

BRITISH LITERATURE

2020-2021 SYLLABUS

ELIGIBLE STUDENTS

9th-12th grade students with the ability to read critically, express thoughts through typewritten academic essays (specifically persuasive, expository and analytical), engage in discussion pertaining to the literature, and synthesize ideas discussed in class.



Please note: Students who complete this course will earn 1 high school credit by reading 12 major European works and writing corresponding papers for each.

Class Dates: Wednesday, September 9, 2020 through Friday, May 28, 2021.

Class Times: Wednesdays and Fridays 12:30 PM (EST)

Office Hours: By request

Instructor: Phaedra Shaltanis

E-mail: pshaltanis_scholé@yahoo.com

COURSE MAP

QUARTER 1

1. *The Pilgrim's Progress*, John Bunyan (1678)
 - a. Literary Response Essay
2. "A Modest Proposal," Jonathan Swift (1729)
 - a. Study on satire
3. *Frankenstein*, Mary Shelley (1823)
 - a. Persuasive Essay
4. Selections from *Book of Nonsense*, Edward Lear (1846) *
5. Literary devices
6. Contemplation exercises, dialectic notebook

QUARTER 2

1. *Pride and Prejudice*, Jane Austen (1813)
 - a. Expository Essay
2. *On Liberty*, John Mill (1859)
 - a. Contemplation Essay
3. *A Tale of Two Cities*, Charles Dickens (1859)
 - a. Persuasive Essay
4. Select poetry of Percy Bysshe Shelley*
 - a. Comparison of poetic styles
5. Short response papers, dialectic notebook, presentations
6. Semester exam

QUARTER 3

1. *Jane Eyre*, Charlotte Brontë (1847)
 - a. Thematic Essay
2. *Silas Marner*, George Eliot (1861)
 - a. Character Analysis Essay
3. “The Necklace,” Guy de Moupasant (1884) and other short stories
4. *Old Possum’s Book of Practical Cats*, T.S. Eliot (1924) *
5. Student-led discussions and presentations
6. Dialectic notebook

QUARTER 4

1. *Animal Farm*, George Orwell (1945)
 - a. Symbolism Essay
2. *The Screwtape Letters*, C.S. Lewis (1942)
 - a. Responsive Essay
3. *The Fellowship of the Ring*, J.R.R Tolkien (1954)
 - a. Character analysis, the epic novel, 20th Century differences
4. Select stories from *Sherlock Holmes*, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (c. 1900)
5. Select 20th century poetry *
6. British literature portfolio
* as time allows

REQUIRED COURSE TEXTS

The Pilgrim’s Progress, Bunyan (1678)
A Modest Proposal, Swift (1729)
Frankenstein, Shelley (1823)
Pride and Prejudice, Austen (1813)
On Liberty, Mill (1859)
A Tale of Two Cities, Dickens (1859)
Jane Eyre, Brontë (1847)
Silas Marner, Eliot (1861)
Sherlock Holmes (selected stories), Doyle
Old Possum’s Book of Practical Cats (poetry), Eliot
Animal Farm, Orwell (1945)
The Fellowship of the Ring, Tolkien (1954)
The Screwtape Letters, Lewis (1942)

Please note: most texts are readily available at public libraries and used bookstores. As well, many can be accessed online through Gutenberg Press or Librivox. I do not require all students to have the same edition.

OPTIONAL COURSE TEXTS

The Elements of Style, Strunk and White
On Writing Well, Zinsser
MLA Handbook, 8th edition

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will focus on British Literature written from 1678 to 1970 and will provide a broad sweep of historical perspective through both fiction and nonfiction readings. The books selected for the course will be studied in depth for their tremendous contribution to the literary world and the shaping of society. During this time frame, and particularly in the 19th century, British writing was prolific and greatly influential. This course will provide solid scaffolding for the further enjoyment and study of renown British literature.

The goals of this course are:

1. to explore the timeline of British authors and recognize influential political, philosophical, social and religious factors on the authors;
2. to analyze writings according to their structure, form and purpose, and practice synthesizing ideas in the written word through a variety of writing projects;
3. to develop comparative, analytical/critical, and responsive thinking, writing, and questioning skills that bolster communication with others and to practice using said skills in various settings.

Of equal importance is the underlying current of the course, which is to nurture a spirit of searching and restful contemplation through the reading of powerful stories, essays and poetry. By examining authors, characters, conflict and themes, students will make connections to themselves and their world while simultaneously recognizing the unchanging state of human nature.

