

Advanced Placement Literature and Composition Syllabus 2016-2017

Course Philosophy and Overview:

Advanced Placement (AP) Literature and Composition is a rigorous college-level course. It is designed to teach beginning, college level writing and literary analysis; and, it follows the curricular requirements described in the *AP English Course Description* at <http://apcentral.collegeboard.com>. In this college-level course, special attention will be given to basic interpretive questions:

- What do we talk about when we talk about ‘literature’?
- What is the work about, and how does it say it to make meaning?
- What qualifies as ‘literature’ in the first place and why is this important to qualify?

Course Tasks:

- Reading: As many college courses are structured, this course will rely on student discussion, input, and feedback. Students are expected to annotate their texts for meaning and analysis in order to provide direction for future discussion.
- Writing: The timed essays will be on both assigned readings as well as never-read pieces of literature and poetry to build stamina needed for success on the AP Exam. The student will strive to understand, explain, and evaluate in all essays.
- Discussion: As many college courses are structured, this course will rely on student discussion, input, and feedback. Students will be expected to guide daily class discussion with talking points, analysis, and connections made from the previous night or class’ reading.
- Assessment: The reading assignments are rigorous, and there will be frequent—weekly or biweekly—timed essays which will mimic the conditions of the actual national AP Exam given in May. Students will be assessed on multiple choice assessments, writing, readings and reading analysis.

In addition to assessment practice, class time will also be spent discussing some essential elements of writing and analysis. Throughout each unit, literary vocabulary, including literary elements, devices and techniques will be introduced. Students will be asked to record notes on this information to be used in writing and discussion throughout the year. Most importantly, students will be expected to participate in a community of learners who share ideas, listen to each other, and learn from each other. If students are committed to the work and their roles as members of the learning community, then they will be personally enriched and intellectually challenged beyond the results of the AP Exam itself.

The kinds of writings the student will be expected to perform are varied, but an emphasis will be placed on expository and evaluative essays. All critical writing on any literary text is expected to judge that piece on its effectiveness, and should include an evaluation on characters, actions, and outcome for personal reflection and understanding.

Students will be provided opportunities throughout the year to revise certain pieces of writing into final drafts. This process of revision includes teacher and peer feedback regarding choice of diction and the appropriate use of words, the ability to create varied and effective syntactic structures, a capacity for coherence and logical organization, the ability to balance generalizations with specific and illustrative details, and, overall, the ability to combine rhetorical processes into an effective whole.

The primary objective of this course is that students will become lifelong lovers and critics of literature. Through reading and writing, students get a chance to explore worlds and ideas outside of their own, enabling them to develop empathy for other genders, ethnicities, generations, nationalities, religions and cultures. Literature is intimately involved in our quest to understand humanity and the societies we create. In English 12 AP, students are given multiple opportunities to discover and confront issues and questions that exercise their minds and intellects. The course will focus on two overarching questions: Why do authors write? (Author's purpose) and what is the "art" in their writing? (Author's craft).

Adapted from <http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/home>

Course Goals

1. Critically read literature from a variety of genres and time periods representing classic American and British literature
2. Study works that require careful, deliberate reading leading to individual student analysis
3. Demonstrate college-level skill in writing formal literary analysis comprised of analytical argumentative, expository, and interpretive essays
4. Incorporate effective elements of composition – vocabulary, variety of sentence structures, organization, rhetorical devices, standard written English, etc.—into student writing
 1. Recognize a variety of figurative language, imagery, and literary devices, especially in poetry, but in all works and types of fiction and nonfiction
 2. Compare and contrast aspects of several literary works such as paired poems, characters, themes, etc.
 3. Apply critical reading, writing, and thinking skills to a work of literature and employ literary terminology and devices properly in written analysis
 4. Write effectively under time constraints to prepare for AP exams and college course requirements
 5. Comfortably discuss and probe ideas and opinions in both small and large group settings, including leading class or small group discussion
 6. Maintain a high level of preparation for class; respect the literature by spending the necessary time on rereading and assessment.
 7. Students will prepare for the Advanced Placement Exam in English Literature and Composition and will strive to earn at least a 4 or 5 on the exam.

