

# ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

## FRESHMAN PROGRAM

Points of View  
Responding to Literature (H)

## SOPHOMORE PROGRAM

World Literature: Identity, Culture, and Meaning  
World Literature: Identity, Culture, and Meaning (H)

## JUNIOR PROGRAM

American Literature  
American Literature (H)

## SENIOR PROGRAM

Biography and Autobiography  
Stranger in a Strange Land  
Stranger in a Strange Land (H)  
British Literature (H)  
European Literature (H)  
Dramatic Literature (N)  
Craft of Writing (N)  
Public Speaking and Public Writing (N)  
The Good Citizen in the Good Society (N)  
Fiction and Film (N)

## ELECTIVES, 9-12

Journalism I (N) (CE credit)  
Journalism II (H) (CE credit)

(H) indicates an honors course.

(N) indicates a non-leveled course.

All students must take English throughout their four years at Brookline High School, accumulating a total of four full credits (in proper sequence) to graduate. Students should read course descriptions carefully and attend to teacher recommendations to determine which level of difficulty -- standard, honors, or non-leveled-- suits their needs. Honors level courses require more reading than standard level courses, and texts are often more difficult. Teachers in honors level courses also assume more independence on the part of students, whereas teachers in standard level courses often break assignments down in order to give students more structure and support. Senior year, the department offers several non-leveled electives which seek interested students across the academic spectrum. Students at all levels write at least twelve drafted papers a year. Students who choose the most challenging English courses will find themselves prepared for Advanced Placement examinations at the end of their junior or senior years.

Make-up credit for English courses may be obtained by doubling courses the following year or by completing courses in summer school. Seniors wishing to graduate early must complete two full semesters of Senior English **and** the Senior Paper **before** leaving school and have the written consent of the English Department Curriculum Coordinator by September 15th of their senior year. Correspondence credit is not granted. Failure to meet the Senior Paper requirement precludes graduation, and the student must take an appropriate summer school course to complete the Senior Paper.

**FRESHMAN PROGRAM:** The Freshman Program introduces students to the major literary genres and to reading and writing at the high school level. Both freshman courses offer focused instruction in reading strategies, ample practice in writing and revising, systematic study of grammar and vocabulary, and an emphasis on narrative point of view.

**SOPHOMORE PROGRAM:** Sophomores read traditional and modern works from World Literature as they explore identity and culture. Students sharpen their writing and reading skills; they identify and interpret motif, theme, and figurative language in poetry and prose. Both sophomore courses include a systematic study of grammar.

**JUNIOR PROGRAM:** The Junior Program highlights important works in American Literature to explore American culture and point of view. In the spring, students compare two works of literature in the Junior Paper as preparation for their Senior Paper the following year.



SENIOR PROGRAM: A variety of year-long courses gives seniors the opportunity to pursue a particular area of interest in English. To gain final English credit, all seniors must successfully complete a Senior Paper related to the content area of their senior course. The Senior Paper is a multi-step process which requires a minimum of 500 pages of independent reading and culminates in an 8-10 page analytic essay.

## FRESHMAN PROGRAM

How can literature deepen our understanding of human experience and our own lives?

Reading: All freshmen read the following core books: *Points of View* (Department Collection), *To Kill a Mockingbird* (Harper Lee), *The Oedipus Cycle* (Sophocles), and a Shakespeare play (*Twelfth Night*, *Julius Caesar*, or *Much Ado About Nothing*). Beyond these core books, individual teachers select from an extensive book list and draw from *How a Poem Means* (BHS Anthology). Literature study emphasizes introduction to the major literary genres (comedy, tragedy, novel, memoir, short story, poetry) and narrative point of view. Students practice, with explicit guidance, the reading strategies necessary to comprehend a text. Students read closely to discover the kinds of choices authors make, and they practice the shift from concrete observation to interpretation.

