

Fair Lawn Public Schools

Fair Lawn, NJ

Contemporary Literature: An English 12 CP Elective

August

2017

**Aligned to NJSL 2017
Revised August 2015**

The English 12 CP Contemporary Literature Elective is a Literature-based course that was developed by the Fair Lawn English Language Arts Department and aligned to the Grade 11-12 New Jersey Students Learning Standards.

Fair Lawn School District

Committee Credits

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English 12 CP Short Story Elective

I. Course Synopsis

Focus for Graphic Novel:

“Just as each generation writes its own history, each reads its own comic books. The two activities are not unrelated, for comic books are history. Emerging from the shifting interaction of politics, culture, audience tastes, and the economics of publishing, comic books have helped to frame a worldview and define a sense of self for the generation who have grown up with them...To critically examine the history of comic books is to better understand the changing world of young people as well as the historical forces intersecting to shape it” (Bradford W. Wright, *Comic Book Nation*).

Focus for Memoir:

“What we remember, wrote the poet who was my first teacher of the art, can be changed. What we forget we are always...We live the stories we tell; the stories we don’t tell live us. What you don’t allow yourself to know controls and determines; whatever’s held to the light “can be changed” – not the facts, of course, but how we understand them, how we live with them...What matters is what we learn to make of what happens to us” (Mark Doty, *Firebird*).

Focus for Science Fiction:

“A science fiction story is a story built around human beings, with a human problem and a human solution, which would not have happened at all without its scientific content” (Theodore Sturgeon).

Focus for Adaptation:

“Stories, great flapping ribbons of shaped space-time, have been blowing and uncoiling around the universe since the beginning of time. And they have evolved. The weakest have died and the strongest have survived and they have grown fat on the retelling” (Terry Pratchett, *Witches Abroad*).

This course will explore four distinct forms of contemporary literature: graphic novel (comic books), memoir, science fiction, and literary adaptation alongside more classic and traditional text. The goal is to help students to understand the importance of both alternative forms of literature as well as develop a greater understanding of the styles of literary available in the modern literary canon and how they can create a difference in understanding the society in which they exist. The course will begin with a study of the “superhero” genre of graphic novel

and discuss the nature of how superheroes have become the modern mythology of the world. The second unit will focus on memoir and importance of telling the individual's story to both the writer and reader. The course will then shift to contemporary science fiction and explore how the fantastic worlds of the genre are meant to directly comment on the current conditions of society. Finally, the course will conclude with a study of adaptation in a variety of forms. The course will read a Shakespearean play as well as view and read adapted forms of the play. Additionally, returning to the graphic novel form, students will end the year by studying how the visual can inform the written word through adaptation. Furthermore, students will gain an understanding of how to analyze visual media through the course readings and supplementary multi-media texts.

II. Philosophy & Rationale

Contemporary Literature will enable students to develop and refine skills needed for post high school endeavors. The course's specified focus will allow students the unique opportunity to study distinct areas of literature. By engaging in standards-aligned skill development with a genre-specific lens, students will find avenues to inform and enhance their future learning in all subjects.

Differentiated instruction for students at different levels of achievement and specific learning needs (e.g. special education, English language learners, at-risk and Gifted & Talented) is embedded in targeted scaffolding based on knowledge of each student's interests and assessment data.

A. Reading Scaffolding

Based on research on reading from the past forty years, the Fair Lawn English Department supports the three reading principles reported by Richard Allington (2003). Specifically, 1) students read better when they read more; 2) students learn from their reading when they have consistent opportunities to discuss and write about their reading; and 3) students need explicit instruction in reading comprehension strategies.

Reading More

In addition to curriculum-driven reading activities, independent reading is provided to support the various interests and learning needs of all students. Teachers facilitate student opportunities to read books-of-choice and timely texts as part of classroom curriculum and instruction. In particular, reading conferences and, at times, project-

based assignments foster a meaningful reading experience with differentiated rigor. The following questions support proficient reading reflection:

[A good reader asks...]

- What reading strategies impact comprehension?
- How does what you experience in life impact your interpretation of text?
- What additional perspectives are necessary for an enhanced understanding of the text?
- What parts of the text are most significant? Why?
- What is the author's purpose?
- What do you want to know more about?
- How is the study of academic vocabulary and vocabulary words in texts vocabulary so vital to a rigorous exploration of a text?

