**AMERICAN LITERATURE**

Dr. Alysha Griffin

Email: [GriffAl1@Richmond.K12.ga.us](mailto:GriffAl1@Richmond.K12.ga.us)

ROOM A113

# **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

What is this class about?  
American Literature & Composition is a high school English class that counts as a core credit toward graduation. You can take it to meet your 3rd or 4th English credit requirement. It follows Georgia’s high school English Language Arts standards.

What will we study?  
In this course, you’ll read and explore a variety of American texts—from classic to modern—while learning how they connect to important events and ideas in U.S. history. You’ll study literature from at least three different time periods and learn how history influenced the writing style, themes, and structure of these works.

## What will you do in class?

* Read and analyze American stories, poems, speeches, and more.
* Learn how to connect literature to the time period it was written in.
* Write in a variety of styles for different audiences and purposes
* Practice writing, grammar, vocabulary, and research skills.
* Discuss how literature has shaped American culture and public opinion.
* Build your understanding of how authors use language to express ideas.

Why is this important?  
By the end of the course, you’ll have a stronger understanding of how American literature reflects the country’s history and values. This will help you become a better reader, writer, and thinker—skills that are useful in school and beyond.

## Textbook

*HMH Into Literature G11*

## Unit/Concept Names

The themes we will explore are:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * Unit 1: Early American Literature | * Unit 4: Literature of the Civil War |
| * Unit 2: The Revolutionary Period | * Unit 5: The Age of Realism |
| * Unit 3: Literature and the American Renaissance | * Unit 6: The Modern Period to the Present Day |

## Materials Needed:

* Writing Utensil (i.e., pencil, and/or pen)
* 3-Ring Binder (this should only be for English class)
* Loose-leaf notebook paper
* Highlighters
* Laptop
* Textbook (hard copy or digital—hard copies only allowed on open-book assessments)

# **‌COURSE WORK AND GRADING**

## Grade Breakdown

Participation and Minor Assessments 60%

Major Assessments and Projects 30%

Final Exam 10%

## Grading Scale

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| A= 90-100 | D= 70-74 |
| B= 80-89 | F= <60 |
| C= 75-79 |  |

## Minor Assessments

Minor assessments are assignments that are low stakes. This means that no single assignment will significantly affect your grade. The goal of these assignments is to keep ourselves accountable for our own learning. In addition, they serve as practice material and measures for tracking what we learn. Too many missing or low grades will add up, but individual assignments have a low impact on your overall grade. Most assignments are graded. You should only expect an “A” or “B” if the assignment is complete, correct, and edited for grammar/mechanics. An “A” or a “B” score is given to students who exceed the expectations for the assignment and show proficiency and mastery. Students who do the bare minimum or submit incomplete, incorrect, and/or unedited work receive “C” grades or below.

## Assessments, Writing Assignments, and Projects

This category of assignments is where you prove your ability to recall what we’ve talked about and apply the skills we’ve practiced on your own. Tests will be cumulative which means that everything up until any single exam is fair game— even if it already appeared on an earlier exam. Content from all lectures, readings, videos, quizzes, homework, and classwork may appear. Keep all your work safe and organized so that you may reference it for study. Projects will be graded for accuracy. In addition, the rubrics will measure your level of effort and creativity. Show your creativity and critical thinking with these assignments.

# **CLASS EXPECTATIONS, POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES**

## Class Expectations

The overarching expectation in this class is to represent WAR (W, Accountable, Respectful). Below are the expectations for how to W.A.R. in class!

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Wholehearted** | * Ask questions for understanding and clarity. * Be prepared to answer “how” and “why.” * Be *thoughtfully* engaged. * Contribute to discussions, share your thoughts, and work collaboratively. * Give every task your full attention and effort regardless of whether it’s for a grade. * Make connections between our learning and the world around you. |
| **Accountable** | * Advocate for yourself. * Check your grades often. * Manage your time and resources. * Seek knowledge and growth instead of a “good grade.” * Submit work that reflects your honest understanding of our learning targets. |
| **Respectful** | * Give the teacher and your peers your undivided attention when they are speaking. * Maintain a positive work environment for all students. * Respect yourself, respect others, and respect our space. * Speak with the utmost regard for everyone’s humanity and dignity. * Voice opinions with facts, reason, evidence, and kindness. |

### Academic Dishonesty

Under no circumstances should you submit work that is not your own or that is not the result of your own intellectual labor. You will receive a zero if you:

* Have a cell phone on your body while testing (cell phones and smart devices should be stored in a bag or in the provided receptacle for the entire duration of the test, even if you are finished).
* Possess a cheat sheet or a digital document of any assessment or assignment.
* Submit the same assignment as another student.
* Use artificial intelligence (AI platforms like Co-Pilot, ChatGPT, and Gemini).
* Share or distribute your own work to other students for the purpose of cheating.

