

Course Syllabus

Advanced Placement Literature and Composition 2014-2015

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Welcome to AP English!

During the next four terms, you will be embarking upon a quest during which you will fight through rocky romances, harrowing tales of deception and revenge, and searches for personal identity. To accompany such fantastic works of fiction as *Great Expectations*, *Frankenstein*, *Hamlet*, *The Awakening*, and *Wuthering Heights*, we will engage in enlightening daily discussions and write numerous literary analyses. Both challenging and rewarding, this class will prepare you for success on the AP English exam, which can be taken in May to potentially earn college credits.

Because this class is designed to replace your freshman English courses at the university level, you can expect AP English to be rigorous in terms of workload; we are going to read and write and *talk* about what we read and write *a lot*. Over the course of the year, we will work together to develop your reading, writing, speaking, listening, and critical thinking skills. When all is said and done, you will probably be both exhausted and mentally enlightened (as our friends the Transcendentalists would say).

Philosophy

The literature we read should inspire us to examine our own values.

The nature of this class requires us all to participate in engaging, exciting discussions. As learners, each of us should not only come prepared to talk about what we have read, but also to be willing to listen to the ideas of others. Every person should have a voice, so to be an effective participant in this class, you have to be open to new ideas and open to sharing your own.

No one interpretation of literature is absolutely correct, and I do not have every answer. However, I will guide you through analyzing texts by introducing you to critical approaches to reading literature. My goal is for you each to make discoveries and examine meaning in every text that we read.

Though this class will be demanding, it is also highly rewarding. It's about challenging ourselves to examine our beliefs, see through the eyes of others, and step outside of the "box." Be open and excited about the literary journey we are about to take—I am!

Materials

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|--------------------|--|
| ✓ 3-ring binder | ✓ LOTS of sticky notes |
| ✓ dividers | ✓ a positive attitude |
| ✓ loose-leaf paper | ✓ concern for others' ideas and beliefs |
| ✓ pens | ✓ an understanding that this is a college-level course |
| ✓ pencils | |

Late Work . . .

. . . is unacceptable for this class. If you are going to be absent, I expect you to take responsibility for your own work and learning and make prior arrangements with me. Because most of your work in this class will be reading, there is no reason for you to fall behind when you are absent. You will have a weekly schedule of assigned reading to keep you on track, so there is no excuse to fall behind, even when you are gone!

Literary Response Journals

For each unit, you will complete a set of literary response journals that will ask you to complete a variety of writing assignments that will help your understanding of what you are reading. For example, when reading short stories, you will include the following in your LRJs:

- ✓ the short story's title in quotation marks.
- ✓ the author's name.
- ✓ a quotation from the story integrated with your own sentence, properly punctuated, and commented upon as necessary to show why you cited that particular passage.
- ✓ specific references to the short story.
- ✓ careful thought.
- ✓ one question for discussion.

The focus of journals will shift depending on the types of work we are reading. For example, literary devices, structures, and concepts will guide your short story and novel LRJs, but when we study poetry, the focus will shift to poetic form, techniques, and terminology. Similar shifts in focus will occur when we study drama.

Your reading notes should be an on-going log of your thoughts as you read as well as salient points that arise during discussion. Aside from the obvious value these notes will have when preparing for quizzes, exams, and composing essays in this class, notetaking is an important skill to develop before entering college.

Quarter Books

In addition to the works read in class, you will read one novel independently during the first three quarters of the school year.

Quarter 1: Read a "classic" published before 1900 from a recommended reading list.

Project: Book Report

1. Research and write a nine-sentence biography of the author of the novel you have read.
2. In a well-supported paragraph, describe the setting of the novel.
3. In three well-developed short essays, analyze the protagonist of the novel, the conflict of the novel, and one major theme of the novel.
4. Select three particularly powerful passages from the novel, relating to tone, mood, characterization, or theme. Write about the impact of each passage as well as its relationship to at least one of literary critical term.
5. A "classic" is a book that has stood the test of time. Why do you believe this novel is considered a classic?
6. Looking at the book from a reader-response point of view, explain your initial response to the book and your response as you concluded the book.

