

Burnaby North English Department
English 10 - First Peoples Literary Studies 10 / Creative Writing 10

I would like to acknowledge the land on which we live, work, and learn is the unceded territory of the Coast Salish peoples, including the territories of the x̱məθkwəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and Səlilwataʔ/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

All English courses are designed to help students develop their skills in reading, writing, speaking, and representing. This course, a blend of *Creative Writing 10* and *First Peoples Literary Studies 10*, focuses on creative writing and encourages students to develop their own creative voice and analyze exactly *how* other writers communicate their ideas. Students will explore a variety of genres of literature (poetry, short fiction, novel, essays, memoir, drama) from Indigenous and non-Indigenous authors. Students will also be provided with opportunities to build their academic and creative writing skills.

Some goals are for students to...

- Think critically, independently and creatively to explore ideas within, between, and beyond texts, and recognize how the “parts” contribute to the “whole”
- Respond to text in personal, critical, and creative ways, and transform ideas to create original texts
- Construct meaningful personal connections between self, text, and world, and see how texts are socially, culturally, geographically, and historically constructed
- Develop an individual writing ‘voice’, and engage the audience through precise diction and engaging sentence variety.
- Recognize and appreciate the role of story, narrative, and oral tradition in expressing First Peoples perspectives, values, beliefs, and points of view, and appreciate the diversity within and across First Peoples societies as represented in texts.
- Recognize the impact of personal, social, and cultural identities in First Peoples texts, and delve into how First Peoples texts provide insight into key aspects of Canada’s past, present and future
- Speak clearly and effectively and participate thoughtfully to respectfully exchange ideas to build shared understanding and extend thinking

See: <https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/curriculum/english-language-arts/10/creative-writing>
and <https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/curriculum/english-language-arts/10/efp-literary-studies>

Author Muriel Rukeyser wrote that the “universe is made of stories, not of atoms.”

It is through story that we understand our world and our place within it. We are all storytellers, and our stories not only define us and make us who we are, but also help us to understand each other.

“All that we are is story. From the moment we are born to the time we continue on our spirit journey, we are involved in the creation of the story of our time here. It is what we arrive with. It is all we leave behind. We are not the things we accumulate. We are not the things we deem important. We are story. All of us. What comes to matter then is the creation of the best possible story we can while we’re here; you, me, us, together. When we can do that and we take the time to share those stories with each other, we get bigger inside, we see each other, we recognize our kinship – we change the world, one story at a time...” (Ojibway author Richard Wagamese)

In this course we will be exploring how story can capture our memories and our sense of identity, challenge our thinking, and also build empathy and understanding, for fiction “puts us inside the minds of other people, gives us the gifts of seeing the world through their eyes” (author Neil Gaiman). We will read both Indigenous and non-Indigenous authors, and explore the connections between authors, and the kinship of ideas shared across cultures, for there is more that unites us than what sets us apart.

Reconciliation: The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada defined reconciliation as an “on-going process of establishing and maintaining respectful relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people”, a process that involves reflecting on the past, to heal and to make right for the future. Part of this process means acknowledging not only the land rights, but also the stories, voices, and culture of the First Nations of Canada.

Seven Grandfather Teachings:

One important belief of many First Nations peoples in Canada that we will explore is the idea of the **Seven Sacred Teachings: *Honesty, Respect, Love, Courage, Truth, Humility, and Wisdom.***

We will explore these ideas in more depth and consider how these values are reflected in a variety of works, and will also focus on these values as we write our own creative pieces.

We will also examine how often we *all*, regardless of culture, share these core values, for, despite the different stories we grow through and carry with us, we all have a universal kinship, and are part of the same story.

