DeLand High School 2019-2020 Course Syllabus – Creative Writing – Mr. Finkle
dlfinkle@volusia.k12.fl.us
Building 17, room 202

Course Name: Creative Writing 1 and 2

Materials Needed:
Composition notebook
Loose-leaf paper or a spiral notebook
Pens or pencils
Computer/internet if possible – please turn in your computer/internet use forms so that you can use the laptop cart when it is my room. I share it with one other teacher.

Course Objectives:
Students will…
• Learn the general principles behind all writing, and how they apply to creative non-fiction, fiction, playwriting, sequential art (graphic storytelling), poetry and any other forms students wish to explore.
• Read to models of different genres of creative writing in order to study author’s craft
• Write in multiple modes and genres
• Write using different organizational styles appropriate to the genre, topic and audience
• Write using different types of details appropriate to the genre, topic and audience
• Use the writing process to plan, draft, revise, and polish pieces of writing
• Study creativity itself: its definitions, processes, uses, including reading pieces by and about creative people and organizations

Semester 1:
This semester we will focus on playwriting and short fiction as a class. Students will participate in a collaborative ten-minute one act, an individual one-act, and a collaborative short story, an individual short story. Students will also complete a major, multi-week project: writing and publishing a children’s book for a specific first grade child at Blue Lake Elementary. Students will also be given ample time to work on their own, students selected writing workshop pieces, and on long-form pieces over the course of the semester or school year.

Semester 2:
Second semester will continue to focus on developing fiction writing with a possible collaborative novel, but will add poetry as a component. Students will also be given ample time to work on their own, students selected writing workshop pieces, and on long-form pieces over the course of the semester or school year.

Grading:
Formative assignments (40% of average) are almost all Writer’s Notebook activities: journals, exercises, and free-writes. These assignments are practice work for learning and growth of skills and thinking.

Summative assignments (60% of average) will include Writing Workshops of students’ own choosing, well as major writing assignments in different genres, as well as written reflections on their writing. Class time will be given for all major assignments. Students will grade their own work and compare it to the teacher’s grade, settling on a final grade after a teacher-student conference.
**Make-up Work Policy:** Parents and students should refer to the school’s policy as found in the Student Handbook for acquiring and receiving credit for all make-up work.

**Academic Honesty: Plagiarism,** according to the American Heritage Student Dictionary, is to “use and pass off as one’s own (the ideas or writings of another),” or “to make use of the passages or ideas from (another) as if they were one’s own.” Creative writers often take inspiration from other authors. We will be discussing what is acceptable (and not) in class. What is NOT acceptable is to take an existing story by another author and claim some or all of it as your own writing, the exception being Found Poetry.

**Class Culture for Learning/Class Rules:**
I begin the year by talking to my students about what a great class looks like and what a not-so-great class looks like, and students all know that in a great class…
- the teacher is knowledgeable, helpful, clear, respectful of students, and enthusiastic about the subject
- the students are in class to learn, come prepared, are respectful and helpful to each other, and try their best, even when it isn’t their favorite subject
They also all seem to know that being respectful involves…
- not talking over a speaker (the teacher or another student) who is addressing the whole class
- not creating distractions
- trying your best to make the class run better, not worse

You can have a great class if everyone is in it to learn and is trying to make it run well. You can’t have a great class based on rules – only an “in control” one. So I try very hard to make my class great. However, if a student does not understand how to help the class, or isn’t in class to learn, I have the following rules in place.

**Rules:**
- **Get to class** on time, and prepared to learn. Get quiet when the bell rings and begin with the assigned work on the front screen.
- **Be in class** mentally and physically, and do not distract other students or the teacher from learning activities. Avoid blurting out, having side-conversations during instruction, having your phone on, or out, except during BYOT activities. Focus on what they class is doing.
- **Leave class** as clean or cleaner than you found it, and try to remember what you learned.
- Follow all school rules and policies.

I try very hard to understand when students have problems, to talk to students about why they may be having difficulty in my class, and to solve problems without referrals. But if a student refuses to cooperate with me, I will have to send the student to the office on a discipline referral. I will always make multiple attempts to contact parents first.
Textbook(s) Used:
*Florida Collections*, 9. Houghton, Mifflin, Harcourt. The textbook is available online (through computer, tablet or smartphone). I will have a class-set available for in class use.

**Other Materials Needed:**
- Composition notebook
- Loose-leaf paper or a spiral notebook
- Pens or pencils
- Electronic Use Form on file with the Media Center; without this form you cannot use the school laptops I will have in class.

**Course Objectives:**
Students will…
- Learn the general principles behind all writing, and how they apply to both non-fiction, fiction, and poetry, and to both the texts we read and the texts we write.
- Read to know what texts say, what texts do, and what texts mean.
- Use different literary lenses to analyze texts from a variety of perspectives
- Write in multiple modes and genres, including narrative, reflective, expository/informational, argumentative, and literary analysis
- Write using different organizational styles appropriate to the genre, topic and audience
- Write using different types of details appropriate to the genre, topic and audience
- Use the writing process to plan, draft, revise, and polish pieces of writing,
- Develop skills in questioning, class discussion, public speaking, listening, viewing media, and critical literacy.

**Major Units/Topics/Themes:**

Inquiry Unit for Year: What is the purpose of education? What is the power of education?

Unit themes:

**Quarter 1:** Themes – The Power of Definition/Education as Survival in the World - Essential Questions: How do humans endure in the face of adversity? How do successful writers develop character in a narrative? In what ways is education a matter of survival? Is education just for college and careers?

