

**AP English Literature and Composition  
Syllabus  
2007-2008**

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**General Course Information**

Grade level offered: 12  
1.0 Credits (.5 per semester)  
Prerequisites: Accelerated 11 is highly recommended

**Course Description**

AP English Literature and Composition will give students a learning experience equivalent to a typical undergrad introduction to literature class. Through close reading of literary texts, students will come to understand how writers use language to provide meaning and to answer the big questions in life. We will "measure" literature against the history of philosophy to understand how literature fits into its own time as well as in all time. We will ask, "What is art?" and try to determine the qualities of great literature. Our literary analysis will look through the lenses of style and structure, rhetorical strategies, diction, figurative language, imagery, selection of detail, language and syntax. Vocabulary study is important. Students will also master literary terms. Writing well about literature is a key component of the class. In addition to writing a variety of essays, students will keep a writing log over the course of the year to document their progress and to engage themselves in thinking about their writing. It is expected that students will take both the AP English exams in May. Students should check with various colleges to see what credits they offer for each or both tests.

**Course Outcomes**

In this course students will

- improve close reading and analytical strategies; while texts are provided, students are strongly encouraged to buy their own copies of each text for ease in close reading and annotating text.
- stretch their imaginative abilities in reaction to literature
- improve their ability to find and explain (through discussion and writing) what is of value in literature
- revisit the purposes and strategies of rhetoric in order to
  - develop an effective use of rhetoric, including controlling tone, establishing and maintaining voice, and achieving appropriate emphasis through diction and sentence structure
  - improve organization in writing through techniques to improve coherence, such as repetition, transitions, and emphasis
  - effectively state, support and explain their claims in their arguments
- advance vocabulary skills to cope with unfamiliar language

## Methods of Instruction

Discussion is the primary way in which students come to understand a particular text. Discussion is both large group and small group. Discussions are sometimes student led. Discussions are sometimes conducted online. Cooperative learning groups are also used extensively in this class. Projects/assignments will be done individually as well. Some assigned texts are to be read independently, in addition to other course texts.

## Writing about Literature

- Students will write a variety of AP style essays over the course of the year, most timed and in class. While all essays expect general rhetorical excellence, each one has a particular thematic or analytical focus (see essay summary below).
- Students will be writing to understand, writing to explain, and writing to evaluate. Quality of interpretation comes from depth of insightful understanding.
- Students are encouraged to revise essays. (All revisions are due one week after originals are returned).
- In addition to writing a variety of essays, students will keep a writing log over the course of the year to document their progress and to engage themselves in thinking about their writing. Students will also write reflective, more personal responses to literature throughout the year in study guides, etc.
- Students will analyze two published critical essays in order evaluate professional models.

## Essay Summary

1. First AP essay: *A White Heron* (not graded)
2. Setting: *Canterbury Tales*
3. Tone: *The Inferno*
4. AP essay: Coca Cola letters
5. Short Fiction: Compare & Contrast (three options)
6. Satire: *Advice to Youth*
7. Diction & Imagery: *1984* or Theme: *All Quiet on the Western Front*
8. AP essay: *Death of a Toad* or *The Author to her Book*
9. AP essay: *The Crossing* or *Obason*
10. Responding to a critical analysis (first of two): partner
11. Responding to a critical analysis (second of two): individual

"AP essay" signifies that the essay prompt is from an actual previous AP exam.

## Resources/Texts

(Texts listed below are generally included in course, but will vary from year to year).

Primary text:

Arp, Thomas R. and Greg Johnson. Perrine's Literature: Structure, Sound, and Sense. 8<sup>th</sup> Edition. Boston: Heinle & Heinle: Thompson Learning, 2002.

