



Middle School American Literature

Yearlong Course
Academic Year (2023/24)

ELIGIBLE STUDENTS:

Grades 6 -9: Students are expected to have proficient reading and emerging writing skills as well as the interest and willingness to grow in discussion skills concerning literature and history. Students suited for this course will also be cultivating the following scholarship skills:

- Actively engage in notetaking.
- Learn annotation of text.
- Practice outlining.
- Apply teacher critiques.
- Adhere to deadlines.
- Be responsible for class and project preparedness.
- Take the initiative to ask questions for understanding and comprehension.
- Participate in Socratic discussion.

Class Dates:

Class Times:

Instructor: Vixie Friedman

Email: vixiefriedman.scholeacademy@gmail.com

SCHEDULE FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL AMERICAN LITERATURE:

CLASS SESSIONS DATES:

Classes will take place for 32 weeks and 62 classes on the following dates* --

**Please note the above dates and times are the anticipated class sessions for this course. However, all dates are subject to change as the instructor's circumstances might dictate (e.g. illness, family emergency). Any classes canceled by the instructor will be made up at an alternate time designated by the instructor.*

OFFICE HOURS: *By appointment; (please include your time zone in your email request)*

AMERICAN LITERATURE AND HISTORY COURSE MAP

Literature		History	
	Quarter 1:		

Pre-America (Before 1600) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Island of the Blue Dolphin</i> Colonial Period (1630-1735) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Witch of Blackbird Pond</i> Revolutionary America (1735-1791) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Johnny Tremain</i> 	A History of US <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vol 1 Pre-History to 1600s • Vol 2 Thirteen Colonies (1600-1735) • Vol 3 Colonies to Country (1735-1791)
Quarter 2:	
Continue Revolutionary America (1735-1791) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Johnny Tremain</i> Young Republic & Expansion (1783-1850) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Bound for Oregon</i> Civil War & Reconstruction (1820-1866) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Across Five Aprils</i> 	A History of US <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue Vol 3 Colonies to Country (1735-1791) • Vol 4 New Nation (1789-1850) • Vol 5 Liberty for All (1820-1860)
Quarter 3:	
Industrial Revolution (1871-1920) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Lyddie</i> WWI/Depression/Dust Bowl (1914-1933) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Blue Willow</i> New Deal & WWII (1933-1945) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Devil's Arithmetic</i> 	A History of US <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vol 6 Terrible War (1855-1865) • Vol 7 Reconstructing America (1865-1890) • Vol 8 Age of Extremes (1880-1917)
Quarter 4:	
Continue New Deal & WW II (1933-1945) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Devil's Arithmetic</i> Civil Rights <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Roll of Thunder Hear My Cry</i> 	A History of US <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue Vol 8 Age of Extremes (1880-1917) • Vol 9 War, Peace, and All That Jazz (1918-1945) • All the People (From 1945)

Required Course Texts:

American History:

- *A History of US* Ten volume set **ISBN: 0195327268**
- Various primary source documents, fables, tall tales, etc. provided by the teacher.
- OPTIONAL: *Atlas of American History* by Rand McNally **ISBN:-10:0528015346**
- OPTIONAL: *The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* — 7th Edition may be a helpful resource since papers and essays will be submitted using basic MLA formatting guides.

American Literature: (Unless noted by ISBN, any version will work, assignments are posted by chapter)

- *Island of the Blue Dolphins* by Scott O'Dell
- *Witch of Blackbird Pond* by Elizabeth George Speare
- *Johnny Tremain* by Esther Forbes
- *Bound for Oregon* by Jean Van Leeuwen
- *Across Five Aprils* by Irene Hunt
- Short Story unit with Mark Twain, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Jack London, Louisa May Alcott, and O'Henry (pdfs to be provided by teacher)
- *Lyddie* by Katherine Paterson
- *Blue Willow* by Doris Gates
- *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* by Mildred Taylor
- *The Devil's Arithmetic* by Jane Yolen
- *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* by Washington Irving (pdf to be provided by teacher)
- *A Treasury of Poetry for Young People* **ISBN-10: 9780806919560**
- Various fables, tall tales, and other pdfs provided by the teacher.

