



Senior Seminar

Valley Oaks Charter School

Mrs. Bunge kabunge@kern.org 852-6756

Availability- I am available for extra help on Thursdays from 8:00-12:00, Mondays, Wednesday afternoons, and Fridays by appointment.

Class rules

1. Always RESPECT other people, other property, and yourself at all times.
2. Always RESPECT everyone's work at all times.
3. Always follow all school rules.

Behavior- Students are expected to adhere to all the school rules of Valley Oaks. Students are expected to **RESPECT** others and treat them in the way that they would like to be treated (no put-downs, profanity, destruction of property, etc.) Disruptive students will lose points in participation/conduct that will be reflected in their overall grades and their parents will be contacted. Any serious and/or ongoing problems will result in parent/teacher conference.

Academic Expectations- **Academic honesty is expected in every aspect of this class. Less than 100% academic honesty will not be tolerated and will result in the student failing the course.** Students are expected to participate actively in class whether working individually, in pairs, or in groups. Additionally, students are expected to turn in all written work, be prepared for class when a presentation is due and be prepared to complete all in-class assignments. Homework is due when it is due. Late work will not receive full credit for any reason and is the work if extremely late, (more than two weeks), it may not be accepted at all. Students are expected to arrive on time to class and always come prepared with their English binder, their textbooks, notes and a pen or pencil.

Absence- Students are responsible for missed class work, notes, homework, quizzes/tests and presentations. When a student is absent, the handouts from class will be placed up front at the front desk. It is the student's responsibility to pick up all missed work. You must see me to make up missed quizzes/tests, turn in work, get notes, etc. You may see me on Thursday mornings at tutoring or you may call and schedule an appointment with me in my office. When you are absent, the work is due the next school day.

Attendance/Tardies- Students are expected to attend class weekly. Students are expected to be on time and ready to work at the beginning of class. Unexcused, excessive tardiness may result in a lowered class participation grade as well as a phone call home. Excessive tardiness and absences will also have a negative effect on the student's overall grade in the course.

Grading Policy- Assignments will be graded and added to Aries weekly. Grades are determined by a point system and follow the standard grading scale for percentages to letter grades. **Late work may be penalized up to 50%.**

Mentor – Each student is required to have a mentor who is an “expert” in the student’s chosen area of research. The mentor cannot be a relative of the student or a faculty member of Valley Oaks Charter School. The student needs to venture out into their field of interest and contact a professional who is very knowledgeable in their chosen topic. The purpose of the mentor is to help guide the student when the student encounters difficulties in their research, paper process, or project. While English teachers will read the research paper for accuracy of writing, the mentor is an excellent source to read the research paper for accuracy of information on the topic. This mentor may possibly become a valuable connection down the road if the student chooses to venture into this area in the work force. Students are encouraged to remember a “Gift of Thanks” for their mentor at the conclusion of the course. Students will also keep a log of hours spent in communication or working with their mentor.

Semester Grading

Research Paper – 25% of the overall grade

Students will write a 10-12 page research paper in MLA format on a topic of their choice. They will choose a topic that is of interest to them and compose a specific and thought provoking thesis statement on which to base their paper. Students will complete all of the steps in the writing process for a research paper: Choosing and narrowing their topic, thesis statement, gathering research of at least 8-10+ credible sources, a working bibliography, 80+ notecards, a rough draft, a few phases of editing and revisions, and a final draft complete with a title page, a works cited page, and any necessary appendices in MLA format. All research papers will be submitted via Turnitin.com to check for originality.

Project – 25% of the overall grade

Students will take the knowledge they have gained from their research paper process and apply it in some manner. The project phase is rather open to the student’s choice as to how they wish to apply their knowledge as long as the project phase clearly demonstrates an application and extension of the knowledge in the research paper and does not simply duplicate the research paper. The project can be completed in a variety of manners such as a physical project, volunteer work, organization and participation in an event, a film, or a variety of other options. Students will keep a log of the hours spent working on their project and the tasks completed during each of those hours. To have the project end up being something of good quality the student should plan on spending a MINIMUM of 15-25 hours on the project. The average time spent on good or great projects is 25-30 hours.

Portfolio – 20% of the overall grade

Students will compile a portfolio of their work in this class as they go through the semester. To make the assembly of the portfolio easier save everything in a folder labeled Senior Seminar on your computer. Back the folder up frequently. This way the assembly of the portfolio entails printing off clean, ungraded copies of all your work and putting it in a binder instead of redoing everything from the entire semester. The portfolio will need to be in a 3 ring binder that is 1” or 1 ½” in width. The student will put a cover sheet on the portfolio. The following sections will be in everyone’s portfolio: Interior title page, Table of Contents, Letter of Intent, Letter to the Judges, Research Paper, Project, and Presentation. Students may have additional sections in their portfolio depending on their chosen topic and project. While the research paper sections of everyone’s portfolio will look generally the same, the project and presentation sections will look vastly different from student to student. This is to be expected. It is wise to assemble a section of the portfolio right after we have completed that section of the

class so as to not leave it all to the last minute. For example, right after you turn in your final draft of your research paper, assemble that section of your portfolio.

Presentation – 25% of the overall grade

Students will give a presentation at the end of the semester before a panel of 3-4 judges. Their presentation will discuss their mentor, research paper, project, and journey through the course. Their portfolios will be displayed for the judges to view prior to their presentations. Their grade for their presentation is an average of all the judges' scores. The presentations will end up being 20-25 minutes in length if every portion is covered thoroughly. Students are expected to dress well for their presentation; they must meet the school dress code at a minimum. Students are encouraged to take pride in their work and dress as if they are proud of their accomplishments.

Other assignments – 5% of the overall grade

There are a few other assignments in this course that are designed to help the student accomplish either their paper, project, portfolio, or presentation section. While most of the assignments will fall under one of the four main areas of the course, these few assignments will fall under the category of "Other Assignments" and will total to 5% of the total grade for the course.

Materials for Senior Seminar

The students need the following materials for Senior Seminar:

- a student planner
- 1 binder to organize their class notes and materials
- 3 x 5 notecards
- a computer with access to the internet
- 1 binder (either 1'' or 1 ½'') for their portfolio
- the project phase will require different materials for each student
- pens, pencils, and highlighters

Parent Duties Since you, the parent, are the homeschool teacher, it is important that you stay informed regarding assignments for this class. You should review your student's work every day and help keep them focused and on task for this class. Please call or email me if you need any help.

Student Duties With a program like this you have an increased amount of freedom and independence. You also have more responsibility. You should use your student planner, work on Senior Seminar every day, call or email me if you need help, and attend Thursday tutoring if need be. You must stay focused on this class and on accomplishing each of the four areas: Your research paper, project, portfolio, and preparing for your presentation.

I look forward to having a wonderful and successful school year with you.

Mrs. Bunge
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