

## Unit 2: Identity and Reputation

### Context

#### Classroom Information

Type	Grade 11 ELA
Ability	College Prep, Honors, Inclusion
Size	20-25 Students
Demographics	Urban Public

### Rationale

There is always time to have a structured space where you learn about your own identity, and the English classroom is a space where one can learn how to *express* identity. Especially in 11<sup>th</sup> grade, personal reflection (for job interviews, college essay applications, general curiosity about the “real world”) is a key part of the year. After studying the representation of children in literature, the structures that support such representations, culturally and textually, and the ways in which groups of people, either as included or disruptive, have been affected by these representations it is fitting that in such a class the teaching should reflect and be aware of the various ways in which many of these representations may be problematic as both a *student* and as an *educator*. As such, while the course will focus on providing students a rhetorical, written, and genuine framework with which to be able to more fully express and share conceptions of one’s identity and representation, the course will equally bear in mind the *pedagogy* to ensure that the treatment and understanding of these concerns is adequately handled in such a class. Therefore, the course would truly provide an environment in which the students will be fully explorative and contemplative of identity, critical and earnest in their engagement with literature dealing with similar issues, and will have learned various rhetorical and written techniques to share their identities with others, including the teacher.

### Semester Context

The first unit of the semester students learned about the form of the memoir, reading texts like *The Color of Water*, and learned basic literary techniques of style and form (many of which are continued and reinforced in this unit).

The second unit of the semester is the unit outlined here. Each Unit lasts roughly six weeks.

### Semester Goals

Students will have written (or performed/acted/composed, with a written explanation) a reflection on their identity (a memoir) that they feel provides a comfortable foundation that is honest, using techniques and modes learned through the study of various texts in class.

Students will have engaged personally with a wide variety of texts, and will feel comfortable approaching a variety of texts from a variety of perspectives, understanding how both their perspective and that of the author are important to understanding the work.

### Common Core ELA Primary Standards

11.L.5	Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings. <i>a)</i> Interpret figures of speech (e.g., hyperbole, paradox) in context and analyze their role in the text. <i>b)</i> Analyze nuances in the meaning of words with similar denotations.
11.RL.2	Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.
11.RL.3	Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story, poem, or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).
11.RL.5	Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its

	overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.
11.RL.6	Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness, or beauty of the text.
11.RL.10	Independently and proficiently read and comprehend literary texts representing a variety of genres, cultures, and perspectives and exhibiting complexity appropriate for the grade/course.
11.W.10	Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

### Common Core ELA Secondary Standards

11.W.3	<p>Write narratives to develop experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.</p> <p><i>a)</i> Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation and its significance, establishing one or multiple point(s) of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters; create a smooth progression of experiences or events.</p> <p><i>b)</i> Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.</p> <p><i>c)</i> Use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole and build toward a particular tone and outcome (e.g., a sense of mystery, suspense, growth, or resolution).</p> <p><i>d)</i> Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.</p> <p><i>e)</i> Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is experienced, observed, or resolved over the course of the narrative.</p>
11.SL.6	Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating a command of formal English when

	indicated or appropriate.
11.RI.7	Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.
Anchor Text	
<i>The Great Gatsby</i> by F. Scott Fitzgerald	
Summary	<i>Set in the Roaring 20s, the novel is told from the point of view of a middle-class stock broker, Nick Carraway, who is thrust into the lives of the ultra-rich when he rents a small cottage next to his mysterious neighbor, Jay Gatsby.</i>
Thematic Connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Society and Class</li> <li>• Wealth</li> <li>• Memory and the Past</li> <li>• Dissatisfaction</li> <li>• Isolation</li> <li>• Mortality</li> <li>• Gender</li> <li>• Lies and Deceit</li> <li>• Reputation and Status</li> <li>• Identity and Persona</li> </ul>
Reasoning	This novel is often taught this year; therefore the reasoning speaks for itself on that front. However, this text also is a great means of pulling apart the construction of identity and the roles that stereotype and reputation play. Gatsby is an entirely self-created persona, a caricature of borrowed phrases and invented back-story. He is emblematic of the potential creative power one has over one's self-creation– yet he is

	<p>also emblematic of the inherent impossibility of a totally self-created identity. Tom and Daisy can be seen as having identities formed <i>for</i> them by their position and status; Daisy especially can be read as offering some resistance to the roles in which she finds herself confined to. The entire culture of the novel bubbles with gossip about reputation and is thick with rumors about secrets and hidden facets of a person; this makes the plot and characters easily opened up by any analysis of identity and self-creation.</p>
Supporting Texts	
Excerpt from “Self-Reliance” by Ralph Waldo Emerson	
Summary	<p><i>An essay written by American transcendentalist philosopher and essayist Ralph Waldo Emerson. It contains the most thorough statement of one of Emerson's recurrent themes: the need for each individual to avoid conformity and false consistency and follow their own instincts and ideas.</i></p>
Thematic Connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Past vs. Present</li> <li>• Exclusion</li> <li>• Self Motivation</li> <li>• Self reliance</li> <li>• Burden of secrecy</li> <li>• Reputation and Self-Creation</li> <li>• Identity and Persona</li> </ul>
Reasoning	<p>This provides a very nice foil to be read after <i>The Great Gatsby</i>; Emerson is writing from a transcendentalist view, where there is extreme importance placed upon the individual creating a <i>unique</i> and self-expressive form of identity. This goes entirely against the kind of man Gatsby created himself as: a collection of borrowed phrases and manners learned unnaturally. Emerson famously writes “Envy is Ignorance; Imitation is Suicide,” highlighting the deep belief he has about remaining true to oneself. Such beliefs are both inspiring and troubling, and by reading this text after</p>