Quarter 2: Read a "classic" published between 1900 and 1960 from a recommended reading list.

Project: Essay

1. Write a five-page essay on the development of a prominent theme in your novel of choice. You should consider elements of plot, character development, and the language and style of the author.
2. Use two critical analyses found in reputable print sources to support your claims. These sources should be used as support for your opinions, but should NOT become the focus of your essay.
3. Your paper must have a clearly stated thesis supported by arguments and observations based on a close reading of the primary text, which should also be cited. Organize your thoughts carefully so that your essay has both logical and verbal continuity.

Quarter 3: Read a contemporary novel of value published from 1960 to the present day.

Project: Presentation

Prepare a 5-6 minute presentation centering on your novel of choice. The following must be included:

1. A brief synopsis of the novel, including characters, conflict, and setting.
2. Commentary on the writer's style.
3. A theme discussion.
4. Why is this novel found on "contemporary books to read" lists?
5. Your recommendation: should we read it or not?
6. A one-page, typed handout containing the information prepared for your classmates.

Blog

Our blog, hosted by *Edublog.org*, will act as a continuation of classroom discussion. You will receive a username and password that will allow you to log in and comment on posts made by both myself and your classmates. Each quarter, you are required to make **five** thoughtful comments on our blog. The blog will also be continuously updated with helpful and important documents as well as links to great web resources.

Timed Writings

These are writing exercises that will help to prepare you for the AP exam. You will receive an essay prompt that has been given on previous AP exams and released for educational purposes. You will have the class period to read the prompt and respond in an essay (which is usually 2-3 pages in length). These timed writes will be graded on a 9-point scale determined by the College Board; however, I realize that it will take practice before any of you achieve high scores on your timed writes and will therefore curve the grades in your favor. We will complete timed writes frequently throughout the year.

Practice Multiple Choice Questions

Periodically, we will work through AP exam questions in order to familiarize you with the exam format. Multiple choice questions are based on passages of literature and ask you to apply your knowledge of literature and literary and poetic structures and terms.

Literary and Poetic Terms

Throughout the year, you will become very familiar with literary and poetic terms through classroom discussion, self-discovery, and quizzes. These terms are essential to your success on the AP exam in May. To know these terms and be able to apply them to the literature you read is a skill you must attain before taking the AP exam. In addition, you will be applying your knowledge of these terms in various writing assignments, ranging from essay questions on tests to practice AP timed writings to close readings and essay assignments.

Sample Terms (we will definitely come across and discuss others)

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|------------------------|---------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| ♦ Diction | ♦ Didactic | ♦ Characterization | ♦ Protagonist |
| ♦ Syntax | ♦ Satire | ♦ Idiom | ♦ Antagonist |
| ♦ Sentence Structure | ♦ Farce | ♦ Assonance | ♦ Foil |
| ♦ Figurative Language | ♦ Melodrama | ♦ Cacophony | ♦ Plot |
| ♦ Imagery | ♦ Tragedy | ♦ Consonance | ♦ Suspense |
| ♦ Narrative Techniques | ♦ Comedy | ♦ Euphony | ♦ Foreshadowing |
| ♦ Frame Narrative | ♦ Soliloquy | ♦ Onomatopoeia | ♦ Personification |
| ♦ Flashback | ♦ Aside | ♦ Antithesis | ♦ Allusion |
| ♦ In Media Res | ♦ Connotation | ♦ Sonnet | ♦ Alliteration |
| ♦ Tone | ♦ Denotation | ♦ Ode | ♦ Rhyme Scheme |
| ♦ Theme | ♦ Metaphor | ♦ Free Verse | ♦ Meter |
| ♦ Style | ♦ Simile | ♦ Conceit | ♦ Understatement |
| ♦ Voice | ♦ Irony | ♦ Apostrophe | ♦ Metonymy |
| ♦ Hyperbole | ♦ Paradox | ♦ Oxymoron | ♦ Synecdoche |

Essays

You will write a variety of essays in correlation with the literature we read in class. Our first essay on your summer reading of *Great Expectations* will take the longest, as we will study the writing process in-depth and help each other work through the first "college-level" essay. As your essay assignments progress, I will expect you to become more and more independent, so that by the end of the year, you feel confident heading off to write a bunch of great stuff in college. Of course, keep in mind that you should always have other people look over your work and give you feedback before turning anything in. Future advice: use your university's tutoring services!! And if you have any questions or need writing advice, email me!

