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AP English Language and Composition Course Syllabus

Course Overview

AP English Language and Composition is a yearlong, college level course designed to engage students in becoming skilled readers of prose written in a variety of periods, disciplines, and rhetorical contexts, and in becoming skilled writers who compose for a variety of purposes. This course will “emphasize the expository, analytical, and argumentative writing that forms the basis of academic and professional communication, as well as the personal and reflective writing that fosters the development of writing in any context.” (The College Board, *AP English Course Description, May 2007, May 2008, p. 6*). Through writing, reading, speaking, viewing, and listening, we will study the interactions among the author’s purpose, the audience’s expectations, the subjects being discussed, and the context in which these interactions take place, as well as the conventions and resources of language that contribute to a message’s effectiveness. This course is organized into thematic units pairing longer works of fiction and non-fiction with shorter readings included in the course’s main text. For each unit of study, we will read closely a number of texts of different varieties, taking frequent quizzes on comprehension. We will complete independent vocabulary work and participate in regular in- and out-of-class writing and discussion activities. The papers you write will include literary, rhetorical, and visual text analysis; argumentative writing; research synthesis; and a variety of expository writing geared toward responding to readings, quotes, questions, cartoons, film, etc. Major writing assignments will ask you to conduct and synthesize research, develop arguments, revise for sophisticated syntax, and demonstrate skill with various rhetorical techniques including controlling tone, establishing and maintaining voice, and achieving appropriate emphasis through diction and sentence structure.

Upon completing the AP English Language and Composition course, you should be able to:

- analyze and interpret samples of good writing, identifying and explaining an author’s use of rhetorical strategies and techniques;
- apply effective strategies and techniques in your own writing;
- create and sustain arguments based on readings, research, and/or personal experiences;
- produce expository, analytical, and argumentative compositions that introduce a complex central idea and develop it with appropriate evidence drawn from primary and/or secondary sources, cogent explanations, and clear transitions;
- demonstrate understanding and mastery of standard written English as well as stylistic maturity in your own writing;
- demonstrate understanding of the conventions of citing primary and secondary sources;
- move effectively through the stages of the writing process, with careful attention to inquiry and research, drafting, revising, editing, and review;
- write thoughtfully about your own process of composition;
- revise a work to make it suitable for a different audience;
- analyze image as text; and
- evaluate and incorporate reference documents into researched papers.

*Advanced Placement Course Description,
College Board*

Grading

As AP English Language and Composition is modeled on the college academic experience, grading will reflect those practices most in use at the college level. These will include semester final exams (modeled after the AP exam), unit major writing assessments, outside reading assignments, vocabulary assignments/quizzes, reading comprehension quizzes, and occasional group assignments.

- Informal essays will be mostly written in class and graded as rough drafts, whereas formal essays will be written at home and graded as final drafts. Essays constitute 30% of the student's grade.
- Tests will constitute 25% of the grade and will be focusing on multiple choice questions that are based on rhetorical devices and their function on given passages.
- Group/Individual Projects will constitute 20% of the grade and will be ongoing throughout the year.
- The last 25% will be for daily tasks such as journal entries, mental drills, vocabulary concepts, mini-rhetorical lessons, and class participation.

Absences and Late Work

When you are absent, it is **your** responsibility to check for make up work, obtain and turn in the assignments you missed. You will only have **1 day** to turn in make-up work or it will receive a Zero. Late assignments will **automatically be given 1 grade lower**. An assignment is late **one minute** after the assignment is collected. If you do not have a hard copy of your assignment, it is considered late. **Please be aware of due dates.**

Behavioral Expectations

Please refer to the Class Procedures Handout.

Ongoing/Year Long Assignments

Class Participation — The study of rhetoric and argument is a give-and-take enterprise. Students will come to class prepared each day. This means the **student will: have read** and **completed** any required annotation/précis of all assigned readings; bring books and writing materials *every day*; join the conversation both when prompted and voluntarily.

Vocabulary Study — Students will complete weekly, independent study of vocabulary and will learn vocabulary associated with rhetorical study as well as vocabulary likely to be encountered on the SAT/ACT. Students also will be periodically quizzed on the new vocabulary.

Quick Writes — Students will complete weekly in-class quick writes demonstrating an increasing ability to identify/analyze an author's use of diction, detail, figurative language, imagery, syntax, and tone.

