

## Senior English 2006 Nicole Bowser

### Syllabus

This year is your final year of high school (we all hope!), and a time of questioning identity. You maintain several, potentially: who you are with your classmates, your parents, your teachers, those you mentor. You are about to transition to a new identity: the graduate.

The texts I wish to present to you will also hold a question of identity. What makes us who we are? Biology? Upbringing? Books we read or movies we watch? Influences of friends? Of religion? Of sports figures? Is identity something we create, or something others place on us?

In *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, the reader is asked to consider how society's perceptions of sanity influence one's identity. A boy your age gives up everything to travel across the country in an attempt, deliberate or not, to learn more about himself in a journey called *On the Road*. *The Bluest Eye* is the story of a young girl who wishes for another identity, and *House on Mango Street* follows someone struggling with her Mexican and American identities. In addition to the text, we will study other developments within these time periods – poetry, society, politics, trends, other arts happenings – to see how the authors were influenced by their times.

### **Expectations**

I expect you all to work hard, to be prepared for class and for what comes next – college, or work. I expect you to attend as required. I expect respect and interest, curiosity and integrity. I expect honest work.

### **Grading**

Homework is due in class. Any late work is accepted for half the points, unless prior arrangements are made. Your final grade is based on homework (30 percent), tests (30 percent), essays (30 percent), and class participation (10 percent). Class participation is not limited to speaking in class – it includes paying attention, staying involved in what is being discussed.

### **Attendance**

The law requires that you must attend this class. Graduation requirements declare that you must attend this class. Most importantly, you should want to attend this class. Missing class means you miss information. Missing a lecture means you are less prepared for a test. Missing specific sessions of class, such as peer editing, means you forfeit a class participation grade. Several of these result in a lowered grade than your potential. Five of these, unexcused, a semester result in permanent work detail. Come to class.

### **Books for the Year**

*One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* by Ken Kesey

*On the Road* by Jack Kerouac

*The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison

*House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros

Although the school provides the texts, you have the option to purchase them. You may find this helpful so that you may write notes and highlight in the book. All tests are open-book and open-note. It is your responsibility to come prepared, and acquire the necessary information.

In addition, we will read Shakespeare and his Sonnets for the Renaissance theme of first semester, and continue to Baroque-themed texts for second semester.