English Courses

English courses at Mercer Island High School include elements from speaking, reading, and writing curriculum. In the ninth-grade courses, students are introduced to different forms of public speaking; writing: descriptive, narrative, and expository; and literature: short story, novels, plays, essays and articles, and poetry. Later courses assume an understanding of the basic information and forms taught in ninth grade. Correct MLA citation, grammar, and usage are emphasized in every English course.

Honors and Advanced Placement courses are enhanced courses taught at an accelerated pace and with greater depth of understanding required of students. They are designed for the highly motivated, independent student who is eager to complete the assigned readings, has strong writing skills, and is prepared to participate actively in class sessions. Upper level honors/AP students (grades 11 and 12) are expected to write analytical essays, lead and participate in group research and presentation projects, participate in class discussions, and demonstrate an understanding of literary theory and methods of literary criticism. Full participation in an AP course includes an expectation the student will take the AP examination, for which the student will be prepared throughout the year.

Some English courses are integrated with a Social Studies course or a College and Career Readiness course; review the Social Studies and the College and Career Readiness sections of this MIHS Course Catalog for descriptions of those courses.

English 9
Grade Level: ........................................9
Duration/Credit: ..................................2 semesters/1 credit
Recommended Preparation: ...............None
Graduation Content Requirement: ......English
Fees: ....................................................None

Course Description: In the first semester, you will learn the principles of critical thinking as you read and analyze literature from different genres. Assessments will include the writing of in-depth paragraphs, multi-paragraph essays, and all aspects of the writing process will be demonstrated and taught. You will apply techniques of organization and argumentation to oral and written communications and learn basic principles of public speaking. In the second semester, you will add refinement to your analytical essays and presentations by applying techniques of research, criticism, and advanced writing and speaking skills.

English 9/Business Communications and Technology
Integrated with Business Communications and Technology
Grade Level:........................................9
Duration/Credit: .........................2 semesters/1 credit for English 9
Recommended Preparation: ...............None
Graduation Content Requirement: ......English
Fees: ....................................................None

Course Description: The English component of the two-period English 9/Business Communications and Technology block is literature-based and follows the same curriculum and expectations described in English 9.

See College and Career Readiness section for detailed description of Business Communications and Technology.
English 9 Honors

Grade Level: 9
Duration/Credit: 2 semesters/1 credit
Recommended Preparation: Strong preparation in 8th grade English
Graduation Content Requirement: English
Fees: None

Course Description: English 9 Honors extends the English 9 curriculum to include additional readings and a deep study of all literature read. You will learn techniques of literary criticism and be introduced to major components of literary theory. It is expected that you already are proficient in essay writing and able to demonstrate strong critical thinking skills. In the first semester, you will enhance your understanding of principles of critical thinking and apply your knowledge in writing, analysis, and oral presentations. In the second semester, you will apply higher order thinking, in-depth research, and advanced writing techniques to refine the written assessments you produce.

English 9 Honors/Business Communications and Technology
Integrated with Business Communications and Technology

Grade Level: 9
Duration/Credit: 2 semesters/1 credit for English 9
Recommended Preparation: Strong preparation in 8th grade English
Graduation Content Requirement: English
Fees: None

Course Description: The English component of the two-period English 9 Honors/Business Communications and Technology block is literature-based and follows the same curriculum and expectations described in English 9 Honors.

See College and Career Readiness section for detailed description of Business Communications and Technology.

English 10

Grade Level: 10
Duration/Credit: 2 semesters/1 credit
Recommended Preparation: None
Graduation Content Requirement: English
Fees: None

Course Description: You will learn to recognize and understand the literary elements that distinguish works across time and place. The approach will be both thematic and chronological and will include a mix of literary genres from the Western Hemisphere, Asia and Africa, and will cover ancient Greece through the Modern Era. You will explore the classical form of tragedy, rhetoric, Romanticism, Modernism, and ethics. Literary works may be selected from Sophocles, Othello, an Enlightenment work, Romantic poetry or Gothic short stories, All Quiet on the Western Front, A Doll’s House, Night, Catcher in the Rye, Things Fall Apart, Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress, Siddhartha, The Stranger, and a work of literary non-fiction. Some texts will align with students’ history classes. In the first semester, you will work on refining the multi-paragraph essay, and strengthening your understanding of literary devices. In the second semester, you will work on developing your writer’s voice.
English 10 Honors
Grade Level: 10
Duration/Credit: 2 semesters/1 credit
Recommended Preparation: English 9 Honors
Graduation Content Requirement: English
Fees: None