Course Writing Goals:

1. Develop a varied and enhanced vocabulary through daily study of vocabulary terms (1-3 per day) and weekly quizzes. A master vocabulary list that consists of words used on past AP exams will be provided to you at the start of the year. You will be expected, as these words are added to your lexicon, to utilize these terms in course writing assignments. Through the revision process, both peer and student-teacher, we will work to incorporate sophisticated language into your work.
2. Master sophisticated and varied sentence structures in all written assignments. When conferencing with me, we will work together to ensure variation in sentence structure, finding weak sentences and revising for strength and concision. Peer reviewing will be another venue for you to recognize and rework tired and repetitive phrasing in your own work as well as that of your peers.

3. Focus on organization and presentation of ideas to develop clear arguments, successful analyses, and well-composed expository essays. Mini-lessons on structuring writing for different purposes will be taught as we go; for example, you will learn how to effectively structure an argument, how to incorporate evidence to support claims made, and how to fully utilize the thesis statement as the starting point for any type of writing. Organization of ideas will be a focal point during peer revision, but it will also often be addressed when analyzing the effectiveness of your practice timed writings.
4. Become effective peer reviewers. For nearly every essay we complete in class, you will go through the writing process, beginning with planning and drafting and ending with revising and editing. During peer review sessions and during conferences with me, you will get plenty of practice working to improve
 - a. Diction
 - b. Sentence structure
 - c. Organization and presentation of ideas
 - d. Selection of detail
 - e. Use of evidence and incorporation of quotations
 - f. Tone
 - g. Rhetorical skill (such as logos, pathos, and ethos)
5. Apply the writing process. We will begin every essay assignment with a brainstorming session followed by a brief conference with me, during which time we will discuss your plans for your essay. Once we have established a plan of attack, you will draft your essay. Mid-drafting time, you will conference with me on what you have completed. During this time we will discuss the development and organization of your ideas as well as sentence structure and fluency. Following the completion of a draft, you will peer conference with two members of the class, evaluating one another's work and discussing improvements. Finally, you will have the opportunity to conference with me one last time before making revisions and edits. After I evaluate your final draft, you will have the opportunity to make further revisions to your essay to improve your score. These additional revisions are optional, but HIGHLY suggested. The goal is to continue to improve your writing, which means that we revise, revise, revise.

Essay Assignments:

1. Plan, draft, revise, and edit an essay in which you discuss one of the following topics, related to your reading of *Great Expectations*:
 - a. Pip often views the world in black and white, seeing people as either strictly good or strictly evil, yet he himself is often caught between these extremes. What is the significance of **moral ambiguity** in this novel? Which of the characters are caught somewhere in between?
 - b. Pip often views himself as a **victim**. Is Pip victimized in this novel? By whom and how? Is anyone else victimized?
 - c. **Choose a theme** and analyze how it is presented in the novel. Some potential topics include isolation, loss of innocence, corruption, and social class.
 - d. Discuss how **setting** impacts the overall theme or development of the characters in the novel. For example, you may consider how the marshes, Satis House, and the city dwelling impact Pip's journey to adulthood. Or, think about how Satis House and Miss Havisham mutually fall into decline—symbolism definitely comes into play here.
 - e. Compare and contrast the **female characters** in *Great Expectations*. Mrs. Joe, Biddy, Miss Havisham, and Estella have distinct personalities and also impact Pip and his personal growth.
 - f. Love is a driving force in the novel, but actions are often driven by love gone too far. How does **obsessive love** affect the plot and characters of *Great Expectations*?
 - g. Look back to the major characters in *Great Expectations* and notice how the different **social classes** are represented. How does Dickens characterize the lower class? When money is added to the equation, how do characters change?