AP Exam Practice Tests — Students will review and practice multiple choice and free response questions from previous AP Language and Composition exams and various study guides such as CliffsAP. They will learn to understand and use the AP rubric for evaluating written expression, and will evaluate their own as well as their classmates' responses to essay prompts. These writing assignments are in addition to the major writing assignments associated with each thematic unit contained in this course.

Analysis of Rhetorical Strategies — For assigned readings, students will respond to regular prompts asking them to identify, analyze, and discuss the rhetorical strategies and techniques being used and their impact on the text and on the reader. These regular responses will include short answers, quick writes, and longer analyses.

Individual Outside Reading — Students will read approximately one *assigned* book per semester based upon an a preset reading list, complete various thematic and rhetorical analyses of the text, and complete an exam on each book.

Presentations — Students will present various research/analytical findings to the class, both in small groups and independently, throughout the year.

Writing Portfolio — Students will maintain a portfolio of all class writing activities, both rough drafts and final drafts, corrections, peer evaluations, etc. This portfolio will be a graded assignment at the end of the school year.

Major Assessments — Each unit below will include a major writing and/or presentation assessment. These will include detailed instructions from the teacher, a study of models and examples, and a rubric based largely on the essay portion of the AP exam. Each writing assignment will introduce a specific mode of writing.

Units of Study

Required Texts:

50 Essays, A Portable Anthology 2nd edition Cohen, Samuel

Readings for Writers 11th Edition McCuen, Jo Ray and Winkler, Anthony C.

The Language of Composition: Reading, Writing, Rhetoric by Renee H. Shea, Lawrence Scanlon, Robin Dissin Aufses

The Lively Art of Writing Vaughn Payne, Lucile

Barron's AP English Language and Composition 2012 Edition Ehrenhaft, George.

Selected Novels

Quarter 1

Unit 1, nine weeks — **Introduction to Rhetoric and Review of Grammar/Writing**

Tone and Thesis-What is tone? How can one identify tone in reading passages?

Identifying Thesis Statements-What is a thesis?

What is an argument? What are rhetorical strategies? What does it mean to persuade?

Unit Goals:

- Identify/discuss the skills being assessed by the AP Language and Composition Exam.
- Establish a set of terms and concepts needed to analyze our own and others' writing, focusing on the SOAPSTone technique
- Discuss the modes of writing, and learn the conventions of the narrative mode.
- Analyze the rhetorical strategies and stylistic devices of narrative essays.
- Review the elements of the writing process and thesis formation.
- Begin to learn some key terms of rhetorical analysis, including audience, context, persona, author, purpose, medium, subject, tone, ethos, logos, pathos, rhetoric, argumentation, persuasion, and synthesis.
- Review and evaluate our knowledge of the parts of speech and sentence mechanics (clauses, phrases, antecedents, sentence types) in order to establish a common set of analytical labels for our writing.

Texts:

- *The Great Gatsby*—F. Scott Fitzgerald
- Joan Didion “Keeping a Notebook”
- Mainardi, Pat. “The Politics of Housework”
- Barry, Dave. “Lost in the Kitchen”

- Robets, Roxanne: “The Grieving Never Ends” (Readings for Writers, p. 107)
- O’Connor, Flannery. “A Good Man is Hard to Find” (Readings for Writers, p. 113)
- Vaughn Payne, Lucile *The Lively Art of Writing* Chap. 8-10 (The Passive Voice, The Sound of Sentences and Parallel Structure)

Supplementary Handouts:

How To Write an Analytical Paper
 Identifying Thesis Statements
 Tone Words
 Close Reading and Annotation
 Rhetorical Analysis Key Terms

Assessments/Activities:

Pre-Test/ Diagnostic Essay
 Reflective short response
 Discussions: The Art of Communicating
 Close reading and annotation
 Writer’s Workshop
 Vocabulary quizzes
 Multiple Choice exercises
 Short/long responses to readings
 Novel project

Unit 2, nine weeks — Writing methods and processes. AP Exam introduction

Exposition and Art in Rhetoric- How can one write, use and identify these styles? What does the AP Exam look like?

