**­AP English Literature and Composition**



**Course Outline and Syllabus**

*“While thought exists, words are alive and literature becomes an escape, not from,*

*but into living.” Cyril Connolly*

This syllabus is designed for a ninety-minute block schedule. The course is taught over a forty-week period, and is intended to function as a rigorous college-level course.  The reading and writing is frequent and challenging, and will require a great deal of independent thinking.  If you are committed to the work as well as to listening and learning from each other, this class will ultimately become one in which we are all teachers and students.  Each member of the class will have a voice.  We will learn from each other and share our thoughts, ideas, and observations with each other.    I am not the expert of any of these texts – we will understand each of them through shared discussion.  I am just as interested in your interpretations as you are in mine.  While the ultimate goal of the class is to pass the exam with a 3, 4, or 5; if you actively engage yourself in this class and complete all of the work, you will have taken giant steps in preparing yourself for college.

**Course Description**

Taught as an introductory college-level survey of literature, this course uses literary readings across various genres and time periods to provide students with a solid basis for university-level literary studies. The approach is based around New Critical close-reading and teacher-directed discussion. Extensive reading of critical/analytical texts provides students with modeling for their own essay writing. Assessment is based on tests, short 3-5 page papers, and in-class, timed, AP style on-demand essays.

This course is designed to teach beginning-college writing through the fundamentals of rhetorical theory and follows the curricular requirements described in the AP English Course Description. We will talk essentially every day about some vital aspect of writing, including invention and the rhetorical appeals (ethos, pathos, logos), disposition or structure, and style (diction, syntax, figurative language, mechanics). This class will function as a workshop, not a rhetoric manual — a place where various kinds of writing will be explored and honed. The kinds of writings in this course are varied but include writing to understand, writing to explain, and writing to evaluate. All critical writing asks to evaluate the effectiveness of a literary piece, but to be an effective evaluator, one must understand and explain. The essence of scholarship is the combination of these three approaches to writing. In order for this class to function as a true workshop, therefore, students will write a good deal, and will revise certain pieces of writing into polished final drafts. In writing these drafts and revisions, students will be exposed to the process of choosing proper diction and the appropriate use of words, creating varied and effective syntactic structures, developing capacity for coherence and logical organization, perfecting your ability to combine rhetorical processes into an effective whole.

**Course Objectives**

**By the end of this course students should be a mastery level for the following:**

1. The student will analyze mature works of literary merit, applying the complexity of language and structure to understand meaning (Reading Standards 1.0, 2.0).
2. The student will present and defend orally and in writing the interpretation of work’s meaning (Writing Standards 1.0, 2.0; Written and Oral English Language Convention Standard 1.0; Listening and Speaking Standard 1.0).
3. The student will write formal and informal essays to demonstrate the ability to express ideas and issues in clear, effective prose (Writing Standard 1.0, 2.0).
4. The student will complete timed writings and multiple-choice exercises that test the student’s comprehension of a literary passage or ability to respond to a literary question to prepare for Advanced Placement examination and the rigors of higher education (Reading Standards 1.0, 2.0; Writing Standards 1.0, 2.0).

**Written responses**

Students are provided with rubrics for each piece as it is assigned. In-class essays are graded using the AP nine-point scale; in all cases, writing should be well organized and insightful with rich elaboration in support of the student’s point of view. Word choice should be specific and reflect a growing ability to control language in a scholarly manner.  
Rubrics specific to the following essays are provided at the time of assignment. Students will be given opportunities for instructor feedback both in and out of class. In addition, students will also participate in writing workshops, where they will read, evaluate, and critique the merit of their classmate’s work. These critiques, both formal and informal, are intended to provide insight to the students both about the quality of their analysis as well as the strength of their writing mechanics. Students will be granted opportunities for writing resubmissions if they chose to revise previous assignments.

Each student will write several short critical papers, explicating poetry and drama, and performing a close reading of novels, including one that is research-based. Each paper will use specific and well-chosen evidence to articulate an argument about poems, drama, and fiction. These critical essays are based on close textual analysis of structure, style (figurative language, imagery, symbolism, tone), and social/ historical values. These critical papers must be typed, double spaced, and proofread (especially spell-checked) and will be approximately two-three double-spaced pages, with the research-based paper around five-six pages. I will often require a rough draft of papers. Writing will frequently be workshopped during class. As a result of group workshopping, that same group will determine criteria for assessing effective critical writing and will develop nine-point holistic rubrics to identify the bases of evaluation.

Students will also be asked to write creative assignments — poems, dramas, and short stories — that take on the rhetorical forms and styles of the literature studied in class. I will not grade these assignments on aesthetic criteria; rather, I will be looking for the student’s knowledge and application of appropriate structures and styles as outlined within the assignment’s parameters (i.e., the student’s capacity to understand and apply the techniques of art used in the literature we’re studying. These techniques include structure, theme, and style (diction, syntax, figurative language, symbolism, and tone). Although we may begin these assignments in class, I will expect them to be typed and proofread (especially spell-checked) before being handed in to me. Often, these too will be workshopped during class. As a result of group workshopping, that same group will determine criteria for assessing effective creative writing and will develop a six-point trait rubric (a different trait per group) to identify the bases for evaluation.

