

## AP English Literature & Composition Syllabus

### Prerequisite courses:

- Students must successfully complete (final average of 87% or better) accelerated coursework in both 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grades in order to be eligible to take AP English Literature & Composition in their senior year.
- Accelerated English 11 is an American Literature survey course that includes, but is not limited to, such works as:
  - *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald
  - *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller
  - *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain
  - *A Streetcar Named Desire* by Tennessee Williams
  - *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck
  - Various excerpts from essays and short stories as well as poetry from Whitman, Bryant, Poe and other representational American poets

### Course Overview:

- During the course of the year students may expect to write 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 and a variety of quiz/short test assignments per quarter. My comments on all papers encourage students to vary sentence length and structure. I point out particularly well constructed phrases and apt word choices, subtle and appropriate transition statements, effective use of rhetoric to establish voice, and original illustrative details.
- A strategy I use to allow students to have their papers returned as quickly as possible is to divide my AP students into four groups. I then set four due dates for each paper stretched over a two week period, which usually allows all students to get their papers back within three to ten days.
- Students are prepared for the AP English Literature and 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 and Composition Exam.
- This course is designed to comply with the curricular requirements described in the *AP English Course*

### Performance Tasks:

- Timed in class essays based on past AP prompts and Applied Practice literature specific prompts
- Essay questions as required of college-level writers
- Reading/responding to/analyzing novels, drama, fiction, nonfiction, and poetry
- Literary analysis papers—expository and persuasive
- 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, general impressions
- Weekly literary terms quizzes
- Quarterly oral presentations in the form of analysis and interpretation of literature and poetry.

## Course Planner/Student Activities

### **Topic/Unit: Critical reading and literary analysis**

#### **Summer Assignment**

Prior to the beginning of the school year, students are required to choose and read three works of recognized literary merit from options provided by the instructor (Appendix A). Works are found in three categories: works published since 1980; twentieth century works and classics read and taught in other junior/ senior accelerated courses. While reading, students are required to complete a four page data analysis on each piece of literature to ensure close, critical reading skills encouraging varied approaches such as biographical, formalistic, gender, archetypal, psychological and deconstructivist.

### **Topic/Unit: Responding to literature and personal essay**

#### **Approximate # of weeks: 2**

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. This assignment is followed by a careful examination of the AP writing rubric used throughout the year and practice in composing effective thesis statements and applying logical organization in essays. The essays are then peer evaluated so that students may practice applying the rubric standards to authentic writing samples. The instructor will also evaluate the essays and include comments and suggestions addressing 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.

### **Topic/Unit: Poetry**

#### **Approximate # of weeks: studied regularly throughout the year with a 3 week concentration in the spring semester**

Students use *Michael Meyer's Poetry: An Introduction* for reading assignments and for poems read and discussed in class. Some of these poems have appeared in past AP Exams. Students will also keep a poetry-reading journal, where they will record initial questions, impressions, and responses to the poems they are reading. 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 this selection and then discuss the poetic devices the poet uses to achieve this purpose. They are to refer liberally to the selection (poem) using quotes from the text.

### **Topic/Unit: The Tragic Figure in Victorian/ Gothic Literature**

#### **Approximate # of Weeks: 5**

#### ***Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë**

Prior to beginning reading, students randomly select topics for concentration while reading the novel that will become the focus of post reading oral presentations/ discussions (topics range from elements of Victorian and Gothic Literature to Brontë's

characterization to the author's use of changing points of view). Regular class discussion derived from students' reading journal notes and questions dominates class time. There is an objective test of comprehension of plot and character at the end of the reading assignment. After the test, students present their topics of concentration in either a formal oral presentation format or an informal presentation followed by student led class discussion of the topics. The unit is concluded with an in class essay using an AP type prompt.

**Topic/Unit: The Tragic Hero in Shakespeare**

**Approximate # of weeks 6**

***Hamlet* by William Shakespeare**

In conjunction with reading, viewing and discussing the play, students work in small groups (2-3) to study, analyze and focus on one of the primary soliloquies in the drama. The culmination of the soliloquy assignment is to create a formal oral presentation that includes memorization of 10-12 lines, establishes the purpose of the soliloquy in terms of Hamlet's character development, explicates the meaning of the language of the soliloquy and describes the connection between the soliloquy and the play as a whole. There is a comprehension test following the conclusion of the soliloquy presentations.

**Topic/Unit: The Tragic Figure in Theatre of the Absurd**

**Approximate # of weeks: 3**

***Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* by Tom Stoppard**

Tom Stoppard's play serves as 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.

**Topic/Unit: The Tragic Hero in Russian Literature**

**Approximate # of weeks: 7**

***Crime and Punishment* by Fyodor Dostoevsky**

As students read and study the novel, they are asked to consider the strong influences from Dostoevsky's own life (biographical literary approach) that are reflected in the novel. Much of the study and discussion revolves around the social, political, and religious climates portrayed. An emphasis is placed on applying a psychological critical approach to the novel as a whole. Prior to beginning the actual reading assignments, students are asked to lead discussions on one of six topics ranging from Dostoevsky's biography to the influence of Peter the Great on the Russia of Dostoevsky's time.

**After the Exam:**

**Topic/Unit: The Tragic Figure in Victorian Literature**

**Approximate # of weeks: 4**

***The Mayor of Casterbridge* by Thomas Hardy**

This novel is generally read and taught after the AP exam and students are asked to consider how Thomas Hardy treats the classical principles of the tragic figure in his 19th century novel and to what extent do the mores of a particular

time period define the tragic condition? Through writing assignments and class discussions, students will be able to show that they appreciate Hardy's characterization of Michael Henchard. They will also discuss how the element of fate (or chance) works in leading to Henchard's ultimate downfall.

**Topic/Unit: Satire**

**Approximate # of weeks: 2**

***Jonathan Swift's "A Modest Proposal"***

Again, this assignment is after the AP exam. The class looks at and discussed modern forms of satire. Students then read, question and discuss Swift's "Proposal" and the possible reactions and ramifications of its publication in 1729. They then form small groups in which they create their own satirical solution to a current social, political or economic issue. Student satires are presented orally for the class's consideration and discussion.

**Student Evaluation:**

*In-class writing* consisting of free-response questions taken from past AP Exams I grade the free-response questions anonymously and holistically, using AP specific rubrics. Many of the essays are then peer evaluated to give students a clearer view of the elements required for a high scoring essay.

*Tests* on books consist of passage-identification questions, true/ false, matching and multiple choice types of items. *Quizzes* on the literary terms found most often on the AP exam.

*Papers* prepared outside of class (3-6 typed pages) 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 - British, World, or American Literature of "recognized literary merit" - of the student's choice (8 - 12 typed pages) is equal to two short papers.

I use portions of the multiple-choice sections of past AP Exams and multiple-choice questions from Applied Practice as completion and quiz grades.

**Methods of assessment/ evaluation:**

Quizzes

Tests

Oral presentations

Student led discussions

Participation in critical discussion

In-class writing (literary analyses of works read for class)

Papers prepared outside of class (two research based and two analyses of author's/ poet's purpose and style)

**Teacher Resources:**

Hamilton, Edith. *Mythology*. Boston: Back Bay Books, 1998.

Web Sites

AP Central® – [apcentral.collegeboard.com](http://apcentral.collegeboard.com)

Bedford/ St. Martins <http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com>

# Appendix A

## **2013 - 2014 AP English class summer reading:**

You are required to read **three** (3) novels/ dramas over the summer. Choose **one** (1) literary work from each of the three categories. (Choose one you have *not* read from the literature class selections.) For each piece read, you must complete one of the included data packets that will be due 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)**

*Water for Elephants* by Sara Gruen  
*The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini  
*The Piano Lesson* by August Wilson  
*The Color Purple* by Alice Walker  
*Master Harold...and the boys* by Athol Fugard  
*The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien  
*The Road* by Cormac McCarthy  
*Beloved* by Toni Morrison

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### **Category 2: Twentieth Century publications**

*Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe  
*Johnny Got His Gun* by Dalton Trumbo  
*Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston  
*As I Lay Dying* by William Faulkner  
*Mrs. Dalloway* by Virginia Woolf  
*A Portrait of the Artist As a Young Man* by James Joyce  
*The Poisonwood Bible* by Barbara Kingsolver  
*Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison  
*To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee

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### **Category 3: Selections from Accelerated English 11 curriculum**

*Julius Caesar* by William Shakespeare  
*A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens  
*The Joy Luck Club* by Amy Tan  
*All Quiet on the Western Front* by Erich Maria Remarque  
*The Metamorphosis* by Franz Kafka  
*Red Badge of Courage* by Stephen Crane  
*The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald  
*The Glass Menagerie* by Tennessee Williams  
*The Magnificent Ambersons* by Booth Tarkington  
*A Streetcar Named Desire* by Tennessee Williams  
*All My Sons* by Arthur Miller  
*Washington Square* by Henry James  
*Far From the Madding Crowd* by

*Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley  
*Watership Down* by Richard Adams  
*Taming of the Shrew* by William Shakespeare  
*The Importance of Being Earnest* by Oscar Wilde  
*Ethan Frome* by Edith Wharton  
*The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne  
*Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain  
*The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck  
*The Crucible* by Arthur Miller

As we begin the semester, you should feel free to schedule a reading/ writing conference anytime you need to discuss an assignment.

It is advisable that, during the summer, you not read the works that we may read in class. We may read the following:

*The Mayor of Casterbridge* by Thomas Hardy  
*Wuthering Heights* by Emily Bronte  
*Crime and Punishment* by Fyodor Dostoyevsky  
*Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* by Tom Stoppard  
*Hamlet* (and possibly *MacBeth*) by William Shakespeare  
*Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad