Advanced Placement English Language and Composition - Syllabus: 2016-2017

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Course Goals:

* **Develop Critical Literacy**: Strengthen basic academic skills students need to perform confidently and effectively in courses across the curriculum, including critical inquiry, deliberation, argument, reading, writing, listening, and speaking.
* **Facilitate Informed Citizenship**: While critical literacy skills prepare students to meet the challenges of college-level study, they also serve the larger goal of cultivating the skills students need for lifelong learning.  Beyond their academic lives, students should be able to use the literacy skills practiced in this course for personal satisfaction, professional success, and responsible engagement in civic life.

To this end, this course focuses primarily on analytic and argumentative texts, as opposed to your previous English classes, which focused primarily on literary texts.  You will read and write texts designed to inquire, to explain, to criticize, and to persuade in a variety of rhetorical situations.

**Grade Distribution:**

30%: In class writing and participation\*

10%: Tests and Quizzes

10%: Homework Assignments

50%: Graded Writing Assignments

My gradebook in powerschool will be programmed to reflect these categories in your final grade for each quarter; to this end, your grade will appear to fluctuate erratically depending on how many grades have been posted in any given category.

\*You will receive two “in class writing and participation” grades each quarter. Students who arrive to class on time and prepared and who engage fully in classroom discussions and activities will receive high grades for in class writing and participation. You will lose points for any combination of the following actions if they take place with any regularity: coming late, coming to class unprepared, using a phone or electronic device during class except when explicitly instructed to do so, excessive use of the hall pass, excessive and suspiciously timed absences, distracting behavior during class, remaining silent during class discussions, lack of attention or respect when other people are speaking, or lack of effort and focus during in class writing assignments.

**Late Work**: All writing assignments are due on turnitin.com at 2:30 PM on the day that the assignment is due unless you are instructed otherwise. All other assignments need to be completed and with you at the start of your class period. You will not receive credit for late homework assignments that I check in class. If I am collecting and grading an assignment, you will automatically lose five points for not turning it in on time, and further points will be deducted as time goes by. I will not accept work that is more than three days late unless you have specifically discussed the situation with me. If you are absent on the day that a significant assignment is due, you are responsible for digitally submitting it on time, and it will be counted as late if you do not do so. You are responsible for all information and work that you miss when you are not in class. Talk to me directly about any extended absences or extenuating circumstances.

**Academic Integrity**: As per Mt. Greylock and English Department policy, any incidents of plagiarism or cheating will be taken extremely seriously. Consequences – listed in order of increasing severity – include rewriting the assignment, receiving a zero for the assignment, guidance counselor notification, parent notification, National Honors Society notification, and administration notification with additional disciplinary actions.

**Extra Help:** Ask me for help when you need it. I am available via email, during directed study, and many afternoons after school. Check with me ahead of time if you want to come after school for extra help.

**Recommendations:** Review and follow the “guidelines for requesting recommendations” posted on my website before approaching me to ask me to write you a recommendation.

**General Learning Objectives**:

1. Analyze and interpret samples of purposeful writing, identifying and explaining an author’s use of rhetorical strategies.

2. Analyze images and other multimodal texts for rhetorical features.

3. Use effective rhetorical strategies and techniques when composing.

4. Write for a variety of purposes.

5. Respond to different writing tasks according to their unique rhetorical and composition demands, and translate that rhetorical assessment into a plan for writing.

6. Create and sustain original arguments based on information synthesized from readings, research, and / or personal observation and experience.

7. Evaluate and incorporate sources into researched arguments.

8. Demonstrate understanding of the conventions of citing primary and secondary sources.

9. Gain control over various reading and writing processes, with careful attention to inquiry (research), rhetorical analysis and synthesis of sources, drafting, revising/rereading, editing, and review.

10. Converse and write reflectively about personal processes of composition.

11. Demonstrate understanding and control of Standard Written English as well as stylistic maturity in writing.

12. Revise a work to make it suitable for different audiences.

**Essential Questions to be considered throughout the year**:

1. How do we know what we know?
2. How does language shape our perceptions and thoughts?
3. How does writing allow people to better understand, appreciate, and respect others?
4. What does it mean for something to be true / What is truth?