Course Description: In this course you will cover all the content of the regular English 10 course. Since this is an Honors option for this course, you will be expected to have mastered skills of critical reading, research, and writing. You will devote significant attention to the study of literary criticism. Literary works may be selected from Sophocles, Othello, an Enlightenment work, Romantic poetry or Gothic short stories, All Quiet on the Western Front, A Doll’s House, Night, Catcher in the Rye, Things Fall Apart, Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress, Siddhartha, The Stranger, and a work of literary non-fiction. Your Honors reading load can be up to twice that of the regular class. Some texts will align with students’ history classes. You will work on refining your skill with synthesis and analysis.

World Studies/ World Literature
Integrated with World Studies/Modern World History
Grade Level: 10
Duration/Credit: 2 semesters/1 credit
Recommended Preparation: None
Graduation Content Requirement: English
Fees: None

Course Description: In the English section of this integrated course, you will study literature from the Middle Ages and Renaissance to the present day. The curriculum requires you to identify, analyze, and question broad themes underlying human civilization. Current events projects also may be assigned. You will be exposed to a variety of writers, possibly including Sophocles, Shakespeare, Ibsen, Achebe, and Wiesel. The course will be integrated with World Studies/Modern World History over two class periods, so you will be able to investigate larger questions from both literary and historical frames of reference. You will develop multi-paragraph expository writing, and may also produce short fiction and poetry. You will be assessed on tests, oral presentations, written work, and group projects. See Social Studies section for description of World Studies/Modern World History.

World Studies/ World Literature Honors
Integrated with World Studies/Modern World History Honors
Grade Level: 10
Duration/Credit: 2 semesters/1 credit
Recommended Preparation: English 9 Honors, Early Civilizations
Graduation Content Requirement: English
Fees: None

Course Description: In the English section of this integrated course, you will study literature from the Middle Ages and Renaissance to the present day. The curriculum requires you to identify, analyze, and question broad themes underlying human civilization. Current events projects also may be assigned. You will be exposed to a variety of writers, possibly including Sophocles, Shakespeare, Shelley, Joyce, Ibsen, Achebe, and Wiesel. The literature assigned will include challenging texts, often of greater length than regular World Studies/ World Literature offerings. You will study literary theory, including all major schools. You will do critical research, which will be the basis for your written literary analyses and for class discussions. The course will be integrated with Honors World Studies/Modern World History over two class periods, so you will be able to investigate larger questions from both literary and historical frames of reference. You will develop multi-paragraph expository writing, and may also produce short fiction and poetry. You will be assessed on tests, oral presentations, written work, and group projects. See Social Studies section for description of Honors World Studies/Modern World History.
American Studies/American Literature
Integrated with US History
Grade Level: 11
Duration/Credit: 2 semesters/1 credit
Recommended Preparation: None
Graduation Content Requirement: English
Fees: None
Course Description: This course will introduce you to themes and ideas in United States history and American literature. The focus of this integrated course will be on literary, political, economic, social, and historical events which have shaped the American character from the Colonial Era to present times. You will examine the writing of authors such as Emerson, Thoreau, Twain, Fitzgerald, Steinbeck, Miller, and others. The course incorporates themes and ideas from literature to enable you to understand developments in the American experience. You will read from several genres and use your reading as the basis for writing expository and narrative essays. In addition, you may write short works of fiction, and poetry, and will complete an extended research paper. You will be assessed on participation in individual and group projects, written essays, and tests. See Social Studies section for description of American Studies/US History.

American Studies/AP English Language and Composition
Integrated with AP US History
Grade Level: 11
Duration/Credit: 2 semesters/1 credit
Recommended Preparation: English 10 Honors or World Studies Honors
Graduation Content Requirement: English
Fees: None
Course Description: In this college-level course, you will develop skills of critical inquiry, argument, reading, and writing to meet the literacy standards for college study. You will study American writing of several genres and will cultivate advanced reading and writing skills. You will learn how written language functions rhetorically to communicate writers’ intentions and elicit readers’ responses in particular situations. You will strengthen your use of formal conventions of written language and gain an understanding of American English from historical, cultural, and social perspectives. The course covers a large volume of material, which you will read and analyze. You will study writing of authors such as Miller, Stowe, Twain, Crane, Dos Passos, Fitzgerald, Hemingway, Faulkner, Cleaver, O’Brien, O’Connor, Dickinson, Rich, and Hughes. You will be assigned daily reading in the English section of this course; additional reading will be assigned in AP US History. Full participation in an AP course includes an expectation you will take the AP examination, for which you will be prepared throughout the year. See Social Studies section for description of American Studies/AP US History.

