AP English Literature and Composition
Mr. Zevenbergen

Course Description
AP English Literature and Composition is designed to be a college/university level course, thus the “AP” designation on a transcript rather than “H” (Honors) or “CP” (College Prep). This course will provide you with the intellectual challenges and workload consistent with a typical undergraduate university English literature course. As a culmination of the course, you will take the AP Literature and Composition Exam in May (required). A grade of 4 or 5 on this exam is considered equivalent to a 3.3-4.0 for comparable courses at the college or university level. A student who earns a grade of 3 or above on the exam will be granted college credit at most colleges and universities throughout the United States.

Course Goals
1. To carefully read and critically analyze imaginative literature.
2. To understand the way writers use language to provide meaning and pleasure.
3. To consider a work's structure, style, and themes, as well as such smaller scale elements as the use of figurative language, imagery, symbolism, and tone.
4. To study representative works from various genres and periods (from the sixteenth to the twentieth century).
5. To write, focusing on critical analysis of literature including expository, analytical, and argumentative essays.
6. To become aware of, through speaking, listening, reading, and, chiefly, writing, the resources of language: connotation, metaphor, irony, syntax, and tone.

Course Philosophy
Although a key objective of the class is to prepare you to be successful on the AP Literature and Composition exam, it is my hope that the class prepares you to achieve whatever goals you have set for yourself after high school.

We will read many works of fiction, poetry, and drama. You'll find many of these texts to be quite difficult. Our initial work with any text will begin with you. I will frequently start our study of a story or poem by asking you to begin shaping in writing your understanding of that text and the writer's technique for revealing meaning. This kind of writing is "informal," meaning your objective is to generate ideas.

The discussion we have as a group will build from that initial writing that you do. Listen to the kinds of questions I ask during these class discussions as they are the kinds of questions you will want to ask yourself as you read. Sound analysis evolves from good questions.

Most of the essays this year will be completed in class under the same time constraints you’ll work under in May when you take the AP exam. To write a strong essay in forty minutes simply takes practice.

As we write, I will give you a great deal of feedback during both the drafting and revision stages of the writing process. This feedback is only valuable to you if you do something with it. If you do not
know how to revise your writing to address that feedback, then you should talk to me and we’ll together develop possible approaches for revision. If I, for example, tell you that you've used imprecise language to assert an idea, you may not understand what about that language is imprecise, or you may see why it’s imprecise but then not know where to go from there. You simply will not grow as a writer if you do not actively address where your skills need development.

It should be clear that this is not a lecture class. I will not stand in front of the class and interpret the story, the poem, the novel for you. You have to be able to do this on your own.

Do not be afraid to share your understanding of a text with the class. The more perspectives we have on a particular text, the more developed your reading of that text will be. Be sure to respect the ideas others share, even when those ideas may be drastically different from your own.

**AP Literature and Composition: The Exam**

**Section I** of the exam will assess your reading comprehension skills. You will have 60 minutes to complete **55 questions** on a range of texts (i.e., selections from poetry, prose, drama) of varying difficulty and from different time periods (i.e., from the time of the Renaissance to the present).

**Section II** of the exam consists of **three essay questions**. The first two questions will primarily focus on the writer's technique and will, therefore, challenge you to work very closely with the language of the given texts. You will be asked to explain in an essay a writer’s technique for revealing a broader component of the text, such as theme or tone. The third essay will require you to write an interpretation of a novel or play of your choosing. You will have 120 minutes to complete all three essays.

**Required Materials**

- at least 100 sheets of **college ruled** loose-leaf paper
- pens (blue or black ink only) and pencils
- optional but recommended: 1” three-ring binder

**Recommended:** a folder that can be used to organize your notes

**Notes on the Novels and Plays We Study this Year**

- Be sure to save your notes on the novels and plays we read leading up to the exam.
- Create a literary term glossary. We will cover many terms – have a list for reference!
- These notes will be a valuable tool for recalling the texts and our readings of those texts when we review in May.

