**AP Language and Composition**

**Course Syllabus**

**2014-2015**

**Course Description**

This course provides students with a first year college level experience; its overview and objectives are abstracted from the College Board’s AP English Course Description. AP English Language and Composition encourages students to become skilled readers of prose written in a variety of periods, disciplines, and rhetorical contexts and to compose for a variety of purposes. Reading and writing assignments highlight the interactions among the writer’s purpose(s), the audience’s expectation(s), the subject matter, and the way generic conventions and language choices contribute to effective writing.

In this course, students will compose in a variety of forms—narrative, exploratory, expository, argumentative—and on a variety of subjects from personal experiences to public policies, from imaginative literature to popular culture. We will examine the expository, analytical, and argumentative writing that forms the basis of academic and professional communications and the personal and reflective writing that fosters writing facility in any context. Students will move beyond such programmatic responses as the five-paragraph essay; although they may provide minimal organization, formulaic approaches often encourage unnecessary repetition and fail to engage the reader. Students will be encouraged to place their emphasis on content, purpose, and audience and to allow this focus to guide their organization. Imitation exercises, journal keeping, collaborative writing, and in-class responses are just some of the assignments students can expect on a daily basis. In addition, students will read a wide variety of prose styles from many disciplines and historical periods to gain an understanding of the connections between interpretive skills in reading and writing. Stylistic development is nurtured by emphasizing the following:

* a wide-ranging vocabulary used appropriately and effectively;
* a variety of sentence structures, including appropriate use of subordination and coordination;
* a logical organization, enhanced by specific techniques to increase coherence, such as repetition, transitions, and emphasis;
* a balance of generalization and specific illustrative detail; and
* an effective use of rhetoric, including controlling tone, establishing and maintaining voice, and achieving appropriate emphasis through diction and sentence structure.

**Course Goals**

Upon completion of AP English Language and Composition, students will be able to:

* use critical literacy skills across the curriculum and in their everyday lives;
* analyze and interpret samples of good writing, identifying and explaining an author’s use of rhetorical strategies and techniques;
* apply effective rhetorical strategies and techniques in their own writing;
* compose in a variety of genres and contexts, both formal and informal, employing appropriate conventions and making adjustments for audience;
* create and sustain arguments based on readings, research and/or personal experience;
* produce expository and persuasive arguments that introduce a complex central idea and develop it with appropriate, specific evidence, cogent explanations, and clear transitions;
* understand and use the Modern Language Association (MLA) conventions of citing primary and secondary sources; and
* move effectively through the stages of the writing process, with careful attention to inquiry and research, drafting, revising, editing, and review.

**Curricular Requirements**

AP Language and Composition is based on the AP English Course Description, available as a free download on the AP English Language and Composition Course Home Page. The AP English Language and Composition Course Description lists the following requirements for successful completion of the class:

* This course teaches students to write in several forms (e.g., narrative, expository, analytical, and argumentative essays) about a variety of subjects (e.g., public policies, popular culture, personal experiences).
* This course requires students to write essays that proceed through several drafts, with revision aided by the teacher and peers.
* The course requires students to write in informal contexts (e.g., journal writing, collaborative writing, and in-class responses) designed to help them become increasingly aware of themselves as writers and of the techniques employed by the writers they read.
* The course requires expository, analytical, and argumentative writing assignments that are based on readings representing a wide variety of prose styles and genres.
* The course requires nonfictions readings (e.g., essays, journalism, political writing, science writing, autobiographies/biographies, history, criticism) that are selected to give students opportunities to identify and explain an author’s use of rhetorical strategies and techniques.
* The course teaches students to analyze how graphics and visual images both relate to written texts and serve as alternative forms of text.
* The course teaches research skills, and in particular, the ability to evaluate, use, and cite primary and secondary sources. The course assigns projects such as the researched argumentative paper, which goes beyond the parameters of a traditional research paper by asking students to present an argument of their own that includes the analysis and synthesis of ideas from an array of sources.
* The course teaches students how to cite sources using Modern Language Association (MLA) style.
* The teacher will provide instruction and feedback on students’ writing assignments, both before and after the students revise, which helps students develop a wide-ranging vocabulary (used appropriately and effectively), a variety of sentence structures, logical organization, a balance of general and specific details, and an effective use of rhetoric.

