**AP English Literature and Composition**

**Unit Calendar**

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Please be advised that this calendar is *approximate* and *flexible.* My intention is to teach these units twice, each over the course of a 20 week semester. The text selections will be different for each semester. This method will allow for a greater exposure to the literature expected to be on the exam, and an opportunity for “review” during second semester. The units will be as follows:

*Introductory Mini-Unit*

*Elements of Poetry: Theme, Imagery, Diction, Tone, Style and Rhythm*

**Reading**:

To be announced

**Process**:

Serving as an introduction to analysis of poetry, this unit is based around one poem. Handouts and lecture on imagery, diction, tone, and style will accompany a copy of the poem itself. A stanza-by-stanza explication follows, detailing the elements of imagery, diction, tone, style, and rhythm in the poem. (ONE DAY)

The second day of class focuses on discussion of themes in the poem. Next, students are assigned groups according to each element treated in the lesson (style, diction and rhythm are combined into one category). They do pre-writing activities, searching for examples of the respective elements in the poem and brainstorming to write a three-page analysis of the poem. (ONE DAY)

**Assessment**:

Students write drafts individually for homework after day two. On day three, they do peer revision in groups, composing final drafts, and do a read-around with each group sharing what they consider to be the best paper in the group. (ONE DAY)

*Introductory Mini-Unit*

*Elements of Fiction: Narrator/Point of View, Setting, Character, Plot/Narrative Structure, Theme*

**Readings:**

To be announced

**Process:**

One class session is spent on each selection, a brief introduction, followed by a reading, followed by close textual analysis focusing on structural and thematic similarities and differences. The concept of epiphany is introduced and illustrated in each story. Study questions are assigned for each selection. (TWO DAYS)

**Assessment**:

Short paper focusing upon narrative structure and themes.

*Unit: An Introduction to Drama: the Greeks*

**Readings:**

To be announced. Two Greek dramas are read by the class, one selection will be read in class, while the other will be read at home. A third play will likely be introduced to connect the elements of Greek comedy and tragedy and related social issues.

**Process**:

A lecture on the tradition of the drama festivals and Aristotle’s poetics and definition of tragedy, emphasizing the elements of tragedy, is used as an introduction. In reading the play, special attention is focused on the issues of the tragic flaw, hubris, the recognition, and the nature of the tragic hero. Special attention is focused on sex/gender roles and expectations in relationship to the characters of the given plays. (ONE WEEK)

**Assessment:**

A test is given at the end of the unit, with an objective component on Aristotle’s definition of and elements of tragedy, and an essay component, with one essay question on each play read. Additionally, students complete their first timed AP practice essay.

*Unit: The American Novel*

**Readings:**

Two works are read in this unit, one in class and one at home. Discussion focuses on social, race, and gender roles in both novels.

**Process:**

An introductory lecture focuses on the social/historical context of the novels and the writers’ personal histories and backgrounds. The in-class novel is assigned in digestible chunks and key passages from both are isolated and explored in-depth in class on a daily basis.

Mini-lessons are based on the use of dialect; the use of folk-tales and oral tradition in literature; the choral role of the community; the use of plant/nature imagery in literature; and the novel as a quest or search motif.

Somewhere in the course of this unit the class will get involved in a discussion about gender and race issues. At this point, one class period is devoted to an in-depth discussion about these issues in contemporary American life and throughout our history. A reflective essay is assigned based on our discussion and the individual’s life experiences. (TWO WEEKS)

**Assessment**:

An in-class essay test is given, structured to be similar to the essay portion of the AP test; time is limited (90 minutes) and two prompts are given—one “free response” type question that applies to the novel, and one prose analysis question with an excerpt drawn from the novel.

*Unit: Romantic Sensibility and Romantic Poetry*

In addition to aesthetic elements of poetry and poetic techniques and figures of speech, this unit serves to connect art and politics. An introductory lecture lays out the influence of the Enlightenment on the Romantics as well as the influence on the Transcendentalist writers of America.

