



**Mr. Alfera  
Room# A31**

**Email: tma1563@lausd.net  
Police Academy Magnet**

***American Literature and Contemporary Composition***

**Class Objective:** The objective of Contemporary Composition is to teach students how to achieve quality writing at a college level, while addressing the Common Core Standards. This objective is achieved through thematic, **law enforcement** exercises that will teach students to: write logically, demonstrate clarity of expression, maintain a consistent point of view, and keep coherent organization, while following all of the conventions of writing. In addition to these 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills, students will receive instruction

**Course Topics:**

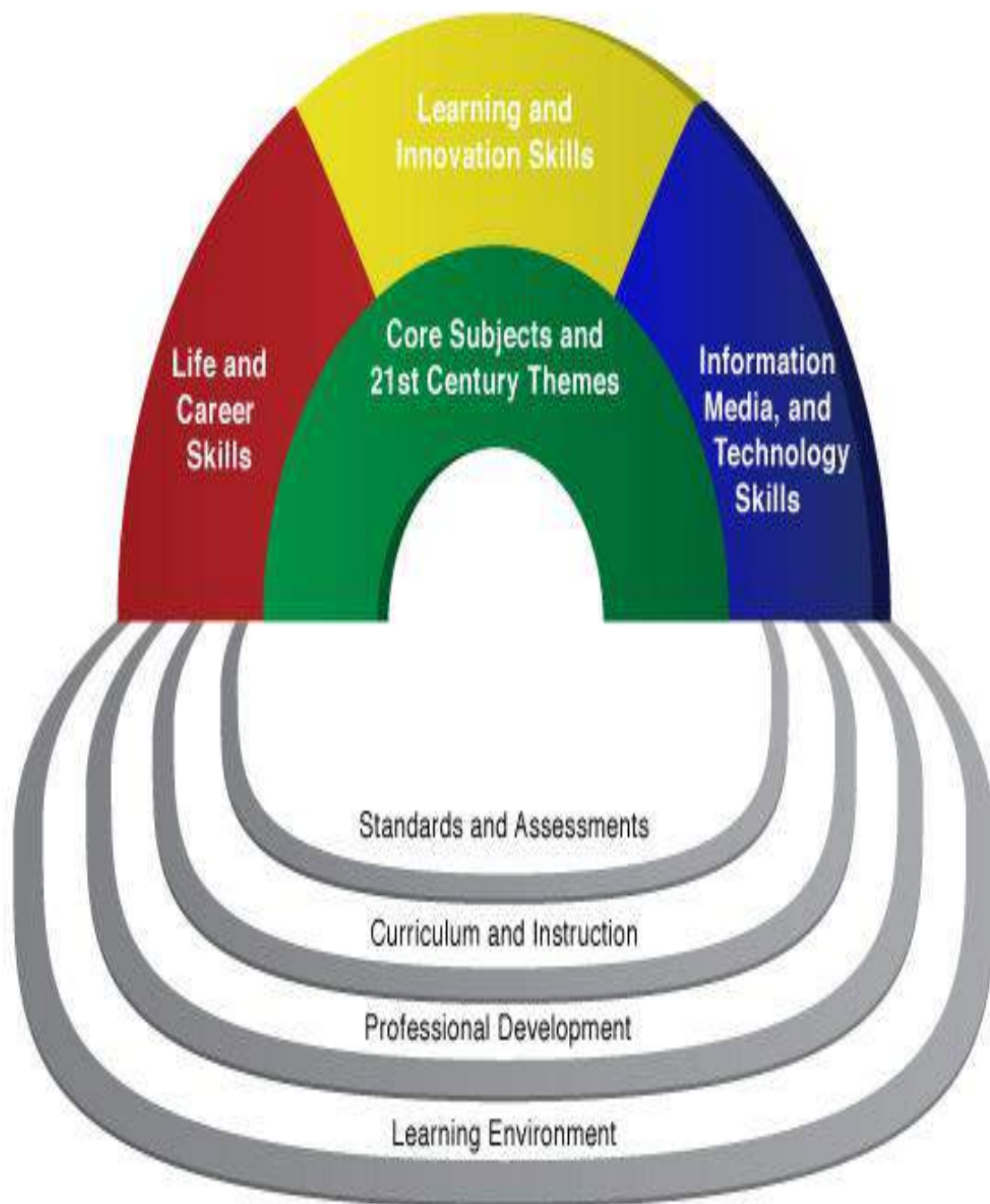
This is a **writing** class: a research-based expository, persuasive and literary response writing class, to be specific. You will be provided multiple opportunities to improve your writing skills. It is also an **American Literature** class. We will read several selections – short stories, poems, eulogies, non-fiction documents, etc.