Writing: The Freshman program moves students into expository writing about literature while also providing opportunities for personal and creative writing. Students learn to revise carefully with particular attention to the well-structured paragraph. Students practice making any kind of writing more convincing through illustration, example, and evidence. They work on maintaining a lively voice while shaping their work to communicate with an audience. In the short story unit, students experiment by writing in the voice of different kinds of narrators, perhaps telling the same story from different points of view. Freshmen also study vocabulary and grammar.

Speaking and Listening: Freshmen work on contributing thoughtfully to group discussion and on listening and responding to their classmates. Discussions encourage students to move beyond an immediate response and to consider others' ideas when discussing literature.

### EN1020 Points Of View

In this course, students strengthen their reading and writing skills. Students read short stories, novels, autobiographies, poems, and plays, and they learn the important components of each genre. The short story unit emphasizes that stories can be told from different vantage points, with different effects. The poetry unit explores the use of image and sound. Reading *The Oedipus Cycle* and a Shakespearean play provide focus on stagecraft and on the characteristics of tragedy and comedy. Beyond the core books, students study works such as *Warriors Don't Cry*, *Ordinary People*, *A View from the Bridge*, *Black Boy*, *Lord of the Flies*, *A Raisin in the Sun*, *Catcher in the Rye*, *Chinese Cinderella*, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian* and *This Boy's Life*. Students read up to 25 pages per night and will write at least twelve drafted papers.

Difficulty: Standard

Grade: 9

Credit: 1

### EN1030 Responding To Literature

In this more demanding freshman course, students explore narrative point of view in reading and writing; they complete nightly reading assignments and do outside reading. Through their study of *The Odyssey* (Homer), *A Tale of Two Cities* or *Great Expectations* (Charles Dickens), *To Kill a Mockingbird* (Lee), short stories, and poems, students examine authors' choices in different literary genres. Reading *The Oedipus Cycle* and a Shakespearean comedy provide focus on stagecraft and on issues of tragedy and comedy. Beyond the core books, students read works such as *Lord of the Flies*, *Black Boy*, *Ordinary People*, *Catcher in the Rye*, *Warriors Don't Cry*, *The Emperor was Divine*, and *This Boy's Life*. Students read up to 35 pages per night and will write at least twelve drafted papers.

Difficulty: Honors

Grade: 9

Credit: 1



## SOPHOMORE PROGRAM – THE ENGLISH TOOLKIT

The sophomore program focuses on developing and sharpening reading and writing skills -- particularly active reading and analytical writing. Our focus is identity, culture, and meaning. How might a literary work help us examine both our culture and ourselves?

Reading: Sophomores read the following core texts: *Macbeth*, *Othello*, or *Merchant of Venice* (Shakespeare), *Things Fall Apart* (Achebe) and *A Doll's House* (Ibsen). Teachers will also draw from the anthology *How a Poem Means*. Beyond these core books, students study works such as: *The Metamorphosis* (Kafka); *The Things They Carried* (O'Brien); *House of the Spirits* (Allende); *The Kite Runner* (Hosseini); *All Quiet on the Western Front* (Remarque); *The Bean Trees* (Kingsolver); *Candide* (Voltaire); *Hiroshima* (Hersey); *Master Harold and the Boys* (Fugard); *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* (Solzhenitsyn); *Waiting* (Ha Jin); *The Sailor Who Fell From Grace with the Sea* (Mishima).

Reading Skills: Students will identify and master approaches that experienced readers use to comprehend a difficult text. Students will learn these strategies -- for example, how to ask questions about a text, mark up a text (passage or poem), and move from observation to inference and analysis. Students will also pay particular attention to figurative language in poetry and prose.

Writing Skills: Students will write well-developed analytical essays with thesis statements, topic sentences, and unified paragraphs with specific (often textual) evidence to prove logical arguments. In addition, students will write personal essays -- and occasional poems and fiction -- following the maxim "Show, don't tell," using specific detail to illustrate general points. Students will also edit and revise their own work.

