

English: The Power of Stories

8th Grade [4 periods *per week, year-round*]

Dr. Sharon Kunde

Course Description

In English 8, students will consider the role stories play in their lives, communities, and world. We will study examples of individuals and governments trying to control stories to further their own power. We will also explore the power stories have to shape our sense of personal identity and to connect us to – or potentially alienate us from – each other.

Aims and Skills

This class will ask students to read rigorously, critically, and proactively. As readers, students will be expected to master plot, characterization, and message. They will also be asked to engage with textual elements such as craft, diction, style, and figurative language. Students will be held accountable for careful and thorough reading with short and long in-class assessments (responses, quizzes, and tests) and through analytic essays. Students will develop their writing skills, with a focus on clarity of expression, organization, and the use of textual evidence. Students will be asked further to engage with texts through rich and complex projects such as debates, dramatic monologues, research papers, etc. Finally, the course will develop students' active listening skills and capacity for self-reflection.

Timeline

August - September: *The Book Thief* (2005) by Markus Zusak (Knopf reprint edition; 978-0375842207)

October: *Fahrenheit 451* (1953) by Ray Bradbury (Simon and Schuster 2012 reissue; 978-1451673319)

November - December: *Lord of the Flies* (1954) by William Golding (Penguin 2003 reissue; 978-0399501487)

January: *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* (1976) by Mildred Taylor (Puffin Books; 978-0142401125)

February: *I am Malala* (2013) by Malala Yousafzai and Christina Lamb (Back Bay Books, 2015 Reprint Edition, 978-0316322423 - NB: be careful NOT to buy the "young reader's" version. The proper co-author is Christina Lamb, NOT Patricia McCormick)

March: Poetry

April - May: *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1600) by William Shakespeare (Simon and Schuster, Folder Shakespeare Library Series; 978-0743477567)