Humanities I

Glennda Bayron

Wylie East High School

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Dear Humanities Students and Parents,

As a pre-requisite to this class, your child has been identified as Gifted & Talented by WISD. Though many of our courses serve the gifted student, this class was designed specifically for that purpose. The program is a two-year cycle with pre-AP credits being earned for pre-AP English I or II. As mandated by the state, we will cover all of the TEKS for English Language Arts and Humanities and utilizing Advanced Placement (AP) strategies to meet and challenge our best and brightest students. In Humanities, we aim to study literature through the lenses of history, art, music, religion, and culture.

Students in Humanities I & II will practice a series of **writing** techniques designed to develop their individual styles and voices. Appropriate diction, effective imagery, rich detail, deft manipulation of point of view, purposeful use of various sentence structures—all these elements of excellent writing will shape student writing in our class. Our class will focus on reading far more than plot, more than detail, more than incidents or characters. Student readers will learn to look for patterns, to detect tone and tone shifts, to analyze symbols, to deconstruct arguments, and to perceive layers of meaning in literature, film, art, and music. This kind of reading is merely practice for the “real” work of reading that forms the primary task of human beings—the task of “reading” the world, life, itself, as a text. To that end, these student readers will also “read,” analyze, and interpret experiences they encounter outside of the literary world.

A central goal of our course is to establish a **reading habit**. As a writing teacher, I fervently believe that to write well, students must be exposed to a wide variety of books; this is particularly difficult when so few students enjoying reading. My goal is twofold: not only do I hope to challenge each of my students to foster a reading life that exists outside of the classroom, but also, I hope to give my students and upper edge as they work their way towards college. I expect them to grow as readers, increasing their stamina and the complexity of the books they choose. The ultimate intent is to recommend books that interest all students so that they enjoy the books they choose.

Here’s the disclaimer: Knowing every book in its entirety or remembering every detail of each book in the library is near impossible. You may pick up a book your child left behind and open to a passage with the details of a group of child soldiers in Sudan mercilessly slaughtering an entire village (*A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier* by Ishmael Beah) and wonder why reading it is a homework assignment. I will answer, “Your son or daughter chose it.” I might have recommended it because I read it and loved it, or the book may be unfamiliar to me because your child borrowed it from another student or public library. The bottom line: **I will not censor what is read in this class.** Please support me in this. I hope the books your student chooses will generate conversation between you and him/her.

Because I respect your role as parents and the traditions you hold sacred, if you want me to more closely monitor your child’s choices this year, by all means, call me and we’ll work out a plan that we can both contribute to. I am hoping we can work together to help our students recapture the pleasure and passion of reading.

**Academic Honesty & Integrity**

Most of the work you do in this class will be interpretive, creative, or analytical, so I hope that the issue of academic honesty will not become a problem this year. Academic honesty is an absolute necessity if you are to learn all that you can. Relying on another person for answers or asking another person to do your work will prevent you from developing important skills. I need hardly add that cheating, copying another’s work, or having someone else do work for you are actions which call for the most severe academic and personal consequences. These consequences are outlined in the WHS Student Handbook.

If you ever fall behind, talk to me and let me know if you don’t understand something or if something about the class is causing you undue stress or anxiety. **NEVER** resort to dishonesty in order to make a deadline. Come and talk to me beforehand.

You are allowed to have other people proofread your essays, but you must make all corrections yourself. In other words, your proofreader may mark and name the mistakes you have made, but he or she may not tell you how to amend the error without breaking the academic honesty policy. The very worst thing you can do when writing an essay at home is to “look around on the Internet for ideas.” Such “looking around” usually leads to sloppy, clichéd writing and often is the entrance ramp to academic dishonesty.

**Behavior Expectations**

I ask that you come to class on time, prepared to give the work at hand your best effort. In addition, I expect you to be courteous, kind, and considerate.

The following qualities contribute to academic and personal success:

* intellectual humility
* consistent attendance and punctuality
* persistence in the face of adversity
* willingness to benefit from correction
* task orientation and a sense of urgency
* a sense of personal responsibility
* flexibility of mind and attitude
* openness to new ideas

**Humanities I Texts & Supplies**

**Freshmen only**

**Texts**

*To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee

*Macbeth* by William Shakespeare (must be **Folger Shakespeare Library** edition)

*Ethan Frome* by Edith Wharton

Students will have a choice of 2 works. We will announce the selections before we begin Literature Circles.

**Supplies for class:**

1 Composition Notebook  
Highlighters – multiple colors  
Blue/Black Pen  
Notebook Paper

5 Dividers

Substantial place in a binder or a binder for Humanities

Dear Parents,

Dear Parents,

Please sign below to indicate that you have reviewed my syllabus and expectations for Humanities. I appreciate your taking the time to look over this information with your son or daughter. I look forward to talking with you and working as a partner with you in your child’s education.

Respectfully,

*Glennda Bayron*

I have reviewed Mrs. Bayron’s expectations for Humanities and will encourage my child to abide by its provisions.

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Dear Students,

Please sign below to indicate that you have reviewed my syllabus and expectations for Humanities. I look forward to our year together.

Respectfully,

*Mrs. Bayron*

I have reviewed Mrs. Bayron’s expectations for Humanities and I promise to abide by its provisions. Furthermore, **I understand that the** **burden of responsibility for success in** **this class is mine, not my parents.**

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