

AP English Literature Fall Syllabus

Instructor: Lilianna Meldrum Serbicki

Live Time Slot: THURSDAYS AT 2PM EST. These meetings will consist of lecture material AND interactive discussion time with fellow students and myself. All course meetings are strongly suggested but optional and will be recorded for your listening convenience. **Students who are unable to attend live lectures MUST listen to lectures asynchronously.**

Required Texts:

Drama:

Macbeth by William Shakespeare (buy or rent any edition)

Fiction:

Persuasion by Jane Austen (buy or rent any edition)

Frankenstein by Mary Shelley (buy or rent any edition)

Brave New World by Aldous Huxley (buy or rent any edition)

A Room with a View by E.M. Forster (buy or rent any edition)

A Raisin in the Sun by Lorraine Hansberry

Short Stories:

Various Short Stories by Gabriel García Márquez, Stephen Crane, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and Flannery O'Connor (available online; I will provide)

Poetry: Various poems by T.S. Eliot, William Shakespeare, W. B. Yeats, John Donne, Emily Dickinson, Elizabeth Bishop, Billy Collins, and others (all available online).

Required Reference Texts:

5 Steps to a 5 AP English Literature. 2019 Edition by Estelle Rankin.

Scholarly articles, nonfiction pieces, and resources that I will provide.

SUGGESTED BUT OPTIONAL REFERENCE TEXTS

Reading Like a Writer by Francine Prose (ISBN-13: 978-0060777050)

The Blue Book of Grammar and Punctuation: An Easy-to-Use Guide with Clear Rules and Real World Examples (ISBN-13: 978-1118785560)

SUGGESTED BUT OPTIONAL Summer Reading from our reference list:

Chapters 1-2 of *Reading Like a Writer* by Francine Prose

The Blue Book of Grammar and Punctuation: An Easy-to-Use Guide with Clear Rules and Real World Examples

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This class is intended for 10th, 11th and 12th graders who possess a love of story and energetic discussion. While this course is designed to prepare students to successfully take the Advanced Placement English Literature exam, the material is structured to encourage an ongoing love of writing and in-depth textual analysis. The ability to **thoughtfully evaluate what we read** is one of the best skills to develop in high school and beyond! I believe the best way to develop writing structure and style is through the study of storytelling and narrative. Humanity connects and communicates through stories, characters, and imaginative worlds. The pieces chosen for this course reflect a wide variety of tastes and themes; there is something here for a lover of any genre and style, from classic drama to biting satire, from gritty realism to nuanced explorations of interpersonal relationships. I have chosen classic works of fiction from a variety of time periods and backgrounds to help students explore a three-dimensional, vibrant scope of humanity.

My goals in AP English Literature are to:

1. Guide students as they master a wide breadth of literary analysis concepts and elements that help us to interpret and enjoy the narratives we read. 2. Help students pursue knowledge and creativity in an active manner. 3. Create a community of rich discussion and exchange of ideas.

I work to achieve these goals through many activities, including but not limited to:

- Hosting OPTIONAL live, interactive chats via the ZOOM conferencing program. If you are not able to attend live meetings, you may ALWAYS listen to the recordings.
- Providing in-depth written feedback on every essay assignment. I provide regular instruction and feedback in areas such as depth of analysis, organization and structure, balance of generalization and specific detail, effective use of literary elements, correct syntax and grammar, and correct use of a wide-ranging vocabulary and diction.
- Guiding students as they complete assignments that prepare them for each concept and section of the AP Exam, including fiction analysis, poetry analysis, drama analysis, free response, and multiple choice questions. Students who complete all of the preparation assignments I assign feel prepared and ready for success! Please read the student reviews below for detailed feedback from course participants.
- Providing optional creative writing assignments to help students “get involved” and enjoy writing! I have a background in Creative Writing instruction; over the past 8 years, my students (including all course and tutoring students) have won many Silver and Gold Keys in the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards.
- Moderating an interactive, week-long “Dinner Party” project each spring. This is a lively website forum discussion that involves students “interacting” as authors and characters we’ve encountered throughout the year. Students interact “in character” and discuss many issues that involve analysis and creativity. This is an excellent

way for students to practice their research skills and develop their ability to see from the point of view of a fictional character – or a classic writer. This is wonderful preparation for the AP Exam!

