

English 4: British Literature

Instructor:
Mr. Furguson
Room 209

Contact Information:
bfurguson@lincoln.k12.nc.us
(704) 736-1969 ext. 61209

Welcome to the *English 4: British Literature* course at North Lincoln High School. We will strive to improve skills in all modes of communication with a focus on some of the best efforts to entertain and inform audiences by some of the most talented Brits to attempt to challenge their readers to evaluate their techniques—often *figurative*—to gain deeper understanding of humanity. This course overview will give all interested parties an idea of what to expect this semester in our class.

NLHS Department of English Mission Statement

The Department of English Language Arts at North Lincoln High School will help students master the skills of reading comprehension, critical thinking, writing, speaking, and listening.

Students, in preparation for your “*Syllabus Quiz*” please peruse this syllabus; your ability to pass will enable you to procure your six passes (see below) for the semester. This is a *literal* assignment and quiz worth 10 points, and the assessment will be administered on **Wednesday, August 23, 2023**.

What the Instructor Expect from Students:

- ✓ Arrive **on time**. With seven minutes between classes, there is really no good reason for being late.
- ✓ During those seven minutes between classes, take a minute or two to go to the restroom. **DO NOT ASK THE INSTRUCTOR DURING YOUR SEVEN-MINUTE BREAK** (especially with a minute or two left before the bell)! Get it done and be on time.
- ✓ See NLHS Tardy Policy in Canvas module “Policies”.
- ✓ **STUDENTS HAVE SIX PASSES OUT OF THIS CLASS FOR THE ENTIRE SEMESTER.** These passes will be received when page 5 of this syllabus is initialed, signed, and returned and upon receiving a passing grade on the “Syllabus Quiz”.
 - These passes are to be used **ONLY** for unavoidable, necessary trips out of the classroom.
 - These are to be used during whole class instruction, discussion, or any other time students are expected to be working.
 - *Simply fill in the necessary details, make it visible to the instructor, and quietly leave and return promptly. The used pass is to be **given to the instructor upon returning**.*
 - If it is time for class work, and a student is **finished with the assignment**, then he/she may ask to be excused to go to the bathroom, library, etc. without using one of the six passes.
 - Napping in class will cost a bathroom pass plus additional points for persistence.
 - It is the student’s responsibility to keep these passes throughout the ENTIRE semester and use them only when necessary. If leaving the classroom is a form of entertainment for students, these passes should be treated like the last six episodes of their favorite show to slowly enjoy over the next five months. It is suggested that the episodes are not binge-watched, though more episodes might be shared for exceptional behavior, discussion points, and/or scores on assignments; still, avoid the show hole.
- ✓ Be **prepared** every day. **This means having a charged Chromebook or laptop**, pen or pencil, notebook, paper, and required reading materials; students are on their own to mooch from classmates or the blue NLHS container at the side of the classroom. These items are intuitively obvious requirements for class.
- ✓ **KEEP THE AISLES CLEAR!**
- ✓ Respect everyone in the room. Disrespectful behavior will not be tolerated.
- ✓ Be ready to participate. If a student actively contributes worthwhile commentary to the discussions in this classroom, each will be rewarded with higher grades through the deposit of extra credit points and/or passes.
- ✓ The following items are **FORBIDDEN** in our classroom:
 - the wearing of hats or hoods (please follow Dress Code),
 - anything that may take anyone’s attention away from the goals of our class.
 - **MOBILE DEVICES ARE TO BE TURNED OFF AND STORED DURING CLASS UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED BY THE INSTRUCTOR.** When students are independently and quietly working, cell phones and ear buds/headphones/etc. may be used to listen to music at a volume that does not disturb anyone else.
- ✓ Check our class Canvas site regularly. It is typically up-to-date and filled with useful tools, study materials, and due dates. Our Canvas resources are like our classroom’s subconscious mind. While we communicate consciously in class, our exchanges would be enhanced by a collectively better unconscious gathering of multiple engaging, complex sources of information.