	<p><i>Gatsby</i> the class will begin to show ways in which these two different manners of creating identity both stand true and fail. Emerson's call to "trust thyself" is a striking way of understanding who one is in their most honest sense.</p>
<p><i>Some Rap Songs</i> by Earl Sweatshirt</p>	
Summary	<p>This album by former Odd Future member Earl Sweatshirt (Thebe Neruda Kgositsile) is a personal and reflective piece where the prolific yet reserved rapper tries to tackle his reputation and legacy during the tumultuous and powerful events of his life. With a jazz-influenced and non-traditional style, Earl tries to let the listener hear who he is, in honesty.</p>
Thematic Connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-Creation and Legacy</li> <li>• Identity and Persona</li> <li>• Loss and Depression</li> <li>• Societal Pressure</li> </ul>
Reasoning	<p>This album by Earl Sweatshirt provides a wonderful counter to the Emerson piece: they are different mediums, in different eras, from very different persons, writing about similar aims: one's identity. For Earl, there is a struggle in his lyrics about the pressures of fame, notoriety, and the expectations of others; there is also an honest consideration of his relationship to his father who passed shortly before the album was completed. Earl is careful to note the flaws he lives with and his struggles with anxiety and depression; his music is stripped bare, unclean, and rough. The sound of the album itself is also notable: with beats and rhythms bordering on improvisational jazz, Earl is clearly forming an identity in a completely different way than Emerson, necessitating a new way of approaching himself that he could not accomplish in the essay format of Emerson. The variety of influences and samples, as well as Earl's lyrics themselves, paint a portrait of an identity that is a product of relationships to others. This entire formation of identity as related to and necessary with others is thus a radically different</p>

	way of seeing oneself compared to the extreme individualism of Self-Reliance.
<b>Queerness in Videogames</b>	
<b>Summary</b>	<p>Two short YouTube videos will form the basis of this “secondary text”. The first video is made by the channel “The Game Theorists,” and features an analysis of the way in which cross-dressing and non-heterosexuality have been treated problematically in the gaming industry; the second video, by Polygon, is a video following the efforts by members of the LGBTQ+ community in creating videogames that go against the aforementioned problematic trend.</p> <p>First: (<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XdmJXHJLZ6M">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XdmJXHJLZ6M</a>)</p> <p>Second: (<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XQB5snyJfXk">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XQB5snyJfXk</a>)</p>
<b>Thematic Connections</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reputation and Self-Creation</li> <li>• Identity and Persona</li> <li>• Gender performance</li> <li>• Societal norms</li> <li>• Videogame Culture</li> </ul>
<b>Reasoning</b>	<p>These videos, when seen together, do well to emphasize a lot of the themes discussed in class brought to something close to the real world. The first video shows how treatment of LGBTQ+ persons in videogames has been overwhelmingly negative and diseased - the video explicitly refers to how such a treatment will impact the imaginations of those playing. The connection between depictions and subsequent internalizations of LGBTQ+ persons as diseased can be mapped onto the class discussions of how one’s identity is both self-created but also misinterpreted by others.</p> <p>This video will provide a different path to understanding how an author’s (or game designer’s) choices about the characters have real (potentially problematic) impacts that can be internalized and felt by the readers. The second video is similar, but from the other perspective: rather than show what the failings are in modern mass video game consumption, the second video shows how certain marginalized individuals are</p>

	working to make a space for themselves in an industry where those spaces are typically regarded as villainous or diseased. The second video specifically talks about how the game designers are trying to put <i>their own</i> experience into videogames so that they, and perhaps others with similar identities, have a means of connecting with videogames as a medium. The second video discusses the potential power of videogames as both a means of expression and a means of connection; similar resonances will be discussed about the literature of the class.	
Itinerary		
Week One		
Summary		
This week will focus on Plot, Content, and Summary. Students will begin reading <i>The Great Gatsby</i> (GG), working through Chapters 1-4. Students will be expected to:		
11.RL.2		
a) summarize events as they occur in the text without opinion, both individually and as a class		
b) describe plot and demonstrate an understanding of the characters, setting, and events		
11.RL.3		
c) begin to analyze the impact of various elements of the structure (plot arc, setting, etc) on the story		
11.W.10		
d) write (at least) four dialectic journal entries per week		
Key Assignments		Reasoning
Dialectic Journal: Students will read the assigned portions of the text and answer the following questions:		The journal will keep students accountable to the readings, as well as provide avenues for discussion in class
1) <b>Quote:</b> Pick a passage, reproduce a quote that stands out to		



<p>you. Briefly explain why that quote struck you.</p> <p>2) <b>Question:</b> Write one question you have after reading. Ask about something unclear in the passage.</p> <p>3) <b>Predict:</b> Anticipate what you think will happen based on the passage.</p> <p>4) <b>Connect:</b> Make a connection between something in the passage and something in your life. For example: a) Do the characters remind you of anyone else? b) Does something in the passage trigger a memory for you? c) Is there some lesson/truth you feel the passage describes? or d) If there is no connection, what are you struggling to connect with?</p>	<p>with questions and interesting passages.</p> <p>Students will be starting to look closer at some passages and asking questions about what interests them, building a foundation for later, more formal, textual analysis.</p> <p>Students will also be relating the literature to their own lives, making the literature more resonant and important in the student's minds. This will be stress-free, with no pressure of being "wrong"</p>
<p><u>Character Chart:</u> Students will have a graphic organizer that they will update with characters as they are introduced. These charts will include both physical descriptions provided in the text as well as descriptions of the characters' personality. The organizer will thus be a bi-column sheet with Physical/Personality descriptions per character.</p>	<p>This will make sure students stay grounded in the text, know what is going on, and can start to build knowledge of characterization and how characters are constructed. This will be used later when literary devices are discussed in greater detail.</p>
<p><u>Close Reading:</u> Students will look closely at specific passages in the text and describe what is happening, where, with who, and why. They will pay attention to moments in the text directed by the teacher. These close readings will be held in small groups, with no one student directing the conversation, as well as with the class as a whole, with the</p>	<p>This will prepare students for more rigorous textual analysis; here, the small groups will be used to get the students comfortable and feel at ease in their readings, encouraging them to try and</p>

