



**Mr. Alfera**  
**Room# A31**  
**Email: tma1563@lausd.net**  
**Police Academy Magnet**  
***Modern Literature & Advanced Composition***

**Class Objective:** The objective for the **Police Academy Magnet *Advanced Composition and Modern Literature*** is to make students college prepared and/or career ready. This objective is achieved through thematic, law enforcement themes specifically designed for **Police Academy Magnet** students that will teach students to: write logically, demonstrate clarity of expression, maintain a point of view, and keep coherent organization, while following all of the conventions of writing. Along with many theme-based activities in reading and writing, there is also a heavy emphasis in law enforcement vocabulary.

**Course Methods:**

This is a writing class -- a research-based expository, persuasive and literary-response writing class, to be specific. Students will be provided multiple opportunities to improve their writing skills. It is also a Modern Literature class. We will read several novels, some short stories, and poems as well. We will read copious current articles surrounding law enforcement issues and ideas.

**Course Topics:**

Writing for purpose and audience, justice and corruption, changing social norms; male/female relationships; poverty and prosperity; prejudice and tolerance; public interest vs. private good; do not consider this an exhaustive list of themes covered in this course.

**“Great literature, past and present, is the expression of great knowledge of the human heart.”--Edith Hamilton**

## Curricular Map

### 1) College Anyone?

- (a) College entrance essays
- (b) Letters of recommendation
- (c) Police Academy registration
- (d) Military applications

### 2) High Level Procedural Writing

- a) You are going to be given a crime/crash scene scenario for which you will create an 8-step police report.
- b) You will edit your report until it is flawless.

### 3) Is This the Real Life?

- i) Next, we will do is **examine** and **write** about individual and group ethos, pathos, logos and decisions that result from each.
- ii) We will **read** two excerpts (Allegory of The Cave & Malcolm X) and **ask** questions in order to **understand** the complexities of these issues.
  - (a) Does civilization corrupt or ennoble humanity?
  - (b) Is it better to be idealistic or pragmatic?
  - (c) Which is more important in the maintenance of a society, safety or freedom?
  - (d) Is there a balance between idealism and pragmatism?
  - (e) What is the catalyst that drives us to seek our own reality?
  - (f) In the end, is the reality we construct better than the one prescribed for us?
  - (g) What are the rewards for participating in the dumb show?
  - (h) Is it possible to truly wake others from their sleep?
  - (i) What are the punishments for autonomy?
    - 1. **Write** a multi-sourced paper exploring the essay prompt from the unit.
    - 2. **Connect** a musical selection to the enduring understanding and explain the connection in your final paper.

### 4) Tips for Writing Your Best and Gaining The Respect of Your Fellow Officers

- a) This unit will consist of three separate opportunities to improve:
  - i) Report writing – become a more efficient writer
  - ii) Peer relationships – increase your unit’s morale by helping others
  - iii) Increased professionalism – impress your superiors with your skills

### 5) Law and Order

- i) Next, we will **examine** the tools of justice and **consider** their effectiveness, i.e., police, wardens, lawyers, citizen groups/neighborhood watch groups, vigilantes. i) We will **read** a provocative novel by the famous Los Angeles writer, Walter Mosley, to examine this interesting and relevant topic.
- ii) What is justice? Is it the same as enforcing the laws?
- iii) Can people change?

- iv) What does it mean to “know thyself?”
- v) Is it possible to be satisfied with the way things are?
- vi) What is the meaning of justice?
- vii) How does one obtain justice when the established authorities are corrupt?
- viii) Am I my brother’s keeper?
  - (a) As a culminating activity, students will have the opportunity to explain in detail the closing scene of the book from the point of view of the police officer who finds the body.

## 6) **Nowhere Left to Hide**

- i) The next thing we will do is **ask** some questions concerning our current and future roles in society? We will read Fight Club, **listen** to relevant musical selections, and **discuss** all the questions raised by these activities.
- ii) From a law enforcement perspective, what are the dangers to society exposed by Project Mayhem, Fight Clubs, etc...
- iii) Do we really need to resort to lawlessness in order to change the system?

## 7) **What do we live for?**

- a) We will take an in depth look at Zora Neale Hurston’s masterpiece, **Their Eyes Were Watching God**
  - i) Not only will we focus on various literary methods used to construct the novel, we will examine some interesting legal and moral questions that come out of that analysis.

