

**Advanced English Literature Seminar**  
**Torah High School Syllabus—2024-2025**

**Contact Information**

**Mrs. Lisa E. Muñoz**

**Email:** lemunoz@sdccd.edu

**Inbox:** Contact me through Canvas Inbox anytime!

I am here to help and support you!

**Navigating Canvas**

**Canvas** contains all of our assignments, many readings, and instructions for our class. It is organized and accessible. Please check it regularly.

**Announcements:** Make sure you read every Announcement very carefully and then go to that week's Module. Check out **Calendar** AFTER.

**Home:** in Home, you will find the syllabus and course information.

**Modules:** are modules for each week where I have put assignment and discussion submission links, important handouts, some required readings.

**Grades:** You can find all your scores and my comments to you in **Grades**. PLEASE access the comments with suggestions! I never put only a score on your major assignments.

**Syllabus:** The **Syllabus** has our course policies and major assignments as well as due dates in Course Summary at the bottom.

**Inbox:** Feel free to reach out anytime if you are having issues or something seems amiss.

**Course Description**

This course is for those who want specialized, in-depth practice in college-level composition, literature, and critical thinking. It is a composition course that uses literature as a background for improving writing skills. We will discuss the general nature and elements of literature and look at literary criticism as well as rhetorical strategies. This course will review literary analysis as a means of strengthening reading, thinking, and writing skills. In looking at a variety of texts, we will also examine how literature can help us understand human nature. As needed, we will cover correct and sophisticated syntax in writing. The works I have selected contain diverse themes and visions, but they share the common questions about humanity, which we will explore and discuss.

## **Required Texts and Materials**

Short articles, stories, and poetry will be posted and accessible via Canvas. We will read *I Will Plant You a Lilac Tree*, by Laura Hillman, *To Vanquish the Dragon*, by Pearl Benisch, *Kindred* by Octavia Butler, *Sun Also Rises* by Ernest Hemingway, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston as well as other novels that we choose together (TBD). Notebook or device for in-class journal writing.

## **Grading & Requirements**

**To pass this class:** read and write actively, be prepared to share essay drafts, and discuss readings for the class it is assigned. Discussions and workshops will provide ideas for your revisions. Also, have good attendance, participate, and turn in complete drafts and other work.

**Essay assignments: major essays and writing projects will be** measured by the student's ability to write essays with sophisticated, college-level writing skills, strong arguments, appropriate organization, and thoughtful development.

- **Rhetorical Analysis Essay**, "Letter from Birmingham Jail," by Martin Luther King Jr.
- **Final Reflection Essay**, *I Will Plant You a Lilac Tree*, by Laura Hillman
- **Argumentative Essay**, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, by Zora Neale Hurston
- **Resistance Essay**, *To Vanquish the Dragon*, by Pearl Benisch
- **Final Essay**, *The Sun Also Rises*, by Ernest Hemingway
- **Artifact Narrative**, *Kindred*, by Octavia Butler

**Journaling:** Since this is a writing course, you will be asked to write during every class. There will be free-writes in class, so it is important that you bring a notebook or device.

**Late work:** Late assignments will usually not be accepted, particularly because it will be difficult to accommodate with the workshop schedule and class discussions. However, be in touch with me if you are having difficulty getting in major essay assignments so that I can help get you on track!

## **Grading Standards**

**By the end of the class, students should be able to do the following:**

1. Read texts critically and apply the principles of critical reasoning to investigate assumptions and ideological viewpoints, claims, reasons, and discourse conventions.
2. Write critically, producing drafts in a variety of styles, genres, and mediums, applying the principles of academic research to discern types of evidence in support of a central point.

3. Understand the rhetorical nature of language and how authors appeal to audiences by relying on sound reasoning or fallacies; discern types of evidence and recognize fallacies.
4. Engage with ideas critically, situating them within a larger, contextualized conversation, synthesizing other voices and recognizing the power dynamics at play in all rhetorical situations.

**Essay assignments throughout the course will be** measured by the student's ability to write essays with sophisticated writing skills, strong arguments, appropriate organization, and thoughtful development.

**Every major assignment will have its own, unique rubric or standards, but I generally score major assignments based on organization, development, thesis/position, and sentence skills.**

### **A (90-100%)**

The paper follows all rules of good paragraph and essay construction. The paper has strong topic sentences, an original thesis, a strong, logical conclusion and relevant, appropriately-used supporting information. Conclusion is logical, though inventive and does more than summarize the points appearing prior to it. The student expresses their thoughts in an unusually original, creative, significant or otherwise exceptional way. A variety of evidence is integrated throughout. Details are full and appropriately placed. The writer's voice and ideas are very clear, even if they are in agreement with their subject or author at hand. Sentences are vividly clear, and transitions flow smoothly from one idea to another. There may only be a very few, very minor errors in spelling, syntax or punctuation. Overall, an excellent paper.

### **B (80-89%)**

The writer shows good competence in paragraph and essay construction. The thesis is easily identified and well-supported with only occasional inconsistency. Some subordinate ideas may be somewhat unclear. Word choice is occasionally awkward. The conclusion is relevant and supported by the evidence presented earlier in the paper. Sentences are strong and generally grammatically correct, but not unusually detailed or creative. There may be a few small errors in logic, or one significant error in the logic of the paper. There are a few errors in spelling, syntax and/or punctuation. Overall, a good paper.