Evaluation:

- English is a skill-based course. The grading for this class will be ***cumulative*** in nature – your term marks will *not* be averaged to calculate your final grade for the course. We become better writers over time with practice, so assessment of your work must take this into account in order to be accurate.
- Students cannot redo or rewrite tests/assignments except in rare circumstances at the discretion of the teacher (the student would write an alternate assignment focusing on the same learning objective.) Evaluation will be on-going, and the focus for evaluation will be on specific learning objectives, not just an accumulation of “points”.
- Students will be provided with on-going feedback in the form of rubrics and conferences/conversations, and this feedback is more important than specific numbers.
- Part of your mark may come from a creative writing portfolio – a small collection of your best pieces that you can work on, receive feedback for, and revise over time.
- I am available for extra help during flex time – **I am in room 15.** I will not have conversations about grades /percentages, but I am always happy to discuss your learning/progress.
 - **Comprehend and Connect (Writing and Reading): 45%**
In-class writing and tests.
Writing assignments will be completed **IN CLASS** (*unless* you are told otherwise). Students who miss an in-class writing assignment need to make-up the assignment within a timely manner, or they may lose the opportunity to write that particular assignment. If you are ill, you **must** stay home (you can stay in touch via email and MS Teams), but you need to be responsible and find out what you missed and bring a note from a parent/guardian to verify the reason for your absence.
 - **Create and communicate: 50%**
Outside class writing /creative assignments that demonstrate or represent your critical and creative thinking. Some assignments will be completed and submitted on the computer via MS Office 365 Teams.
 - **Speaking / Discussion: 5%:** You will be expected to share your ideas with the group to contribute to the group knowledge of the class. (You will be evaluated for your ability to speak clearly to communicate your ideas in “book club” reading groups, class discussion, and presentations/speeches).

Independent reading: *"If you want to be a writer, you must do two things above all others: read a lot and write a lot."* (Stephen King)

Reading widely is the best way to improve your vocabulary and composition skills, and will help you in all of your subject areas. Students are required to **bring a silent reading book of their own** to class every day, as each class will begin with 10-15 minutes of silent reading. If you have a library card, you can even borrow books electronically through the Burnaby Public Library by using the Libby app.

When you finish a book, bring a new book to class. You must bring *novels* (not magazines or other reading material.) You will need to share your response to your reading through on-going independent reading assignments.

Writer's Notebook

Just as athletes need plenty of practice to improve at their sport, writers need to practice their craft and *play* with language. The goal here is for you to develop your own independence and your own voice in your writing, without always being graded and evaluated. You will have the opportunity to choose to finish / 'publish' particular pieces from this free-writing.

Writing Contests

Students are encouraged to participate in writing contests (to be announced, with details posted in the classroom and on MS Teams).

"If there's a book that you want to read, but it hasn't been written yet, then you must write it."

(Toni Morrison)

Classroom Routines This Year:

- **Social distance** as much as possible from other people – I have arranged a seating plan, so please use the same desk (the seating plan may change!)
- **Wash hands** frequently and sanitize your hands on entering the building.
- You must wear a **mask** inside the school / classroom.

Extending the class online: Microsoft Office Teams

*You can see instructions for MS Office Teams on the school website:

<https://north.burnabyschools.ca/blog/2021/08/15/office-365-for-students-at-north/>

I will use **Microsoft Office 365 Teams** to post a “Shape of the Day” in the General discussion channel. I may also include readings, and resources. If you are away, check the “Shape of the Day” post.

If the school were to temporarily close, the class would move to MS Teams.

Many assignments will be written by hand in the classroom during class time (assignments that may take longer than one class period will be kept in an in-class writing folder).

However, some assignments are to be submitted on MS Office Teams -- these will be posted in the “Assignments” tab (but will also come up under the post for the day), and already formatted for you to complete.

Any assignments submitted on MS Teams:

*Open the document on MS Teams, *edit* the document and submit it.

If you happen to be working first in a Word document, or even in googledocs, just copy and paste your work *into* the document posted in “Assignments”.

Do not attach a PDF, or links to googledocs.

- Photographs of your writing will ***not*** be accepted (they are really too hard to read!)
- Use size 12 font, double-spaced, in Times New Roman or Arial or Calibri.
- Put your first and last name and block at the top of the document

Use of MS Teams:

We *may* also use MS Teams for “chat” book club discussions (one of the tabs on the left under “General”). Remember that this platform is an extension of the classroom; Office Teams is a place where we do course work – it is not for casual conversations, and conversation must remain respectful and “professional”. You can also post any questions you might have in the “Questions / Assignment Help” channel (do not post in the General Discussion channel).

Contact me:

If you or your parents have any questions, please contact me at Bryn.Williams@burnabyschools.ca.