English 12
Grade Level: 12
Duration/Credit: 2 semesters/1 credit
Recommended Preparation: None
Graduation Content Requirement: English
Fees: None
Course Description: In this course, you will be exposed to a thematic study of literature. Readings will include classic and contemporary international literature. In your writing, you will demonstrate strong mechanics and style and competent literary analysis. You will be assessed on writing assignments, tests and quizzes, and projects. Works studied may include Hamlet, How to Read Literature Like a Professor, Man’s Search for Meaning, and selected fiction, poetry, and non-fiction.
English 12/Film as Literature
Grade Level: ................................. 12
Duration/Credit: ......................... 2 semesters/1 credit
Recommended Preparation: .......... None
Graduation Content Requirement: ...... English
Fees: ............................................ None

Course Description: In this year-long exploration of film and literature, you will examine elements of film production, practice techniques of “reading” films, and attempt your own creative work. You will practice visual literacy and learn about the way in which images create and alter meaning. Readings will include literature and texts relevant to film studies, and you will be assessed through written assignments, tests and quizzes, and projects. You will be expected to read relevant novels and texts, watch films each week, maintain a film journal, compose essays throughout the year, examine the screenplay as a written form, and write your own scripts.

English 12 Honors
Integrated with AP Comparative Government and Politics
Grade Level: ................................. 12
Duration/Credit: ......................... 2 semesters/1 credit
Recommended Preparation: .......... American Studies/AP
Graduation Content Requirement: ...... English
Fees: ............................................ None

Course Description: In the English portion of this integrated course, you will study the literature, philosophy, history, and economics of Great Britain, China, Russia, Mexico, Nigeria, Iran, Israel, and Vietnam. You will read literary criticism and news articles to supplement and complement the study of the cultures and governments of these countries. In addition, you will study relationships between state and society; sources of authority and power; political institutions and frameworks; and the causes, scope, and consequences of political change. Texts may include: A Star Called Henry, Wild Swans, Death of Ivan Ilyich, Persepolis, Man’s Search for Meaning, Hamlet, Graceland, The Brief and Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao, How Soccer Explains the World, and selected world poetry and non-fiction. You will be expected to complete written assignments with competence and mastery in style, depth of analysis, and quality of research. You will be assessed through examinations, group projects, presentations, and individual research projects. See Social Studies section for description of AP Comparative Government and Politics.

AP Literature and Composition
Grade Level: ................................. 12
Duration/Credit: ......................... 2 semesters/1 credit
Recommended Preparation: .......... American Studies/AP
Graduation Content Requirement: ...... English
Fees: ............................................ Fee for AP examination, approximately $95

Course Description: In AP Literature and Composition, you will read, discuss, and write extensively about the ideas of the most influential poets, playwrights, and novelists from Greek antiquity to the contemporary age. The English Literature and Composition course follows all mandatory and recommended Advanced Placement (AP) requirements. The class will practice and assess components of the AP exam throughout the year. You will be required to read and understand the assigned works and to write with clarity, thoughtfulness, and thematic certainty. You will analyze literature and display your mastery through university-level assessments, group presentations, written essays, your writer’s notebook, class participation, and some creative assessments. You may be assigned a summer reading that must be completed prior to the first day of class. Full participation in an AP course includes an expectation you will take the AP examination, for which you will be prepared throughout the year.
English Language Learners: Communications

Grade Level:........................................9, 10, 11, 12
Duration/Credit: .................................2 semesters/1 credit
Graduation Content Requirement: ......Elective
Recommended Preparation: ..............Washington State bilingual test qualification as English language learner
Fees: ....................................................None

Course Description: In this course, you will learn and practice English vocabulary and grammar to improve your skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. You will be learning English language and increasing your understanding of American culture by reading and discussing newspapers, magazines, specific ELL materials, stories, and poems. Your teacher will help you with language skills so that you can gain the most from your other classes at the high school. This course will help you succeed in your MIHS English class. You will be expected to participate in each day’s class, and you will have many writing assignments.