### EN2020 World Literature: Identity, Culture, And Meaning

Students will ask, "What do I think and why?" as they explore identity, culture, and meaning in literature. Students will examine how authors from different cultures and eras approach universal questions such as: How does culture influence our values, attitudes, and behaviors? What are my responsibilities to others? How can I be myself? They will consider how literary works can help answer these questions of importance in their own lives. Students read up to 25 pages per night and will write at least twelve drafted papers (both personal and analytical).

Difficulty: Standard

Grade: 10

Credit: 1

### EN2030 World Literature Honors: Identity, Culture, And Meaning

In this more demanding course, students will focus on the formal elements of literature: students will explore identity, culture, and meaning by asking how authors reveal to us who we are. Students will examine how authors from different countries and eras approach universal questions such as: How does culture influence our values, attitudes, and behaviors? What are the ramifications of accepting or rejecting our culture? The course includes books of significant length and complexity. Students read up to 35 pages a night and will write at least twelve drafted papers (both personal and analytical).

Difficulty: Honors

Grade: 10

Credit: 1

## JUNIOR PROGRAM – AMERICAN LITERATURE

The Junior Program considers the factors shaping the American culture and point of view.

Reading: All juniors read the following core books: *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, *Song of Solomon*, *The Great Gatsby*, and *Death of a Salesman*. Teachers will also draw from *How a Poem Means* (BHS Poetry Anthology). Beyond these core books, individual courses and teachers select from an extensive supplemental book list of fiction and non-fiction.

Beyond the core texts, students will study works such as: *The Scarlet Letter*, *Ragged Dick*, *My Antonia*, *The Yellow Wallpaper*, *Being There*, *The Crucible*, *Fences*, *Into the Wild*, *Walden*, and *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*.



Reading and Thinking: What does America say that it stands for? What is the reality of who we are? Discussion in this course centers on the tensions inherent in the “American Dream.” The ability to step outside oneself is necessary for perspective and growth. At some crucial point in each of the core books, the main characters must stand outside themselves and evaluate American truths.

Special emphasis is given to close reading of texts in the junior program. Authors have a number of options but consciously choose the genre, the point of view, and even the best verb for their first sentence. Students will analyze the ideas and language in one passage [microcosm], and then consider how that passage relates to the book as a whole [macrocosm]. Students will study how form is suited to content in both poetry and prose.

Writing: Building on the expository skills of sophomore year, juniors formulate and defend their own thesis statements about literature. Although there is opportunity for creative and personal writing, students concentrate on literary analysis: generating thesis statements about literature and developing their ideas into coherent compositions with clear focus, well-developed paragraphs, and sufficient documenting detail. The work on literary analysis culminates in the Junior Paper, a major paper which compares and contrasts two pieces of literature; this exercise helps prepare juniors for the more complicated Senior Paper. As they polish their papers and prepare for the SAT writing component, students review the conventions of Standard Written English.

### **EN3020 American Literature**

Although the American Dream usually refers to material success achieved through hard work, many other dreams have fueled this country. In this course, organized around the dreams and the dreamers, students examine how characters in literature pursue their dreams and how they readjust those dreams when they encounter obstacles. Students may compare the dreams of Willy Loman and Troy Maxson (August Wilson). What would Huck Finn say about Jay Gatsby’s failed dream? What could Daisy Buchanan learn from Pilate Dead (Toni Morrison)? The course also highlights American intellectual and historical eras and the people who formed them. Students read up to 30 pages per night.

Difficulty: Standard

Grade: 11

Credit: 1

### **EN3030 American Literature Honors**

Students must hold opposites in their minds as they explore the paradoxes of American life as revealed in our literature. This course explores some of the tensions inherent in American ideals. The course also highlights intellectual and historical eras and the people who formed them. Students may learn about Transcendentalism through Emerson and Thoreau; the Harlem Renaissance through Langston Hughes and Zora Neale Hurston; or the Westward Movement through Mark Twain and Willa Cather. Students will examine American ideals as they manifested themselves in different historical and philosophical settings. Students read up to 40 pages per night.