<p>teacher providing “jumping-off” points for discussion. For this week, the questions will be mainly of structural elements such as plot arc, character actions, and understanding descriptions.</p> <p>Possible passages for class-directed discussion include: Nick’s first characterization of himself as a narrator; the first description one gets of Tom and the Estate; the description of the Valley of Ashes and Dr. T.J. Eckleburg; the description of Gatsby’s smile, Gatsby’s recollection of his past en route to the City</p>	<p>expand moments where they feel engaged.</p> <p>The larger group and class readings provide clearer and directed attention to specific parts of the text. By having both structured and unstructured direction, students will surely gain the required understandings while hopefully also realizing their own understandings as important and valid.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Assessments</b></p>	
<p>At the end of the week, students will show the teacher that they have completed at least 4 individual Dialectic Journal entries and have been keeping up with their character charts in class. There may be a short reading quiz on Friday, prepared for on Thursday, where students will have to answer questions related to the passages discussed in the small groups and as a class. These quizzes will be short and very easy, serving as a means of accountability for the classwork, but also as a convenient summary when they receive the graded versions the following Monday. They will consist of no more either a few short answer questions or one paragraph responses, where students are asked to explain a character trait/plot element or summarize an event in that week’s readings.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Connections to Cumulative Goals</b></p>	
<p>This week, as referenced in the summary, will focus on standards 11.RL.2, 11.RL.3, and 11.W.10. Students will be able to objectively summarize texts through the in-class close readings and discussion (<i>11.RL.2</i>), analyze the impact of the authors choices in relation to other elements of the story (<i>11.RL.3</i>), and write in contained (the journals) as well as continuous and growing (character sheet) assignments (<i>11.W.10</i>).</p> <p>Students will know authors intentionally choose how to develop plot (<i>11.RL.3</i>); through the close readings and</p>	

journaling, students will begin to know that texts have multiple themes that build off one another. These will be used in the following week (*11.RI.2*)

### Pedagogical Influence

Students should be provided not just a space where they are directed by the teacher towards an understanding or specific point (in-class close readings) but also a space where they can engage with and ask questions of the text in whatever way they find to be appropriate (journaling, small groups). These individual insights, while not consisting of the entire class, will be consistently encouraged and used in the class discussions as ways of framing the text. The teacher will bear in mind thematic connections to guide towards but will allow the various interests of the class to provide much of the direction. Specifically, students will be tasked with connecting (or disconnecting) the literature to their lives so as to make the works heavier felt. As such, students will feel a greater sense of connection to the literature and class, hopefully allowing them to do well with subject materials they find engaging.

### Week Two

#### Summary

This week will build upon the standards of Week One but will focus on Theme, Literary Devices, and Composition. Students will read Chapters 5-9. Students will be expected to:

#### *11.L.5*

Understand figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings through guided readings of the text and vocabulary lessons.

#### *11.RL.6*

Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text where the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness, or beauty of the text.

#### *11.RL.3*

Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story, poem, or drama

(e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed), building off an understanding of the plot/characters/content from the previous week.

### Key Assignments

### Reasoning

Dialectic Journal: students will keep the same journal for the text this week; however, the teacher will ask that students pay particular attention when reading to the devices discussed in class, and mention at least two literary device they noticed in their journals for the week. The set-up of the journals are the same as last week.

The journals will provide a consistent way to keep students accountable, as well as provide a way to engage the students in consistent writing practices.

Theme Chart: Similar to the Character charts, this will be a graphic organizer where students will “keep track” of major themes or symbols as they develop in then novel and are discussed in class. This organizer will be bi-column as well, where the Left side will be filled out with Themes (taken from Thematic Connections) and the right will be References (where students will write brief summaries with page numbers). This chart will be used alongside the Character Chart in order to organize and plot the progression of the novel. Students will be asked, as the class works through readings, to offer up any connections they see to the listed themes. Since the organizer will only have 2-3 themes given, students will also be asked to try and consider other themes they think are present and consistent in the novel. As such, these charts will be filled out largely as a group.

The differences that will become apparent between Thematic mappings and Character Mappings will enable students to have a firm way of grasping how the choices the author makes influence the “feel” of the novel. Students will have already considered how characters are portrayed and described and have demonstrated understanding of the plot; now students will work to connect those elements to themes and, by having specific passages they reference, show their understanding of how the author constructs themes through details.

