

AP English Literature and Composition

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Essential Questions

Whether discussing class goals and expectations, reading, or writing an essay, the following questions will guide our thinking toward work that is challenging, purposeful, and enriching.

- Why AP?
- Why read old novels?
- What does effective writing look like?
- To what extent can we learn about ourselves by studying literature?

Enduring Understandings

- An effective AP course prepares students not only to pass the AP exam in May, it also prepares students to read and write at a college level and to think critically and creatively in a variety of contexts.
- Literature offers timeless insights into the human condition; as we study literature, we study ourselves.
- Writing is a craft that meets the intellectual, creative, and analytical needs of writers and readers.

Major Concepts / Content

This course prepares students for the AP English Literature and Composition exam. At the same time, students experience the environment of a college class through individual study, class discussions, and writing assignments that focus on analysis, literary appreciation, and critical thinking. Moreover, the curriculum and grading system are consistent with the College Board AP course description and scoring guides. In terms of rigor and workload, this course is comparable to college- or university-level classes. To that end, students scoring a 3 or above on the exam receive college credit at most colleges and universities throughout the United States.

Prerequisites

AP English Literature and Composition requires no prerequisite courses, though a background in the English Honors program is highly suggested. Students should be able to read and comprehend college-level texts and write grammatically correct sentences.

Course Goals

- To read and critically analyze imaginative literature.
- To understand the way writers use language to provide meaning and pleasure.
- To consider a work's structure, style, and themes as well as the use of figurative language, imagery, symbolism, tone, and other literary elements.

- To study representative works from various genres and periods but know a few works well.
- To understand a work's complexity, to absorb richness of meaning, and to analyze how meaning is embodied in literary form.
- To consider the social and historical values a work reflects and embodies (history informs the narrative)
- To write critical analysis of literature; expository, analytical, and argumentative essays; and creative works to sharpen understanding of literary artistry.
- To become aware of various modes of communication of the resources of language: connotation, metaphor, irony, syntax, and tone.
- To develop AP testing skills through study and practice during the year.

Performance Tasks

- Timed in-class essays based on past AP prompts
- Formal literary analysis that include expository, analytical, and argumentative essays (outside of class)
- Personal essays (e.g. college application essays)
- Close reading
- Reader's Responses
- Poetry analysis and explication
- Presentations - group and individual
- Quick responses
- Practice multiple choice questions
- Mock exams
- Dialectal journals
- Peer Review

Expectations for the AP Literature Student

- The ability to read closely and accurately
- the ability to engage in intelligent discussion involving active listening and constructive speaking
- the desire to learn more than the literal or superficial
- embrace personal and social responsibility sufficient to keep up with individual workload as well as the group responsibilities
- a willingness to accept and incorporate feedback from the teacher and peers.
- an open frame of mind that embraces the ambiguity of literature and to consider the unresolved questions starting points for further thinking and exploring
- a basic command of language, composition, and grammar and/or to be willing to accept extra help to keep up with the class.
- Know the MLA style guide

Course Text and Materials

Our studies will include some or all of the following major works:

How to Read Literature Like a Professor by Thomas C. Foster (Excerpts)
How to Read Novels Like a Professor by Thomas C. Foster (Excerpts)
How to Read Poetry Like a Professor by Thomas C. Foster (Excerpts)
Frankenstein by Mary Shelly (1818)
A Lesson Before Dying by Earnest Gaines (1993)
Oedipus Rex by Sophocles (429 BC)
Hamlet by William Shakespeare (1603)
Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead by Tom Stoppard (1966)
Gulliver's Travels by Jonathan Swift (1726)
Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen (1813)
Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man by James Joyce (1916)
The Stranger by Albert Camus (1942)
The Metamorphosis by Franz Kafka (1915)
Poetry - Various authors, themes, and schools of poetry throughout the year.
Short Fiction - Various authors, themes, and genres.

Course Units

- Unit 1: The Quest for Meaning Part 1: Building a Literary Analysis Toolbox
- Unit 2: The Quest for Meaning Part 2: Archetypes, Patterns, Allusions (biblical and mythological)
- Unit 3: Bildungsroman: Novels of Formation
- Unit 4: The Search for Identity and a Return to Nature in Romantic and Gothic Literature
- Unit 5: The Human Response to Suffering
- Unit 6: Drama
- Unit 7: AP Exam Final Preparations
- Unit 8: Film as Literature

Homework

To prepare for the exam in May and to realize success in this class, it is imperative that students perform work outside of class and come to class prepared to work with the assigned text. Discussing varying aspects of literature, structure, style, theme and the author's argument will be a daily practice. In preparation, for these discussions, students are asked to write their thoughts, questions, and discoveries as they move through the work. Plan to read every night. In addition to assigned reading, students will write out-of-class essays, various Reader's Responses, Close Reading forms, and other work of analysis, as appropriate. As this is a college-level course, college-level behavior and a college-level work ethic will be the norm.

CRITICAL: If a student is absent the day a major assignment is due, OR IF AN ASSIGNMENT IS DUE A WEEK OR MORE PRIOR TO THE DUE DATE, that student must still submit the completed assignment **via an email attachment** by the due date and

by the time the student's class period begins (the first bell). If the work appears any time after that (even one minute), it will be considered late and not accepted.

Grading and Attendance

Inconsistent attendance always results in anxiety, loss of continuity, and the inability to successfully participate in discussions. Showing up is essential. This course adheres to the El Segundo High School code on absences and tardies. Students will makeup missed tests due to an excused absence at a mutually agreed upon time.

Students will be graded on the items outlined in the Performance Tasks section of this syllabus. All written work, presentations, and other assessments will follow this guide. In doing so, students will learn to perform according to a set standard and develop the ability to self-assess.

Grading Guide (Based on Writing Traits, AP exams, and Understanding by Design)

Signs of an "A":

- Mature understanding of a given topic (offers fresh and insightful analysis; understands subtleties; can see several sides of an issue)
- Thorough, organized work
- Creative, well-supported ideas
- Critical-thinking clearly present
- Effective at communicating (superior control of language and ideas)
- Applies previous knowledge and concepts to new situations and problems with skill and insight
- Meticulous attention to style guide (where appropriate)

Signs of a "B":

- Solid understanding of a given topic (starts to take basic ideas to deeper levels)
- Skilled work, but limited in the care and detail of an "A"
- Ideas supported, for the most part
- Competent organization overall
- Communication hindered by some flaws in spelling, punctuation, etc.
- Solid attention to style guide (where appropriate)

Signs of a "C":

- Basic understanding of a given topic (gets the main ideas, but does not go beyond the surface)
- Work is done adequately
- Ideas are over-generalized and/or lack support in places
- Should re-organize work to make it more effective
- Quite a few errors and problems with spelling, punctuation, etc.
- Five to six errors to style guide (where appropriate)

Signs of a “D”:

- Limited understanding of a given topic (struggles to grasp main ideas, let alone more sophisticated aspects)
- Ideas are vague and rarely supported
- Lacks organization
- No evidence of proofreading or rethinking of ideas in order to communicate effectively.
- Overall inattention to style guide.

Signs of an “F”:

- Does not grasp even the basics of a given topic
- Incomplete, unsupported, and sloppy
- Seems thrown together at the last minute; overall, misses the assignment’s goals
- Does not participate in class discussions, group work and peer editing.
- 0 awareness of style guide.

Additionally, students will write according to specific AP scoring guides (e.g.: 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, etc.). Not only will students evaluate writing samples based on these guides, but they will also write, evaluate, and revise their own work based on those guides as well as feedback from peers and the instructor.

Note on grammar and usage: Seniors in AP Literature and Composition are expected to have a sound command of standard written English. Mini-lessons and individual work will may be assigned to help individual writers.

Success in this Class

Students will impress me and enhance their academic standing if they practice these habits of mind:

- Ask probing questions
- Demonstrate engagement
- Exhibit curiosity
- Make academic mistakes
- Challenge your beliefs
- Do *your* best! Do not compare yourself, doubt yourself, or shortchange yourself
- Think outside the box, take chances and generate ideas
- Know class protocols and never plead “not knowing.”

Classroom Rules:

- Have all appropriate materials (I will check randomly).
- Show up on time (in your seat when the bell rings).
- Treat yourself, your classmates, instructors, and visitors with respect.
- Practice courteous and ethical behavior.
- No hats or hoods.
- No completing work for other classes during AP Lit.
- Inappropriate use of technology

- NO CELL PHONES IN CLASS.

Use of Technology in Class

Technology is a part of some assignments in this class, so students should always carry fully charged iPads to class. Outside of these assignments and on a daily basis, use of the iPad is your choice.

If students do choose to use this tool, students must follow the policy and know the procedures for the 11 Honors classroom.

- Students will use the iPad as a learning device.
- Appropriate use of the iPad primarily includes note taking and accessing course content through the teacher website or various apps. Additionally research, writing, vocabulary, test taking will be available through the iPad at the teacher's direction.
- Students must ask permission before recording audio, using video or taking pictures of classmates or staff.
- Students will not use photos in place of notes EXCLUSIVELY.
- Students will not text, listen to music or play games during instructional time.
- Working on anything other than the assigned English work will result in lost Gangstuh points. Repeated violations of this policy will result in further disciplinary action.

I exercise the right to allow or disallow iPad use at any time.

A Final Word

AP English Literature and Composition is something of a paradox. It is indeed rigorous, but it is also enjoyable. The literature is enormously engaging, the work satisfying, and the class environment vibrant. Students will be challenged, but it is fair to say that if students engage in the work, they will emerge from the course with college credit and skills. More importantly students will garner timeless insights about themselves, the human condition, and the world.

I look forward to a wonderful year with you, the wonderful class of 2020.