

A.P. SEMINAR – CAPSTONE YEAR 1

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

“AP Seminar is a foundational course that engages students in cross-curricular conversations that explore the complexities of academic and real-world topics and issues by analyzing divergent perspectives. Using an inquiry framework, students practice reading and analyzing articles, research studies, and foundational, literary, and philosophical texts; listening to and viewing speeches, broadcasts, and personal accounts; and experiencing artistic works and performances. Students learn to synthesize information from multiple sources, develop their own perspectives in research-based written essays, and design and deliver oral and visual presentations, both individually and as part of a team. Ultimately, the course aims to equip students with the power to analyze and evaluate information with accuracy and precision in order to craft and communicate evidence-based arguments.”¹

COURSE FRAMEWORK:

Q – Question and Explore: Questioning begins with an initial exploration of complex topics or issues. Perspectives and questions emerge that spark one’s curiosity, leading to an investigation that challenges and expands the boundaries of one’s current knowledge.

U – Understand and Analyze: Understanding various perspectives requires contextualizing arguments and evaluating the author’s claims and lines of reasoning.

E – Evaluate Multiple Perspectives: Evaluating an issue involves considering and evaluating multiple perspectives both individually and in comparison to one another.

S – Synthesize Ideas: Synthesizing others’ ideas with one’s own may lead to new understandings and is the foundation of a well-reasoned argument that conveys one’s perspective.

T – Team, Transform, and Transmit: Teaming allows one to combine personal strengths and talents with those of others to reach a common goal. Transformation and growth occur upon thoughtful reflection. Transmitting requires the adaptation of one’s message based on audience and context.”²

COURSE CONTENT:

“Students engage in conversations about complex academic and real-world issues through a variety of lenses, considering multiple points of view. [We will] choose one or more appropriate themes that allow for deep interdisciplinary exploration based on:

- Concepts or issues from [the AP Government & Politics] courses
- Student interests
- Local and/or civic issues
- Academic problems or questions
- Global or international topics”³

“Exploring different points of view and making connections across disciplines are fundamental components of the AP Seminar experience. Students consider each topic through a variety of lenses and from multiple perspectives, many of which are divergent or competing. Analyzing

¹ *AP Seminar Course Overview*,

<http://media.collegeboard.com/digitalServices/pdf/ap/ap-capstone/ap-seminar-course-overview.pdf>

² *Id.*

³ *Id.*

topics through multiple lenses aids in interdisciplinary understanding and helps students gain a rich appreciation for the complexity of important issues. [We will] explore [topics] through several of the following lenses:

- Cultural and social
- Artistic and philosophical
- Political and historical
- Environmental
- Economic
- Scientific
- Futuristic
- Ethical^{2,4}

AP Capstone Policy on Plagiarism and Falsification or Fabrication of Information

Participating teachers shall inform students of the consequences of plagiarism and instruct students to ethically use and acknowledge the ideas and work of others throughout their course work. The student's individual voice should be clearly evident, and the ideas of others must be acknowledged, attributed, and/or cited.

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 particular component of the AP Seminar and/or AP Research Performance Task. 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 0 for that component 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 particular component of the AP Seminar and/or AP Research Performance Task. 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 component of the Team Project and Presentation.

Course Outline:

Unit 1: Introduction to QUEST (8/14-10/9)

Enduring Understandings:

- 1.3: The investigative process is aided by the effective organization, management, and selection of sources and information. Using appropriate technologies and tools helps the researcher become more efficient, productive, and credible.
- 2.1: Authors express their perspectives and arguments through their works. The first step in evaluating an author's perspective or argument is to comprehend it. Such comprehension requires reading and thinking critically.
- 2.2: Authors choose evidence to shape and support their arguments. Readers evaluate the line of reasoning and evidence to determine to what extent they believe or accept an argument.

⁴ *Id.*

- 2.3: Arguments have implications.
- 3.1: Different perspectives often lead to competing and alternate arguments. The complexity of an issue emerges when people bring these differing, multiple perspectives to the conversation about it.
- 3.2: Not all arguments are equal; some arguments are more credible/valid than others. Through evaluating others' arguments, personal arguments can be situated within a larger conversation.
- 4.1: People express their ideas, points of view, perspectives, and conclusions through arguments. Crafting an argument requires a clear line of reasoning, considering audience, purpose, and context.
- 4.2: Evidence is strategically selected to support a line of reasoning that appeals to or influences others.
- 5.1: How an argument is presented affects how people interpret or react to it.

Components of arguments (Claim, Warrant, & Impact)

LO: 4.2B, 5.1A, 5.1B

EK: 4.2B1, 5.1A1, 5.1A2, 5.1B4

Identifying main points, theses, and arguments

LO: 2.1A, 2.1B

EK: 2.1A1, 2.1A2, 2.1A3, 2.1A4, 2.1B1, 2.1B2, 2.1B3

Evaluating and comparing evidence (Who wrote it, how, and when?)