<p><u>Vocabulary List:</u> This will be a collection of literary terms the students will be expected to understand (understatement, paradox, hyperbole, etc). Students will be provided a list of terms and definitions to refer to; beneath the definitions the List will have space for students to write in page numbers for moments they find through individual, group, or class discussion that demonstrates concrete usage of the terms. These will be used as study guides for vocabulary quizzes.</p>	<p>These lists will provide constant and clear definitions for the terms as they are being discussed in class. They also provide a means of making the students use their understandings of summary: as with the theme chart, students will summarize the text they refer to briefly, building off skills of summarization from Week 1.</p>
<p><u>Close Reading:</u> Students will look closely at specific passages in the text and describe what is happening, where, with who, and why. They will pay attention to moments in the text directed by the teacher. These close readings will be held in small groups, with no one student directing the conversation, as well as with the class as a whole, with the teacher providing “jumping-off” points for discussion. For this week, the questions will be mainly of literary and figurative elements such as word choice, figures of speech, literary devices.</p> <p>Possible moments to be looked at include: the repetition of the phrase “old sport”; the symbolic resonance of the green light; the motif of the telephone as central to the text; the inclusion of Gatsby’s “schedule” in the novel after his death; the choice of detail in the climactic fight between Tom and Gatsby; the importance of the color yellow throughout the text (such as the scene when Myrtle dies).</p>	<p>Just as with the last close readings, by working through the text both in groups and as a class students will be able to critically read and analyze moments in the text, not just for plot or characterization, but now for the ways in which the text is being shaped by literary devices and choices by the author. Students will build off the reading skills of the previous week and will now “dig deeper” in their readings both as a class and individually. They will analyze why the author made choices and how those choices impact the text and the meanings one reads from the text.</p>

### Assessments

Students will be quizzed on the vocabulary learned during the week, taken from their vocabulary sheets. Students will also be tasked with writing a longer analysis, in class, to a passage reproduced on the prompt. Students will be asked to use their knowledge of literary devices to analyze some details in the passage and relate how those details help form one of the themes also discussed in class. Students will also have to show they have entered at least 4 entries into their dialectic journals, and will have to show the teacher their updated Theme and Character charts.

### Connections to Cumulative Goals

Students will be able to analyze words and their connotations, grasping a deeper understanding of the content of the passages (11.L.5). Students will interpret passages as shaped by word choices from the author, understanding that the author makes specific choices to form the text (11.RL.3). Students will recognize that authors build themes using all elements of a text, including plot characterization, conflict etc (11.RL.2). Students will be able to highlight points in the text of particular strength and beauty, and be able to express why such moments seem so strong and beautiful to them.

### Pedagogical Influence

Students will be engaging with broad themes of the novel and explicitly relating those themes to broad understandings they see in their own life. The connections between content (week one) and theme (week two) will help students understand how these themes and understandings are supported by specific details in the text. By providing students with rather structured and clear organizers as a means of plotting the progression of the text, students will build a strong rhetorical foundation that will be used in the coming weeks as the students then build outwards from the texts in their more creative projects. Since the last half of the Unit is largely based on students applying what was learned in the first half of the unit to their own lives, projects, and perspectives, a clear and strong foundation of understanding is necessary.

## Week Three

### Summary

This week will accept any spill-over from the previous weeks, and will finish any readings that students perhaps have unfinished. This week will focus on context, genre, and audience. Students will have read *The Great Gatsby* and will watch video clips from the 20s and moments from modern film adaptations (both the older and newer film), setting up for the comparative classes of the following weeks. Students will specifically look at ways the novel has been adapted as well as the history and context of the original release of the novel. Students will be expected to:

#### 11.RI.7

Incorporate an understanding of multimedia, using and learning from videos, images, and artworks. Students will take their knowledge from the previous weeks and apply that understanding to different mediums

#### 11.RL.2

Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, applying those themes to the multimedia presented anew this week

#### 11.W.10

Write routinely over extended time frames (the culmination of their journals and graphic organizers) and shorter time frames (the fanfiction) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences. Students will write narratives from GIFs, fanfictions from their personal interests, and annotate a drawing depicting a scene of their choice.

### Key Assignments

Fan Fiction: Students will work in class to map out extensions to the story, “fanfics,” where they will do some imaginative work in spaces the novel does not. After reading Danez Smith’s “Dinosaurs in the Hood” and discussing what the poem is trying to imagine, students will try to imagine something into GG. At home, students will be required

### Reasoning

With any literature, there is always spaces where the author does not go and spaces where the reader struggles to apply the content to their own lives. This assignment will then enable students to

<p>to work on an outline for their fiction, with the important details and plot points roughly framed. These fictions will be revised with attention to the treatment of details and thematic connections to the text. These fictions fill in spaces the novel did not (such as imagine Jordan's childhood) or reimagine the novel in new ways (imagine Jordan as a man). Students will not be required to write complete and full fictions, but will be required to demonstrate revisions between their initial outlines and their final.</p>	<p>truly investigate moments of both resonance and dissonance they feel with the text; the creative fictions will invest students into the imaginative work of the text and allow for them to begin carving out spaces where they can directly envision their relationship to the text as either continuous and unhindered (add to the story) or as restricted and unaligned (change the story). This assignment will thus allow for students to engage with the text, despite barriers they may feel in relating to the content.</p>
<p><u>Hopper and Deco</u>: Students will look at art ranging from the period, highlighting both the positive and negative aspects they see in the era. They will interpret a scene from the GG and draw it in class, writing a one paragraph description of why they chose their scene, and what details they chose to include, for homework. The class will initially be divided into two; one half will discuss in small groups Art Deco, the other half will discuss Edward Hopper. Within these groups students will be using their Theme Charts in order to find resonances between the themes of the novel and of the artworks. After a short time, the class will rejoin and do a group discussion of the artworks and their</p>	<p>Students should be exposed to the variety of media surrounding the literature, and providing a context (through art) will help strengthen understandings of the themes. Art Deco will be shown in class in order to discuss themes of decadence, novelty, and industrial beauty found within the novel. Edward Hopper will be used to discuss themes about the negatives of city life, alienation, and loneliness. By having</p>