### **C (70-79%)**

Competent work which *meets or slightly exceeds the minimum requirements of the assignment*. Content, organization, thesis formation and supporting sentences are competent, but expression may be marred by sentence fragments, run-ons, misspellings and/or improper verb use. Writer's ideas are somewhat apparent, but may

be indistinguishable from their subject's agreement or disagreement on an issue. Thesis is present, but is not very strong or original. Transitions between sections are present, but not smooth. An acceptable essay.

#### **D (60-69%)**

This paper has a weak thesis, if any. Thesis may be only somewhat related to the assignment prompt. The paper is unclear and difficult to follow any sort of logical pattern because it is poorly organized and errors of sentence structure and punctuation are frequent. Little to no evidence of original thought. Paper is not logical because topic sentences are not strong (or there seem to be too many competing topic sentences) and supporting sentences appear random rather than ordered by relevance, importance or any other organizational pattern. Paragraphs and essays as a whole are underdeveloped. An unsatisfactory essay.

#### **F (0-59%)**

Almost incomprehensible and/or seriously divergent from the assigned essay. No coherent, discernible thought pattern. No adherence to the rules of paragraph or essay construction. No fluidity. Essay is filled with poor sentence and paragraph construction. Misspellings, improper verb tenses, fragments and run-ons are very frequent. An unacceptable essay

### **Class Calendar in Canvas**

**Readings and assignments are to be completed by the date listed.** All major essay assignments must use Modern Language Association (MLA) format and must be typed, 12pt font, and double spaced (with appropriate headers, headings, titles, and margins).

**Changes in course schedule:** During the course of the semester, as things invariably shift, I may need to change the schedule or alter assignments. Check Canvas regularly to get missed assignments, send me a message through Inbox, or email me at [lemunoz@sdccd.edu](mailto:lemunoz@sdccd.edu).

### **Learning Environment**

We will work collaboratively throughout this semester in a seminar-style class. There will be a combination of lecture, reading assignments, and writing opportunities throughout the semester. This course is a place for self-discovery through writing, literature, provocative discussion, collaboration, and effort. Participate in making it an exciting and inviting place to learn.

### **Student Code of Conduct**

Students are expected to be respectful and courteous to one another at all times. This is our opportunity to explore ideas, concepts, and strategies as a class. The purpose of

this class is to write material that may challenge us. Some may feel very uncomfortable doing this, but it helps us grow as thinkers and writers.

### **Attendance**

Since regular attendance is an important part of learning, to do well in this class, you must attend every class session. *The final grade in this class will be affected by active participation and in-class writing activities.* Much of this course involves in-class writing and discussion and as such, depends on you regularly contributing your insight. The participation grade includes homework, preparatory reading, attendance, effort invested in class discussion, in-class assignments, and workshop. Since this is a discussion-based class, it is vital that you listen and speak respectfully to others at all times. I encourage you to express your opinions, of course—they will help inspire good discussions.

### **Plagiarism**

Students are expected to be honest and ethical at all times in the pursuit of academic goals. Using another's writing or ideas without acknowledging these sources is plagiarism. It is your responsibility to document all outside sources even if you paraphrase. Using your own writing that has been "recycled" and already graded from another class is unacceptable as well. Cheating also includes copying answers from other students' homework, quizzes or exams, or submitting work (sentences, paragraphs, papers) written by someone else and claiming that you have written it. This involves having someone "fix your grammar" before you turn in a paper. If you plagiarize a paper, you will receive a ZERO for that assignment. I am interested in helping YOU with your writing, so please do all of your own work.

**To avoid plagiarism, be sure to familiarize yourself with Modern Language Association Format (MLA), which you will be required to use throughout the semester:**

OWL by Purdue is a great resource to peruse for MLA format and essay writing:  
<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/685/02/>

Also, here is a quick link you can review for essay-writing basics, which covers basic argumentation (cut and paste into browser):  
<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/685/05/>

### General MLA Guidelines

- Double-space the text of your paper, and use Times New Roman.
- Set the margins of your document to 1 inch on all sides.
- Indent the first line of paragraphs one half-inch from the left margin. MLA recommends that you use the Tab key.

- Create a header that numbers all pages consecutively in the upper right-hand corner, one-half inch from the top and flush with the right margin. (Note: Your instructor may ask that you omit the number on your first page. Always follow your instructor's guidelines.)
- Use italics throughout your essay for the titles of longer works such as books, films, newspapers, magazines, and journals, and, only when absolutely necessary, providing emphasis.
- Use quotation marks for exact words taken from a source, dialogue, and for the titles of shorter works such as stories, essays, articles, poems, songs, episodes, and short videos.
- If you have any endnotes, include them on a separate page before your Works Cited page. Entitle the section Notes (centered, unformatted)

Something we are still just beginning to navigate is Open Artificial Intelligence.

You must notify your reader that you are using AI.

### **How to cite ChatGPT in MLA style**

For the in-text citation, just write "OpenAI" in parentheses: (OpenAI). In the Works Cited entry, list OpenAI as the author, followed by "ChatGPT" in italics as the website name, and then the URL. We recommend including an access date, since the tool is updated frequently.

Here is an example: OpenAI. ChatGPT. [chat.openai.com/](https://chat.openai.com/). Accessed 16 Feb. 2023.