Difficulty: Honors

Grade: 11

Credit: 1

## **SENIOR PROGRAM – FULL-YEAR OPTIONS**

A variety of year-long courses gives seniors the opportunity to pursue particular areas of interest in English. The English department will do its best to honor seniors’ first choices, but due to the challenges of scheduling, students should give serious consideration to their alternate choices. Depending on course enrollments, some courses may not run in a given year.

**THE SENIOR PAPER:** In the spring of senior year, each student is required to complete a Senior Paper, a culminating reading and writing project related to his or her senior English course. The Senior Paper is a multi-step process which requires a minimum of 500 pages of independent reading and culminates in an 8 to 10-page analytic essay. Senior teachers use a common rubric to evaluate the essay. The Senior Paper is a Brookline High School graduation requirement. Students who fail to meet the Senior Paper requirement by the deadline will not graduate with their class and must take an appropriate summer school course to complete the Senior Paper.



TAKING TWO ENGLISH CLASSES: Juniors may sign up to take two senior English classes. The English Department does its best to accommodate second course requests. Seniors taking two English classes will write their official Senior Paper in one of the two classes and will complete another paper or project as a substitution for the senior paper in the other class. The details of this arrangement will be determined by the two teachers in consultation with the student.

### **EN 4020/EN 4030 Stranger in A Strange Land**

“A stranger comes to town” is one of the oldest and most enduring story ideas in literature. The stranger might be returning home or moving to a new country. And he or she might be “strange” for all sorts of reasons: background, values, psychological state, culture, race, planet of origin. What happens when that stranger comes to town? This senior course explores how strangers adapt to new places and new modes of being. It explores how individuals and groups react to the Other. Students will read stories about immigrants, explorers, misfits, scapegoats, prophets, and other outsiders. Students will look at what “stranger” means and who gets to decide. And what does an outsider’s “otherness” reveal to and about those they encounter?

Students will examine their own experiences in this light, and will study literature from many different time periods, ancient to modern, and voices from different backgrounds and cultures. The course will include texts by some of the following authors: Shakespeare, Camus, Morrison, Sacks, Hurston, Twain, Silko, Lee, Bradbury, Mengestu, and Ellison.

This course is offered at two levels of difficulty:

EN4020 Standard: Students are expected to read up to 30 pages per night, to practice close reading, to participate actively in class, and to write creative, personal, and critical papers.

EN4030 Honors: Students are expected to read up to 40 pages per night, to practice close reading and in-depth analysis of assigned texts, to participate actively in class, and to write creative, personal, and critical papers. Outside reading may also be assigned.

### **EN4220 Biography and Autobiography**

This course focuses on the true stories of people’s lives. Some books are about inspirational people who give to others, or brave people who confront evil, or persistent people who overcome long odds. The choice of titles depends on the students’ interests. Books that students have enjoyed in the past include: *Nickel and Dimed* (about low wage jobs), *The Color of Water* (a mixed race family), *Cockeyed* (blindness), *Persepolis* (Iranian graphic novel), *Girl, Interrupted* (mental hospitals), *She’s Not There* (gender identity), *Mountains Beyond Mountains* (medicine), *The Glass Castle* (dysfunctional family), *Long Way Gone* (African child soldier). Students read up to 30 pages a night.

Senior paper topics might include: overcoming poverty; cultural assimilation; achieving success in sports, business, or public life. The course also has a circulating book cart of over 100 memoirs, biographies, and autobiographies for outside reading. The only requirement for outside books is that students must find books they want to read.

Students will also write analytical papers and personal responses based on the readings. The course will include review of basic grammar to help prepare students for the New SAT and ACT tests.

Difficulty: Standard

Grade: 12

Credit: 1

### **EN4430 British Literature**

The British Isles, though small in size, have brought forth one of the world’s greatest literary traditions—rich in comedy, tragedy (both in drama and fiction), and lyric poetry. This course looks at some of the major themes in British literature—particularly social class, love, and marriage. Students will also have the opportunity to read and write about literature written in English from the former colonies—India, Africa, and the Caribbean, to name just a few. While critical reading and writing will be the major focus, this course also lends itself well to dramatic and creative projects.