<p>reception by the students. Students will then pick a scene from GG and draw it however they see fit.</p>	<p>students look at art and connect that art to themes, students will then create their own artworks with explanations. In doing so students will demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between details and theme, as well as employ new mediums as a means of expression</p>
<p><u>Gifs and Media:</u> Students will compose a short narrative of only gifs. This will be worked on in class and in groups, with each group presenting their narrative to the class. The narrative they invent cannot be one found in Great Gatsby; rather, the students must create a new and original narrative from the GIFs from the <i>Great Gatsby</i>; while the students cannot copy plot, they are required to relate their narratives to one of the themes discussed in class. Students may use this as a means of adding visuals to their “fanfictions.” Afterwards, students will talk as a class about what was most difficult about the assignment.</p>	<p>Continuing the theme of multimedia for the week, students will have a relatively light assignment where they will focus on the mass-production of certain elements of the text in GIF and meme format. This will connect the literature directly to the daily lives of the students and will provide them a way to create their own narratives from the narrative before them; this assignment aligns with the reasoning behind the fanfiction. The difficulty of the assignment will be discussed in class, guiding students towards an understanding of the limitations such forms of mass media carry when one tries to then create a cohesive narrative.</p>

### Assessments

Students will turn in their fanfictions and drawings + explanations at the end of the week. The presentations in class on the narratives the students made will be graded in class. The teacher will check that the students incorporated themes from the novel into their narratives, assessing their understanding of the themes discussed. The fanfictions will be graded for clarity and plot-cohesion, checking that the students have learned and built upon the lessons from the previous three weeks, and upon revision, making sure students changed and edited their fictions.

### Connections to Cumulative Goals

Students will recognize that authors choose the way they present information to add to the effectiveness and aesthetics of a text, taking that understanding and applying it to their presentation of information in the assignment for the week (11RI.6). Students will continue building upon their understanding of themes and how they are products of a culmination of details and choices within the text (11.RL.2). Students will be able to relate the themes learned in class to their projects, demonstrating understanding of the relevance of the literature to the world outside the text. Students will have edited their fictions and demonstrated an understanding of revisions and the editing process (11.W.5)

### Pedagogical Influence

Students can easily struggle to see how the texts they read are relevant to their lives or to the world at large; students may also be easily put-off from material if they do not find clear and open spaces in which they can place themselves within the text; students may struggle with “seeing-themselves” in the characters. The assignments are thus geared towards bringing the themes and devices of the previous week into practice, providing the students a variety of ways to engage with connections to the text, be it through art, fanfictions, or memes. As such, this week will guide students to an understanding of the internet is both a radically new yet similar space to what they are familiar with; by juxtaposing GIFs and memes with art and texts, students will see ways in which their critical analysis of texts can be mirrored (though not perfectly) onto aspects of the internet they are familiar with.

## Week Four

### Summary

This week will focus on Content and Summary of the new texts, *Self Reliance (SR)* and *Some Rap Songs (SRS)*.

Students will read an excerpt from the Emerson and will listen to and read a transcript of the Sweatshirt Album.

Students will be expected to:

#### *11.RL.2*

Summarize events as they occur in the text without opinion; Describe argument and demonstrate an understanding of the setting and events

#### *11.RL.3*

Begin to analyze the impact of various elements of the structure (plot arc, setting, rhythm) on the work

#### *11.SL.6*

Write two summaries in formal English

#### *11.RI.7*

Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats

#### *11.W.10*

Write routinely over extended time frames and shorter time frames for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

### Key Assignments

### Reasoning

Dialectic Journal: same thing, for Emerson and Sweatshirt, without the “predict” section since these are less plot-focused texts. Each text will be split up into two days apiece for a total of 4 journal entries.

The journals will provide a consistent way to keep students accountable, as well as provide a way to engage the students in consistent writing practices.

One-Liners: students will take a single line from either Sweatshirt or Emerson and write a short creative piece where that line is the first line

Students will have to do some very close reading in order to adequately write a

<p>of the paragraph. Students will either criticize or support that line, making references to their own life and examples to support their critiques. Students will be asked to continue (or work against) the line in a creative way, taking the line and imagining how they, as if they were the original authors, would write the line into context. The finished work will be no more than a few paragraphs.</p>	<p>couple paragraphs from a single line; as such they will have to build off devices and techniques learned from the reading of GG. This assignment will also be used to highlight the ease with which one can take a line and apply it in a variety of ways, getting students to understand the importance of contextualization and the dangers of heavy-handed reduction. This task pairs with the GIF/media assignment.</p>
<p><u>Summaries and Themes:</u> students will, in lieu of a reading quiz, have to write two responses (one per text) that summarizes the main points and general themes of the text. Similar to week one, students will have Theme Chart this is being filled out during group and class discussions. This chart will serve as the bedrock for their summaries. One summary will be done in class with minor assistance and guidance for any questions, the other will be done for homework. These summaries will be written in conjunction with close reading (both in groups and as a class) to ensure students know what the text is saying. These summaries will be in Formal English.</p>	<p>Students must have demonstrated the ability to write concrete summaries as well as demonstrate the ability to write independently. This assignment will make sure students understand the texts they are working with so that they may build of that understanding in the following week. This also gives the students time to practice their writing and close-reading skills developed in the first week.</p>
<p><u>Representations:</u> Students will watch the secondary texts on queerness in videogames: after, in groups, they will summarize and explain the main points and content. As a class we will then discuss the content;</p>	<p>Similar to the above assignment, this assignment is largely done so that students have a concrete and firm foundation of</p>

students will be asked how they feel discussing these topics, and will submit a short response (structurally similar to the dialectic journal) of the biggest take-away they found in the videos, specifically about what they learned or were interested in regards to representations of people in videogames.	understanding of the texts. By discussing the main take-aways from the videos and then writing about what piqued their interest, students will demonstrate an understanding of arguments presented in various forms of media.
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Assessments
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Students will submit a fair amount of writing for this week – this is done so that the students can focus on their more creative projects in the final weeks, and also to ensure that the last week of the semester isn’t dominated by writing (since they will likely be writing for other classes’ finals as well). The dialectic journals will be assessed the same as the previous weeks, essentially checking for completion. The summaries will be collected and graded for clarity of writing and understanding of the content; the response to the Representations assignment will be graded for completion and how accurately the students engaged with a critical argument within the videos.

