

Goldhammer

LA 9
2011-2012

Scholars of Language Arts:

Welcome to LA 9! I am truly ecstatic to be joining you in your first round of academic adventure at MSHS. Over the course of the next two semesters we will all have ample opportunities to get to know each other, be amazed at the class' collective brilliance, and most importantly, delve into the fascinating and life-changing world of language arts. The goal of this course is to provide you with a strong foundation in the core areas of language arts: reading, writing, and critical thinking. Throughout the year we will undergo an exploration of a diverse curriculum of literary works, genres, and writing styles in order for you to develop the skills necessary for effective communication and further academic success. Be prepared to read and write, participate in class discussions and presentations, and hone your skills as a writer in order to meet all course expectations. These expectations are stringent and you are expected to fulfill them in a *creative, independent, and responsible* manner. Get ready to work hard, increase your love for the written word, develop as a scholar of language arts, and have fun along the way. I am sincerely looking forward to sharing in the journey.

--Mr. Goldhammer

Course Content

-Required Course Reading:

Of Mice and Men –John Steinbeck

Animal Farm –George Orwell

Romeo and Juliet –William Shakespeare

The Odyssey –Homer

To Kill a Mockingbird –Harper Lee

Additional materials/texts are used throughout the year. Additional titles (including outside reading requirements) may be added if time allows.

-Reading: Reading activities will focus on the areas necessary for success in an academic environment. Therefore, thematic analysis, textual examination, and the fostering of critical thinking skills will be heavily emphasized. Students will learn to better support original ideas and commentary with concrete evidence.

-Writing: Writing activities will center on the development of a structured writing process and meeting the standards of the six-trait writing model for paragraph and essay writing. A major element in your studies will be the writing of analytical essays focusing on some major, thematic aspect of the work at hand. You will be given the opportunity to improve your writing by undergoing the multiple steps in the writing process and by completing numerous drafts of major papers.

-Other Activities: Other activities will include studying **grammar** and **vocabulary** in conjunction with student writing and the literary content of the course, individual and group presentations focusing on major units, and regular **standardized assessment prep** will also be included. The completion of all coursework and participation in class discussions and activities are essential to a student's achievement.

Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts

The content of this course is **directly in-line with *the Common Core Standards*** recently published by the Common Core Standards Initiative. Since this course—in addition to specific language arts goals—aims to prepare students for college and career readiness, much of what these standards propose a freshman should be able to do corresponds with the work we do in LA 9.

For a detailed look at these common standards, please follow the link below to the complete *Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts*. (http://www.corestandards.org/assets/CCSSI_ELA%20Standards.pdf)

Course Requirements, Expectations, & Other Important Matters

-Complete All Reading Assignments: Whether it is a 3-line haiku or a 57+ page selection from a novel, you are responsible for coming to class prepared to discuss, think, and explore the text/material at hand.

-Actively Participate/Be Attentive In Class: The success of this class lies on the shoulders of you, the students. In order for a dynamic, mature, and interesting classroom to exist, active participation is a necessity. Remember: taking a risk often leads you to the most interesting places....

-Be Prepared: Just as it is impossible to climb Mt. Everest in 3-wheeled roller-skates, it is extremely difficult to assess your genius if the proper materials are not at hand. Having the necessary textbooks, writing utensils, journals, etc. are a definite requirement.

-Complete All Daily Assignments, Homework, and Extended Projects: Your success in this class is highly dependant on your dedication to completing all assignments—no matter what their size or significance. Assignments are typically due at the beginning of class. With the exception to excused absences (see below), **late work is not accepted** without prior arrangement/communication with me.

-Absences / Make-Up Work: A daily summary of “what-was-covered” is posted online at “**The Daily Post**” section of penguinsandtoast.com. This portion of the website is **updated daily (right after school) and is designed for you to be able to access what was covered in class, from home**. It's a great resource for last minute updates, if you are ever absent, or if you find yourself confused about any specifics about homework, reading, due dates, etc. If absent, it is your responsibility to seek out any missed info/work as quickly as possible. With the convenience of the website, it is simple (and expected) to come to class prepared for—or at least aware of—the work you missed. If a class is missed—yet excused—you will have the same amount of days to make up the assignment that you were not present. Example: If you missed three days, you will have three days to make up the assignment(s). **Make-up work is not accepted without an excused absence**. If you have a school related absence, such as a field trip, it is my expectation that all work will *still* be turned in on that day and that any make-up work will be ready to be handed in at the start of class the next day. Of course, allowances will be made under special/emergency circumstances with proper documentation from a guardian. Note: A number of highly scientific and expensive studies have proven that a decrease in tardies/absences is directly linked to an increase in one's academic success.

-Excessive Absences: Your presence in the classroom is essential. Accordingly, if you miss more than 11 days during the course of a semester, you will not receive any credit for this class. Please see your student handbook for additional details.

-Plagiarism and Other Unpleasant Matters: In order to receive a score, **all major writing assignments must be submitted to Turnitin.com** prior to the actual due date (see the “Links” page on penguinsandtoast.com for instructions). Cheating or plagiarism on any assignment (as well as allowing other's to cheat or plagiarize off one's own work) will result in a failing grade for that assignment regardless of its weight. A second instance of plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the term—even if the second offense occurs in a course other than where the initial instance took place.

-Hall Passes: During class, it is your responsibility to decide whether or not it is a proper time to step outside for any personal reasons. All students leaving the classroom—for any reason—are **required to carry their planner with them at all times**. Remember: please do not leave class in the middle of instruction, failing to have your necessary materials is never an excuse to leave, and students should make a strong effort to use their time between classes as much as possible. Note: This is a system based on trust and maturity-- any abuses will result with immediate loss of privileges.

-Behavior: The behavior expectations for this class revolve around one guiding concept and principle: **RESPECT** and **P.R.I.D.E. (Perseverance, Respect, Integrity, Dependability, and Encouragement)**. All specific rules can be found in the MSHS handbook. What applies to the school similarly applies to this classroom. Simply put: act like an adult and you will be treated like one.

Grading & Contact

-Point/Grade/Class Breakdown: Your grade is broken down into the following categories/percentages. Grades will **continue at quarter and start anew at semester:**

Percentage	Category	Description (includes, but is not limited to):
50%	Assignments:	A compilation of scores that you will earn for homework, in-class activities, daily work, participation, etc.
40%	Papers/Projects	All graded writing pieces and major projects, presentations, and tests. This category is solely limited to “The Big Stuff,” of which you will have only four or six assignments in this category each term. With this in mind, be sure to recognize the weighted importance of these assignments and the effort that should therefore be afforded.
10%	Vocabulary	In-class vocab work, regular quizzes, etc.

-Grades: Letter grades are broken down by the following percentages:

A = 93+%	A- = 90-92%	
B+ = 87-89%	B = 83-86%	B- = 80-82%
C+ = 77-79%	C = 73-76%	C- = 70-72%
D+ = 67-69%	D = 60-66%	Failing = 59% and below

-Online Grade Access/Progress Reports: Ever lie in bed wondering if you brought that grade up from a B to a B+? Well, you are in luck. Current and up-to-date grades (with some exceptions) for this class are posted through the Snoqualmie Valley School District’s “online grading” program. **Students and parents have the convenience of accessing their grades at any time** by following the links on Mt. Si’s homepage...even at 3:17 in the morning.

Contact: If not in person, all questions, comments, or clarifications can be directed to:

Email: goldhammer@svsd410.org
 Phone: **425.831.8176**
 Web: penguinsandtoast.com
 Prep: **2nd period** (8-40-9:40 M-Th), (8:20-9:00 F)