

English at Grosse Pointe South

Our Department

We are a group of passionate, innovative, and knowledgeable educators who care about helping all students become effective readers, writers, and thinkers. Graduates of the South English Department are analytical and empathetic communicators, engaged and enthusiastic about the experiences ahead of them in life. Our former students frequently share that our courses prepared them for their studies at the nation's top universities.



Freshman Year Requirement:

Freshman English (1 credit/full year)

This is our department's engaging and rigorous genre-based introduction to language and literature. Students will study a variety of authors, from William Shakespeare to Billy Collins. In addition to developing their analytical reading skills, they will sharpen their writing skills by crafting a variety of their own narratives, arguments, and informational texts. Throughout the course of the year, students will also learn how to critically view and listen to multiple forms of media. Of course, students will also practice effective speaking and listening skills in order to synthesize what they study and discover how it connects to their lives.

- OR -

Honors Freshman English (1 credit/full year)

Students who are interested in a course that moves at a faster pace and covers the skills and concepts listed above in more depth may be interested in "Honors Freshman English." In addition to the authors studied in "Freshman English," students may also read Mary Shelley. We recommend this course for students who are truly passionate about reading and writing.

Optional Electives for Freshmen:

Creative Writing (.5 credit/semester course)

Students interested in creative writing can take this exciting semester-long course, designed and taught by published authors. This course provides students with a strong foundation in the fundamentals of writing prose and poetry. Students may elect Advanced Creative Writing after taking this course.

Journalism or Honors Journalism (1 credit/full year)

This course is an introduction to the world of fact-finding, reporting, writing, designing, and meeting a deadline. Students will have the opportunity to acquire an understanding of all phases of publication work. Students will also learn about the different elements of newspapers, yearbooks, and broadcasts. Ethics in journalism, journalistic history, and the role of the press in a democratic society will be stressed.

Get in Touch:

The next page answers many frequently asked questions. Please feel free to ask us any additional questions that you might have. Open and frequent communication with families is important to us.

Department Chair:
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Q: What do students learn in our Freshman English courses?

A: Both our Traditional and Honors Freshman English courses include the following units: genre exploration of short stories; genre exploration of poetry; research strategies and best practices with research essay; Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*; Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. Additionally, Honors courses read Shelley's *Frankenstein*, and Traditional students read Satrapi's *Persepolis*. All core readings include an exploration of cultural context and contemporary criticism.

During freshman year, students may also take Creative Writing and/or Journalism or Honors Journalism. Academic support programs are also available for students needing more structured guidance.

Q: What is the course progression after Freshman English?

A: After Freshman English, students take either Traditional or Honors American Literature & Composition during their sophomore year. During their junior year, students select either The Power of Language or Advanced Placement English Language & Composition. Seniors have several options, such as Advanced Placement English Literature & Composition, Humanities, and/or a blend of semester courses to meet their English requirements.

Throughout their studies at Grosse Pointe South, students have an array of English electives open to them, including Journalism, Creative Writing, Mythology, Film Literature, Debate, Speech, Reading & Writing Through Athletics, and Theory (intro. to philosophy/epistemology). The Program of Studies offers a detailed description of course options and content descriptions.

Q: What are the main differences between the Honors and Traditional courses?

A: The descriptions above list some of the core experiences in each course. Additionally, the key differences include a slightly faster pace and greater complexity in the honors-level course. Families are encouraged to consider their child's current skills and interest levels, as well as time commitments for studying and extracurriculars. A conversation with older South students and families can also help you consider your options.

Q: May a student elect an Honors or A.P. course later if they decide to take Traditional Freshman English?

A: Yes! Students are permitted (and encouraged) to "level up" if they decide to move up to an Honors course or A.P. course later in their studies. A.P. Lang. & Comp. is normally taken during the junior year, and A.P. Lit. & Comp. is traditionally a senior-level course.

Our department is committed to helping every student succeed. For students who are struggling, we are always available during tutorials and before/after school by appointment. We also offer academic support programs for students needing extra guidance. For students who want to go above and beyond, we offer a number of extracurricular opportunities, from *The Tower* (our award-winning newspaper) to *Looking Glass* (our literary/art magazine), to Writing Club, to Poetry Club. Students can learn more about these options during our activity fair at registration. For more information about any of these opportunities, contact Kevin Cox.