We will on occasion have an in-class essay exams that ask to synthesize student understanding of the texts studied in class. Students will be asked to free-write their responses to the reading on a regular basis. In-class writings will primarily be AP-based examinations, though there will also be quick-response, in-class writings as a basis for discussion.

**Grade Evaluation**

Assessment is completed by the instructor with the help of peer review and self reflection. The grading scale for this course is as follows:

A 90-100 Classwork 50%

B 80-89 Tests / Quizzes 10%

C 67-79 Essays / Projects 20%

F 0-66 Participation 10%

Notebook / Organization / Effort 10%

All assignments and tests will be given points based upon the type of work. Essays will be graded against an AP style rubric, and entered as rubric scores (rather than point values) into overall grades. Assignments will be weighted according to designated point values as prescribed by specifics outlined for writings, quizzes, tests, and other work. Students will have the opportunity to select one essay from each semester to eliminate from their overall grade.

**Course Readings and Timeline**

The most important requirement for this course is that students read every assignment— read it with care and on time. Students unused to literature courses will need to plan time in their schedule for more reading than most courses require. Poetry, though usually not long, is dense and complicated and should always be read at least twice. Novels in particular require planning.

Please be advised that this calendar is *approximate* and *flexible.* You will be notified at least two weeks in advance of when a new unit begins of what readings should be completed when. Be aware that a great portion of the readings for this class are done OUTSIDE the classroom. This information is provided to you so that you might budget your time accordingly and be prepared for class in a timely fashion. The units will be as follows:

*Unit 1: Introductory Mini-Unit*

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

**Reading**:

“Lady of Shallot”, by Lord Alfred Tennyson

**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.

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. (THREE DAYS)

**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)

*Unit 2: Introductory Mini-Unit*

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

**Readings:**

“A&P”, by John Updike; various selections from *Dubliners,* by James Joyce

**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. (THREE DAYS)

**Assessment**:

Short paper focusing upon the artistic themes and motifs of the work(s) being analyzed

*Unit 3: An Introduction to Drama: the Greeks*

**Readings:**

*Lysistrata* and *Orestia.* One selection will be read in class, while the other will be read at home.

**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. (TWO WEEKS)

**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 4: The American Novel*

**Readings:**

Two works are read in this unit; *Beloved* by Toni Morrison will be read in class, and *The Adventures of Huck Finn*, by Mark Twain will be read 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 5: 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:**

Selections by the following authors: William Blake, William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Walt Whitman, Henry David Thoreau, Ralph Waldo Emerson.

**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 6: Shakespeare’s Comedies and Romances*

**Readings**:

*The Tempest* and *Midsummer Night’s Dream*, by William Shakespeare. 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 7: Shakespearean Tragedy*

**Readings:**

*King* *Lear* and *MacBeth*, by William Shakespeare

**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 8: Victorian Verse*

**Readings:**

Selections by the following authors: Gerald Mnely Hopkins, Lord Alfred Tennyson, Robert Browning, Matthew Arnold, Thmas Hardy, Emily Dickinson, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Herman Melville, Edgar Allen Poe, Nathaniel Hawthorne

**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 9: Bridging the Past and the Present*

**Readings:**

*Hamlet*, William Shakespeare; *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern,* by Tom Stoppard

**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 10: Modernism, Postmodernism, and the Death of Tragedy*

**Readings**:

T.S. Eliot’s poem, “The Wasteland,” along with Wilfred Owen’s war poetry, Samuel Beckett’s play, *Waiting for Godot*, and a prose selection of the student’s choice, either *The Stranger*, by Albert Camus, *The Crying of Lot 49*, by Thomas Pynchon, or *Catcher in the Rye*, by JD Salinger, are the major works read in this unit. The poems and play are read in detail in class—though not entirely. The novel is 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.

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.

**Year Calendar and Due Dates**

Due to the brevity of Friday’s schedule, typically students will take quizzes and / or engage in writing circles. These days are marked in bold on the syllabus calendar. With whatever time is left in class, students will also have time to prepare their classroom notebook for submission.

Note! All readings are expected to be done all or in part by the first day of each new unit. If more than one day is devoted to a text, it is expected that the first portion of the reading which is equivalent to the amount of days for the unit will be completed by the first day of the unit (i.e. if there are two days for a reading, the first half of the reading will be completed on the first day, the second half on the second day).

