

*"It is a mistake to suppose that there is always a single right answer to every moral dilemma."
-Richard Norman (philosopher)*

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Why do people act as they do? What might have made them behave differently? What would you do in the same situation? Our world is rich with dilemmas ranging from the simple and mundane to the extreme and life threatening. We will focus on the struggles that we face as a society, with a particular emphasis on those surrounding relationships with family, friends, and even strangers. This work will take a variety of forms in terms of types of texts that we examine, styles of writing we explore, and the interdisciplinary approach we will utilize, which will weave in elements of philosophy, psychology, and sociology to enhance our understanding and elevate our discussion of these topics.

COURSE GOALS

- to continue to develop the ability to read critically, participate actively, think analytically, and write cohesively
- to see writing as more than a task for school; to begin to view it as a personal and vital activity and a way to explore our thoughts, realizations, and beliefs
- to ask big questions and engage in honest and meaningful conversation about human nature, morality, and our society
- to give you the tools necessary for success in the years to come

COURSE POLICIES

- **Attendance:** You are expected to show up to class every day. If you know in advance that you will be out for a college visit (or other reason), please come talk to me. When you are out, **it is still your responsibility to make up the work in a timely fashion.** You can do so by sending me an email at ksummerfield@scarsdaleschools.org or visiting me in my office (201B).
- **Materials:** Please come to class every day with: a writing implement, a place to take notes/write, a place to hold handouts (binder, folder, etc.), the text we are currently reading, your homework, and an open mind.
- **Homework:** The purpose of homework is to reinforce a concept from class, preview a text, or give you an opportunity to independently think/write/reflect on a topic. Since each assignment is purposeful, well-thought out, and will be utilized in class, **it is an expectation that you complete the homework each night.** Doing so will allow you to fully benefit from and participate in class each day.

- **Participation:** Active class participation (completing homework, contributing respectfully in discussion, etc.) is essential to having an interesting and productive class. Therefore, it will be counted as a portion of your grade. If speaking in class is something that you have trouble with or makes you nervous, please come see me to discuss.
- **Phones:** In order to be fully immersed in our work this year, we will need to be focused on the task(s) at hand. Therefore, it is the expectation that phones will be turned off/silent in your bag throughout the entirety of class.
- **Grading:** In a perfect world, there would be no grades, as feedback is much more valuable than letter grades in helping you grow as a student. Since it is part of my job to also give you a grade, each assignment you complete will have a point value associated with it (100 points for participation and larger writing assignments, ~10-20 points for smaller assignments, etc.) Your grade at the end of the term will be calculated by dividing points earned by total points available.
- **Plagiarism:** I have an incredible amount of confidence in your ability to complete the work that I assign. Not only that, but I actually *want* to hear what you think of the material we are engaging with. Taking credit for someone else's work is not only unethical, but counterproductive to your growth as a person and student. We will review specific plagiarism policies before our first large assignment. If you have questions before that, please ask!
- **Have a question? Need help? Want to chat?** Send me an email at ksummerfield@scarsdaleschools.org or stop by my office in the English alcove (room 201B). I love having visitors and am always happy to answer questions, discuss assignments, look at your writing, or help in any way I can.

A NOTE TO SENIORS

Senior year is a unique experience. You're on the cusp of adulthood, yet you still have one year of high school left. My aim is to take full advantage of this year to prepare you for what you will face in the future. I hope that you will help me help you by making this class an exciting one, with "real world" value, that we're all proud to attend each day.

Looking forward to a productive, meaningful, and exciting year!