

August 16, 2010

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I am sincerely excited to have your child in my English 10 Honors course this semester. Honors American Literature is one of my favorite classes to prepare for and teach. It is definitely a challenging course, and I enjoy watching the students learn and grow as they encounter increasingly complex works from the authors they have long heard about as American classics, from Thomas Paine to F. Scott Fitzgerald. We approach literature as a writer's creative product—one that combines social, historical, and literary significance. We work to understand the writer's intended purpose and his craft and then to make connections with other works and, importantly, our own experiences and observations. Our study will begin with our required summer reading selections, and then we will move into a chronological study of American literature.

As you know, this course is the complement to 10 Honors Composition and Research, and both classes are prerequisites for AP Language and Composition. Thus, the focus of this course is the reading and analysis of American literature. I will ask students to respond to texts in a variety of ways, including through journals, discussions, visuals, and essays. I encourage students to read and study at home, making notes in their texts, studying unfamiliar vocabulary, and discussing with family members the content of the material. My goal is for them to become increasingly thoughtful and independent readers of college level texts!

In addition to our class work, I will assign an independent novel project (first nine weeks) and annotated bibliographies on current issues (throughout the semester). I will post deadlines soon for these projects and guide the students through both exercises; of course, these projects are intended to prepare them for future AP courses.

I am so excited about this semester, and I look forward to teaching your children. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns about assignments or expectations. Thank you so much!

Sincerely,

Mrs. Shepard