**Why write;** how to write well; **global awareness;** civic and environmental literacy, **law and order;** male/female relationships; **crime and punishment;** poverty and prosperity; **prejudice and tolerance.**

**More specific goals are to:**

- A) Develop your critical and creative thinking skills,
- B) Instruct you in the humanistic study of literature, and
- C) Improve your oral and written communication skills.

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



## Curricular Map

### UNIT 1: The American Dream

- 1) America's Promise
  - a) **Essay:** "A Cause Greater Than Self," by Senator John McCain
  - b) **Poetry:** "The New Colossus," by Emma Lazarus
  - c) **Speech:** Excerpt from President Roosevelt's Address at Statue of Liberty Celebration
- 2) America's Voices
  - a) **Poetry:** "I Hear America Singing," by Walt Whitman
  - b) **Poetry:** "I, Too, Sing America," by Langston Hughes
  - c) **Poetry:** "America," by Claude McKay
- 3) Fulfilling the Promise
  - a) **Short Story:** "America and I," by AnziaYeziarska
- 4) Defining an American
  - a) **Letter:** Excerpt from *Letters From an American Farmer*, "What is an American?" by Hector St. Jean de Crevecoeur
    - i) A Hyphenated American
  - b) **Essay:** "Growing Up Asian," by Kesaya E. Noda
    - i) Researching Images of America
  - c) **Poetry:** "Let America Be America Again," by Langston Hughes
- 5) What Is Freedom?
  - a) **Speech:** Excerpt from "The Four Freedoms," by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt
  - b) **Historical Document:** The Preamble to the Constitution of the United States
  - c) **Historical Document:** The Bill of Rights
  - d) Strategies for Defining Freedom
    - i) **Definition Essay:** "What Is Freedom?" by Jerald M. Jellison and John H. Harvey
      - (1) Embedded Assessment 1: **Writing a Definition Essay**
- 6) **Argumentative Essay:** "Is the American Dream Still Possible?" by David Wallechinsky
  - a) The Structure of an Argument
    - i) **Historical Document:** The Declaration of Independence
- 7) Coming for the American Dream
  - a) **Poetry:** "Ellis Island," by Joseph Bruchac
  - b) **Poetry:** "On Being Brought From Africa To America," by Phillis Wheatley
  - c) **Poetry:** "Europe and America," by David Ignatow
  - d) Money and the American Dream
  - e) **Poetry:** "Money," by Dana Gioia
  - f) **Drama:** Excerpt from *A Raisin in the Sun*, by Lorraine Hansberry
- 8) Working Toward the Dream
  - a) **Poetry:** "Who Burns for the Perfection of Paper," by Martin Espada
  - b) **Nonfiction:** Excerpt from *Working*, "Roberto Acuna Talks About Farm Workers," by Studs Terkel
- 9) The Road to Success
  - a) **Speech:** Excerpt from *2004 Democratic National Convention Keynote*, by Barack Obama
  - b) **Essay:** "The Right to Fail," by William Zinsser
    - i) American Dream: Real or Imagined? Structured Academic Controversy
    - ii) Embedded Assessment 2: **Synthesizing the American Dream**

### UNIT 2: The Power of Persuasion

- 1) Preparing to Read The Crucible
  - a) **Sermon:** Sinners In The Hands of An Angry God
  - b) **Essay:** The Trial of Martha Carrier
  - c) **Article:** The Lessons of aleem
  - d) **Drama:** The Crucible
    - i) The beginnings of characterization
    - ii) Pivotal scene 1: Considering interpretations

- iii) Analyzing the elements of a script
- iv) Illuminating hysteria: characters, conflict, and social commentary
- e) **Fable:** “The Very Proper Gander,” by James Thurber
  - i) Conflicts in Salem
  - ii) Speaking like a Puritan
  - iii) Proctor and Elizabeth
  - iv) Courtroom Drama: Evidence and confession
  - v) Examining the role of irony in climax
- f) **Speech:** Excerpt from “A Declaration of Conscience,” by Margaret Chase Smith
- g) **Essay:** “Why I Wrote the Crucible: An Artist’s Answer to Politics,” by Arthur Miller
  - i) Integrity Rising to the top: Written dialogue
  - ii) Comparative Interpretations: Arriving at Conclusions
- h) **Film:** The Crucible
  - i) Timed Writing
  - ii) Contemporary Conflicts

