St. Pius X

Freshman English: Language, Literature, and the Catholic View of Human Dignity

Modern Tools + Traditional Practices | Full-Year Syllabus | Google Classroom LMS |

Course Overview

Freshman English develops students as thoughtful readers, clear writers, careful speakers, and responsible members of an academic community. Literature and composition are used to explore truth, integrity, dignity, virtue, courage, mercy, freedom, and moral responsibility within the Catholic intellectual tradition.

The course centers on four major works: True Grit, Lord of the Flies, Animal Farm, and Of Mice and Men. Students will read each book on a paced schedule, discuss important passages and ideas, and complete a limited number of purposeful assignments that build toward the major writing or presentation for each quarter.

Writing instruction emphasizes planning, drafting, feedback, revision, and authentic student voice. Short practice activities may be completed in class without becoming separate graded assignments. Google Classroom will be used for due dates, materials, submissions, and feedback; technology is a tool for learning, not a substitute for reading or thinking.

Grading Categories

Category	Weight
Reading and annotation	15%
Writing - process and products	30%
Speaking and listening	15%
Quizzes and tests	10%
Projects and portfolio	15%
Final examination - portfolio presentation	15%

Quarter 1 | True Grit - Courage, Conscience, and Moral Identity

Character, point of view, moral courage, justice, conscience, and human dignity.

Reading Schedule

Due	Assigned Reading
08/28/26	Chapter 1
09/04/26	Chapter 2
09/10/26	Chapter 3
09/18/26	Chapter 4
09/21/26	Chapter 5
09/25/26	Chapter 6
10/02/26	Chapters 7-8 - Finish Novel

Major Assignments

Due	Assignment	Points
09/04/26	Personal Narrative Final - 500-650 words	75
09/16 or 09/17	Justice and Mercy Discussion	20
09/21/26	Character Code Chart Final	30
10/05/26	True Grit Thesis and Outline	20
10/09/26	True Grit Essay Draft / Peer Review	25
10/16/26	Final True Grit Essay - 1.5-2 pages	100
10/16/26	Quarter 1 Portfolio Reflection	25

Quarter 2 | Lord of the Flies - Community, Power, and the Fragility of Civilization

Symbolism, leadership, fear, group psychology, conscience, and the common good.

Reading Schedule

Due	Assigned Reading
10/23/26	Chapter 1
10/29/26	Chapters 2-3
11/13/26	Chapters 4-5
11/20/26	Chapters 6-7
12/04/26	Chapters 8-9
12/11/26	Chapters 10-12 - Finish Novel

Major Assignments

Due	Assignment	Points
11/20/26	Civilization Map - group project	25
12/02 or 12/03	Leadership Debate	25
12/07/26	Symbol Tracker Final	30
12/11/26	Seminar / Character-on-Trial	15
12/16/26	Lord of the Flies Essay Draft	25
01/08/27	Final Lord of the Flies Essay - 2-3 pages	100
01/08/27	Midyear Portfolio Reflection	25

Quarter 3 | Animal Farm - Truth, Power, Language, and Freedom

Allegory, propaganda, rhetoric, truth, power, freedom, and responsible use of evidence.

Reading Schedule

Due	Assigned Reading
01/15/27	Chapter 1
01/22/27	Chapter 2
01/29/27	Chapters 3-4
02/05/27	Chapter 5
02/19/27	Chapters 6-7
02/22/27	Chapter 8
02/26/27	Chapters 9-10 - Finish Novel

Major Assignments

Due	Assignment	Points
02/03/27	Rhetorical Analysis Paragraph	20
02/19/27	Media Claim Audit Topic	10
02/24/27	Media Claim Audit Source List - 2-3 sources	25
03/05/27	Animal Farm Essay Draft	25
03/09/27	Media Audit Slides	40
03/10 or 03/11	Final Animal Farm Essay - 2-3 pages	100
03/10 or 03/11	Media Audit Presentation	25

Quarter 4 | Of Mice and Men - Dreams, Friendship, Mercy, and Human Dignity

Characterization, setting, dreams, loneliness, vulnerability, friendship, mercy, and moral responsibility.

Reading Schedule

Due	Assigned Reading
03/19/27	Section 1
04/09/27	Section 2
04/16/27	Section 3
04/23/27	Section 4
04/30/27	Section 5
05/07/27	Section 6 - Finish Novella

Major Assignments

Due	Assignment	Points
04/26/27	Relationship / Motivation Chart Final	30
05/05 or 05/06	Moral Responsibility Discussion	25
05/12/27	Of Mice and Men Essay Draft	25
05/17/27	Final Of Mice and Men Essay - 2-3 pages	100
05/17/27	Final Presentation Slides / Portfolio Reflection	75
05/18-05/19	Final Examination: Portfolio Presentation - 3-4 minutes	100

Course Policies and Student Responsibilities

Late Work and Absences

Assignments are expected by the posted due date. Late work receives an immediate 10% reduction from the grade earned. No work will be accepted more than three calendar days after the original due date unless an exception has been approved by the teacher. Exceptions may be available for illness, family emergencies, school-sponsored activities, extended absences, or other significant circumstances when discussed with the teacher. Students who are absent are responsible for obtaining missed assignments, notes, reading expectations, handouts, and announcements by checking Google Classroom and communicating with the teacher.

Academic Integrity and AI

All submitted work must represent the student's own reading, thinking, writing, and analysis. Plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, copying, or submitting work created by another person or tool as one's own may result in loss of credit and consequences consistent with school policy. Approved AI tools may support brainstorming, outlining, grammar checks, or revision coaching only with teacher permission and disclosure; AI may not replace assigned reading, student-authored drafting, or original analysis.

Technology, Preparation, and Communication

Students are responsible for confirming that digital assignments are successfully submitted in Google Classroom. Students should come to class with the assigned text, writing materials, and completed reading; participate respectfully; ask for help when needed; and check Google Classroom and school email regularly for directions, due dates, changes, and feedback.

Course Flexibility

Supplemental readings, class activities, and minor assignments may change as needed to support student learning, school-calendar changes, or instructional pacing. Major reading deadlines and major project dates will be communicated clearly in Google Classroom if adjustments become necessary.

Capstone Portfolio Project

- Two polished essays per semester with scaffolded planning, drafting, and revision support
- One multimedia project per semester
- Reading journal highlights
- Growth reflection at quarter and semester checkpoints
- Final examination: 3-4 minute portfolio presentation using Google Slides to demonstrate growth as a reader, writer, and thinker; this presentation is worth 15% of the overall course grade.