**English II: American Studies 2012-2013**

*Swegarden*

[jeswegarden@rochester.k12.mn.us](mailto:jeswegarden@rochester.k12.mn.us)

**The Course Description**

American Studies is a year-long course that is designed to teach you how to write well-developed, appropriate papers and present to you from a historical perspective the evolution and development of literature in America. In order to do that, you need to work hard at reading and understanding how particular pieces of writing reflect the attitudes and social movements of American history. You will also need to work hard at developing fundamental writing skills that will enable you to produce effective compositions.

The course will be divided into approximately 10 units of study, each of which will be followed by a summative unit test. Most of the time the unit assessment will involve a multiple choice test combined with an essay test. Those test scores will assess your understanding of American literature, your writing skills, and your understanding of history. Calendars for the units will be posted on Mr. Swegarden’s website at jeswe.weebly.com. Each calendar is a guide to keep us on track, but may be changed as specific needs arise among students. Along with the summative exam, there will also be formative assessments within each unit. Some of the unit test scores may be part of your grade for both English class and history class.

American Studies is designed to provide you with enrichment in higher level thinking skills, with more rigorous standards in the application of study and listening skills, with higher expectations in the production and delivery of presentations, and with more challenging reading assignments and grammar studies. In addition, students are expected to be able to employ a mature writing style when applying and analyzing the course materials. Those materials include various genres and modes including verse, stories, dramas, novels, essays and nonfiction works.

While specific details of the course may vary, the major components that I will teach you this year and that you must know and perform before passing the class are to:

1. Write three **Multi-Paragraph Papers**.

A. Narrative

B. Informative Research

C. Literary Analysis

2. Analyze and understand **Voice, Theme,** and **Style** in a work of literature.

3. Examine **Major Authors, Literary Works and, Periods of American Literature** including

A. Colonialism B. Romanticism C. Transcendentalism D. Individualism E. Realism

F. Naturalism G. Regionalism H. Modernism I. Post Modernism J. Multiculturalism

4. Understand and use the **Mechanics** of literature including grammar, usage, and punctuation.

5. Write effective answers to **Essay Questions.**

6. Utilize effective **Reading and Analysis Strategies** while studying literature.

**The Truth**

*Because this is an honors level course, you must meet some basic expectations. The expectations are:*

* + **That you will not plagiarize information**
  + **That you will create all work in MLA style**
  + **That you will word process all work unless instructed otherwise**
  + **That you will participate in class discussions**
  + **That you will attend class regularly**
  + **That you will not hand in work late**

**The Grades**

*After I assign the appropriate number of points to a particular activity, you will be graded on a straight percentage basis. The scale is as follows:*

A: 100-89.5 B: 89.4-79.5 C: 79.4-69.5 D: 69.4-59.5 F: 59.4-0.00

**All percentages are rounded up to the nearest tenth. For example, 79.44 is a C, where 79.45 is a B. Per the attendance policy, you will be deducted 5 percent for each unexcused absence.**

**Absences and Assignments**

You are responsible for finding out what you missed and for making up the work. If you are excused for sports, appointments, activities, etc., arrangements for handing in an assignment or taking a test must be worked out with Mr. Swegarden before you leave. Pre-excused absences do not provide you with the excuse to hand in an assignment late nor take a quiz or test the day after it is scheduled. You must make up work ahead of time if you know you are going to be gone on a specific date, unless you have made specific arrangements with Mr. Swegarden. Prior to a pre-excused absence or after an excused absence, it is your responsibility to find out what you will be missing or what you actually missed.

**DUE Friday:**

Discuss the syllabus and the following expectations with a parent or guardian. Write below any comments or questions, sign below with your parent/guardian, and return **this sheet** to Mr. Swegarden.

**NOTE TO PARENTS:**

**The SKYWARD grading program is a wonderful tool. It is not, however, a perfect system. Please keep in mind that grades can be updated on a daily basis, but not all assignments will be graded the day they are due. Additionally, I receive a number of questions from parents regarding missing work and grades. I believe it is imperative for your son or daughter to learn to communicate with me and to share his/her perspective on a particular situation. With that in mind, prior to emailing me with questions that you have regarding a grade, assignment, or classroom situation, have your son or daughter talk to me in person about the issue. If you feel it is not resolved at that point, please feel free to contact me.**

**Plagiarism has become a significant and disturbing issue in the American Studies course the last few years. I understand that the students with whom I work are adolescents and, therefore, prone to making mistakes. I also know that when a student buys an online paper, uses another person’s paper, or copies a presentation, he or she is well aware that he or she did not create that work. With that in mind, I am initiating a zero tolerance policy regarding plagiarism. A student who hands in a significant portion of work that is not his or her original creation will receive a non-negotiable zero for that assignment.**

**Please acknowledge by signing below that you have read and agree to the conditions regarding communication and plagiarism.**

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