## Secondary texts:

- *Sophie's World*, Jostein Gaarder (Summer reading)
- *Native Son*, Wright (Independent reading)
- *Oedipus Rex*, Sophocles
- *The Canterbury Tales*, (Selected Tales including the Knight's Tale) Chaucer
- *The Inferno*, Dante
- *The Metamorphosis*, Kafka (Independent reading)
- *A Doll House*, Ibsen
- *The Death of Ivan Ilych*, Tolstoy
- *Paul's Case*, Cather
- *Greenleaf*, O'Connor
- *A Good Man is Hard to Find*, O'Connor
- *Good Country People*, O'Connor
- *Araby*, Joyce
- *The Dead*, Joyce
- *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Wilde
- *A Modest Proposal*, Swift
- *Brave New World*, Huxley (Independent reading)
- *1984*, Orwell
- *All Quiet on the Western Front*, Remarque
- Shakespeare (selection will vary from year to year)
- Various satirical selections
- Various persuasive texts
- *Accelerated English 11 & AP English Glossary & Guide* (from 11<sup>th</sup> grade )
  - This guide is a resource for literary terms, elements of fiction, poetry, and rhetoric. It also includes essay tips, guides, and other helps. Finally, this resource includes a brief grammar handbook.
- Chapter 7 from: Rottenberg, Annette T. *Elements of Argument: A Text and Reader*. 6<sup>th</sup> Ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, 2000.

## Assessment:

- Assessment of understanding of literature is done primarily through essays.
- Some quizzes are given (weekly vocabulary quizzes).
- Knowledge of literary terms is tested.
- Students are expected to be active participants in discussions.
- An exam is given at the end of the first semester.
- Students who take the AP test in May are not required to take the second semester exam.
- Students will create a writing log to help with self-assessment of writing.

## Grading:

- Standard English Department Scale
  - A: 100-90
  - B: 89-80
  - C: 79-70
  - D: 69-60
  - F: 59-0
- Grades are calculated using total points.
- AP Rubric is used for scoring essays (all essays worth 50 points)

## Course Outline

### Pre-coursework

Assignment is due the first Friday of the school year.

- Read *Sophie's World* by Jostein Gaarder (see assignment overview)
- Participate in list serv discussion (see guidelines in assignment overview)
- Create a project and present it to the class
  - Project details are online

### Semester One (18 weeks)

#### WEEKLY Vocabulary Quizzes

Weekly vocabulary quizzes have the following objectives:

- Improve vocabulary knowledge and competence.
- Improve sentence fluency, sentence variety, and grammatical conventions.

#### INTRODUCTORY UNIT (2 weeks)

- Review summer assignment: present projects
- Hand out syllabus & course calendar
- Setting the tone for the course: *The Emperor's Three Questions*
- Independent reading: *Native Son* (see below)
- Introduce Vocabulary Study & Weekly quizzes
- Introduce Elements of Lit terms for test
- Review Acc.11/AP Glossary & Guide (from 11<sup>th</sup> grade)
- Answering the "So What?" question (reference: an essay about essays)
- The first AP essay (not graded): *A White Heron*
  - Analyze rhetorical qualities
  - Talk through the process: what went right, wrong, what do you need?
- Make first entry in writing log.

#### NATIVE SON (Independent novel)

- Analytical Focus: plot, point of view, diction, tone, faulty reasoning
- Thematic Focus: Racism, Anti-Semitism, and Individual vs. Society
- Assignment: study guide
- List serv discussion

#### OEDIPUS REX (1 week)

- Analytical Focus: irony, classical tragedy, Greek drama
- Thematic Focus: self-knowledge, pride, arrogance
- Assignment: study guide

### CANTERBURY TALES (3 weeks)

- Study the General Prologue, *The Pardoner's Tale* (on video), *The Knight's Tale*, *The Miller's Tale* & *The Reeve's Tale*.
- All students memorize & recite the first 18 lines of the GP in Middle English to understand a bit of what English used to be.
- Analytical Focus: Structure, diction, symbolism, imagery
- Thematic Focus: chivalric values, love, human idealism
- Assignment: study guide
- Essay (2): Setting
- Critical Essay Analysis #1 on Canterbury Tales with a partner

