

AP Seminar Course Syllabus
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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 (AP Seminar Course & Exam Description).

The AP Capstone program aims to empower students by

- engaging them with rigorous college-level curricula focused on the skills necessary for successful college completion;
- extending their abilities to synthesize information from multiple perspectives and apply skills in new situations and cross-curricular contexts;
- enabling them to collect and analyze information with accuracy and precision;
- cultivating their abilities to craft, communicate, and define evidence-based arguments; and
- providing opportunities for them to practice disciplined and scholarly research skills while exploring relevant topics that appeal to their interests and curiosity.

Instructional Resources

- Teacher supplied readings from journals, magazines, newspapers, and other primary and secondary sources listed in Units and posted in Google classroom.
- Student-selected daily/weekly online news articles
- Lunsford, A. A., Ruskiewicz, J. J., & Walters, K. (2016). Everything's an argument: with 2016 MLA update (7th ed.). Bedford/St Martins.
- Birkenstein, C., & Graff, G. (2018). They say / I say (4th ed.). WW Norton.

Class Requirements

In order to find success in the AP Capstone program, students must abide by the following requirements:

- *Attendance*: Students are expected to be in class on time every day. If by unfortunate circumstances, a student misses class, it is solely the student's responsibility to speak with the instructor and plan to make up for missed work in class.
- *Preparedness*: Students must come prepared to class everyday with the following:
 - Reading and writing materials for the day's lesson
 - Fully charged chrome book
 - Weekly agenda
- *Technology*: As previously mentioned, students MUST have their chrome books with them at all times while in class.

- *Class Participation:* This class is highly participatory. As such, students are expected to participate daily in class in a variety of ways:
 - Impromptu individual and group arguments/debates: Students will be given a quote, picture/cartoon, chart, etc. at the beginning of class to stimulate discussion.
 - Group and class conversations about complex academic and real world issues through a variety of lenses addressing multiple perspectives: this includes, but is not limited to, asking original questions, making insightful comments, and/or creating and/or expanding on ideas.
- *Assessment:* The premise behind Advanced Placement is to create a college level course at the high school level. For this reason, NO late work will be accepted after the assigned due date. Skill-based assessments include, but are not limited to:
 - Inquiry-based assessments
 - In-class timed writings: analysis, argument, synthesis
 - Reflections
 - Team projects: team building, cooperative learning, group presentations
 - Writing activities and assignments
 - AP preparation: skill-based activities, practice essays
 - Online portfolios

College Board's Statement on Plagiarism

A student or team of students who fails to acknowledge (i.e., through citation, through attribution, by reference, and/or through acknowledgment 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 score of zero on that particular component of the AP Seminar and/or AP Research assessment. **[CR4]**

[CR4]—Students develop an understanding of how to ethically use other's knowledge and ideas in their own work, avoiding plagiarism.

About the use of AI

The College Board is very clear about the use of AI in AP courses. Please consider the following statement:

Students are categorically prohibited from using any and all Artificial Intelligence tools (e.g. ChatGPT or DALL-E) or essay writing services (e.g. Chegg or Course Hero) to guide, brainstorm, draft, or create student work related to any AP assessment, including written projects and performance tasks. The AP Program reserves the right to validate student work submitted for AP African American Studies, AP Art and Design, AP Computer Science Principles, AP Research, and AP Seminar with plagiarism detection tools and other investigative efforts to identify non-student generated work. Any use of Artificial Intelligence tools or essay writing services will be considered an exam violation and may result in the cancellation of a student's AP score(s).

The AP Seminar curriculum is shaped around five Big Ideas: QUEST

- Big Idea 1: Question and Explore
- Big Idea 2: Understand and Analyze
- Big Idea 3: Evaluate Multiple Perspectives
- Big Idea 4: Synthesize Ideas
- Big Idea 5: Team, Transform, and Transmit

Performance Tasks

During the AP Seminar course, students complete the following performance assessments: two through-course performance tasks and end-of-course exam, while adhering to AP College Board policies to ensure the validation of their scores. Both performance tasks will be completed after Unit 3. **[CR5] [CR6]**

[CR5]—Students work collaboratively with a team to identify, investigate, analyze, and evaluate a real-world or academic problem or issue; consider and evaluate alternatives or options; propose one or more solutions or resolutions; and present and defend the argument for their solutions through a multimedia presentation.

