

August 1, 2019

Dear Parents:

Welcome to Honors World Literature and Composition (HWLC)! Please scan the syllabus and visit the class web page: <http://mrslawsonclasses.weebly.com> where you will find a link to the state standards for this course. Soon, the web page will list due dates, other important dates, links, downloads, and additional help and information, so students must visit it daily. Please help your child set up an agenda—digital or paper—to remind him/her to do so and to record homework from the classroom board and due dates. Part of the syllabus lists each unit’s specific readings, skills, and assignments, so students should use it to guide their progress through each unit.

To succeed in this course, students must be organized, conscientious, and present in class. Students cannot easily comprehend lessons from borrowing another’s notes or by attempting assignments without my instruction. When students know they will be absent, they must see me in advance. Those who have unexpected absences must email me as soon as possible, no later than 2:00 pm, so I can email them that day’s agenda and homework. Catching up after an absence can overwhelm students, causing them to fall more and more behind, so acting proactively is the key to avoiding that stress and frustration.

The Policies and Procedures section of the syllabus details reading requirements and explains the purpose behind non-graded-yet-vital-to-learning assignments. A major part of learning involves practice, and each practice does not need a grade for students to know what skills they still must develop. Plus, students need more practice than I can possibly grade. Many assignments build on other assignments, so while I may okay earlier steps, I will only grade the final product. Nonetheless, students must do all the steps in the process so they can produce a quality product (paper, test, or project). They will earn zeroes for final products that do not have previous steps attached.

I teach using a variety of methods to reach all learners and require a range of assignments to reinforce learning. Students will receive the Toolkit which provides advice, resources, guidelines, and practice that they will not only use throughout this course, they should take it to college to help them. Their roommates will want to borrow it!

Please understand that because people—especially teens whose brains are undergoing major changes right now—cannot effectively focus, much less learn, when instead of participating, they are doing something on a cellphone, I require students to store their phones in their bookbags during class. Unless we are using them for a class activity, they may not use their phones, so if you text or call them during this class period, they will not reply until class ends or they leave for lunch (if 3<sup>rd</sup> period).

During process papers, I provide students the opportunity to consult with a former honors or AP Lang student about their second drafts. They will meet in my room after school to read through their drafts, ask questions, seek guidance, and hear suggestions about improving their papers. If you do not want them to participate in these conferences, they can submit their second drafts to a tutor for editing, or you can conduct a paper conference following the guidelines I will provide.

Usually, I only contact parents if students’ grades drop below passing. During the semester if you are concerned about your child’s progress or grade, please see the syllabus again and discuss the requirements with your child. Problems usually arise because students have decided to take shortcuts or to neglect assignments, especially reading and non-graded tasks. Helping your child find ways to motivate him/herself intrinsically so that he/she values learning and understands that true learning rarely comes easily is the most successful way of turning around poor grades. To contact me, e-mail me at [cathie.lawson@cobbk12.org](mailto:cathie.lawson@cobbk12.org). For students, I am available until 4:30 on Mondays, Thursdays, and Fridays so they can work in my room or seek help. Students also should seek assistance from my before- and after-school tutors. Thank you for being involved in your student’s learning and success!

Sincerely,

Mrs. C. Lawson

Keep above for future reference. Return only bottom portion.

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Student’s name	_____	Student’s cell	_____
Student’s email	_____		
Mother’s name	_____	Cell phone	_____
Mother’s email	_____	Other phone	_____
Father’s name	_____	Cell phone	_____
Father’s email	_____	Other phone	_____

Parent Signature

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