**(**[http://apcentral.collegeboard.com](http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/))

**Units of Study**

**Below are the six different units we will cover this year. Listed are the unit titles, the essential questions for each unit, and some of the literature we will read in each unit.**

1. **Introduction to Rhetoric – Ethos, Logos, Pathos; Rhetorical Triangle**
   1. Analysis – Annotating; Thesis Statements; Visual Texts
   2. Argument – Types of Claims; Presenting Evidence; Argumentative Models
   3. Synthesis – Using Sources in an Argument; Quotations; MLA Citation
2. **Education – Are our schools succeeding in providing a true education?**
   1. “I Know Why the Caged Bird Cannot Read” – Francine Prose
   2. From “Education” – Ralph Waldo Emerson
   3. “A Talk to Teachers” – James Baldwin
   4. “Superman and Me” – Sherman Alexie
   5. From “Me Talk Pretty One Day” – David Sedaris
   6. “This is Water” – David Foster Wallace
   7. Analysis of Multiple Visual Images
3. **Family (Memoirs) – How does one define family?**
   1. *Glass Castle –* Jeanette Walls
   2. *The Color of Water –* James McBride
   3. From *The Social Animal* – David Brooks
4. **The Environment – What is the responsibility of humans to the natural environment?**
   1. “Silent Spring” – Rachel Carson
   2. From *Nature* – Ralph Waldo Emerson
   3. From *The Land Ethic* – Aldo Leopold
   4. From *The Future of Life* – E.O. Wilson
   5. From *Desert Solitaire* –Edward Abbey
   6. “Consider the Lobster” - David Foster Wallace
   7. Analysis of Visual Texts and different Advertisements
5. **Community – What is the relationship and responsibility of the individual to the community? What is the responsibility of the community to the individual?**
   1. “Letter from Birmingham Jail” – Martin Luther King, Jr.
   2. “Where I Lived, and What I Lived For” – Henry David Thoreau
   3. “Small Change: Why the Revolution Will Not Be Tweeted” – Malcolm Gladwell
   4. “Facebook Friendonomics” – Scott Brown
   5. “Walking the Path between Worlds” – Lori Arviso Alvord
   6. From *The Singer Solution to World Poverty* – Peter Singer
   7. Analysis of Paintings, Cartoons, and Advertisements
6. **Genius Hour Project – Explore your passion. Learn. Create change.** 
   1. Students research an answer to a question they have about something which they are passionate. Students test their answer(s) through whichever means they determine best. Genius hour requires a research paper and presentation.

**Periodic Assignments:** The following activities and assignments will recur regularly throughout the different units.

* Regular practice with MC passages and all three free response essay types (timed)
* Discussing and journaling about current events.
* Prompt writing, which develops students’ abilities to identify the questions that texts pose, to select texts that are appropriate for different tasks, etc.
* Information Literacy investigation of different source types—popular and academic, social science; humanities, and science—and sites, such as databases, think-tanks, organizations,
* Diction, Syntax, Grammar, Punctuation, and Usage practice in the context of the student’s own writing and that of the model texts we study. Examples include: rewriting an individual work to include parallelism; finding real-world examples of grammatically incorrect phrases and sentences; writing transitions with proper punctuation into a piece lacking transitions.
* Weekly vocabulary instruction with words taken from SAT word lists, the weeks’ readings, and rhetorical terms. Students will learn to use the vocabulary words in context in their own speaking and writing.
* Visual/Digital Literacy development activities that may include creating graphs, tables, and timelines that complement the author’s argument as well as pairing print texts with visuals, which are explicated in print.
* Using SOAPSTone as a tool for analyzing texts to build understanding.
* Synthesis practice with units from *The Language of Composition*.

**Formal Assignments**: These represent different kinds of formal writing, speaking, and reading tasks that will be required throughout the school year.