- This class is designed to be rigorous and exciting, while still flexible.

Weekly assignments may include:

- An optional live discussion.
- Interactive discussion of course texts and concepts in our web forum.
- Short essays and multiple choice quizzes in preparation for the AP exam in May. These assignments are designed to develop the specific skills your student needs!
- Reading assignments ranging from approx. 30-100 pages.
- Optional bonus assignments and an in-depth extra credit vocabulary prompt of the week.
- Longer writing assignments, including a mandatory 10-page midterm literary analysis paper.

TECHNICAL DETAILS:

- Homework will be assigned/due weekly on our course website. I will also send out a weekly homework update email to both students AND parents! I provide regular, clear communication to ensure everyone is “in the loop.”
 - Students will read regular handouts, posts, and activities on the website.
- All homework will be submitted and critiqued via the website.
- **REQUIRED:** High speed internet and Microsoft Office (or equivalent word processing capabilities). You must have the ability to read Word Documents and PDFs.
 - Headset or microphone capabilities suggested, but not required.
- LIVE meetings via the ZOOM Meeting Center.

WEB FORUM DISCUSSION:

This is an ongoing element of class; short discussion questions are posted on our website forum and students discuss (with myself and their peers) thoughtful short-form answers to our course readings. This is an excellent preparation for longer writing assignments and represents a more personal/colloquial writing aspect.

GRADING AND CRITIQUES: Every written composition assignment will include a brief grading rubric. Rubrics may VARY per assignment. I provide critiques of every written composition.

The three rubric categories my essay critiques may address are:

- Structure and Organization. This includes basic logical essay organization (introduction, thesis, body, and conclusion), transitions, and the presence and placement of a thesis.

- **Content and Analysis:** This may include the choice of examples/support, the specificity of analysis, the level of general vs. specific detail, and (if relevant) the strength of the argument.
- **Diction, Grammar, and Syntax:** This includes appropriateness and clarity of vocabulary and tone, strength of basic grammar, and strength and variety of sentence structure.
- All of these concepts are explained, explored, and discussed throughout the year.
- **NOTE:** I will also provide detailed instructions for following basic MLA Academic Formatting in all untimed major essay work.

GRADING AND CRITIQUES:

Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Percentage Grade
A+	98-100
A	93-97
A-	90-92
B+	88-89
B	83-87
B-	80-82
C+	78-79
C	73-77
C-	70-72
D	60-69
F	Below 60

Division/weighting of assignments is organized as follows:

- Short essays, both timed and untimed: 50-100 points each (most are 100).
- Midterm Paper: 200 points.
- Multiple Choice Quizzes (MCQs): 50 points each.
- Extra credit assignments (Vocabulary Prompt of the Week, Points for Peer Comments, etc.): 1 point each.
- Minor/miscellaneous assignments: 2-10 points each.
- Discussion Qs: 5 points per week.

MIDTERM PAPER ASSIGNMENT:

All students must complete a 6-8-page Literary Analysis paper at the end of our first semester. This paper may address a work we read in class OR a classic outside work. This paper evolves through multiple revisions/stages. My feedback is given at each “checkpoint” and students are able to view and discuss the outlines and drafts of their peers. This paper must include at least one outside resource, include a logical organization with a specific thesis and detailed outline, and address ONE of the following topic categories:

1. An in-depth character analysis of a character from a classic work of literature.
2. An in-depth analysis of the relationship between characters from a classic work of literature.
3. An exploration of literary devices, themes, or figurative language in a classic work of literature.
4. Comparing and contrasting two novels, short stories, or characters.
5. An in-depth analysis of the historical or cultural context of a novel or play and how the author uses that context to express their themes.