Connections to Cumulative Goals
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Students will have demonstrated the ability to write clearly and consistently, both in short responses as well as in longer summaries (11.W.10). Students will be able to objectively summarize texts through the in-class close readings and discussion (11.RL.2), as well as analyze the impact of the authors choices in relation to other elements of the story (11.RL.3).

Students will know authors intentionally choose how to develop their argument (11.RL.3); through the close readings and summaries, students will strengthen their knowledge that texts have multiple themes that build off one another (11.RI.2).

Students will have engaged with and will understand the difference between various forms of media (11.RI.7)

## Pedagogical Influence

Different people will craft their works in different ways; what some say in a long essay with polysyllables another would say in iambic hexameter to a trap beat. As such, this week focuses on students understanding a variety of ways of approaching similar themes and issues; by looking at both an old essay written by a renown intellectual and a collection of rap songs written by a cultural prodigy, students will be able to draw connections and disconnections between these two forms of media, connections strengthened in the following week. Such juxtaposition will provide a clear means for the students to analyze the context and content of the works, while also providing a basis for the student's understanding of how different identities necessitate different forms of expression.

## Week Five

### Summary

This week will focus on craft, aesthetics, and choices by the author. Students will be juxtaposing ways of writing between Emerson and Sweatshirt, as well as working through reasons for such differences. Students will also reflect on the "Queerness in Videogames" texts, using their theories as groundworks to work through different ways to embody identity. Students will be expected to:

*11.L.5*

Demonstrate understanding of figurative language and word relationships

*11.RL.5*

Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.

*11.RL.10*

Independently and proficiently read and comprehend literary texts representing a variety of genres, cultures, and perspectives and exhibiting complexity appropriate for the grade/course.

11.RI.7

Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats

### Key Assignments

### Reasoning

Close Reading: Students will continue their analysis of Sweatshirt and Emerson, specifically highlighting the choices of the authors in terms of their language and detail. Students will work in small groups over specific passages / songs, focusing not as much on *what* is being said but on *how* it is being said; students will be considering literary devices (such as rhyme, repetition, diction, or point of view) as well as how the overall aesthetic of the piece (dark, sad, uplifting, grand-scale, personal, impersonal) is derived and built upon these details and devices. Students will work in small groups with specific passages provided by the teacher; they will then join as a class to discuss their thoughts and to contextualize the chosen passages within the work as a whole.

Building off their understanding of the content from last week, this assignment will have students diving into a text they now have a good understanding of, enabling them to better critically engage with the devices and choices of the author. Students will be connecting specific usages of language or sound to the overall aesthetic of the piece, understanding how such choices are important to understanding the author's project.

Representations: After the previous week's emphasis on the content of the videos, students will be asked to apply the themes of the videos to the other secondary works. Students will have to create a Fake videogame character, where they will design a rudimentary visual of the character (humanoid) as well as compose a short, one paragraph bio of the character. This will be done in class and completed for

It is difficult at times to grasp the ways in which many people feel 'connected' to characters in literature, and ways in which much of reading almost requires the ability to imaginably see oneself as the protagonist. Videogames are a much more

<p>homework; students will be given a template to fill out, where they must describe/draw their character, mention specific traits, and briefly say what their character's role or mission is for their game.</p>	<p>direct and easy way to grasp the investment of the player (reader) into the character. Students will be considering the importance of detail to build a character (building off Week One standards) and will be seeing how different media shares similar characteristics of characterization.</p>
<p><u>Influencers</u>: Students will look at Twitter and Instagram influencers with Moguls and Stars, reading and discussing the ways in which their reputations are crafted, and will bring in one person who they know of and value. They will share in small groups their choices, noting specific details they feel are important to their persons "image." After the small groups the class will join and discuss various commonalities and differences between how these icons create an 'image' (and therefore identity) and how their image is related to their work and specific influence. Students will write a short paragraph/page about which influencer or icon they feel they relate to, and on some level, draw inspiration from.</p>	<p>Similar to the above assignment, here students will be seeing ways in which characterization (here, one's 'image') is composed of details that contribute to an overall impression. As with videogames and literature, popular culture provides another avenue or perspective for students to engage with the understanding of how an author's (or influencers) specific choices contribute to the overall aesthetic of a work.</p>
<p><u>Reputations</u>: students will write their views on their own reputation, both as they see it and how it could be seen by others. These will be in the form of some media icon they know: students can create Fake Twitters, Fake Instagram's, or Fake Profile Pages where they will try to craft a reputation (which can be honest, caricatured, or purposefully</p>	<p>This will be used to start students thinking about their final project. As with the other creative projects thus far (Videogame character, GIF narrative, Fan fiction), this assignment will push students to take the</p>