Sharing Ideas about Reading

In addition to written discussion and small-group collaboration, the Fair Lawn English Department engages students in purposeful paired discussions to share and process information more effectively. The following process may be used to operationalize "Turn and Talk" (Harvey & Daniels, 2009) as part of the classroom culture.

1. Explain the importance of actively sharing our thinking with a partner.
2. Teach the practice of partner conversation by reading a short text silently and modeling turn-and-talk guidelines. Ask students to notice the following: use eye contact; listen attentively, ask follow-up questions, disagree politely, share connections, and express reactions.
3. In guided practice, ask students to report their noticings. Create a classroom anchor chart that provides expectations for partner conversation. Choose a student-friendly topic and give it a go.
4. Provide consistent opportunities for partner conversations with deliberate student pairings. Whereas some prompts may be open-ended (e.g. What do you wonder about the text?), other prompts may be more specific (e.g. What was the main character's motivation? Or, what is the most important information in the text?)

Explicit Instruction in Reading Strategy

In-class reading of grade-level texts is supported by the application of reading strategies as noted in Harvey Daniels and Nancy Steineke's *Texts and Lessons for Content-Area Reading* (2010), provided to all English department members. Teachers target Tier II words (i.e. high frequency words used across content areas) and Tier III words (content-specific vocabulary words) and teach the words before they are encountered in the text.

Pre-reading, during-reading, and post-reading strategies promote strategic thinking. For example, “Think Aloud” (p. 62), “Pair Reading” (p. 66), and “Text Annotation” (p.41) are explained within model lessons by Daniels and Steineke (2010). One culminating goal is to model proficient reading behaviors such as higher order questioning and an enthusiastic passion for inquiry while gradually releasing this skill work to more strategic-thinking students.

B. Writing Scaffolding

Writing instruction in the Fair Lawn English Department includes a balance of student journaling, open-ended responses, and formative writing assessments. In the end, students complete summative processed and timed writing in designated writing genres. Teachers confer and write specific and individualized feedback to support revision during the writing process. Students will write on a variety of subjects, in a variety of genres, for a variety of readers.

The following questions support proficient writing reflection [A good writer asks...]:

- Why must the purpose of the writer be determined?
- What makes a piece of writing effective?
- Why is it important to have a cogent thesis statement or arguable claim?
- Why are supporting details essential in argument-based writing?
- How could voice be employed to engage the writer’s audience?
- Why is it important, in terms of meaning, to use correct grammar conventions and organizational structure?

Processed Writing Resources:

The *Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL)* web site (<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>) provides explicit writing instruction to foster the writing process: prewriting, drafting, sharing, revising, editing, proofreading, and publishing. Some important teaching points that are detailed on the OWL web site include: an introduction to prewriting, tips for writing a thesis statement, paragraphing in academic writing, and an updated MLA formatting and style guide.

The PARCC web site provides resources including standards-aligned rubrics for narrative writing and expository writing. These rubrics serve as starting points for teacher-driven writing rubrics that are created with Fair Lawn English students in mind. For example, the Fair Lawn English Department created a common midterm essay exam rubric that delineates a standards-based expectation for literary analysis with explicit expectations for student voice.

Each writing assignment is supported with a clear writing expectation as represented in a writing rubric. The Fair Lawn English Language Arts Department has adopted the following expository essay criteria (posted on the next page) in partnership with the First Year Writing Program at Montclair State University (as published on the Montclair State University First Year Writing web site for students at: <https://www.montclair.edu/chss/first-year-writing/first-year-writing-program-students/student-writing-assessment/>). Individual teachers may present these standards in slightly different language, and their comments on student work may not address every item on this list.

