

**West Linn–Wilsonville School District**  
**English Language Arts – Course Statement**

**Course Title: Advanced Literature Study: Contemporary Novel**

**Length of Course:** Semester  
**Number of Credits:** 1  
**Grade Level:** 11, 12 (10 with teacher recommendation)  
**Prerequisites:** None  
**CIM Work Samples**  
**Offered in Course:** Opportunities for expository and persuasive writing samples

**Date of Description/Revision:** 2004

**Course Overview**

This is a course for students who would enjoy reading and discussing well-written and critically acclaimed novels published during the past ten to fifteen years. Most novels will be read by the entire class; however, there will be opportunities for student choice as well. This is primarily a class focused on reading and discussion. Other activities will include journal writing, reflective essays, and student-designed projects. A primary aim of the class is to encourage students to take charge of their own learning, so they will be contributing to the design of the various units.

**Essential Questions**

**Concepts providing focus for student learning**

- What are the cultural, political, environmental, spiritual issues of our times? What do contemporary authors tell us about these issues and how we might deal with them?
- How do contemporary novels reflect our own lives? The lives of our fellow human beings? Why is it important to look within and without? How do good novelists illuminate and yet transcend an individual life?
- In what ways do contemporary novels connect with literature from our past? How are they similar? Different?
- What qualities do we admire in others and ourselves?
- How do we nurture these qualities in our increasingly complicated and ambiguous world?
- How much responsibility do we have for doing so?
- What responsibility do we have for creating a better world? For attaining justice? For fostering compassion?
- What roles do love, forgiveness, and need play in our lives? How will a better understanding of the connection among these help us create a better world?
- Since life includes pain, struggle, and loss, how should we respond?
- What happens when my intentions are good, but the results of my actions are harmful?
- Is redemption possible? How? How do I move on?
- How do I handle a “crisis of conscience”?
- How do I create a meaningful life?
- How do I retain hope in the face of suffering? in the face of evil?
- How much do I control my own destiny? How do I deal with forces beyond my control?

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<b>Proficiency Statements</b>	
<p>Upon completion of course, students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peruse book lists and websites for recently published novels of interest and share information with others.</li> <li>• Demonstrate the ability to articulate personal feelings, beliefs, and insights through writing and discussion.</li> <li>• Demonstrate the ability to support personal interpretation of literature through writing and discussion.</li> <li>• Demonstrate understanding of the prevalent themes in the novels studied through writing and discussion.</li> <li>• Demonstrate ability to analyze the novels in terms of structure, interpretation, and criticism.</li> <li>• Articulate and justify personal criteria for evaluating a novel.</li> <li>• Articulate how reading and collaborating with classmates over the course of the semester has impacted them.</li> </ul>	
<b>General Course Topics/Units &amp; Timeframes</b>	
<p>A. Core Literature (all students will read):  <i>Peace Like a River</i>  <i>The Secret Life of Bees</i>  <i>The Miracle Life of Edgar Mint</i>  <i>Atonement</i></p> <p>B. Class Selected Literature (one or two):  <i>Empire Falls</i>  <i>Midwives</i>  <i>Montana 1948</i>  <i>Bel Canto</i>  <i>The Life of Pi</i></p> <p>C. Literature Selected by Small Groups of Students</p>	
<b>Resources</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See “General Course Topics”</li> </ul>	