CONNECTION TO AP EXAM:

Students read excerpts from our reference manual, *5 Steps to a 5 AP Literature*. I also provide my own in-depth handouts regarding AP Exam Format and each essay section of the exam. Our primary AP Literature Prep “Boot Camp” occurs in the spring. The analysis and free response essays completed in response to course content are modeled to prepare students for those respective categories on the AP Exam. We focus primarily on UNTIMED ESSAYS in the fall and TIMED ESSAY WORK in the spring semester. The regular quizzes completed in each module are modeled to prepare students for the AP Exam multiple choice section. In addition to regular course curriculum, students complete: timed essay responses to practice AP prompts from EACH essay category; a variety of short practice AP quizzes; and 3-4 FULL PRACTICE EXAMS.

What is your late work policy?

While I do grant extensions when necessary AND when requested beforehand, please do not request unnecessary extensions. In my experience as a teacher, students who routinely turn in late work and do not stay up to date in their assignments do not do as well in the final AP Exam! Submitting late work hampers your ability to stay on course; in addition, it takes me longer to grade late work. For these reasons, I have the following late work RULES:

- If you request a NECESSARY extension BEFORE the due date, I am happy to grant a consequence-free extension of 1-14 days.
 - Legitimate reasons to request an extension: illness, out-of-town travel, family emergencies and special events (i.e. family weddings, etc.)

- Illegitimate reasons to request an extension: Busy with other schoolwork, forgot a due date, or have a question about the assignment that you did not ask in time. NOTE: All of these reasons may be prevented by reading assignment instructions promptly and managing your time!
- If you DO NOT request an extension BEFOREHAND (i.e. you simply turn in late work without discussing the issue with me), your late work will experience a 24-hour “grace period” (during which it may be received without demerit) and THEN automatically be docked a full grade (in other words, a submission that would otherwise have earned an A- will receive a B-). Comments and critiques on late work will also be brief/minimal due to time constraints.
- I DO NOT accept any work that is submitted more than 2 FULL WEEKS past the due date. Exceptions due to family emergencies or vacation may apply; if you have a situation such as this, please discuss it with me ASAP.

NOTE: Homework is always ASSIGNED on Tuesday mornings and DUE the following Monday night at 11:59PM EST. This results in a Tuesday-Monday work week.

FALL SYLLABUS (NOTE: Your spring syllabus will be sent at the end of our fall semester.)

WEEK 1 – DUE AUGUST 28

- Discussion Qs
- [Read “Bernice Bobs Her Hair” by F. Scott Fitzgerald \(Links to an external site.\)](#) (I will provide). Our discussion will include the social and historical context of this work. • Presentation: Plot Structure.
- Presentation: Diction, Syntax and Figurative Language.

WEEK 2 - DUE SEPTEMBER 4

- Discussion Qs
- [Read “The Open Boat” by Stephen Crane \(Links to an external site.\)](#) (I will provide). My lecture will include the social and historical context of this work.
- Presentation: CHARACTER Analysis.
- Presentation: Writing a Strong Analysis Paragraph
- Suggested Reading: Chapter 1 of 5 Steps to a 5 AP Literature

WEEK 3 - DUE SEPTEMBER 11

- Discussion Qs
- [Excerpts from “The House on Mango Street” by Sandra Cisneros.](#) Our discussion will include the social and historical context of this work.
- Presentation: Building Blocks of an Effective Essay. This presentation addresses logical 5-paragraph essay structure, effective paragraph structure and transitions, and thesis structure and organization. It also includes specific tips for OUTLINING and examples of incomplete vs. effective analysis.
- **ASSIGNMENT: UNTIMED SHORT ANALYSIS ESSAY RESPONSE TO SHORT STORIES.** This essay asks students to respond to one of several analysis questions in a well-organized short essay. Students will be able to choose to analyze any ONE of the three short stories we have discussed. This essay will evolve through two drafts for all students. All analysis essays in this course consist of a thesis, substantial body paragraphs, a clear organizational plan, and several (more than one) textual examples analyzed to support the thesis. Detailed instructions will be provided for this assignment.