<p>distorted) through in-class discussions and working directly with the teacher. There will be provided empty templates of Profile Pages for the students to fill out. Students will write a short piece (no more than one page) about how their avatar differs from and are similar to themselves, and why.</p>	<p>content and devices they learned and actively embody them in their own lives. By paying specific attention to how they will create a reputation through ‘quotes’ (posts) and details students will understand how an author crafts a character as well as how reputations are formed.</p>
<p><b>Assessments</b></p>	
<p>Students will be graded on the quality of their videogame character in terms of how well-chosen their details were, and how well they relate those details to the persona of the character. Their paragraph on the influencer will be graded on the writing style and structure, demonstrating a good command of writing skills. The content of the paragraph will be assessed on how well students draw connections between details of their icon and the general aesthetic or persona that icon created.</p>	
<p><b>Connections to Cumulative Goals</b></p>	
<p>Students will have been able to demonstrate command of the conventions of Standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking in their annotated paragraphs for their Reputation and Representation assignments (11.L.1). Students will have looked at and engaged with a variety of media (essay, album, YouTube video) understanding the similarities and differences in the construction of a character/persona across a multitude of platforms (11.RI.7; 11.RL.10). Students will have engaged in a close analysis of these texts, demonstrating their understanding of an author’s choices and of the overlapping themes of a text in their related discussion of influencers and reputation (11.RL.5).</p>	

## Pedagogical Influence

As with the first half of the semester, the treatment of the secondary texts mirrors that of the anchor text: first students are taught the content, then the analysis, then the application of the ideas into their own lives to make the class relatable and therefore relevant to their lives. This week focused on the analysis and application; students were tasked with close readings and engagements with the text, then subsequently tasked with bringing those ideas and techniques into their own experiences. At this point in the semester, students will have learned a lot through these texts and this week tries to make that learning more involved with the student's lives. As with the GIF project, this week also works to guide students into a critical engagement with their relationships to the internet and pop culture; by creating their own "profiles" and looking at the profiles of others, coupled with discussions of the different aims and affects of Sweatshirt and Emerson, students will be applying their knowledge gained from the texts to themselves in concrete and important ways. Students will be understanding the creation of reputation, specifically on the internet, with their assignments.

## Week Six

### Summary

This final week will be dedicated to the Final Project of the semester. This "week" may extend to the following Monday/Tuesday, depending on the positioning of the Winter Break, and will be purposefully a bit looser so as to accommodate any spill-over or lateness from previous weeks. This week will focus on bringing together the three ways authors approached identity (GG, SR, SRS) and asking students to reflect how they wish to create their final. The final classes will be split between open discussions about similarities/differences they noticed throughout the semester and the final project.

#### *11.W.3*

Write narratives to develop experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

Key Assignments	Reasoning
<p><u>Discussions:</u> The first few classes of the week (plus the probable spill-over from pervious weeks) will be dedicated to discussion about parts of the novel the students found interesting that was perhaps undiscussed so far. Students will use their dialectic journals as jumping off points for such discussion – the teacher will have a list of topics that may have escaped discussion as well (such as the potential sexuality of Nick in GG; the poetry of Sweatshirt’s father referenced in his songs; or any other un-touched upon moment). Students can ask any questions about their graphic organizers; these days will provide time for students to wrap-up and solidify anything still unpolished from the previous weeks.</p>	<p>This will provide a refresher of the Unit so far so that students feel prepared going into their final projects. This will provide space for the teacher to note anything thus far unnoted as well as provide opportunity for students to discuss something of interest to them that perhaps has gone unnoticed; this time will also be used to draw over-arching connections between the anchor and secondary texts explicitly, now that the students have read them all.</p>
<p><u>Final Project:</u> building off the previous creative assignments students will create a final project or “memoir” that captures their expressive identity. Students will build off understandings of memoir from Unit 1, couple that understanding with the multifaceted discussions of identity in Unit 2 and compose a project that will be their main project of the fall semester. This project will be a “memoir” insofar as there must be a narrative, personally reflective element within the project. These projects can be an extension of previous work, but more fully expanded. This memoir can be a series of “tweets” over time from their Fake Twitter account, detailing their lives, plotting a story; it can be a plotline of the videogame where they are a character; it can a song with</p>	<p>This project ties together all reasoning in the class and works to be a culmination of the previous unit’s work. Students will have closely read a variety of texts from a variety of media; now those techniques and understandings will be put to practice as the students craft a narrative memoir in a medium of their choosing.</p>

lyrics that capture their expression and craft a narrative; it can be a semi-fictional autobiographical narrative; it can be a personal reflective essay like those studied in Unit 1. The requirements of the project are:

- students must create a “memoir” that has a narrative structure (characters, plot, etc) and that is personally reflective, painting a portrait of how students view their identity.
- students must include culturally saturated elements: this could mean songs sampled for the music project, common videogame tropes/characters used for their videogame; GIFs or photos widely used in their videos; oft repeated quotes from one of the texts. These elements must be cliché, repetitive, or over-used.
- students must include wholly original elements, where the students either write, create, act, or perform some element of the memoir that is totally original, and derivative of their views of themselves. This, combined with the usage of the saturated elements, will mean students must create a memoir both original and partially copied.
- In any form, students must turn in at least 2-4 full pages of writing that describe their project and relate it thematically to issues and texts described in class. (if the students wrote a typical memoir, this wouldn't apply).

## Assessments

The final written portion of project will be graded on how well students demonstrated an understanding of the themes and devices discussed throughout the unit, as well their control of language and clarity of description. Students will be assessed on how well they demonstrate an understanding of the lessons in class as related to their projects. The creative portion of the text will be graded on how well the students incorporated themes and tensions from class into their own memoirs, as well as how well the students were able to use “saturated” media with personal creative media. The assignment will be looking for students to have earnestly engaged some theme or issue in any of the texts we read, taken that theme/issue and built upon it for one of the previous assignments, and demonstrated an understanding of the ways in which they can express their identities.

