



COURSE SYLLABUS

The Art of Attention

Year Two · Grades 9–12 · 2026–2027

A year given to one quiet practice: attention. Students read slowly, notice what lingers, and let two great works — one each term — teach them how to attend to a book, and to the world it opens. It is built as a whole, the way a year is.

INSTRUCTOR *Kim Prieto*

CONTACT _____

CLASS MEETINGS Mondays 3:00–4:30 · Room 201

FALL TERM *opens September 2026*

SPRING TERM *opens January 2027*

CLASS WEBSITE margin.delightandsavor.com

CLASS CODE **attention2627**

GOOGLE CLASSROOM join code: **dy3hr3l2**

1 THE SHAPE OF THE YEAR

Two halves, taken together. Each part opens when its season comes.

Fall · Attention & Endurance. Six weeks of poetry that teach the ear to listen, then Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea* — the spare, luminous story of an old fisherman and the marlin he will not let go.

Spring · Attention & Imagination. Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* alongside Lewis Carroll's *Alice* — a turn from the solitary sea to a wood where nothing stays as it seems, and a look at how attention itself can be bewitched and restored.

2 WHAT YOUR STUDENT WILL READ

The books are provided in class; students bring only a notebook and a pencil.

- ☐ **THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA** — Ernest Hemingway *fall*
- ☐ **THE LIVELY ART OF WRITING** — Lucile Vaughan Payne *writing handbook, all year*
- ☐ **A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM · ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND** *spring*

- The only supplies to bring from home: a **1.5-INCH THREE-RING BINDER** with five dividers (Syllabus & Reference, Weekly Handouts, Narrations & Compositions, Follow the Thread, and The Riches) and a pencil. The **BOOK OF MOTTONS** (commonplace book) is provided; returning students continue the one they keep.

*Books are purchased for the class through the supply fee, so everyone reads the same edition. All poetry is provided in the handouts — nothing to buy. Digital work is turned in through **Google Classroom**.*

3 HOW WE WORK

One method, carried into everything.

Every week opens with a **Habit of Attention** — a line worth keeping and a small practice. We read aloud, then work three moves: **Find It** (what is there), **Follow It** (what it suggests), and **Frame It** (what it means for us). As the term goes on, students take over writing those questions themselves — first in pairs, then on their own. It is close reading as a habit, not a worksheet.

Each week students add a brief **observation entry** to their **commonplace book** — a note on what their Habit-of-Attention practice showed them. The class website prompts the entry each week and models it with a few examples. About once a month the Habit sends them outdoors and the entry becomes a **nature drawing** in the commonplace book, tied to the reading — the stars in September, the winter trees in December, the waking wood in spring.

The class website (margin.delightandsavor.com) works on any phone, tablet, or computer — students add it to their home screen so it opens like an app. It is where they read each week, sit with its art and music, and find the prompt for their weekly commonplace-book entry.

4 THE MAJOR WORK

Beyond the weekly reading, four threads run through the term.

- **RECITATION** — each student memorizes one poem and carries it all term, reciting it near the end.
- **RELATION STUDIES** — hands-on work beside the reading: writing an original poem modeled on a favorite, and a piece of maritime craft (a sailor's knots) for the novel.
- **COMPOSITION** — the Frame It essays, assessed on a single **SIX-TRAITS** rubric that grows with the student toward college-level writing.
- **THE CAPSTONE — FOLLOW THE THREAD** — one argument given four shapes (a letter in character, a spoken piece, an essay, and a small visual square), gathered over the final weeks.

5 HOMEWORK & TIME

Real, but bounded.

Reading and written work are designed to stay within **about two hours a week** outside of class — a little each day rather than a sprint at the end. Each handout separates a **Core** path (for everyone) from a **Go Further** path for students who want more.

6 DEPTH, NOT MORE — THE HONORS PATH

An **Honors option** runs through every week. It is not extra volume; it is the same material asked more deeply — a harder question, a further connection, a more demanding piece of writing. Students may step onto and off of it as the term suits them.

7 EVERY LEARNER

This course is built for grades 9–12 and for a range of readers, styles, and needs. Pacing, formats, and accommodations flex to the student. If there is something that would help your student read and write at their best, please tell me — that conversation is always welcome.

8 ASSESSMENT

What we look at, and roughly how much it counts.

CATEGORY	WEIGHT
Major Grades <i>the Final Project (the Capstone — Follow the Thread) · composition & essay assignments</i>	60%
Minor Grades <i>narration · the commonplace book · class participation · dictation · completion checks — handouts, reading, binder, spot-check quizzes, peer revisions</i>	40%

◆ A NOTE ON THE READING

These are short books, but they are not small — they ask real things of a reader, and now and then they travel to serious places. We read slowly, and we walk the harder parts together. Often the books that ask the most of us are the ones that change us most.

PLEASE SIGN & RETURN

STUDENT _____

PARENT _____

DATE _____

We have read the syllabus together and are glad to begin.



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