

## Course Syllabus

<b>Course Title:</b>	American Literature	
<b>Term and Year:</b>	Spring 2019	
<b>Instructor's Name:</b>	Scott Lawson	
<b>Contact Information:</b>	Email: slawson@mansfieldschool.net Twitter: @ScottLawso Phone: 417-924-3236 ext. 309	
<b>Availability:</b>	During advisory time By appointment: Before school, second period, or after school	
<b>Instructor's Bio:</b>	<p>A Christian County native, Scott Lawson graduated from Sparta High School in 1986. He attended Drury University and Missouri State University in Springfield, majoring in English and minoring in journalism. He graduated cum laude in 1992 and earned an MA in English in 2009.</p> <p>Scott Lawson has worked in a variety of industries including manufacturing, agribusiness, restaurant management, and sales. He taught at Mountain Grove High School from 2001 to 2004 and has taught at Mansfield High School from 2004 to the present.</p> <p>His academic interests include composition and rhetoric, creative nonfiction, and science fiction. He has published verse in <i>Missouri Teachers Write</i> and criticism in <i>The Internet Review of Science Fiction</i>. Although he appears to be the sole connection between two defunct publications, he remains irrationally optimistic about future projects.</p>	
<b>Course Description:</b>	American Literature is a survey of canonical works in American literature, emphasizing questions of multiple perspectives on issues of American identity.	
<b>Prerequisite or Corequisite Courses:</b>	English 2 (prerequisite)	
<b>Course Schedule:</b>	Meeting daily, third period	
<b>Course Location</b>	Mr. Lawson's room	
<b>Electronic Resources:</b>	Google Apps for Education MoreNet misterlawson.weebly.com	
<b>Calendar:</b>	See district calendar	
<b>Student Outcomes:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The student will be able to comprehend and interpret texts. (MLS RLT1, SMS CA 2, 7, Goal 1)</li> <li>2. The student will be able to analyze craft and structure in texts. (MLS RLT2, SMS CA 2, Goals 1, 2)</li> <li>3. The student will be able to synthesize meanings from multiple texts. (MLS RLT3, SMS CA 2, 7, Goals 1, 2)</li> </ol>	

	<p>4. The student will be able to conduct research. (MLS W1, SMS CA 3, 4, Goals 1, 2, 3)</p> <p>5. The student will be able to follow a writing process. (MLS W2, SMS CA 1, 4, 6, Goals 1, 2, 3)</p> <p>6. The student will be able to review, revise, and edit texts. (MLS W3, SMS CA 3, 4, 6, Goals 1, 2, 3)</p>
<b>Assignments:</b>	Subject to change. See class webpage – misterlawson.weebly.com
<b>Weighting of Assignments:</b>	Points are assigned using a variety of scoring methods as appropriate to assignments. Participation is also worth points on some assignments. Not all activities are assignments though. Some activities in class are for practice and will not be graded. Students who show evidence of effort of improvement may receive verbal praise and encouragement. Such praise is not a guarantee of a particular grade.
<b>Grading Scale:</b>	Grades are assigned according to a percentage of total points possible for the class according to the school's standard grading scale.
<b>Attendance:</b>	<p>Students must be in the classroom when the tardy bell rings. Students in the hall without permission from a teacher or administrator will be counted tardy/absent. Students should take their seats as soon as possible and begin working on the activity displayed on the board. Talking and passing notes are not allowed while the teacher is taking role or at any other times during class without specific permission from the teacher. Students with excused absence slips should raise their hands after roll and ask for makeup work if they do not already have it.</p> <p>Good attendance is a vital component of academic success. Students who are present for lectures, discussions, and in-class help will perform better than those who are not present.</p> <p>Class time is not an appropriate time for students' pursuit of their social lives. Discussion should be appropriately timed and limited to appropriate topics. Distracted or distracting talk and behavior will harm student performance and is a disciplinary issue.</p>
<b>Assignments:</b>	Subject to change. See class webpage.
<b>Cell phones and pagers:</b>	The class conforms to the electronic device policy of Mansfield High School. Check your student handbook for the full policy.
<b>Written Work:</b>	All papers are to be college level papers: typed, spell checked and grammar checked, well written with a logical flow of thought.
<b>Late Work:</b>	Late work may be submitted to the instructor in class or electronically. Students should understand that late work delays grading, which may result in low grades during critical points in the semester (such as midterms).
<b>Participation:</b>	Much of the learning that occurs during this course happens in the classroom. If you are absent, for whatever reason, you lose the benefit of sharing of knowledge by the faculty and other students. Additionally, the class loses the benefit of the sharing your knowledge and experience; thus, the learning experience is diminished and will be reflected in your grade.