Homework and Class Work Policy:

 **THERE IS HOMEWORK EVERY NIGHT FOR THIS CLASS.**

- ✍ Students are expected to take ownership of their educations. Rather than waiting for others to force learning upon us, we owe it to ourselves to take advantage of a privilege and stop treating it like a punishment. This is an irony that should bring shame to all Americans not seizing the opportunities to achieve their own happiness when so many others worldwide suffer oppression through the suppression of knowledge.
- ✍ Visit the class Canvas site regularly. There are ideas and solutions in this subconscious mind of our classroom.
- ✍ Actively reading, analyzing, and documenting findings from independently assigned fiction and nonfiction sources is like a daily bowel movement. Without doing it, the student should feel some mild discomfort at first. If constipation ensues, the student should expect to suffer greatly.
- ✍ **CLASS WORK vs. HOMEWORK:** Class Work assignments are given with no deadline because it is impossible to predict precisely when a unit will come to a close. At least 2 days will be allowed to finish assignments once a unit is complete. To avoid being overwhelmed, students are encouraged to take copious notes during class and work with class materials nightly to proactively construct describing maps, plotlines, concept maps, etc. Therefore, Class Work assignments are recommended to be treated like Homework assignments. Students who do not heed this advice commonly find themselves frantically struggling to graduate, and some, unfortunately, despite all of the instructor's efforts, do not make it.
- ✍ **Students will be expected to read and complete assignments at home NIGHTLY.**
- ✍ We all have deadlines and expectations to meet, so spend your time completing work rather than dreaming up flimsy excuses (try redirecting those skills toward writing a work of fiction).
- ✍ It is the **responsibility of the student** to see the instructor for make-up work. School policy allows **3 days** to make up any work when returning from an absence. It is expected that students will consult the class Canvas page (the subconscious collection of our class) for notes, assignments, and supplemental materials, especially during extended absences, then email the instructor with any questions. It is the student's responsibility to stay in contact; just don't disappear and **help is always available.**
- ✍ **LATE WORK:** "Time is money." –Ben Franklin; "The lack of money is the root of all evil." –Mark Twain; "Budget the time to do your work." –Mr. Ferguson
 - Any assignment submitted after an explicit deadline will immediately lose 10% of the assignment's worth.
 - Each day after that will result in the forfeiture of another 5% until it is worth 0%. It is still in the best interest of the student to still complete the assignment as **no extra credit will be awarded to any student missing assignments.**
 - While tardiness in completing daily assignments may be subject to excuse, the completion of projects with due dates occurring toward the end of the semester, after having been established at the beginning of the semester, will at once only be worthy of a 90% maximum and penalty fees will be applied.

Reading Requirements:

- 📖 In addition to everything being read by the class as a whole, students are also students will also be required to read, watch, and/or listen to journalistic feature articles (all of which can easily be found on the Internet), etc. on their own as part of the "Book Feature Project," which involves a novel/nonfiction book and research. There will be assignments throughout this course where students will have to bring outside materials that interest them/are applicable to their efforts with the aforementioned project into the classroom. **Students must have their books by Friday, August 20, 2023.**
- 📖 We will be reading in class every day. The instructor will read to the class, and students will read to themselves as well as to their classmates.
- 📖 If students EVER have the notion that there is no homework for the class, they should consult the following "Projects" section. **It is the instructor's expectation that students are actively working on their projects by READING EVERY NIGHT FOR SELF-ASSIGNED HOMEWORK. (Keep those bowels clear!)** Additionally, assistance will be provided during the course of the semester toward the completion of the project.

Projects: The "Book Feature" is the central nervous system of the class. All activities and assignments arguably stem from and connect back to it.

- 📖 Students will be expected to read at least one fictional book of their choice to be discussed with the instructor, throughout the semester. Independent reading time will be occasionally allotted throughout the semester, but **the student will need to be actively reading outside of class regularly (evacuate bowels daily for optimum health!).** This book will be the focus of multiple major grades during the entire semester involving the planning for and writing of a "Book Feature" that is a condensed version of the novel. **Students must have their books by Friday, August 25, 2023.**
- ✚ **Feature:** this written piece is similar to the mode of writing found in all sources of journalism that involves the re-telling of the story while directly quoting the author's uses of imagery, figurative language, etc. will be required for the book the student reads independently. More information will be forthcoming. **It will be DUE Sunday, December 10, 2023.** It is worth 200 points.

RESEARCH: Some additional research will be required for the "Book Feature" project. After a **central issue in the student's book of choice** has been identified by the student, more information will need to be found and incorporated into the final written presentation. Much more information will be forthcoming.