## Connections to Cumulative Goals

*See summary*

## Pedagogical Influence

Rather than have students write a single essay at the end, which would be against every assignment geared towards providing students an open space for their expression, the final turn of the semester will be a space where students can essentially choose what they want to do. Since such a task is daunting for any student, especially a highschool student, the final project will build directly upon the other creative assignments of the year. By having the experience already of analyzing music, designing a videogame character, looking at art and memes, writing an outline for fan fiction and creating a fake influencer profile students will have already explored a variety of ways of approaching this final. By meeting with the teacher individually while students work in class, students will be encouraged to pursue whatever avenue they found the most interesting that semester. As such, students will be more engaged with their task and will likely then be more engaged with their own creation of their “memoir.” Since the class had highlighted ways in which one’s identity is both self-created and imposed and how one’s perspective can

be both resonant and dissonant with other means of expression, the incorporation of both “copied” and “original” media will provide students a foundation for understanding how to navigate the spaces they find themselves in, especially when that space is the internet. The hope in the end is that students can use the project and skills from class to earnestly dissect their own identities and express those identities clearly (in some form) to the teacher.

## Annotated Bibliography

1. Spillers, Hortense J. "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book." *Diacritics* 17, no. 2 (1987): 65-81. doi:10.2307/464747.

This essay was one of the first influences upon my syllabus. One of the few aspects of the text I had some hold on was the nature of there being an inaccessible grammar for black people within the United States; since all African Americans were brutally inserted into this country, with specific and orchestrated efforts to dehumanize and force them to be outside the structures they lived in, there are many ways in which that enforced outside-ness of the black person in America results in a completely different way of how one fits themselves into cultural roles and societal places. There lies an impossibility of simply attempting to adhere and fit oneself into the structure of society, of simply trying to fit oneself into the same grammar one is disallowed from. For the African American there is a restriction of agency if one were to try and fit themselves, for to truly fit would be to exclude that part of themselves which was so harshly excluded in the past. Rather, there must be a way in which one uses the structures in place as guides for a communal flourishing and creative expression. This was likened to jazz music, where it is within the spaces between the structure that the music flows forth, improvisational and relational.

As such, when teaching this class there lurks in the back of my mind the idea that some of these characters, these themes, this grammar may be simply inaccessible to some students wishing to fully express themselves. By providing a wide range of texts from a wide range of perspectives, actively engaging in *both* the resonance and dissonance of one's experience with the text, the class hopes to not force students into an approach of the text that is

inherently restrictive to their agency. The emphasis on connection to one's own life, the emphasis on creative reimagining, and the emphasis on approaching various forms of media are all attempts to allow for an open space where students will not be restricted in their expression. The incorporation of "saturated" elements in the final and the constant call to one's identity as both shared and individual is another way of trying to avoid a restrictive class; in a way, the class hopes to be like a jazz song, where students are provided a structure that they then enact their own creativity within, a creativity necessarily involving relationships to others. Such a goal is rather lofty, but one hopes that keeping it in mind will allow for a more open classroom.

2. Thomas, Ebony Elizabeth. *The Dark Fantastic: Race and the Imagination from Harry Potter to the Hunger Games*. New York: NYU Press. 2019

It was in this book that I was first introduced to the concept of "digital intimacy" (p3) and the ways in which ideas discussed in class can be made relevant to the internet. Thomas begins with a discussion of the ways in which the internet both embodied this an imaginative and was also strangely resistant to certain types of imagination. Her discussion of fandoms and the inaccessibility of certain types of fantasy to her echoed (in my mind) some of what Spillers was saying about the inaccessibility of some to an American grammar. As such, similar to the response to Spillers, the course will try to provide a space where the imagination of the students is not restricted or confined. There are assignments where students are asked to impose their imagination upon the text (FanFiction, OneLiners) and embody the spaces that Thomas described as lacking in the cultural imagination. The students, in their consideration of the



limitations (GIF/Media) and possibilities (Final) of the internet will approach understandings of the digital intimacy that Thomas described.

While the class cannot create Dark Fantasy, since such a creation necessitates a common cultural phenomenon, students will nonetheless try to write their own fanfictions for *The Great Gatsby*. Specifically, after taking a look at poetry such as Denez Smith, the classroom (in contrast to Harry Potter fandom boards) will provide a welcoming space for to students to imaginatively engage with the texts.

3. Ntozake, Shange. *Sassafrass, Cypress & Indigo: A Novel*. New York: St. Martin's Griffin.  
2010

While I wish I could have taught this book to the students, this novel will nonetheless provide a good background for the kind of space the classroom wishes to create. There is the hope that if one acknowledges the limitations of certain grammars and fantasies, and consciously works to provide a space without such limitations, the classroom can become a space similar to that of Indigo's backyard with her fiddle. What this novel provides is a way of enchanting the opening of spaces of agency described in the above references. Rather than simply open up space for creativity, there is a subtle yet important distinction when one believes themselves to be opening a space for *magic*. As such, many of the assignments purposely seek for students to 'enchant' some aspects of themselves, either by expressing those aspects in fantastical fictions or in a videogame character with special abilities; throughout the course, there will be overarching pedagogy of not simply getting students to believe their identities as unique and worth writing about but encouraging them to genuinely view those unique aspects as spaces where some

‘magic’ can arise. Some of the CC ELA standards mention regarding the aesthetic beauty of the texts; the class will equally focus on encouraging students to appreciate the aesthetic beauty of their identities and experiences. By having the final be so open, the hope is that students will truly enchant their memoirs in ways that they find personally compelling. While this sounds rather intangible, there is a notable difference when a teacher is looking for students to show ingenuity and when a teacher is trying to guide students towards a demonstration of their own magicalness.

In total the pedagogy of the class will be one of an open, magical, fantastical, structured yet creative attitude towards the students. One should not view the students as stereotypes of innocent children but rather as agents with creative and magical identities. It is the goal of the course to extend that view of the students to the students’ views of themselves.