tone</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creativity</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate resolution for Carver story (final draft only)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanics/grammar</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I. The Development of the Short Story

Match the term to the best definition for that word.

1. ___ tall tale
2. ___ allegory
3. ___ parable
4. ___ fable
5. ___ myth
6. ___ legend
7. ___ folk tale
8. ___ fairy tale
9. ___ tale

- a. anonymous story that explains why the world is as it is cosmologically, metaphysically, socially and naturally
- b. a type of story grounded in historical fact, which recounts the exploits, perhaps with exaggeration, of a real human
- c. an elaborate metaphor grafted onto a narrative
- d. a short, direct presentation of a religious or moral lesson
- e. a story that often features animals to personify human qualities.
- f. A brief story, either fiction or nonfiction, about strange and perhaps exotic places and events.
- g. A story that recounts the adventures of spirits, who guide, aid and trick humans for good or ill.
- h. A tale passed on orally
- i. A humorous story using folk idioms to recount amazing feats of strength or cunning

10. This semester we read several modern works that were based upon earlier fiction archetypes. In a well-developed, 7- to 10-sentence paragraph, discuss whether you believe early story types are effective story models for today’s readers. Your paragraph should discuss one or more of the works studied this semester and explain your opinion.

II. The Elements of Fiction

Select five of the eight elements of fiction, listed below, to analyze in terms of the story “Kew Gardens,” by Virginia Woolf. Write one well-developed, 7- to 10-sentence paragraph for each element selected. Your paragraph should discuss why Woolf made the choices she made and/or how she used craft to convey each element to the reader:

- Theme
- Plot
- Character
- Conflict
- Narration or point of view
- Setting/atmosphere
• Author's use of language
• Tone
III. What Kind of Story Are We Reading?

Select the best answer for each question.

1. Which of the following is not a characteristic of the nineteenth-century Romance?
   a. characters with pronounced sensibilities
   b. exotic settings
   c. local color
   d. mysterious forces

2. Verisimilitude is:
   a. only found in realistic stories
   b. the way an author creates a semblance of truth
   c. only found in nonrealistic stories
   d. a technique used in hypertext stories

3. Realism is not described by which of the following statements:
   a. may contain local color
   b. has settings recognizable from our own lives
   c. usually focuses on people succeeding or failing based on their inner strengths and weaknesses
   d. contains bizarre settings and fantastic events

4. Naturalism is not described by which of the following statements:
   a. may contain local color
   b. applies the tenets of scientific determinism to realistic fiction
   c. usually focuses on people succeeding or failing based on their inner strengths and weaknesses
   d. has characters who struggle with outside forces

5. Which type of short fiction exaggerates the techniques begun by the modernists?
   a. New Realism
   b. Post-modernism
   c. Naturalism
   d. Romance

6. Which type of short fiction developed after World War II?
   a. Modernism
   b. Realism
c. Naturalism
d. Romance

7. “A Very Old Man With Enormous Wings” is best described as:

a. New Realism
b. Naturalism
c. Romance
d. Magical Realism

8. “Soldier’s Home” is best described as:

a. Modernism
b. Post-modernism
c. Naturalism
d. Romance

9. Raymond Carver’s style of writing is best described as:

a. Romance
b. Minimalism
c. Naturalism
d. Gothic

IV. Critical Approaches

1. Match each critical approach to the best explanation of what that type of critic concentrates on.

This approach:

a. examines short stories for nature imagery and evidence of humankind’s interaction with nature.
b. looks at the influence time period (either when written or when set) on an author’s work.
c. asks why characters behave the way they do.
d. interprets the story in terms of what the reader identifies with in the text.
e. Examines what happens in the story, particularly with regard to repeated motifs and images, without regard for other disciplines or outside knowledge.
f. looks for patterns in literature that occur across cultures, times, geographical areas.
g. tries to connect an author’s life to his/her work.
h. studies the influence of money, power, and as represented in fiction.
i. examines what happens in the story without regard for other disciplines or outside knowledge.
j. considers the effect of gender and sexuality on characters.
2. In a short essay explain which one of the critical approaches you believe best for analyzing and interpreting Jeanette Winterson’s short story “Newton.”
V. Responding to Writers’ Words About Writing

1. Read Virginia Woolf’s essay excerpt from “Craftsmanship.” In a well-developed, 7- to 10-sentence paragraph, explain how this essay does or does not help you understand the short story “Kew Gardens.” What is the value of this essay to the reader or to another writer? (10 points)

2. Read Jeanette Winterson’s essay excerpt from “A Work of My Own.” In a well-developed, 7- to 10-sentence paragraph, explain how this essay does or does not help you understand the short story “Newton.” What is the value of this essay to the reader or to another writer? (10 points)

VI. Critical Interpretation

Using the Raymond Carver story “Where I’m Calling From” and any one or more of the other stories we have studied by Carver (“A Small, Good Thing,” “The Bridle” or “Cathedral”), write a response to the critic who said:

Carver doesn’t write stories at all, just rambling, simpleminded anecdotes about not much of anything. They lack plot, style, theme, irony, and symbolism—in short, everything that makes fiction worthy of notice. So drab, obtuse, and lacking in moral sensibility are the characters he creates that it’s impossible to care about any of them. With Carver, fiction is going to the dogs.

Your essay should use direct quotation and thorough explanation to illustrate your points.

In addition to the Carver stories, you may refer to his biography, his essay on writing, the terminology and concepts studied in class.

In your essay, you should take a clear critical stance. Do not waver between agreement and disagreement with the statement. Of course, one quality of an effective persuasive essay is recognizing opposing viewpoints, so you should mention or summarize what those with the opposite opinion would say. If there is validity to some of the arguments given by those of the other opinion, acknowledge the valid points.
Your assessment of Carver may, and probably should, also use your own perceptions of how the stories relate, or fail to relate, to your life or the world at large.