**Discovering America: Developing an Identity and Realizing the Dream**

**Course Description:** We will be examining the major themes of “American Identity” and “The American Dream” as they are revealed in American Literature. In doing so, we will actively engage in reading various texts from early American speeches and sermons to classic and contemporary works of poetry and prose. Throughout the course, we will analyze and evaluate the experiences of America and Americans, ultimately identifying, understanding, and defining change and growth in our country and its people. In doing so, we will gain a deeper understanding of American culture and identity as a nation and as individuals. Additionally, we will be exploring the concept that “everything is an argument.” We will analyze texts for arguments, evaluate their effectiveness, and ultimately learn to make our own arguments expressed through personal writing. Preparation for the SAT will be embedded throughout course activities and assignments.

**Course Objectives:** This course will be guided by the Common Core Standards, which are designed for growth and development in college and career readiness.

The following objectives are copied from The Common Core Standards for English Language Arts at [www.corestandards.org](http://www.corestandards.org). Please refer to the aforementioned website for more detailed information.

**Reading Standards for Literature:**

1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

2. Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.

3. Analyze the impact of the author’s choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama.

4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful.

5. Analyze how an author’s choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.

6. Analyze a case in which grasping point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant.

7. Analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama, or poem, evaluating how each version interprets the source text.

8. Demonstrate knowledge of eighteenth-, nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century foundational works of American literature, including how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes or topics.

**Reading Standards for Informational Texts:**

1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

2. Determine two or more central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.

3. Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text.

4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term or terms over the course of a text.

5. Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure an author uses in his or her exposition or argument, including whether the structure makes points clear, convincing, and engaging.

6. Determine an author’s point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness, or beauty of the text.

7. Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.

8. Delineate and evaluate the reasoning in seminal U.S. texts, including the application of constitutional principles and use of legal reasoning and the premises, purposes, and arguments in works of public advocacy.

9. Analyze seventeenth-, eighteenth-, and nineteenth-century foundational U.S. documents of historical and literary significance for their themes, purposes, and rhetorical features.

**Writing Standards:**

1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

6. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products in response to ongoing feedback, including new arguments or information.

7. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

8. Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the task, purpose, and audience; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and overreliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation.

9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

10. Write routinely over extended time frames and shorter time frames for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

**Note: We also will be incorporating CCSS Language Standards: Conventions of Standard English, Knowledge of Language, and Vocabulary Acquisition and Use.**

**Materials:** You will be expected to bring the following items to class on a regular basis for effective organization and participation in class objectives:

\* Writing utensils – multiple colored pens, pencils, and highlighters

\* Paper – Loose leaf paper is preferred. (No fringes)

\* Binder – 2-3” inch binder

\* Reading materials – as assigned in class. These may be handouts or texts.

**Reading Materials:** We will be reading literature from 17th Century to 21st Century America. Readings (including film as literature) may include, but are not limited to, “A Model of Christian Charity,” *The Scarlet Letter*, “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God,” *Rip Van Winkle* and *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow, Common Sense, Dead Poet’s Society* (and corresponding works)*,* selected texts from the literary movements of Transcendentalism, Romanticism, and Realism, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin, Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, Up from Slavery, The Souls of Black Folk, The Narrative Life of Frederick Douglass, The House on Mango Street, The Latin Deli, The Arrival, Chinese Born American,* etc.

**Course Assignments:** There will be a multitude and variety of assignments in this course that are weighted according to complexity. Full participation in and completion of all assignments is expected.

*Classwork:* There will be many assignments that you will be asked to complete in class. Classwork will include, but is not limited to, reading activities, SAT preparation, quizzes, reader response prompts, quote analysis, discussion, and general participation. Classwork assignments should be completed in class as time is allotted. In-class work with amply allotted time provided will not be accepted late. Extensions may be granted based on individual needs. Occasionally, classwork assignments may become homework assignments.

*Homework:* You should expect to work daily outside of the classroom. Many homework assignments will be reading assignments (such as reading guides or responses) along with annotating and journaling. These assignments are to prepare you for discussion and participation in classroom activities. Independent reading on personally selected texts is also expected. All homework assignments are to be completed prior to coming to class. However, a late policy is in place to aid you with your success as unexpected circumstances do arise. Assignments may be turned in up to three days late minus 10% per day. All work will be accepted through a quarter grading period with a maximum of a 30% late grade deduction. While this policy is in place to ensure your success, not being prepared for class may affect your classwork grades as well.

*Papers*: You will write several papers throughout the year, which will be considered major grades. The completion of these papers will often occur in multiple steps, allowing you to revise and edit according to instructor and/or peer feedback. All final drafts must be completed following strict MLA guidelines. Papers are considered major grades and will fall under a late work policy of up to three days late. Each day will result in a deduction of 10% of your grade. After three days, you will be allowed to turn in your paper until the end of a quarter grading period with a maximum of a 30% late grade deduction.

*Projects:* Some units will be accompanied by a final project that will be completed as an individual or in groups. Projects include tasks such as video compositions and creative writing assignments. Projects will be accepted up to three days late with a grade reduction of 10% per day. After three days, you will be allowed to turn in your project until the end of a quarter grading period with a maximum of a 30% late grade deduction.

*Tests*: Occasionally you will be given a test on a unit. Tests will consist of a variety of questions, which may include multiple choice questions, true/false questions, fill-in-the-blank, matching, quote analysis, short response, and short essay. You will be notified of test days well in advance; therefore, missing class the day or two before a test does not excuse you from taking the test on the assigned day.

**Academic Integrity:** You are expected to maintain academic integrity in the completion of all assignments. All work must be original. Plagiarism is considered a serious offense and will be subject to the building cheating/plagiarism policy on major grades only. Cheating on daily work or homework will result in a zero. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, to plagiarize means “to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one’s own.” All work must be properly cited in MLA format to avoid issues and concerns with plagiarism in the completion of papers and projects. When in doubt… CITE!