

Advanced Placement English Literature and Composition Syllabus

Course Overview

The Advanced Placement Literature and Composition course is designed to involve students in the close reading of selected texts, and enable students to write fluently at the beginning-college level. Students will do close readings to experience, interpret, and evaluate literature. Students will engage in discussion over the concepts and questions raised by the literature, in both small group and whole class discussions. There will be an extensive amount of writing, weekly vocabulary, and grammar instruction as the need arises. Students will spend a great deal of time preparing for the AP English Literature and Composition Exam. This course is designed to comply with the curricular requirements described in the *AP English Literature and Composition Course Description*.

Understandings

Students will understand that:

- Literature is an outlet of expression, as well as a way for us to understand ourselves and the world around us.
- Characters, and people are a combination of both unselfishness and egotism.
- Writing is a way to communicate from age to age.

Essential Questions

How does literature help me communicate my opinions and perspectives with the world?

What does exploring humanity through characters in literature show us about people?

What skills will I take with me from high school to help me communicate to others

Course Goals

1. To read actively and deliberately, making observations of textual details in order to critically analyze imaginative literature.
2. To understand a writer's use of language for both pleasure and to provide deeper meaning.
3. To consider all aspects of a work including structure, style, themes, figurative language, imagery, symbolism, and tone.
4. To study texts from various genres and time periods (from the sixteenth century to the twentieth century) in both English and American literature.
5. To captivate students into lifelong reading through first reading the "best books" and generating thoughtful discussion in the company of fellow students.
6. To reflect on the social and historical values surrounding the text.
7. To write focusing on such critical analyses as expository, analytical, and argumentative essays as well as creative pieces to help create deeper respect and understanding for the artistry of writing.
8. To show how writing has changed in both language and meaning throughout the different centuries.

9. To extend vocabulary and become familiar with the resources of language, including denotative accuracy, connotation, syntax, metaphor, and irony.
10. To improve writing both formal and exploratory, giving students the chance to write and rewrite, and to write effectively under time constraints.

Overview of Assignments

Reading Assignments

Students will be required to read a lot of literature. Most required reading will need to be done outside of class. Students will need to have reading assignments done on time so that they can actively participate in class discussions.

Reading assignments include works from both English and American literature from various genres and periods.

Various activities will accompany reading assignments, on top of classroom discussions. Students will also be asked to prepare in advance to lead class discussions over selected readings.

In addition to required readings, students will be asked to read independently throughout the year.

Class Expectations

- Students will be required to keep a three ring binder of weekly vocabulary and any in-class work, notes, or hand-outs.
- Weekly quizzes will be given over vocabulary from the text, in addition to a large amount of college-based vocabulary.
- Unannounced quizzes over assigned readings will be given on a periodic basis to check that students are keeping up with the reading assignments.
- Students will be required to read *three novels independently*; two first semester, and two second semester. Students will choose from a list of classic American and English texts. They will be required to write an analytical critique over each paying careful attention to structure, style, themes, symbolism, and tone.

Reading List

1984

An American Tragedy

Brave New World

Death of a Salesman

Ethan Frome

Fahrenheit 451

Great Expectations

Jane Eyre

King Lear

One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest

Slaughterhouse Five

The Color Purple

Waiting for Godot

- Students will keep a reading log of assigned readings, recording their personal responses to each reading assignment.

- No late work will be accepted for credit; however, students will still need to complete each assignment because revisions of each assignment are done throughout the course in order to improve writing.
- **No Extra Credit will be given in this course.**
- Students will learn a variety of important literary terms throughout the different units. At the end of all units, before the AP exam, students will be tested over all literary terms.

Writing Assignments(Large)

- Summer Assignment- Due the third day of class
- 1-2 Page Paper over *The Mosquito Coast*
- 1-2 Page Satirical Piece over a Present Day Issue
- 1-2 Page Essay over the characterization used in *A Streetcar Named Desire*
- 1-2 Page Essay over literary devices used in *Pride and Prejudice*
- 1-2 Page Research Paper over Social Customs as they relate to *Pride and Prejudice*
- Poetry Scrapbook(includes many elements, including several writing assignments over poetry)
- 3-5 Page Paper over *Hamlet*
- 1-2 Page Paper over *Heart of Darkness*
- 6-8 Page Controversial Topic
- Three Analytical Critiques

*Many smaller writing assignments will be given in class as practice for the AP examination and college preparation. Other short writing assignments will be required outside of class.

Writing Expectations

No matter what kind of writing assignment given, it is expected that students put forth their best effort at all times. This means that proper grammar should be practiced at all times, in both formal and exploratory writings.

Papers will be graded on specific criteria for each assignment. Grading rubrics will be given before each assignment. In general, however, these guidelines apply:

- Effective Word Choice
- Variety of Sentence Structures including subordination and coordination
- Effective Organization
- Effective Use of Rhetoric
- Excellence of Argument
- Extensive Supporting Evidence
- Use of Proper Grammar

Students will be asked to write revisions of their papers throughout the course.

Reading and Writing Schedule

Units & Approximate number of weeks

Summer Assignment- Children and Monsters-

Grendel by John Gardner

Frankenstein by Mary Shelley

Lord of the Flies by William Golding

A Midsummer Night's Dream by William Shakespeare

First Semester

Weeks 1-3: Introduction to the Course

- Introduction to Advanced Placement Examination
- Review summer assignment
 - write about, analyze, and discuss all works read over the summer
 - use readings to introduce the AP style, and practice

Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*- Introduction to Romanticism(2 weeks)

Students study the complexities of the creation of *Frankenstein* paying careful attention to the story of the author, and then make connections between Shelley and Wordsworth to form a background of the romantic period.

Key Goals

- Define British Romanticism
- Understand the characterization of both Victor and his monster
- Explain the effect of nature in the time period as it relates to the story
- Recognize ethical dilemmas
- Explore Shelley's use of foreshadowing and irony
- Analyze the plot structure
- Analyze major themes including the novel's treatment of human search for knowledge and view of science and technology.

***The Mosquito Coast* by Paul Theroux (4 Weeks)**

The main thematic focus of this novel is the deterioration of man. Students examine various quotes throughout the novel that show the *characterization* of the main character, Allie. They trace the events that lead Allie to his ultimate demise and also the impact Allie has on his various family members.

Satire and Irony (2 Weeks)

Students read:

- "The Rape of the Lock"
- "A Modest Proposal"
- Selections from *Gulliver's Travels*
- Parts of *Candide*

Students examine the purpose of satire, the difference between satire and sarcasm, and how irony relates to satire.

Students write their own social satire on an issue from present day.

A Streetcar Named Desire, Tennessee Williams (4 Weeks)

Students will read this play largely on their own. They will keep a reading log as they read, recording their personal thoughts about the play.

Students will examine each character's personality. Which characters seem to act in a selfish manner? They will also look specifically at the idea of fantasy versus reality, and which character(s) seem to have a problem coping with reality. They will also look at human flaws. How do these relate to tragic flaws as seen in Shakespeare?

Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice (5 Weeks)

Students describe the key conflict in the novel, looking specifically at the relationship, or often lack thereof, between Elizabeth and Darcy. The methods for teaching this novel will be largely rooted in discussions of important themes and questions raised during class. Key questions included in discussions are as follows.

The original title for *Pride and Prejudice* was *First Impressions*. How does this relate to the meaning of the novel? Which do you consider most powerful in conveying the meaning of the novel? What is meant by the title, *Pride and Prejudice*?

What is a novel of manners? How does this novel exhibit those qualities?

Why is this work considered a classic?

Students define classic, and explore what about them helps withstand the test of time.

Students write a 1-2 Page Essay over the literary devices used in the novel.

Key Topics

Family conflict

Conflict between reason and passion

The hazards of first impressions

Social Customs and Norms/Acceptable Cultural Behaviors

Students will research and present a comparison of social customs of any decade/culture with those of the culture in the novel.

Second Semester

Hamlet, William Shakespeare (5 Weeks)

Throughout the two Shakespeare plays students will look deeply at the tragic flaw in the main characters Hamlet and King Lear.

Students will reflect on major themes and ideas from the play including;

- Death as both the cause and consequence of revenge
- Revenge and Justice
- Hamlet's tragic flaw-his need to avenge his father's death
- Is Hamlet's need to avenge his father's death a self-centered or noble act?

A great majority of the play will be read aloud in class. Discussion will be largely whole class discussion.

Students will read parts of the play *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* on their own, outside of class, for comparison.

Poetry Unit (4 Weeks)

This "unit" will be both intertwined between the others, as well as focused on heavily for four weeks. For example, during the Romanticism units, students will read a considerable amount of British Romantic poetry. We will also use the *Sound and Sense: An Introduction to Poetry*, 8th edition book. We will be reading many chapters of the books, reading poems by ourselves and out loud.

Students will take a closer look at what poetry is, and how it appeals differently to different people. Students will examine different methods for reading poetry, and see how a poem changes meanings with multiple readings.

Throughout the course, we will concentrate heavily on various literary devices including; denotation, connotation, imagery, figurative language, tone, rhythm, meter, and repetition.

During the specific poetry unit, students will create a poetry notebook which includes analysis of several poems, as well as some creative elements.

Students will write many interpretative essays over the course, including poetry and short fiction. This will be practice for the Advanced Placement Examination. Many will be timed practice, some simple analysis over a poem of choice, others essays that compare and contrast two poems.

Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (2 Weeks)

Students will explore the moral confusions in the novella. They will spend a lot of time sharing their thoughts on the characters Marlowe and Kurtz in small group discussion. We will look deeply at mistakes made by humans throughout history.

AP Exam Practice – Two to three weeks prior to the AP Exam; also concurrent with other units

Throughout the course students will complete seven AP practice exams from both the Barron's *AP English Literature and Composition* book and The Princeton Review *Cracking the AP English Literature Exam* book. Students practice both the multiple choice and writing portions of the test.

Students will take a few practice tests first semester, but the majority of them closer to the AP exam. After each time students will converse with fellow students upon completing and correcting their own exams. They will discuss several of the test questions and answers. As we progress students will chart their own progress from practice exam to practice exam. This will allow them to see which areas they are the weakest and need improvement.

Final Project- To be completed after the AP Exam

*Assignment expectations will be given at the beginning of the semester. Students will have to have their topic approved prior to beginning writing.

Students will be required to write an 6-8 page paper over a topic of their choice. The topic must be something considered to be controversial. They will need to research the topic, and form their own opinion about the topic. They will use rhetoric to convince their audience of their viewpoint. Solid evidence for their argument must be present in their paper.

Texts

Austen, Jane. *Pride and Prejudice*.

Conrad, Joseph. *Heart of Darkness*.

Gardner, John. *Grendel*

Golding, William. *Lord of the Flies*

Shakespeare, William. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

Shakespeare, William. *Hamlet & King Lear*.

Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein*.

Theroux, Paul. *The Mosquito Coast*

Williams, Tennessee. *A Streetcar Named Desire*.

Ehrenhaft, George. *Barron's AP English Literature and Composition 2007*. New York:

Barron's Educational Series, Inc., 2004.

McDougal Littell. *British Literature*. Evanston, IL:Houghton Mifflin Co., 2008.

Perrine, Laurence and Thomas R. Arp. *Sound and Sense: An Introduction to Poetry*. 8th ed.

Orlando: Hartcourt Brace & Co., 1992.