

AP ENGLISH LITERATURE & COMPOSITION SYLLABUS

PREREQUISITE COURSES:

Students must successfully complete (final average of 87% or higher) Challenge-Level coursework in both tenth (American Literature) and eleventh (British Literature) grades in order to be eligible to take AP English Literature & Composition in their senior year.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This college-level, full year course is concerned primarily with understanding, analyzing, writing, and rewriting about literature. Referring to the literature studied, students develop both oral and written compositions throughout the year. Summer reading and analysis assignments and research-based papers are a requirement for the course. This course is designed to comply with the curricular requirements described in the AP English Course Description provided by The College Board.

The units do not necessarily follow the exact same sequence from year to year, nor are the exact same texts taught every year. Texts are added or subtracted according to various criteria including the interests, strengths/weaknesses, and literary background of each class's members. The thematic organization ("The Tragic Figure in Literature") is broad enough to allow for substitutions and additions.

COURSE OVERVIEW:

- **Students may expect to write (and revise/rewrite based on instructor and peer feedback):**
 - 3-4 papers (3-6 pages each) outside of class
 - 5-10 in-class essays (rhetorical or literary analysis)
 - 1 literary research paper (8-12 pages) outside of class
 - Numerous informal pieces ("write to learn" assignments)
 - Reading-journal entries on a continuing basis
 - a variety of quiz/short test assignments

- **Feedback on student writing**
 - Instructor's comments on all papers and direct writing instruction encourage students to:
 - Vary sentence length and structure
 - Refine word choice and expand writing vocabulary
 - Organize ideas logically and make subtle and appropriate transition statements
 - Use specific techniques to increase coherence
 - Use rhetoric effectively to establish controlling tone and appropriate voice
 - Balance generalization and specific, illustrative detail
 - Meet one-on-one with instructor to discuss writing assignments, both before, during, and after writing
 - REVISE and REWRITE based on instructor and peer feedback

- **Direct Test-Prep**
 - Students are prepared for the AP Literature & Composition Exam using released practice exams as well as resources from Applied Practice for each novel/drama read in class.
 - Students are regularly quizzed on and practice with literary terms most commonly found on the AP English Literature & Composition exam.

COURSE PLANNER / STUDENT ACTIVITIES:

UNIT: CRITICAL READING & LITERARY ANALYSIS

Approximate length: To be completed over summer vacation

Major work(s): varies according to student choice

Prior to the beginning of the school year, students are required to choose and read three works of recognized literary merit from the options provided by the instructor (Appendix A). Works are sorted into three categories:

- Works published since 1980
- Works published between 1900 and 1979
- Works published prior to 1900

While reading, students are required to complete a four-page data analysis sheet on each piece of literature to ensure close, critical reading skills encouraging varied approaches such as biographical, formalist, gender, archetypal, psychological and deconstructivist.

UNIT: RESPONDING TO LITERATURE & PERSONAL ESSAY

Approximate length: 2 weeks

Major work(s): NA

After a few days of informal discussion of the summer reading, students begin the year by writing an in-class, timed essay from a past AP prompt, using one of their three summer readings. The assignment is followed by a careful examination of the AP writing rubric for the free-response essay used throughout the year and practice in composing effective statements and applying logical organization in essays. Students also evaluate released sample responses so that they may practice applying the rubric standards to authentic writing examples. The instructor will also evaluate the essays and include comments and suggestions which address diction, style, tone, voice, and structure. The unit is completed by having students submit college application personal essays. Both types of essays are then reviewed in face-to-face conferences with the instructor. Students are permitted and encouraged to revise and resubmit essays for reevaluation.

UNIT: THE TRAGIC FIGURE IN SHAKESPEARE

Approximate length: 6 weeks

Major work(s): *Hamlet* by William Shakespeare

In conjunction with reading, viewing and discussing the play, students analyze the work in performance. Students discuss and write extensively about how actors' and directors' choices (in films originally intended for the screen and videos of stage productions) impact audiences' understanding of characters and the play as a whole. Textual and film/video analyses focus mostly on soliloquys. The culmination of the soliloquy analysis assignment is to create a formal oral presentation which compares/contrasts at least two versions of the soliloquy in performance in order to establish the purpose of the soliloquy in terms of Hamlet's character development, explicate the meaning of the language of the soliloquy, and describe the connection between the soliloquy and the play as a whole. Throughout the unit, students

practice AP-style multiple choice questions based on short reading selections from *Hamlet* (questions are taken from the *Applied Practice* book). The unit is concluded with an in class essay using an AP type prompt.