Students will face disciplinary action for copying, distributing, or photographing assessments or answers to an assessment. There is never any reason to cheat, especially since other opportunities may be provided to reassess, and there may be flexibility when completing projects and writing assignments.

### Civility and Respect

Students will contend with topics that might be difficult. Engage in lively exchanges and rigorous debates with respect for your peers. Discriminatory, hateful, or harmful language will not be tolerated. The teacher will use their authority to end or redirect conversations that put others at risk of emotional harm. If anyone deliberately disrespects another student, they will be subject to disciplinary action. In the same token, please extend grace. Mistakes will happen. Let’s try to be gentle with one another. If someone offends you, name the harm, apologize if you are the offender, and move on.

### Email Etiquette

When sending emails, make sure that you include a subject, greeting, and closing. Also, make sure the tone and word choices in your email are appropriate for communicating with your teacher.

### Food and Drink

No takeout food is allowed in class per school policy. You may have a pre-packaged snack that is odorless. While you should not bring beverages with open mouths like soda cans or take-out coffee cups, drinks with a screw-on lid or closable top are allowed. Please clean-up after yourself. Having food in class is a privilege. It will be taken away if it becomes a problem.

### Preparation

Come to class with your charged laptop, a writing utensil, paper/notebook, and textbook. If you need to sharpen a pencil or gather materials, please do so when you first walk-in. If a need arises after a class is already in session, please wait until we transition between activities.

### Technology

Silence all cell phones before class starts. **Do not use them or have them visible during class.** *Unless you have official documentation for specified accommodations, no electronic devices should be used during class unless specified by the teacher.* Technology should only be used for educational purposes.

### Tracking Grades

Take responsibility for your grades. If you complete and turn in all of your assignments, it is nearly impossible to fail the class, even if you don’t do well on the major assessments. However, missing assignments are detrimental to your grade, and too many missing or incomplete assignments will make it impossible to pass. That said, make sure you are staying on top of your work. Notifications about missing work, announcement about upcoming assignments, and failure reports are sent frequently through the Infinite Campus platform. Check your account often so that you can stay informed about your progress in the class.

Parents should receive Infinite Campus notifications and alerts as well. In addition, parents can gain access to Canvas by downloading the Parent Canvas app and pairing your app with your student’s account. For help with either of these platforms, contact Ms. Alyssa Multanen in the front office.

*\*Infinite Campus is the platform where grades are posted and tracked. Canvas is our online learning platform that houses instructional materials and where students submit their work.*

## Class Policies

### Attendance/Tardy

Students are subject to the Richmond County Board of Education policy on absenteeism. Attendance will be recorded daily. Please inform your teacher of any expected absences ahead of time. It is your responsibility to inquire and complete any work you missed while absent. Most assignments are available on Canvas.

### Extra Credit

There will be many assignments that are not required but offer extra practice toward gaining proficiency and mastery. You may receive extra points towards your grade for completing these opportunities. Late extra credit is not accepted. Because extra credit is privilege, you will not receive full extra credit points just for completing the assignment. The work should be complete in its entirety and show students’ progress toward gaining proficiency of the standards, If there is a trend (or suspicion) of academic dishonesty, the teacher will no longer offer extra credit opportunities to the class. That said, please use these opportunities to sharpen your skills or prepare for an assessment.

### Late Work

If you do not meet an assignment deadline, you have 5 school days after the original due date to submit. For each day an assignment is late, there will be a 5% deduction applied to your grade per school day for a 25% maximum reduction (5 school days). After the 5th day, the assignment will be closed, and no further submissions will be accepted, except at the teacher’s discretion.

If you are going to be absent on the day that an assignment is due, you are still responsible for turning it in on (or before) the scheduled due date**.** If there is an instance-- personal or otherwise—that you can foresee will hinder you from turning in assignments on the due date, please talk to your teacher in advance. Accommodations may be made.

### Make-Up Work

You are expected to make-up assignments and assessments that were missed due to absence from school. You are also responsible for asking teachers for the make-up work upon returning to class. Most assignments and resources will be posted on Canvas (except assessments that require your presence in class). In the rare case that work is not available on our online platform, you’ll need to inquire about your work when you return to class.

Make-up work should be completed as soon as possible. You are allowed 2 school days per absence to make-up missed work. Again, accommodations may be made as long as you maintain the lines of communication.

### Relearn and Reassess Plan

For *any* major assessment, students will have the opportunity to retake or resubmit the assessment. To retake an assessment, you are required to stay for tutoring and/or complete any required practice assignments. Time permitting, your teacher may allow students to reassess in class on designated days. You must score below 70% to qualify, and you will only receive one opportunity to reassess/resubmit. Please note that assessments may be different from the original, and the score will *replace* the original score (the scores will not be averaged).

