



## English Language Arts 3 – Critical Literacy

School Year: 2011-2012 – Semester 1 (Fall/Winter)

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**“Education is a conversation where there are no experts.”**

- Motto of the *Joy Arts Institutes*

**COURSE OVERVIEW:** This course introduces students to critical literacy, cultural studies, and communication research through a variety of texts and media. By examining identity, society, and culture as interrelated constructs, we'll focus on the role of communication, generally, and of mass media and popular culture, specifically, in ways that illuminate intertextuality. Our goals are to become more fully literate and to deepen our understanding of ways that society and culture contribute to identity formation and worldviews. The cultural aspect of literacy asks readers to consider texts in relation to context and to recognize the socially constructed components in all human acts and practices.

Called critical literacy, this education will draw from Paulo Freire's model of critical pedagogy and encourage you to ask questions and dialogue with the instructor and one another about what you watch, see, and read.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

- To consider what it means “to read”
- To reconceptualize learning as a long-term, thinking-centered process
- To grow as literate learners
- To familiarize yourself with critical literacy constructs and processes
- To speak, listen, interpret, read, and write as significant means in which to reflect on our own thinking processes
- To develop structures for discussing and analyzing texts
- To learn how to plan, draft, and revise a memoir, critical analyses, public speaking presentations, and research poster
- To prepare and deliver several presentations to the class of varying lengths
- To survey online research databases
- To write with peer-reviewed, scholarly research as support
- To help you write in commonly accepted academic style and MLA formatting
- To help you think more clearly and effectively by:
  - Organizing your ideas in a well-structured, succinct, and creative manner
  - Designing argument statements
  - Realizing that what you write is an extension of you and your ideas
  - Understanding that good writing comes from rewriting
  - Improving your writing and thinking and rethinking



**GRADE CRITERIA:** Students will be graded on the following:

- Participation: Students are expected to respect the teacher, their peers, and the classroom property. They are to be active and thoughtful participants in discussions, debates, games, and presentations. Additionally, students will be expected to have read the assigned works and be able to discuss them cogently.
- Essays, in-class journals, daily assignments, quizzes/tests, presentations, and other work, as assigned.

**GRADE SCALE:**

A+	97-100%	C	73-76%
A	93-97%	C-	70-72%
A-	90-92%	D+	67-69%
B+	87-89%	D	63-66%
B	83-86%	D-	60-62%
B-	80-82%	NC	0-59%
C+	77-79%		

Note: An "A" is the highest grade that can be earned on report cards. "A+"s will show up as

**SUBJECTS TO BE COVERED BY THE COURSE:** During the semester, the course will cover five areas of Language Arts: Reading, Writing, Grammar, Speech, and Spelling & Vocabulary. We will also cover three additional areas: Listening, Research and Presentation. The school themes of quarter one and two are "Know Yourself" and "Know Your Community" respectively. In keeping with this, the themes for the class are, "You Have Something Important to Say!" and "If Not Me, Then Who - Cultural Literacy." Throughout the entire semester (quarters one and two), much of our reading, writing and presentation work will help you explore these themes.

**CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR:** Mutual respect is mandatory. Students will be expected to follow the school rules as outlined in the student handbook as well as my classroom rules & procedures which I will hand out and review the first week. Your behavior in class will affect your grade through participation points. Disruptive behavior will cause you to lose points. Frequent absences may also cause you to lose points.

**TARDIES/ABSENCES:** If you are not in class and in your seat when the bell rings, you are tardy. If you come to class 10 minutes after class begins, you are absent. Only a written excuse from an administrator, teacher, or security will negate a tardy or absence. Excused absences or tardies cause no loss of credit. Unexcused absences or tardies can cause loss of credit. My expectation is that you will be in the room and in your seat before the bell rings. You should be ready to participate and work when class begins.

**MAKE-UP WORK:** If you miss one or more days of class, you will be expected to make up the work you missed. You are responsible for obtaining any assignments, handouts, etc. that you may have missed. In order to find make-up work, do not start by asking the teacher. First, go to the file folder on the front wall labeled for your class period and pull out the work for the day(s) you were absent. Next, ask one or more of your classmates what happened in class the day you were gone. Get any notes or reminders from your classmates. If you are unable to find the appropriate make-up work or have additional questions, then you may ask the teacher at lunch or before or after school. Do not ask while the teacher is in



the middle of a lesson. If you miss a quiz or test, it is your responsibility to schedule a make-up with the teacher. *For each day you are absent, you have one day to make up your missed work.*

**LATE WORK:** Turning assignments in after the due date will negatively affect your grade. Unless you have an excused absence, in which case you will be given one day per day of absence to make up your work (see make-up work), you will lose one grade level for each day your assignment is late. (ex. If you turn in an assignment that would have earned a B+ two days late, you will earn a D+.) *Also, there are some assignments that will be checked in class or reviewed the day they are due. These assignments will receive no credit unless turned in on time.* Please keep this policy in mind and get your work in on time...every time.

**A FEW WORDS ABOUT MISREPRESENTATION:** Plagiarism, cheating, and misrepresentation are not acceptable. Plagiarism is using someone else's ideas and/or writing as your own. It is also not using proper documentation or citation when using another person's writing such as when doing an essay. Misrepresentation could cause you loss of credit on an assignment. Repeated plagiarism will be referred to the appropriate administrator.

**CAVEAT:** This syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor. Students will be notified promptly of any changes.