

# El Monte Union High School District

## Course Outline

**District:** EMUHSD

**High School:** SEMHS

Course Title: Creative Writing

Textbook(s): See #8

Copyright date/Edition:

Transitional\* \_\_\_\_\_ (Eng. Dept. Only)

Sheltered (SDAIE)\* \_\_\_ Bilingual\* \_\_\_

AP\*\* \_\_\_\_\_ Honors\*\* \_\_\_\_\_

Department: English

CTE\*\*\* :  
Industry Sector: \_\_\_\_\_  
Pathway: \_\_\_\_\_

Check One  
Introductory: \_\_\_\_\_  
Concentrator: \_\_\_\_\_  
Capstone: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade Level (s): 9-12

Semester \_\_\_\_\_ Year X

Year of State Framework Adoption \_\_\_\_\_

This course meets graduation requirements:

- English
- Fine Arts
- Foreign Language
- Health & Safety
- Math
- Physical Education
- Science
- Social Science
- Elective

This course meets a-g requirements:

- "a" – Social Studies
- "b" – ELA
- "c" – Math
- "d" – Lab Science
- "e" – Language (not English)
- "f" – Vis/Perf Arts
- "g" – College prep elective

Department/Cluster Approval      Date


Is this course an adaptation from another source?

- No
- Yes

If yes, please indicate the source of the original course:

Alta Loma High School

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\*Instructional materials appropriate for English Language Learners are required.

\*\*For AP/Honors course **attach a page** describing how this course is above and beyond a regular course. Also, explain why this course is the equivalent of a college level class.

\*\*\*For CTE, **attach the CTE course outline** created in the online template (<http://ctecourse.scoe.net/>).

1. Prerequisite(s): Completion or concurrent enrollment of English I (CP or Accelerated)
2. Short description of course which may also be used in the registration manual:

- **Objectives of course**
- **3-5 sentences explaining overall course content**
- **Indicate references to state framework(s)/standards (If state standard is not applicable then national standards should be used)**
- **Student performance standards**
- **Evaluation/assessment/rubrics**
- **Include minimal attainment for student to pass course**

Creative writing is an elective which will introduce students to the writer's workshop method of production. Students will write daily, read exemplary models, and join a writing response group of peers. This creative writing course introduces students to the writer's workshop method of production. Primary focus on giving students a skill set to tap into their own creativity. Opportunities for students to explore their creative strengths, develop a vocabulary with which to discuss their own creativity, and experiment with the craft and adventure of their own writing. Students will come out of the course strengthened in their ability to identify and pursue their own creative interests by writing daily, read exemplary models, and join a writing response group of peers. Each student will practice writing of different genres as well as reviewing the principles of poetry, fiction and non-fiction. Students will produce a portfolio or project which represents their best writing for publication.

Objectives of the Course: 1. Students will learn to maintain a writer's journal for drafts and ideas. 2. Students will experience a writer's workshop environment, including open-ended writing time, writing groups, and author's chair. 3. Students will learn the principles of fiction, non-fiction and poetry by examining exemplary professional and student models. 4. Students will become aware of appropriate markets for their own writing as well as places to research markets. 5. Students will learn how to respond effectively to the work of others and how to accept the responses of others. 6. Students will produce a high-quality portfolio or project each semester that reflects the best of their writing as well as revision. 7. Students will read widely in all genres and be able to explain the features of the pieces they read. 8. Students will improve the quality of their writing from the beginning of the course to the end.

\*The California English Language Development Standards correspond to the California Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Science and Technical Studies. English Learners should have full access to opportunities to learn ELA, mathematics, science, history/social science, and other content at the same time they are progressing toward full proficiency in English. (California Department of Education) RL.9-10.1, 2, 4, 6; SL.11-12.1, 2, 4, 6; W.9-10.1, 4-6; W.11-12.1, 4-6; L.9-10.1, 3, 6; L.11-12.1, 3, 6; WHST.9-10.1, 4-6; WHST.11-12.1, 4-6; RL.9-10.1-7; RL.11-12.1-7; RI.9-10.1-10; RI.11-12.1-10; RH.9-10.1-10; RH.11-12.1-10; RST.9-10.1-10; RST.9-10.1-10; RL.9-10.5; RL.11-12.5; RI.9-10.5; RI.11-12.5; RH.9-10.5; RH.11-12.5; RST.9-10.5; RST.11-12.5; W.9-10.1-5; W.11-12.1-5; WHST.9-10.1-2, 4-5, 10; WHST.11-12.1-2, 4-5, 10; SL.9-10.4; SL.11-12.4; L.9-10.1, 3-6; L.11-12.1, 3-6

Evaluation/Assessment Rubrics: 70% project-based learning, 30% portfolio  
Minimum of 60% to pass the course

3. Course content:

Number of units (minimum of 6): 6

Unit Title: What is a Writer?