WEEK 4 – DUE SEPTEMBER 18

- Discussion Qs
- Read *Persuasion* by Jane Austen, Chapters 1-8. The introductory lecture for this novel includes a discussion of the historical and social context.
- Presentation: NARRATIVE PERSPECTIVE Analysis.
- Complete corresponding MCQs
- Suggested: Read Section II: Elementary Rules of Usage in Strunk and White's Elements of Style
- EXTRA CREDIT for any Jane Austen week: Students write a short inner character reflection from the POV of a minor character in *Persuasion*.

WEEK 5 – DUE SEPTEMBER 25

- Discussion Qs
- Read *Persuasion* by Jane Austen, Chapters 9-16
- Complete corresponding MCQs
- Presentation: Clarity and Style. This presentation focuses on concepts such as Concision, Syntactic Variety and Sentence Structure.

• **ASSIGNMENT: OPTIONAL. COMPLETE ANY BRIEF SUGGESTED REVISIONS TO FIRST SHORT ANALYSIS ESSAY.**

WEEK 6 – DUE OCTOBER 2

- Discussion Qs
- Read *Persuasion* by Jane Austen, Chapters 17-24
- Suggested: Read Section III: Elementary Principles of Composition in Strunk and White's Elements of Style.
- **ASSIGNMENT: UNTIMED PERSUASION ANALYSIS ESSAY**
RESPONSE. Students will respond to their choice of specific analysis prompts that ask them to discuss the literary elements, themes, and characters of *Persuasion*. The student's thesis must be supported with detailed evidence AND/OR specific quotations.
- Suggested: Chapter 4: Section 1 of the Exam: The MCQs in 5 Steps to a 5

WEEK 7 - DUE OCTOBER 9

- Discussion Qs
- Read *Macbeth* Act 1-3. The introductory discussion for this play includes information about Macbeth's historical and social context.
- Presentation: Intro to Drama.
- Suggested: Read Section IV: A Few Matters of Form in Strunk and White's Elements of Style.

WEEK 8: DUE OCTOBER 16

- Discussion Qs
- Read *Macbeth* Act 4-5
- Presentation: DIALOGUE Analysis.
- **Handout: Introduction to the Midterm Paper.** This handout will contain complete instructions for this 8-10 page assignment. Students may choose to write an in depth literary analysis or a short fiction piece for this project.
- Suggested: Read Section VI: Words and Expressions Commonly Misused in Elements of Style.

WEEK 9: DUE OCTOBER 23

- Presentation: CONFLICT Analysis.
- Complete corresponding MCQs
- **ASSIGNMENT: UNTIMED MACBETH ANALYSIS ESSAY OR FICTION**
RESPONSE. Students will respond to an in-depth analysis prompt OR creative fiction prompt in order to discuss Shakespeare's Macbeth. There will be an emphasis on organization, structure, vocabulary, and in-depth analysis. In the analysis essay, the student's thesis must be supported with detailed evidence AND/OR specific quotations. The fiction option will include flexible instructions.
- Suggested: Chapters 5 and 7 (Prose Passage and Free Response Essays) in 5 Steps to a 5 AP Literature.

WEEK 10: DUE OCTOBER 30

- Discussion Qs
- Read *Frankenstein* Chapters 1-12. The introductory lecture for this module includes a discussion of historical and social context.
- Presentation: Symbolism, Motif, and Theme
- EXTRA CREDIT for any *Frankenstein* week: Write a scene from a MINOR character's POV.