[CR6] -- Students work independently to identify a research question based on provided stimulus material; research the issue; analyze, evaluate, and select evidence to develop an argument; present and defend a conclusion; and produce a multimedia presentation to be delivered to their peers.

Performance Task 1: Team project and presentation [CR5]

Students work in teams of three to five to identify, investigate, analyze, and evaluate an academic or real-world problem or issue. Each team designs and/or considers options and evaluates alternatives; develops a multimedia presentation to present the argument for their proposed solution or resolution; and provides a defense to questions posed by the teacher.

Scoring:

- Individual Research Report (1200 words)
- Team Multimedia Presentation and Defense (8-10 minutes, plus defense questions)

Performance Task 2: Individual Research-Based Essay and Presentation [CR6]

The College Board's AP Program will annually release cross-curricular source material representing a range of perspectives focused on a single theme or topic. Students use these texts to identify a research question of their own; conduct research; analyze, evaluate, and select evidence to develop an argument; and present and defend their conclusions. The final paper must refer to and incorporate at least one of the provided sources.

Students have 30 school days to complete their research, compose their essays, and develop their presentation.

Scoring:

- Individual Written Argument (2000 words)
- Individual Multimedia Presentation (6-8 minutes)
- Oral Defense (two questions from the teacher)

AP Seminar End of Course Exam (2 Hours)

During the AP Exam administration window, students take the AP Seminar EOC. The exam consists of four items: three short-answer questions and one essay question.

Scoring:

- Three short-answer questions (analysis of an argument in a single source or document)
- One essay question (synthesizing and creating an evidence-based argument)

Semester 1: The first semester is broken into three units based on the tasks for the final exam in May

Unit 1: Introducing the Seminar's QUEST Process and Understanding Argument [CR2a]

Focus: Students will engage with the QUEST process by evaluating others' arguments and creating their own.

Skills:

- Identifying and contextualizing a problem or issue
- Accessing information using effective strategies
- Using technology to access and manage information
- Evaluating the relevance and credibility of information from sources and data
- Employing appropriate reading strategies and reading critically for a specific purpose
- Summarizing the main idea and explaining the line of reasoning and supporting details of an argument
- Identifying and interpreting multiple perspectives of an issue
- Creating a line of reasoning that arrives at a potential solution to a problem

Activities:

- Research the CB site for information on the QUEST process [CR2a]
- Collaboratively create and present one of the QUEST letters to the class [CR2a][CR2b][CR2f][CR2h]

- Reflect on how the internet has influenced their own biases [CR2g]
- Identify various lenses that may be considered to evaluate a given issue [CR1]
- Create focus and research questions for a topic based on a specific lens (bubble charts) [CR2b]
- Identify and evaluate multiple perspectives/stakeholders for a line of inquiry within a specific lens [CR2d]
- Identify an argument's line of reasoning
- Students read articles and speeches, summarize them, and evaluate the strength of the argument [CR2c]
- Students create argument maps for the arguments they read
- Gather evidence to support a claim based on a given research question [CR4a]
- Collaboratively create and present a tree of "reasoning" graphic organizer for a specific claim [CR2f]
- Orally defend evidence choices based on source reliability and credibility
- Collaborate to construct a photo essay that requires a clear line of reasoning

Summative Assessments:

- QF Bubble Chart Group Presentation
- Tree of Reasoning Presentation
- Photo Essay

[CR1] — Students explore complexities of one or more themes by making connections within, between, and/or among multiple cross-curricular areas and by exploring multiple perspectives and lenses (e.g., cultural and social, artistic and philosophical, political and historical, environmental, economic, scientific, futuristic, ethical) related to those themes.

[CR2a] -- The course provides multiple opportunities for students to practice and refine their skills by engaging with the QUEST process

[CR2b] -- Students develop and apply discrete skills identified in the learning objectives within the Big idea 1: Question and Explore

[CR2c] -- Students develop and apply discrete skills identified in the learning objectives within the Big Idea 2: Understand and Analyze

[CR2d] -- Students develop and apply discrete skills identified in the learning objectives within the Big Idea 3: Evaluate Multiple Perspectives

[CR2f] -- Students develop and apply collaboration skills identified in the learning objectives within the Big Idea 5: Team, Transform, and Transmit

[Cr2g] -- Students develop and apply reflection skills identified in the learning objectives within the Big 5: Team, Transform, and Transmit

[CR2h] -- Students develop and apply written and communication skills identified in the learning objectives within the Big Idea 5: Team, Transform, and Transmit

[CR3] -- Students gain a rich appreciation and understanding of the issues through the following activities: reading articles and research studies; reading foundational, literary, and philosophical texts; viewing and listening to speeches, broadcasts, and/or other personal accounts; and experiencing artistic works and performances.