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### **Grading Procedures**

This class will have several essays, unit tests, a final exam, and quizzes. The essays and unit tests will be worth 100 points and the final exam 200 points. Quizzes will vary; sometimes they will be just a question or two; usually quizzes per se will be worth 10 points each. At any time you can determine how well you are doing by dividing the total points you have received by the total number of points that the essays, tests, and quizzes are worth. This will yield a percentage:

90-100 = A	ADVANCED
80-89 = B	PROFICIENT
70-79 = C	BASIC
60-69 = D	BELOW BASIC
Below 60 = F.	FAR BELOW BASIC

**Materials for the Course** (Not provided by the school) Your child will need:

- A notebook to keep notes and loose-leaf paper
- A pen or pencil
- Curiosity and imagination

**That you are here—that life exists and identity,  
That the powerful play goes on, and you may contribute a  
verse.— Walt Whitman**

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## **Classroom Policies and Procedures**

The policies for this class are quite similar to those you have become accustomed to over your years as a student. Please return with the required signatures.

### **BEFORE CLASS**

1. Check to make sure you have what you need for class.
2. Aspire to intelligence!
3. Get a drink and use the restroom.

### **DURING CLASS**

1. Hats may be worn for religious or medical reasons only.
2. Questions are encouraged by raising the hand and being recognized.
3. Focus on the task at hand.
4. Bring all materials needed for class.
5. Be seated and ready for class when the bell rings.
6. Remain seated until the class is dismissed.
7. Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.
8. Obey all school rules including dress code.
9. Turn off all music devices and cell phones during class.

### **AFTER CLASS**

1. Make sure you take with you everything you brought to class.
2. Carry proudly the knowledge gained from your lessons.
3. Apply with confidence in other classes your improved literacy.
4. Read something because you want to!

**The resentment of discipline of any kind will warp the whole life away from meaning and purpose. *Anonymous***

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Parent/Guardian Signature

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Student Signature

### **Some Guidelines For Students**

- i) Please do not wear a hat or cap in class unless you have a medical or religious reason for doing so. It is impolite to wear a hat in class.
- ii) You are to submit papers and answers to take-home questions on the due date. Late work will lose 10% of the points for each class period that the work is late. Any work more than one week late will not be accepted except for unusual circumstances. Work handed in one week late will be graded at "F" (half the original points) except for excusable reasons.

### **Instructions for Submitting Papers**

- i) Use good quality paper--not see-through
- ii) Use proper manuscript format:
  - (a) Use double spacing
  - (b) Use a margin of 1 and 1/2 inches on the left and 1 inch on all other sides.
  - (c) Use a title page, with a real title. Catchy titles are fun, and I like them; but if you use a catchy title, please also use a sub-title to indicate the substance of the paper. Titles are not in all caps and are not underlined and are not put in quotation marks. You may underline or use quotation marks in part of your title if it is necessary to do so. NOTE: the title of a story, by itself, can NEVER be your title, though it may be part of your title. The title does not have a period at the end. Capitalize all words in the title except internal articles (a, an, the) and short prepositions (such as to, in, with, by, for, etc.). All verbs, no matter how short, are capitalized. The first word of a sub-title is capitalized, no matter what it is. A title and subtitle are separated by a colon, not a semicolon or comma.
  - (d) Paginate as follows: the title page does not count; page one of the actual paper counts, but the number 1 does not appear on the page; page two and subsequent pages have their number (just a number--no parenthesis, no period, no hyphen) in the upper right corner where the margins meet.
  - (e) On the first page of the paper itself, repeat the title (exactly as it appears on the title page) centered, about 10-12 spaces down the page. After the title, skip three spaces and begin.
  - (f) Put commas and periods INSIDE quotation marks--always, without exception. This is America, not Britain.
- iii) Hyphens and dashes are not the same thing. A hyphen separates parts of a compound word (as in "three-day break"); a dash signals an interruption or perhaps an explanation. A dash is two un-spaced hyphens, not a space, hyphen, space (see the dash in the next item, below).
- iv) Use present tense in writing about literature--and be sure to maintain it throughout; do not switch from present to past and back again.

- v) Staple the paper together in the upper left-hand corner only; do not staple all the way down the side and do not use a binder of any kind. Unstapled papers will cause you to lose points.
- vi) Thought papers should not deal with subjects covered extensively in class; a rehash, even a well-written one, isn't worth much.
- b) Grades on papers will reflect not only on the content but also the writing itself. I read papers carefully and annotate them for grammar, punctuation, etc. as well as for content. I see no need to apologize for this whether the course is a writing course or a literature course. You should always write as well as possible.
- c) **P R O O F R E A D** and make necessary corrections. And don't depend solely on a spell-checker; it cannot distinguish between, say, tear and bear, since both are words. You must make the final spell-check of the paper.