

## **Advanced Placement Literature and Composition Syllabus**

### **Course Description**

Advanced Placement English Literature is a one-year course emphasizing the development of skills in the critical reading of fiction and in writing about literature and related ideas. It is for high school students capable of understanding college-level work in English, and who are willing to devote the energy necessary to complete a course more rigorous than other high school English courses designed for the college-bound student. This course is designed to enable students to demonstrate their achievement in college-level work by taking the Advanced Placement English examination in Literature and Composition in May. Most colleges and universities grant college credit for recognized performance on the exam.

### **Literature Objectives**

- Read critically, ask questions about the reading material, and recognize assumptions and implications by evaluating ideas.
- Read with understanding a range of literature that is rich in quality and representative of different literary forms and historical periods.
- Read a literary text analytically, seeing relationships between form and content.
- Describe how language contributes both literally and figuratively to the meaning of a work: i.e. deal systematically with the “whats” and “hows” of a literary work.
- Respond actively and imaginatively to a literary work by describing its stylistic features and evaluating them in light of the theme, entertaining alternative approaches, or dramatizing the circumstance of effects of the work.
- Draw conclusions about the themes of a work, appraising them and speculating independently on related concepts.
- Think reflectively about readings and apply findings to life.
- Value literature as an imaginative representation of truth or reality.

### **Writing Objectives**

- View writing as a developed discipline that includes collecting information.
- Formulate ideas, determine their relationships, draft paragraphs, and arrange them in order using appropriate transitions
- Write as a means of discovering and clarifying ideas.
- Respond directly and efficiently to questions that require a timed essay, organize quickly and clearly, focus on major points that provide a competent response to the question as asked and develop each major point fully.

- Write appropriately for different occasions, audiences, and purposes (persuading, explaining, describing, and interpreting).
- Use the conventions of standard written English with skill and assurance.
- Maintain a consistent tone and appeal (emotional, logical, or ethical) through precise syntax, phrasing, and diction.
- Summarize clearly and accurately the ideas of others.
- Collect data from secondary sources, use it judiciously, and document it accurately.
- Write creatively for one's own enjoyment and the pleasure of others.

(Objectives listed in *Teacher's Guide to Advanced Placement Course in English Literature and Composition*, The College Board.)

### **Note on Grading Informal Writing (Writing to Understand)**

Journals are informal writings completed either in class or out of class in which students test their ideas, ask questions, make observations, and formulate connections about the work we are reading in class. I give students a list of possible journal topics, and they are encouraged to develop topics of their own. I make comments on their journals, highlighting insightful thoughts, asking and answering questions, and encouraging students to elaborate and make text to text, text to self, and text to society connections.

### **Note on Grading Formal Writing (Writing to Explain and Writing to Evaluate)**

I evaluate formal assignments based on the following elements:

- vocabulary integration from particular unit vocabulary words
- utilization of a variety of sentence structures
- organization of thinking using a variety of techniques including repetition, transitions and emphasis, and balance and detail
- effective use of rhetoric including tone, voice, diction and sentence structure.

Feedback on papers encourages students to incorporate the above elements into their writing. Students are given opportunities to revise their essays through writing conferences and peer editing. Each assignment is different and may focus on a particular element of writing more than another. Specific writing assignments are listed below for each unit.

## **Unit I, First Quarter: Conflicts between Self vs. Truth**

### **General Goals**

1. To learn basic concepts of classical and Shakespearean tragedy
2. To use several approaches to literary analysis
3. To review the basic format of writing a solid literary essay
4. To write fluently and critically in a response journal
5. To build vocabulary

Materials Used:

Summer reading selections

*Metamorphosis*. Franz Kafka

*Oedipus Rex*. Sophocles

*Othello*. William Shakespeare

Selected Short Stories: "Young Goodman Brown," "The Lottery,"

*AP A to Z Focus: Tone, The Analysis Paragraph, Tone Writing, and Detail (Please see note in "Teacher and Student Resources" on page 9 for a description of this source and how it addresses AP Evaluation Guidelines.)*

### **Weeks One through Three: Summer Reading and *Metamorphosis***

Focus of study: Review summer reading. Students present reading journals for assigned texts. During the first two weeks of class students will review good writing practices and get an overview of the AP test and writing expectations.

