

# GOLDHAMMER

## CREATIVE WRITING

### 2009-2010

Scholars of Language Arts:

Welcome to Creative Writing! I am truly ecstatic to be joining you in your current round of academic adventure at MSHS. Over the course of the next semester 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 creative writing. The goal of this course is simple: to enable you to work toward developing your craft as a writer. Be prepared to explore different genres; read and analyze various styles of literature; participate in class discussions, readings, and presentations; and most certainly—hone your skills as a writer and enthusiast of the written word. Please note: although this class is an elective, the expectations and requirements 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 writing, find your voice, and have fun along the way. I am sincerely looking forward to sharing in the journey.

--Mr. Goldhammer

## Course Content

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### **-A Small Sampling of What Will/May Be Covered:**

*Poetry and Poetic Devices/Forms*

*Understanding and Using Literary Elements*

*Focus on original Character, Setting, and Plot Development*

*Exercises in Descriptive Language*

*Fiction (primarily through writing and analyzing short stories)*

*Creative Non-Fiction (topical writing)*

*Developing Dialogue*

*Style and Voice (and how to get them)*

*Grammar (and how to make it do what you want)*

*Developing, Editing, Revising, and Submitting Final Drafts (for publication)*

*Critical Reading and Textual Analysis*

*...and oh so much more!*

**-Reading:** Becoming a good writer also means becoming a good reader. Therefore, a fair portion of the course will be spent on the exploration of various writers who are extremely good at what they do. Reading activities will focus on close textual examination and style analysis, including: tone and attitude, diction, detail, point of view, organization and syntax.

**-Writing:** As expected, writing is the central focus of this course. Therefore, all content is designed to encourage the development of personal voice, style, confidence, and craft. Although you will often have more freedom than say with formal essays, a high amount of dedication, commitment, and work is unquestionably necessary for success in this course. Assignments will vary in style, length, and form. Assessment will regularly be based on personal growth, commitment to the task, professionalism, and specific assignment guidelines.

**-Publishing:** Although writing for one's self is often rewarding and therapeutic, having your work displayed in a public forum is ultimately the goal of all creative writing. All students will be required to contribute to *Floodplain* (the class anthology) and publish a minimum of 2 pieces of original work a semester (once a quarter). The class will thus be responsible for the creation, design, and editing of a professional quarterly journal. Additional requirements to submit to outside sources may also be required.

**-Ongoing Assignments:** Ongoing assignments will also be a part of the course content. Monthly assignments, continuing practices and exercises, and gradually evolving works will exist in addition to assignments covered in class.

**-Public/Class Readings:** Reading one's own work to a crowd is never an easy thing. However, presenting your words to the public in the way they were meant to be heard is extremely valuable to you as a writer, a student, and a professional. Small group and class readings (and possibly larger events) will therefore be a part of the course requirements.

## Course Requirements, Expectations, & Other Important Matters

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**-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:** Cheating or plagiarism (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.

**-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.** 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

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

Percentage	Category	Description (includes, but is not limited to):
35%	In-Class Assignments	A compilation of scores that you will earn for homework, in-class activities, projects, and daily work.
45%	Final Drafts, Readings, & Publishing	Score in this category will be based on points earned for final drafts, submissions for publication, class (or other public) readings, and any other large-scale assignment/project.
20%	On-Going Assignments	Any assignment that has regular due-dates, scheduled checks, or requires continuing work/contributions.

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

A = 94+%	A- = 90-93%	
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.

**-Class Website:** The address for the class website is [www.penguinsandtoast.com](http://www.penguinsandtoast.com). In addition to being a one-stop source for all things LA, it is also updated daily, right after school with a description of what was covered in class and any homework that may have been assigned...that means you never have an excuse to be behind, confused, or unprepared—it's all right there for you. Check it regularly.

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

Email: [goldhammer@svsd410.org](mailto:goldhammer@svsd410.org)  
Phone: 425.831.8176  
Web: [www.penguinsandtoast.com](http://www.penguinsandtoast.com)

Prep: 2<sup>nd</sup> period (8:40-9:40)

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**Parent/Guardian Permission for Course Content 2009-2010**

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Parents and guardians,

Your student is currently enrolled in Creative Writing. Thank you for stopping by the website and reviewing the syllabus with him/her. Over the course of this semester, he/she will have many opportunities to explore various authors, literary styles and forms, and genres. As a part of his/her development as a writer, many works will be read, analyzed, and discussed. While the highest discretion will certainly be used, there may/will be selections and works where objectionable language/situations are present. Please note: all selections and writing with such characteristics are carefully chosen for their ability to successfully capture the human experience—and *never* for shock value or gratuitous language/violence/etc. By signing this form, you are giving your permission to allow your student to be exposed to such work. If you have any questions about this matter, please feel free to contact me at: **goldhammere@svsd410.org**

**Student:** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent/Guardian:** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Parent/Guardian Permission for Publication of Student Photo & Work on the Web  
2009-2010**

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Parents and guardians,

It is the school's practice when preparing work for external publication on the internet to seek parent/guardian permission before including their student's photo or work. In order to include your student's photo or work in the project described below, the school must have your signed permission on file. Last names of students will not be used on web-based projects. **Please review the information, sign it, and have your student return it to his/her teacher.**

**-Description of Project:** To create an online version of Mount Si's quarterly Creative Writing anthology, *Floodplain*.

**-Sign and Return to School:** The School District has my permission to publish a photo and/or the original work of my student for publication on the internet. I understand that my student's full name will not be published on the internet. As the parent or guardian of this student, I have read the Internet/Intranet Publishing Agreement and allow my student to be a Content Contributor\*. I agree to allow my student's work to be published on an Internet accessible server. I understand that use of electronic information resources is designed for educational purposes.

Parent or Guardian Name (Please print) \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Student (Please print) \_\_\_\_\_

\* A **Content Contributor** is an individual who, with a Content Sponsor (teacher), contributes content materials to an Internet/Intranet accessible server. They agree to follow their organization's Publishing Procedure and Guidelines and assure the accuracy and appropriateness of all materials they submit.