

John H. Glenn High School
AP Seminar
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Course Description:

AP Seminar is an inquiry-based research and composition course. To best express what you will do in English this year when interacting with texts and writing your essays, I'm going to use a quote from Margaret Heffernan, an international businesswoman, author, and speaker. Heffernan posits that "For good ideas and true innovation, you need human interaction, conflict, argument, debate."

Human interaction, conflict, argument, and debate to generate innovative ideas define AP Seminar. This course offers you the opportunity to research issues *you* find important and argue positions and solutions *you* deem appropriate. To develop the skills to craft effective arguments, you will learn how to analyze another person's research, line of reasoning, and the effectiveness of the support the author uses. In addition, you will work on writing your own arguments by focusing on how to most effectively research a topic, craft a thesis, use evidence to support your claims, organize your thoughts, vary your sentences, embed quotations smoothly into your pieces, enhance your vocabulary, and argue your perspective using a scholarly tone.

The most exciting aspect of this course is the autonomy you have when designing and executing your research to build well-developed arguments. After you acquire the foundational skills needed to analyze others' work and write your arguments, you will receive a great deal of freedom to research topics you deem important.

Active participation is a must. Expect a lot of cooperative learning to take place throughout the year. Group work is a time for you to engage in constructive discussions, produce multimedia presentations with your peers, and share your thoughts and opinions. Class expectations are high; it is up to you to reach them.

Classroom Procedures

Rules:

- Respect yourself and your peers.
- Strive to grow, but do not try to be perfect—it's impossible.
- Work diligently in class and at home to complete assignments on time and well.
- Be honest. Do not cheat.
- Come to class prepared (pen, paper, charged Chromebook, etc.).
- If AP Seminar work is confusing or overwhelming, talk to me.

Reading Assignments: You are responsible for completing each reading assignment on time. You will mainly evaluate non-fiction, such as articles, journals, speeches, graphs, illustrations, and documentaries. To broaden your perspective as a reader and thinker, you will explore topics through different lenses: cultural and social, artistic and philosophical, ethical, political and historical, futuristic, environmental, economic, and scientific. Also, you will further analyze topics not only through various lenses but also through different perspectives. Another goal of our reading is to distinguish between credible and non-credible sources. By accomplishing the goals above, you will enhance your ability to argue your perspective and comprehend other points of view.

Research: To argue from a knowledgeable and credible position, you must gather information from a variety of reliable sources. Researching is probably the most challenging part of this course. It requires persistence because you have to (1) find potential sources in a database and on the web; (2) annotate the documents; (3) discard irrelevant sources; (4) modify your research as you continue to learn about your topic, and (5) organize the sources into coherent lenses and perspectives to begin formulating your unique argument on the topic. Research is grunt work, but it is necessary to write a successful paper. You will complete a research tracker for every major project to show and organize your work.

Writing Assignments: To improve your writing abilities, you will complete various writing assignments and exercises. While writing major essays, you will have the opportunity to complete the writing process in class, which means you will be able to plan, draft, revise, edit, and publish your work during school hours. However, if the time given in class is not enough to finish your work, you are responsible for completing it at home. Grammar will be taught as needed: I will identify common grammatical errors made in class and teach mini-lessons on how to fix them.

All formal papers must follow the APA format and be typed, double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12-point font, and stapled.

Presentations: To reinforce 21st-century skills, you will have multiple opportunities to publicly share and defend your perspective on topics. You will create multimedia presentations using Google Slides and present your arguments to your peers cogently and effectively to inform and persuade them. Also, you will partake in debates and symposiums as other ways to express yourself. While many people, especially students, avoid speaking publicly since it evokes gut-wrenching angst, it is a discomfort that must be conquered because it is an inevitable situation one faces—on more than one occasion—during life. If you fear public speaking, do not fear it in this class. You will be afforded a safe environment free of negative criticism and given ample opportunities to practice.

Major Assignments: Major assignments will be collected at the beginning of the period on the assigned due date. They must be stapled and printed. **Two** points will be deducted for unstapled work. **Ten** percent will be deducted from the final grade for each day an assignment is late. If you miss a class when an assignment is due, you are still responsible for submitting it in Google Classroom and TurnItIn at the beginning of the day. If you cut class on the day an assignment is due, you will lose **30** points. If an assignment is more than three days late, it will not be graded, and you will receive a zero. Excused late work will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

If you miss class on a day you are to present without providing a legitimate excuse, you will receive a zero for that assignment.

Grading Policy: Your overall grade for the quarter is summative, so every assignment is worth some points. At the end of the quarter, all of the points you earned are added up and divided by the total points of each assignment.

- Tests / Essays = 100-200 points
- Quizzes / Paragraphs = 25-75 points
- Classwork / Homework = 5-10 points

More on Grading: Most major writing assignments will be graded using the AP rubrics associated with the AP Seminar tasks. I use a code system of numbers and letters when grading written work. You will receive a detailed explanation of these codes. Just know that when you receive work back with these codes, you will have to correct the identified mishaps. This practice will help you become conscious of your weaknesses and ultimately help you become a better writer.

I encourage you to set up a meeting with me to discuss any of your work. I find that students understand their grades more when I conference one-on-one with them.

Plagiarism and AI Policy: Please read the College Board plagiarism and AI policies that I distribute separately. These policies apply to all coursework in this class, not just to AP Seminar Performance Tasks 1 and 2. Students are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity in every assignment, whether minor or major. **Failure to follow these policies will result in a grade of zero for the assignment in question.** These rules ensure fairness and authenticity for all work submitted. **In addition to the College Board policies, note that students will receive zeros for doing any of the following:**

- Submitting someone else's writing (even with small changes).
- Having a friend, tutor, or family member complete or heavily edit assignments.
- Using assignments from previous years, classes, or siblings—even if they are your own past work—is not acceptable without my permission.
- Relying on AI or advanced grammar tools to rewrite sentences or restructure responses.

Extra Help: Students may schedule appointments with me before school, after school, or during a shared free period.

AP Seminar Assessment Overview:

Practice Projects

Before beginning the official AP tasks, you will complete:

- Practice Individual Research Report (IRR) – to build skills in developing a narrow research question, researching credible sources, writing cogently, and citing.
- Practice Individual Written Argument (IWA) – to practice writing a sustained, evidence-based argument using credible sources that you collect during the research process.
- Practice AP Seminar End-of-Course exam tasks that require you to evaluate an argument and write a synthesis argument essay.

These practice projects will prepare you for the official AP assessments.

Major AP Assessments (that begin in December)

Task 1: Team Project and Presentation (20% of Your Overall AP Score)

Individual Research Report (IRR)	50% of 20%
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Team Multimedia Presentation (TMP) and Defense	50% of 20%
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Task 2: Individual Research-Based Essay and Presentation (35% of Your Overall AP Score)

Individual Written Argument (IWA)	70% of 35%
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Individual Multimedia Presentation (IMP)	20% of 35%
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Oral Defense (two questions from the teacher)	10% of 35%
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AP Seminar End-of-Course Exam (45% of Your Overall AP Score)

Part A - Evaluating an argument	30% of 45%
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Part B – Synthesis Argument Essay	70% of 45%
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Academic Integrity and Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policies¹

AP Capstone Policy on Plagiarism and Falsification or Fabrication of Information

A student who fails to acknowledge the source or author of any and all information or evidence taken from the work of someone else through citation, attribution or reference in the body of the work, or through a bibliographic entry, will receive a score of 0 on that [assignment.] In AP Seminar, a team of students that fails to properly acknowledge sources or authors on the Team Multimedia Presentation will receive a group score of zero for that assignment of the Team Project and Presentation.

A student who incorporates falsified or fabricated information (e.g. evidence, data, sources, and/or authors) will receive a score of 0 on that assignment. In AP Seminar, a team of students that incorporates falsified or fabricated information in the Team Multimedia Presentation will receive a group score of 0 for that assignment of the Team Project and Presentation.

AP Capstone Policy on Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Definition of Generative AI in English Courses

Generative AI tools use predictive technology to produce new text, charts, images, audio, video, etc. This includes not only ChatGPT and similar Large Language Models (LLMs), but also many writing assistants or plug-ins that are built on this or similar AI technologies [such as Grammarly].

Policy on Acceptable Generative AI Use

Generative AI tools must be used ethically, responsibly, and intentionally to support student learning, not to bypass it. Accordingly, all [assignments] submitted in AP Seminar [...] must be the student's own work. **[Students who violate this policy will receive a score of 0 on that assignment.]** While students are permitted to use generative AI tools consistent with this policy, their use is optional and not mandatory.

Students can use generative AI tools as optional aids for exploration of potential topics of inquiry, initial searches for sources of information, confirming their understanding of a complex text, or checking their writing — but not rewriting — for grammar and tone. However, students must read primary and secondary sources directly, perform their own analysis and synthesis of evidence, and make their own choices on how to communicate effectively both in their writing and presentations. Students may not use generative AI tools to write or create their assignments for them. It remains the student's responsibility to engage deeply with credible, valid sources and

¹ *AP Seminar Course and Exam Description* (pp. 45–48), 2024 College Board.

integrate diverse perspectives when working on the performance tasks. Students must complete interim “checkpoints” with their teacher to demonstrate genuine engagement with the tasks.

