

Welcome, parents of English III students!

We are so thrilled to begin this learning journey with your child! However, we need your help. We have one request of you to make this an even better year for your student: please make a point to speak to your child about what they are reading. Whether the discussion takes place gathered around the dinner table as a family or in the car after school, find a routine that works best for you.

Here are reasons we ask you to talk to your student about their reading each week:

- Reading relieves stress. High school is stressful. Many would argue that junior year is the most stressful of all four. Reading may be the perfect escape for your student as they navigate the year ahead.
- Reading builds stamina to prepare students for college. Reading for an hour or two in one sitting is a basic expectation in college. We will encourage your student to read at least two hours each week – talking with them about their reading will encourage and support them in developing this habit.
- There is a lot of talk in the media that ‘students today won’t read,’ but I believe students substitute all of those other distractions (the internet, TV, etc.) if they are not engaged outside the classroom in what they learn in the classroom.
- It is important that students still read and be exposed to ‘classic’ literature written by talented, time-tested authors and be guided by their teacher in how to approach challenging texts. Discussing these works with you may help students make sense of language and ideas that feel unfamiliar to them (or know they are not alone in their questions!).
- America was founded on the ideals of freedom of speech, religion, and the press. That means students will come across experiences outside of the classroom that will challenge their perspectives, values, and experiences. One of the benefits of a public education is the opportunity for students to read, write, research, debate, and confront those challenges in the safety of their learning community. Discussion helps students develop the skills to listen, understand, critique, and communicate effectively and civilly – important preparation for them to participate in the democratic process.
- Students will be required to read independently throughout the semester, in addition to our whole class and book club choice texts. That means your child will be choosing their own books, the content of which may deal mature content and adult themes. My hope is that you and your child find that talking about what they are reading, the questions they have, and why they are reading it strengthen your relationship as you are your child’s most trusted advocate.

The bottom line: I hope you will talk to your child about what he/she is reading this semester. I also encourage you to get a copy of a book and read it if you’re concerned about the content. (Our local library is free!) Also, if you want to know more about a book your child is reading, please try the School Library Journal web site, the American Library Association web site, or even Amazon.com. Or call me—I’ll tell you what I know.

Students will have access to all books in my classroom and the library, and your child will be allowed to choose what he/she reads. Because I respect your role as parents and the traditions you hold sacred, if you want me to more closely monitor your child’s independent reading choice(s) this semester, by all means, call me and we’ll work out a plan to which we can both contribute. Most importantly, I look forward to being a partner with you in your student’s learning, reading, and writing!

We thank you for your support!

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## Course Syllabus

*“The important thing is to not stop questioning. Curiosity has its own reason for existing. One cannot help but be in awe when he contemplates the mysteries of eternity, of life, of the marvelous structure of reality. It is enough if one tries merely to comprehend a little of this mystery every day. Never lose a holy curiosity.”*  
 – Albert Einstein

### English III Essential Questions.

*What does it mean to be American?*

*How is the American identity portrayed in American and world literature?*

*How is American culture shaped by world voices and cultures?*

*How do changes in American culture and identity shape life?*

*How do the various voices in America shape American culture and its institutions?*

**English III Course Description.** This course focuses on the variety of ways the American dream and identity has evolved for different groups of people over time, as presented in the novels, plays, essays, poetry, and short stories of American writers. Emphasis is placed on development of the student as a critical reader and intentional writer. Students continue to develop their composition, rhetoric, research, critical thinking vocabulary, communication, and study skills.

**Reading.** Throughout first semester, students will explore a range of literature from Native American tales to Puritan sermons to popular novels to modern satires. The diverse voices, perspectives, and genres of writing will emphasize the theme of the *Individual on the Frontier*, exploring the complex relationship between the individual and society, the influence of nature on individualism, and the moral and political “wilderness” that many Americans still navigate today. The second semester of the course will conclude in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries as we explore the American Dream through the American play and tragic hero, as well as in the research paper. In keeping with the “mixing pot” metaphor that characterized America’s settlement, the authors we read will vary in background, voice, and style in order to give full flavor to the American identity.

1<sup>st</sup> semester mentor texts: *The Scarlet Letter* (Hawthorne); *Narrative of Frederick Douglass* (Douglass); *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (Twain)

1<sup>st</sup> semester book club choices: *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* (Alexie), *American Street* (Zoboi), *The Awakening* (Chopin), *Between the World and Me* (Coates), *Catcher in the Rye* (Salinger), *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* (Safran Foer), *I’m Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter* (Sanchez), *Into the Wild* (Krakauer), *The Last American Man* (Gilbert), *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest* (Kesey), *Peace Like a River* (Enger), *The Road* (McCarthy), *Shane* (Schaefer), *A Walk in the Woods* (Bryson), *Wild* (Strayed)

2<sup>nd</sup> semester mentor texts: *The Great Gatsby* (Fitzgerald); *Death of a Salesman* (Miller)