**Content:** Students begin the year by considering what makes someone a writer: Is it writing really well? Is it writing regularly? Is it being famous and successful? They examine the career paths of several writers, including Mary Shelley, Shonda Rhimes, Joan Didion, Lord Byron, and others. They begin to conceive of themselves as writers. Through readings from Natalie Goldberg's *Writing Down the Bones*, they come to understand writing as a process of experimentation and growth. They begin a journal that they keep for the duration of the course and develop a habit of writing in it daily.

**Sample Assignment:** Weekly Writings: Students make writing a habit by writing every weekend and meeting with their writing groups on Mondays to share what they wrote. Each week's topic is based on something explored in class, either a particular work read or a strategy learned. Writing groups help students build skills for giving constructive, meaningful feedback to their peers. Students also engage in reflection both as writers and readers, asking themselves how they can grow as writers and how they can help their classmates grow.

**Culminating Project:** Writer Study: Students complete a research project on one writer, including biographical sources and the writer's own catalogue. Including a presentation component, this project exposes students to the diversity of backgrounds, experiences, and life trajectories that can "make" someone a writer. Students will also identify "starting points" for their writers and trace their development of a personal style over time.

Unit Title: Creative Nonfiction

**Content:** Students explore several large questions about writing in relation to the truth: What does it mean for something to be true? Do writers have a responsibility to tell the truth? Can something contain truth without being factually true? In order to develop answers to these questions, students explore a range of non-fiction pieces, including personal essays and memoirs. Students discuss writer responsibility and the ethical issues that writers face and develop a basic understanding of copyright and libel laws and analyze the strategies writers of nonfiction use to create a sense of realism and write with these strategies themselves.

**Sample Assignment:** Weekly Writings: Students make writing a habit by writing every weekend and meeting with their writing groups on Mondays to share what they wrote. Each week's topic is based on something explored in class, either a particular work read or a strategy learned. Writing groups help students build skills for giving constructive, meaningful feedback to their peers. Students also engage in reflection both as writers and readers, asking themselves how they can grow as writers and how they can help their classmates grow.

**Culminating Project:** Creative Memoir: Students demonstrate their learning through a culminating narrative. This piece of writing is a memoir that may blur the lines between fact and fiction, but it is grounded in a personal experience. Students develop their pieces over several weeks of independent work and writing group conferences. They demonstrate learned skills in point of view, using concrete details, and revising to strengthen a piece of writing. After completing the 700-1000 word piece, students reflect on their learning over the course of the unit by reexamining the essential questions they considered at the beginning of the unit and evaluating their own use of and perspective on the truth.

Unit Title: Short Stories

**Content:** In this unit, students explore the elements of a short story, including plot, characters, and setting. Students analyze the techniques used by these writers to develop characters and create a sense of reality for readers. Individually and in small groups, students practice developing characters from stereotypes to dynamic figures. They create compelling plots and observe the world around them in order to write detailed, realistic settings. They read model texts to support their learning about realism in writing.

**Sample Assignment:** Short Story #1: This assignment focuses on what students have learned about characters and characterization. They write a story (minimum 1500 words) in which a dynamic character wants something (motivation) and either succeeds or fails to get it. Students share their work with their writing groups and revise based on image grammar and strong verb strategies. They work their stories through the writing process

**Culminating Project:** Reflective Piece: In this assignment, students identify and examine their own growth over the course of the semester. Students look through the body of work they have built over the semester and identify moments of difficulty and growth. They analyze their own writing as they would another writer's, asking themselves, What did I do well here? What could I have done better? What did writing this teach me? Why am I proud of this piece but scared to share this one? Finally, they set goals for the coming semester, identifying places of growth and describing where they would like to go as writers.

Unit Title: Poetry

**Content:** In this unit, students read and variety poetry in a variety of forms. They explore the difference between poetry and prose and the role poetry plays in today's culture. Using Mary Oliver's Poetry Handbook, students consider form and sound, analyzing model texts to figure out what makes them so pleasing to the ear. They practice reading poems aloud and listening to others read poems, training their ears to hear what sounds good. Model texts include poetry by Elizabeth Bishop, Joanna Klink, Naomi Shihab Nye, ee cummings, and Margaret Atwood, as well as songs by Lin-Manuel Miranda and Twenty-One Pilots. Forms explored include iambic pentameter, villanelle, haiku, found poems, and list poems

**Sample Assignment:** Journal Mining Poem: For this assignment, students choose a journal entry they wrote at some point in the school year. They consider their journal entry as a kernel of coal from which a diamond can be extracted. After finding several journal entries that they might like to expand, they narrow their list down to one topic. Then they compose a free verse poem of 20 lines, focusing on sensory details. Students workshop their poems with their writing groups and share their finished poems orally with the class.