Students will read works such as: *The Canterbury Tales*, *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Tess of the D’Urbervilles*, *Dubliners*, *A Room With a View*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Pygmalion*, *To the Lighthouse*, *Portrait of the Artist As a Young Man*, 1984, *The Remains of the Day*, sonnets, lyric nature poetry, and poetry of WWI. Students read up to 40 pages per night.

Difficulty: Honors

Grade: 12

Credit: 1



### **EN4530 European Literature**

In European Literature, students are introduced to some of the greatest works of Western civilization, works as varied as the *Bible*, *Hamlet*, *Madame Bovary*, *Waiting for Godot*, and *Blindness*. This literature, often challenging in content, style, or structure, gives us insight into the roots of modern consciousness. The course investigates a wide range of themes such as romance, family duty, crime and punishment, and the search for meaning in a complex world. While critical reading and writing will be the major focus, this course also lends itself well to dramatic and creative projects. Class time focuses on discussion and presentation.

Students read up to 40 pages per night.

Possible titles: Medea, the Bible, The Romance of Tristan and Iseult, Hamlet, King Lear, The Dubliners, A Room of One's Own, The Inferno, Hedda Gabler, Waiting for Godot, Madame Bovary, Crime and Punishment, Blindness, The Unbearable Lightness of Being, Invisible Cities, The Cherry Orchard.

Difficulty: Honors

Grade: 12

Credit: 1

### **EN4100 Dramatic Literature**

Throughout history, plays have helped us explore important human questions such as "Who am I?" and "What do I believe?" In this course, students examine key plays which dramatize our place in the world. Starting with the Greeks, students explore the evolution of plays through medieval morality plays, through the groundbreaking Shakespeare in the Renaissance, to the emergence of "modern drama" of the 19th century to the current multinational authors. Students analyze theatrical performances filmed from stage productions, performances created for film, and when possible, performances live on stage. Students write reviews and critical essays. Class time focuses on discussion and presentation. Anyone who has a genuine desire to learn more about dramatic literature is welcome in this course. Students study the work of playwrights such as Sophocles, Euripides, Shakespeare, Oscar Wilde, G. B. Shaw, Henrik Ibsen, Tennessee Williams, and Suzan Lori-Parks. Students read up to 35 pages per night.

Difficulty: Non-leveled

Grade: 12

Credit: 1

### **EN4600 Craft Of Writing**

This course is intended for seniors who have a serious interest in writing fiction and poetry. Students examine published authors from the perspective of a writer; in each unit, they study the craft of a master writer's work and use it as model and inspiration for their own work. Writers studied may include Ernest Hemingway, Virginia Woolf, Vladimir Nabokov, Emily Dickinson, Leo Tolstoy, Matthea Harvey, Jorge Luis Borges, and many others. Students write regularly and edit carefully. Students will pay close attention to many particular elements of a writer's craft such as: detail, structure, dialogue, point of view, description, narration, endings, epiphanies, image, ambiguity, rhythm, rhyme, lineation, and randomness. Significant class time is devoted to reading and critiquing each other's work. Students will study an author of their choosing for their Senior Paper and will also complete a final creative project inspired by that author. The course welcomes all students who will take seriously their own writing and the writing of others. Craft of Writing classes benefit if students bring with them a wide range of interests and styles. Students must submit a writing sample to the English Department in the spring of their junior year.

Difficulty: Non-Leveled

Grade: 12

Prerequisite: Writing Sample

Credit: 1

### **EN4700 Public Speaking And Public Writing**

This course is designed for students who wish to develop their skills and confidence in argumentative writing and public speaking. Students will study public speaking first at an introductory level, gradually moving to more advanced skills of oratory and presentation (including PowerPoint, Prezi, and video). Through careful reading and frequent writing, students will study how both essays and speeches work so that they can become effective writers and speakers in their own right. In addition, students will work to sharpen their research skills by conducting interviews, developing surveys, and using a variety of web-related tools to research issues of personal interest. This course is designed for students who have struggled with writing in the past but also for students who may be strong writers and are in search of a new way to present their ideas. Students should expect to write one short speech or essay each week and deliver speeches in class throughout the year. Students will also complete a senior paper, based on extensive outside reading regarding a topic of their choosing, and produce a final senior speech.

