**Writing Workshop for High School 2019-2020**

**Instructor:** Crystal Crawford crys.crawford@gmail.com//813-731-1742

**Grade level: 9-12**

*(This course provides a solid foundation for our College Prep English course, and is well-suited for students 9th-11th grade, as well as 12th graders who are not yet ready to move up to College Prep. Please note: this Writing Workshop course does not go deeply into grammar in and of itself, focusing instead on larger-scale topics and addressing grammar only as it arises in those contexts. If you are looking for something more grammar-intensive, one of our IEW Composition courses may be a better fit.)*

This class takes a practical approach, examining the elements that make for strong writing, then putting them into practice in various types of compositions. I strive to make writing as pain-free as possible, focusing not only on the *how* of strong writing, but the *why* – why it matters, and why many people struggle with it. I understand not all students love writing, and that’s okay! My goal is to help *all* students feel confident and comfortable in their writing skills, so that they are equipped to tackle – with confidence – any future writing assignments or projects they may come across, both in school and in life. Whether your student is already in love with writing or struggles with it, this class will challenge them to grow while providing a positive, encouraging workshop environment that will foster the ability to give and receive constructive criticism with grace and compassion.

**The course will focus on a different type of writing each quarter:**

1. **First-person narratives** (including narrative essays, blog-type narratives, autobiographies, etc.). Through these assignments, we will cover:

* Choosing a topic, planning, and outlining
* Gathering supporting details to build a narrative
* POV/Voice – how it’s crafted and why it matters (diction, imagery, etc.)
* Writing to genre/structure expectations; writing to an intended audience
* Appropriate use of research/citing sources/avoiding plagiarism
* Revising/editing process (each assignment will go through several drafts)

1. **Argumentative and Persuasive Essays** (including compare/contrast essays, 5-paragraph essays, 3-prong thesis statements, etc.). Through these assignments, we will cover:

* Rhetorical devices; how to construct a strong argument in writing
* How to support an argument with secondary sources
* Writing to structure expectations; writing to an intended audience
* Appropriate use of research/citing sources/avoiding plagiarism
* Revising/editing process (each assignment will go through several drafts)
* Basic formatting expectations (we will expand on this in quarter 4)

1. **Practical Writing** (resumes, cover-letters, professional correspondences, business letters, business emails, etc.)

* Professional expectations in writing and why professionalism matters
* What does professionalism *look* like in writing? Examining the elements of “professional” style of writing and how to implement them
* Study of different writing structures/situations and the expectations for each
* Revising/editing process (each assignment will go through several drafts)

1. **Research Papers** (an expansion on the compare/contrast, informational, argumentative, etc.)

* Different types of research papers and the format/expectations for each
* Quality research practices – credibility of sources, depth of research, evaluating sources, etc.
* Bibliographies and how to construct them
* Works Cited pages and how to construct them
* MLA formatting (which is used in most language arts courses in college)
* APA/Chicago formats (we will only touch briefly on these; MLA will be the format required for the class assignments)

\*\*We will not cover creative writing/fiction writing in this class – though of course we’ll still be creative in the context of other writing types! If you are specifically wanting a fiction-writing course, please see my *Fiction Workshop* syllabus!\*\*

**WORKSHOPS**

Each quarter’s assignments will move through several drafts (outline, first draft, and at least one revision). At least one draft of each assignment will be *workshopped*, meaning fellow classmates will read each others’ writing and offer feedback/critiques. This will be done in a positive, encouraging environment and I will set expectations ahead of time for how to both give and receive critiques. This peer-review is such an important part of the learning process and an excellent opportunity for students to learn and grow by identifying writing done well and adapting examples into their own writing, learning from one another’s strengths.

**FEEDBACK AND REVISIONS**

In addition to the class workshops, I will also provide rubrics and detailed feedback on *each draft*, so that students are learning and growing through each round of revision. Some students may balk at being asked to write more than one draft of an assignment, but this writing/feedback/rewriting process is vital to cementing the concepts we’ll be learning in class.

**Note: This class does *not* focus heavily on grammar or on basic writing skills except where they arise as part of the students’ individual projects. While I will point out grammatical errors in my feedback and ask students to correct them, I will not have time to provide detailed explanations of grammar or mechanics in this class. This class is intended for students who already have a basic grasp of those elements and are ready to move on to practicing them in the context of in-depth writing assignments.** If your student is in need of basic grammar instruction, I would recommend taking a more grammar-intensive course prior to taking this one – for those students, IEW Composition might be a better fit.

*If you are uncertain whether your student is ready grammatically for this course, please ask! I can assess a brief writing sample and give you my recommendation for placement.*

**Materials to bring to class:**

* Required text: *Put Some Pants on That Kid (A Writing Handbook for High School and Beyond): Student Book*. You can order this on Amazon in paperback or e-book (either is fine for this class, so long as you can bring whichever version to class with you for reference and readily access it for the homework/readings each week). [Full disclosure – I did write this textbook so I get some royalties from each purchase, but it is geared exactly for what we will be covering in this class.]. Please have a copy by the first week of class. You can purchase here:
  + E-book: <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B07TW8YTHW>
  + Paperback: <https://www.amazon.com/dp/1076561462>
* Binder or folder to store handouts and notes
* Notebook paper for notes and in-class assignments
* Pen and highlighter

**You will also need:**

* Reliable internet access for submitting electronic assignments and participating in online class discussions (we will have a closed Facebook group for students to communicate – students without Facebook may use a parents’ account. If this is an issue for you, please let me know ASAP!)
* Computer and word-processor program (Microsoft Word, Google Docs, etc.) for typing and submitting assignments
* Prompt completion of all writing assignments and homework
* Participation in class discussions and group activities
* Encouragement and positivity (we will practice constructive criticism in all of our workshops and discussions, working to help each student improve as a writer)
* Willingness to receive constructive criticism with grace and humility, and to implement feedback in an effort to improve as a writer

**Attendance/Late Assignments:**

All assignments should be completed prior to the deadline, and any late assignments may be penalized a full letter grade for each day they are late. Instructor should be notified in advance of any planned absences, and any assignments which affect the group project must still be completed and submitted on time.

**Grading:**

* Outlines/Planning – 10%
* First Drafts – 20%
* Revisions/Editing – 20%
* Final Drafts – 20% (you will notice these are not weighted more than earlier drafts; this is because *every* step of this process matters!)
* Workshops – 10%
* Weekly Online Topic Discussions – 10%
* Class Participation -- 10%