



Critical Reading and Creative Writing Course Overview

Dr. Stanley

Description:

Critical Reading and Creative writing focuses on strengthening students' reading comprehension and writing skills. Through close reading and detailed discussions during class, students will become more confident and comfortable analyzing the structure and major themes of important novels and short stories. Students will also learn to read "beyond the page" as significant course time will be devoted to making connections between the texts we study and their historical context.

Goals:

1. **To help students with their reading:** I want students to attentively read the text that I assign. This can help students recognize themes of a text, become familiar with literary devices, learn how stories are told, be introduced to unfamiliar vocabulary and uncover patterns and motifs to heighten their understanding. Reading is the foundation of every class. In order to write well, students need to learn how to read. In my class, they will learn how to look for details inside of a text.
2. **To help students with their writing:** My classes are focused on teaching students to sharpen their organization skills and creativity. Using selected excerpts from the text as a platform for analysis and discussion, I teach students how to properly compose responses to guided questions or prompts. However, I do not want students to strictly abide by the rules I set out for them. There has to be room for personal interpretation. Otherwise their writing style will not develop. This is where the in-class writing comes in. Every class there will be 2-3 opportunities for students to write. They respond to questions pertaining to philosophy, their own lives and selected themes from the text. I monitor and respond to their answers in the chat and take note of strengths and areas that need to be improved upon. Sometimes students will also be asked to write creatively. Style emulation, poetry, outside class research....all of these things help students to seek out knowledge and to critically engage with the text.
3. **To help students with their critical thinking skills:** My classes are structured like a seminar. Each student is an active participant in learning. Therefore, if they do not keep up with the reading, they are at a disadvantage. The excerpts that I select will help them retain a semblance of the novel, but they will be missing out on nuance and will not be able to participate in a meaningful way. Each class begins with a keyword. We discuss the keyword and I define it thoroughly for the entire class. We then transition into reading selected excerpts. After an excerpt is read, discussion begins. I pose questions and select students to respond. This not only gives students a platform to express their views, but it also encourages them to look deeper into the text and organize their oral responses in a logical, straightforward manner.
4. **To help students develop personal responsibility:** I hold students accountable and am in frequent contact with parents if a student is not meeting my expectations in the classroom. My main concern is not quality, but effort. If a student is trying their hardest and struggling.... I will do everything in my power to help that student succeed. I'm a deeply passionate teacher who puts a lot of effort into designing engaging and challenging courses, I need to see that same dedication from my students. I always encourage students and treat them with a lot of respect in the hope that they feel motivated to learn and push themselves to reach their potential.