Welcome to the 2012-13 school year!!

Course Description: This is a concept-based course designed to explore American writers of various genres, including, but not limited to: short stories, novels, poetry, essays and non-fiction. Composition and research are integral parts of this course.

Please complete the parent and student information at the bottom of this sheet and return it to me within the week.

I am very excited about incorporating numerous tools to help you know what’s happening in class and with ways to improve learning.

You may find my webpage at http://fhsdfhc.sharpschool.net/
This link brings you to the school page, and from there simply click on the Contact Us tab, and then the Staff Directory. My webpage will have hyperlinks which will lead you to the online classroom. Here you will be able to find assignments, blog or chat with other students in the class, and turn in much of your work. Not only will we be going as green as possible, but you will have immediate access to work you may have missed.

All of my classes will be going to the library on August 13th to acclimate you with the system.

- **Course Rationale:** By studying literature written by a variety of American voices, students will see how and why American society has shifted in ideals, how students are influenced by those ideals, and where students fit into society.

- **All essays will be turned in on our electronic system called TurnItIn.com** – this system checks for material that has been borrowed from other sources and alerts the instructor when proper credit has not been given to that source, or when large bodies of material has been pasted into a document without putting it into the students own words. A majority of colleges now use this service or one similar to it. Starting to use this in 11th grade will better prepare you for college life. You will receive more information on this later, but please be aware that you will need access to the internet to submit papers. No paper will be accepted if it is not electronically submitted. If you do not have internet access at home, please be sure to make the time to use the library or other school computer in order to submit your essays.

- **ACT EXAMS!** This is an essential year for your ACT exam. We will spend at least one day a week dedicated to assuring your success on these exams. Be sure to sign up early to take these so that, if you are not happy with your score, you have time to retake the exam. In addition, we will be doing a lot of online prep, these prep sessions will be a major component of your quarter grades. Make sure you have figured out a way to get online and do these, as “I don’t have access” will not be an acceptable response when there are so many ways to access the internet here.
• **Grading:** Grades will consist of essays, classroom discussion, quizzes, tests, projects and other assignments. **All assignments should have your name, the date and the class period clearly marked in the upper left hand corner.** Essays must be typed (you will need to work out a way to utilize the writing lab or library computers.

• **Parent Portal** – It will be your responsibility to check your grades. If you do not know your PIN for Parent Portal, you can obtain the information from your principal. You should check your grades twice a week. On some occasions, there may be no additions or changes; on other weeks, there may be 3-4 grades added. If you have a 0 or blank score, check to see if it is missing. If you did not get a score you believe you should have gotten, check the notes and then come see me. If a mistake has been made, it will be corrected, but I can’t do that if you don’t talk to me about it. **It is very important you do this often. Since the late work policy will be very strict, if you don’t check your grades for a few days, and then realize you’re missing work, it will be too late to turn it in. You will also be able to see what assignments are coming up.**

• **Grading Scale:** 100-90 = A, 89-80 = B, 79-70=C, 69-60=D, 59-0 = F

• **Semester Grade Components:** 1st Quarter – 40%, 2nd Quarter – 40%, Final Exam = 20%

• **Late Work Policy:** One of my roles as a teacher is to help you develop responsibility and work ethics. No assignment will be accepted more than two days after the due date. Each day it is late will be a 20% reduction in points. Should you have extenuating circumstances, such as an extended illness or family emergency, please see me to discuss a plan for catching you up. **Under no circumstances will it be acceptable to come in, hand me 2-3 weeks worth of work (or even 2-3 late assignments) and expect me to accept them. You will be held accountable for doing all work and turning it in on the assigned date.**

• **No Name Work:** I understand that everyone makes mistakes and will forget to put a name on something; however, I have had numerous students that would leave their name off of at least half their assignments. When I get up to 180 papers a day, this becomes a tedious and arduous task to find the student to which the paper belongs, as sometimes I will have 15-20 papers without a name from one assignment. Therefore, all no name papers will go in a bin. If you think you turned in an assignment but did not get it back, you can come in on your own time and go through the papers to find it. I will add no name work into the grades at my discretion once all other work has been entered, and points will be removed for not following directions.

• **Make-up work:** Extra copies of handouts and assignments are located in the front of the class room. **It is your responsibility to get any missing assignments and to turn them in, according to district policy, one day per each excused day of absence.** For instance – if you are absent on Tuesday and Wednesday and assignments were given that were due Wednesday and Thursday; you will have until Thursday and Friday to complete these. HOWEVER, if you find yourself buried in make-up work due to an extensive, excused absence, come and talk to me so that we can work something out – I don’t want you to be so overwhelmed with makeup work that you just give up.
• **Materials**  Each student will need a three ring binder or other way of keeping all papers from the semester in an organized manner.

• **Textbooks and Novels**  There will be a class set of literature books in the room for class use; however, if you need to check one out for at home, please see me. Replacement fees for novels are $15.00 or a copy of the novel purchased on your own.

• **Academic dishonesty:** If you are caught cheating or plagiarizing, you will receive a zero for that assignments and I will contact your parent and administrator.

• **We will be using numerous electronic resources to help with learning this year.** We will be going to the library to sign up for all of these.
  
  ◆ Edmodo – It’s similar to Facebook but strictly for education
  ◆ Turnitin.com – An electronic way to submit essays.
  ◆ Google Docs – a way to type your paper and share it with me as you write, so that I can make comments directly on the document.
  ◆ Learning Express Library and Study Island – Electronic skill building tools to help with everything from grammar to ACT practice.

• **You may also want to have a jump drive to help with your organization.**

I appreciate you taking the time to review this information and look forward to working with you this year!

-------------------------------

Student’s Name ____________________________________________________ Grade ____

Parent Contact for grades, kudos and concerns -
Name: ___________________________ Email _________________________________
Phone Number _________________________________________________

Internet Usage – We have numerous resources available to us and utilize many in this class. Please let me know if ____ your child has access to internet for educational purposes ____ does not have internet access, but can come in early or stay late to use school computers for work instead of doing it at home.