WEEK 11: DUE NOVEMBER 6

- Discussion Qs
- Read *Frankenstein* Chapters 13-Epilogue
- **THESIS + OUTLINE of Midterm Lit Paper Due (if preferred, you may submit this the following week).**

WEEK 12: DUE NOVEMBER 13

- **ASSIGNMENT: UNTIMED FRANKENSTEIN ANALYSIS ESSAY OR FICTION**

RESPONSE. Students will respond to an in-depth analysis prompt OR creative fiction prompt in order to discuss Shelley's *Frankenstein*. There will be an emphasis on organization, structure, vocabulary, and in-depth analysis. In the analysis essay, the student's thesis must be supported with detailed evidence AND/OR specific quotations. The fiction option will include flexible instructions.

- Complete Corresponding Frankenstein MCQs

WEEK 13: DUE NOVEMBER 20

- Discussion Qs
- Read Chapters 1-9 of *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley
- Presentation: Dystopian and Speculative Fiction. This presentation focuses on the significance of *imaginative* literature – and how to analyze it!

THANKSGIVING BREAK – 1 WEEK

WEEK 14: DUE DECEMBER 4

- Discussion Qs
- Read Chapters 10-18 of *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley
- **FIRST DRAFT OF MIDTERM PAPER DUE.**

WEEK 15: DUE DECEMBER 11

- **ASSIGNMENT: UNTIMED BRAVE NEW WORLD ANALYSIS ESSAY.** Students who are ready to move on to TIMED AP prep activities may also choose to take this essay as a timed essay. We will discuss your options further this week.
- PRESENTATION: AP Exam Format and Spring Practice Plan
- Live Vocabulary Review Game

WEEK 16: DUE DECEMBER 18

- LIVE DISCUSSION: MIDTERM SUPPORT
- **ASSIGNMENT: COMPLETE AND SUBMIT MIDTERM LITERARY ANALYSIS**

PAPER

WEEKLY SPRING SYLLABUS

WEEK 17 – DUE JANUARY 19

- LIVE DISCUSSION
- Read *A Room with A View* by E.M. Forster Chapters 1-10. The introductory lecture for this module includes a discussion of historical and social context.
- HANDOUT: MOTIF AND SYMBOLISM, PART II

WEEK 18 - DUE JANUARY 26

- LIVE DISCUSSION
- Read *A Room with A View* by E.M. Forster Chapters 11-20
- **HANDOUT: TIMED ESSAY TIME MANAGEMENT AND STRATEGIES**
- **ASSIGNMENT: SHORT 90-MINUTE TIMED ROOM WITH A VIEW ANALYSIS ESSAY RESPONSE. This essay will be critiqued but NOT count toward your final course grade. Relax and have fun! It is a PRACTICE ESSAY! Students will respond to their choice of specific analysis prompts that ask them to discuss the literary devices, themes, and characters of *A Room with a View*. There will be an emphasis on organization, structure, vocabulary, and in-depth analysis.**

WEEK 19 – DUE FEBRUARY 2

- LIVE DISCUSSION
- Begin *Raisin in the Sun* by Lorraine Hansberry. The introductory lecture for this module includes a discussion of the historical and social context of the play.
- Handout: Introduction to *Raisin in the Sun*
- AP DIAGNOSTIC MCQ SECTION

WEEK 20 – DUE FEBRUARY 9

- LIVE DISCUSSION
- Discussion focus: IMPROVING MCQ SKILLS
- Finish reading *Raisin in the Sun* by Lorraine Hansberry

- AP Practice Quiz

WEEK 21 – DUE FEBRUARY 16

- LIVE DISCUSSION
- Handout: How to succeed in the Free-Response Essay Category
- **ASSIGNMENT: TIMED ESSAY RESPONSE TO RAISIN IN THE SUN. Students take a 40-60 minute timed essay and respond to their choice of *analysis* or *free response*. Emphasis on organization, vocabulary, and in-depth analysis is key.**
- AP Practice Quiz

WEEK 22 – DUE FEBRUARY 23

- LIVE DISCUSSION
- Read Poetry: Pre-19th Century
- Complete Corresponding MCQs
- Handout: Introduction to Poetry (additional resources provided as well)
- EXTRA CREDIT: Poetry Exercise: Write Your Own Poem. Students compose an original poem which explores poetic devices (such as metaphor or simile), themes, or motifs inspired by course readings and our discussion.

