

20 August 2020

Students & Parents/Caregivers,

If you are reading this letter, you (or your student) are registered for Multi-Cultural Lit (counts for 5 or 7) or English 5 with Mrs. Connolly. I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome you – to tell you a bit about this course, about how I conduct class, about what you can expect from this semester. I'd also like to invite you to a zoom call where I plan on answering any questions you might have and helping you make the transition to remote learning (details below).

Normally, this class would meet in Room 251 at GCHS. This semester we will find a homebase at mrsconnollysclass.com. Check here daily for what's going on and for links to pretty much everything we will use to make class happen. I will use Google classroom to push out emails and info, but you won't find assignments posted there (or turned in there). Stay tuned for more directions on how we will make that happen.

This year I have a student-teacher candidate who will be working with us – Mackenzie Munn or Miss Kenzie. She'll be joining us in zoom calls, helping provide feedback to students and figuring out the best ways to learn online along with the rest of us.

In my classes, my number one priority is a quality learning experience that helps students become readers, writers, and thinkers, gaining the capacity they need for the future, whatever it may hold. That means it is important to me that we think always about WHY we are learning particular content, skills, concepts, or ways of thinking. I value feedback over grading, engagement over compliance, critical thought over memorization, and research through relevant inquiry.

It is my goal for students to leave my classes with better answers to the following questions:

- Who am I? and why is my identity important?
- What am I taking with me into the bigger world?
- How will I build success for learning beyond high school?
- How will I make myself a better person and this world a better place?

We will study by both meeting in real-time and working on-demand depending on what the situation dictates. This means you will be expected to meet via zoom for class check-ins and discussion and that sometimes that meeting will be short with plenty of time to get working on assignments. I don't give assessments in the form of quizzes or tests, instead gaining a fuller picture of your progress through writing, communicating, conferring, and other check-ins.

Mostly, I just want you feel welcome. After the unexpected move online last spring, I know students and parents alike are unsure and unsteady. And although a remote situation isn't ideal, I think we can make something of it, even something wonderful.

Parents/Caregivers – You are invited to join me for a zoom session on Wednesday, August 26th at 6:30pm to hear more about class, ask questions, or just to say hello. If you plan on attending, do read the course syllabus located on the website at the SYLLABI & OBJECTIVES tab beforehand and check out the parent letter about independent reading (I'll send that via Skyward email – it's also on the website under the INDIE READ tab [after the letter to students]) to keep our conversation focused and moving. If you aren't able to attend, I'll record a shorter version (including answers to questions raised at the meeting) by the end of next week and post a link so you can check it out when convenient.

RSVP by sending an email to me at jennifer.connolly@gcsd9.net and I'll email you the zoom link.

Looking forward to an exciting (even if unusual) semester of learning, I can't wait to meet this year's students and see what they discover.

With booklove,

Jennifer A. Connolly – Mrs. C =)

GCHS English teacher

SWIC instructor

MA English teaching of writing SIUE