Learning objectives introduced in this unit:

BIG IDEA 1: Question and Explore

- LO 1.1A: Contextualizing and identifying the complexities of a problem or issue. (EK1.1A1)
- LO 1.1B: Posing questions and seeking out answers that reflect multiple, divergent, or contradictory perspectives (EK1.1B1-2)
- LO 1.2A: Retrieving, questioning, organizing, and using prior knowledge about a topic.(EK1.2A1-3)
- LO 1.3A: Accessing and managing information using effective strategies.(EK1.3A1-3)
- LO 1.4A: Evaluating the relevance and credibility of the source of information and data in relation to the inquiry.(EK1.4A1-3)

BIG IDEA 2: Understand and Analyze

- LO 2.1A: Employing appropriate reading strategies and reading critically for a specific purpose (EK2.1A1-4)
- LO 2.1B: Summarizing and explaining a text's main idea or aim while avoiding faulty generalizations and oversimplification (EK2.1B1)
- LO 2.2A: Explaining and analyzing the logic and line of reasoning of an argument (EK2.2A1-5)

- LO 2.2B: Evaluating the relevance and credibility of evidence used to support an argument, taking context into consideration (EK2.2B1-3,5-6)

BIG IDEA 3: Evaluate Multiple Perspectives

- LO 3.1A: Identifying, comparing, and interpreting multiple perspectives on or arguments about an issue (EK 3.1A1-2)

BIG IDEA 4: Synthesize Ideas

- LO 4.1A: Formulating a well-reasoned argument, taking the complexities of the problem or issue into consideration (EK 4.1A1-2,4-5,7)
- LO 4.3A: Attributing knowledge and ideas accurately and ethically, using an appropriate citation style (EK4.3A1)

BIG IDEA 5: Team, Transform, and Transmit

- LO 5.1A: Planning, producing, and presenting a cohesive argument, considering audience, context, and purpose (EK5.1A2)
- LO 5.1C: Communicating information through appropriate media using effective techniques of design (EK5.1C1,3)
- LO 5.1D: Adapting an argument for context, purpose, and/or audience (EK5.1D1)
- LO 5.1E: Engaging an audience by employing effective techniques of delivery or performance (EK5.1E1)
- LO 5.2A: Providing individual contributions to overall collaborative effort to accomplish a task or goal (EK5.2A1)
- LO 5.2B: Fostering constructive team climate, resolving conflicts, and facilitating the contributions of all team members to address complex, open-ended problems. (EK5.2B1-4)
- LO 5.3A: Reflecting on and revising their own writing, thinking, and creative processes (EK5.3A1-2)

Unit 2: Issues of Identity

Focus: Students will engage topics relating to cultural, ethical, social, and national identities while continuing to work through the skills and learning objectives associated with the QUEST process

Skills:

- Identifying alternatives for approaching a problem
- Accessing information using effective strategies
- Using technology to access and manage information
- Evaluating the relevance and credibility of information from sources and data
- Employing appropriate reading strategies and reading critically for a specific purpose
- Summarizing the main idea and explaining the line of reasoning and supporting details of an argument
- Describing and analyzing the evidence used to support an argument
- Evaluating the validity of an argument
- Evaluating potential resolutions or solutions to problems or issues
- Identifying and interpreting multiple perspectives or arguments on an issue
- Evaluating objections, implications, and limitations of an alternate, opposing, or competing perspective or argument
- Formulating a complex and well-reasoned argument
- Interpreting, using, and/or synthesizing data from various perspectives and sources to develop and support an argument
- Using rhetorical appeals
- Proposing resolutions and/or solutions based on evidence, considering limitations and implications
- Working with a team to plan, produce, and present a cohesive argument
- Communicating an argument in an engaging oral presentation that uses effective techniques of design delivery

