

Humanities Department News
March 13, 2017

Social Studies:

In military history, students have been wearing a set of chain mail armor for a full school day to get a feeling for what it is like to wear it for an extended period of time. In past years students tried on the armor and recognized that it is indeed heavy, however they would immediately take it off. Students never learned the challenges associated with moving around and trying to do even simple tasks while wearing the armor. This year, while wearing the armor for a full school day, the students are gaining a real life appreciation of the challenges soldiers in antiquity faced.

- By Mark Yanaway

English:

April: the cruelest month, mudluscious, a perhaps hand. Recognize those words?

Yes, they're from famous poems. And yes, April is Poetry Month. Poetry, often forgotten or given a pat on the head, is actually a wonderful way into writing more powerfully. The beauty of poetry is that it forces the reader and writer to tackle the elusive and the mundane, the transcendent and the base, the self and the world. In years past, students have started out reluctant and shy about sharing, only to end the unit as class poet laureate, embolden by their ability to not just use words but create meaning.

This coming April, 9th graders will explore a variety of poems, from ones that surprise and don't read like poems to poems that require two voices. Using these as models, they will craft and share their own. There will be animal poems, punctuation poems, poems that are lists, poems that are apologies, elegies, and of course, sonnets (*Romeo and Juliet* is next up, after all).

Students will be creating an anthology of our best and favorite poems. Look for the link to be posted on the school blog end of April! Who knows, maybe there's another Billy Collins or Maya Angelou in our midst...

-By Jane Smith-Vaniz

The AP/ECE classes are currently working on their "Morality and Madness" unit where we are reading several short stories by authors such as Nathaniel Hawthorne, Edgar Allan Poe, and Ernest Hemingway. Additionally, we are reading the novella "The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" by Robert Louis Stevenson and Margaret Atwood's novel "The Handmaid's Tale" as a means of exploring the nature of morality and madness. Through this unit students explore what morality is, what makes something morally right or wrong, how we define madness, and the potential causes for slipping into a maddened state. This unit will end with a synthesis essay where students utilize at least three of the texts we have studied to formulate a conclusion about the connection between morality and madness.

English IV classes have just begun their unit revolving around philosophical thought and argument. Over the course of this unit students will develop skills in critical thinking and logic through the process of creating, researching, and defending their own essential question based on a belief or value that they hold to be true in their world. We will engage in reading and discussing of philosophical theory from well-known philosophers such as Descartes, Nietzsche, Fromm, etc. Students will then apply their understanding of these theories to philosophical debates regarding ethical questions.

- By Alicia Robinson

World Languages:

Spanish 2 classes will use their knowledge of food and commands to create a cooking video making their favorite spanish food. Students will show these videos in class, and then will have a fiesta to try all the dishes prepared. Spanish 3 students just presented on what they will do in the future, and will begin a unit exploring different spanish-speaking countries like Spain, Argentina and the Dominican Republic. They will learn about different cultural aspects like dance, and will experience traditions from each country. Spanish 4 will start watching a 'telenovela' or spanish soap opera from Mexico created for high school classes called "La Catrina." Students will read about each episode and then watch the episode to listen to native speakers of the language.

- By Kaitlyn Schneider