The following table describes what constitutes acceptable use of generative AI at different phases of the work to complete the performance tasks.

Phase of Work	Acceptable Use	Unacceptable Use
Exploring ideas to develop and refine an area of inquiry	Using generative AI tools to get a sense of existing debates on an issue, potential sub-topics, or what is generally already widely known about a topic.	Taking the output of generative AI tools uncritically, such as using AI to generate a research question or thesis, without engaging with the actual research or relying solely on generative AI as a source of information about a topic.
Finding sources	☐ Using generative AI to find authors, organizations, publications, or sources that may be pertinent to the area of inquiry, so that the student can then locate and read those perspectives directly. ☐ Asking for recommendations on related sources to further explore the topic or address gaps in research. NOTE: Not all AI tools are the same in terms of the likelihood they will provide output with credible sources. For example, AI-powered search engines for research databases draw from vetted sources, whereas ChatGPT does not necessarily differentiate. Students must review output with a skeptical, critical eye to be sure any suggested sources are real, credible, and relevant to their inquiry.	Using a list of sources generated by AI without going to the original sources and reviewing the content.

Phase of Work	Acceptable Use	Unacceptable Use
Summarizing and/or interpreting sources	Using generative AI to help develop understanding of complex texts by: ☐ Requesting help with understanding complex vocabulary or sentence structures in a source. ☐ Asking for clarification on a confusing concept or passage in a source. NOTE: Students should always read the original text of the sources they intend to use to ensure they are accurately understanding and utilizing the evidence from those sources in their work.	☐ Generating a summary or paraphrasing of the source instead of reading it. ☐ Requesting direct quotes or citations from a source to use as evidence without independently identifying them. ☐ Copying and pasting AI generated source summaries into the final draft.
Synthesizing ideas and information from sources into a literature review, report, or argument	No acceptable use. NOTE: Students will be asked questions in the checkpoints (AP Seminar) to ensure they have done this work themselves.	Asking generative AI to: ☐ Compare or contrast sources and/or generate a review of literature. ☐ Synthesize common or contrasting elements from within a source or across multiple sources. ☐ Develop statements or paragraphs that put sources in conversation.
Drafting or outlining a paper	Seeking guidance on general best practices in how to structure a research paper, essay, or report. NOTE: Students will be asked questions (on the reasoning underpinning their choices for structure and content) in the checkpoints to ensure that they have done this work themselves.	☐ Asking generative AI to produce an outline or draft of a specific paper. ☐ Requesting generative AI to write all or part of the paper. ☐ Using writing generated by AI in the final draft.

Phase of Work	Acceptable Use	Unacceptable Use
Revising a paper	☐ Using spell or grammar checkers. ☐ Asking for feedback on style and tone (students must make deliberate choices on what feedback to incorporate).	☐ Accepting AI-generated suggestions for revisions of written work without critically evaluating such contributions. ☐ Incorporating into student submissions new sections of text suggested by generative AI.
Creating Citations / Bibliography	☐ Seeking guidance on how to cite or check citations. ☐ Generating a draft of the bibliographic listing of citations or checking the format of a student-generated draft of the bibliographic listing of citations.	☐ Using AI to generate citations without having directly studied the original sources. ☐ Relying on generative AI to create the bibliographic listing of citations without then checking the accuracy of the format.
Developing Presentations	☐ Seeking general guidance on effective presentations. ☐ Generating initial ideas for key points, sequence, or visuals for presentations.	☐ Uncritically using AI to produce the key points, visuals, or structure for presentations. ☐ Using AI to generate a script that is memorized or read for the presentation.
Preparing for Oral Defense	☐ No acceptable use.	☐ Using AI to generate possible answers to potential oral defense questions (and memorizing or reading them).

Required Checkpoints and Affirmations

To ensure students are not using generative AI to bypass work, students must complete interim “checkpoints” with their teacher to demonstrate genuine engagement with the tasks. AP Seminar [...] students will need to complete the relevant checkpoints successfully to receive a score for their performance tasks. Teachers must affirm, to the best of their knowledge, that students completed the checkpoints authentically in the AP Digital Portfolio. Failure to complete the checkpoints will result in a score of 0 on the associated task.

In AP Seminar, teachers assess the authenticity of student work based on checkpoints that take the form of short conversations with students during which students make their thinking and decision-making visible (similar to an oral defense). These checkpoints should occur during the sources and research phase (IRR and IWA), and argument outline phase (IWA only).

AP Seminar [...] teachers are also required to affirm, to the best of their knowledge, that the student’s final submission is authentic student work.

College Board reserves the right to investigate submissions where there is evidence of the inappropriate use of generative AI as an academic integrity violation and request from students copies of their interim work for review.