Tentative Overview

Course Philosophy, Overview and Objectives

The AP English Language and Composition course strives to prepare you for the AP examination in Language and Composition as well as the New York State English Regents exam. Furthermore, as this is a college-level course, we are working towards critical awareness of both the written and the spoken word. While practicing for multiple choice and essay sections of both the AP and New York State Regents exams, you will develop and refine reading and writing skills, especially in terms of rhetoric and analysis. Ultimately, clear, stylistic and persuasive communication is the goal of AP Language and Composition students so they can speak, think and “write effectively and confidently in their college courses across the curriculum and in their professional and personal lives” (The College Board, AP® English Course Description, May 2009, 2010, page 8).

Writing and reading skills will develop through revising drafts of essays before submitting a graded version. Often you will analyze passages through close reading, multiple choice questioning and writing. Clear and poignant interpretations of prose and poetry must be defended; hence, we devote much time to examining, synthesizing and drawing conclusions through discussion and reflection. In order to convey such analysis, studies of grammar, punctuation, syntax, fluency, rhetorical devices and vocabulary occur during each semester.

A wide variety of non-fiction and fiction is entertained in this course as is poetry, though mainly for language style. Particular attention is paid to tone, purpose, syntax, diction and meaning as demonstrated by diverse texts. Such critical awareness is practiced in both responses to prose and literature as well as personal writing endeavors and the junior thesis, a research-based project. Throughout the course, students are asked to keep a writing journal, in which the respond to various prompts, record their personal thoughts about writing and language, and observe the world around them in a variety of written modes.

Teaching and Learning Strategies

- Summer Reading, Journaling and Essay writing- Students are required to read two pieces of literature, compile a journal and write an essay addressing a specific AP Language and Composition open-ended question.

- Multi-Draft Essays- Students will complete several essay styles:
  - interpretive (literary)
  - analysis
  - persuasive-argumentation
  - synthesis/research
  - descriptive/narrative
  - expository
  - comparison/contrast

- Discussion/Oral Presentation- Students will engage in debate and discourse about literature,
prose, poetry and various rhetorical topics.

☐  **Test Practice**- Students will take practice tests for the AP Language and Composition exam as well as New York State Regents exam. An AP Language Mid-term will take place.

☐  **Rhetorical Analysis and Writing Style**-The following techniques are practiced for critical analysis and writing. Additional techniques are used.

- SOAPStone (speaker, occasion, audience, purpose, subject, tone)
- OPTIC (overview, parts, title, interrelationships, conclusion)
- Rhetorical Devices
- DIDLS (diction, imagery, details, language, syntax)

☐  **Conferences**-Throughout the year, student-teacher conferences occur in class and by appointment to discuss writing and critical understanding. Students may request to meet or the teacher may set up a time for conferencing.

☐  **Timed Writings**- During each unit of study, timed writings will occur for students to practice their approach to tasks and strategies for completion. Modeling, cooperative writing, critiquing and individual timed responses provide scaffolding for the AP Language and Composition Exam.

*Tentative Syllabus by Units of Study*

Timed writing, vocabulary, writing conventions and style are incorporated into each unit. Vocabulary instruction stems from Greek and Latin roots, foreign words incorporated into English and common S.A.T. words. Four major vocabulary tests are administered throughout the year, but specific strategies and practice with words occurs weekly. Grammar and mechanics are also studied weekly; a focus on the role of grammar, conventions, semantics, and sentence structure to enhance meaning drives instruction. For instance, how meaning and connotation is changed by employing complex structure instead of compound is studied.

*Unit I- Narration and Literary Interpretation*

This unit is comprised of narrative essays and summer reading pieces, one of which is *Snow Falling on Cedars*. Particular attention is paid to the ways an author reveals his or her message through tone, figurative language, imagery, allusion, theme and other literary devices. Multiple Choice questioning is coupled with interpretation and analysis strategies to enhance students' abilities to comprehend and communicate clearly in the narrative mode. Speaker and writer point of view is studied through various pieces and short responses. Close reading with annotation is introduced and practiced. The unit culminates in a narrative essay which models various pieces and incorporates rhetorical devices as well as a literary analysis essay comparing and contrasting two novels according to a theme and how that theme was developed through the writing. The essay will be drafted and revised with personal, group and teacher critique.