* All formal assignments will include a reflective writing component, which requires students to journal about their writing process. This might include reflecting on different stylistic choices, techniques used by professional writers, changes made from during the different stages of the writing process, etc.
* Writing Rhetorical Précis to demonstrate a thorough understanding of the essential elements of spoken or written discourse. Developing rhetorical précis skills helps students write stronger synthesis as a thorough understanding of a text is required for a strong synthesis.
* (6) Synthesis Essays from above, one for each marking period, some which are further developed forms of impromptu synthese. They represent increasing requirements for the students to pose their own questions and to locate their own sources. They also represent different arguments types, which evolve from the expository synthesis to the qualified argument to the position-based polemic. Specific synthesis tasks include:
  + Literature Review – Using the readings from our unit on Family, one of which must be a memoir, review how the authors define family.
  + Defend, Challenge, or Qualify one of the proposed methods of building stronger communities we have read in this unit. Synthesize at least 3 sources in your essay. Cite your sources according to MLA formatting.
  + Draft an Informed Opinion about which of two proposals you believe would work best in creating a more mutualistic relationship between humans and nature. Use reliable sources, at least one of which you must find on your own, to support your opinion.
* (6) Rhetorical Analysis (one each marking period) of the literature read and visuals examined throughout the year. Students will analyze the different rhetorical strategies of the different authors we read throughout the year.
* (6) Argumentative essays (one each marking period). Some essays will be timed and addressing specific prompts, at least one timed essay will be taken through the writing process, and at least one argumentative essay will require students to develop their own argument.
* Narrative writing on relationship with the community. Students identify how they relate to their community in a narrative piece using rhetorical skills of the memoirist we read.

# Independent Reading - Objective of assignment: Over the course of a six-week marking period, students will choose a book off the AP Language reading list provided by the teacher and analyze an aspect or aspects of their book in a critical manner using a formal thesis statement and supporting points to prove their thesis.

* Genius Hour – After students have taken the AP test in May, they will focus the majority of their time on developing a hypothesis and creating a plan to answer their hypothesis. In answering their hypothesis, students will demonstrate mastery of the skills absorbed throughout the school year. Students will: pose a research worthy question; select appropriate resources; synthesize sources into a coherent discussion by appropriately using paraphrase, summary, and strategic quoting; employ rhetorically savvy choices; sustain the author’s voice and purpose; and document borrowed ideas and words in MLA style. After answering their hypothesis in the form of a research paper, students will share their findings through their choice of multi-media format.

Additional Assignment Requirements

* Any assignment not submitted on the due date will lose 10% for every day late.
* All assignments must follow the conventions of MLA formatting: headings, in text citations, works cited, etc.

**Assessment**

Different assignments require different grading scales. Rigor of response, skill-mastery, and timeliness is required. Student formal essay assignments will be assessed using a variety of rubrics based on the writing skill(s) being addressed in any specific essay. Some writing assignments will be thoroughly reviewed in the rough draft stage, some will be peer-reviewed, and some will be self-reviewed. The 6-point ACT Writing rubric will be discussed and utilized.

Credit is awarded in point value for daily assignments, with culminating activities weighing more heavily. Point totals are cumulative over the course of the semester.

Grades are based on the following formula each marking period:

o One-third is outside novel analysis

o One-third is major writing projects and papers

o One-third is daily work

Grading is cumulative throughout the semester and runs across the marking periods.

100-93 = A

90-92 = A-

89-88 = B+

87-83 = B

80-82 = B-

79-78 = C+

77-73 = C

70-72 = C

69-68 = D+

67-63 = D

62-60 = D-

59+ lower = E

This High School maintains high academic ethics and integrity. Plagiarism, copying, and cheating of any kind will not be tolerated and will cause an immediate loss of credit. Any second offenses will result in an E for the marking period in which the incident occurs. Appropriate organizations, such as NHS, will also be notified.

**Student Resources**

Sebranek, Patrick, Dave Kemper, and Verne Meyer. *Writer’s Inc: A Student Handbook*

*for Writing and Learning*. Wilmington, MA: Write Source Houghton Mifflin, 2006.

Shea, Renee H., Laurence Scanlon and Robin Dissin Aufses. *The Language of Composition.*

New York: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2008.

Walls, Jeannette. *The Glass Castle.* New York: Scribner, 2005.

**Teacher Resources**

Carnevale, Linda. *Hot Words for the SAT*. 3rd ed. Canada: Barron's, 2007.

Cohen, Samuel. *50 Essays: A Portable Anthology.* New York: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2004.

Diyanni, Robert, ed. *One Hundred Great Essays,* 3rd ed*.* New York: Pearson Education, Inc.,

2008.

Graff, Gerald, and Cathy Birkenstein. “*They Say/I Say”: The Moves That Matter in Academic*

*Writing.* New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2006.

Lunsford, Andrea A., John J. Ruszkiewicz, and Keith Walters. *Everything’s an Argument:*

*With Readings*, 3rd ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2004.Faigley, Lester, Diana