

Advanced Placement English Language and Composition Syllabus

Students *of Advanced Placement English Language and Composition* will be "engaged 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" as dictated by the Collegeboard. To this end, fiction and nonfiction on a myriad of subjects, including arts and culture, public policy, personal experience and popular culture will be explored and discussed orally and in writing.

How to Tackle AP Language When You Did So Well in English Last Year

This is not a course that reveres the suspension of belief necessary to enjoy fiction. We must consider that we are being manipulated—that there are forces at work that lead us to believe what we believe about said characters toward some greater purpose. Nothing is real; there are only strategies.

This is a class that mimics the college experience. Assigned novels should be read at home, without interruption, reminders, or formal announcement. Refer to the sign on the wall: "READ YOUR 15PAGES" every night.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

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- Teaches and requires students to write in several forms (e.g., narrative, expository, analytical, and argumentative essays) about a variety of subjects (e.g., public policies, popular culture, personal experiences);
- Requires students to write essays that proceed through several stages or drafts, with revision aided by teacher and peers;
- Requires students to write in informal contexts (e.g., imitation exercises, journal keeping, collaborative writing, and in-class responses) designed to help them become increasingly aware of themselves as writers and of the techniques employed by the writers they read;
- Requires expository, analytical, and argumentative writing assignments that are based on readings representing a wide variety of prose styles and genres;
- Requires nonfiction readings (e.g., essays, journalism, political writing, science writing, nature writing, autobiographies/biographies, diaries, history, criticism) that are selected to give students opportunities to identify and explain an author's use of rhetorical strategies and techniques. If fiction and poetry are also assigned, their main purpose should be to help students understand how various effects are achieved by writers' linguistic and rhetorical choices.
- Teaches research skills, and in particular, the ability to evaluate, use, and cite primary and secondary sources. The course assigns projects such as the researched argument paper, which goes beyond the parameters of a traditional research paper by asking students to present an argument of their own that includes the analysis and synthesis of ideas from an array of sources. **STRATEGY**

- 1) The school ensures that each student has a copy of all required readings for individual use inside and outside the classroom.

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- 2) The course is taught in four parts as dictated by the four nine-week advisories as determined by school district. I offer a proposed outline that allows the instructor flexibility to introduce current and appropriate text to the classroom environment and to address immediate student needs.
- 3) Students write in journals that allow them personal space to try new ideas, share, grade one another's work and chart their progress from the first journal entry to the last.
- 4) Visual art, charts, maps and film are used to teach students to analyze how graphics and visual images both relate to written texts and serve as alternative forms of text themselves.
- 5) Students practice AP style essay questions and multiple-choice questions from supplemental materials and from texts such as *50 Essays* that provide such opportunities. These essays and multiple-choice exercises are randomly graded. Students must correct/justify missed multiple-choice answers.
- 6) The AP Mock Exam, administered early in the fourth advisory constitutes a major project grade for that advisory, considering that EACH student in the class should experience the AP Exam.
- 7) A final assignment called *4 Personal Portfolio* that includes 1) *a personal narrative* modeled on the style of a writer of choice; and 2) *two researched editorials* on subjects of their choice culminates the final advisory.
- 8) Students cite sources using Modern Language Association format.

GRADING

Students are allowed one week from an absence to submit late assignments. Assignments are graded instructor and/or peer evaluation. Grades are standard six-point scale as outlined in the school handbook. Please refer.

Proposed Agenda—Advisory One

Major Task 1

Students are introduced to the language of rhetoric by memorizing and applying a comprehensive vocabulary list of rhetorical terms and strategies. This pattern occurs weekly until the list is exhausted. The goal is to create familiarity with "new language and provide generally type "A" students who expect high grades with confidence boosting activities while they learn new material.

Major Task 2

Vocabulary describing tone is introduced, applied and tested by labeling "Random Passages" appropriately. "Random Passages" may come from film, newspapers, printed radio excerpts or other media as collected by the instructor.

Major Task 3

Daily Journal exercises on identifying the manipulation and purpose of Tone by performing tasks in *Voice Lessons* (Dean, Nancy) for the first fifteen minutes of class. This task also checks attendance and cannot be made up without an excused absence.

Textbook:

The Language of Composition. Chapter] "An Introduction to Rhetoric: Using the "Available Means". Renee Shea

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The Language of Composition, Chapter 2 "The Art and Craft of Analysis", Renee Shea
Students will complete all exercises as provided from these chapters. **Essential Questions/**

Writing Assignments: Students will perform writing assignments in

1) What is the difference between rhetorical and literary analysis? 2) What constitutes an analysis essay? 3) What constitutes an argumentative essay? 4) Can you identify strategies used in an argument? 4) Can you find the "aim" or premise of a seemingly innocent "story"? 5) Can you use appropriate vocabulary to discuss language and rhetoric? 6) Learn to dissect or "mark up" a text by making appropriate notes, using tables, graphic organizers or side bar commentary.

Proposed Agenda, Advisory Two

Major Task: Students continue "Voice Lessons" Journals and focus on "Diction" and "Detail". Students trade journals and grade one another based on instructor's comments last advisory

Novel: *A Mercy*, Toni Morrison

Essays:

"A Modell of Christian Charity", John Winthrop

"Crisis No. 1", Thomas Paine

Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson

"Self-Reliance", Ralph Waldo Emerson

"Letter to My Master", Frederick Douglass

"What to the Slave is the Fourth of July", Douglass

Essential Questions/Writing Assignments.

