



UNIVERSITY HIGH SCHOOL

English

The curriculum of the English Department is designed to help students read literary texts very closely in order to discover what the text says, what the text means, how the text affects them, and how the text achieves its effect. We study texts by a variety of authors from various countries (concentrating especially, though by no means exclusively, on literature originally written in English) and from various periods. Although we explore backgrounds to the texts we read, our courses do not survey literature chronologically. Through class discussions and activities, study guides, written homework grounded in the text, and analytical essays, we help our students to understand figurative language, imagery, and patterns of language and to draw progressively more sophisticated inferences. Through their work, students engage in a dialogue with the text at hand, letting it speak directly and personally to them, and, in their turn, speaking their insights to it and asking their questions of it.

Our writing program focuses on analytical writing. We help our students learn how to find a valid thesis; how to research a text to find support for the thesis; how to narrow

or expand the thesis to fit the assignment; how to organize according to what the thesis says and to its logic. Students use rough drafts to develop appropriate rhetorical strategies; to check for errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics; and to come to logical conclusions. As in our class discussions, we teach our students to support their ideas by quoting directly from the text or texts under consideration. Our students also explore literature by writing personal essays, short stories, and poems.

Students must complete four credits of English and be enrolled in an English class during each term. All freshmen enroll in English 1, a year long course. Sophomores

choose between two yearlong English 2 courses, Literary Analysis or Expository Writing. After completing Literary Analysis, students may elect to take Analysis & Composition or English 3/4 as juniors. After completing Expository Writing, students enroll in English 3—Argument in their junior year. As seniors, those students choose between Analysis & Composition and English 3/4.