Course Description:

Schole Academy's Middle School American History and Literature courses are designed to offer a flexible yet integrated introduction to the study of American Literature and develop the skills necessary for independent scholarship in a restful and supportive learning environment. These middle-school courses will invite students to take a closer look at various works and authors to provide context and understanding of the broad strokes of American History and Literature. Like other Schole history courses, this class will blend "surveying the landscape" (considering the whole) with a deep dive into great books from American Literature.

Our study of American Literature and History will teach students to cultivate historical thinking through the engaging study of real people and events that have helped shape the nation of America. Beginning with Viewpoints exercises (from Socratic Circles by Matt Copeland), progressing to the annotation of small sections of texts, and moving on to asking one another questions from their annotations, students will learn the basics of Socratic discussions, which will guide our interaction as they begin to see shades of gray and the nuances of people and events. Posing and answering questions will take them deeper into literary analysis and advance their thinking skills. Learning how to summarize, complete outlines, and write papers will help them connect information, seeing cause and effects.

Students are asked to consider and engage carefully crafted questions as to their window into "the Great Conversation". Occasionally, the teacher will present literary analysis and concepts through brief lectures, but all other classes are seminar-style discussions on the American texts. Students are assessed for their curiosity, participation, and their diligence during the discussion, as well as using short response papers, essays, projects, and occasional informal quizzes. It is understood that students of this age are at varying abilities and skill levels and the goal is to improve and increase the skill level of each student.

- **Integrated** - Both classes may be taught by the same teacher.
 - **Flexible** - students may take one or both modules (either simultaneously or successively).
 - **Introductory** - no background knowledge of either history or literature or a particular skill level is assumed or required.
 - **Survey** - students will gain a broad perspective on civilization, reinforcing what they have already learned and preparing them for future studies.
 - **Restful** - a modest selection of texts read slowly and carefully while savoring the content; *multam non multa*
-

Student Mastery Portrait

Middle School History and Literature students practice a variety of complex skills which usually take many years to develop. Here are the skills which successful students of this course will develop at an age and maturity appropriate level.

General Scholarship Skills

Socratic Discussion: Formulate questions, define terms, offer examples, compare, contrast, and discover relationships between ideas.

Inspectional Reading: Skim, preview books, study the table of contents and other parts of the book, search for information.

Analytical Reading: Identify key passages, terms, and definitions, outline a passage or short chapter; determine an author's message; evaluate key arguments.

Mark a Text: Underline key terms, add marginal notes; annotate; introduction to color-coding.

Composition: Keep a reading journal, compose a short narrative, respond in paragraph form to a prompt.

History Skills

Geography: Identify important information on historical maps; identify the relationship between geography and history.

Timeline: Follow a timeline of events that tells the story of the development of the United States, along with its relationship with world history.

Research: Become familiar with the methods of primary research used by historians and archaeologists.

Literacy: Learn the vocabulary of the specific period (names of people groups, political entities, wars, places, and artifacts) and general historical inquiry (especially economic, religious, artistic, and political concepts)

Appreciation: Cultivate a sense of appreciation and gratitude for the rich inheritance of civilization that we enjoy today: art, architecture, science, religion, medicine, literature, philosophy, mathematics, law, ethics, education, and so much more.

Literature Skills

Reading Comprehension: Practice reading and narrating passages from intermediate and moderately difficult texts from or inspired by classical antiquity.

Annotation: Learn to actively read and annotate literature using these steps:

1. Circle any vocabulary words that you are unfamiliar with or that you would have difficulty explaining to others.
2. Underline key phrases.
3. Keep track of the story or idea as it unfolds through a timeline or summary.
4. Note word patterns and word repetitions or anything that strikes you as important, confusing, or something worth noting.
5. Write down questions in the margins of the book or a notebook.

Color Coding: Introduction to using color to note key phrases or ideas, people, places, etc.