Unit Goals:

- Continue to learn how to effectively use specific detail
- Learn how to develop paragraphs effectively and benefit from peer editing
- Learn the conventions of the descriptive, narrative, definition, mode
- Learn how to use fictional techniques to infuse expository writing with energy
- Learn how to balance narrative and commentary
- Learn how to annotate and identify/master tone, diction, syntax and voice.
- Continue to learn how to use imagery and figurative language to capture experience
- Continue to learn the strategies necessary for the AP rhetorical analysis essay

Texts:

- *Barron’s AP English Language and Composition 2012 Edition—(selections)*
- AP Exam Free Response and Multiple Choice Practice Questions
- Joyce, James. “Hell” (Readings for Writers, p. 246) Description
- E.B White “Once More to the Lake” (50 Essays, p.441). Description
- Orwell, George. “Shooting and Elephant” (Readings for Writers, p. 375). --Narration
- Walker, Alice. “Beauty: When the other Dancer is Self” (50 Essays, p.441). Narration
- Wernick, Robert. “Who the Devil is the Devil?” (Readings for Writers, p.364) Definition
- Goodman, Ellen “The Company Man” (Readings for Writers, p.375) Definition
- Eighner, Lars “On Dumpster Diving” (50 Essays, p.161). Process Analysis
- Se Vaughn Payne, Lucile *The Lively Art of Writing* Chap. 11-13
- Selected Novel

Supplementary Handouts:

Tone and Voice handout
Identifying Thesis Statements
Close Reading and Annotation
Rhetorical Analysis Key Terms

Assessments/Activities:

AP Practice Exams
Peer Editing/Scoring
Scoring/Holistic Reading Workshop
Reflective short response
Close reading and annotation
Writer's Workshop
Vocabulary quizzes
Multiple Choice exercises
Short/long responses to readings
Novel project

Unit 3, twelve weeks —**Argument, Fallacies, Research and Effective Writing**

How do logical fallacies affect an argument? What constitutes a good argument? How do you write a casual analysis essay? How do you write a researched argumentative paper and analyze images as text?

Unit Goals:

- Review the conventions of literary analysis and the expository mode
- Learn how to apply and analyze classical models of rhetoric: logos, pathos, ethos
- Learn common rhetorical fallacies used to convince and manipulate
- Learn and apply methods of research collection and outlining
- Analyze magazine articles to see connection between written and visual texts and sender/receiver relationship in rhetoric
- Learn and apply MLA citation rules
- Learn the conventions of satire as a rhetorical strategy
- Learn how to use and analyze the effect of humor on argument.
- Analyze word choice in terms of audience and purpose.
- Analyze dialect as a rhetorical strategy
- Further understand inductive/deductive argument
- Learn use of precise language and rhetoric—combined models

Texts:

- *Amusing Ourselves to Death* –Neil Postman
- Thoreau, Henry David. “Where I lived, and What I lived for” (50 Essays, p.424). compare/contrast
- Hamill, Pete “Crack and the Box” compare/contrast & argument
- Swift, Jonathan “A Modest Proposal” (50 Essays, p.408). Argument/Satire
- Thomas, Jefferson. “The Declaration of Independence” (50 Essays, p.163). Argument
- Brady, Syfers Judy. “I Want a Wife” (Readings for Writers, p. 588) Argument
- Orwell, George. “Politics and the English Language”. Argument
- “Aria: Memoir of a Bilingual Childhood,” Richard Rodriguez;
- “Politics and the English Language,” George Orwell
- “Mother Tongue,” Amy Tan;

- Supplementary Handouts:
- Tone and Voice handout
- Rhetorical Matrix
- Rhetorical Precis
- Connotative Language Control
- Fallacies Handout
- Writing Introductions

- Assessments/Activities:
- AP Practice Exams
- Peer Editing/Scoring
- Scoring/Holistic Reading Workshop
- Reflective short response
- Close reading and annotation
- Writer's Workshop
- Vocabulary quizzes
- Multiple Choice exercises
- Short/long responses to readings
- Novel project

Unit 4, four weeks — **Education Beyond the Classroom**

Essential Question: *Who am I? What is my ambition? How can I become a more effective writer?*

Unit Goals:

- Continue to learn how to effectively use specific detail as a rhetorical strategy.
- Continue to learn how to explicate and model the use of imagery and figurative language to capture experience.
- Learn the conventions of, and write and edit a standard college admissions essay.
- Complete final course portfolio.