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English I: Culture and the Human Mind

**---------------------------------------- EXPECTATIONS ---------------------------------------**

**Respect Yourself and Each Other.**

*“I speak to everyone in the same way, whether he is the garbage man or the president of the university.”*

*-Albert Einstein*

Above all else, students, teachers, and anyone else who enters our classroom need to feel safe and respected. That can only happen when we all agree to treat each other the way we would want to be treated: with kindness and understanding.

**Try.**

* Be on time and prepared for class
  + Every day when you take your seat, take out your writer’s journal, a writing utensil and the homework. Then begin responding to the Do-Now. You also need to have a book for independent reading in class ***AT ALL TIMES.***
* Take responsibility for your learning
  + Turn in assignments ***ON TIME.***
    - Late work will be accepted for 50% credit up to one week after the due date. After a week, the work will not be accepted and the grade will be entered as a 0%.
  + Seek out missing notes/assignments due to absences.
    - It is the student’s responsibility to look up the missing work on my dp and to come see me the following day to check in..
  + Communicate with me when you are struggling. I’m here to help you succeed. That’s my job.
  + Come to office hours if/when needed.
* Show care in your work.

*All school wide rules/expectations will also stand in this class. These include:*

* *All electronics (cell phones, ipods, video games, etc) must be turned off unless given explicit permission by me.*
* *Dress code will be enforced at all times.*
* *No gum or eating in the classroom or hallways.*
* *Language will reflect that of a professional environment and will not be vulgar or offensive.*

**------------------------ CLASS OBJECTIVE & CONTENT SCHEDULE-----------------------**

On to the fun part! The content!

Have you ever turned on the news and thought, “I don’t understand how a person could do that.” Have you ever admired someone so much you felt they must be superhuman, in a league far beyond you and your mere mortality and your mistakes? Have you ever laughed at the most inappropriate moment? Have you ever wondered why to any of these?

Why do people do what they do, and why do they think what they think?

This class is about the investigation of culture which, according to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, is the beliefs, customs, arts, etc. of a particular society, group, place, or time. In order to reach an understanding of a society’s culture, we will examine individual human behavior and the human mind. It’s my hope that through this course, you’ll have the skills to explore human behavior so that when you go on to World History and American History, you’ll see history and the world’s people through a compassionate, unbiased lense with hope towards our future.

* **My Mini Manifesto Project** (August 26th - September 12th)
  + EQ: Why do some people risk their lives to go to school while others drop out or complain about their current schools? What is your purpose for waking up and coming to school? Or just waking up? What passion will you choose to cultivate this year?
  + *Skills: Read and analyze news articles on the fight for education around the world, write a brief, clearly organized piece of text explaining your purpose for attending school and a visual representation of that passion for the cover of your writer’s notebook.*
* **Making Memories (Literally) Project** (September 13th - November 1st)
  + EQ: What is important to remember?
  + Did you know you reconstruct your memories every time you remember something? It’s true. Every time you remember something, it changes (kinda defeats the purpose, right?). With all of this uncertainty regarding the truth of our memories, what really is important to remember? What could we never forget?
  + In this unit, we’ll explore how the brain processes, stores and retrieves memories. We’ll explore what significant events cultures choose to honor every year, such as Dia de los Muertos, 9/11, and the Warsaw Uprising.
  + *Skills: Read, summarize and analyze scientific studies on memory, various memoirs, and days of remembrance. Write memoirs and take photos illustrating those reconstructed memories. Create a book that attempts to answer the question, what is important to remember? Display work at the Dia de los Muertos festival in downtown Chula Vista on November 1st.*
* **The Gray Project** (November 2nd - January 15th)
  + Anchor literature pieces for this project include *A Christmas Carol,* “The Gift of the Magi,” “The Hanukkah Family Reading,” various current event articles that explore the winter season from multiple perspectives. We will present an art piece at the Museum of Contemporary Arts in downtown San Diego, but I will look for student voice and choice in developing the final product.

**----------------------- EVALUATION OF GROWTH & LETTER GRADES ------------------------**

**My goals for you:**

* **Write** informally, reflectively, analytically, argumentatively and academically.
  + I want you to feel capable of writing for any audience and for any purpose, whether you want to persuade your classmate that the Cubs will one day win the World Series, write and perform a song so that Ellen Degeneres will invite you onto her show, or write a letter to the president. There are structures and strategies for all types of writing.
* Obtain **reading** comprehension strategies that you can use for both fiction and nonfiction texts.
  + I want you to feel capable of picking up and reading any text written for any audience, including essays, news articles, political speeches, scientific journals, poems and stories. There will be words you don’t know. There will be whole paragraphs that are difficult to decipher, but there are tools you can use to get through it, and I hope by the end of the year, we will find ones that work for you.
* **Evaluate** the structure of argument.
  + I don’t want you to be blind or accepting. I want you to question and investigate. I don’t want you to naturally accept anything as true without an understanding of the evidence used to support that “truth” so that you can make up your own mind.
* **Feel prepared** for success in college level rhetoric and English courses.
  + You CAN go to college, whether you would be the first in your family to do so or the fiftieth. To do this, you need to know how to read, write and advocate for yourself. We have three years to work on those skills, and you have the rest of your life to keep improving.
* **Persevere** even when tasks are difficult or uncertain.
  + “I wanted you to see what real courage is...It's when you know you're licked before you begin, but you begin anyway and see it through no matter what.

- Atticus Finch”

**Assessment:**

1. **Weekly Reflections and Class Contributions: 20%**
   1. We will assess ourselves and our performance in class using weekly reflections that both I and your parents will read and periodically respond to.
2. **Daily Assignments and Class Work: 35%** 
   1. Daily assignments and class work will be graded and updated to Powerschool every Sunday.
3. **Final Product of Projects and DPs: 25%**
   1. I believe the proof is in the pudding. The final project should speak volumes of the work that is being conducted in the classroom.
4. **Tests and Quizzes: 20%**
   1. Quizzes will be given every Friday to assess the class’s understanding of the content learned throughout the week.

**--------------------------------------------------- MATERIALS ----------------------------------------------**

The Constitution of the State of California requires that we provide a public education free of charge. Subject to certain exceptions, your right to a free public education means that we cannot require you or your family to purchase materials, supplies, equipment or uniforms for any school activity.

Many families have been asking what supplies their child may need during this school year. Below, I have a recommended list of supplies that your child may bring to school. **Please note that if your child does not bring the recommended supplies, the school will provide the supplies for him/her.** If you have any questions/comments about this, please contact me, or Lillian Hsu, the school director.

* Pens
* Class 3-ring binder (at least 1.5 inch)
* Filler paper
* Binder tabs (preferably 5)
* Book for independent reading (this can come from the library, used book store, anywhere. It just has to be a book that interests the student. I also have many books in the classroom for students to check out.)

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***All students are required to sign and return the completed last page of the syllabus during the first two weeks of school.***

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Student Name Student Signature and Date

**Parent or Guardian Contact Information**

Parent or Guardian Name (please print)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Email\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Does the student have internet access at home? Y / N \_\_\_\_

Does the student have access to a computer at home? Y / N \_\_\_\_

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Parent or Guardian Signature Date

\_\_\_\_\_\_Yes, I would like my email added to the contact email list to get updates on assignments and important due dates.

**Are there any questions or concerns you have about this course or your child’s success within this course? Please write your question/concern below along with a way for me to contact you to discuss this further.**