Difficulty: Non-leveled

Grade: 12

Credit: 1



## EN4800 Fiction and Film

In this unlevelled course, students will read and analyze written texts before viewing their film adaptations. Students will then examine and analyze each film in order to explore the technical and artistic decisions involved in the process of translating the written work into film. The course will offer a balance of reading, writing, and visual examination of film. Students will learn to write with precision and technical sophistication about both the written texts and their cinematic interpretations.

The course will expose students to various film genres, classic films and filmmakers, and film history. Students of all reading, writing, and technical abilities are encouraged to enroll. This course will include texts by some of the following authors: William Shakespeare, Jane Smiley, Joseph Conrad, Sherman Alexie, and Marjane Satrapi. Students will view films by Akira Kurosawa, Francis Ford Coppola, Spike Lee, and Alfred Hitchcock. Please note that several R-rated films are included in the curriculum. Students under 18 will need permission from a parent or guardian in September.

Difficulty: Unleveled

Grade: 12

Credit: 1

## ID1000 The Good Citizen In The Good Society

(Course not offered in 2012-2013)

What are the environmental impacts of the food I eat? How do my habits as a consumer contribute to economic justice or injustice? What can a single individual do in response to global problems? Good Citizen is an interdisciplinary, team-taught English and Social Studies class with a social justice focus. Our path of inquiry travels from the personal to the political, from the local to the global. Working in collaboration with the organization Facing History and Ourselves, the Good Citizen course aims to help students move "from thought to judgment to participation." Our goal is for students to envision a better world and their active role in it. This course has a strong experiential and service learning component. In the past, classes have visited a local organic farm, led workshops at Brookline elementary schools, and volunteered at an area food bank. In the spring, Good Citizen students complete a Senior Paper based on outside reading, and also complete a service/activism component. This course is designed to meet the needs of a range of students: Students who enjoy a hands-on approach to learning, students who are interested in social justice, and students who are looking for an alternative to a traditional English class may find this class to be a good fit. Course texts include both literature and nonfiction essays and articles by such authors as Diaz, Ehrenreich, Friedman, Gourevitch, Kidder, Morrison, Orwell, and Pollan.

Difficulty: Non-Leveled

Periods per week: 8

Grade: 12

Credits: 2



## ELECTIVES, 9-12

### ID0100 Journalism I

In this full-year interdisciplinary elective, students in grades 10 through 12 learn the essential skills of print journalism and the steps involved in creating a newspaper. Students receive instruction in reporting, interviewing, writing, editing, and layout, as well as in the history and ethics of journalism. Students enrolled in this course plan, write, and produce the school newspaper, The Sagamore. The course seeks a range of students to contribute to the newspaper in a variety of areas: reporting and writing, editing, graphic design, photography, and business. The course is taught by an English teacher.

Difficulty: Non-leveled

Credit: 1 CE credit

Prerequisite: Application through instructor

Grade: 10-12

### ID0130 Journalism II

In this full-year interdisciplinary elective, students in grades 10-12 are trained in executive positions such as Editor-in-Chief, Business Manager, and Layout Manager. Journalism II students are responsible for running the production of the school newspaper, The Sagamore, and overseeing staff and contributing writers. Students receive advanced instruction in reporting, interviewing, writing, editing, and layout, as well as in the history and ethics of journalism. Journalism II students will help teach the basics to new reporters and will train Journalism I students to be management staff. The final class list will include returning editors and qualified applicants. The course is taught by an English teacher.

Difficulty: Honors

Credit: 1 CE credit

Prerequisite: Journalism I, and/or application through instructor

Grade: 10-12

