**DP Literature Course Overview, Year 1**

First of all, breathe. You can do this! Here is what you can expect . . .

IB Literature is a two-year course that concentrates on literary study and analysis.   
The aims of the course are to . . .

1. introduce students to a range of texts from different periods, styles, and genres.
2. develop in students the ability to engage in close, detailed analysis of individual texts and make relevant connections.
3. develop the students' powers of expression, both in oral and written communication.
4. encourage students to recognize the importance of the contexts in which text are written and received.
5. encourage, through the study of texts, an appreciation of the different perspectives of people from other cultures, and how these perspectives construct meaning.
6. encourage students to appreciate the formal, stylistic, and aesthetic qualities of text.
7. promote in students an enjoyment of, and lifelong interest in, language and literature.
8. develop in students an understanding of the techniques involved in literary criticism.
9. develop the students' ability to form independent literary judgments and to support those ideas.

Source: International Baccalaureate. *Language A: Literature Guide.* United Kingdom: International Baccalaureate, 2011. Print.

There are two IB assessments this year: one is internally assessed, which means that I score it, and the other is externally assessed, which means that it is scored by IB examiners. Each of these assessments will be based on one of the works studied each semester, and all of the activities associated with these texts are designed to help prepare you to be successful on these assessments.

Let's look at each semester in detail:

**Semester 1**SL and HL students will study the following three works over the course of this semester:  
 *The Things They Carried* by Tim O' Brien  
 Selected poems relevant to the theme of witness to history  
 *Behind the Beautiful Forevers: Life, Death, and Hope in a Mumbai Undercity* by Katherine Boo

Internal IB Assessment

* HL and SL students will plan and deliver a 10-15 minute individual oral presentation on a student-chosen topic related to one of the three works studied over the course of the semester.
* The presentation should focus on an aspect of the work, such as cultural setting, theme, characterization, techniques and style, author’s attitude toward the subject, and/or interpretation of particular elements from different perspectives.
* These presentations will serve as the 1st semester exam and 15% of your overall IB score.

Students will also have a summative assessment at the conclusion of each text study:

*The Things They Carried*: Students will write a script and produce a podcast that communicates a close reading of one chapter in the novel.

*Beyond the Beautiful Forevers:* Students will respond to an aspect of the book and write a reflection that uses their analysis of text to justify artistic choices. Students will deliver a 3-5-minute oral presentation on their artistic response and reflection.

*Selected Poetry*: 1) Students will write their own "witness to history" poem. This response will be modeled after one of the 18-20 poems studied and will include a reflection that justifies the student's creative choices. 2) Students will analyze an unseen poem (supervised timed writing).

**Semester 2**  
SL students will study two **works in translation**, and HL students will study **three**.  
*Crossing the Mangrove* by Maryse Conde (HL and SL)  
*Dom Casmurro* by Marquis de Assis (HL only)   
Selected stories from *The Elephant Vanishes* by Haruki Murakami \* (HL and SL)

\*These titles are subject to change at the teacher’s discretion. I will post the final selections on ManageBac after   
 Thanksgiving break.  
  
**Assessment**   
The FINAL assessment will be a 1,200-1,500 word essay on one of the works in translation. Reading, presentation, and writing over the course of the semester are designed to help you choose an appropriate topic for your essay and to develop your thinking on the text and topic chosen. There are three stages leading up to the final assessment:   
  
Part 1 (internally assessed): interactive oral discussion

* Students will be divided into groups and each group will be assigned ONE of the three texts studied over the semester.
* Groups will research a topic related to the work's context or cultural issues and then plan and deliver a 30-minute interactive oral discussion. Presentation time should include both delivery of information discovered AND relevant activities that involve the class.
* Groups will submit a 3-5 page research paper based on their investigation.

Part 2 (internally and externally assessed): reflective statements

* After each interactive oral discussion, each student will write a 300-400 word reflection in response to the following question: *How was your understanding of the cultural and contextual considerations of the work developed through the interactive oral?*
* ONE of these reflections will be sent to IB to be scored externally.

Part 3 (internally assessed): timed writing

* At the conclusion of our study of each of the three texts, students will complete a timed writing assignment on one of three prompts provided by the instructor.
* The idea for the final essay must come from one of these timed writings.

Final assessment (externally assessed): 1,200-1,500 word essay developed from one of the timed writings

* This essay will be taken through many different drafts, only ONE of which will receive feedback from me. The draft will count as a test grade; the final copy will serve as a portion of your final exam grade.

**Grading**  
Semester 1: Quarter 1: 40% Semester 2: Quarter 1: 40%  
 Quarter 2: 40% Quarter 2: 40%  
 Exam: 20% Exam: 20%  
Please remember that semester 1 and 2 are not averaged at the end of the year.