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| **DATE** | **READING / TEXT** | **ACTIVITY (IES)** | **SPECIAL NOTES** |
| 8/12, 8/16 | N/A | * Opening Policies and Procedures | * Students will have this week to gather needed materials and prepare for the first unit. |
| 8/13-8/14 | N/A | * ArTES Art Fest 2014 |
| 8/18-8/25 | “Lady of Shallot” | * Reading discussion groups established for fall semester * Discussion/lecture on imagery, diction, tone, rhythm and style * Class/group discussion of theme – courtly love, medieval romance, gender roles, captivity and freedom, etc * Short answer essay-style writing analysis of poetic elements |
| 8/27-9/10 | “The A&P”  “Araby”  “The Dead” (individually) | * Textual analysis focusing on structure, theme, and epiphany * Short paper assigned focusing on theme and structure | * First in-class essay will be on 8/27. There will be 40 minutes to finish this essay. * **8/29-9/1 - Labor Day weekend** * Students are expected to have read “The Dead” and one other story from *Dubliners* on their own. This will be necessary for the writing assignment. * Fiction essay due 9/19 |
| 9/12-10/10 | *Lysistrata* (in class)  *Orestia* (individually) | * Class discussion / lecture on tradition of Greek drama * Exploration of elements of tragedy * Analysis of tragic flaw and nature of tragic hero * Analysis of sex / gender roles and expectations of roles in a relationship | * AP style exam on 10/10. Essay questions will be included so students may familiarize themselves with the format of the exam. |
| 10/13-17 | CATCH UP WEEK, DEPENDENT ON WHEN GRADES ARE TO BE SUBMITTED | | * **10/10 – end of Term A** * All final work to be included in 10 weeks grades MUST be submitted by 10/6 if it is to be included. |
| 10/20-11/12 | *Beloved* (in class)  *Adventures of Huck Finn* (individual) | * Class discussion / lecture on historical and social context * Exploration of dialect, oral tradition, and use of folk tales * Class discussion on contemporary social issues * In class, AP style essay assigned (60 minutes) | * **11/11 - Veteran’s Day holiday** * American Novel in class essay |
| 11/17-12/12 | Selections from the following poets:   * William Blake * William Wordsworth * Samuel Taylor Coleridge * Percy Bysshe Shelley * Walt Whitman * Henry David Thoreau * Ralph Waldo Emerson | * Class discussion / lecture on theme, tone, imagery, diction, and style * Students will prepare a proposal of a school that adheres to the tenets of the Romantic / Transcendentalist writers | * **11/24-28 – Thanksgiving Break! ☺** * Annotated bibliography will be due AFTER WINTER BREAK on 1/12. Bibliography will follow MLA format. |
| 12/17-18 | N/A | * Final exam schedule. Exam will be on curriculum from ENTIRE semester, using an AP style format. * Exam date TBA | |
| **WINTER BREAK!!**  **12/22 – 1/12** | | | |
| 1/12-2/2 | *The Tempest*  *Midsummer Night’s Dream* (individually) | * Class discussion / lecture on metaphor, simile, imagery, metonymy, and synecdoche. Connections will be made between Greek and Shakespearean comedy * Study questions to be answered for homework * Take home compare/contrast essay discussing concept of lovers and nature | * **1/19 – MLK Day** * Essay due on 2/6 |
| 2/4 - 3/2 | *King Lear*  “The Avoidance of Love” (individually) | * Class discussions regarding nature of evil in/sanity, familial relationships, and power/authority * Introduction to literary criticism and exploration of textual analysis * Graphic organizers focusing on character and plot structure, and imagery * Contrast character analysis between 2 of the major characters in the play, paying particular attention to use of imagery in the play. * In-class lit prose analysis questions will be assigned at the close of the unit. | * **2/16 – President’s Day** * AP style exam on 3/2 |
| 3/4-3/13 | Selections from the following writers:   * Gerald Manley Hopkins * Lord Alfred Tennyson * Robert Browning * Matthew Arnold * Thomas Hardy * Emily Dickinson * Henry Wadsworth Longfellow * Herman Melville * Edgar Allan Poe * Nathaniel Hawthorne | * Class discussion / lecture on connections between the Romantics and the Victorians. * Discussion of influences of modernism on human psyche * Take-home critical essay assigned exploring historical context and influences of a given work or writer | * Essay due 3/20 |
| 3/16-3/20 | CATCH UP WEEK, DEPENDENT ON WHEN GRADES ARE TO BE SUBMITTED | | * **3/20 - Term C ends** |
| 3/23-4/27 | *Hamlet* (in class)  *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* (individually) | * Class discussion / consideration of minor themes in *Hamlet,* and how they are portrayed in *R/G.* * Discussion / lecture on justice vs. revenge and character analysis of Hamlet’s function * Short answer essay responses will be assigned to explore these topics | * **3/30-4/3 – Spring Break** * In class essay exam on 4/27 |
| 4/29-5/20 | Selections from the following writers:   * TS Eliot * Wilfred Owen * Samuel Beckett * Albert Camus * Thomas Pynchon * JD Salinger | * Class discussion / lecture regarding historical context and postmodern orientation in modern era * Exploration of modern hero / antihero | * **5/25 – Memorial Holiday** * Final synthesis essay due 5/27 * AP exams week of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| 6/1-2 | N/A | * Final exam schedule. Exam will be on curriculum from ENTIRE semester, using an AP style format. * Exam date TBA | |