Tentative Narrative Reading List:
- Dan Guterson, *Snow Falling on Cedar*
- David Sedaris, *Me Talk Pretty One Day*
George Orwell, *Shooting and Elephant*
Maxine Hong Kingston, *No Name Woman*
Frederick Douglas, *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglas*

**Unit II- Description and Classification**

The study of Description and Classification focuses on the use of figurative language, imagery and detail to communicate mood and enhance meaning. Poetry and prose analysis leads to multiple choice practice and essay drafting, with a major essay devoted to exam practice. Students will study syntax and style, emulating famous pieces in their own written passages, practice thesis sentences, and journal entries. Specifically, an essay which humorously describes ideiosyncracies of a particular segment of the population concludes the unit along with a discussion of favorite writers, techniques and the power of language to convey meaning and illustrate imagination.

Tentative Description Reading List:
Tim O'Brien, *The Things They Carried*
Edith Wharton, *Ethan Frome*
Sandra Cisneros, *The House on Mango Street*
Linda Hogan, *Dwellings*
Stephanie Ericsson, *The Ways We Lie*
Mike Rose, *I Just Wanna Be Average*
Deborah Tannen, *There Is No Unmarked Woman*
Annie Dillard, *An American Childhood*
Billy Collins, selected poems
Robert Frost, selected poems
Dylan Thomas, selected poems
Ted Kooser, selected poems
Mary Oliver, selected poems
Robert Burns, selected poems
Elizabeth Bishop, selected poems
Anne Bradstreet, selected poems

**Unit III-Analysis**

Analysis prose helps students critically investigate meaning derived from the specific choices writers make, ranging from diction to structure. Multiple choice questioning of essays and passages and drafting responses to AP Language and Composition tasks solidify students' understanding of this rhetorical mode. Video viewing, visual analysis of graphics and prose research coalesce in mini-research responses for synthesis and AP Language and Composition exam practice. Students will analyze a contemporary event concluding its significance in understanding psychology of a culture or society.

Tentative Analysis Reading List:
Frederick Douglas, *Learning to Read and Write*
Malcolm X, *Learning to Read*
Lars Eighner, *On Dumpster Diving*
Joan Didion, *On Keeping a Notebook*
Current events
Selected documentaries

**Unit IV- Exposition and Cause Effect**

Current events and notable essays and passages comprise this unit which seeks to engage students in observational reading and writing. Annotation and strategies like OPTIC prove useful in comprehending these pieces and demonstrating understanding with multiple choice questions and modeling famous authors. Civil Rights videos (on subjects such as The Children's March and Rosa Parks) and photographs are analyzed in terms of the medium then compared to written counterparts. A reflective piece about the power of photography and video ensues, using those pieces studied as the basis for the discussion. During the reading of *The Declaration of Independence*, students investigate and determine the role of diction and sentence structure in proposing and defending Jefferson's argument.

Tentative Expository Reading List:
Barbara Lazear Ascher, *On Compassion*
Thomas Jefferson, *The Declaration of Independence*
James Q. Wilson, *Cars and Their Enemies*
William F. Buckley, *Why Don't We Complain*
Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Morals of the Prince*
William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*
Civil Rights Videos

**Unit V- Comparison-Contrast**

Using various rhetorical syntax structures, students will write to differentiate concepts and critically analyze pieces which do the same. Ultimately, a central message will emerge from the juxtaposition of subtopics, concepts or ideas and style imposed by the author in both drafting passage-response essays and personal essays. Students will compare and contrast Huxley's and Orwell's vision of the future, concluding which has come to fruition.

Tentative Comparison-Contrast Reading List:
Dave Barry, *Lost in the Kitchen*
Plato, *The Allegory of the Cave*
Henry David Thoreau, *Where I Lived and What I Lived For*
Aldus Huxley, *Brave New World*

**Unit VI- Persuasion and Argumentation**

Many rhetorical modes are used to produce quality persuasion in both writing and speaking. Students defend their own arguments employing a well-developed style and structure by interpreting and analyzing noteworthy pieces and modeling those pieces. Debate is practiced using current topics and students eventually synthesize arguments based on diverse forms of written and visual research. A persuasive essay is processed which considers a contemporary issue of importance, but defends a specific stance (e.g. continuing, affirmative action, banning non-military gun licenses, or re-instituting the draft).