LO: 1.3C, 2.2B

EK: 1.3C1, 1.3C2, 1.3C3, 1.3C4, 2.2B1, 2.2B2, 2.2B4

Test 1: End of Course Exam Section 1, Part A Simulation

Discussion and reflection on Section 1, Part A responses

Evaluating and comparing arguments

LO: 2.2A, 2.2B, 2.2C, 2.3A, 2.3B, 3.1A, 3.2A

EK: 2.2A1, 2.2A2, 2.2A3, 2.2B3, 2.2B5, 2.2C1, 2.3A1, 2.3B1, 3.1A1, 3.1A2, 3.2A1, 3.2A2

Test 2: End of Course Exam Section 1, Part B Simulation

Discussion and reflection on Section 1, Part B responses

Using sources to construct your own position and arguments

LO: 4.1A, 4.2A, 4.2B

EK: 4.1A1, 4.1A2, 4.1A3, 4.1A4, 4.1A5, 4.1A6, 4.1A7, 4.1A8, 4.1A9, 4.2A2, 4.2A3, 4.2A4, 4.2B1

Test 3: End of Course Exam Section 2 Simulation

Discussion and reflection on Section 2 responses

Theme 1: Citizenship and Gun Violence

Stimulus: Various Political Cartoons and Art Works based off of Theme (Artistic Work or Performance)

How often do students Use Guns in Self Defense?, Rick T. Wilking, NPR (Article or Research Study)

The Myth Behind Gun Ownership, Evan Defilipis and Devin Hughes, Politico (Article or Research Study)

The GOP's Favorite Gun Academic is a Fraud, Evan Defilipis, Devin Huges, Politico (Article or Research Study)

Defensive Gun Use in Not a Myth. Gary Kleck, Politico (Article or Research Study)
Defensive Gun use is More than Shooting Bad Guys James Agressi, FEE.org (Article or Research Study)

Trump and Gun Rights: Keep Your Promises Mr. President, David B. Kopel, National Review (Article or Research Study)

We Call BS, Speech by Emma Gonzalez (Speeches, broadcasts or Personal Account)

Banning Assault Weapons Works, Joe Biden, NY Times OP-ED (Article or Research Study and Speeches, broadcasts or Personal Account)

Has the Brady Act Been Successful? Duke Today Staff (Article or Research Study)

The Effectiveness of Legislation Controlling Gun Use, Ik-Whan Kwon and Danial Baack, American Journal of Economics and Sociology (Article or Research Study)

The US Deceleration of Independence (Foundational, Literary or Philosophical Text)

The US Bill of Rights (Foundational, Literary or Philosophical Text)

Activities:

-Examine various artworks relating to them; discuss what each one is saying about the issue to elicit understanding of artwork and arguments

-Examine and discuss sample of End of Year Exam Part A as a class, discuss the various components and Rubric

-Evaluating arguments in written works: Class Reads Opinion Piece together, collectively determine exact nature of writers Argument, students individually evaluate an article for assessment (End of Year Exam Part A Q1)

-Establishing line of reasoning: As a class, identify claims within a written argument, collectively establish connections, students individually evaluate an article for assessment (End of Year Exam Part A Q2)

-Evaluating Evidence Reevaluate previous articles, look at specific examples of effective use of evidence and questionable use of evidence, students individually evaluate an article for assessment (End of Year Exam Part A Q3)

-Compare opposing viewpoints on gun issue, do SOAPStone analysis and compare perspectives while also evaluating main arguments, line or reasoning and evidence provided.

-Comparing different aspects of issue, students compare different articles and categorize into different types of perspectives on the issue, i.e. policy aspects, economic aspects, rights aspects, students debate the relative merits of Argument, LoR and Evidence

Students examine foundational Philosophical texts (Deceleration of Independence, Bill of Rights) and examine previously examined opinion pieces to find explicit and implicit references

-Introduction to academic articles. Class collectively examines scholarly Journal article on the subject and discusses how it compares to other types of information

-Direct Instruction of APA Citation Methods and Importance and Collective Understanding of Plagiarism Policies

Unit 2: Research, Synthesis, and Presentation (10/14-12/5)

Enduring Understandings:

- 1.1: Personal interest and intellectual curiosity lead to investigation of topics or issues that may or may not be clearly defined. A good question explores the complexity of an issue or topic. Further inquiry can lead to an interesting conclusion, resolution, or solution. Sometimes this inquiry leads to research and unexpected paths.
- 1.2: New knowledge builds on prior knowledge. Strengthening understanding of a concept or issue requires questioning existing knowledge, using what is known to discover what is not known, and connecting new knowledge to prior knowledge.
- 1.3: The investigative process is aided by the effective organization, management, and selection of sources and information. Using appropriate technologies and tools helps the researcher become more efficient, productive, and credible.
- 1.4: There are multiple ways to investigate problems and issues. The question asked determines the kind of inquiry.
- 4.2: Evidence is strategically selected to support a line of reasoning that appeals to or influences others.
- 4.3: Achievement of new understandings involves the careful consideration of existing knowledge, imagination, innovation, and risk taking and incorporates personally generated evidence.
- 4.4: Innovative solutions and arguments identify and challenge assumptions, acknowledge the importance of content, imagine and explore alternatives, and engage in reflective skepticism.
- 5.1: How an argument is presented affects how people interpret or react to it.
- 5.2: Teams are most effective when they draw on the diverse perspectives, skills, and backgrounds of team members to address complex, open-ended problems.
- 5.3: Reflection increases learning, self-awareness, and personal growth through the slowing down of thinking processes to identify and evaluate personal conclusions and their implications.

Theme: Student Choice

Stimulus: Student Choice, But texts will include Articles, Philosophical works, Speeches, Visual Art, and Scholarly Journal Articles as well as other types

Activities

-Introduction End of Year Exam Part B, students will engage with task and assignment

-Build a Part B, Students will find materials based around theme to make a Part B

- Direct Instruction of Research Techniques (Use of UBESCO, Advanced Google searches etc.)
- Direct Instruction of APA Citation Methods and Importance and Collective Understanding of Plagiarism Policies
- Developing Questions, Students will come up with research questions which are then critiqued and reevaluated as a class
- Students work in teams to develop research questions while also individually refining them after evaluation

Research skills

LO: 1.3A, 1.3B, 4.2A

EK: 1.3A1, 1.3B1, 1.3B2, 4.2A1

Doing background research

LO: 1.1A, 1.2A

EK: 1.1A1, 1.2A1, 1.2A2, 1.2A3

Formulating research questions

LO: 1.1B, 1.4A

EK: 1.1B1, 1.4A1

Researching specific perspectives

LO: 1.1B, 4.2A

EK: 1.1B2, 4.2A1

Citation

LO: 4.2C

EK: 4.2C2, 4.2C3, 4.2C4

Assessment 1: Annotated Bibliography

The role of reflection and revision

LO: 5.3A, 5.3B

EK: 5.3A1, 5.3B1, 5.3B2

Drawing conclusions, making recommendations

LO: 4.3A, 4.4A

EK: 4.3A1, 4.4A1

Assessment 2: Policy Memo (Background, Issues, Recommendation) – 500 words

Effective presentation skills

LO: 5.1B, 5.1C, 5.2A, 5.2B

EK: 5.1B1, 5.1B2, 5.1B3, 5.1C1, 5.2A1, 5.2B1, 5.2B2, 5.2B3, 5.2B4

Assessment 3: Extemporaneous Speeches – 30 minutes to research and prepare a 7 minute speech answering a question related to current events

Effective use of media

LO: 5.1A

EK: 5.1A3, 5.1A4

Assessment 4: Group Presentation Simulation – 600 word individual report, 1,500 word group report, 4-5 minute presentation, 400 word reflection

Unit 3: Performance Assessment Task 1 (12/8-1/30)

Peer review, class discussion throughout

Unit 4: Performance Assessment Task 2 (2/2-3/24)

Peer review, class discussion throughout

Unit 5: End of Year Exam Review (4/6-5/5)

Review of course skills

Practice exams

Unit 6: Capstone Year 2 Preparation (5/5-6/5)

Identifying areas of interest

Exploring possible research questions

Meeting with possible research mentors

COURSE TEXTS:

All materials will be provided digitally by the instructor.

KEY ASSIGNMENTS:**Reading:**

Students will be assigned daily readings, and will be expected to be able to discuss that material at the next class. Students are also expected to keep up with, and be able to discuss, current events, by reading the top stories on at least one major international news site each day.

Recommendations include *The New York Times* (<http://www.nytimes.com/>), *The Washington Post* (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/>), *Al Jazeera* (<http://www.aljazeera.com/>), and *BBC News* (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/>). Specific articles from these sources will also be assigned regularly throughout the course.

Team Project and Presentation:

Students will work in teams of three to identify, investigate, analyze, and evaluate an academic or real-world problem, question, or issue. Each team designs and/or considers options, alternatives, and approaches and develops a written report and multimedia presentation to communicate its conclusion, solution, or recommendation.

