**Contemporary Literature Syllabus**

Contemporary Literature is a course that focuses on reading, studying, and analyzing literature from the last 50 years. Because of the contemporary nature of the literature, we will encounter rough language and situations in the literature. I expect you to handle this in a mature manner.

You will be held accountable for reading sections of novels by specific due dates. You will also be expected to complete research, writing, and projects related to the works we read. We will also be viewing films related to the reading.

We will be reading the following novels:

* *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time* by Mark Haddon
* *Maus: A Survivor’s Tale* by Art Spiegelman
* *Big Fish* by Daniel Wallace
* *The Things They Carry* by Tim O’Brien
* *The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak
* *The Kite Runner* by Khaled
* *Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurst
* Possibly either *Into Thin Air* by Jon Krakauer or *Thirteen Reason’s Why* by Jay Asher
* We may also read some poetry and short stories.

We will not likely get to all of these, and this is not necessarily the order that we will read the novels in.

**Course Objectives: Students will…**

* Read several works of contemporary literature
* Explore a variety of forms of literature
* Identify universal themes commonly found in contemporary fiction
* Develop analytical reading skills
* Learn and utilize a variety of reading strategies when looking at various literary works
* Understand the various literary devises present in the works studied
* Express ideas both orally and through writing, working to improve your communication skills through repeated practice

Realistically, you might not love everything we read, and that’s ok. Sometimes dislike or discomfort can produce fascinating thoughts and ideas. I do, however, expect everyone to (1) read the texts in their entirely; (2) complete all assignments that go along with each text; and (3) actively participate in classroom discussion. I cannot emphasize enough how important class participation is in this type of class. Active and regular participation will help you become strong readers and critics of literature, analytical thinkers, and stronger writers, all skills that will benefit you immensely as you go to college and beyond.

With all of this being said, it is very important that you understand the following: This is an upper level contemporary literature class. Some of the novels will have instances of adult language and adult situations (within reason). If this type of reading makes you uncomfortable, perhaps this is not the class for you. Also, if you have no intention of reading the works covered or don’t like to read, then you should probably reconsider taking this course and find a more suitable option for you.

**Materials Needed**

Binder, paper, a blue or black pen, a pencil, and post-it notes

**Types of Assignments**

* Reading assignments (obviously ☺)
* Reading guides and worksheets
* Quizzes and exams over material covered
* Essays
* Projects
* **On-going class discussions in which participation is important and graded**
* Semester exam or assignment