**Senior Creative Writing Presentation**

All seniors give a 10-15-minute presentation to their English class towards the end of the school-year. This, along with the Senior Paper, is a culminating experience generations of WHS seniors have shared. The specifics of the assignment vary based on the focus of the course. Your version will literally embed your prior work from this course, and will figuratively follow its spirit.

I’m asking you to read aloud a polished piece of writing you’ve completed at some point during this course, and place it in the context of a larger theme or narrative in your life. You can choose a piece of writing from any point in the year, of any genre. You can read a whole work, an excerpt of a longer work, or multiple related short works. The piece of previous writing you’re incorporating should take no more than a third or your total presentation time (so if your presentation is 15 minutes, no more than 5 for the previous writing; if your presentation is 10 minutes, no more than 3:34). It could be work you’ve already “finished,” but you may choose to revise further before including it in your presentation.

Either the previous piece of writing or the context, or both, should be of great importance to you—if your subject does not matter to you, then it won’t to your audience, either. Another way of saying this is that there should be conflict, something at stake. Maybe it concerns an area of struggle, past or ongoing—maybe overcome by now, maybe something more difficult now than ever. Without such conflict, speaker and audience will wonder what the purpose is.

Maybe the context you put the piece in has to do with the *theme* of the writing, or maybe it has to do with the *process* of the writing (recall that Stephen King focuses as much on the latter in *On Writing*). If the process piece interests you: What happened to you or changed in you during or after you finished? How and why? How does that *experience* tie into the larger theme or narrative in your life?

While we’ve done a lot of informal reading aloud and discussion, this is the first formal presentation you’ll give. So in the absence of practice, here are some pointers to help you as you prepare:

* Just as in all the *writing* you’ve practiced, concrete language is usually better than abstract, specific better than general, and a scene tends to infuse more life than summary.
* A senior presentation is most memorable when the speaker *reveals* oneself, or articulates a *discovery* both recent and important—taking on a subject in depth and detail that *exceeds* what the audience knows or expects, and, ideally, what the speaker thought the speaker knew before preparing.
* Voice and Pace: correct pronunciation, audible volume, not too fast or slow, effective pauses
* Body Language: occasional eye contact, good posture, avoid distracting habits
* Avoid Fillers (like, um, ah, you know, right, okay)

(over)

Your presentation should be carefully planned and prepared. You may refer to notes, but you shouldn’t read directly from your paper or other script—except when reading the previous work. Sometimes a Smartboard slideshow can help structure and enhance a presentation with an audiovisual component; but, just as often, it distances a speaker from their audience, making the presentation feel impersonal and its subject unimportant. The same can be said of props, demonstrations, or audience interaction. Decide what you believe will work best.

Think of the best way to organize your presentation. Will you read the previous writing first, in the middle, or last? Will you analyze its specifics, or will it stand alongside the rest of your talk with little explicit connection? Or somewhere in between? Consider the importance of clarity, but also of effect. In creative writing, overexplaining what’s jolly-well shown can kill the effect. So, choose a piece of previous writing that will float, not drown, in the context you develop around it. Would you like to incorporate visuals? Music? Food?

Presentations will be scheduled **from Tuesday 3/16 to Thursday 4/2**. Presentation order will be determined by lottery.

See scoring guide for information on evaluation.