

English 9
2022–23
Room 211
Period 2
Class website: cheriewalsh.weebly.com

Mrs. Walsh
Office in lower hallway
Meetings: sign up on office door
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Description

English 9 is mostly a course in Classical literature. To that end, students will read excerpts from Homer’s *Iliad*, almost all of Homer’s *Odyssey*, *Oedipus Rex* and *Antigone* by Sophocles, and the also Jean Anouilh’s twentieth-century adaptation of the play. Students in English 9 also read Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein: The Modern Prometheus*. Our Shakespeare selection is *Macbeth*, which we read for its literary richness as well as for its relationship to Aristotle’s *Poetics*.

To review and bolster academic writing skills, the course opens with a two-week writing intensive. We will discuss the Aristotelian five-paragraph essay structure, which will serve as a foundation for all future academic writing. Students will review and apply fundamentals of English grammar as they most often come up in professional and student writing. We will use Strunk and White’s *Elements of Style* as a source of some straightforward writing principles.

Students practice critical reading, writing, speaking, listening, and thinking through in-class process-based work—free writes, discussion, systematic question-answering, seminar—as well as through the creation of their own pieces of academic and creative writing. Vocabulary comes from context, and students will study context cues as well as definition and etymology to understand how language works and to be able to understand more precisely what they read.

In the first quarter, students will practice note-taking and similar essential skills that will serve them well throughout their academic careers.

Students in English 9 are encouraged to check in with me both informally before or after class and by signing up for an appointment. (There is always a sign-up sheet on my office door.) I am happy to answer questions by email or text as well, and I am often available to have Zoom meetings outside of school hours.

Poem memorization

Memorizing poems is important to the culture of Brookewood School K–12. Students who memorize a poem for recitation

- gain experience with public speaking
- learn to trust themselves
- internalize structures of syntax to increase their understanding of how sentences can work
- internalize patterns of sound
- increase vocabulary in a permanent way

In English 9, students will memorize and recite one poem that corresponds to each major text in the course.

A few policy points

1. Academic honesty. This course will follow the school policy for academic honesty, as delineated in the Handbook. Ask if you have questions about your work's relationship to outside sources.

2. Late work.

- Late homework is accepted for half credit; late papers lose one letter grade per day late, bottoming out at 50%.

- Work late for any reason must be submitted as a pdf uploaded to the assignment slot in Jupiter. You should explain the reason for the lateness in the comments field when you upload.

- Ask for an extension at least 36 hours in advance if you see trouble coming.

- IEP accommodations apply to work completed in class, such as in-class essays or tests, not to homework assignments or papers.

3. Students are expected to complete the carefully crafted assignments during the quarter; "What can I do to bring up my grade?" is a question that's inappropriate in at least two ways. "What can I do next quarter to improve my learning?" is a far more suitable question.

4. All work must be presented double spaced, whether handwritten or typed. Any work submitted electronically must be submitted as a pdf to the appropriate assignment slot in Jupiter.

Tips for success:

1. Class is much more interesting when you have done the reading. If you fall behind, do the current assignment and then reach back to pick up what you have missed. If you read ahead, be sure to go over your annotations before class so that you are clear about what material is in the current reading.

2. The revolution will not be televised. Be present and active in class.

a. Come to class whenever you possibly can; when you miss, get assignments from friends, the website, and the teacher.

b. Participate avidly in discussions and activities to learn as much as you can and to collaborate with your classmates to improve everyone's learning.

c. Use note-taking in a notebook in conjunction with book annotation to learn actively and deeply.

i. Book annotation allows you to track your first, independent ideas and reactions; read more actively; and locate important passages (as they come up in class) for future use. Highlight/underline, yes, but also summarize, isolate, and react with words.

ii. Note-taking allows you to track ideas from class, to keep your learning and thinking active in discussions and lectures, and to isolate especially important ideas you have questions about or wish to develop further more deeply.

- d. Frequent office hours. **You will not be fully successful in this class unless you come to office hours from time to time with drafts, ideas, and questions.** The strongest students stop by office hours to test an idea or to refine their understanding of feedback; students in need of review receive it by meeting with me.

A final word:

English at Brookewood is challenging because we believe in the importance of both the literature we've selected and your developing strong reading and writing skills. In ninth grade, you read excellent texts and learn to analyze them in a grade-appropriate version of the same techniques you'll use in college. No matter your post-Brookewood plans, the experience of reading literature as both a mirror (we identify and sympathize with characters and test out decisions and thoughts in a safe way, through art) and a window (we learn about people other than ourselves and places and cultures related to but not identical with our own) should help develop your thinking and your understanding of the human experience as a whole. I expect that you'll find ways to enjoy reading along, learning also about the systems of language and common patterns in art.