Re-assessments must be completed within 5 school days of receiving the original grade, unless you are taking it during a designated class period. Teachers have the discretion to extend the timeline to address extenuating circumstances. Arrange a time to re-take the assessment by emailing Dr. Griffin at [griffal1@boe.richmond.k12.ga.us](mailto:griffal1@boe.richmond.k12.ga.us).

## Classroom Procedures

### Arranging to Complete Major Assessments or Re-Assessments

To re-take or take a major assessment like a test or quiz, email your teacher with your availability as soon as possible so you can take the assessment within 1 week of returning from the absence or within 1 week of receiving your grade.

### Borrowing Materials

Although you should be prepared with your notebook, textbook, laptop, and something to write with for every class, there are pens/pencils and notebook paper available. Feel free to grab a writing utensil before class starts or during a natural transition between tasks. Please return all borrowed materials, and take only what you need for the work session.

### Contesting a Grade

Sometimes mistakes are made when inputting grades. This is never intentional. If a grade is inputted incorrectly in the gradebook, please send an email to [griffal1@boe.richmond.k12.ga.us](mailto:griffal1@boe.richmond.k12.ga.us) explaining which grade needs to be corrected.

### Entering/Leaving Classroom

Enter the classroom quietly. Refer to the prompt on the board, and follow any instructions provided. Silence or turn off your cell phone and other devices and put it *out of sight*. If you need to use the restroom, please do so before class starts. No students are allowed to leave in the first and last 10 minutes of class per school policy.

### Fire Drills/Emergency Procedures

Fire, lockdown, and inclement weather procedures and maps are posted by the door. Please review them regularly. In all cases, students should sit quietly and await instruction. Report back to the classroom immediately after the drill. Do not make other stops to the restroom or anywhere else without notifying the teacher. Your attendance will be changed to a “Tardy” or “Absent” if you are not present when attendance is re-taken.

### Movement in the Classroom

Refrain from moving in the middle of instruction or while the teacher is talking. When performing group work, students should quietly and quickly move desks to the specified instructions (if desks are not already arranged).

### Restroom

Please try to use the restroom before class. It’s best to notify your teacher that you’re going to the restroom. Be sure that the teacher responds and acknowledges you, that way grace can be given if you’re a minute or two late. If you must go during class, you may ask after the first ten minutes and before the last 10 minutes of class. Please do not ask for a pass during a lecture or while instruction is being given; wait until we are transitioning from one task to another or when you are working. When you are given the pass, go directly to the restroom. If you are gone longer than reasonable, you may face disciplinary action.

### Tutoring

Due to frequent after school meetings and conferences, tutoring is offered by appointment. If you’d like to stay for tutoring, please send your teacher an email with a few a dates you are available. Please allow at least 24 hours in advance.

## Teacher Contact Information

Email: [griffal1@boe.richmond.k12.ga.us](mailto:griffal1@boe.richmond.k12.ga.us)

# **SYLLABUS ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

After reviewing this syllabus with your parent/guardian, please sign this form and return to your teacher by **Monday, August 11th**.

## Student Contract

I have read the course syllabus in its entirety for American Literature, and I understand this course’s expectations, policies, and procedures. I agree to follow these guidelines and take responsibility for me learning. Specifically, I understand:

* All work should be completed on time and points will be deducted for late work. My teacher does not have to accept work that is more than 5 days late.
* Academic dishonesty—plagiarism, AI, copying, or submitting another student’s work, cheating on assessments, or sharing my work with others—will not be tolerated, and I will receive a 0 if I cheat or make it possible for others to cheat.
* Extra credit is a privilege and not required.
* My grade is my responsibility. I should get any work I miss due to absences and make arrangements to complete missing assessments as soon as possible.

Student Signature: Date:

## Parent Contract

I have read the course syllabus in its entirety for American Literature, and I understand this course’s expectations, policies, and procedures. I agree to assist my child to abide by these guidelines. Specifically, I understand:

* All work should be completed on time and points will be deducted for late work. The teacher does not have to accept work that is more than 5 days late.
* Academic dishonesty—plagiarism, AI, copying, or submitting another student’s work, cheating on assessments, or sharing my work with others—will not be tolerated, and students will receive a 0 if they cheat or make it possible for others to cheat.
* Extra credit is a privilege and a not requirement. Late extra credit will not be accepted.
* The student’s grade is their responsibility. They are responsible for retrieving work they miss due to absences and for making arrangements to complete missing assessments as soon as possible.
* I should remain in contact with my child’s teacher and monitor missing and late work as noted in Infinite Campus Parent Portal.

Parent Signature: Date: