

Course Overview

AP English Literature and Composition is a college-level course that follows the curricular requirements outlined in the College Board's *AP English Course Description*, with a workload consistent with those of undergraduate English courses. In this course you will study novels, drama, poetry, and nonfiction pieces that offer varying views of the human experience. Through close reading of literary texts from different genres and time periods, you will come to your own determinations about what makes great literature, what makes a work a piece of art.

Required Materials:

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| 1. An open mind and an active imagination | 7. A composition notebook or comparably bound journal - preferably college ruled, and <u>absolutely NOT spiral bound</u> |
| 2. Maturity | |
| 3. Motivation | |
| 4. A willingness to take risks | 8. 3-ring binder or other organizational system |
| 5. Writing utensils | |
| 6. sticky notes and highlighters | 9. a sense of humor is an added bonus |

Course Objectives - In this course, you will:

- Improve your close reading and analytical skills
- Develop a deeper understanding of writer's craft and rhetorical strategies including tone, voice, diction and sentence structure
- Effectively explain and support arguments both orally and in writing
- Develop your voice and confidence as a writer
- Continue to grow as a thinker and as a vital and engaged participant
- Stretch imaginative and critical thinking abilities in order to recognize and sustain multiple reactions to literature
- Hone your ability to find and explain (through discussion and writing) what is of value in literature and what makes a work "art"

Class Structure

Class discussions are central to your success, and that of the course. Be prepared to run the class discussion in multiple formats: whole class, in pairs or groups, individually as a participant or facilitator in Socratic circles and similar formats.

Reading Assignments

AP English Literature is a home for readers, and a place to analyze complex texts. The most essential requirement for this course is that you read every assignment. Read it, digest it, and stay on schedule. Particular works will require you to reread portions of the text in order to approach it with new eyes and, possibly, a new interpretation. I recommend that you take notes as you read. Find a system that works for you; the goal is to develop a conversation between you and the text, and then expand that conversation to include the thoughts and reactions of your peers. The study of figurative language, diction, rhetoric, style, structure, language and syntax will be covered and we will adopt the AP vocabulary when interpreting and analyzing literature in both oral and written forms.

Preliminary List of Texts (subject to revision):

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| → <i>Let the Great World Spin</i> – Colum McCann | → <i>Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead</i> – Tom Stoppard |
| → <i>How to Read Literature Like a Professor</i> – Thomas C. Foster | → <i>A Doll's House</i> – Henrik Ibsen |
| → <i>Hamlet</i> – William Shakespeare | → <i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i> – Oscar Wilde |
| → <i>As I Lay Dying</i> – William Faulkner | → <i>All the King's Men</i> – Robert Penn Warren |
| → <i>Age of Innocence</i> – Edith Wharton | → Non-fiction (as supplemental reading) |
| → <i>Ironweed</i> – William Kennedy | → Poetry (poetry explications, supplemental reading, short unit) |
| → <i>A Prayer For Owen Meany</i> – John Irving | → Short fiction |
| → <i>Beloved</i> – Toni Morrison | |
| → <i>Waiting for Godot</i> – Samuel Beckett | |

Assessments - Your grade is calculated on a point system where smaller tasks are worth 10-20 points and larger assessments can be worth 100-300 points. Your grade will be based on:

- **Participation** - Your class participation grade will reflect your ability to do the following: come prepared, volunteer insightful and compelling ideas, offer questions that further discussion and deepen understanding, be actively engaged by listening and responding to your peers, participate without reservation in group activities, be a positive member of our classroom community, and arrive punctually to class.
- **Homework/Classwork** – This includes daily reading and/or short writing assignments.
- **Quizzes** – These can be announced or unannounced. Expect the unannounced. They can range from vocabulary, to the plot of the story we are reading, to a sustained analysis of an instance of writer's craft. The best way to an "A" is to always be prepared.
- **Multiple-Choice Practice** - We will practice taking the test, mostly so that you can see that there are fine nuances that separate the answer you feel is right and your second choice. We'll work on these separately and together and discuss our interpretations. These can count as quiz grades.
- **Writing:**
 - ◆ **Informal Writing/Journal Responses** – You will write responses frequently. These will be less formal and will range in length. These do ask you to support your thoughts with textual evidence. In addition to Writing Responses, I may ask you to confine your thoughts to two pages ("The horror!"). These ask you to be very succinct, but they allow you the chance to push at your concluding statement to get at the "so what" factor. In this concluding statement, which can go as long as you feel necessary beyond the sharp, well-written two pages, you will get at: why your idea matters; what the big, central idea or truth is that you have discovered; and why we must, as your readers, consider it. This is the kind of paper that focuses on ideas and allows you the freedom to truly explore them. This paper gives you strict confines, but in the end, also lets you go.
 - ◆ **In-Class Essays** – You will write timed, in-class essays based on questions from previous AP English Literature and Composition exams. You will be assessed based on the AP scoring guidelines and will receive specific written feedback. You will be graded on content and support as well as organization/clarity, style and mechanics. Original, insightful ideas and strong textual support are central to good writing. Literary analysis will include the study of figurative language, diction, rhetoric, style, structure, language and syntax and how the author's craft helps to make and shape meaning.

◆ **Formal essays** – Formal essays will allow you to focus on the writing process. You will have the chance to workshop your piece with partners and to conference with me.

→ **Poetry explications** – You will write 2-3 page interpretations of a poem frequently throughout the year. It is a hands-on way to reinforce your knowledge and understanding of poetic terms and devices and it is preparation for the AP test. At times, you might be asked to teach the poem to us and tell us about the poet.

→ **Projects** – These will vary in scope and size and allow you to showcase your creativity.

Class Expectations

This is an Advanced Placement class. Expect it to be taught at a college pace. I will always answer any questions that you have but I will not slow the pace of the class. Please come for extra help if you experience difficulty keeping up with the workload in or out of class. I expect a high level of skill and diligence from each of you. My goal is to help you fine tune your reading and writing skills in anticipation of your college career. This goal of mine will not be feasible without work from you. I ask that you to have a willingness to try and a desire to learn.

Try your best. Never give up on a reading assignment. Many times students can figure out the overall message by the end of the reading even if the beginning was confusing. Read all the way through even if you are confused and jot down questions to ask me the next day. I am always ready and willing to help you through an assignment.

Do not let problems or misunderstandings go too far. Come to me as soon as you notice there is a problem. I am always available for extra help. Please make an appointment to see me so that I will be ready to meet with you. Sometimes my schedule corresponds with yours and we can meet during a lunch or study hall, otherwise, we can arrange to meet before or after school.

If you have an excused absence, you are responsible for obtaining all work missed. If you have an excused tardy to class, you are still responsible for the work missed during that time. Make-up work must be turned in no later than **one day** after your return to school. **I will not accept work turned in after that date** (extended illness or other extenuating circumstances will merit appropriate extensions). Stay on the ball and you won't have any problems. **Please note: Field trips do not excuse you from any known or long-term assignments, nor do they grant you an extension on work.**

For every day an assignment is late it will lose ten percent. For instance, if you turn in a "B" quality paper (an 85/100) two days late, it will be worth a "D" (65/100 points).

Office Hours:

First semester: periods 2, 4, 6

Before school any day

Second semester: periods 2, 6, 7

After school on Thursdays or by appointment

I look forward to learning with you this year.

Karlen Shupp

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