### THE INFERNO (2 weeks)

- Analytical Focus: structure (terza rima), diction, tone, symbolism, figurative language, allegory
- Thematic Focus: heroic journey, choices, more
- Assignment: study guide
- Essay (3): Tone

### THE METAMORPHOSIS (Independent novel)

- Analytical Focus: point of view, imagery, diction, tone
- Thematic Focus: alienation
- Thematic Focus: study guide

### REVIEWING RHETORIC (2 weeks)

- Review Acc.11/AP Glossary & Guide
- Read ch. 7 "Language & Thought," Rottenberg
- Read and annotate Tom Wolfe article and discuss
- Debate: Why girls do better in college (texts provided; teams read, analyze and prepare arguments and rebuttals)
- Argument/Rhetoric terms test
- Essay (4): AP essay: Coca Cola letters

### A DOLL HOUSE (2 weeks)

- Analytical Focus: Character, Irony, Point of View
- Thematic Focus: Women's Rights
- Assignment: study guide
- Critical Essay Analysis #2: individual

### SHORT FICTION Unit (4 weeks)

- Analytical Focus: various literary elements, as applicable
- Thematic Focus: various themes
- Close reading: annotate a major text from this unit
- Compare/Contrast graphic organizer
- Essay (5): Compare/Contrast (three options)

#### THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST (2 weeks)

- Analytical Focus: humor, irony, satire, syntax
- Thematic Focus: Manners & Conventions
- Assignment: study guide
- Video (if time permits)

#### SEMESTER EXAM

- A practice AP exam is given as the 1st semester exam

Writing Log is due

#### **Semester Two:**

**WEEKLY:** Vocabulary Quizzes

#### THE COLLEGE ENTRANCE/SCHOLARSHIP ESSAY (1 week)

- Look at exemplars
- Analysis: what makes an exemplary essay?
- Rhetorical focus: voice/ethos and logic/logos; organization; fluency; word choice; conventions
- Peer review

#### SATIRE UNIT (1 week)

- *A Modest Proposal*, Swift (annotate text)
- Various practice test selections
- Essay (6): Advice to Youth

#### BRAVE NEW WORLD (Independent novel)

- Analytical Focus: Dystopian genre, diction, tone, imagery
- Thematic Focus: value of art, what it means to be human, ethics of science & technology
- Assignment: study guide
- List serv discussion

#### 1984 (2 weeks) (or All Quiet on the Western Front)

- Analytical Focus: Point of view, diction, tone, imagery, syntax
- Thematic Focus: Dissolution of language, innate vs. learned behavior, objective reality
- Activity: Logical Fallacies & Rhetorical Strategies
- Essay (7): analyze a passage--diction, tone, imagery

ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT (2 weeks) (or 1984)

- Analytical Focus: Point of view, diction, tone, imagery, figurative language, etc.
- Thematic Focus: Glorifying service, horrors of war, camaraderie, who starts war and why?
- Activity: Study Guide, analyzing passages
- Essay (7): choose a theme from the novel—diction, tone, imagery, figurative language

SHAKESPEARE (2 weeks) Text will vary from year to year

- Analytical Focus: Shakespearean structure, figurative language, etc.
- Thematic Focus: varies
- Activity: Analyzing passages

POETRY (3 weeks) (various chapters and selections from *Sound and Sense*, Perrine)

- Analytical Focus: elements of poetry
- Thematic Focus: varies with poem
- Poetry terms test
- Essay (8): *Death of a Toad* or *Author to her Book*

TEST PREP (3 weeks)

- Practice Objective Tests: two versions
- Review answering strategies, thinking processes, pitfalls, etc.
- Practice AP essay: (9) *The Crossing* or *Obason*
- Going beyond: More test prep materials are available for independent study. Just ask.

Writing log is due

!! AP EXAMS (First part of May)

FINAL PROJECT (3 weeks) (after test through end of school year)

Students suggest a project that meets at least two of the following

- Integrates the study of the literature/concepts/themes we have studied
- Is a new study of a text/concept
- Requires all students to write/contribute
- Is a collaborative or public performance