

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Will you give extra credit?

A: I do not give straight extra credit. If you are actively involved in the class and do the work required of you, there should be no need for extra credit. I do, however, offer an optional assignment each quarter. If you choose to do the optional assignment, it will be graded as normal (so, you run the risk of receiving a poor grade for poor work). If you choose not to turn in the optional assignment, there is no consequence.

Other than the optional assignments, the closest to extra credit is the Class Participation grade. Since this grade is by its nature subjective, students may always earn credit by showing me their engagement and involvement in the course by going for extra help, asking questions and offering thoughts, going to a play or art exhibition or other event.

Q: Can I email you an assignment?

A: I will not accept any emailed assignments unless we have made arrangements beforehand. "My printer ran out of ink" is simply not a valid excuse—use a printer at school or the public library or at a friend's house. If an assignment is due on Turnitin, or Edmodo, or some other Internet receptacle, it must be submitted there only.

Q: My computer crashed. Can I give you the assignment tomorrow?

A: Refer to my policy on late assignments. Always save copies of your work on Dropbox or SkyDrive or Google Drive (or something like that) or on a flash drive, so you can access it from somewhere other than your home computer.

Q: Something is bothering me. Can I talk to you outside of class?

A: Absolutely, anytime. I have an open-door policy, so if there is anything you want to discuss just let me know. Just a caution: I'm quite busy and constantly moving around, so it's usually better to let me know ahead of time (by email or by finding me in the building) that you'd like to chat so that we can arrange an appropriate time.

Q: I read, but I don't get it. What now?

A: Read again. And again. And again. This should be your first step towards responsibly solving any problems with comprehension. Read carefully, closely, and slowly. Take notes. Underline passages or words or sentences that stand out to you, or that puzzle you. If you don't know a word or a term, look it up. Think about what you're reading. Quiz yourself. Read some more. *Make it happen.*

Q: What happened in Chapter Nine?

A: You tell me.

Q: Do we need to know this? Will it be on the exam?

A: There is nothing you don't need to know, exam or not.

Q: *Will you drop the lowest grade?*

A: No. Everything counts.

Q: *Do you grade on a curve?*

A: No. You receive what you earn. I take the time to carefully and thoughtfully craft the questions I give you, so they all have equal weight and importance.

Q: *Can I use Sparknotes?*

A: You are free to use any resource available to you, as long as it does not replace your reading of the primary text. Such resources are always supplementary, and should be approached with a critical eye. “Jimmy Joe’s Big Blog of Beowulf” is probably not a good resource to use. Also, bear in mind that all resources, including Sparknotes and Wikipedia, are not all-inclusive, and are sometimes even incorrect. If any information from an outside source appears disguised as your own in an assignment, you are in violation of the Honor Code and it will be treated as plagiarism. This includes the use of ideas. I know the work we’re dealing with is difficult—I don’t expect you to know it all. However, I do always expect you to *try*, to have an open mind, and to think.

Q: *Can I use my Kindle?*

A: I prefer that all students use traditional paper copies of books. The value of a book cannot be overlooked, or forgotten. However, the 21st century is one of proliferated and fascinating utility. Thus, with my permission students may use a digital tool such as an iPad or Kindle to read and take notes. It is always the student’s responsibility to use the devices for work only while in class, and to stay on point with where the rest of the class is in our discussion.

Q: *Can I go get my book from my locker?*

A: Yes, but only this once. Each time after I will deduct five points from your Class Participation grade. If you go to get it before the bell rings and return after the bell rings, you will be marked as late. That said, be prepared each day.

Q: *Do you offer extra help sessions?*

A: Often I will meet with a student when we each have some free time to go over any specific questions he or she may have regarding the work. This meeting should only come after the student has tried on his or her own to improve a skill or enhance comprehension. The student must arrange a meeting with me. I will not meet with students who are clearly not trying. Occasionally I will offer a large-group extra help session. Do not simply see a poor grade or a difficult text and say to yourself: *Forget it, I give up, I’ll just ask for help*. This work is challenging, but that’s the point. You **can** do it.

Q: *How can I improve my writing?*

A: The Writing Center, E-209. An English teacher is in there each period of each school day (I’m there during B-Period), but you must sign up for an appointment. You do this by filling out a Request Form in the Writing Center.

Q: Can I turn in an assignment after it is due?

A: All assignments are due when they are due. Students may turn in an assignment for half credit only, one day after it is normally due. After that, the assignment will receive a zero.