**Major Units**

**Fiction**

Our study of fiction will begin with the novels you read over the summer and the work you completed around theme. In the fall we will read *All the Pretty Horses* by Cormac McCarthy and Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*. Our fiction unit will also include a diverse set of short stories by writers such as James Joyce, Eudora Welty, D.H. Lawrence, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Franz Kafka, and Louise Erdrich. In the spring, we will study *Crime and Punishment* by Fyodor Dostoyevsky.
As we read the novels above and short fiction, we will study the writer’s craft. We might consider, for example, a writer’s manipulation of syntax to create mood or to reveal a character’s state of mind. We will also attend to that writer’s use of diction, imagery, figurative language and setting to establish tone, character, and message.

**Poetry**
Our study of poetry will begin with a focus on the Metaphysical poetry of John Donne, and then the Romantic and Victorian period writers. We will also examine new trends in contemporary poetry. In this unit we will study the evolving structure of the sonnet, and a writer’s use of poetic devices such as meter, rhyme, symbolism, imagery, and figurative language.

Expect to read poetry from writers such as John Donne, Robert Herrick, William Blake, John Keats, William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Emily Dickinson, H.D., Robert Frost, Stanley Kunitz, Czeslaw Milosz, Ted Kooser, Sharon Olds, and Billy Collins.

**Drama**
If time permits, we will also study a contemporary play.

**Research**
This project is designed to allow you the opportunity to explore an area of research interesting to you. Although we may begin our work on this project before the AP exam in May, expect to complete the vast majority of it in the fourth quarter once the AP examination period has concluded.

**If you’re absent, what do you do?**
- First, go to the class calendar at my teacher web page. There you will find that day’s Power Point, which will include any new assignments and the lesson that you missed.
- You may also see me during activity period or during a commons if I’m free. **We will not be able to discuss this in class.**

**Late work**
- If you fail to complete an assignment by its due date, **you must come and see me during activity period OR during a commons the next day.** We will not discuss your late work during class time.
- Failure to complete your late work will lead to a zero for that assignment.
- Failure to complete three or more assignments will lead to an **INCOMPLETE FOR THE COURSE.** The incomplete will be removed once you have completed the missing work.

**Quarter Grades:** I keep your grades in the portal up to date.
- 60% essays and exams
- 40% informal writing assignments and quizzes
AP Literature and Composition: Essay Scoring Rubric

*This rubric assesses all in-class, timed essay writing.

9-8 (100-95)
Essays scored at this range are rare. These are well-organized and well-written essays. With apt and specific references to the passage, they will analyze the prompt in depth and with appropriate support. While not without minor flaws, these papers will demonstrate an understanding of the text and a consistent control over the elements of effective composition. These writers read with perception and express their ideas with clarity and skill. Finally, above all else, these writers demonstrate maturity in their analysis and provide original thought and insight about the discussed text.

7-6 (94-90)
These essays are less incisive, developed, or aptly supported than papers in the highest ranges. They deal accurately with the prompt, but they are less effective or thorough than the 9-8 essays. These essays demonstrate the writer’s ability to express ideas clearly but with less maturity and control than the better papers. These papers generally have more minor flaws—perhaps even a few major flaws. Nonetheless, essays scored a 7, even with more flaws, still present a more developed analysis and a more consistent command of the elements of effective exposition than essays scored a 6.

5 (89-85)
Customarily, these essays are superficial: They lack the analytical depth expected from AP students. The writing is adequate to convey the writer’s thoughts, but these essays are typically ordinary, not as well conceived, organized or developed as upper-level papers. Often, they reveal simplistic thinking and/or immature writing. It is quite common for many essay writers at the beginning of this course to begin writing essays at a low 5; however, by the end of the semester, these writers typically grow into writers who create essays that are scored at either a high 6 or low 7, consistently.

4-3 (84-75)
These lower-half essays may reflect an incomplete understanding of the passage and/or fail to respond adequately to part or parts of the question. The discussion may be inaccurate or unclear, and misguided or undeveloped; these essays may paraphrase rather than analyze. The treatment is likely to be meager and unconvincing. Generally, the writing demonstrates weak control of such elements as diction, organization, syntax, or grammar. These essays typically contain recurrent stylistic flaws and lack persuasive evidence from the text. Any essay that does not address the prompt can receive no higher than a 4.