The readings begin with John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* and progress through the Enlightenment Era, the Romantic Period and Victorian Age to Realism and Existentialism. As students investigate the historical impact of political, philosophical, social and religious perspectives, they will come to recognize effects on the writers of the time. They will develop the craft of asking questions following the form of Aristotle's Five Common Topics of Invention; in so doing, they will engage with the text and their peers on a contemplative level. Students will be required to read all assigned texts (**approximately 1 hour of reading per day**) and write **one major essay per book** (comparison, narrative, expository, etc.). Additionally, students shall expect to maintain a dialectic notebook (to be explained in class), periodically submit short (1-page) response papers, and complete a portfolio. Participation in Socratic dialogue is imperative as it serves to promote vigorous contemplation and reflection.

The writing portion of this course will focus on various types of academic essays including compare and contrast, critical analysis, expository and persuasive. Students will follow a rubric for each piece of writing in order to develop strong mental templates for presenting thoughts in differing forms. As the communication of ideas is paramount in literature, selecting the most appropriate

structure to convey such ideas is a valuable skill. Likewise, a writer's personal style can powerfully impact the reception of the work, and as such, students and teacher will together explore and practice schemes and tropes such as *anaphora*, *antithesis*, *epistrophe*, *polysyndeton* and more. Experimenting with word play will enrich our study of British literature and lead students toward growth in eloquence. Students will be expected to employ proper grammar and mechanics of writing (including spelling, grammar, and structure) as they endeavor to stretch their writing abilities.

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS (EXECUTIVE FUNCTION SKILLS)

Students enrolled in British Literature should expect to progress in their reading, writing and speaking abilities as they utilize classic modes of thinking and discussing. They should aim for:

1. Respectful and Compassionate Discussion

Students are mindful of their peers during dialectic periods and strive to maintain a balance between pensive listening and thoughtful responding. Compassion is evidenced through gracious conversation even as significant disagreements occur. Honoring others in a Socratic setting allows the guests (students) to restfully seek understanding in the realm of truth.

2. Informed Responses and Preparedness

Students are prepared to participate in discussion concerning the assigned readings. They ruminate on themes and generate questions throughout their reading processes; they weigh comments adequately and are comfortable making annotations and responding to class questions and conversation.

3. Self-Motivation

Students are able to determine appropriate pacing measures to thoroughly complete all readings. They are managers of their time, seeking quiet, unpressured opportunities to delight in the text; they allow themselves to consider the many dimensions of a literary work without simply rushing through the reading; they pursue knowledge by conducting research if necessary, looking up new vocabulary, and asking questions.

4. Aptitude in Writing

Students exhibit aptitude in the grammar and mechanics of writing and display a suitable eagerness for advancing their skills. As students study writing devices and techniques, they aim to weave them into their own writing and actively search for examples in classic and modern texts. Additionally, students are receptive to peer and teacher critiques that aim to illuminate errors or graciously provide feedback. They are willing to scrutinize their own work and revise their final papers.

5. Organization and Responsibility

Students employ organizational techniques that increase success: notes are taken during class, annotations marked while reading, writing practices and activities are maintained and consolidated. Students are adept at using a keyboard and submitting assignments; they are timely and punctual; they are familiar with the required technology and take ownership in their academic pursuits by monitoring their own progress.

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS IN ACTION

Students will be following the sequence of study contained in *British Literature*.

They will:

- remain on pace with the reading and writing schedule and contribute to class discussion;
- submit all assignments on time, requesting help from the teacher as needed;
- demonstrate initiative in the active reading process by maintaining a dialectic notebook;
- make connections between readings, authors and historical context to add layers to their understanding;
- properly cite sources in the correct MLA format as found in their printed edition or online resource;
- come to approach each text with an eye toward the True, Good, and Beautiful and respectfully interact with the writings on multiple levels.

Students will participate in class discussions through active listening, asking and answering questions, and building the conversation with informed contributions. All students are expected to be prepared with assignments completed and all should engage during class time. On the occasions the teacher presents lectures or outlines, students should take notes for later review and study.

Students who have not submitted their homework to the appropriate Schoology assignment folder prior to the start of class might not be permitted to join the live class session. Those students may be invited into a separate Zoom breakout room to work privately until they have completed the day's assignment. After they have completed their homework submission, they will be permitted to rejoin the class in session. A day spent in a breakout room will constitute an absence from class.

All assignments will be due into the appropriate Schoology Assignment folder prior to the start of class each day. Late assignments will not receive full credit, though exceptions can be made with proper communication between student and instructor. Students will submit their work by scanning their homework pages and uploading it into the Schoology assignment window. **Photographs of completed assignments will not be accepted as they are incredibly difficult to read.**

STUDENT EVALUATION (GRADING)

Scholé classes strive to be restful, but we also recognize the need to provide grades for students who will be using this course as part of their prepared college transcript. It's a delicate balance to achieve both restful learning and excellent academic performance. Earning a specific grade should not overshadow achievement goals for mastery of this discipline, and students should strive to appreciate constructive feedback and authentic learning.

