

Dear Parents, Guardians and Families,

I will have the pleasure of working with your students for two consecutive terms in **College Writing**. This elective is intended for college-bound seniors and designed as a **hybrid course*** where students will work in an online environment** and through face-to-face instruction. This means that students are not required to be in the classroom every day. Students will be expected to meet as a large group for lecture, instruction and test days, which are generally Tuesdays and Thursdays. Students will also work in assigned writing groups that will meet face-to-face on assigned days throughout the term. Please see the tentative schedule online. **Students must be present for large group days and assigned writing group days. Failure to attend on these days will negatively impact the participation part of the grade.** Missed days may result in the loss of credit. If a student's grade drops below 70%, the student may be required to attend every day until the grade improves. In addition, students may also opt to come into the classroom to use equipment and/or ask for extra help on days when they are not scheduled.

Students in College Writing will read and write about several novels as well as nonfiction selections. In the first term we will work in large groups, small groups and individually on *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* and a book in the creative commons, *Little Brother*, which students may buy, borrow or download from the Internet in a variety of forms. In addition, students will participate in an online role-play that may be monitored and assessed by University of Minnesota researchers. During the second term, we will analyze novels, which may include *The Kite Runner*, *The Chosen*, *Speak*, *Montana 1948* and *Beloved*. Students will also work on an individual book project using novels or non-fiction selected from lists recommended for college reading. Students will review vocabulary, literary terms and writing techniques in order to prepare for standardized tests and a wide variety of academic papers. Students will review and implement research skills in order to evaluate the merit of sources, consider forms, write for specific purposes and audiences and use MLA format, which has recently changed and been updated in the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* (7th edition).

Each student must create a Gmail account in order to access the tools and communicate outside of class. Students will need to read and respond to each other's work in blogs, wikis, social networks, and other Web 2.0 formats. These sources and tools through which we publish our work must only be used for College Writing and therefore must be appropriate for school. **Any crude, illegal or dangerous behavior included or alluded to in the assignments may be reported to a school counselor, administrator and/or civic authorities.** Jefferson is running a pilot program this year, which allows students to use their own laptops with access to the wireless Internet. During scheduled class time, computers and the Internet will be available, but it would be a benefit for each student to have Internet access away from school as well. Students will need the Internet in order to research their assignments, access the class website, communicate outside of class and hand in assignments.

Please sign the form on the reverse side of this letter, detach it and send it back with your student. Your signature on this form counts as an assignment in the course. Please feel free to contact me you have any questions. I am very eager to start a new term and meet my new students. Thank you for your time and attention to your student's education.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth A. Boeser
Communication Arts and Literature
Thomas Jefferson High School
4001 West 102nd Street
Bloomington, MN 55437
Email: eboeser@bloomington.k12.mn.us

***Please refer to the attached hybrid course form from page three of your Registration Guide.**

****You can find directions and assignments at <http://sites.google.com/site/missboeser/>.**

A student's grade will be divided into the following components:

- **50% ACADEMIC WRITING:** essays must be handed in on paper with a Turnitin originality report.
- **25% PARTICIPATION:**
 - **BLOG/WIKI/NING:** Each student is required to post journal entries online
 - **CLASS DISCUSSION/WRITING GROUPS:** Students will respond in class to literature, nonfiction and journal posts, as well as work together to proof and edit papers.
 - **PEER REVIEW:** Students will read and respond to the work of their peers in writing groups
- **10% HOMEWORK** including vocabulary assignments and daily assignments
- **5% TESTS AND QUIZZES** on novels and nonfiction from class, including vocabulary
- **10% FINAL EXAM** on novels, stories or terms we have covered in class.

NOTE: Late work will be given no more than half credit. No exceptions. No excuses.

All of the school rules apply in COLLEGE WRITING. Please make sure you and your student know the school rules. I will not tolerate any inappropriate or unacceptable behavior.

ESSENTIAL STANDARDS

1. Plan, organize and compose narrative, expository, descriptive, persuasive, critical and research writing to address a specific audience and purpose.
 - Generate, gather, and organize ideas for writing.
 - Develop a thesis and clear purpose for writing.
 - Revise writing for clarity, coherence, smooth transitions and unity.
 - Apply available technology to develop, revise and edit writing.
 - Revise, edit and prepare final drafts for intended audiences and purposes.
2. The student will locate and use information in reference materials.
 - Use print, electronic databases and online resources to access information, organize ideas, and develop writing.
 - Evaluate and organize relevant information from a variety of sources, verifying the accuracy and usefulness of gathered information.
 - Produce a report with detailed evidence to support a thesis.
 - Understand plagiarism and its consequences, and identify ethical issues of research and documentation.
 - Organize and synthesize information from a variety of sources and present it in a logical manner.
 - Credit sources for both quoted and paraphrased ideas.
 - Cite sources of information using a standard method of documentation, such as a style sheet from the Modern Language Association (MLA) or from the American Psychological Association (APA).

Please detach along this line and return the bottom portion with your signature.

Student Name: _____

I have read and understood Miss Boeser's letter and the course grading criteria. If we have any questions we know we can contact Miss Boeser at her email address listed above. Parents can be reached with any concerns, questions or information regarding student at (please circle preferred method):

(Phone) _____ or (email) _____

Parent Signature: _____

Student Signature: _____

Hybrid Courses

Due to the nature of an advancing technological society and the need for our students to have 21st century skills, Jefferson is offering a new type of course starting in the 2008-2009 school year. Hybrid courses combine the best components of face-to-face instruction with the flexibility of meaningful online instruction.

What makes a course a hybrid course?

Students will meet some days in class but will not come to class every day. For example, a hybrid course might meet on Monday, Wednesday and Friday but not on Tuesday and Thursday. Some course content like journaling, presentations and research will be delivered online and some work may be turned in online as well.

Are hybrid courses easier or harder than other courses?

Hybrid courses are not easier or harder but offer the same strong curriculum delivered in a different way. A student taking a hybrid course will be spending at least the same amount of time completing assignments as a student would in a traditional course.

Why should I take a hybrid course?

Hybrid courses offer a flexibility that can fit well with some learning styles. To succeed in such an environment you need to be an independent learner, well organized, disciplined, and on-task. Students who have motivation, good time management and technology skills will likely do well in a hybrid course.

Should I take a hybrid course?

Freshmen are not allowed to take hybrid courses. Answer the following eight questions to see if you are a good match with hybrid courses.

Yes No	I have good time management skills and can stick to a schedule without prodding and reminders from a teacher.
Yes No	I am resourceful at figuring out what to do next when I hit a roadblock in following instructions.
Yes No	I am NOT a procrastinator.
Yes No	I would rate my reading ability at "Above Average" or higher.
Yes No	I express myself fairly well in writing.
Yes No	I would rate my technology skill level at "Above Average" or higher.
Yes No	I have access to a computer and the Internet at home.
Yes No	I am good at problem-solving technical difficulties on the computer.
6-8 Yes answers – you are a good candidate to take hybrid courses. 4-5 Yes answers – you may struggle if you choose to take hybrid courses. 0-3 Yes answers – you should avoid taking hybrid courses.	