Activities:

- Discussion about definitions of identity
- Bubble chart/Graphic organizer on lenses through which to consider identity
- Discussion about social and “tribal” identities
- Table Talk: Controversial team mascots
- Partner Debates: Should potentially controversial mascots be removed? (identifying lenses, perspectives, gathering evidence, analyzing data)

- Argument mapping
- PowerPoint Karaoke
- Discussion: Protecting identity, identification of stakeholders
- Solutions/Resolutions/Conclusions processes
- Finding limitations of solutions/resolutions/conclusions
- TMP Practice: PowerPoint Debates on national identity issues
- Reflecting on personal contribution to team effort
- Creating the Question Focus: Identity through multiple lenses and perspectives
- Compiling an annotated bibliography

Summative Assessments:

- Partner Debates
- PowerPoint Debates

Learning Objectives Introduced in this Unit:

BIG IDEA 1: Question and Explore

- LO 1.5A: Identifying the information needed for context of the inquiry (EK1.5.A1)

BIG IDEA 2: Understand and Analyze

- LO 2.1B: Summarizing and explaining a text's main idea or aim while avoiding faulty generalizations and oversimplification (EK 2.1B2)
- LO 2.2B: Evaluating the relevance and credibility of evidence used to support an argument, taking context into consideration (EK 2.2B4)
- LO 2.3A: Connecting an argument to broader issues by examining the implications of the author's claim (EK2.3A1)
- LO 2.3B: Evaluating potential resolution, conclusions, or solutions to problems or issues raised by an argument (EK2.3B1)
- LO 2.2C: Evaluating the validity of an argument (EK2.2C1)

BIG IDEA 3: Evaluate Multiple Perspectives

- LO 3.2 A: Evaluating alternate, opposing, or competing perspectives or arguments, by considering their implications and limitations (EK 3.2A1-2)

BIG IDEA 4: Synthesize Ideas

- LO 4.1A: Formulating a well-reasoned argument, taking the complexities of the problem or issue into consideration (EK4.1A3,6,8,9)
- LO 4.2A: Interpreting, using, and synthesizing qualitative and/or quantitative data/information from various perspectives and sources (e.g. primary, secondary, print, nonprint) to develop and support an argument (EK4.2A1-4)
- LO 4.2B: Providing insightful and cogent commentary that links evidence with claims (EK4.2B1)
- LO 4.3A: Attributing knowledge and ideas accurately and ethically, using an appropriate citation style (EK 4.3A3-5)
- LO 4.4A: Extending an idea, question, process, or product to innovate or create new understandings (EK4.4A1)
- LO 4.5A: Offering resolutions, conclusions, and/or solutions based on evidence considering limitations and implications (EK4.5A1)

BIG IDEA 5: Team, Transform, and Transmit

- LO 5.1C: Communicating information through appropriate media using effective techniques of design (EK5.1C2)
- LO 5.1E: Engaging an audience by employing techniques of delivery or performance (EK5.1E1)
- LO 5.3B: Reflecting on experiences of collaborative effort (EK5.3B1)

Unit 3: The Search for Meaning

Focus: Students will engage with topics and texts relating to various philosophical lenses while continuing to hone their skills related to the QUEST process. They will also begin to prepare for the AP summative assessments.

Skills:

- Reading, summarizing, and synthesizing complex texts
- Evaluating the validity of an argument
- Reading visual argument
- Formulating a complex and well-reasoned argument
- Interpreting, using, and /or synthesizing data/information from various perspectives and sources to develop and support an argument
- Proposing resolutions/solutions based on evidence, considering consequences and implications
- Working both as an individual and with a team to plan, produce, and present a cohesive argument.
- Communicating an argument in a research-based essay
- Communicating an argument in an engaging oral presentation that uses effective techniques of design delivery

Activities:

- Discussion of College Board definition of plagiarism/Quiz **[CR4b]**
- Students write reflections on philosophical texts
- Graphic organizers
- OPTIC strategy for analyzing visual argument
- Brainstorming research questions and lines of inquiry
- Checklists for arguments and presentations
- Individual argumentative essay
- Mock Performance Task 1
- EOC preparation

Summative Assessments:

- Visual argument analysis
- Individual 2-3 page argumentative essay and presentation using the QUEST framework (pose questions, collect and analyze data to make and support conclusions with evidence, and report findings/conclusions to a larger audience)
- Mock IRR
- Mock TMP

[CR4b] -- Students develop an understanding of ethical research practices and the AP Capstone Policy on Plagiarism and Falsification or Fabrication of Information.

