St. Joseph High School Syllabus: Freshman Writing



**Teacher: Mr. McGahey**

**Department: English**

**Course Objectives:**

1. This course is designed to equip students with the proper skills and strategies needed to write papers/essays in all classes, not just English.

2. Students will be able to practice and develop writing processes pertaining to invention, revision, organization, drafting through multiple drafts, editing, and adjusting for rhetorical context (purpose, audience, persona).

3. Students will employ a range of writing strategies including brainstorming and free writing, mapping and outlining, conferring with teachers, drafting, and peer editing.

4. Students will be able to identify areas in their own writing in need of improvement.

5. Students will understand and apply the rules of agreement (subject-verb, pronoun-antecedent, verb tense).

6. Students will recognize and avoid the use of run-on sentences and sentence fragments.

**Course Outline:**  
  
First Quarter  
-Terms: plagiarism, purposes for writing, audience, paragraph, essay, thesis statement.  
-Practice creating topic sentences.  
-Practice making sentences specific.  
-Identify and practice the steps of the writing process  
-Create thesis statements and identify errors in writing thesis statements.  
-Identify elements of the five paragraph essay.  
-Write essays using the steps of the writing process  
-Modes of Rhetoric

         Descriptive Writing – Describe an item, place, or person (use spatial order)  
         Narrative Writing – Narrate an event (using chronological order)  
  
Second Quarter  
-Introduce and practice strategies for writing an effective introductory paragraphs and concluding paragraphs.  
-Write essays using the writing process  
-How to create parenthetical references.  
-How to create a Works Cited Page in MLA formatting.  
-Continue evaluating other essays for ways to improve own writing.  
-Writing pre-research drafts.  
-Using outside source material to support own original opinions by using direct quotes.  
-Modes of Rhetoric:  
          Definition Writing - Using specific and precise language and examples.  
          Persuasive Writing – Argumentation (using emphatic order)  
          Process Writing - How to specifically and precisely explain a process.  
            
  
Third Quarter  
-Continue to write essays using the writing process  
-Continue putting outside source material into essays.  
-Continue to directly quote.  
-Introduce paraphrasing.  
-How to avoid plagiarism when paraphrasing.  
-How to use parenthetical references.  
-Strategies for improving tone.  
-Primary vs. Secondary Sources  
-Strategies for selecting quality internet sources.  
-Reasons why wikipedia, yahoo answers, etc. should NOT be cited.  
-Read and analyze "The American Dream" by Dr. Martin Luther King  
-Identify how he uses definition and argument writing.  
-Write an argument agreeing or disagreeing with him.  
-Modes of Rhetoric:          Cause and Effect Writing  
          Comparison and Contrast – showing similarities and differences

Fourth Quarter  
-Compose a Research Essay  
-Prewrite and choose a topic  
-Compose a Pre-Research Draft  
-Create an annotated bibliography with at least ten sources  
-Compose a second draft with source material in the text  
-Submit final draft that is 6-10 pages in length and that contains at least six sources (two sources

being non-website sources)  
-Present Thesis and Research Material  
-Last Lecture Response  
-Exam Review: Practice Writing all the Modes of Rhetoric

**Grading Breakdown:**

Students will have ample opportunity to excel in this course.  I will always make myself available to the students.   Assignments will be graded on content and clarity; however, points will be taken off for sloppy work and informal writing.  The final grade will be determined using a category-weighted system:

**Percentages:**

Tests/Major writing assignments- 40%

Quizzes- 25%

Homework/Classwork- 25%

Daily Journal- 10%

**Final Semester Grades:**

Quarter 1- 40%

Quarter 2- 40%

Midterm Exam- 20%

Quarter 3- 40%

Quarter 4- 40%

Final Exam- 20%

\*Homework – Students are expected to have homework completed and in class with them on the day it is due. Late homework will not be accepted. If students are absent for a class, but are in school later that day, they are expected to submit work that was due in class that day.  Also, they are responsible for the work covered during class and all homework assigned during the class.

\*Writing – It is imperative that writing assignments, first and final drafts, are handed in on time. **Ten points** will be deducted each day a writing assignment is late. If a final draft is still not received one week after it was due, the grade for the assignment will be a zero!! In addition, major writing assignments must be typed. Any major writing assignment that is expected to be typed will not be accepted if it is handwritten.\*

**Necessary Materials:**

1. Pen/pencil

2. Spiral notebook

3. Folder

4. Daily journal

**\* Students should have above materials with them in class every day \***

**Procedures and Policies:**

1. First and foremost, you are expected to treat your classmates with respect at all times; inappropriate calling out, name calling, or disrespect will not be tolerated.

2. Be in your seat and prepared for class when the bell rings.

3. Obtain permission by raising your hand before speaking or leaving your seat, no calling out.

4. Follow directions and complete all assignments on time

5. Remain awake, alert, and on task during class time

**Policy for Inappropriate Classroom Behavior:**

First Offense- Warning, rule reminder

Second Offense- Teacher detention after school

Third Offense- Phone call home

**ABSENCE**

If students are absent, they are expected to see me on **the day they return to school** to find out what they missed during their absence. (Not the next day they see me in class!) Students who are absent from school on the class day before a test, but are present on the school day between class days are still expected to take the test or quiz on the assigned day. They are also expected to submit any homework and classwork covered during the missed class.

If students are absent on the day that a test or quiz is scheduled, it is their responsibility to make arrangements with me to take it. Students who miss a test or quiz have two class days from the day they return to school to make up any test or quiz that has been missed. A grade of zero will be given if the test or quiz is not made up in the given time frame.

**Personal Technology in the Classroom:**

Cell phones, computers, tablets, or any other electronic devices, ***are not to be used during class time without the permission of the teacher***. Students may not record any audio or any visual element of class without the teacher’s permission. Doing so *without* permission will result in disciplinary action. Any infraction of the “Acceptable Use Policy,” as explained in the student handbook, will be reported to the administration.

**Policy for Cell Phone use during class:**

First offense: Warning

Second offense: Teacher detention after school

Third offense: Phone confiscated, parent/guardian must pick it up

**Signatures:**

I have read and understand the information in the syllabus for this class. I accept all of the responsibilities and conditions outlined within:

Parent or Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Student: ­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_