Fair Lawn English Department Writing Criteria

- **Central Claim:** The central claim (also called thesis or main point) guides both writer and readers. This central claim should be reflected—sometimes directly, sometimes indirectly—in each paragraph of a successful essay. A good central claim is not obvious; it is debatable, worthy of discussion.
- **Development:** A successful essay is rich with examples, evidence, and discussion. The writer develops—substantiates, explains, and illustrates—all of his or her points.
- **Organization:** A successful essay is one that is organized clearly and logically. A well-organized essay provides readers with an engaging opening, well-constructed paragraphs, appropriate transitional cues between paragraphs and sections, and a satisfying ending.
- **Analysis:** A successful essay demonstrates analysis, when the writer is thinking on the page. It consists of the moments when the writer connects evidence to a central claim through logic and careful reflection. Analysis is evident when a writer connects one piece of evidence with a larger phenomenon or theorizes about a specific quality. Analysis is asking and addressing questions. Analysis is discussion.
- **Clarity of Prose:** A successful essay is characterized by clarity of prose, which comes not only from demonstrated mastery of English grammar, usage, and mechanics but also from careful proofreading. Clarity is further enhanced through elegant, well-constructed sentences.

III. Scope & Sequence

There are three thematic short story-based units (Units 1-3); the goal is to study each unit for one-third of the semester. Vocabulary, Literary Terms, and Grammar is embedded in each unit.

- Unit 1: The Modern Superhero 10 Weeks
- Topic 1: The Superhero Mythology
 - A. The History of Comics: A Documentary (film)
 - Topic 2: Heroes living in the “Modern World”
 - A. *Astro City: Life in the Big City*
 - B. *Ex Machina: The First Hundred Days*
 - C. *Arkham Asylum: A Serious House on Serious Earth*
 - Topic 3: Deconstructing the Hero
 - A. *Watchmen*
- Unit 2: The Memoir 5 Weeks
- Topic 1: Graphic Novel as History & Memoir
 - A. *Maus I & II*
 - B. *American Splendor* (film) and/or *Persepolis* (film)
- Unit 3: Science Fiction 5 Weeks
- Topic 1: Government Control & Dystopia
 - A. *1984*
 - Topic 2: Comedy in Science Fiction
 - A. *Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy*

IV. Sample Unit Description

Unit 1: The Superhero Mythology

Enduring Understandings:

1. To seek to establish the ever-evolving criteria and style of the superhero character and story.
2. To conceptualize graphic storytelling as a cultural and artistic process that is product of (often) complex meanings within culture

Essential Questions:

1. What is the role of the superhero in American history as well as in our modern culture?
2. How do we define a hero?
3. How do traditional perspectives of the superhero conflict with the deconstruction of that principle perspective?
4. What does it mean to live in a visual culture?
5. How can we consider writings deemed as 'pop culture' to be literary texts?

Learning Objectives:

Teachers use New Jersey Student Learning Standards to create specific, behavioral and measurable goals. Individual unit and/or lesson objectives will derive directly from the language of the grade-specific standards for Grades 11 and 12; teachers will look to the more general anchor standards for guidance. In turn, specific New Jersey Student Learning Standards have been designated as learning targets for this unit. The comprehensive are available at: <http://www.state.nj.us/education/cccs/2016/ela/>. Sample learning objectives are posted below the standards-aligned learning targets in each unit. The NJDOE model curriculum provides "ELL Scaffolded Student Learning Objectives" at: <http://www.state.nj.us/education/modelcurriculum/ela/ellscaffolding/1112u5.pdf>.

Learning Targets Aligned to Grade-Specific New Jersey Student Learning Standards:

RL.11-12.1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

RL.11-12.2. Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.

RL.11-12.3. Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).

RL.11-12.4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.)

RL.11-12.5. Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.

RL.11-12.6. Analyze a case in which grasping a point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).

RL.11-12.7. Analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama, or poem (e.g., recorded or live production of a play or recorded novel or poetry), evaluating how each version interprets the source text. (Include at least one play by Shakespeare and one play by an American dramatist.)

RI.11-12.1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

RI.11-12.2. Determine two or more central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.

RI.11-12.3. Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text.

RI.11-12.4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term or terms over the course of a text (e.g., how Madison defines faction in Federalist No. 10).

RI.11-12.5. Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure an author uses in his or her exposition or argument, including whether the structure makes points clear, convincing, and engaging.

RI.11-12.6. Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly

effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness or beauty of the text.

RI.11-12.10. By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literary nonfiction in the grades 11–CCR text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend literary nonfiction at the high end of the grades 11–CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently.