**Culminating Project:** Family Poem: Students will demonstrate mastery of a chosen poetic form by writing a 25+ line poem about family (their family or the concept of family in general). They will take this poem through the workshop process and end the unit with a substantive work they are proud of.

Unit Title: Drama and Playwriting

**Content:** In this unit, students learn how a script is built from the ground up. Following methods from Stuart Spencer's Playwright's Guidebook, they craft characters with complex motivations, develop tense conflicts, and analyze plays and films they read and watch. Model texts include *The Glass Menagerie*, excerpts from the work of Tom Stoppard, "The Philadelphia," Peter Pan, and others. Students also consider why writers might choose a play as the medium through which they want to tell their story by examining the differences between a novel and play for the reader/viewer.

**Sample Assignment:** Action Scene: In this unit, students learn how a script is built from the ground up. Following methods from Stuart Spencer's Playwright's Guidebook, they craft characters with complex motivations, develop tense conflicts, and analyze plays and films they read and watch. Model texts include *The Glass Menagerie*, excerpts from the work of Tom Stoppard, "The Philadelphia," Peter Pan, and others. Students also consider why writers might choose a play as the medium through which they want to tell their story by examining the differences between a novel and play for the reader/viewer.

**Culminating Project:** One Act: Students will demonstrate mastery of playwriting by composing a one-act play that includes all of the elements of a play, including action, motivation, and conflict. Students will workshop their one acts and write a cover letter to a hypothetical director or playhouse convincing them to stage their play.

Unit Title: Polishing and Publishing

Content: In the final unit of the course, students explore traditional and contemporary methods of publishing, including poetry anthologies, literary magazines and journals, and self-publishing options. Essential questions concern the role that writing plays in contemporary society and in students' lives, as well as the attitudes towards self-publishing.

Sample Assignment: Literary Magazine Exploration: Students explore online editions of literary magazines from universities and high schools across the country. They consider the role that design plays in telling a story and the thematic connections that unite a diverse body of work in a magazine. Finally, they choose one of their own pieces to submit to SEMHS's literary magazine.

Culminating Project: Chapbook: Students finish off the year by constructing a chapbook that showcases their best writing. They learn the function and history of chapbooks and explore basic concepts of design before making their own book. They also select and revise their best pieces of writing and develop a thematic link between their pieces. The final piece of the chapbook is a reflection about their growth over the semester, supported by the work they choose to include in their book.

(Add additional unit(s) at the end)

4. Describe how this course integrates the schools SLO (former ESLRs- Expected School-wide Learning Results):

There numerous motives as to why students would want to be empowered to express a thought, opinion, or fact to other individuals through words. Creative writing can be used for entertainment, informative, or persuasive purposes to communicate clearly and effectively.

5. Describe the Integrated ELD teaching techniques to be used to meet the needs of English Language Learners:

English learners, especially those at the lower levels of proficiency, may have trouble with literacy, but that does not mean they're incapable of advanced levels of thinking. Teachers skilled in effective instructional strategies for English learners can scaffold questions and provide the use of sentence frames. Sentence writing frames guide English learners in their oral and written responses, in their academic language, as well as the appropriate use of function, signal words and phrases. Once English learners are comfortable with the level of proficiency and/or function, English learners will increase the level of rigor moving across from emerging to expanding to bridging.

6. Describe the interdepartmental articulation process for this course:

Students will understand the relationship between content knowledge and academic language development to increase student learning. This course would provide practical resources for teaching Common Core Standards to students who need accelerated growth in their academic language and literacy. Practices include (1) comprehending and learning from complex text; (2) communicating complex ideas orally, visually, and in writing; and/or (3) engaging in authentic conversations about content.

7. Describe how this course will integrate academic and vocational concepts, possibly through connecting activities. Describe how this course will address work-based learning/school to career concepts:

Within the context of the course, students will learn the essential skills for success in today's world, such as critical thinking, problem solving, communication and collaboration. The course will provide opportunities for students to more engaged in the learning process, adapt to changing technologies, and be ethical citizens in our global society.

8. Supplemental Materials of Instruction (Note: Materials of instruction for English Language Learners are required and should be listed below.)

Type of material (book, manual, periodical, article, website, primary source document, etc.)	Author	Publisher	Edition/Year	URL	Primary book, read in its entirety? (Y/N)
Book - Writing Down the Bones	Natalie Goldberg	Shambhala	30th - 2016		N
Book - A Poetry Handbook	Mary Oliver	Harcourt	1994		N
Book - Writing with At-Risk Youth	Richard Gold	Roman & Littlefield Education	2014		N
Book - The Playwright's Guidebook	Stuart Spencer	Farrar, Straus and Giroux	2002		N