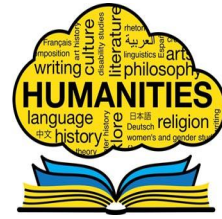


West Orange High School

Institute for the Humanities IH 9 & IH 10 Newsletter



November 2025

Honors English 9 IH

Janine Sullivan, Language Arts Teacher, IH Program Coordinator

I'm honored to be the IH program coordinator and ninth grade English Language Arts teacher. It's going to be a great year in ELA.

Our elements of the literature unit culminated in an interdisciplinary project where students wrote original short stories on the topic of change. These stories incorporated the literary elements and devices we studied throughout the marking period. In addition to creative writing, students crafted original thesis statements, identified, integrated, and analyzed text evidence, acquired vocabulary independently, and improved grammar competence. Next quarter, we begin with elements of poetry and transition to rhetoric and the rise of totalitarianism in post World War I Europe with George Orwell's *Animal Farm*. Please enjoy these short story excerpts from some of our gifted students!

After far too long I get out of bed and tip toe along the hard wood floor to the bathroom. I look into the mirror. A face with angular cheekbones and sullen black eyes half covered by stringy black hair stare back at me. My alarm continues to ring in the background but the house still feels too quiet. Too empty. Something is missing.

-December Rose

And power in the form of lightning tears through Eternity from its siblings' anger, and the world begins to scream. Fate's divinity tears through the world, and the mortals are thrown forward once more as the very planet shakes. Elsewhere, it's an earthquake. But here? In this small corner of Eternity, where two mortals hold on to each other for dear life? It is carnage.

-Hayley Smiley

A yellow cloud shape contains the following text:

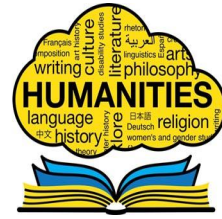
- writing
- culture
- literature
- philosophy
- art
- religion
- history
- language
- Chinese (中文)
- Japanese (日本)
- German (Deutsch)
- French (Français)
- Arabic (العربية)
- Interpretation
- Composition
- History
- Classical studies
- Gender studies
- World history
- Theory
- Core
- Women and gender studies

 Below the cloud is an open book with yellow pages and a blue cover.

When her name was called, the room went silent. Valeria walked to the center platform. She looked at her parents and Arden Vale, Concord's director. Her heart pounded so loud she could barely hear the official's voice. The five glowing symbols appeared before her, each representing a sector. Her hand was just above the devotion, but her brother's face flashed in her mind, and the word "Defiant" lingered violently in her mind. Before she could stop herself, her hand slammed down on Daunt. Gasps filled the auditorium. The black symbol glowed under her palm. The official hesitated, then forced a smile. "Valeria Moretti, Daunt."



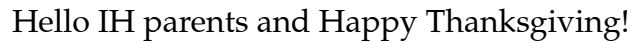
Timothy Miskimon, Social Studies Teacher



Hello, my name is Mr. Miskimon. I am the 9th grade Honors Modern World History teacher within the IH program. I am very excited to work with your children this year as we explore the Modern World and the significance of the humanities.

As we have ended the first marking period and begun the second, the students have completed their first unit of study and are almost done with the second. We began the year by looking at where the world was in the mid-1400s. After exploring the beginning of interconnectedness through trade routes, the students then learned about the beginning of major change within European society by examining the Renaissance, the Protestant Reformation, and the Scientific Revolution. The unit ended with an in-depth look at the increased interactions between Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Americas that came as a result of the Age of Exploration. Our second unit of study began with an exploration of the radical changes experienced by the European nations during the Age of Revolution with a specific focus on the Enlightenment's introduction of new ideas on government and the Industrial Revolution's complete transformation of European society. We have recently started exploring the unit's second half focus on the Age of Imperialism, a time period in which European nations utilized their strength to dominate most of the world. Our focus for this part of the unit is to explore the various effects this time period had on both European society and various societies around the world that we are looking at as examples of victims of European imperialism (India, Africa, China, Japan). Throughout the first marking period, we have primarily focused on skills development, especially on writing and document analysis skills. This focus will culminate in the students completing their first DBQ Essay assessment during the first week of December. As always, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to me via email. Thank you!

Elicia Baker, Language Arts Teacher



Harper Lee's classic novel, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, will be the focus of the upcoming unit.

Honors US History 1 IH

Wilson Du, Social Studies Teacher



Hello IH parents and students!

The year is off to a great start and it's been a pleasure getting to know everyone. The marking period has just ended and everyone is off to a strong start and I'm looking forward to the rest of the year.

We are currently nearing the end of Unit 2, which focused on how the United States gained independence and the pivotal moments in its early founding years. This unit has spanned a variety of topics from the French and Indian War to the American Revolution. We are currently learning about the Constitution and the various debates people had regarding it. At the conclusion of the unit, students will complete a Unit 2 PBA in which they will connect a topic we have covered to the theme of democracy. Their findings will be presented in the form of a digital exhibit. There will also be a unit test and a DBQ to assess students' knowledge of the entire unit. This will all be after the Thanksgiving break.

Thank you for all your support and help. Take care!

Sincerely,

Mr. Du

School Counseling News

Rachel Rosen, School Counselor/IH Committee



Greetings IH families!

Congratulations on completing the first marking period at West Orange High School. The School Counseling office is currently reviewing first marking period grades for all students. Each marking period counts for 25% of their final grade. Students should continue to work diligently throughout the rest of the year. Feel free to reach out to your child's school counselor, if you have any questions or concerns. We encourage students to reflect on their progress thus far and create short and long term goals for themselves. Parents can continue to monitor their child's academic progress through the Parent Portal account. Please contact your child's school counselor, if you have not activated the Parent Portal.

After the New Year, school counselors will be meeting with students to input course requests for the 2026-2027 school year. Teachers are responsible for submitting recommendations for academic courses and students have the option to choose elective courses for next year. As an IH sophomore, students will be considered for Honors English 10 and Honors US History 1. Additionally, students are required to enroll in a Visual/Performing art, Creative Writing, or Journalism elective designed to provide students with practical and experiential application of their learning in the core ELA and Social Studies class.

Course descriptions are accessible on the Program of Studies and we strongly recommend browsing through the course catalog to learn about the breadth of classes offered here at West Orange High School.

On behalf of the school counseling department, we wish you and your family a Happy Holiday Season!

Rachel Rosen

School Counselor

IH Committee