### UNIT 3: American Forums: The Marketplace of Ideas

- 1) Rights and Responsibilities
  - a) **Historical Document:** First Amendment and The United States
  - b) **Informational Text:** “The Role of Media in a Democracy,” by George A. Krinsky
- 2) Introducing the Media: The Newspaper debate
  - a) **Editorial:** “How the Rise of The Daily Me Threatens democracy,” by Cass Sunstein
  - b) **Editorial:** “The Newspaper Is Dying – Hooray for Democracy,” by Andrew Potter
- 3) News or Views: A Closer Look
  - a) **Article:** “Facebook Photos Sting Minnesota High School Students”
    - i) The Bias of Rhetoric
    - ii) Fair and Balanced
  - b) **Editorial:** “Abolish High School Football,” by Raymond Schroth
- 4) How to Read an Editorial
  - a) **Editorial:** “Facing Consequences at Eden Prairie High” from Minneapolis/St. Paul Star Tribune
- 5) How to Write an Editorial
  - a) **Editorial:** Time to Raise The Bar In High School,” by Jack O’Connell
  - b) **Editorial:** “New Michigan Graduation Requirements Shortchange Many Students,” by Nick Thomas
- 6) Where’s Your Proof? Reading and Writing a Letter to an Editor
  - a) **Editorial:** Why I Hate Cell Phones,” by Sara Reihana
    - i) Fallacies 101
- 7) How to Read and Write an Editorial Cartoon
  - a) **Informational Text:** “An Inside Look at Editorial Cartoons,” by Bill Brennan
    - i) **ASSIGNMENT: Creating an Op-Ed News Project**
- 8) Identifying the Elements of Satire
  - a) **Satire:** “Let’s Hear It For The Cheerleaders,” by David Bouchier
    - i) The Satirical Spectrum
    - ii) The Tone of Satire
  - b) **Satire:** “Girl Moved to Tears by *Of Mice and Men* Cliff Notes,” from The Onion
- 9) Writing Parody
  - a) **Parody:** “In Depth but Shallowly,” by Dave Barry
  - b) **Satire:** “Advice to Youth,” by Mark Twain
  - c) **Satire:** “The War Prayer,” by Mark Twain
- 10) The Satirical Critique
  - a) **Satire:** “Gambling in Schools,” by Howard Mohr
  - b) **Satire:** “How To Poison The Earth,” by Linnea Saukko
    - (1) **ASSIGNMENT: Writing a Satirical Piece**

### UNIT 4: The Pursuit of Happiness

- 1) Searching for Meaning
  - a) **Essay:** from “Self-Reliance,” by Ralph Waldo Emerson
  - b) **Essay:** from **Walden**, by Henry David Thoreau

- c) **Poetry:** “In The depths of Solitude,” by Tupac Shakur
- d) **Poetry:** “Remember,” by Jay Harjo
- e) **Poetry:** Selections from **Leaves of Grass**, by Walt Whitman
- f) **Poetry:** “A Light Exists In Spring,” by Emily Dickinson
- 2) **Nonfiction: Credo** from “All I Really Need To Know I Learned In Kindergarten,” by Robert Fulghum
  - a) Drafting a **Credo**
    - i) Revising your **Credo**
      - (1) Framing The Subject
- 3) **Biography:** Into The Wild, by Jon Krakauer
  - a) Meeting Christopher McCandless
    - i) Literary Connections
    - ii) Shedding Light
    - iii) Meaning Through Structure
    - iv) A Personal Perspective
  - b) A Personal Perspective on Style
    - i) Reflecting on Life’s Experiences
    - ii) **Essay:** “A View from Mt. Ritter,” by Joseph T. O’Connor
- 4) Writing a **Personal Essay**
  - a) Searching for the author
  - b) Many Ways of Showing
- 5) Multi-Genre Research Project
  - a) Exploring, Recording and Imagining Research
  - b) Melding facts, Interpretation, and Imagination
  - c) Meeting In The Middle
  - d) Thematic Threads to Create Flow
  - e) Organizing The Multi-Genre Research Project