<p><i>Approach to teaching</i></p>	<p>I am here to teach you the fundamentals of American literature because stories are what make us human. No other animal tells stories for the sake of telling stories. No other animal makes meaning out of experience through stories. Stories transmit culture and history from one generation to another generation. Stories give us identity. Stories make us American, or British, or Russian, or Chinese. If you want to understand people, you need to understand stories.</p> <p>And you need to understand people.</p> <p>People who are successful in their educations and careers are usually people with a good theory of mind (the ability to infer another person's emotional state and thought process). Reading literature improves that ability. By understanding fictional and historical characters on a deep level, you will learn to understand yourself and others on a deep level as well, and in a way that no other discipline can show you. I am here to take you through that process so that you can have meaningful careers and make the world a better place to live in (especially for me in my dotage). Do not waste this opportunity.</p> <p>American Literature is a big step up in academic difficulty compared to other high school-level work so brace yourselves. If you want to know why this is so, feel free to ask me during a class discussion. I would love to have that conversation. I will be introducing new concepts and skills throughout the semester while also pushing you to work at a higher level with the skills you already have. It. Will. Be. Hard. Expect to work a lot. Expect to work every day. Expect most of the work to be writing. This is a hard class. We do not (as a rule) have free days. Do not waste time asking for them. We will often, have work days or activity days of various types, but I will expect you to work every single day. If you tell someone that you did not do anything in English class, you have confessed to a failure to participate. If you have been gone, don't ask me <i>if</i> we did anything. Ask me <i>what</i> we did.</p> <p>Because this is an advanced class, you will have homework. You will have a lot of homework – mainly reading, researching, and writing. You will have to have access to a computer with a decent word processing application and a reliable internet connection. You will not be able to keep up with the workload without one. Trust me. I know. If you need help getting access to a computer and internet connection, see me as soon as possible so I can help you out.</p> <p>School is a lot easier if we all get along. Consequently, I expect you to follow the rules in the student handbook and to behave like decent human beings. Many social expectations are unwritten, but they can be summarized by three rules of thumb:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Be kind.</li> <li>2. Be trustworthy.</li> <li>3. Work hard.</li> </ol> <p>Follow these rules. I will be following them myself. I will be as kind to you as you let me be. If you mistake kindness for weakness or for an opportunity to play me or your classmates, then (as much as it will break my heart) I will have to stop being kind. At that point, you will be involved in a disciplinary process regardless of whether or not it reaches your parents/guardians (alien captors/robot overlords/whatevers).</p>
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	<p>You may earn whatever grade you want in this class. If you want an A, all you have to do is earn it. If you want to slide by with something less, then you are not following rule three (work hard), and you can expect me to devote my considerable ability at annoying people (ask my wife some time) to encouraging you to make a better choice. (Seriously. It's like a super power.) To that end, I expect you to be checking your grade regularly on Lumen's parent portal. You are old enough to do this yourself. Do not ask me to check your grades during class. I will not do it, even if you think we aren't doing anything (see paragraph two of this section). If you cannot check your own grade on your own time, see me during advisory, before school, or after school. I will check your grade with your at those times if I am not otherwise committed.</p> <p>We are all in this together. Let's help each other out.</p>
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<p><i>Ten ways to impress your teacher</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Show up. You can't win if you don't play.</li> <li>2. If you miss, show up in class with a slip from Janet. You know you need one, and I shouldn't have to remind you or waste class time waiting for you to get one. (We will wait for you like one pig waits for another, which is to say not at all.)</li> <li>3. Show up on time. Tardy students waste everyone else's time. Being tardy breaks all three rules of thumb on page five.</li> <li>4. Turn off your tech (especially your phone) unless I tell you to use it. Playing with electronic toys during class is not working hard.</li> <li>5. Communicate with me in a mature fashion. Don't whine, scold, pretend you know more about the subject matter than I do, or make accusations when what you really want is help. Grownups have emotions too, and if you irritate them they will treat you like an irritant.</li> <li>6. Help me out. If I'm moving desks, lend a hand. If I'm handing out papers, volunteer to help. (I can't let you hand back graded work.) If your classmates are off task, get them back on task. Remember though, don't open the door for anyone. Locked doors save lives.</li> <li>7. Deal with any problems with your grade before the last minute. I have too many students to check every assignment for a quarter on the last day of the quarter for everybody.</li> <li>8. Follow directions. Different teachers have different procedures and requirements for good reasons. Don't expect assignments or standards to change to suit your whims.</li> <li>9. Make a personal contribution to the class. Actually try to answer discussion questions. Encourage other students during group activities. Help those who are struggling with the material. I can't help everyone at once and neither can you. But we can both help someone.</li> <li>10. Remember that you aren't better than anybody else. If you think you are, you've missed something. Everybody in this class has something to contribute, and everybody will need help from time to time. Do your part.</li> </ol>
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