

## Contemporary Lit and Comp

Room: 9700

Teacher: Matt Misuraca

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### Who am I as a teacher?

I strive to create a community of learners. I believe that the education system often places too much emphasis on competition, even though society has proven time and time again that cooperation is the most effective way to accomplish a goal. I believe this community to be a safe place. If students do not feel comfortable voicing an opinion, then we can never truly dig to the root of a problem. I find that I am most comfortable with composition teaching as opposed to literature teaching, but I am working to improve. Also, I have noticed that I am not as prolific a lecturer as I could be; however, I do not strive to make that a focus in my classroom.

I encourage you (as the student taking this class) to advocate for yourselves. When parents contact me, my first question will always be, "Have I spoken to \_\_\_\_\_ about this?" Understand I would like you (as the student taking my class) to take your grades and future in your own hands.

Please contact me via email only. My telephone neither rings nor flashes to tell me anyone has called/left a message, therefore I do not always remember to check for messages until they are several months old. All emails will be returned within 24 hours except on weekends and holidays.

**Materials Needed:** 1 folder specific to this class  
1 notebook specific to this class  
1 pack of sticky notes  
1 book of your choice  
1 flash drive  
Various pens/pencils/highlighters, etc.  
Library card or novel (more information to come)

**Grade Breakdown:** Pretty standard stuff. Rounding is at my discretion.  
90%-100% is an A  
80%-89% is a B  
70%-79% is a C  
60%-69% is a D  
59% and below is a F

**First 15:** Because one of my ultimate goals for you is to become better readers and writers, you will be either reading or writing for the first 15 minutes of EACH DAY of class. Reading material is your choice, however, there are some obvious exceptions (textbook, magazine, catalog, internet, websites, etc...). You need to have a book! From time to time, you will be given a grade based on whether or not you have your book. You will also be choosing from a menu of activities

about your book. The expectation is that you read and complete one book every 6-7 weeks in addition to the long term reading assignment, which we will discuss below. This is the minimum requirement. If you need help choosing a book or acquiring the proper reading material, just ask!

**Course Description:** In this course, students will prepare for the demanding reading and writing requirements in college. Students will learn valuable techniques for improving their reading comprehension and developing their critical thinking skills across various subject areas. Students will improve their ability to read deeply and carefully, understanding how authors use language to create meaning. All elements of this course are intended to make a student's transition into college as smooth and successful as possible.

**Course Policies:** I do not tolerate hateful words, phrases or gestures. I want to create a community in my classroom and you need to know that pushing me on this will not bode well for your future. Use of inappropriate words, phrases, gestures, etc. will result in you being moved to the hall or the main office if needed. Just be nice.

**Attendance:** It is simple. Come to class. Don't be late. I will honor your time in our class. I will use it wisely and try to keep you from having excessive amounts of homework. However, if you choose not to work, to show up late or not at all, you will have lots of homework. The amount of homework you have is directly affected by how absent/tardy you are.

**Participation:** It is simple. In order to create a community, we need to hang out and get to know each other. We will get to know each other by sharing our work, by working together in groups and all that sort of fun. To keep each of us accountable for our participation, each student will be given a "quality worker" grade. This 50-point grade is there to reward students who demonstrate the 4 Ps (punctuality, preparedness, participation, politeness). This grade may fluctuate throughout the term. Discussion is a large part of my course, and most people prefer this to constantly having to write. As long as we are able to sustain discussion, then we can avoid busy work assignments.

**Missed Assignments:** ...are simple. If you know you're going to be absent before a due date, get your assignment to me (via email or give it to a friend to turn in for you) before you go. If you are absent, you get as many days as you were gone to make-up an assignment plus one day. This is the policy at Castle View High School. After those dates, the late work policy applies. If missed assignments are not turned in on time, they become missing and/or late work, which can not be made up for credit.

**Cheating:** Don't cheat. Don't steal. Trust that whatever you come up with in our class is going to be loads better than some ridiculous thing you can find off the internet. Oh, and assume that if you can find it, I can find it too. And... cheaters get 0s on assignments. Cheaters get NO chances to make up assignments. Cheaters get to explain to us, and their parents (in their own, non-

plagiarized, words) why they thought someone else's work was better than their own. Cheaters can be expelled for cheating. Think about that. (I'll teach you how to properly use the internet as a resource. If you ever have a doubt about whether your use is appropriate for the class, please ask. Better safe than sorry with this policy.)

**Technology:** Use of technology including personal computers, tablets, smartphones, etc. is an important part of our class. Abuse of technology (texting in class) will cause you to not be able to use any of the available technology in class. Don't ruin it for yourself by misusing technology. If you have any questions about whether or not your use is acceptable, please ask! If you have the ability to bring your own device to class, preferably a computer of some kind, it is encouraged but not required. I will do my best to book computer carts, but sometimes the demand is too high within the building. On days that I cannot book computers for all, the expectation will be that the students work in groups as a means of spreading resources. **Most importantly** with regards to technology, if you do not think you will have access to certain devices or a home computer outside of class then please see me privately and we will work something out.

Please detach the bottom of this page and return no later than Friday, August 12<sup>th</sup>.

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I have read and understand the policies for Contemporary Lit & Composition with Mr. Misuraca.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_