2<sup>nd</sup> semester book club choices: *Fences* (Wilson), *The Piano Lesson*, *The Glass Menagerie*, *Two Trains Running*, *Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *A Long Day’s Journey into Night*, *Lost in Yonkers*, *The Miracle Worker*, *Stunning*, *August: Osage County*, *4,000 Miles*, *Blues for Mr. Charlie*, *Crimes of the Heart*, *Clybourne Park*, *With Their Eyes*

**Writing.** Although this is not a formal “composition” course, writing will be an integral and daily part of the course used to explore literary topics and develop students’ voices. Students will evaluate their strengths and weaknesses as writers. Through writing they will express opinions, develop the capacity to think critically, and become careful, thorough researchers. Second semester includes a Research Paper unit. Vocabulary and grammar instruction is also part of the daily curriculum. Since we strive to ensure students get timely feedback on their writing and they will receive frequent feedback throughout the writing process, final drafts will include only a rubric and minimal comments. Students should read and apply that feedback as needed.

**Grading.**

Formative Skill Work (chapter leaders; reading checks; annotations)	= 20%	*Extra Credit is
Writing (grammar checks; drafting; essays; creative writing)	= 40%	seldom offered.
Summative Assessments (unit tests; vocabulary tests; projects)	= 30%	
Final Exam	= 10%	

<b>Grading Scale.</b>	B+ 87-89	C+ 77-79	D+ 67-69	F 59 or
A 93-100	B 83-86	C 73-76	D 63-66	below
A- 90-92	B- 80-82	C- 70-72	D- 60-62	

**MLA.** All written assignments should be typed using Times New Roman, 12 point font. Modern Language Association (MLA) style and documentation rules are to be followed.

**Materials.** A three-ring binder with looseleaf paper to keep track of all notes and readings; a pen; a pencil.

**Technology.** Technology is an incredible tool that should be utilized and integrated in the classroom. However, cell phones and personal electronics often distract learners from interpersonal interactions required to be proficient communicators of both the spoken and written word. These devices should NOT be visible or used once students walk in the classroom. Students are welcome to take notes or draft on a personal chromebook or computer, but they are to be used only when the activities in class call for it. If a cell phone or other device is a distraction for the student, Mrs. Michael reserves the right to take it away until the end of the class period should a student not listen to given warnings. See page 13 in the Student Handbook for additional consequences.

**Email.** Parkway students are required to use their Parkway email account to contact teachers. Please keep emails formal and respectful, and remember email is rarely an acceptable substitute for speaking to or conferencing with Mrs. Michael in person. Keep in mind that I do not check my email from home after 4pm. In addition, students will create an account and are required to submit written work to Turnitin.com. This website is designed as a tool to ensure students properly give credit to others’ ideas and words.

**Attendance.** Each student’s presence is vital in order to fully develop skills and explore concepts during class discussion. I expect students to be in their seats and ready to begin class when the bell rings. After the first tardy or if a student is skipping class, a detention will be assigned (per Student Handbook pages 6-7). There are times when extenuating circumstances make it impossible to attend class. During such instances it is the student’s responsibility to gather class notes from another student, to visit the google classroom, consult the attached calendar, or meet with Mrs. Michael to clarify what was missed and make up the work.

**Late Assignments.** Homework is due at the beginning of class. Late process work and skill checks will be taken until the end of a unit, but will not be accepted if a student skips a step in the writing process. Assignments and assessments cannot be completed for credit once the unit is complete.

Late papers will be accepted up to two weeks late with an automatic grade-letter deduction (10%). After two weeks, the paper is a zero. ***Extensions on essays WILL be granted IF process work has been completed.***

**English Department Standard of Academic Honesty and Turnitin.com.** Please review our shared policy on Academic Integrity. This is the next page in this packet.

**General Classroom Behavior.**

In keeping with Parkway's food safety protocols, it is my preference and request that food is not brought into the classroom. I also prefer that students use the restroom during pass time. However, as juniors, we trust students to know what they need and speak to us directly should they need an exception. As long as the student handles the situation in line with our building's core values as outlined in the Colt Code, we will not have any issues. *Citizenship grades will be determined based on how well the student's behavior reflects the core values of Respect, Integrity, and Caring.* Please do not hesitate to contact Ms. Campanella and Ms. Michael with questions or seeking help.

**We want students in our classroom to be challenged academically but also to feel confident as they face those challenges. We simply ask that each student**  
1) be respectful, 2) be responsible, and 3) be ready to learn.

**Review and return this page by Monday, August 19<sup>th</sup>**

I have read and understand the contents of this letter, as well as the course expectations and procedures. Parents/guardians: please also include contact information that would be best to reach you throughout the semester.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian's Signature

**Contact Information.**

Student Name (Printed): \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name (Printed): \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Does your child have computer and internet access at home? Please circle: YES / NO

Student Extracurricular Activities: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Health concerns or situations the teachers should be made aware in order to better teach your student (please do not disclose anything you do not feel comfortable with our knowing):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Return the signed syllabus and Academic Honesty policy by \_\_\_\_\_ for 5 points extra credit.**

**Students will be quizzed over the syllabus and Academic Honesty policy on \_\_\_\_\_.**

**Binder due date (complete with loose leaf): \_\_\_\_\_**