Resources and Readings (including but not limited to):

Learning Objectives Introduced/Reinforced in this Unit:

BIG IDEA 4: Synthesize Ideas

- LO 4.3A: Attributing knowledge and ideas accurately and ethically, using an appropriate citation style (EK4.3A1-45)

BIG IDEA 5: Team, Transform, and Transmit

- LO 5.1A: Planning, producing, and presenting a cohesive argument, considering audience, context, and purpose (EK5.1A1-2)
- LO 5.1B: Adhering to established conventions of grammar, usage, style and mechanics (EK5.1B1-4)
- LO 5.3A: Reflecting on and revising their own writing, thinking, and creative processes (EK 5.3A1-2)

Semester Two: The AP Seminar Performance Tasks

Unit 4: Performance Task 1 [CR5]

Unit 5: Performance Task 2 [CR6]

Unit 6: Preparation for the EOC

Grading

The goal of education is learning. Therefore, my classroom is based not on *points* but on *learning*. The only time we will focus on “grades” is when we negotiate your final grade at the end of each nine-week grading period. **Rationale:** In many classrooms, it’s possible to achieve good grades without engaging in much learning. When you **focus on learning**, learning is much more likely to happen.

Process

- Early in each grading period, students will determine their learning goals and then engage in activities and assignments designed to meet these goals.
- Students will receive feedback on their work but not grades. Instead, assignments will be logged as complete or incomplete in the gradebook. Your **progress grade** should always be 100%— if it isn’t, you have work to do. Your progress grade may or may not be your final grade.
- At the end of each nine weeks, students will evaluate their development toward the goals and make an argument about what grade they have earned.
- Students and parents are encouraged to send an email or set up a conference if they have any questions or concerns about grading.
- If you want an A, complete all assignments and apply yourself to learning.

Progress Grades

Throughout the grading period, the progress grade tracks the completion of assignments according to the schedule below. The progress grade may or may not end up being the final grade.

Completion of Major Assignments	60% of progress grade
Completion of Writing Drafts and Minor Assignments	40% of progress grade

FINAL GRADE GUIDELINES

To make an A

- **Your story of learning is detailed and compelling and demonstrates* significant growth toward all your learning goals.**
- You are a positive community member.
- You display the behaviors of an engaged learner. You have no missing assignments and no more than one late assignment.

To make a B

- **Your story of learning demonstrates* some growth on some of your learning goals but could be more detailed and compelling.**
- You may be missing a minor assignment or have some late work.
- You are a positive community member.

To make a C

- **Your story of learning demonstrates* minimal growth.**
- No major tasks are marked *Missing* in the grade book. You may be missing minor assignments or have late work.

* *Demonstration of growth must be based on **data** collected throughout the grading period. Data will be found in your learning logs, progression toward goals, and in the Gradebook grades and comments. **Make a claim and back it up.***

Gradebook Codes

Complete (100%)

Assignment is complete

Must Revise (70%)

Review my feedback, revise and resubmit

Review Instructions (50%)

Review instructions, revise and resubmit

Missing (0%)

Assignment is missing and needs to be done as soon as possible

Cannot Complete (0%)

It is too late to complete this assignment

Late Work and Makeup Policy

Please see the Student Handbook for the Riverside High School Late Work and Make Up Policies. In this class, the late work policy will apply to your PROGRESS grade, which will impact your final grade because it is part of the data set that will help you and I determine your final grade.

Classroom Norms

Focus on learning

Make a claim and back it up

Challenge with respect

Do better than good enough

Be responsible for yourself and responsible to the group

Take risks

Value mistakes

Share your voice

Cell Phone Policy

In AP Seminar, we have a lot of work to do! When we need to focus, we don't need any unnecessary distractions to keep us from thinking and learning as best we can. Communication is important, but sometimes it needs to wait. Therefore, all cell phones and ear buds should be silenced and put into backpacks during all active learning sessions, which include things like lectures, journaling, group assignments, writing, reading, and others. There are times when we have some down time and being on your phone is okay, and I'll let you when those times are.