Literary Analysis: Interpret texts using tools of literary analysis: setting, character, theme, focus, and plot development.

Moral Philosophy: Evaluate the actions and decisions of literary characters according to standards found within *The Holy Bible*.

Stylistic Development: Identify, study, and imitate the poetic and literary devices of classical authors.

STUDENT EVALUATION: ASSIGNMENTS, TYPES & WEIGHTS

Mrs. Friedman will communicate with students regarding assignment feedback and grading through the free online system, Canvas. The teacher will provide students with more detailed information and access to the American Literature course page.

Student's grades will be comprised of:

Name	Description	Frequency	Standard
A. Reading (62%)			

Reading Log/annotation	Submit a brief log of key terms, notes, quotes, outline, or short answer questions.	2 per week	Completion
Reading Journal	Write sentences or paragraphs in response to a reflection question.	1 per week	Quality
Oral exam	Teacher or parent administered verbal Q & A or Memorized work	1 per semester	Quality
B. Participation (24%)			
Participation	Teacher completed evaluation rubric regarding in-class observations (attendance, attention, work ethic, responsibility)	2 per quarter	Quality
Student Review	Teacher completed evaluation rubric regarding general student performance (communication, work ethic, responsibility)	1 per semester	Quality
C. Composition (9%)			
Composition	A formal letter, essay, or narration; at least one draft and edit.	3 per semester	Quality
D. Memory (5%)			
Recitation	Recite a poem or memory passage to the teacher or a parent; check the memory of key terms, dates, events, or people.	5 per semester	Quality

STUDENT EVALUATION: GRADING

While pursuing the Middle School American History and/or Literature through Scholé Academy will be “restful” (I’d also like to say it’s going to be very enjoyable), 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. The study of history and literature, like the studies of Grammar and Rhetoric, is a “core” discipline in Classical Education, and learning to own the material introduced in this class will be a necessary and significant component of future success in upper-level Classical Education. In that sense then, attaining mastery of history and/or literature is its reward and as the teacher, I can assign the following grades to your student’s level of achievement: *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.

Since 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. Traditional percentage grades will be provided and will be readily accessed on the *Middle School American Literature* Canvas page. Additionally, Mrs. Friedman will provide a transcript of that grade to the requesting parent at the end of the year.

STUDENT EVALUATION : ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Students will often take assessment tests and/or quizzes privately at home. Students are 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. Remember to cite any source if the information is not common knowledge or is an opinion obtained through any source. A plagiarized assignment will result in a failing grade. Students should consult their chosen style manual (see Student Expectations above) for specific directions 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 provide such software. The virtual classroom will provide students with interactive audio, text chat, and an interactive whiteboard in which texts, diagrams, videos, 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 computers, then attaching those files as .pdfs to an email. They will submit their work to the *Middle School American Literature* Canvas assignment page (access granted after enrollment is secured).

About the Instructor

Since she was a little girl, **Vixie Friedman** always wanted to be a teacher and lined up her dolls and stuffed animals to compose her classroom. That dream became a reality when she began homeschooling her oldest son in 1988, a journey that continued with her six children until her youngest graduated from their family's homeschool in 2015.

Vixie has taught in a formal classical education setting since 2008 and assisted with curriculum development and staff training with a classical Christian curriculum company.

After graduating with a BS degree in nursing from Western Carolina University, Vixie entered the US Army Nurse Corps, where she was stationed in Frankfurt, Germany. This fueled her love of travel and history as she married and left her Army commission to raise a family. She and her husband lived in Germany for nine years and enjoyed traveling throughout Europe, studying the region's history as they traveled.

These days she continues to travel as she and her husband travel to Israel, Europe, and Africa through their ministry, Children of Jacob.

She is continuing her education as she takes classes in classical education, history, literature, Russian, and German and enjoys enriching her education through Bible studies, personal reading, and book clubs. She enjoys spending time with her friends and family, including a growing number of grandchildren, cooking, and a multitude of crafts.