#### **UNIT 5: An American Journey**

- 1) Developing Research Questions
  - a) **Informational Text:** The Harlem Renaissance,” by Kathleen Browne and Patrick Huber
- 2) Historical Context of the Harlem Renaissance
  - a) **Informational Text:** “Introduction to The New Negro,” by Alain Locke
  - b) **Poetry:** “Usward,” by Gwendolyn B. Bennett
  - c) **Poetry:** “Lift Every Voice and Sing,” by James Weldon Johnson
  - d) **Literary Criticism:** “On ‘From The Dark Tower,’” by Eugenia W. Collier
- 3) Synthesizing Facts, Interpretation, and Media Formats
- 4) Documenting Your Sources
- 5) Finalizing Research

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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 your child can determine how well he or she is doing by dividing the total points they have received by the total number of points that the essays, tests, and quizzes are worth. This will yield a percentage:

### **Grading**

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 a composition book.
- A pen, pencil, and highlighter
- 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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**Police Academy/Law & Public Service Magnet American Literature and Contemporary Composition**

**Classroom Policies and Procedures**

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

**BEFORE CLASS**

- 1. Check to make sure you have what you need for class.
- 2. Mentally prepare yourself for English class.
- 3. Get a drink and use the restroom.

**DURING CLASS**

- 1. 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.
- 2. You are encouraged to ask questions by raising your hand and waiting to be 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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

### Some Guidelines For Students

1. 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

1. Use good quality paper--not see-through
2. Use proper manuscript format:
  - i. Use double spacing
  - ii. Use a margin of 1 and 1/2 inches on the left and 1 inch on all other sides.
  - iii. Do NOT use a title page, unless specifically asked to do so. Use the link below to consult MLA formatting guidelines.
    1. <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>
3. Put commas and periods **INSIDE** quotation marks--always, without exception. This is America, not Britain.
4. 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).
5. Use present tense in writing about literature--and be sure to maintain it throughout; do not switch from present to past and back again.
6. 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.
7. Thought papers should not deal with subjects covered extensively in class; a rehash, even a well-written one, isn’t worth much.
8. 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.
9. **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.



## Cheating and Plagiarism Policy

Reseda High's Law and Public Service Magnet has adopted the following code of Academic Integrity and all students are expected to adhere to its letter and spirit:

Reseda High's Law and Public Service Magnet, united in a spirit of mutual trust and fellowship, mindful of the values of a true education and the challenges posed by the world, agree to accept the responsibilities for honorable behavior in all academic activities, to assist one another in maintaining and promoting personal integrity, and to follow the principles and procedure in this Code of Academic Integrity. Violation of the Code of Academic Integrity may take several forms.

Cheating of any kind is obviously a violation of the Code, whether a student is cheating for him or herself, is working in groups on an individual assignment, or is helping another student cheat. In addition, plagiarism is a violation of the Code.

Any of the following, without full acknowledgement of the debt to the original source, counts as plagiarism:

- **Direct duplication, by copying (or allowing to be copied) another's work, whether from a book, article, web site, another student's assignment, etc., without proper citation or notification.**
- **Duplication in any manner of another's work during an exam.**
- **Paraphrasing of another's work closely, with minor changes but with the essential meaning, form and/or progression of ideas maintained.**
- **Piecing together sections of the work of others into a new whole.**
- **Submitting one's own work which has already been submitted for assessment purposes in another subject.**
- **Producing an assignment in conjunction with other people (e.g. another student, a parent, a tutor) which is expected to be your own independent work.**

**Note:** Students are responsible for clarifying expectations and following the Code with respect to all assignments and in all disciplines.

Consequences for Violation of the Code of Academic Integrity:

**First Offense:**

- A fail on the assignment or 5% of course grade (whichever is greater)
- A double “U” in the class
- A 500 word essay on why cheating is wrong (due the next day of issuance)
- Probation from all activities for ten weeks
- Parent call home (by witnessing teacher)
- An explanation to the law staff

**Second Offense:**

- A fail on the assignment or 5% of course grade (whichever is greater)
- A double “U” in the class
- A 1000 word essay on the definition of personal integrity (due the next day of issuance)
- Probation from all activities for a semester
- A formal parent conference with coordinator, counselor and administrator
- In-school suspension (plant management detail)

**Third Offense:**

- Varies from failure of the course to removal from the program.