Tentative Persuasion-Argumentation Reading List:
VII- Research and Thesis Project

The culmination of reading, writing, analysis and synthesis is the Thesis Project, based on sociological, philosophical, cultural, or psychological research coupled with a text of literary merit. Students will view the text through their chosen research lens and explain the motivation of a character or characters as a result of the researched “cause.” In addition, the writing process will involve selection of a specific rhetorical mode, structure, style and diction. Modern Language Association (MLA) formatting must be used for all citations. Finally, students will present their research and its applicability to the literary work using visual and textual support.

STEPS AND REQUIREMENTS

1. Primary Source: As you read your chosen literature, you should keep a reading journal. If you own the piece, annotate the book itself. Reflect on aspects you enjoyed and questioned. The journal should be a source of ideas and a reference for you as you develop and refine your thesis and write your paper.

2. Thesis Meetings. We’ll meet and discuss your journal, research and ideas throughout the writing. This will be your responsibility.

3. Thesis Statement: By the time you finish reading your primary source and secondary sources, a working thesis statement should be formed. This may be refined as you conduct research and synthesize information from further secondary sources. Your thesis MUST be approved, but it may be changed throughout the research/writing process with approval.

4. Secondary Sources, Annotated Bibliography, and Notes:
   a. You will need adequate information from secondary sources for your paper. The sources may be any of the following:
      i. Biographical sources
      ii. Literary criticisms
      iii. Interviews from professional sources
      iv. Reviews
      v. Historical, sociological, psychological, philosophical, cultural or literary references
      vi. Miscellaneous research references according to topic which are professional and non-biased.
   b. Your notes from these sources will also be kept in a folder or your English notebook. Record relevant quotes from these sources; summarize and paraphrase the information. BE SURE TO CITE ALL INFORMATION FROM PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SOURCES.
c. EACH quotation, summary and paraphrased component MUST contain the correctly cited reference of the source (MLA- Modern Language Association format).

d. You may use Noodlebib, another bibliography program or website, or a Writer’s Reference Handbook to create a “working” ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY. This bibliography will contain a short summary of the source. Furthermore, this will act as your Works Cited page.

5. Working, Drafting and Designing: You will be writing and designing a working draft of the research paper. Utilize technology to email attachments as well as memory sticks to carry your paper, research and ideas with you. It is your responsibility to bring all needed materials to class to progress with your work.

   a. Your working draft MUST contain your PARENTHETICAL CITATIONS.
   b. Be sure your MLA Works Cited is up to date

6. Final Version: Your individual paper is to be submitted by the deadline assigned and will be accepted only after all of the previous steps have been completed and recorded. Your final copy should include:

   a. Introduction Page for overall topic and research
   b. Brief abstract for each student paper (goals and research conducted)
   c. Additional diagrams or graphics
   d. Annotated Works Cited Page

Evaluation and Assessment

Various assessment methods are employed in AP Language and Composition in order to compile a well-rounded student evaluation. Late work is generally not accepted unless circumstances warrant extensions. In addition, essays submitted for a grade cannot be revised unless required by the teacher. Instead, students are encouraged to meet with the teacher prior to the due date for drafting, reflecting and revising. It is imperative that each student takes an active role in their learning by drafting and meeting with the teacher to receive feedback. Some, but not all, grades are tabulated; students are mostly evaluated on major assignments such as multiple choice tests, essays, timed writings, debate/seminars, projects and participation. A letter grading scale is used in conjunction with the AP Language and Composition rubric (0-9), New York State English Regents rubric (0-6), and other rubrics for participation and writing (0-10, 0-100, A-F).

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>A+</td>
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<td>A</td>
<td>94-96</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-93</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>84-86</td>
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<td>B-</td>
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<td>C+</td>
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<td>C-</td>
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The AP scale of 0-9 and Regents scale of 0-6 may also be used.
In addition, some writing assignments are simply graded out of points, such as 0-10 or 0-33.

Essentially, quarterly grades are determined by points in different categories (reading, writing and participation (which includes homework), and the final grade is an average of the four quarters and
junior thesis project.

Participation includes: class activities, homework, speaking in debate and discussion, listening quizzes, and other forms of assessment requiring active involvement in the lesson.

Grades achieved on writings, quizzes and some activities are often for you to self-assess and reflect. More important than a grade is the written commentary or rubric statements aligned with the grade. In fact, many “grades” do not enter into your overall average, as they are meant for you to gauge your learning. However, you will always be informed about culminating activities, assignments, tests, quizzes and writings contribute to your overall grade and evaluation.

Teacher Resources


English: English Language and Composition English Literature and Composition Course Description.


Tentative Student Resources