**General Overview of Texts and Assignments** (subject to minor additions, deletions, and shifts in timing)

Q1 – **Close Reading and Rhetorical Analysis**

Students will attend to the pragmatic and stylistic choices writers make to achieve their purposes with particular audiences. Students will demonstrate this skill primarily by writing rhetorical analyses that consider specific texts, but they will also consider these same issues in small group and whole class discussions (Learning Objectives: 1, 8, 10, 11)

**Texts**

summer reading

* Ta-Nehisi Coates, *Between the World and Me*
* Marilynne Robinson, *Gilead*
* Nonfiction text summer read

general introductory texts about reading and writing

* Neil Postman, *Teaching is a Subversive Act* – excerpt
* Vladimir Nabokov, “Good Readers and Good Writers”
* Verlyn Klinkenbord, excerpts from *A Few Short Sentences About Writing*
* Joan Didion, “Why I Write”
* Susan Sontag, “Introduction,” from *The Best American Essays: 1992*
* David Foster Wallace, “Tense Present,” from *Harper’s Magazine*: 2001

memoir

* Phillip Lopate, “Writing Personal Essays: On the Necessity of Turning Oneself Into a Character”
* Annie Dillard, excerpt from *An American Childhood*
* John McPhee, “Swimming with Canoes”
* Zora Neale Hurston, “How it Feels to Be Colored Me” 1928
* “On Being the Target of Discrimination” by Ralph Ellison
* Russell Baker, “Becoming a Writer”
* Selections from *The Moth* (podcasts and video)
* Jeanette Walls, excerpt from *Glass Castle*

imaginative fiction - whole class book

* Jennifer Egan, *A Visit from the Goon Squad*

**Major Assignments**

* Rhetorical Analysis
* Memoir

Q2 – **Argument**

Using effective rhetorical strategies and techniques when composing, students will articulate clear claims and provide appropriate evidence and convincing justification in order to convince a reader to agree to or take a course of action. Students will develop this skill by analyzing and interpreting a wide variety of purposeful writing samples. (Learning Objectives: 1, 3, 8, 9, 10, 11)

**Texts**

general introduction to argument

*Everything’s an Argument* – chapters on definition, evaluation, proposal, and fallacies

Argument and Persuasion

Mary Wollstonecraft, “Of the Pernicious Effects Which Arise from the Unnatural Distinctions Established in Society,” from *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman.* 1792

Virginia Woolf, “Shakespeare’s Sister,” from *A Room of One’s Own.* 1929

Martin Luther King Jr., “I Have a Dream” (LA)

Abraham Lincoln, “Second Inaugural Address” (LA)

Sojourner Truth, “And Ain’t I a Woman?” (LA)

Jonathan Swift, “A Modest Proposal” (LA)

Gloria Naylor, “The Meanings of a Word” (LA)

Transcendentalism

* Ralph Waldo Emerson, excerpts from *Nature* and *Self-Reliance*
* Henry David Thoreau, excerpts from *Walden*
* Annie Dillard, “Scanning the Creek” and “Living Like Weasels”
* Barbara Kingsolver, “High Tide in Tucson,” from *High Tide in Tuscon*

*Classic ORB*

*The Laramie Project*

*The Crucible*

**Major Assignments**

* Transcendentalism Narrative
* Extended Argument Essay
* Socratic Seminar (*The Laramie Project / The Crucible*)

Q3 – **Synthesis**

Students will read for multiple perspectives in response to a common question and discern patterns of agreement and disagreement among sources. Students will bring together their skills at rhetorical analysis and argument building to write research-based persuasive essays that analyze multiple sources to broaden the context of an individual argument. (Learning Objectives: 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11)

**Texts**

*Everything’s an Argument –* causal arguments

* Andrew Solomon, “The Refugees,” from *The Moth*

Synthesis: Power of Language (LA)

Malcolm X, “Coming to an Awareness of Language”

Helen Keller, “The Day Language Came into My Life”

David Raymond, “On Being 17, Bright, and Unable to Read”

Martin Luther King, “Letter from a Birmingham Jail”

Synthesis: Politics, Propaganda, and Doublespeak (LA)

Newman and Genevieve Birk, “Selection, Slanting, and Charged Language”

George Orwell, “Politics and the English Language”

William Lutz, “The World of Doublespeak”

Jason Stanley, “Language that Silences”

Selections from *Everything’s An Argument* (Food and Sustainability, Campus Diversity, or Privacy and the Internet)

Truth in Literature and Film

Truman Capote, *In Cold Blood*

*Capote*

Tim O’Brien, *The Things They Carried*

*Restrepo*

*The Hurt Locker*

**Major Assignments**

* Synthesis / Research Task
* Socratic Seminar (journalism)

Q4 – **Images and Multimodal Texts**

Students will analyze, evaluate, and write about the rhetorical use of images, graphics, video, film, and design components of print- and web-based texts. (Learning Objectives: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, 11, 12)

**Texts**

*Everything’s an Argument* – visual arguments

speeches

advertisements

*The Great Gatsby*

Major Assignments:

* Advertising Campaign
* Speech / Multimedia Presentation on ORB
* College Essay

Review this syllabus on your own and also with a parent/guardian. Sign in the space below to indicate that you have reviewed the syllabus and understand the procedures, policies, and expectations for this course. If you have any questions about the syllabus or about the course, please contact me directly or use the space below to record your question(s). Return this small part of the page, but keep the syllabus itself!

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Any questions?