

# BRITISH LITERATURE

2022-2023 SYLLABUS

## ELIGIBLE STUDENTS

**9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> 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 major works by British authors with an emphasis on interacting with the text.

**Class Dates:** Tuesday, September 6, 2023 through Thursday, May 24, 2023.

**Class Times:** Wednesdays and Fridays 11:00-12:15 EST

**Office Hours:** By request

**Instructor:** Phaedra Shaltanis

**E-mail:** [pshaltanis.scholeacademy@gmail.com](mailto:pshaltanis.scholeacademy@gmail.com)

## OBSERVED SCHOLÉ ACADEMY HOLIDAYS (NO CLASSES)

Monday, September 4, 2023 (Labor Day)

Monday, November 20 – Friday, November 24, 2023 (Thanksgiving)

Monday, December 15, 2023 – Friday, January 8, 2024 (Christmas and New Year's)

Monday, February 19 – Friday, February 23, 2024 (winter break)

Monday, March 25 – Friday, March 29, 2024 (Holy Week/Easter)

## COURSE MAP

### QUARTER 1

1. *The Pilgrim's Progress*, John Bunyan (1678)
  - a. Allegory, symbolism
  - b. Dialectical journal
  - c. Response questions
2. "A Modest Proposal," Jonathan Swift (1729)
  - a. Satire
  - b. Short satirical writing
3. *Frankenstein*, Mary Shelley (1823)
  - a. Dialectical journal



- b. Literary devices
- c. Gothic Romance
- d. Persuasive Essay

## QUARTER 2

1. *Pride and Prejudice*, Jane Austen (1813)
  - a. Regency Period, England
  - b. Quote analysis
  - c. Response questions
2. *On Liberty*, John Mill (1859) \*
  - a. Contemplation questions
  - b. Comprehension questions
3. *A Tale of Two Cities*, Charles Dickens (1859)
  - a. Dialectical notes
  - b. Response questions
  - c. Informal debate
4. Select poetry of Percy Bysshe Shelley\*
  - a. Comparison of poetic styles

## QUARTER 3

1. *Jane Eyre*, Charlotte Brontë (1847)
  - a. Victorian Period, England
  - b. Dialectical notes
  - c. Contemplation exercises
  - d. Character Analysis Essay
2. *Silas Marner*, George Eliot (1861)
  - a. Response questions
  - b. Thematic Essay
3. “The Necklace,” Guy de Moupassant (1884) and other short stories
4. Student-led discussions and presentations

## QUARTER 4

1. Select stories from *Sherlock Holmes*, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (c. 1900) and *Father Brown*, G.K. Chesterton
2. *Animal Farm*, George Orwell (1945)
  - a. Historical presentation
  - b. Character chart
3. *The Screwtape Letters*, C.S. Lewis (1942)
  - a. Question journal
  - b. The Art of the Personal Essay (Lopate)
4. *The Fellowship of the Ring*, J.R.R. Tolkien (1954)

- a. Character analysis, the epic novel, 20<sup>th</sup> Century differences
  5. Select 20<sup>th</sup> 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  
*Animal Farm*, Orwell (1945)  
*The Screwtape Letters*, Lewis (1942)  
*The Fellowship of the Ring*, Tolkien (1954)

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, but Penguin Classics is my preference. Other excellent publishers include Oxford University Press and Signet Classics.

### OPTIONAL COURSE TEXTS

*The Elements of Style*, Strunk and White  
*On Writing Well*, Zinsser  
*MLA Handbook*, 8<sup>th</sup> 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 for their tremendous contribution to the literary world and the shaping of society, with a dedicated focus on the core virtues and vices evident in the narrative. During this time frame, and particularly in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, British writing was prolific and greatly influential. This course will provide solid scaffolding for the further enjoyment and study of 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 to 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.
4. To consider human nature in its various expressions, weighing the complexities of sinful persons alongside God's abounding grace, and to recognize such attributes in ourselves.

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 contribute to class discussion, read all assigned texts (**approximately 25-30 pages of reading per day**) and write **1 essay per quarter** (comparison, persuasive, expository, and analytical). Additionally, students shall expect to maintain a dialectic notebook, periodically submit short (1-page) response papers, and complete a final 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*, *metaphor*, *antithesis*, *epitrophe*, *symbolism* and more. Experimenting with word play will enrich our study of British literature and lead students toward growth in eloquence. Though this is not a writing course, 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;
- participate in dialogue with students and the instructor, both in live class sessions and through discussion threads;
- make connections between readings, authors and historical context to add layers to their understanding;
- formulate questions, define terms, offer examples, compare, contrast, and consider relationships between literary elements and other components of the works;
- 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 instructor 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. Achieving both restful learning and excellent academic performance is a delicate balance, and a specific grade should not overshadow achievement goals for mastery of this discipline. 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, conversation, 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.

In addition to traditional percentage grades, 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.

## 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:

- Written assignments (40%): response questions, contemplation exercises, presentations, dialectic notebook
- Class Participation (35%): reading completion, informal debate, dialogue with peers
- Essays, final portfolio, and projects (25%)

## 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 parent-teacher meeting and possibly a failing grade. Students should consult the MLA handbook for specific direction on obtaining, quoting, and paraphrasing sources.

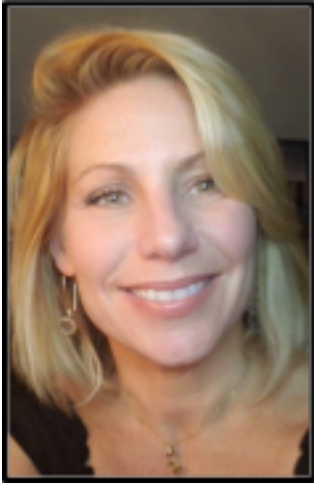
## THE VIRTUAL CLASSROOM

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 25 years and has educated her four children in the classical tradition, which has been the monumental joy of her life. After college graduation, she began teaching high school Writing, Literature, Spanish, and Art in classical schools. Her involvement with Scholé Academy includes teaching American Literature, British Literature, Western History, Rhetoric I, Formal Logic and *Well-Ordered Language Levels 1 and 2*. She is enthused to serve as the Humanities department chair and appreciates guiding parents and teachers toward restful education. In her Dallas community, she currently directs a high school university-model program, trains and mentors teachers, conducts seminars on classical education, builds curriculum, supports parents, and provides fine art instruction at a classical high school. She and her husband hope to support classical education as avenues present themselves.