WEEK 23 – DUE MARCH 2

- LIVE DISCUSSION
- Read Poetry: 19th Century
- AP PRACTICE QUIZ
- **ASSIGNMENT: POETRY TIMED ESSAY RESPONSE. Students take a 40 minute timed essay and respond to their choice of poetry analysis questions. Emphasis on organization, vocabulary, and in-depth analysis is key.**
- Suggested: Read Chapter 6 (The Poetry Essay) in 5 Steps to a 5 AP Literature

WEEK 24 – DUE MARCH 9

- LIVE DISCUSSION
- Read Poetry: Modern
- Complete Corresponding MCQs
- Suggested: Read Chapter 9 (Comprehensive Review - Poetry) in 5 Steps to a 5 AP Literature

WEEK 25 – DUE MARCH 16

- LIVE DISCUSSION
- AP PRACTICE QUIZ
- Read Poetry: Contemporary
- **ASSIGNMENT: POETRY TIMED ESSAY RESPONSE.** Students take a 40 minute timed essay and respond to their choice of poetry analysis questions. **Emphasis on organization, vocabulary, and in-depth analysis is key.**

DUE MARCH 23

- SPRING BREAK

WEEK 26 – DUE MARCH 30

- LIVE DISCUSSION: Working through MCQs live!
- Review Handout: How to succeed in the Free-Response Essay Category
- **ASSIGNMENT: FULL COLLEGE BOARD PRACTICE EXAM RELEASED - DUE APRIL 6!**

WEEK 27 – DUE APRIL 6

- LIVE DISCUSSION
- AP PRACTICE QUIZ
- **ASSIGNMENT: DINNER PARTY WEEK.** Students interact “in character” as AP Literature characters and/or authors and discuss many issues that involve analysis and creativity. This is an excellent way for students to practice their research skills and develop their ability to see from the point of view of a fictional character or a classic writer. This is wonderful preparation for the AP Exam, particularly the free response essay category. Further instructions will be provided.

WEEK 28 – DUE APRIL 13

- LIVE DISCUSSION: Working through MCQs live!
- AP PRACTICE QUIZ

- Website Discussion: Responding to Real Essay Questions
- **ASSIGNMENT: COMPLETE FULL COLLEGE BOARD PRACTICE EXAM 2 EITHER THIS WEEK OR NEXT WEEK.**

WEEK 29 – DUE APRIL 20

- LIVE DISCUSSION
- Concept Review: Analyzing Real Essay Questions
- **ASSIGNMENT: COMPLETE FULL COLLEGE BOARD PRACTICE EXAM 2 IF NOT ALREADY COMPLETED.**

NOTE: ADDITIONAL COLLEGE BOARD PRACTICE EXAMS WILL BE AVAILABLE. I encourage students to work through at least one more practice exam at this point, and I make myself available for support, scoring help if desired, and review assistance.

WEEK 30 – DUE APRIL 27

- LIVE DISCUSSION: Working through MCQs live!
- AP PRACTICE QUIZ
- Discussion: Analyzing Real Essay Questions

WEEK 31 – DUE MAY 4

- LIVE DISCUSSION: Final Live Review
- AP PRACTICE QUIZ
- PRACTICE ACTIVITIES FROM PAST EXAMS
- Discussion: Analyzing Real Essay Questions from Past AP Literature Exams

AP English Literature Exam Date:

English Literature and Composition

Wednesday,

May 6, 2026