W.11-12.1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

- Introduce precise, knowledgeable claim(s), establish the significance of the claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that logically sequences claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.
- Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly and thoroughly, supplying the most relevant evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience’s knowledge level, concerns, values, and possible biases.
- Use words, phrases, and clauses as well as varied syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims.
- Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.
- Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

W.11-12.2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

- Introduce a topic; organize complex ideas, concepts, and information so that each new element builds on that which precedes it to create a unified whole; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.
- Develop the topic thoroughly by selecting the most significant and relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience’s knowledge of the topic.
- Use appropriate and varied transitions and syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.
- Use precise language, domain-specific vocabulary, and techniques such as metaphor, simile, and analogy to manage the complexity of the topic.
- Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.

- Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).

W.11-12.4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)

W.11-12.5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

W.11-12.6. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products in response to ongoing feedback, including new arguments or information.

W.11-12.7. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

W.11-12.9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Apply *grades 11–12 Reading standards* to literature (e.g., “Demonstrate knowledge of eighteenth-, nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century foundational works of American literature, including how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes or topics”).

Apply *grades 11–12 Reading standards* to literary nonfiction (e.g., “Delineate and evaluate the reasoning in seminal U.S. texts, including the application of constitutional principles and use of legal reasoning [e.g., in U.S. Supreme Court Case majority opinions and dissents] and the premises, purposes, and arguments in works of public advocacy [e.g., *The Federalist*, presidential addresses]”).

W.11-12.10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes

- **SL.11-12.1.** Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
 - Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.
 - Work with peers to promote civil, democratic discussions and decision-making, set clear goals and deadlines, and establish individual roles as needed.
 - Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that probe reasoning and evidence; ensure a hearing for a full range of positions on a topic or issue; clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions; and promote divergent and creative perspectives.
 - Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.

- **SL.11-12.3.** Evaluate a speaker’s point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, assessing the stance, premises, links among ideas, word choice, points of emphasis, and tone used.
- **SL.11-12.4.** Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks.
- **SL.11-12.5.** Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.
- **SL.11-12.6.** Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating a command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.
- **L.11-12.1.** Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
 - Apply the understanding that usage is a matter of convention, can change over time, and is sometimes contested.
 - Resolve issues of complex or contested usage, consulting references (e.g., *Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary of English Usage*, *Garner’s Modern American Usage*) as needed.
- **L.11-12.2.** Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
 - Observe hyphenation conventions.
 - Spell correctly.
- **L.11-12.3.** Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.
 - Vary syntax for effect, consulting references (e.g., *Tufte’s Artful Sentences*) for guidance as needed; apply an understanding of syntax to the study of complex texts when reading.
- **L.11-12.4.** Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on *grades 11–12 reading and content*, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
 - Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence, paragraph, or text; a word’s position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
 - Identify and correctly use patterns of word changes that indicate different meanings or parts of speech (e.g., *conceive*, *conception*, *conceivable*).
 - Consult general and specialized reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning, its part of speech, its etymology, or its standard usage.
- **L.11-12.5.** Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
 - Interpret figures of speech (e.g., hyperbole, paradox) in context and analyze their role in the text.
 - Analyze nuances in the meaning of words with similar denotations.

Technology Standards (<http://www.state.nj.us/education/cccs/2014/tech/8.pdf>):

- 8.1.12.A.2 Produce and edit a multi-page document for a commercial or professional audience using desktop publishing and/or graphics software

Career Awareness, Exploration, Preparation Standards

<http://www.state.nj.us/education/cccs/2014/career/92.pdf>):

- 2.6 Access and assess information on specific topics using both technological (e.g., computer, telephone, satellite) and print resources available in libraries or media centers.
- 2.7 Use technology and other tools to solve problems, collect data, and make decisions.
- 3.8 Organize, synthesize, and evaluate information for appropriateness and completeness.
- 4.6 Describe actions that demonstrate respect for people of different races, ages, religions, ethnicity, and gender.

21st Century Content Standards (<http://www.state.nj.us/education/cccs/2014/career/91.pdf>):

- 9.1.12.A.1 Apply critical thinking and problem-solving strategies during structured learning experiences.
- 9.1.12.B.1 Present resources and data in a format that effectively communicates the meaning of the data and its implications for solving problems, using multiple perspectives.

