

AP Literature and Composition

Course Syllabus and Guidelines

2010-2011

AP English is a course designed for those students who display **a love of reading**, and not just for their favorite book or author. Students should also show an aptitude for analyzing literature beyond a basic study of plot, characters, and setting. Furthermore, students with a desire to be engaged in the text will benefit more from the course than those who read quickly but don't see reading as a worthwhile activity.



COURSE OBJECTIVES

One goal of AP English is to develop and sharpen accurate reading and writing skills through studying a wide variety of literary texts and genres, from graphic novels to poetry to essays to full-length novels. Through an in-depth examination of these pieces of literature, students will be exposed to different literary periods, as well as a number of distinct cultural perspectives.

After ample time is spent with the text(s), another goal of the course presents itself: the development of precise, analytical writing (essays, short response, etc.) that is both fluent and relevant to the appropriate text(s). Students will be coached on expanding their own writing expertise (sentence structure, writing style, etc.) and vocabulary through writing and extended reading, analysis of various exemplars and writing samples, small-group practice, and/or small vocabulary studies within each unit. These writings and exercises not only serve as preparation for the approaching AP English Exam but they also let the student convey his or her knowledge of and/or reaction to the text(s). The majority of these writing will be timed in class, but other out-of-class assignments and writings may be used as well to supplement in-class work.

And, speaking of in-class work, the one thing that should NOT happen in this class is for the lecture format to dominate most of the time. Class will function best as an open discussion forum, allowing students to freely share their perspectives on the work of literature being discussed. For this reason, participation is essential—even shy people must learn to speak their mind at some point, even if it is to agree with a current proposal (although productive disagreement is tolerated as well). Remember, there is no right or wrong answer when studying literature—value can be found in any well-thought-out, relevant viewpoint or theory. Have the guts to share it!

CLASSROOM NECESSITIES

- Please bring these with you every day to be fully prepared for class!
- >whatever novel, poem, reading, etc. we're currently discussing
- >writing implements and a notebook in which to use them

>your own ideas and creativity, and a willingness to share them

SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT/CLASSROOM POLICIES

By this point in your academic career, you should be well versed in most Darby policies governing attendance (7 and you're sunk), grades, discipline, etc. For the sake of space and redundancy, only specific classroom policies appear here. For any questions regarding school policies, consult your handbook, see me outside of class, or talk to your Panther Period teacher, should you have one.

>**Turn in your work on time.** I understand that sometimes situations arise which prevent you from completing your out-of-class assignment(s). For this reason, I allow ONE FREE LATE ASSIGNMENT PER 9 WEEKS, free of penalty. Sometimes things just happen, after all. Outside of this "grace period," you must communicate with me regarding the reason for your missed assignment, and I'll do my best to work with you in each individual situation. Repeated use of this process, however, and I'll assume you're taking advantage of my kindness. Don't let this happen. In general, late assignments after your Free Late will be docked a letter grade each day they are late, excluding days you have excused or official absences.

>**Technology is everywhere—use it to your advantage.** The English department has a strict NO EXCUSES policy when it comes to technology, and we'll use it in this class as well. With all the possible resources at your disposal (most of you can type papers on your cell phones or i-phones by now, can't you?), there is simply no room in an upper level course for any excuse that begins with, "My computer wouldn't..."

>**Activity, not passivity.** You are an honors student in an advanced placement course. As such, I expect a high level of participation, both verbal and otherwise. This means that you should plan on voluntarily sharing a viewpoint or two on a weekly basis (at the very least), as well as keeping detailed notes on class discussion about each text we analyze (which may be checked for points or fodder for quizzes). Participation will be your best friend later, whether it's to help prepare you for the AP Exam or simply fulfill your K.A.P. requirements.

>**Plagiarism is not tolerated in any form, intentional or otherwise.** Your ideas should remain yours; others' ideas should remain theirs. The school handbook deals with plagiarism policies, but know that your work will receive no credit if it is plagiarized. Give credit where credit is due, and have some faith in your own ideas.

- **Grades are earned and seldom negotiable.** Your grade will be determined on a point-based system. Obviously, if an assignment is worth more points, it will be more important to your grade. The smaller assignments can pile up, though, so stay on top of all work!

Should you disagree with me about your grade, especially if your dispute would result in a different letter grade entirely, your dispute must be submitted to me in writing for review. As long as you have a legitimate concern or I have made a grievous error in judgment, I'll consider your case on an individual basis. After all, I will occasionally make mistakes on purpose to propagate the idea that I'm not perfect so others will not feel intimidated. If you catch one of my "accidental" mistakes, you're entitled to the points. Mindless quibbling over one or two percentage points to pad your grade, however, will most likely get you nowhere.

