

Integrated World Literature and Cultural Studies

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“The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step” –Chinese proverb

Building Bridges, Crossing Cultures: A Course Overview Trimester I

The major focus of this class will broaden your perspective by examining other cultures around the world. However, it’s not enough to just read and learn about people different than you. My goal for this year is to instill tolerance and empathy in your worldview so when you leave my classroom those principles adhere to how you live your life. *It’s one thing to say you will build a bridge, and quite another to cross it.*

In this course we will cover three major geographical locations: Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. The first trimester (12 weeks) will focus on Africa, the second term will focus on Asia, and we end the final term in the Middle East. We will be integrating studies in literature with mythology, religion, philosophy, economics, geography, and history—essentially every facet that aides us in our pursuit of understanding culture.

The novels I selected are as follows:

Africa

- The Poisonwood Bible by Barbera Kingsolver
- Things Fall Apart by Chinua Achebe
- A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier by Ishmael Beah

Asia

- Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress by Dai Sijie
- Snowflower and the Secret Fan by Lisa See
- Memoirs of a Geisha by Arthur Golden

Middle East

- Three Cups of Tea by Greg Mortenson
- Kite Runner by Khaled Hosseini

Cultural Studies

For the cultural studies portion of this course, I am implementing project-based learning strategies—and I don’t mean the kind where you make a poster and read a report in front of the class. I am a firm believer that the end-product of a project needs to have a purpose and a useful application in the world we call the “real.” You will publish your finished product in some form or another.

Writing 121--3 College Credits from RCC

This year you will have the opportunity to earn college credit for my class. You must earn an A or B and pass the writing assessment from RCC. You will write a number of

samples for each of the types of writing (descriptive, narrative, expository, imaginative, and persuasive). We will utilize many of the strategies outlined in the Communication Quick Start Guide and from the writing process (i.e. outlining, drafting, peer review, etc). You will polish one piece for each of the types of writing for your digital portfolio.

Digital Portfolio

You are going to create a web-based digital portfolio that contains evidence of your growth as a student and a person. Think of this as a professional profile that charts your strengths in academics, professional settings, and community involvement. Not only are we going to integrate literature with global studies, but you will also spend some time web-designing.

Policies and Procedures

I have NO tolerance for intolerance—period

Respect your peers' culture, sexual orientation, socio-economic position, family situation, and ideas. This room is a safe environment and I have no qualms with eradicating a potential or apparent threat to the sanctity of the environment.

Tardies

I will allow you two freebies--no questions asked. Your third tardy will result in a referral, which will result in lunch detail or detention. Any tardy after will result in an automatic referral and more detention. Refer to the student handbook for further inquiries of punishment.

Cell Phone Use

Cell phones must either be turned off or silenced during class. You are NOT permitted to use your cell phone at any time during class. This includes texting. Think of this class as a professional environment. A professional environment dictates a professional demeanor. Using your cell phone is a distraction and non-productive, and could result in termination at your job.

Bathroom Breaks

Take care of your business before class. Only one person may go to the bathroom at a time when it's appropriate. Frequent requests will be denied.

Food and Beverage

You may eat in my class as long as it does not cause a disturbance or create a huge mess. Throw away your garbage—I'm not your maid. Liquids must have a lid. No glass.

Computer Use

Each student will have use of a computer while in class. Because many students use the same computers, it is expected that students do not make any system changes. Changes desired for work related to academic learning may be discussed with the instructors but must not be made without permission. In addition, computers should not be used for

anything that does not contribute to student's formal education at Crater High School. Students who bring in their own computers must set them up in designated areas only and obey the same responsible use policies as required on computers owned by School District 6.

Do not put any software on our computers that we have not provided to you (this includes the newest version of Adobe that you burned from your connection in Holland, movies, anime, cartoons, games, and anything else).

Don't lock your computer and then leave - it will be restarted.

GOLDEN RULE(S)

1. Don't be a goober, you are not as cool, funny, clever, great, stylish, beautiful, smart, sassy, you name it, as you think.
2. Treat the lab with respect and ownership - this is your home and equipment. Truly, this is the coolest place at CHS. Cherish it.
3. Be Nice.
4. Think before you speak.
5. Take chances.
6. Try.
7. Think.
8. Don't give up.
9. Believe in yourself.
10. Do it well - make it better!

Grading

Our motto for this year is “Do it well—make it better.” In the business world, simply completing an assignment is not enough. Companies would fail if they simply accepted an idea or a product as “good enough.” The expectation is to constantly improve—make it better.

Incomplete Assignments

You must complete all the portfolio and project assignments for a grade in the class. However, completion of all these assignments DOES NOT guarantee a passing grade. Furthermore, if you have a passing grade but fail to complete a portfolio or project assignment, you will receive an incomplete for the term. All incomplete assignments must be completed 2 weeks after report cards are issued or you will fail the term.

Employability

This category contains two major elements: attendance/participation and work ethic/productivity. Bear in mind, this category is designed to prepare you for life outside the classroom and to hold you accountable to workplace expectations.

Late Work

In the “real” world you have deadlines. Failure to accomplish a task before the deadline often results in disciplinary action, if not dismissal. I will evaluate requests for time

extensions on a case-by-case basis and award credit accordingly. Frequently turning in late work or requesting time extensions may result in a “no tolerance for late work” policy.

The 5 Point Scale

Regular assignments are based on a 5 point scale:

- 5 = Publishable, exceeds performance standards and might earn you a promotion
- 3 = Illustrates knowledge of the content but needs revisions
- 1 = Assignment would be unacceptable in the work place because of writing errors (grammar, spelling) or lack of effort

Major assignments use the 5 point scale as well, but contain multiple categories that increase the overall score.

Grades are weighed by category

- Employability = 20%
- Homework/Daily Work = 25%
- Portfolio = 30%
- Composition Books = 10%
- Worklinks = 15%

This means some assignments affect your grade more than others. Please note that the categories and their respective weights may change.

Scale based on percent:

- A = 90-100%
- B = 80-89%
- C = 70-79%
- D = 60-69%
- F = 59%-below

Redo Policy:

Instead of accepting extra credit, I will allow you to redo any assignment within the 12 weeks of the trimester. To get a better grade, you must significantly improve the quality of the work. You may redo any assignment as many times as you see fit.

Plagiarism:

I consider the act of plagiarizing another person’s work a gross violation of academic and social integrity. Plagiarism is often characterized by copying an author’s work without giving him/her credit for his/her ideas and using them as your own. The punishment for plagiarizing another author’s work includes, but is not limited to:

- An automatic referral
- A phone call home
- Failing the assignment with no opportunity to redo it
- Failing the class for the quarter or semester