



COURSE INFORMATION
For Students and Parents

The World of Franz Kafka

Teacher:
Mr. David Grunner

Year Offered:
Third Trimester, 2014



Course Description:

Talking dogs, singing mice, a man transformed into a giant bug—how very...Kafkaesque? The writings of Franz Kafka (1883-1924) have allured, disturbed and perplexed readers for nearly one hundred years. In this course we will read a sizable portion of Kafka's oeuvre, focusing on both his short fiction and one of his posthumously published novels, The Trial. In conjunction with the primary literature, we will draw on the critical reception of his work—from Walter Benjamin, Theodor W. Adorno and Hannah Arendt through Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, Milan Kundera, David Foster Wallace, Zadie Smith and others—as a means of understanding what Kafka has come to represent over time. Writing assignments will total twelve pages.

Texts:

Please purchase Franz Kafka's novel The Trial (Schocken, Trans. Mitchell, ISBN 978-0805209990). Be sure to purchase the correct edition as I have deliberately chosen Mitchell's translation for several reasons. I will distribute all other texts either electronically (via Moodle) or in class.

Number of Class Sessions:

In the period of a full A-E cycle, our class will meet 3 times. Meetings will last 40 minutes. The number of class meetings over the course of the trimester is approximately 21 (barring unforeseen reasons for cancellation, etc.).

Course Requirements:

- **NIGHTLY READING:**

Read, read, and read— all Kafka, all the time. You must come to class having done the assigned reading carefully and in full.

- **WRITING:**

You will produce two essay length assignments over the course of the trimester. The first will be a critical essay that will call on you to perform some interpretative work; the second will be a creative-mimetic essay that will call on your to take up Kafka's pen and compose a short story of your own.

- **PRESENTATION:**

At some point during the course of the trimester, you will give a presentation on an assigned reading and lead part of the class discussion. You will decide ahead of time, in consultation with me, on which of the texts you will present.

- **PARTICIPATION:**

Your participation in class discussions is essential—without it, our class will not succeed.

Grading Policies:

The grade for the course will be calculated based on the following breakdown:

Class participation 25%

Presentation 25%

Writing assignments 50%

Grading Policies:

April 16: Critical Essay Due

May 9: Creative Essay Due

Teacher Availability after School:

My formal office hours are 3-4 pm on Tuesday. However, I am frequently available most days before, during, and after school.

Teacher Contact Information:

E-MAIL ADDRESS: dgrunner@regis.org

DEPARTMENT: English

TELEPHONE: 646.657.2016

Reading Schedule (Subject to change!)

Early Fiction and Fragments	
Feb 24 (C)	“Before the Law,” “The Trees,” “Imperial Message,” “A Common Confusion,” “Rejection,” “The Streetwindow,” “Passers-by,” “A Little Fable,” “The Wish to be a Red Indian,” “The Top,” “Give it up!”
Feb 27 (A)	“Laughing with Kafka,” David Foster Wallace “F. Kafka: Everyman,” Zadie Smith “The Castrating of St. Garta,” Milan Kundera
Fathers and Sons	
Mar 3 (C)	“The Judgment”
Mar 6 (A)	“The Metamorphosis” Part 1
Mar 10 (C)	“The Metamorphosis” Part 2
Mar 13 (A)	“The Metamorphosis” Part 3
Mar 19 (C)	“Letter to his Father”
Animal Farm	
Mar 20 (D)	“Report to an Academy”
Mar 24 (A)	“Investigations of a Dog”
Mar 26 (C)	“Investigations of a Dog”
Mar 27 (D)	“The Burrow”
Apr 3 (C)	“The Burrow”
Apr 7 (D)	“Josephine the Singer”
Apr 9 (A)	“Josephine the Singer”
Crime and Punishment	
Apr 11 (C)	“A Hunger Artist”
Apr 14 (D)	“The Penal Colony”
Apr 16 (A)	“The Penal Colony” * <u>Critical Essay Due (Hard-Copy by 2:50pm)</u>
Apr 30 (D)	<i>The Trial</i>
May 2 (A)	<i>The Trial</i>
May 7 (D)	<i>The Trial</i>
May 9 (A)	Wrapping Up and Sharing of Stories * <u>Creative Essay Due (Hard-Copy in class)</u>

