

“Humankind. Be both.”
-Unknown

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Plotinus, an influential Roman philosopher, once said, “Mankind is poised midway between the gods and the beasts.” To what extent is that a sentiment we agree with? And what exactly is it that makes us human? In this class, we will explore this question as we examine humanity on its own terms, as well as in relation to animals, fairies, and gods. In delving into our own existence via the stories of literary figures, we will consider concepts of identity and culture and how they influence the human experience. This work will take a variety of forms, which will allow us to explore different types of texts and styles of writing.

COURSE GOALS

- to continue to develop the ability to read critically, participate actively, think analytically, and write cohesively
- to learn how to develop and support powerful arguments in both discussion and writing
- to ask big questions and engage in honest and meaningful conversation that pushes us to new realizations

COURSE POLICIES

- **Attendance:** You are expected to show up to class every day. If you know in advance that you will be out, let me know ahead of time. If you are out unexpectedly, send me an email at ksummerfield@scarsdaleschools.org.
- **Missed Work:** When you are out, **it is your responsibility to make up the work.** I am always happy to grant appropriate extensions based on excused absences and extenuating circumstances; however, you must contact me to make this happen. Unless we have come to a different agreement, your work is due with the rest of the class.
- **Email:** It is the expectation that you regularly check your school email for class communications and announcements. Additionally, be sure to set up email notifications so you will be made aware when new content is posted on Google Classroom.
- **Materials:** Please come to class every day with:
 - Writing Specific Materials:
 - a composition notebook
 - 1 labeled folder (2 pockets- 1 for writing handouts, the other for essays)
 - Additional General Materials: a writing implement (pen or pencil), a place to take notes (paper, notebook, etc.), a place to hold handouts (binder, folder, etc.), our current text, your homework, post-its (optional but suggested), 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:** One goal of this class is to be fully immersed in the world of literature and writing. In order to do so, 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!
- **Communication:** The true secret to this course (and high school in general) is communication. Everything runs much more smoothly when you communicate with those around you. To that end, help me help you! If you have a question, need extra support, or simply want to chat, please don't hesitate to 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 assist in any way I can.

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