

Hello, Class of 2026 Welcome to AP Lit!

This year is significant as you start your transition to life after high school, and I count it a privilege to share this time with you. My hope is that this class will go far beyond the required standards required by the College Board and the state of Georgia but instead become a place where we cheer each other on to finish strong and make the most of your senior year.

We will spend a lot of time in this class reading a variety of texts - old, new, poetry, prose - and writing about these texts. The reading and writing are secondary to the most important work that we will be doing all year - learning how to become better thinkers and considering new thoughts and ideas which will help us grow. I use first person pronouns here because I, like you, will be growing and learning alongside you and often from you. By opening our hearts to poetry and prose and our minds to new ideas found in them or other classmates' thoughts about them, we will finish the year differently than how we began. This is the real goal of education.

We continue to live and go to school in interesting times. This has caused me to rethink my grading practices, specifically assignments that reward compliance as opposed to assignments that facilitate exploration and thinking and the use of technology (or overuse) specifically how AI will shift writing instruction. I would ask that you open your mind to new ideas as well and think about how you best learn and stay engaged; we will discuss these topics the first couple of weeks of school.

What should you know about me? I'm an eternal optimist, lover of the written word, and am passionate about teaching and the next generation (that's you). This is my eighth year at Grady/Midtown. I'm a prolific reader and an active writer with a professional website MuchAdoAboutTeaching.com which provides resources for English teachers across the world. I work part-time for the College Board as a consultant and serve as co-chair on the test development committee (yes, I help write the exam and no, I won't tell you what's on it). On the weekends, I'll be in Piedmont Park with my family and [Freddie the Beagle](#), trying new restaurants (I'm a foodie, any recs?), or cheering on the Crimson Tide. You can find me on [IG](#), [GoodReads](#) which is never up to date, or catching up with friends at a local coffee shop.

Now it's your turn. I would like for you to write a letter to me telling me about you, but like most things in life, there's a twist. Here are three of my favorite poems: "[On Listening to Your Teacher Take Attendance](#)" by Aimee Nezhukumatathil, "[Perhaps the World Ends Here](#)" by Joy Harjo, and "[How to Triumph Like a Girl](#)" by Ada Limon. Read and think about these poems deeply; let them roll around in your mind and your soul. Then write your letter introducing yourself to me using this as a model (style, length, etc.); include your thoughts on ONE of these poems. Remember: "it's not what you look at that matters; it's what you see."

You can turn your letters in on Schoology anytime the first full week of school. If you prefer to handwrite, feel free to do that as well. Also if you're submitting electronically and don't mind, would you please include a picture of yourself so I can learn names and faces faster? I am looking forward to learning with you this year!

Cheering you on, Class of 2026!

Susan Barber