Step 1: Identify initial formulation of research question: **Due 12/12**

Step 2: Individually investigating an approach, perspective, or lens on the issue. Write a report (1,200 words) presenting your findings and analysis to the group: **Due 1/16**

Step 3: Working collaboratively, considering all the research and analyses from individual team members for the purpose of proposing or creating a solution, conclusion, or recommendation. Write a group report (3,000 words): **Due 1/23**

Step 4: Developing an 8-10 minute presentation, delivering it to an audience using appropriate media: **Due 1/30**

Step 5: Writing an individual reflection on the project as a whole: **Due 2/2**

Grading:

Steps 2 & 5: 25% of project grade

Step 3: 50% of project grade

Step 4: 25% of project grade

Individual Research-Based Essay and Presentation:

You will have 30 school days to identify a research question prompted by source material provided by the College Board, gather additional information, develop an argument, write your essay, and create a presentation, which you will be called upon to defend.

Step 1: Release source material: 2/2

Step 2: Compose an initial formulation of a research question: **Due 2/6**

Step 3: Write an essay (2,000 words) answering the research question: **Due 3/17**

Step 4: Developing a 6-8 minute oral/visual presentation: **Due 3/24**

Grading:

Step 3 – 60% of project grade

Step 4 – Individual Presentation: 30% of project grade

Step 4 – Oral Defense of Presentation: 10% of project grade

Tests/Assessments:

Exams will be given and projects assigned throughout each semester in order to assess the extent to which students have mastered the skills being developed during the course. By using the same format as the End-of-Course Exam, tests will also ensure students are thoroughly prepared therefor.

End-of-Course Exam:

Section 1, Part A (30 minutes, 25% of exam score): Students are provided with an article. They

1. Identify the author's argument, main idea, or thesis.
2. Identify the reasons the author cites and explain how he establishes his line of reasoning.
3. Evaluate the effectiveness of the evidence the author uses to support his argument.

Section 1, Part B (60 minutes, 35% of exam score): Students are provided with two articles.

They write an essay that evaluates and compares the effectiveness of the two arguments. They should focus their essay on the relevance and credibility of the evidence each presents and the validity of their lines of reasoning.

Section 2 (90 minutes, 40% of exam score): Students are provided with four sources that present multiple perspectives on the same issue or topic. They read the sources carefully, focusing on both the thematic connection among them and the different perspective each represents. Then, they write a logically organized, well-reasoned, and well-written argument that presents their own perspective on the thematic link you identified. You must incorporate at least two of the sources provided. You may also use the other provided sources or draw upon your own knowledge.

GRADING POLICY:

Homework: 10% of Course Grade (Short assignments given only occasionally.)

Team Project & Presentation: 25% of AP Score

Individual Research-Based Essay & Presentation: 35% of AP Score

Participation and Other Presentations: 30% of Course Grade

Tests/Assessments: 60% of Course Grade

End of Course Exam: 40% of AP Score

IMPORTANT NOTE: STUDENTS WILL RECEIVE **BOTH** COURSE AND AP GRADES FOR **BOTH** THE TEAM PROJECT/PRESENTATION AND THE INDIVIDUAL ESSAY/PRESENTATION. THESE GRADES WILL BE BASED ON DIFFERENT RUBRICS, AND ***THE COURSE GRADE IS NOT INTENDED TO REFLECT A PREDICTED AP SCORE***. AP SCORES WILL NOT BE DISCLOSED UNTIL AFTER THE END OF COURSE EXAM.

ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY:

The instructor takes academic honesty extremely seriously, and reminds students of their obligations under the school's honor code. Consequently, academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. **NO CREDIT WILL BE GIVEN FOR ANY WORK PRODUCED AS A RESULT OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY.** Subsequent violations **WILL** result in more serious academic consequences, including failure of the course.

Academic dishonesty is defined as any kind of cheating that occurs in relation to an assignment or class activity.

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to:

1. Plagiarism - The adoption or reproduction of ideas, words, or statements of another person without due acknowledgment.
2. Self-Plagiarism - The submission of the same work for academic credit more than once without permission.
3. Fabrication - The falsification of data, information, or citations in any assignment or class activity.
4. Deception - Providing false information to the instructor concerning any assignment or class activity. This includes giving a false excuse for missing a deadline or falsely claiming to have submitted work.
5. Cheating - Any attempt to give or obtain assistance in any assignment or class activity without permission.
6. Sabotage - Acting to prevent others from completing their work. This includes cutting pages out of library books or willfully disrupting the work of others.

(Adapted from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Academic_dishonesty, last accessed 8/16/07)

The AP score for work submitted as part of the Team Project & Presentation and the Individual Research-Based Essay and Presentation will also be subject to the following AP Capstone Plagiarism Policy, as outlined by the College Board:

“A student or team who fails to acknowledge (i.e., through citation, through attribution, by reference, and/or through acknowledgement in a bibliographic entry) the source or author of any and all information or evidence taken from the work of someone else will receive a zero on that particular component of the AP Seminar and/or AP Research assessment.”

Students should note the AP Capstone Plagiarism Policy is less robust than the course's academic honesty policy, and that work that may be eligible for an AP score other than zero may not earn a student any points towards their course grade.