UNIT: THE TRAGIC FIGURE IN THEATRE OF THE ABSURD

Approximate length: 3 weeks

Major work(s): *Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead* by Tom Stoppard

Tom Stoppard's play serves as a useful follow up assignment to Shakespeare's *Hamlet* since it uses characters and plot events familiar to the students and presents a comprehensible introduction to absurdist drama. The play, therefore, is read and discussed in class in terms of its adherence to the genre as well as its variation in point of view of Shakespeare's drama. The unit is concluded with an in class essay using a past AP free response prompt that lists the play as an appropriate text choice (students choose from among several possible prompts).

UNIT: THE TRAGIC FIGURE IN THE ROMANTIC NOVEL

Approximate length: 5 weeks

Major work(s): *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley

Students are asked to consider how Mary Shelley treats the classical principles of the tragic figure in her 19th century novel and to what extent the mores of the Romantic era define the tragic condition. Through writing assignments and class discussion, students study how Shelley's treatment of ambition, parental responsibility, fate/destiny, dangerous knowledge, and the impact of education do or do not result in the creation of a traditional tragic figure. Students will examine thoroughly, as well as propose and defend in writing what they identify as Frankenstein's tragic flaw. Students will also complete a creative project in which they examine the novel's themes and motifs (and connect those themes to twenty-first century concerns and scenarios) through the creation of a mock Facebook page for a character in the novel or create mock text message conversations between characters.

UNIT: THE TRAGIC FIGURE IN RUSSIAN LITERATURE

Approximate length: 6 weeks

Major work(s): *Crime & Punishment* by Fyodor Dostoevsky

Much of the study and discussion revolves around the social, political, and religious climates portrayed. Regular class discussion derived from students' reading-journal notes and questions dominates class time. An emphasis is placed on applying a psychological critical approach to the novel as a whole. The unit is concluded with a formal essay; though the prompt is in the style of AP free responses essays, students will have time outside of class to develop and refine their work.

UNIT: POETRY

Approximate length: studied regularly throughout the year with a 3-week concentration in the spring

Major work(s): *Michael Meyer's Poetry: An Introduction*

Some poems from the Meyers book have appeared in past AP Exams. Students will also keep a poetry-reading-journal in which they will record initial questions, impressions, and responses to the poems they are reading. For most poems, students will be asked to respond to the following: "Which line(s) from the poem would you most like the poet to explain to you? Put your response in the form of a question." This prompt is designed to help students develop specific and worthwhile questions for discussion. For the short paper assignment on poetry, students must select a poem from the text or one of their own choosing and they are to write a commentary in which they make judgments about the work's artistry and quality. In order to do this, students will need to determine the poet's tone/attitude or purpose for

the poem and then discuss the poetic devices the poet uses to achieve this purpose. Students are to refer liberally to the poem using quotes from the text.

UNIT: THE TRAGIC FIGURE IN MODERN AMERICAN LITERATURE

Approximate length: 10 weeks

Major work(s): *Ethan Frome* by Edith Wharton, *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald

As students read and study the novels, they are asked to consider the strong influences from Wharton's and Fitzgerald's own lives (biographical literary approach) that are reflected in the novels.

Prior to the study of *Gatsby*, students are asked to lead discussions on one of six topics ranging from Fitzgerald's biography to cultural aspects of the Jazz Age. As we study both novels, students will evaluate in writing how the works reflect the social, cultural, and/or historical values of their time. In a final writing assignment, students will be asked to consider how the principles of the classical tragic hero are played out against the backdrop of twentieth century American life. Students will be required to draw upon textual details liberally to support their claims.

UNIT: THE TRAGIC FIGURE IN MODERN AMERICAN DRAMA

Approximate length: 5 weeks

Major work(s): *A Raisin in the Sun* by Lorraine Hansberry

This play is generally read and taught after the AP exam. As we move from the early part of the 20th Century (*Frome* and *Gatsby*) to the middle of the 20th Century, students will be asked to consider how the treatment of the American Dream and the idea of the tragic figure do (and do not) change. That is, students will attempt to answer the question: as setting, social class, and race change in a major literary work, how does our conception of what is possible, admirable, and tragic change? Students will research literary criticism of the play as well as of Harlem Renaissance Poetry (including Langston Hughes's "A Dream Deferred" from which Hansberry borrowed the play's title). In addition, students will research poverty and race relations in Chicago and other parts of the country leading up to the play's first production in 1958, seminal court cases that likely informed Hansberry's writing of the play, and assimilationism as it relates to race in American in the early-to-mid twentieth century. Students will use their research to write about how Hansberry uses her play to explore the social, political, and economic values and concerns of her time.

PERFORMANCE TASKS / STUDENT EVALUATION:

- **Reading, responding to, and analyzing** novels, drama, fiction, nonfiction, and poetry
- **Timed in-class essays** based on past AP prompts and Applied Practice literature specific prompts
These essays are scored holistically, using AP specific rubrics; some are then peer evaluated to give students a clearer view of the elements required for a high scoring essay.
- **Informal writing** – short writing assignments designed to allow students to write to understand. These are exploratory activities that enable students to discover what they think in the process of writing about their reading. Sometimes prompts for these assignments are teacher-generated, sometimes they develop from thoughts/questions raised in a student's reading journal (see Appendix B).

- **Tests** on books consist of passage-identification questions, true/false matching, and multiple choice items; tests include short *essay questions* as required of college-level writers. **Quizzes** on the literary terms found most often on the AP exam.
- **Past AP Exams** (released items) and multiple choice questions from *Applied Practice* are used as completion and quiz grades
- **Literary analysis papers prepared outside of class** (expository and persuasive, at times incorporating **research**). These papers count more than essays written in class with some grade consideration for properly using internal and external citations. One paper is an analytical essay of a prose passage that requires the student to claim and defend the author’s purpose or tone using textual details for support. The research paper, based on a novel of the student’s choice (British, World or American literature of “recognized literary merit”) is 8-12 typed pages and is equal to two short papers.
- **Personal essay**
- **Reading journal** for all reading assignments throughout the year, the journal consists of: reflections on reading, unfamiliar vocabulary encountered, predictions, confusing or unclear literary elements, analysis/judgment, important quotations, recurring themes/motifs, general impressions (see Appendix B)
- **Participation in critical discussion**
- **Student-led discussions**
- **Oral presentations** in the form of analysis and interpretation of literature and poetry

TEXTS include but are not limited to:

- *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark* by William Shakespeare
- Short fiction: “Gertrude Talks Back” by Margaret Atwood and “That Thou Art Mindful of Him” by Isaac Asimov
- Other short fiction, as selected
- *Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead* by Tom Stoppard
- *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley
- *Crime & Punishment* by Fyodor Dostoevsky
- *Ethan Frome* by Edith Wharton
- *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald
- *A Raisin in the Sun* by Lorraine Hansberry
- *Michael Meyer’s Poetry: An Introduction*
- Other poetry, as selected

(APPENDIX A)

AP LITERATURE & COMPOSITION: SUMMER READING LIST 2015

You are required to read **three** (3) novels/dramas over the summer. Choose **one** (1) literary work **from each of the three categories**. Choose ones you have *not* read already; it will be important for you to go into the AP test in the spring with a wide and deep repertoire! For each piece, you must complete one of the included data packets; they are **due on the first day of class in the fall**. *Remember: failure to complete the reading or the data packets will result in removal from the class.*

CATEGORY 1: Recent Publications (since 1980)

