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To Love and to Serve



**DURHAM CATHOLIC
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**
Learning and Living in Faith

January 30, 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians,

St. Mary Catholic Secondary school community is pleased to announce that effective September 2020 we will be offering a new Grade 11 English curriculum, inspired by Indigenous voices and focused on contemporary literature. Our new courses are designed around the principles of research and inquiry, the development of 21st century skills and global competencies, and our shared commitment to building 'student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect' as outlined in the calls to action in Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report (2015).

These mandatory Grade 11 English courses will explore the themes, forms, and stylistic elements of a variety of literary, informational, graphic, oral, cultural and media text forms emerging from First Nations, Métis, and Inuit cultures in Canada and will reflect our Catholic Graduate Expectations and Catholic Social Teachings. They will be offered at all levels (university, college and workplace preparation) to fulfill the mandatory requirement for the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) and are recognized by all post-secondary institutions.

We are truly excited to extend this innovative programming to our school community and believe the students will find the course content to be highly relevant and engaging. Please refer to the Question and Answer resource (attached) for further information.

We look forward to sharing our successes in the implementation of this new curriculum throughout the 2020-2021 academic year.

Yours in Catholic Education,

Mrs. Susan Duane
Principal

“NBE3U/C/E” Questions and Answers

Grade 11 *English: Understanding Contemporary Indigenous Voices*

What changes are happening to Grade 11 English courses?

Beginning September 2020, our students will complete Grade 11 English: Understanding Contemporary Indigenous Voices as their mandatory Grade 11 English credit in all three levels of preparation (University/3U, College/3C, or Workplace/3E).

Why are Grade 11 English courses being changed?

The new Grade 11 English: Understanding Contemporary Indigenous Voices curriculum reflects our board’s commitment to delivering a modern, relevant curriculum that enhances opportunities for student engagement and success. Through the study of a rich variety of literary forms, students will build critical understanding of Canada’s First Nations, Métis and Inuit cultures and perspectives. These courses are consistent with our commitment to reconciliation, and provincial and federal priorities as recommended by Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

What are the benefits to students?

The new Grade 11 English courses will provide students with the opportunity to fulfill all of the requirements of our current Grade 11 English courses through the lens of contemporary literature that reflects Indigenous perspectives, culture and history. In addition, students will benefit from the purchase of new learning materials and resources in the classrooms, and an updated curriculum designed to inspire inquiry, creativity and critical thinking skills. This enhanced programming will increase students’ understanding of Indigenous education, while providing the opportunity to examine contemporary issues through a variety of literary forms.

What will be different about the new courses?

The main difference is our Grade 11 students will study the works of Canada’s award-winning Indigenous authors and playwrights. Course materials will be delivered in an innovative and modern mixed media format and will include curriculum that is essential to the development of our Catholic Graduate Expectations. Students will develop the same strands, skills and expectations that are currently taught in Grade 11 English.

How are the courses being developed?

The courses are being developed by an implementation team that includes: English teachers; a special project resource teacher in our board; our board’s Indigenous Education Advisory Circle; partners in our local universities; partners in school boards that have implemented the new course outlines; and the expertise of Elders and Indigenous knowledge keepers.

How will these English courses relate to our Catholic faith?

The courses will inspire and build on the foundation of our Catholic Social Teachings and commitment to reconciliation. Our Catholic worldview will be infused throughout the curriculum, building connections to Indigenous teachings and perspectives and reinforcing that we are all created in God's image and that we are more alike than different.

Will English teachers still teach English?

Yes, teachers will continue to teach English, but through an Indigenous lens. Teachers will choose literature by Indigenous authors and playwrights. For example:

- Right to be Cold by Sheila Watt-Cloutier;
- Indian Horse by Richard Wagamese;
- Someday by Drew Hayden Taylor;
- Strength and Struggle: Perspectives from First Nations, Inuit and Metis Peoples – An anthology of poetry and short stories;
- Seven Fallen Feathers by Tanya Talaga; or
- The Outside Circle by Patti LaBoucane-Benson.

Do these courses count as the mandatory English credit for Grade 11? Are they recognized by post-secondary institutions as such?

Yes, these courses fulfill the Grade 11 English requirement for the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) and are recognized by all post-secondary institutions in this way.

Will these courses be offer through Summer school in July 2020?

Not at this time. Grade 11 English (ENG 3U/3C/3E) will continue to be offered in summer school (July 2020) and through night school offerings in the 2020-2021 academic year to also fulfill the Grade 11 English requirement for the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD).

Is there a Grade 12 Course Option?

As outlined in the Ontario Curriculum, English: Contemporary Indigenous Voices is only offered as a Grade 11 program to fulfill the mandatory requirements for the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD), and as a pre-requisite for all Grade 12 English courses.