- ⊕ **Poetry Project:** Students will be expected to practice personal reflection and evaluate their own expectations for their futures throughout the course. This will be guided at first and revisited occasionally throughout the semester, but students are expected to continuously work on this project outside of class. **Five drafts and one final draft (6 drafts total) will be required to be completed by Tuesday, December 12, 2023.** It is worth 100 points. This project, from the perspective of the instructor, is a gift that many students forsake by not taking it (or, presumably, themselves, their pasts, presents, and futures) seriously. Please accept this present and work independently in the future to evaluate your past's role in your persona, and do not end up like so many whose refusal of this offering has led to the repetition of the present—at least in the form of English 4—in the future.
- ⊕ **Satire Project:** Details for this project will be revealed throughout the semester; students should always be aware that a work we are studying could be a satire and, therefore, become better at determining if a work belongs to this genre, as well as the issue it is ridiculing, the change it is provoking, and the irony employed within it utilized to shock the audience by going against the expectations established in the work. Students will be required to find a satire on their own; the product for this project may be created in any mode of communication. This will be due toward the end of the semester. **It AND ALL the PLANNING for it are DUE Thursday, December 14, 2023** (the last day of classes). It is worth 300 points.

Classroom Behavior:

I have very high expectations for every individual in our classroom, as well as our class as a whole. However, this is not my first endeavor in a high school classroom, and I am fully aware that on any given day someone may require some disciplinary action. In case you are or may be considering disrupting our class in the future, you should expect one or more of the following actions on my part:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Verbal Warning | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meeting with Parent(s) and an Administrator |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Personal Meeting | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Office Referral |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Parent Contact | |

Extra Help:

My door is always open for extra help. I am typically available before after school and, in emergency cases, during 2nd period. With the new Empower Block, students will have additional opportunities to meet with one another and the instructor for collaboration and/or help. However, **extra help will only be given if scheduled in advance.** My schedule will be posted outside the classroom.

Students may reach out for extra help in person, through email: bfurguson@lincoln.k12.nc.us, or phone: (704) 736 – 1017, extension 61209.

Suggested Materials for Class:

- a charged Chromebook or laptop EVERY DAY
- 3-ring binder notebook to be kept and maintained throughout the course of the semester. Having a loose-leaf binder is preferred since it allows for the addition and removal of papers at your convenience. You should plan to have multiple sections that will be suggested as the semester progresses. Some ideas for those divider headings can be found in the content of this syllabus.
- Pen or pencil every day.
- Remember to **ALWAYS** BRING materials that you are reading independently.

Grading Policy:

Points are our currency, and students are expected to pay their debts to the minimum satisfaction of sixty cents on the dollar. Establishing a line of credit requires timely, consistent payments. Late assignments will forfeit forty percent of their potential earnings once the due date passes. Assignments more than three days late after an absence will face the same penalty. Each day an assignment is late it will lose another five percent of potential earnings until it has a value of zero. Despite this, completing the assignment, even for no credit, will give the student the opportunity to earn extra currency from overtime.

- ★ Papers, characterization and analysis assignments, and projects (summative assessments) are usually worth 40 – 200 pts.
- ★ Quizzes (formative assessments) are typically worth 5 – 45 pts.
- ★ Homework and class work (formative assessments) are worth anywhere from 5 – 25 pts.
- ★ Book Feature Project is worth 200 points.
- ★ Poetry Project is worth 100 points.
- ★ Satire Project is worth 300 points.
- ★ **PARTICIPATION IS STRONGLY RECOMMENDED!** You have the opportunity to gain and/or lose these points every day. Extra credit is awarded to those who offer valuable commentary to the class.
- ★ Students may also receive extra credit points by answering challenging questions specifically designated for extra credit (written and/or verbal), finding and presenting new information of interest to the class, or simply contributing to the classroom experience in a positive manner that surpasses my expectations.

Grading Program:

As an educator, I understand that many **parents and students are interested in following up on graded items** and wish to know how grades are calculated and the impact that each assignment has on the overall average for classes. North Carolina affords parents and students the opportunity to access PowerSchool Parent and Student portals to check student grades. I expect aspiring young adults to take ownership of their educations and to monitor PowerSchool closely, as though it were a bank account, and bring any concerns or questions to my attention. I find that those running low on funds are the least likely to check their accounts—remaining ignorant is reportedly blissful—until they (more precisely, their parents) receive statements showing the deficiencies, which are only issued every 4.5 weeks in the form of progress reports and report cards, the latter of which carrying the most weight but arriving too late to afford the opportunity for any recompense. Scoring results for most assignments will be posted within 10 days of submission, with exception for longer assignments like feature articles, unit assessments, and projects.

