

The Well-Trained Mind Academy
Scholars' Seminar: Literature

Course Blackboard site: wtma.blackboard.com

Required Text(s):

Summer Reading:

How to Read Literature Like a Professor: A Live and Entertaining Guide to Reading Between the Lines, Revised Edition by Thomas Foster

The *Odyssey* by Homer (trans. Emily Wilson)

Circe by Madeline Miller

The Handmaid's Tale by Margaret Atwood

The Testaments by Margaret Atwood

Jane Eyre by Charlotte Brontë

Wide Sargasso Sea by Jean Rhys

The Bell Jar by Sylvia Plath

Selections from *The Feminine Mystique* by Betty Friedan

[*The Yellow Wallpaper*](#) by Charlotte Perkins Gilman (link provided on Blackboard)

Little House on the Prairie by Laura Ingalls Wilder

Prairie Fires by Caroline Fraser

Hamlet by William Shakespeare

Hamnet by Maggie O'Farrell

When Breath Becomes Air by Paul Kalanithi

W;t, by Margaret Edson

The Hero with a Thousand Faces by Joseph Campbell

Gulliver's Travels by Jonathan Swift

Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl by Harriet Jacobs

The Underground Railroad by Colson Whitehead

Beloved by Toni Morrison

Notes of a Native Son by James Baldwin

Americanah by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

Between the World and Me by Ta-Nehisi Coates

"The Management of Grief" by Bharati Mukherjee (link provided on Blackboard)

"Interpreter of Maladies" by Jhumpa Lahir (link provided on Blackboard)

Down and Out in Paris and London, George Orwell

Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America, Barbara Ehrenreich

All the Light We Cannot See by Anthony Doerr

Atonement by Ian McEwan

A Farewell to Arms by Ernest Hemingway

The Things They Carried by Tim O'Brien

Description:

Scholars' Seminar: Literature is designed to engage rhetoric-stage students in reading, literary discussion, and literary analysis. Students will come together with their instructor twice a week to discuss a broad array of readings including novels, drama, autobiographies, short stories, and essays. The course guides students in the close reading and critical analysis of classic and contemporary works of literature and helps them appreciate the texts and the contexts in which the works were written. In particular, this course makes use of a paired text framework, encouraging students to engage with each text individually and in conversation with another work that shares similar themes, literary devices, topic, or writing style.

Please note: This course is designed for high-school students. Several of these readings contain topics, scenarios, subjects, and themes that younger and/or more sensitive readers may find upsetting or unsettling. While these texts are appropriate for most mature high school students, students and parents should be aware of the complexities and intensities of these readings in advance. If you have any concerns we encourage you to check the texts out at the local library before enrolling your student.

This course requires students to read multiple texts in advance of the weeks that are spent discussing them in class. As such, students will develop the ability to manage cognitive load as they practice daily reading and notetaking habits for one set of readings while working through in-class discussions and assignments on the previous set of readings, a valuable skill set for further academic success.

Grade Breakdown:

Student Presentation:	10 %
Participation:	30 %
Short Essays:	30 %
Long Essays:	30 %

Assignments:

Class Discussion: In the tradition of the Socratic seminar, the bulk of each class will consist of formal discussion, based on a text, in which the student discussion leader and/or instructor ask open-ended questions. Within the context of the discussion, students will listen closely to the comments of others, think critically for themselves, and articulate their own thoughts and responses to the thoughts of others. Instructional time will also include presentations on literary techniques, authors, and devices relevant to the texts at hand.

Student Presentations: Every student will formally present on one textual pairing throughout the year. The 15-20 minute presentation will provide the framework for our first discussion of the pairing, and students will be required to work on this presentation in advance, submitting a draft one week prior to the date of the presentation and meeting with the instructor in advance of the presentation. Failure to present draft material and/or meet with the instructor in advance of

the presentation will deduct 10% from the final grade. Failure to arrive on time (barring extreme circumstances, of course) for the presentation will result in a 0%.

Weekly Responses: Students will complete a weekly written response of 250-500 words in which they react and respond to something said in that week's class session. The weekly response must include at least two quotations from the text(s). Students should use this assignment as an opportunity to dig deeper into the texts and present their own analysis of ideas shared in class and those presented in the texts. Response papers are graded for credit/no credit and count towards a student's participation grade.

Short Essays: Students will complete four short essays (2-3 pages) in which they write on a single assigned text. The essay prompts will be supplied by the instructor and discussed in more detail in class.

Long Essays: Students will complete two long (5-7 pages) essays in which they compare and contrast two works of literature from the semester's reading list. The essay prompts will be supplied by the instructor and discussed in more detail in class.

Schedule:

The course schedule is loaded as a separate document to Blackboard.

The schedule is subject to frequent updates. Please see Blackboard/email for changes.