Assignments: Students complete an expository and informal writing to understand assignment. Both are explained below:

- Writing to Explain: Students complete an in-class essay from an AP prompt about the novel read for summer reading. Students revise their essays.
- Writing to Understand: Students begin to write in their response journals, something that they need to do weekly on a weekly basis for the remainder of the school year.

Focus of Study: Students focus on critical analysis for *The Metamorphosis*.

Assignments: Students complete interpretive and evaluative writing assignments. Writing assignments are explained below:

- Writing to Explain: The novel unit concludes with an open-book test and a timed in-class essay from an AP prompt about how an unrealistic incident highlights a more realistic event in a novel. Students make connections between other novels and dramas with tragic characters.
- Writing to Interpret: Students read, summarize and discuss the ten critical essays that are in the novel. Students are assigned to present specific essays to the class. Discussions should include specific evidence from the novel applied to the critical essay. Students should interpret figurative language, imagery, symbolism, and tone.

### **Weeks Four through Five: *Oedipus Rex***

Focus: Students learn and review dramatic irony, character foils, and internal conflict. They work with the theme of fate. Students spend time reviewing Greek Mythology.

Assignments: Students complete an expository essay and an evaluative writing assignment. Both are explained below:

- Writing to Explain: Students are assessed by writing an out of class expository essay which focuses on analyzing fate in *Oedipus*. They bring their first draft essays to class for peer editing. Students must integrate vocabulary learned from this unit. They will be evaluated using the writing guidelines listed on page two of this syllabus.
- Writing to Evaluate: They use *Prentice Hall: Literature* to learn about various literary approaches and apply them to *Oedipus*. Students write evaluative paragraph responses about each approach and lead class discussions based upon their responses.

### **Weeks Six through Nine: *Othello***

Focus of Study: Students focus on Othello's tragic flaws and appearance versus reality. Topics reviewed include irony, figurative language, and elements of the drama. Students review and expand basic concepts, structure, style, and themes of the Shakespearean tragedy.

#### Assignments:

To end the drama study, students take an *Othello* test and write an essay.

Writing assignments are explained below:

- Writing to Understand: Students must write ten one-page journals throughout the reading. They are given a list of journal topics. Journals may be completed in class and out of class. Students have opportunities to share the journals with each other.
- Writing to Explain: Students write an essay about Othello's tragic flaws and compare him to Oedipus.
  - Writing Focus: Students should strive for an effective use of rhetoric, including controlling tone, establishing and maintaining voice, and achieving appropriate emphasis through diction and sentence structure. Students are given opportunities to revise. They are expected to integrate vocabulary words into their writing.

### **Unit II, Second Quarter: Conflicts between Self vs. Society**

#### General Goals:

1. To review and/or learn major literature terms of fiction
2. To analyze literature for author's techniques and individual style in addition to thematic content
3. To analyze prose nonfiction for its ideas and language choices
4. To write solid literary essays in a limited time frame
5. To continue writing in the response journal
6. To build vocabulary

#### Materials Used:

*Perrine's Sound and Sense*

*Prentice Hall: Literature*

*Jane Eyre*. Charlotte Bronte

*Death of a Salesman*. Arthur Miller

Selected Short Stories: "The Fall of the House of Usher," "The Yellow Wallpaper," "The Black Cat"

*AP A to Z Focus: Diction, Figurative Language, Imagery, and Syntax* (**Please see note in "Teacher and Student Resources" on page 9 for a description of this source and how it addresses AP Evaluation Guidelines.**)

### **Weeks One through Six: *Jane Eyre* and Poetry**

Focus of Study: Students analyze *Jane Eyre* from gothic, feminist, and historical critical lenses, and study foreshadowing, symbolism, imagery, allusions, and word choice.

Assignments: Students develop an ongoing list of unfamiliar words and add them to their knowledge base. Writing assignments include informal, expository, and evaluative. They are described below:

- Writing to Understand: Students write daily reflective journals based on readings and discuss them in class.
- Writing to Explain: The essay for the first half of the novel is a analysis comparing and contrasting Lowood and Thornfield locations. Students should make connections between these locations and Jane's situation. Essays are graded on integration of quotes word choice, syntax, and details.
- Writing to Evaluate: For the second half of the novel, students write a persuasive essay of their choice. Topics may include feminism in the novel, bird imagery, gothic elements, and Bertha's role.

### **Weeks Six through Nine: *Death of a Salesman* and Poetry**

Focus of Study: Students examine capitalism, family dynamics, and the American Dream.

Assignments: Students write informal and expository essays. They are described below:

- Writing to Understand: Students write several journals, an obituary and a life slogan for Willy Loman.
- Writing to Explain: Students view excerpts from the movie and write a comparison/contrast essay as a final assessment.

### **Poetry Project**

Focus: Students study diction, imagery and figurative language, rhythm and rhyme, form, and symbols and allusion. We use a variety of poems from

*Perrine's Sound and Sense* and *Prentice Hall: Literature* as well as student-selected poetry from many resources. This is an ongoing project throughout the second quarter.

Assignments: Students write to understand, to evaluate, and to explain.

- Writing to Understand: Students read the poems for homework, write journals, answer assigned questions, and discuss the poems in class.
- Writing to Interpret: Students are also assigned a poetry project in which they select any poet, read several of the poet's poems, and write a 3-6 page paper that analyzes the poet's style. Students find a common thread that runs throughout the selected poems, paying attention to the social and historical context of the works.
  - Writing focus: sentence structures, including appropriate use of subordination and coordination. Students write a rough draft which I help them revise.
- Writing to Explain: They choose their favorite of the poet's poems, take digital photos that symbolize elements of the poem, and display them with a copy, and explanation of the poem.

#### **Final Exam:**

The final exam consists of two in-class essays, one from each unit of study. Students are given two of the open-ended essays from prior AP tests which fit into the works they read for each unit. They choose one novel from each unit and answer the correlating question.

#### **Unit III, Third Quarter: Conflicts between Self vs. Society and Self vs. Self**

General Goals:

1. To continue developing skills of literary analysis for both thematic content and authors' techniques in novels and poetry
2. To continue developing skills in literary criticism and analysis approaches
3. To further strengthen writing skills
4. To review the major elements of poetry
5. To build vocabulary

Materials Used:

*Native Son*.

*A Doll's House*. Henrik Ibsen

*AP A to Z Focus: Writing the Essay, Characterization, and Symbols, Motifs, and Archetypes (Please see note in "Teacher and Student Resources" on page 9 for a description of this source and how it addresses AP Evaluation Guidelines.)*

**Weeks One through Four: *Native Son***

Focus of Study: Students are introduced to the Marxist critical approach, discuss the fear and alienation of racism, and make connections to poetry.

Assignments: The novel is distributed to students before the semester break, giving them a minimum of two weeks to read it ahead of time.

- Writing to Understand: They complete a study guide and lead discussions in class about the reading.
- Writing to Explain: Students find poems that are related to the novel and write analysis paragraphs connecting the two works.
- Writing to Evaluate: They also write two essays on topics which are adapted from the 1976 and 2001 AP essay questions. The first essay debates Bigger's sanity and the second essay discusses the moral and ethical implications of opposing society.
  - Writing Focus: Students should strive to meet a balance of generalization and specific, illustrative detail. These essays may be revised upon teacher conference.

**Weeks Five through Nine: *The Kite Runner***

#### **Unit IV Fourth Quarter: Conflicts between Self and Evil**

General Goals:

1. To continue analyzing authors' thematic and stylistic techniques in prose and poetry
2. To build vocabulary
3. To continue to practice writing for the A.P. Exam

Materials Used:

*Crime and Punishment*. Fyodor Dostoevsky

*A Doll's House* Henrik Ibsen

AP A to Z Focus: Introductions and Conclusions, Structure, Figurative Language Part II, and Multiple Choice Exams (**Please see note in "Teacher and Student Resources" on page 9 for a description of this source and how it addresses AP Evaluation Guidelines.**)

#### **Weeks One through Six: *Crime and Punishment***

Focus: Students study Nihilism, Hegel, and Nietzsche and make connections to Raskolnikov. They examine group values, theme, plot and subplot within the novel. They study trial procedures and legal frameworks.