Communication:

Anyone wishing to contact the instructor, may choose one of the following:

1. School email: bferguson@lincoln.k12.nc.us
 - As we are all busy, this is the preferred method, at least initially.
2. Canvas: students and parents can use this site to communicate with teachers and staff, as well access resources, assignments, and due dates.
3. Phone: (704) 736 – 1017 ext. 61209
 - I am available before school (7:15 am), during planning my period (11:19 – 1:19), and after school (until 4 pm).

English 4 Reading List

Book of Choice (for the “Book Feature” Project)

novel/fiction

The “Book Feature” is the central nervous system of the class. Everything that is performed for the course is designed to create better, stronger communicators. Whether the class is reading classic literature or contemporary nonfiction, the mind and body functions remain the same: Receive a message, decode it, store what is worthwhile, and share it. Without messages traveling between humans we cease to have impact and importance.

No matter the genre, the book should contain at least one central issue that is current in our society to enable the student to complete the project with greater ease. Both the content of the book and the issue(s) central to it should interest the student greatly. Additionally, the material addressed in the chosen work should be complex enough to be further investigated with additional research and problem-solution proposal(s). It is highly recommended that a great deal of research and consideration is put into the student’s book choice. More information that will better enable students to make informed choices will be delivered as the course gets underway.

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|---|-------------|
| • <u>Macbeth</u> or <u>Hamlet</u> by William Shakespeare | drama |
| • Sonnets by Petrarch, Edmund Spenser, William Shakespeare, and John Donne | poetry |
| • Poems from William Blake, Andrew Marvel, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Dylan Thomas, William Butler Yeats, John Donne, Thom Yorke | poetry |
| • “Lamb to the Slaughter” by Roald Dahl | short story |
| • “The Chaser” by John Collier | short story |
| • “This Is Water” by David Foster Wallace | essay |
| • “Words and Behaviour” Aldous Huxley | essay |
| • “A Hanging” by George Orwell | essay |

Additional complex informational, nonfiction texts will be chosen from various sources by the instructor and students throughout the semester often with specific relationships to the literature being read at the time but overall interest in the subject matter will be a major determinant. These supplemental materials will often include background and historical information pertaining to the authors and the time periods in which they were writing, as well as contemporary issues sharing connections to the themes present in the literature being read. Additionally, professional features and materials containing background knowledge pertinent to the issue(s) addressed within will be commonly assigned.

****PLEASE READ, COMPLETE, AND RETURN THE FOLLOWING PAGE (5) BY THE END OF THE FIRST WEEK TO RECEIVE YOUR 6 EMERGENCY PASSES.****

****PARENTS/GUARDIANS and STUDENTS, PLEASE READ, COMPLETE, INITIAL, SIGN, DETACH, and RETURN ONLY THIS ENTIRE PAGE BY THE END OF THE FIRST WEEK.****

STUDENT NAME: _____
(Please print)

Parent or Guardian Name: _____
(Please print)

To the PARENT(S) or GUARDIAN(S):

PARENTS/GUARDIANS, Please Sign Your Initials on Each Line Below

I have read and understood the course syllabus for this class: _____

I understand that my child is responsible for any grade he/she receives, as the teacher does not just give out random grades (all grades are averaged out to arrive at a final grade for each term, which you are strongly encouraged to monitor with the use of PowerSchool.): _____

I understand I must ask my child for the necessary username and password to access PowerSchool to view my child's grades and access assignments on Canvas: _____

I have viewed the "READING LIST" and have no conflict with any of the works to be read by my child in this class: _____

I understand that I may contact the school at any time to speak with Mr. Ferguson or leave a voice mail for him to return my call. I may also utilize the messaging system in Canvas or use the school email address to contact him regarding any questions/concerns I may have: _____

*** PARENTS/GUARDIANS and STUDENTS, PLEASE SIGN AND DATE BELOW: ***

I, parent/guardian of _____, understand all of the above and will do my best to keep tabs on my child regarding his/her grades by utilizing the PowerSchool program. I am also aware that Mr. Ferguson will only accept late work under extenuating circumstances, and he does not accept verbal or written excuses. He will only accept a phone call from a parent or guardian with a valid reason why the work is late (see "Homework and Class Work Policy" above).

Date: _____

Parent or Guardian Signature: _____

Student Signature: _____

****PLEASE RETURN THIS ENTIRE PAGE BY THE END OF THE FIRST WEEK **
YOU WILL NOT RECEIVE YOUR 6 PASSES FOR THE SEMESTER UNTIL IT IS RECEIVED.**

**There is a Google Form for Page 5 located in Canvas if you prefer.