2. Plan, draft, revise, and edit an essay in which you analyze Mary Shelley's commentary on the forces of good and evil in *Frankenstein*. Consider factors such as narration style, actions of the characters, parallels between Victor and the monster, diction (especially the "speech" of the monster and of Victor), and tone when drafting your thesis. Think: who is truly monstrous?
3. Undeniably, Tom Stoppard's modern masterpiece, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, is influenced by two other enormously important dramatic works of the past, Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*. Plan, draft, revise, and edit an essay in which you discuss how *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern* connects and contrasts with either *Hamlet* or *Waiting for Godot*. Consider, for example, if Stoppard's play changes the meaning of *Hamlet*. Perhaps discuss how both *R&G* and *Waiting for Godot* deal with similar themes.
4. Plan, draft, revise, and edit an essay in which you analyze late 18th and early 19th century issues of gender inequalities. After reading Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper" and Kate Chopin's *The Awakening*, find historical and/or critical sources that defend the validity of the portrayal of women's struggles in one or both of these works of fiction.
5. Plan, draft, revise, and edit an essay in which you complete a literary analysis of *Wuthering Heights*. As this is your final essay, you must brainstorm, research, and propose your own essay topic. Once it is approved by me, find at least one critical source to defend the validity of your thesis.

****Essay assignments are subject to change.****

****You will continue to get practice on organization and presentation of ideas as well as sentence fluency, sophisticated style, and etc. as we will have weekly timed writing practice prompts. In addition, you may look forward to occasional essay tests, which will follow the format of a timed writing prompt on the AP exam, but will be tailored to course readings.****

Plagiarism

This should go without saying, but I'm going to say it anyway. All work you complete for AP English must be original, meaning that YOU wrote it using YOUR ideas and experiences. Consulting other sources is a valid option when confused, but to directly copy someone else's work is plagiarism. Plagiarism is stealing. Stealing is bad. Plagiarism will not be tolerated in this class, nor will it be when you get to college, where consequences are much more severe.

Course Readings

Summer Reading

- ♦ *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens
- ♦ Novel of choice cited on AP Exam

Unit 1: How to Write an Awesome Essay

- ♦ "Mrs. Schultz's Guide to Essay Writing Happiness"

Unit 2: A Fictional Quest of Epic Proportions

- ♦ "The Most Dangerous Game" by Richard Connell
- ♦ "Young Goodman Brown" by Nathaniel Hawthorne
- ♦ "A Jury of Her Peers" by Susan Glaspell
- ♦ "Once upon a Time" by Nadine Gordimer
- ♦ "The Lottery" by Shirley Jackson
- ♦ "Everyday Use" by Alice Walker
- ♦ "A Worn Path" by Eudora Welty
- ♦ "A Rose for Emily" by William Faulkner
- ♦ *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley

Unit 3: Piecing Together the Poetry Puzzle

- ♦ Sonnet 18 by Shakespeare
- ♦ Sonnet 130 by Shakespeare
- ♦ "The World is Too Much With Us" by Wordsworth
- ♦ "Ode on a Grecian Urn" by Keats
- ♦ "The Lady of Shalott" by Tennyson
- ♦ "Dover Beach" by Arnold
- ♦ "My Last Duchess" by Browning
- ♦ "Porphyria's Lover" by Browning
- ♦ "Cry of the Children" by Barrett Browning
- ♦ "Because I could not stop for Death" by Dickinson
- ♦ "I heard a fly buzz, when I died" by Dickinson
- ♦ "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" by T.S. Eliot
- ♦ "Anthem for Doomed Youth" by Owen
- ♦ "The Soldier" by Brooke

* A poetry project and presentation will require the research and reading of several other poems, including Langston Hughes, Pablo Neruda, Shelley, Coleridge, Maya Angelou, Whitman, and several others. *

Unit 4: All the World's a Stage

- ♦ *Hamlet* by William Shakespeare
- ♦ *The Taming of the Shrew* by William Shakespeare

Unit 5: Novel Ideas

- ♦ *The Awakening* by Kate Chopin
- ♦ "The Yellow Wallpaper" by Charlotte Perkins Gilman
- ♦ *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Bronte