Quarters: 50% summative assessments completed at the end of a unit (final essays/tests/projects)   
 50% formative assessments completed during the unit (classwork/homework/quizzes/essays)

**Electronic Use**I encourage students to participate in the BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) program at SMMHS. I often ask students to use their phones, tablets, or computers for classroom activities. These activities are aligned with specific learning goals. If a student chooses to bring a device to class, I welcome its use as a learning tool. Misuse of the device, however, will result in suspension of privileges, parent contact, and/or confiscation of the device.

**Communication**  
In this course these are two primary means of communication. Well, three--if you count my tracking you down in the halls, at lunch, or in other classes.   
  
PowerSchool: I use PowerSchool to post Hamilton County scores. For the most part, these are DP scores that have been converted to a Hamilton County score. There will be some scores, like reading checks, that are just percentages, but for the most part, I use the DP literature criteria to assess your work. This helps ensure that you are receiving the type of feedback that will allow you to move toward higher levels of achievement on the criteria.

ManageBac: I use ManageBac as my primary means of communication. Students should check ManageBac and/or their email every day. Every assignment on ManageBac will include a thorough explanation, due date, assessment criteria, and any relevant handouts. If you are absent, check ManageBac for make-up work.

Parent Communication: You are juniors who are preparing to be seniors and college freshman. To help you learn to communicate and advocate for yourself, my primary communication will be with you. However, because you are still in high school, your parents are still your safety net (thank them for that), and I will call on them to perform that function as needed.

**Make-up Work**Daily work and homework are used for formative assessment purposes (determining a student’s skills and understanding). Most assignments will be assessed for a Hamilton County grade, but others will only be used to provide feedback to improve your level of achievement on the criteria. All of your practice is valuable: your formative assessments are training for the summative assessment (and for life).

Getting and completing make-up work is the responsibility of the student. Make-up work is scored AFTER current assignments are scored. Rest assured, I will score it, but it might sit as a checkmark for collected in ManageBac until I have finished assessing current assignments.

**Grading**PowerSchool is a blessing and a curse. You know that you submitted that essay on Friday, so why is it not entered into the gradebook on Monday? Or by the following Friday? The truth is that grading papers is a time-consuming process. My goal is to give you specific and thorough, criteria-driven feedback so that you can develop the skills you need to be successful on your DP literature assessments (. . . and in life. I mean there is a bigger picture here, right?).   
As a frame of reference, my goal is to get papers graded and into PowerSchool within three weeks of submission. Sometimes I succeed; sometimes I fail; sometimes I rock it out. In any case, please be patient with me.

**Novel Selection**SMMHS's mission is to provide a world-class education that successfully engages our students and fully prepares them to compete with students from all over the world.  Our required reading selections are carefully chosen by our faculty for the richness and complexity of ideas that they contain--ideas that we expect our students to analyze, discuss, and reflect upon.  In such a diverse community as ours, we cannot ensure that your student will never encounter content that may conflict with his/her (or the parents’) personal beliefs and values. Rest assured, however, that our faculty is committed to fostering classroom environments where difficult content is addressed with the utmost maturity and professionalism.Each of the assessments contributes to the student’s overall score for the course. While there will be formative assessments throughout each semester, they will all lead students to the final assessment for the semester and ultimately prepare students for their final exam papers. It is also important for parents to understand that **students are ALWAYS assessed on the books they have read in class**; **therefore, the chosen works are required reading**. Our selected works are submitted to IB, so there will be no alternative texts. While the works may contain some mature material, please be reassured that I have made very careful and thoughtful choices in the pairings and themes.

**Academic Honesty**Please read the SMMHS Academic Honesty policy and the DP contract. My goal is to help you develop and communicate your own ideas. If you use another person’s material/ideas to support your own, you must give that person the appropriate credit. That way, it is clear which material/ideas are yours and which material/ideas belong to someone else. Practicing academic honesty gives your work authenticity and credibility. If you use another’s material/ideas without citing your source OR if you access prohibited information during an assessment, it will be considered a violation of the SMMHS Academic Honesty Policy.

**Class Norms**  
Same norms that apply to the rest of the school. The pace of this class mandates an environment conducive to learning; therefore, students will be expected to maintain an appropriate demeanor and attitude at all times. I could provide a lengthy list of specific class rules, but it really just comes down to these six behaviors that are relevant to all people:

* challenge yourself
* mind your manners
* practice acts of kindness
* engage in learning
* act with integrity and honesty
* manage your time

The junior year passes quickly--believe it or not. Engage and enjoy each moment . . . even in DP literature class!

Sincerely,

Ms. Mastin  
[mastin\_j@hcde.org](mailto:mastin_j@hcde.org)

Questions?

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I have reviewed the syllabus for DP Literature and understand the course expectations.

Student signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Please keep the syllabus in your DP Literature folder.