

AP Literature and Composition /KAP English

2012-2013

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INTRODUCTION

An AP English Literature and Composition course engages you in the careful reading and critical analysis of imaginative literature. Through the close reading of selected texts, students deepen their understanding of the ways writers use language to provide both meaning and pleasure for their readers. As they read, students consider a work's structure, style and themes, as well as such smaller-scale elements as the use of figurative language, imagery, symbolism and tone.

GOALS

The course includes intensive study of representative works from various genres and periods, concentrating on works of recognized literary merit. The pieces chosen invite and reward rereading and do not, like works in such popular genres as detective or romance fiction, yield all (or nearly all) of their pleasures of thought and feeling the first time through. Such reading should be accompanied by thoughtful discussion and writing about those books in the company of one's fellow students.

READING

Reading in an AP course is both wide and deep. This reading necessarily builds upon and complements the reading done in previous English courses so that by the time you complete their senior year, you will have read works from several genres and periods — from the 16th to the 21st century. More importantly, you will **know a few works well**. In the class you read deliberately and thoroughly, in both instance to **appreciate** the quality and ideas of the work as well as the **aesthetic** value of the work – how it was conceived and constructed. In addition to considering a work's literary artistry, you reflect on the social and historical values it reflects and embodies.

In short, students in an AP English Literature and Composition course read actively. The works taught in the course require careful, deliberative reading. And the approach to analyzing and interpreting the material involves you learning how to make careful observations of textual detail, establish connections among their observations, and draw from those connections a series of inferences leading to an interpretive conclusion about the meaning and value of a piece of writing. Simply put, you will get out of these works what you put into them. If we were interested in merely learning ABOUT these stories, we could read the plot summaries of the books online and be done with it. While it is important to know about the books that we read, it is much more important to experience the books and be able to apply them critically to our own experiences. Part of reading actively involves annotating, and you will be asked to annotate everything that you read. You will be allowed to use your books for every assessment, and these assessments have been carefully designed to reward annotating. Those who fail to mark up their book effectively will find themselves at a disadvantage in completing work.

Over the past few years the concept of a book has changed considerably – electronic resources have allowed us to carry multiple books around on one device or read an entire book online. The use of Kindles or iPads or other similar devices is encouraged – keep in mind that you can annotate on those as well (although perhaps not as quickly or thoroughly as a paper copy). Although there is no way to police the way books are read outside of class, the use of phones to read books is strongly discouraged. Students have found that they work in a pinch when you have to get some reading done

at a place where having a book is not convenient. However, reading on a phone does not adequately create an environment which enables you to read at an AP level.

The following texts will be covered in class. You will be required to obtain copies of these books on your own. You will need an actual copy of the book for class – **no audio books, nothing downloaded to your phone** (Kindles and related devices are fine.) You must have a copy of the books in class with you every day while we are working them unless told otherwise. This list, while fairly definite, is subject to change.

Summer Work

- *Catch – 22* - Heller
- *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime* - Haddon

Individualism and Identity

- *Pride and Prejudice* – Austen - 9780451530783

Alienation Unit

- “The Metamorphosis” – Kafka - 9780553213690
- *No Exit*- Sartre - 9780679725169
- *Waiting for Godot* – Beckett – 9780802130341

Journeys Unit

- *Heart of Darkness* – Conrad – 9781593081232
- *A River Runs Through It* – Norman McLean - 0226500667

Classic Theater Unit :

- You will choose one of a handful of classic Greek tragedies to read (*Antigone, Oedipus Rex, etc.*)

Shakespeare Unit

- *Othello*- 9780140714630

Dystopian Unit (ONE of the following):

- *1984* – George Orwell
- *Brave New World* – Huxley
- *The Handmaid’s Tale* – Atwood
- *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* – Dick
- *A Clockwork Orange* – Burgess

Each semester we will focus on a different poet. The first semester will be Walt Whitman. The second semester will be determined later.

WRITING

Writing is an integral part of the AP English Literature and Composition course. Writing assignments focus on the critical analysis of literature and include expository, analytical and argumentative essays. Although critical analysis makes up the bulk of student writing for the course, well-constructed creative writing assignments may help students see from the inside how literature is written. Such experiences sharpen their understanding of what writers have accomplished and deepen their appreciation of literary artistry. The goal of both types of writing assignments is to increase students’ ability to explain clearly, cogently, even elegantly, what they understand about literary works and why they interpret them as they do.