The Kite Runner by Khaled Hosseini +
The Color Purple by Alice Walker
The Things They Carried by Tim O'Brien +
Beloved by Toni Morrison
The Joy Luck Club by Amy Tan +
The Poisonwood Bible by Barbara Kingsolver +
The Piano Lesson by August Wilson
The Story of Edgar Sawtelle by David Wroblewski
The Remains of the Day by Kazuo Ishiguro
The Secret Life of Bees by Sue Monk Kidd +

CATEGORY 2: Twentieth Century Publications

The Grapes of Wrath by John Steinbeck*
Lord of the Flies by William Golding*
A Separate Peace by John Knowles*
1984 by George Orwell*
The Catcher in the Rye by J.D. Salinger*
Brave New World by Aldous Huxley*
Things Fall Apart by Chinua Achebe +
All Quiet on the Western Front by Erich Maria Remarque +
Mrs. Dalloway by Virginia Woolf +
Their Eyes Were Watching God by Zora Neale Hurston +
As I Lay Dying by William Faulkner +
Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man by James Joyce +
The Metamorphosis by Franz Kafka
The Invisible Man by Ralph Ellison +
The Glass Menagerie by Tennessee Williams +
A Streetcar Named Desire by Tennessee Williams
Long Day's Journey into Night by Eugene O'Neill
The Sun Also Rises by Ernest Hemingway +
Cry the Beloved Country by Alan Paton +

CATEGORY 3: "Classics" Written Prior to 1900

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain*

Oedipus Rex (aka *Oedipus the King*) by Sophocles*

A Tale of Two Cities by Charles Dickens*

Don Quixote by Miguel de Cervantes*

The Odyssey by Homer*

The Importance of Being Earnest by Oscar Wilde

Jane Eyre by Charlotte Bronte +

Pride & Prejudice by Jane Austen +

The Awakening by Kate Chopin +

Wuthering Heights by Emily Bronte +

Madame Bovary by Gustave Flaubert +

* We have some copies of this title at CHS; please see Mrs. A. if you would like to sign out a copy for the summer. All other titles you will have to procure on your own. These titles are available first come, first served.

+ We have at least one of copy of this title in the CHS library. See Mrs. L. before you leave for the summer to sign it out. These titles are available first come, first served.

(APPENDIX B)
READING JOURNAL – AP LITERATURE & COMPOSITION

You will keep a reading journal for **all reading assignments** (poetry, prose, novels, plays, fiction, non-fiction, etc.). Your journal entries should be kept **in a separate notebook**. I will, at times, collect your journal and keep it overnight; therefore, you cannot have materials for other classes within your AP English journal.

Format – Each entry should include:

- date on which you are doing the assignment
- Title and author of the work
- Assignment (chapters, pages, etc.)
- the entry itself

Entries can include (but are not limited to):

- short plot summaries
- quotes or significant passages that seem confusing and/or important; the quotes should include personal commentary
- questions
- thoughts/ideas generated by that portion of the text
- recurring themes/motifs, etc.
- examples of literary devices (identify what they are)
- notable use of syntax and diction
- notes about tone, particularly when/if tone changes
- notes about style
- unfamiliar vocab (and a reasonable guess at a definition based on context clues, then a definition upon looking up the word)
- doodles/pictures of characters or events
(there must be a **purpose** to the doodle – e.g., to help you visualize something that's hard to visualize, to help you remember important details, etc.)
- historical, political, biographical, social commentary – this can contain informal research about something that seems relevant/important
- genre characteristics
- connections to other texts, films, TV shows, your personal life etc.

The **goal** is to include a **WIDE VARIETY of TYPES** of entries. The **purpose** is to help you **retain and comprehend** what you read and to **create material for our class discussions and writing assignments**.

There is **no minimum or maximum length** for entries; length will vary depending on the assignment and what you have to say/ask about it.

Your journal will be graded occasionally. No advanced notice will be given. You should **bring your journal to class daily**. Use it for reference and note-taking during class and teacher conferences.

Your reading journal will be graded periodically on the following criteria:

CRITERIA	POINTS POSSIBLE
Entries are FORMATTED appropriately	5
Entries are NEAT , legible, and organized	5
Entries are of a VARIETY of TYPES (see list above for suggestions)	10
Entries contain evidence of CLOSE READING and DEEP THINKING	10
TOTAL:	30