

## **English 10A: The Power of Stories**

Mr. Allain

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Office Hours: Wednesday 2:00-3:00 and by appointment.

**“People need good lies. There are too many bad ones.”**

**—Kurt Vonnegut**

This year, you will examine the power of stories and the roles they play in defining our identities as both individuals and as members of society. Along the way, we will look closely at how authors use argument, style, and rhetoric to comment upon themselves and the societies they lived in. Ultimately, we will work together to identify the roles that stories already play in our culture, and the roles they can play if we give them the chance.

### **Essential Questions for the Year:**

- How do stories define our identities?
- Which stories do we need to hear?.
- How are stories lost or forgotten?
- What makes a story *true*?

### **Pride and Responsibility:**

I expect you to take your role as a student seriously. This does not mean that you have to perform perfectly every step of the way, but it does mean that everything you do should show clear evidence of your pride and effort. It also means that you should take responsibility for and find solutions to problems that arise.

***Please come to class prepared with your laptop or Chromebook, a notebook & writing utensil, and all reading materials (including your textbook, novels/plays we are discussing and any handouts that have been distributed).***

I want you to feel comfortable coming to me whenever you have a question or concern. I am here to help, so let me help you. Don't let success elude you because you were too afraid to ask for help or admit to a mistake.

### **Plagiarism:**

All forms of academic dishonesty, such as cheating and plagiarism, will be treated in accordance with the Old Rochester Regional Student Handbook. Essentially, the work in question will be made up, but the student **will receive a grade of zero**. This system upholds the importance of academic integrity while ensuring that the student does not miss out on the intended learning experience. While academic dishonesty can be very damaging to grades, the biggest concern in an instance of academic dishonesty is the damage it does to your integrity as a student leader. Please continue to uphold the long tradition of excellence in the ORR academic community.

If you have any questions regarding what constitutes cheating or plagiarism, see Mr. Allain for clarification - but the short version is this: **All work should be original and represent your own ideas and conclusions. If you are referencing a site like Schmoop, Sparknotes, etc. while completing original work, you are already plagiarizing.** While these sites are ok to reference as a pre or post-reading resource, you should only reference the text(s) in question, your own notes, or teacher-provided materials. I am interested in guiding YOUR academic development. I do not expect you to write at a professional level. The borrowing of ideas and writing structures merely stunts your development as a writer and a thinker.

### **Journaling:**

- Please acquire a basic, one-subject notebook to use for journaling activities throughout the year.

### **Grading:**

- Your grades will be calculated using a **total point** system. Essentially, the number of points assigned to each assignment are also an indication of the bearing it will have on your final grade. Expect your grade to be influenced by long-term and on-demand writing assignments, tests, quizzes, discussions, classwork and homework. While the total points will vary from term to term, you can expect to see about:
  - 1-3 100-point assignments
  - 1-4 50 point assignments (might be broken down into 25-point steps)
  - 5-10 HW/Classwork/Reader Response/Quiz assignments (10-20 points each)
    - Quizzes will generally ask you to construct a paragraph that opens with a clear and unique central idea statement, is supported by at least three specific details (not necessarily direct quotes - but they are welcome), and is wrapped up with a clear concluding sentence.
    - Reader Response journals will sometimes be assigned in place of a quiz. You will earn 20 points for your Reader Response Journal based on the [Reader Response Rubric](#).
- Each term, your grade will include a 100-point CLASS PARTICIPATION GRADE. You'll start with 90/100 points. You will maintain your first 90 points by coming to class, taking part in day-to-day activities, and meeting deadlines. I will award the remaining 10 points based on the depth of your participation in classroom discussion & activities (both spoken and written), and your overall effort over the course of the term. I will update this portion of the grade at the end of the term.

**Late Work:**

Students are expected to meet deadlines in a timely manner and use the tools at their disposal to resolve late work when they are out of school. All assignments and deadlines are posted to Google Classroom and should be accessible to students at all times. It is your responsibility to address work that you missed during an absence - and you are even allowed to complete work from home DURING an absence if you are able to do so. While I will always make myself available to go over missing class discussions and materials, you should also take as much initiative as possible to stay on top of your grades. Students can complete late assignments of 50 points or more up until the last day of the term for a 10% credit reduction. Smaller assignments will not be accepted once the grades have been entered...unless they are one of the steps in a major project/paper. If work is late due to an ongoing medical situation, we will work together to put together a fair plan to resolve the missing work.

**Independent Reading:**

Each term, you will be asked to read a book independently on your own schedule. Some texts will be assigned directly, and others will be based on student choice. We will discuss the texts in class and complete a project or in-class activity (depending on the unit).

**Extra Credit:**

If you are up to date with your classwork, I will encourage each of you to engage in at least one literary conference throughout the year for extra credit. It will provide a new and unique way for us to discuss literature and will provide me with an extra way to get to know you as a writer. To initiate a literary conference, please complete one of the following assignments:

- Write an article for the school newspaper: *Paw Prints* (at the end of the conference we can look into having it published).
- Bring in at least 5 pages of personal creative writing in the style of your choice: narrative, poetry, script, etc.

After completing your first draft, discuss it with me after school or during a directed study, then complete the final draft before we meet for a second time.

### **Parent-Student-Teacher Contract**

In order to best serve you as a teacher, I need to have the ability to maintain contact with both you and your parents. In order to do this in the easiest and most respectful way, I will make the following requests:

- Students, parents, and guardians: please sign this form indicating that you have read, and reviewed the student expectations outlined in the course expectations posted on Google

Classroom. Please do not sign this form if you are confused or have reservations about any of the expectations outlined in this document. Instead, please contact me via phone or e-mail for clarification or to discuss the possibility of alternate arrangements.

- Parents and guardians: please provide the information requested at the bottom of this page.

Sincerely,  
Randy Allain  
randyallain@oldrochester.org

I have received, read, and will help my student adhere to the expectations outlined for this course:

Student Name; \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of parent/guardian to contact regarding this student: \_\_\_\_\_

Best phone number to reach you at: \_\_\_\_\_

Best weekday hours to contact you: \_\_\_\_\_

Best e-mail address to reach you (and to use for class e-mail list): \_\_\_\_\_

Additional information I will need to best serve you and your student:

*Please return this page to Mr. Allain*