Instructor: Robert Carmichael  
E-mail: robert.carmichael@ops.org  
Office Phone Number: 557-4700, ext. 7734  
Teacher Web Site: http://morton.ops.org/STAFF/GATE/HonorsSpecialProjects/tabid/382/Default.aspx  
Room 211

Course Description: This course offers a variety of projects designed to challenge students with advanced reading and language skills through problem solving, creative and critical thinking, self-analysis, inquiry, and collaboration.

Content Standards
- Writing Genres: Students will write for a variety of purposes and audiences in multiple genres.
- Students will apply reading skills and strategies to comprehend text.
- Students will apply writing skills and strategies to communicate.
- Students will learn and apply speaking and listening skills and strategies to communicate.
- Students will identify, locate, and evaluate information.
- Students will develop problem solving and inquiry skills by proposing questions, analyzing possible solutions, researching, evaluating their learning, and communicating findings.
- Students will be able to self-direct their inquiry and develop a relevant product.
- Students will recognize their own experience, limitations, and values with respect to their learning.
- Students will recognize the ethical standards involved in work.
- Students will demonstrate self-reliance when working independently.
- Students will utilize effective leadership, communication, and conflict management skills in a group setting.
- Students will be able to cultivate and utilize experience gained from adversity.

Course Expectations
- Complete all projects and class presentations.
- Work on communication skills daily.
- Read inside and outside class. Students are expected to keep up with class reading assignments as well as regularly read for recreation.
- Students are expected to do their best every day.

Class Rules and Expectations
- Students will be on time and prepared for class.
- Students will participate fully in class.
- Students will be respectful of themselves, fellow students, and school personnel.

Texts
Texts will vary according to unit of study and may include newspaper articles, student chosen novels and resources, online resources, print resources, and Junior Great Books.

Assessment
Course grades will be determined by planned assessments such as formative and summative projects scored with rubrics. 
State Testing: All 8th-grade students are required to complete the Nebraska State Reading (NeSA-R) test. In order to prepare students for the NeSA-R test, OPS requires all students to complete an online reading assessment to determine their strengths and weaknesses and help them improve their reading comprehension skills.
OPS Secondary Grading Practices

All coursework and assessments are judged based on the level of student learning from “below basic” to “advanced.” This course will provide multiple opportunities to achieve at the “proficient” to “advanced” levels. Students are evaluated based on a proficiency scale or project rubric. Proficiency scales for this course are available upon request (teacher will identify location such as portal, teacher website, attached, etc.)

There are three types of coursework

- **Practice** – assignments are brief and done at the beginning of learning to gain initial content (e.g., student responses on white boards, a valid sampling of math problems, keyboarding exercises, and diagramming sentences, checking and recording resting heart rate). Practice assignments are not generally graded for accuracy (descriptive feedback will be provided in class) and are not a part of the grade. Teachers may keep track of practice work to check for completion and students could also track their practice work. Practice work is at the student’s instructional level and may only include Basic (2) level questions.

- **Formative (35% of the final grade)** – assessments/assignments occur during learning to inform and improve instruction. They are minor assignments (e.g., a three paragraph essay, written responses to guiding questions over an assigned reading, completion of a comparison contrast matrix). Formative assignments are graded for accuracy and descriptive feedback is provided. Formative work may be at the student’s instructional level or at the level of the content standard. Formative assessments/assignments will have all levels of learning – Basic (2), Proficient (3), and Advanced (4), which means that for every formative assessment/assignment, students will be able to earn an Advanced (4). Teachers will require students to redo work that is not of high quality to ensure rigor and high expectations. The students score on a formative assessment that was redone will be their final score.

- **Summative (65% of the final grade)** – assessments/assignments are major end of learning unit tests or projects used to determine mastery of content or skill (e.g., a research paper, an oral report with a power point, major unit test, and science fair project). Summative assignments are graded for accuracy. Summative assignments assess the student’s progress on grade level standards and may not be written at the student’s instructional level. Summative assessments/assignments will have all levels of learning – Basic (2), Proficient (3), and Advanced (4), which means that for every formative assessment/assignment students, will be able to earn an advanced (4).

To maintain alignment of coursework to content standards, which is a key best practice for standards-based grading, teachers will utilize a standardized naming convention for each of the standards within a course. The content standard will be marked on each assignment entered into Infinite Campus (District Grading Program) using all capital letters followed by a colon. After the colon will be the title of the coursework.

At the end of the grading period, scores are converted to a letter grade using this grading scale.

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\begin{align*}
A &= 3.01 - 4.00 \\
B &= 2.01 - 3.00 \\
C &= 1.51 - 2.00 \\
D &= 0.76 - 1.50 \\
F &= 0.00 - 0.75
\end{align*}
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Redoing/Revising Student Coursework

1. Students are responsible for completing all coursework and assessments as assigned.
2. Students will be allowed redos and revisions of coursework for full credit as long as they are turned in during that unit of study while a student still has an opportunity to benefit from the learning. When time permits, teachers should allow the redoing or revising of summative assessments.
3. Students are expected to complete assessments when given to the class, or if a student was justifiably absent, at a time designated by the teacher.
4. Redoing, retaking or revising will be done at teacher discretion in consultation with the student and parent(s). Teachers may schedule students before, during, or after school to address needed areas of improvement if not convenient during class. The time and location for redoing, retaking or revising will be done at the teacher’s discretion in consultation with the student and parent(s).
5. Scores for student work after retaking, revising or redoing will not be averaged with the first attempt at coursework but will replace the original score.