**Quarter 2:** Theme – The Power of Attention, Educating the Emotions - Essential Questions: How are we all connected? How do writers use details of all sorts? How does literature work on multiple levels at once? How does education create connections between people as well as separate them? Is education objective, or subjective, or both?How do we experience love and the conflicts surrounding it? How do successful writers compare and contrast in literary analysis? What power do words have over our emotions and decisions? Why do emotions matter in writing, education, and life? Play: *The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare

**Quarter 3:** Theme – The Bonds Between Us/ Finding Common Ground/The Struggle for Freedom - Essential Questions: Essential Questions: How have people expressed their desire for freedom? How are texts used as evidence in writing and discussion? Does education give us more freedom or less? Novel: *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee

**Quarter 4:** Themes – The Power of Words and Literature – Essential questions: In what ways does education make us more human? In what ways might education be necessary for society to survive? What, in the end, is the purpose of education? Novel: *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury
**Major Projects:** Summative assignments will include Volusia Literacy Tests, major writing assignments (essays, literary analysis, stories), speeches and presentations. Class time and time to work at home will be given for all major assignments.

**Methods of Assessment:**

**Diagnostic Assessments:** These assignments may or may not go in the gradebook, but they are designed to see what students’ current level is at a particular skill or skill set as a reader or writer. They do not count toward the students final average.

**Formative Assessments (40% of average):** These assignments are practice work for learning and growth of skills and thinking. Many of these will be done in students’ composition notebook (Writer’s Notebook), though some will be done on loose-leaf paper. Some formatives will be based on textbook assignments; others will be teacher-designed. Formatives will include:

- Journals – Writing to explore ideas and develop thinking
- Writing exercises – Short writing assignments designed to develop specific writing skills such as using different types of details, citing sources, revising for sentence fluency, and organizing ideas.
- Reading notes/annotations – A written log of what students are noticing as they read a particular text
- Reading charts – During the reading of novels or plays, students will be asked to summarize, keep track of what they notice, and come to class with discussion questions based on the text.
- Short speeches and discussion participation – students will be given grades for short speeches delivered to the class, and for their participation in class discussion.

**Summative Assessments (60% of average):** These assignments are the “big ticket” items, the assignments where students demonstrate what they have learned to do. These include the district Volusia Literacy Tests during the first semester, as well as any major writing assignments, projects, or tests. You will be allowed the opportunity to retake one summative assignment per quarter if you are not satisfied with your original grade. All retakes must be completed within two weeks of the original assignment date.

**Academic Support:** I am available for help and tutoring Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday during the last 20 minutes of lunch (12:25 – 12:47; 12:37 – 12:57 on early release days) in my room by appointment. I am also available between 7:30am and first bell every morning in my room. The DeLand High Writing Center is available as well in room 8-208.

**Make-up Work Policy:** Parents and students should refer to the school’s policy as found in the Student Handbook for acquiring and receiving credit for all make-up work.

**Excused Absences:** If you will have an excused absence, you will have one day to make up the work for each day that you are out. It is your responsibility as a high school student to check on what the make up work is. I recommend having a “study buddy” who can take down assignments and check for work, but you can also check with me during my Academic Support times.

**Academic Honesty:** Plagiarism, according to the American Heritage Student Dictionary, is to “use and pass off as one’s own (the ideas or writings of another),” or “to make use of the passages or ideas from (another) as if they were one’s own.” If you write something in a paper that doesn’t come out of your own head, you must give credit to the person who wrote it. Plagiarism is a form of cheating. Cheating is defined as “to deceive by trickery.” Academic honesty and integrity means not cheating.

Plagiarism can be anything from copying an entire paper, to copying even a sentence or part of a sentence, without giving credit to the original source.

**Students should not:**

- Copy or copy and paste information from a book, magazine, website, or other source, including your own previous work without citing that source to give credit.
• Take a passage from another source and change words, word order, or order of sentences and then submit the information as your own writing.
• Write or speak (in a speech, presentation, or PowerPoint) someone else’s words and ideas without giving credit.
• Use their own work from a previous assignment or assignment for another class without getting explicit permission from both teachers.

Students should:
• Record all relevant information about any source they might use in an assignment, including authors, titles, editions, publishers, publication dates, places published, website names, URL’s, dates accessed, and persons spoken to (for interviews).
• Clearly either quote directly or paraphrase (put into your own words) any information from a source in the text of the assignment, and cite the source, either in the sentence or in parentheses.
• Include a Works Cited at the end of any assignment that includes sources. A Works Cited page should be in a recognized format (MLA, APA, etc.) as assigned by the teacher. Students may use websites like Citation Machine (http://citationmachine.net) to help create their Works Cited.

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Unit themes:
Quarter 2: Themes – The Power of Attention, Educating the Emotions - Essential Questions: How are we all connected? How do writers use details of all sorts? How does literature work on multiple levels at once? How does education create connections between people as well as separate them? Is education objective, or subjective, or both? How do we experience love and the conflicts surrounding it? How do successful writers compare and contrast in literary analysis? What power do words have over our emotions and decisions? Why do emotions matter in writing, education, and life? Play: *The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare
Quarter 3: Theme – The Bonds Between Us/Finding Common Ground, The Struggle for Freedom - Essential Questions: Essential Questions: How have people expressed their desire for freedom? How are texts used as evidence in writing and discussion? Does education give us more freedom or less?
Quarter 4: Themes – The Power of Words and Literature – Essential questions: In what ways does education make us more human? In what ways might education be necessary for society to survive? What, in the end, is the purpose of education? The class will read a novel (to be announced) this quarter.
Major Projects: Summative assignments will include Volusia Literacy Tests, major writing assignments (essays, literary analysis, stories), speeches and presentations. Class time and time to work at home will be given for all major assignments.

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credit.
• Use their own work from a previous assignment or assignment for another class without getting explicit
permission from both teachers.

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