**Readings:**

To be announced

**Process**:

Some of these poems are read and explicated in class, some—especially the longer ones—are assigned for homework and then discussed in class. Not all of the readings are covered; different combinations and permutations are used as time permits. We begin with Blake to set up the Romantic sensibility. The lessons focus on establishing theme, tone, imagery, diction and style as analytical tools and identifying figures of speech used in the poetry. (ONE WEEK)

**Assessment:**

Students select one of the Romantic poets and research the biography of the writer in the library or on the Internet. This material is then put into an annotated bibliography. Students write an analysis of one longer work from the poet they have selected.

*Unit Shakespeare’s Comedies and Romances*

**Readings**:

To be announced. One play will be read in class, another will be assigned to read at home. Study questions are assigned for both plays as homework.

**Process**:

New elements of literature are introduced through the reading; special attention is paid to metaphor, simile, categorizing imagery (animal, nature, visual, auditory, tactile, etc.), metonymy and synecdoche. There is a brief introductory mini-lecture on comedy from the Greeks to the present and on Shakespearean comedy specifically. Students and instructor read one play aloud in class, with the instructor explicating and commenting. The other play is read by students at home. (ONE WEEK)

**Assessment:**

Compare/contrast essay focusing on the subject of lovers and love.

*Unit: Shakespearean Tragedy*

**Readings:**

To be announced

**Process:**

The central themes of the play will be explored at length, in addition to lengthy character analysis. Furthermore, students will also be introduced to literary criticism, and be expected to read an additional piece of text on the primary work itself. This is intended to provide a model for extended textual analysis.

Students work on graphic organizers charting characters, plot, setting, and imagery throughout the play. (TWO WEEKS)

**Assessment:**

The essay assignment is to do a character analysis, using the imagery they have noted to establish a thesis. (3-5 pp.)

A test on the play follows the format of the novel test for the previous American Novel unit: two essays are assigned, one based on a “free response” prompt and one based on a selection from the play. (TOTAL: TWO WEEKS)

*Unit: Victorian Verse*

**Readings:**

To be announced

**Process:**

Not all of the poems are covered; different titles may be used at different times to establish thematic continuities. Victorian themes are established through lecture and discussion: the reluctant acceptance of change and transformation from a pastoral to a modern world; the challenge to established values that the Victorian era embodied; the longing for tradition and hearkening to the past by the Victorians. Shorter poems are read and explicated in class, longer poems are assigned as homework and discussed and explicated in class. Form in terms of meter and different verse forms are introduced. Additional figures of speech and poetic technique are added to our vocabulary. (ONE WEEK)

**Assessment:**

Students are assigned to research the historical referents of any one of the poems studied. This research is incorporated into a critical paper that takes an historical approach to the work, situating it in the time it was composed and orienting the content of the poem to the historical context in which it is set. (3-5 pp.). Occasional tests and in-class essays are assigned. An AP timed writing is assigned.

*Unit: Bridging the Past and the Present*

**Readings:**

To be announced

**Process:** Two texts will be selected, one classic and one contemporary. Minor themes from the classic text will be explored at length in the contemporary text, and students will discuss and explore the relevance of these themes in a modern context. (TWO WEEKS)

**Assessment:**

Essay exam

*Unit VIII: Modernism, Postmodernism, and the Death of Tragedy*

**Readings**:

To be announced.

This unit will consist of a combination of short and long prose pieces, drama, and poetry. The poems and play are read in detail in class—though not entirely. Longer pieces will be read at home; each novel has a writing assignment tying it into the works read in class. Additionally, excerpts from George Steiner’s critical work, The Death of Tragedy, are read to shed light on our reading and discussion.

**Process:**

This unit attempts to tie together the semester’s work and to establish a postmodern critical orientation for the students. All the works studied de-center readers’ expectations, and this is a significant departure from Shakespeare and the other authors studied throughout the year. The modernist and post-modernist search for coherence does not always result in security and stability in the text or in the reader; this is a simple fact that students seem to have difficulty with. Through reading Steiner’s commentary and connecting it with the entirety of our coursework, students are asked to deal with the uncertainty and lack of heroism that characterizes twentieth century literature. (THREE WEEKS)

**Assessment:**

The final paper is a synthetic essay, one that attempts to establish the continuities and discontinuities among the works studied. Students are required to select four works from the readings throughout the year, each from different units, and to establish a thematic connection among these works. In addition, an in-class essay exam using the AP format is given.