To that end, writing in this class includes attention to developing and organizing ideas in clear, coherent and persuasive language. It includes study of the elements of style. And it attends to matters

of precision and correctness as necessary. Throughout the course, emphasis is placed on helping students develop stylistic maturity, which, for AP Lit, is characterized by the following:

- a wide-ranging vocabulary;
- a variety of sentence structures;
- a logical organization, enhanced by specific techniques of coherence such as repetition, transitions and emphasis;
- a balance of generalization with specific illustrative detail; and
- an effective use of rhetoric, including controlling tone, maintaining a consistent voice, and achieving emphasis through parallelism and antithesis.

The writing required in an AP English Literature and Composition course is thus more than a mere supplement to the study of literature. The writing that students produce in the course reinforces their reading. Since reading and writing stimulate and support one another, they are taught together in order to underscore both their common and their distinctive elements. Implied is that the judgments are the work of the student and not merely a repetition of ideas gained from the teacher or from study aides. Students should begin to get comfortable with the idea of writing about parts of literary works that they do **not** understand instead of writing about parts of works that they **do** understand for this will encourage the development of critical thinking and analytic skills.

However, many students by the time they arrive at their senior have decided what kind of writer they are, as if writing ability was a fixed trait like eye color. These students who receive a C on a paper will accept their role as a C writer and move on without making steps to improve. However, all students regardless of how well or poorly they write, can improve, much like a student who has no chance of playing in the NBA can still get better at basketball.

All students will be required to keep a portfolio of their work this year. Please purchase a small three ring binder for your portfolio. **No variations will be accepted.** Throughout the year several assignments will be designated as “portfolio pieces.” These pieces must be **typed and graded** in order to be included. At the end of the year you will be required to hand in your portfolio as a final assessment. **It is your responsibility to keep track of your portfolio.**

Here is a brief explanation of the types of writing you will be doing this year:

Timed Writings -The evaluation of your reading and comprehension will be handled through timed writings instead of tests. You will have forty minutes to complete each one. In the beginning of the class you will need to sharpen your ability to write on the fly. You are expected to use quotes from the works to support your point. A major part of the beginning of class will be devoted to learning how to write an effective essay in this format. Many of these will be completed outside of class.

Formal Essays- Roughly once a nine weeks you will be asked to write a formal paper of approximately three to four pages in length. The topic is by and large up to you, but there’s a good chance that your topic will develop from either a timed writing or a focused free write.

Before writing any timed and formal essays, I will provide rubrics, and we will go over these in detail during class. Rubrics will target imaginative and effective vocabulary, varied sentence structure, logical organization enhanced by stylistic techniques, an appropriate balance of inference and substantiation (quotations), as well as tone, voice, and emphasis. Rubrics will also target a clear thesis and unified focus. Please review your rubrics often during the writing process.

Focused Free Writes – These are informal writings that may be anywhere from one to two pages in length. They are intended to be informal in nature; less formal than a typed paper, but more formal than a journal entry. You may be expected to give personal reactions to the events of the story, respond to why you think

a character behaves the way they do, or explain how the author creates a realistic setting. These writings are intended to form the bedrock for the major papers you will do at the end of each quarter.

Forum Posts-We will also be setting up groups in class to post on message boards to engage in conversation with your classmates. You may be given a poem to respond to, or you may have a question dealing with a particular issue in a work. Regardless, you are expected to respond with the same degree of intellect and sophistication that you would bring to any other assignment.

We will also do a number of mini lessons and projects targeting all of these areas as well as various composition problems that arise during each semester.

CLASS EXPECTATIONS AND GUIDELINES

- Turn your work in on time. Of course there will be situations where you will not be able to turn in assignments due to unforeseen circumstances. I will do my best to work with you should these occur. **Any abuse of my tolerance will not be accepted.**
- The above does not include computer policies. With all of the technology that you have at your disposal, there should be no reason to hand work in late.
- Do your reading. You are an honors student and to choose not to read because you can is a disgrace to your standing.
- Should you disagree with me about a grade, your dispute must be submitted in writing for review. I want to know what you dispute and what you propose as a remedy. I will not tolerate arguing for points, nor will I tolerate an unwilling attitude simply because we disagree. If you are going to dispute a grade, make sure it's for the right reason. Your GPA, which will mean nothing to you at this point next year, is not a valid reason.

I am looking forward to another great year!

Mr. Rickert