Rubric for AP Essays

A Description of the Scoring Guidelines according to AP Central

9-8 These essays offer a persuasive analysis of how the author uses literary techniques to achieve his/her purposes. The essays demonstrate a deep understanding of a few techniques rather than a superficial understanding of many techniques. The essay needs to restate the question being posed in the prompt, it needs to connect the elements of literature to literary/poetic/dramatic technique to the author's purpose or the "meaning of the work." While the essay may not be error-free, the student's perceptive analysis is apparent in writing that is clear, precise, and effectively organized.

7-6 These essays offer a reasonable analysis of how the author uses literary techniques to achieve his/her purposes. The writer provides a sustained, competent reading with attention to literary techniques, but these insights are slightly less perceptive than the 9-8 essay. The adherence to the thesis is not as controlled, but maintained nonetheless.

5-6 These respond to the prompt with a plausible reading of the story, but lack textual evidence to support the analysis, or, misstate the technique used to create meaning. Essays that score a 5 or a 6 might also correctly name the technique but inaccurately connect it to an author's purpose.

3-4 A less than thorough understanding is apparent. A clear effort is present, even though it may be totally inaccurate. A thesis is not evident. The question is not answered, but a topic of the student's invention is addressed.

1-2 These essays compound the weakness from the 3-4 range. They are inept and demonstrate a lack of comprehension of author's purpose and literary techniques.

0 These essays do not respond to the prompt.

Reading and Writing Schedule

10 Weeks (September 8- November 10)

Introduction to the course

This week will focus on introducing students to the format and expectations of the class, including but not limited to: bell ringer multiple choice questions, explication strategies (SOAPS, SOLIDD, Five S's, TIPCASTT), 3 x 3, class discussion, literary terminology, reading expectations, benchmark schedule and AP Exam format.

Approximate number of weeks: 1

Strategies for examining poetry and reading poetry: The Basics (Tone, Speaker, Language, Imagery Symbolism, Style and Structure), TIPCASTT and Five S's

In-class reading aloud of poetry with discussion of literary devices and elements listed above. Individual photocopies of poems will be supplied for reading and discussion. To help guide students as they read and explicate poems, the TIPCASTT, FIT and Five S's approaches will be implemented.

Students will record initial questions, impressions, and responses to the poems in a journal format to be used to develop an interpretation paper on one poem from our class packet. The interpretation should discuss the poem's structure, style, or theme based on its textual details. This assignment, while primarily drawing upon skills of interpretation, engages students in writing for understanding (note-taking) and writing for analytical explanation.

Poetry selections written by (not an all-encompassing list): Robert Frost, Richard Middleton, Ben Jonson, Adrienne Rich, T.S. Eliot, John Donne, Sharon Olds, Eavan Boland, Marilyn Nelson, Karl Shapiro, William Blake, Emily Dickinson, A.E. Housman, Mary Oliver, Marge Piercy, Richard Wilbur, Phillip Larkin, Dylan Thomas John Crowe Ransom, Langston Hughes, Kate Chopin, James Joyce

***Note: The above authors will be included throughout the year both during a poetry unit, and throughout the reading of novels and plays. Poems, articles, essays and short stories will be included based on the direction of the readings and discussion.

Approximate number of weeks: 2

Unit Theme: Character in Search of Identity

A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, James Joyce

This unit focuses on Joyce's literary characteristics. Emphasis will be placed on the structure of the novel: the five chapter format and the cyclical pattern of the chapter endings. The autobiographical elements and allusions to the Dedalus myth will be traced throughout the novel. Discussion will focus on the protagonist's search for identity and how religious, societal, familial and historical influences help Dedalus develop his own identity. Students should take particular care to trace the steps of Dedalus's journey from innocence to experience.

Approximate number of weeks: 3

The Awakening, Kate Chopin

Kate Chopin reveals the theme of this novel through the use of a variety of literary techniques, most notably, symbolism, figurative language, and imagery. Discussion will focus on how literary techniques contribute to the meaning of the novel as a whole, and how the protagonist is developed through individual independence and self-expression. By applying feminist theory to this novel, we will explore the types of women presented in the novel, their purpose, and how their presence is pertinent to the protagonist's search for identity. Chopin's social criticism will be explored in regard to nineteenth-century social attitudes toward women, children and family.

Approximate number of weeks: 2

20 Weeks (November 14- January 27)

Unit Theme: The Tragic Figure in Literature

Death of a Salesman, Arthur Miller

In his essay entitled “Tragedy and the Common Man,” Arthur Miller asserts “that the common man is an apt subject for tragedy in its highest sense as kings were.” The basic characteristics of the tragic figure will be reviewed as outlined by Aristotle in *The Poetics*. Aristotle says that the tragic figure is one of some renown who, through some error or frailty, suffers a fall. We will apply these criteria to our reading while also discussing how the language, symbolism, themes, and the construction of the play contribute to the effectiveness and overall meaning of the play.

Approximate number of weeks: 3

King Lear, William Shakespeare

Having explored a tragic hero in Death of a Salesman, students will make connections between Lear and Miller’s protagonist, Willy Loman, including familial ties, the tragic father figure, and their semi-public downfall. The study of the play will involve students in a close examination of theme, characterization, and figurative language. Written assignments will range from journal response to essays based on AP prompts. A formal analysis will compare and contrast the tragic fate of both protagonists supported by examples of imagery and dramatic irony.

Approximate number of weeks: 4

Unit Theme: Truth: Illusion and Reality

1984, George Orwell

Our reading of Orwell’s 1984 will focus on how the narrative choices made by Orwell, the dystopian setting of the novel, and the complex qualms about society that Orwell presents help to create meaning for the novel. Class discussion and writing will focus on the dissolution of language, innate vs. learned behavior, and objective reality which ultimately drive the action. Mood, point of view, tone, syntax, setting, diction, characterization and imagery will be examined.

Approximate number of weeks: 5

30 Weeks (January 30- April 7)

Unit Theme: Truth: Illusion and Reality (contd.)

1984, George Orwell

Approximate number of weeks: 2 (in this marking period)

Unit Theme: Coming of Age

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain

Through one of the most iconic pieces of literature ever written, students will be asked to do everything from analyze Twain's use of rhetorical devices to explore the book's continued relevance. Twain presents numerous literary themes that have universal ramifications, particularly the conflict between the individual and society. Readings will look at the concept of satire and how it can be an effective tool in bringing human behaviors to light and/or precipitating change in human behavior. Twain's use of literary devices such as, symbolism, metaphor, foreshadowing, irony, allusion, imagery, tone, character, diction, syntax will be examined in context of the whole novel.

Approximate number of weeks: 4

Test Preparation

As the exam approaches, students will create a list of all the novels and plays that they have intensely read and studied in an academic manner since the 9th grade by preparing summaries, highlighting key quotes, characters, themes, narrative points of view and settings. They will perform timed writings based on the three types of essay questions on the exam and will complete multiple choice practice exams. The answers will be reviewed in class, with corrective feedback focused on improving scores and speed to make them efficient test takers through analysis of high, middle, and low scoring responses based on AP's rubric.

Approximate number of weeks: 3

40 Weeks (April 10- June 23)

TBD by class.

***I reserve the right to make changes to this syllabus regarding dates and works chosen. These changes will not be made without feedback from students in which a consensus decision is made between class and teacher. Because of the thirty-nine minute period schedule and AP Literature and Composition running for a full year, time frames are flexible.