AP READING COMPONENTS & SYLLABUS

While subject to change at a moment's notice, the following course syllabus will at least give you a good idea of where we're heading this year, which will include a variety of literary genres and styles, from novels to plays to classical and contemporary poetry. You will be expected to obtain copies of the reading materials we will use in class by the time you need them (although not all the texts listed will be used). Units of study will be announced well in advance, in the event that the order presented below changes. In addition, possible topics of study, interpretation, and analysis within each unit may include:

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|-----------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|----------|
| -tone | -point of view | -character development | -irony |
| -imagery | -setting | -metaphor/analogy | -culture |
| -direct/indirect characterization | -figurative language | -symbolism | |
| -author's purpose | -historical value | -cultural value | |

>Introduction (1-2 Weeks)

- >>Summer Assignment/Text Review—E-Campus Review
 - The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime* (Haddon)
 - Persepolis* (Sartrapi)
 - The Catcher in the Rye* (Salinger)
- >>AP Concepts
 - The AP Exam & the K.A.P. Program
- >>Literary Criticisms and Examining Text
- >>Analytically Approaching a Piece of Literature; How to Critique
- >>Writing Conventions/Examples; MLA Format

>IDENTITY & INDIVIDUALISM (1ST 9 Weeks)

- >>*Their Eyes Were Watching God* (Hurston)
- >>*Pride and Prejudice* (Austen)
- >>Poetry Analysis (TBA)

>ALIENATION (2ND 9 Weeks)

- >>*The Metamorphosis* and other selections (Kafka)

- >>*No Exit* (Sartre)
- >>*Waiting for Godot* (Beckett)
- >>*Heart of Darkness* (Conrad)
- >>Poetry Analysis (TBA)

>**SHAKESPEAREAN CLASSICS (3rd 9 Weeks)**

- >>*Othello*
- >>*The Tempest*

>**DYSTOPIA (4th 9 Weeks)**

- >>1984 (Orwell)
- ~~CHOOSE 1 OF THE FOLLOWING~~
- >>*Brave New World* (Huxley)
- >>*The Handmaid's Tale* (Atwood)
- >>*Never Let Me Go* (Ishiguro)
- >>*A Clockwork Orange* (Burgess)
- >>Poetry Analysis (TBA)

Again, please keep In mind that this is a working syllabus ONLY, not the law!

AP WRITING COMPONENTS

Throughout the course, you will be required to complete a number of writings, ranging from informal reactions to more formalized essays. These writings are your chance to respond to what you have read and analyze the text through your own personal observations. Remember—it's no longer enough to "like" or "dislike" a piece of writing! Use sophisticated and varied vocabulary, complex and effective sentence structure, and a multitude of specific details and instances from the text to make your point(s) as strong as possible! In addition, take revision seriously! You will be given assistance to develop logical organization and coherence through techniques such as rhetorical structures, graphic organizers, and work on repetition, transitions, and emphasis. Among the many writing goals in this course, you should seek to develop a balance of detail—both general and specific—in your writing and establish an effective use of rhetoric including controlling tone and a voice appropriate to your audience. No piece of writing is ever really "done", is it?

>**Homework/Class Activities (15-40 pts each, typically):** Not always involving a great deal of writing, expect some small pieces of work or some reading quizzes along the way that may dabble in fact recall or recognition, vocabulary, group exercises, or public speaking, as well as a bit of writing. More difficult texts will probably yield more numerous assignments. Writing assignments that *would* fall into this category would include analytical and interpretive responses that focus on specific aspects of the literature (imagery, themes, figurative language, symbolism, tone, style, historical background, author's purpose, etc.). Students should expect class discussion to revolve around important parts of the literature and for writings to naturally progress from that

discussion. Analytical and interpretative writing techniques and expectations will be covered before writings are assigned.

>**Focused Free Writes (10-20 pts each):** Typically a page or two in length, this is a basic reaction to the text, and may take the form of a topic proposal of sorts. Basically, this writing is informal (but not quite a journal entry) and may be used as a springboard later for a longer, more formal piece of writing or assessment. You may be asked to respond to why you think a character behaves the way they do or explain how the author creates a realistic setting, among other things. Based on class discussion and other writing components, this writing piece can eventually be developed into an expository, analytical essay in which students draw upon textual details to develop an extended interpretation of a literary text.

>**Timed Writings (typically 50 pts each):** Possibly prompts taken from works we are reading, or maybe topics based on poetry or prose selections you have not seen before. Regardless of the prompt, these writings are what they appear to be: timed, basically for 40 minutes. Expect to see these writings once or twice a month, as they effectively help you sharpen your writing skills and your ability to think and create on the fly. Opportunities for feedback and revision will be given, so be prepared to hone your ability to create something of high quality on the spot. In addition, these writings may be used for assessment purposes to finish off a novel. Who knows—there may even be a way to get these done *at home*...

>**Semester Papers (typically 100 pts each):** Occurring at the end of each semester, these papers should showcase your growing writing abilities. Generally at least 3 pages in length, typed, and following MLA format, expect to know about these papers well in advance and to see a rubric before actually sitting down to write. Conferencing, group or peer editing, minimal research, or feedback before, during, and after the assignment may also be part of the writing process here. In addition to extended analysis and/or interpretation of textual details, students may also be asked to formulate argumentative essays and draw upon textual details to make and explain judgments about a work's artistry and quality or historical significance and cultural value.