Burke’s English faculty devote expertise and energy to the belief that all students have vital voices and ideas. Students read fascinating and urgent texts, ranging from classic to contemporary, and hone writing and reading skills through practice and revision. Discussions, projects, and writing assignments raise new questions and present real problems, requiring writing and analytical skill sets to address possible solutions.

**Course Sequence**

English is a required course all four years of high school at Burke, with required courses in 9-11th Grades and a range of elective choices for 12th Grade. All English classes at Burke are built around vibrant discussions and riveting texts.

- **9th Grade**: Life Lessons through the Genres
- **10th Grade**: Modern World Literature
- **11th Grade**: American Literature

**Senior Electives**

- AP English Literature and Composition
- Ethics and Literature
- One-Acts Workshop
- Shakespeare
- The Existential Crisis
- West African Literature
- Supernatural Literature
- The Art of Memoir
Special Trips and Projects

- **9th Grade**: 30 Minute Plays and yearlong “Researching to a Story”
- **10th Grade**: Memoir and Memorial Design Experience
- **11th Grade**: Controversy Writing Project, considering both sides of a contemporary issue, and Environmental Justice culminating trip to West Virginia
- **9th-12th Grade**: Student-Written One Acts, performed in the spring

Sample Reading Lists

**10th Grade English (Modern World Lit.)**

- *Interpreter of Maladies* by Jhumpa Lahiri
- *1984* by George Orwell
- *Death and the King’s Horseman* by Wole Soyinka
- *Purple Hibiscus* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
- *Night* by Elie Wiesel
- Selected short stories
- Selected poetry

**12th Grade Elective (Ethics & Literature)**

- *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe
- *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley
- *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding
- *Quest for the Moral Compass* by Kenan Malik
- *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald
- *Justice* by Michael J. Sandel
- *Natural Goodness* by Philippa Foot
- *Ethics in the Real World* by Peter Singer
- *The Ethics of Identity* by Kwame Appiah

Preparation for College

Students conclude our English program with:

- analytical writing skills, including building an argument and thesis and supporting it with detailed evidence and logical, cogent reasoning
- firm foundation in grammar and punctuation, along with grammatical tools for creating sophisticated and varied sentences
- understanding of their own writing style and ability to revise their own work
- ability to speak confidently and listen purposefully in discussions
- sense of themselves as readers with particular reading passions
- growing sense of themselves as creative writers
- growing sense of their own moral identity, as derived from literature and community