Assignments: Students write for understanding, explaining, and evaluating in the following assignments:

- Writing to Understand: Students complete a study guide with discussion questions and write daily journals.

- Writing to Explain: They write an essay describing how the two settings of the novel reflect the characters' inner conflicts. This is a timed, in-class essay.
- Writing to Evaluate: Students read several peer reviewed scholarly sources about dreams and salvation. Students compare "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" to Raskolnikov. Students may revise these peer-edited essays.

### **Weeks Seven through Nine: *A Doll's House***

Focus: Students analyze the following ideas: self awareness, gender roles, and character development. They consider the themes and the internal/external conflicts of the characters.

Assignments: Writing assignments include the following:

- Writing to Understand: Students write a reflective essay about a seemingly minor decision they made that later impacted their lives. They also write a poem about Nora. Students follow a character throughout the reading and present an analysis to the class.
- Writing to Explain: Students write a take-home essay from the 1998 AP Prompt about awakenings based on external events. They also read and write critiques about two Marxist essays on the play.
  - Writing Focus: Students should work on logical organization, enhanced by specific techniques to increase coherence, such as repetition, transitions, and emphasis. Students, who may revise these essays, must also integrate vocabulary learned in this unit.

### **Final Exam: Portfolio**

Students compile a collection of their best essays from each unit. They include a table of contents and write introductions to each piece. Students should also include a 1-2 page reflection paper about what they have learned in the course. Students present the portfolios in class on the final exam day. The majority of the remaining two weeks after the AP test is spent preparing this portfolio.

### **Student and Teacher Resources:**

Roberts, Edgar, and Henry Jacobs. *Literature: An introduction to Reading and Writing*. 8th ed. New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2007.

Works Used in the Anthology:

Miller, Arthur. *Death of a Salesman*

Shakespeare, William. *Hamlet*

Sophocles. *Oedipus*

Selected Poems and Short Stories

Arp, Thomas, and Greg Johnson. *Perrine's Sound and Sense*. 10th ed. Boston: Heinle, 2002.

*AP from A to Z Literature Edition*. Literature Ed. Texas: Athena Publishing, 2003.

I use this resource throughout the year to teach elements of writing and analysis. The source is divided into several chapters which help students sharpen their writing and analytical skills. As we cover these sections, I expect students to integrate what they have learned into their writing and analysis of the current text we are reading. The chapters covered include: Tone, The Analysis Paragraph, Tone Writing, Detail, Diction, Figurative Language Part I, Imagery, Syntax, Writing the Essay, Characterization, Symbols, Motifs, and Archetypes, Introductions and Conclusions, Structure, Figurative Language Part II, and Multiple Choice Exams. This source helps address the College Board evaluation guidelines for vocabulary, sentence structure, subordination and coordination, organization, coherence, repetition, transitions, emphasis, generalization, detail, tone, voice, and diction.

Bronte, Charlotte. *Jane Eyre*. 2nd. USA: New American Library, 1997.

Conrad, Joseph. *Heart of Darkness*. 1st. USA: Dover Publications, 1990.

Dostoevsky, Fyodor. *Crime and Punishment*. 1st. New York: Vintage Books, 1992.

Ibsen, Henrik. *A Doll's House*. 1st. USA: Dover Thrift Editions, 1992.

Kafka, Franz. *The Metamorphosis*. 1st. New York: Bantam Dell, 2004.

Wright, Richard. *Native Son*. 5th ed.. New York: Harper Collins, 2003.

### **Websites**

*AP Central*. 2007. <<http://apcentral.collegeboard.com>>.

*Web English Teacher*. 2007. <<http://www.webenglishteacher.com>>.