The study of British Literature is a key component in a student's upper school education. It will not only lay a foundation for the lifelong pursuit of seeking but also expand the student's academic scope. Due to the dialectic nature of the course, students will examine their thoughts and synthesize them into reflective presentations and papers. Thus, student assessment will focus on clarity of written expression, depth of thought, and effort.

I will use rubrics to both explain and assess assignments; these should be viewed as helpful aids in determining goals and measuring success.

I will provide assessment marks to your student's level of achievement as follows: *magna cum laude* (with great praise); *cum laude* (with praise); *satis* (sufficient, satisfactory) and *non satis* (not sufficient).

Ideally, every average student working diligently should do praiseworthy work (*cum laude*). Those who excel beyond this expectation will be the *magna cum laude* students. Students who do adequate but not praiseworthy work be designated *satis*. *Non satis* means lacking sufficiency or adequacy.

Inasmuch as you might be fully on board with this grading method in theory, there will undoubtedly be the need to complete a college transcript with either a numeric or traditional letter grade. I will provide traditional percentage grades on the *British Literature* Schoology page, which you will be able to access throughout the course. Additionally, I will offer transcripts to parents upon completion of the course.

MASTERY PORTRAIT

Students who are prepared to take this class are typically freshmen and sophomores with some background in critical reading. They are beginning to think rhetorically, using comparison skills to weigh objective and subjective ideas. They are developing analytical abilities and examining contradicting philosophies for Truth to the end that they may continue on their journey of contemplative growth. As well, they are practicing the art of conversation and dabbling in debate as they find themselves holding opinions contrary to others.

- At the completion of this course *cum laude* students will be able to recognize time periods within British literary history, including the factors that influenced thinkers and writers of the day. They will have the ability to discern between various genres of writing and deliberate on themes contained therein.
- Additionally, they will have attained skills, especially attentive listening and directed questioning, crucial to engaging others in meaningful dialogue. This promotes the goal of honoring others throughout the discourse that frequently materializes when individuals study powerful ideas.
- Further, students' appreciation for the English language will grow as they learn and recognize writing techniques utilized throughout classic and modern writing. They will have practiced various types of writing, valuing clarity and truth while endearing their listeners and readers.

STUDENT ASSESSMENT

Mrs. Shaltanis will communicate with students regularly, giving feedback and using the free online grading system, Schoology.

Student's numerical grades will be comprised of:

Essays (40%)

Class Participation (30%)

Exams, response and contemplation exercises, presentations, dialectic notebook (30%)

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Students will sometimes take assessment privately at home. They will be on their honor to abide by [Scholé Academy's Learning Philosophy](#) which assumes the personal cultivation of Student-Virtues described in the Student-Parent Handbook.

Additionally, plagiarism is a serious and punishable offense. Proper citation of all sources is essential to the academic endeavor. A plagiarized assignment will result in a failing grade. Students should consult their chosen style manual (see Student Expectations above) for specific direction on obtaining, quoting, and paraphrasing sources.

THE VIRTUAL CLASSROOM

We will be using the free online “virtual classroom” software provided by Zoom, one of the leading companies that provides such software. The virtual classroom will provide students with interactive audio, text chat and an interactive whiteboard in which texts, diagrams, video and other media can be displayed and analyzed. We will provide students with a link (via email) that will enable students to join the virtual classroom.

Specific information regarding the technology used by Scholé Academy (including required technology) can be found by visiting the [Technology in the Classroom](#) section of the Student Parent Handbook.

Students will submit documents by scanning and uploading them to their personal computer, then attaching those files as pdfs to an email. They will submit their work to the *British Literature* Schoology assignment page (access granted after enrollment is secured).

ABOUT THE INSTRUCTOR

Phaedra Shaltanis has taught in private and classical schools for over 20 years and is educating her four children in the classical tradition. After earning a BA in speech communication and K-12 education from Concordia University, Wisconsin, she began teaching high school Writing, Literature, Spanish and Art in Lutheran (LCMS) schools.

Her involvement with Scholé Academy includes teaching American Literature, British Literature, Western History, Rhetoric I, and *Well-Ordered Language Levels 1 and 2*. In her Dallas community, she currently directs a high school tutorial program, trains and mentors teachers, conducts seminars on classical education and provides fine art instruction at a classical high school. She believes students learn best through repetition, conversation and application, and she supports the classical model wholeheartedly.