Sample Objectives	*Activities
<p>Students will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students will review and question whether a variety of classic and contemporary short stories consistently define and support societal norms and rules. 2. Students will be able to read and analyze texts critically. 3. Students will be able to analyze a variety of texts effectively and with purpose. 4. Students will be able to compare and contrast the styles and themes of a variety of texts. 5. Students will be able to utilize secondary sources and literary criticism to broaden their analytical approach to the reading a given fictional work. 6. Read to cite and distinguish explicit, inferential and uncertain evidence using adapted text, T-Charts, and L1 support as noted on the NJ Model Curriculum ELL Support site (RL.11.1 WIDA ELDS 2-5 Reading and Writing 7. Analyze, evaluate, and synthesize the ideas, views, and information presented in non-fiction works relative to the literary themes and context in whole class discussion and processed analytical essay writing (<u>W.11-12.2</u>; <u>W.11-12.5</u>). 	<p>Reading curriculum-driven texts and respond to each reading on a consistent basis</p> <p>View film excerpts related to the content within each short story read in class, and answering study questions related to these topics as well</p> <p>Text-dependent questions and class discussion</p> <p>Reading portions of Joseph Campbell's <i>Hero with a Thousand Faces</i> and applying those readings to the texts read</p> <p>Reading selections from the following critical texts:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. <i>Watchmen and Philosophy</i>, by William Irwin B. <i>Superheroes and Philosophy</i>, edited by Tom Morris C. <i>Superheroes: A Modern Mythology</i>, by Richard Reynolds D. <i>Comic Book Nation</i>, by Bradford W. Wright <p>Viewing superhero related films, answering study questions, and reflecting in writing on the films. Films may include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. <i>The History of Comics: A Documentary</i> <p><i>*Teachers, please see the department Google Drive folder for sample lessons, assessments, essay assignments, benchmark student essays.</i></p>

V. Course Materials

Core Texts

- *Ex Machina: The First Hundred Days*, by Brian K. Vaughan
- *Astro City: Life in the Big City*, by Kurt Busiek
- *Watchmen*, by Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons
- *Arkham Asylum: A Serious House on Serious Earth*, by Grant Morrison and Dave McKean
- *Maus I & II*, by Art Spiegelmen
- *City of Glass*, by Paul Auster (adapted by Paul Karasik and David Mazzucchelli)
- *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, by Philip K. Dick
- *Neuromancer*, by William Gibson
- *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, by Douglas Adams
- *The Road*, by Cormac McCarthy
- *1984*, by George Orwell
- *Hamlet*, by William Shakespeare (both original play and graphic novel)

Supplementary Texts

- *The Art of Hunger*, by Paul Auster
- *The New York Trilogy (City of Glass)*, by Paul Auster
- *Watchmen and Philosophy*, Edited by William Irwin
- *Superheroes and Philosophy*, Edited by Tom Morris and Matt Morris
- *Superheroes: A Modern Mythology*, by Richard Reynolds
- *Comic Book Nation*, by Bardford W. Wright
- *Invention of Solitude*, Paul Auster
- *My Brother*, Jamaica Kincaid
- *This Boy's Life*, Tobias Wolff
- *Firebird*, Mark Doty
- *Persepolis*, Marjane Satrapi

Films

- *The History of Comics: A Documentary*
- *V for Vendetta*
- *The Dark Knight*
- *Ghost World*
- *American Splendor*
- *Persepolis*

- *AI*
- *A Scanner Darkly*
- *2001: A Space Odyssey*
- *Hamlet (modern version)*

VI. Assessments

Formative Assessments

- Ongoing creation of Reader Response journals to generate and supplement class discussion
- Anecdotal Notes on Partner, Small-Group, and Whole-Group Discussion
- Class Discussion / Lecture Notes / Participation
- Essay Drafts
- Quizzes with Reading Checks for Annotation and/or Notes
- Pretests

Summative Assessments

- First Semester College Essays
- Processed Analytical and creative compositions
- Performance assessment project involving either research on graphic novel topics or on a generated script.
- Unit Tests
- MLA Research
- Independent Reading Project
- Projects
- Presentations

VII. Interdisciplinary Connections and Alignment to Technology standards

English/Media Arts

Students choose books for independent reading projects in collaboration with the high school media specialist.

Technology-based process supports the construction of the MLA-research paper. This includes a media-driven lesson on acceptable academic sources and computer-based production of a formal research paper.