Students will answer the questions at the end of each essay as provided in texts such as *50 Essays* or instructor created questions. Students will write three timed, in-class analysis essays (including Description, Narration, Definition) will focus on any of the following questions as covered in class discussions: 1) Explain how a novel is more than a story about a fictitious character; 2) How does Morrison advance her premise in *A Mercy*? 3) Identify the rhetorical appeals in the assigned texts; How do they help to advance the arguments. 4) How is Morrison's definition of "storytelling" used as a rhetorical tool? 5) What terms are used to label people in each of the essays and in the novel? What effect does it have on the reader? How do these terms help to advance the argument proposed? 6) What is the connection between these texts?

Proposed Agenda—Advisory Three

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Major Task 1

Students continue "Voice Lessons" and focus on Imagery and Syntax.

Major Task 2

Lecture on logical fallacies. Students learn major logical fallacies and create advertisements or find published text that relies upon fallacious arguments. A guest lecturer assists with the introduction to this topic. A formal test on identifying the type of fallacy in an argument is given this advisory.

Major Task 3

Students follow one issue of their choice in *The Washington Post* for an entire advisory. A journal on the development of the subject focuses on 1) Name the type of writing: Narration, Description, Cause and Effect, Compare and Contrast. 2) Who are the major players? 3) What is at stake?; 4) Who is effected?; 5) What language/terms are used to describe the issue?; 6) Identify any logical fallacies found in the article; 7) Is the writer biased? 8) Does that bias work for you as a reader?

Essays:

Art of the Personal Essay, Phillip Lopate

Theme: Growing Up

"The Lantern Bearers," Robert Louis Stevenson

"Such, Such Were the Joys", George Orwell

"Aunt Harriet", Hubert Butler

"How I Started to Write", Carlos Fuentes

"Meatless Days", Sara Suleri

"The Secret Life of James Thurber", James Thurber

"Notes of a Native Son" James Baldwin

Essential Questions:

Students work hard on constructing logical arguments to articulate with whom do you agree and why? Each essay taken from *The Art of the Personal Essay* focuses on questions on rhetorical strategy and intent. These questions are assigned after each essay and graded at will.

Three to five timed writings that require students to 1) refute, defend or qualify an argument and 2) gather facts from assigned essays to analyze or refute, defend or qualify an argument.

Students should consider how personal essays are also political essays, that is, one's personal experiences are often connected to a larger societal construct.

Proposed Agenda—Advisory Four , .

Major Task 1

Students take AP Mock Exam

Major Task 2

Students are assigned *A Personal Portfolio* project that includes 1) *a personal narrative* essay on an subject, modeled on the style of a writer of choice; and 2) *two researched editorials* on subjects of their choice culminates the final advisory.

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Procedure for Editorial Writing:

- 1) Begin with a topic of interest; use the topic that you traced from third advisory or another of your choice; Consider, What do I know? What do I think about this issue? What information do I think that I'll need to write authoritatively?
- 2) Use the Internet to find articles and identify good search engines;
- 3) Narrow and define the topic based on gathered information;
- 4) Create a bibliography for print and electronic materials.

Procedure for Writing Personal Narratives:

- 1) Decide on a topic that defines your philosophy on a subject or that explains something about you that connects you to the larger society.
- 2) Find a writer whose voice you admire.
- 3) Mock the voice to write your personal narrative essay. Make use of the writer's organizational structure, syntax (Does he/she use loose or periodic sentences? Note their use of subordination and coordination.)
- 4) Seek a peer evaluation. Does the tone of the essay match the intent of the author?

Suggested Reading List:

All texts from the attached bibliography will be available to students as resource guides to write their personal narratives. Students will self-generate a list of four (4) essays on a pre-generated list. This method allows students to feel more in charge of the materials they read at the end of the year.

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Selected Bibliography

Atwan, Robert. *Convergences: Message, Method, Medium*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's.

Barnet, Sylvan, and Hugo Bedau. *Current Issues and Enduring Questions: A Guide to Critical Thinking and Argument with Readings*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's.

Barnet, Sylvan, and Morton Berman. *Literature for Composition*. Irving, TX: Prentice Hall.

Baym, Nina. *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2006

Cohen, Samuel. *50 Essays: A Portable Anthology*. New York: Bedford/St. Martin's.

Colombo, Gary, Robert Cullen, and Bonnie Lisle. *Rereading America: Cultural Contexts for Critical Thinking and Writing*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's.

Cooley, Thomas, ed. *The Norton Sampler: Short Essays for Composition*. New York: W. W. Norton.

Crowley, Sharon, and Debra Hawhee. *Ancient Rhetorics for Contemporary Students*. New York, NY: Longman.

Dean, Nancy. *Voice Lessons: Classroom Activities to Teach Diction, Detail, Imagery, Syntax, and Tone*. Gainesville: Maupin House, 2000.

Faigley, Lester, Anna Palchik, Cynthia Selfe, and Diana George. *Picturing Texts*. New York: W.W.Norton.

Hacker, Diana. *The Bedford Handbook*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's.

Lunsford, Andrea A., John J. Ruszkiewicz, and Keith Walters. *Everything's an Argument: with Readings*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's.

Kennedy, X.J., Dorothy M. Kennedy, and Jane E. Aaron. *The Bedford Reader*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's.

Kirsznner, Laurie G., and Stephen R. Mandell, eds. *Patterns for College Writing: A Rhetorical Reader and Guide*. New York, NY: Bedford/St. Martin's.

Lopate, Phillip. *The Art of the Personal Essay. An Anthology from the Classical Era to the Present*. New York: Anchor Books/Doubleday.

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Pollit, Katha. *Subject to Debate: Sense and dissents on women, politics and culture*. New York: Random House, 2000.

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Strunk, William, Jr., and E. B. White. *Elements of Style*. New York: Longman.

Teaching Literature in High School: The Novel. New York: NCTE