

## AP English Literature and Composition Syllabus

This AP English Literature and Composition class is a year long English class taught to prepare students fully for college work, both reading and writing, and will culminate in all students taking the AP test in May. The class will consist of a significant amount of literature reading, in different styles and from different periods of time. The student will annotate what we read and spend a significant amount of time discussing most texts, through both the literary qualities of each text and meanings of the text, including how they relate to life's big questions. Students will also be writing for a variety of different purposes and formality, but frequently in response to AP style questions, to help students prepare for the AP exam.

### Summer work:

Read and write journals, following the assigned format, for *Candide*, *Slaughterhouse Five*, a novel of the student's choosing, and three articles.

### Class Texts:

- *Things Fall Apart*
- *Life of Pi*
- *Romeo and Juliet*
- *Slaughterhouse Five*
- *The Awakening*
- *Hamlet*
- *Twelfth Night*
- *Beloved*
- *Sound and Sense* by Laurence Perrine and Thomas R. Arp
- *A Short Guide to Writing about Literature* by Sylvan Barnet and William E. Cain
- Assorted other bits and pieces that I bring to class to supplement what we are reading.

### Reading and Writing Assignments:

#### Reading Assignments:

There is daily reading in this course and it is imperative that students stay on track and keep up with assignments. Our shared reading experience will enable us to develop more fully an understanding of the work in question and will give us equal footing on which to build the discussion and writing assignments for each work.

#### Writing Assignments:

There will be daily writing in this course, both formal and informal in context. On days when a formal writing assignment has not been given, there may be a reading journal required. Formal essays in this class will vary by the text, but will include short critical analyses, explications (especially with poetry), research based papers (following MLA format), interpretive, and others of various

contexts. Specifics will be given with every assignment, but in general the student's writing will need to show that he/she has thought about the process of writing and utilize and understand the concepts of rhetoric, tone, style, structure, logical organization, etc.

Students are also responsible for drafting their own vocabulary lists with every class reading. At the end of each unit I will generate some form of formal assessment with the list that they generate. Students should read with a dictionary close by. Misunderstanding one word can destroy a close reading!

## **Timeframe, Content/Skills Taught, Major Assignments and Assessments:**

### **First Semester:**

- Response to summer reading & AP 2004 Literature question # 3 (writing sample).
- Annotation/ notes for CHs. 3-4, 5-7, & 13 in *A Short Guide to Writing about Literature*. This text will be read in the midst of the literary units for the semester.
- Introduction to AP Literature and review of Style and Rhetoric.
- AP Literature Writing and Basics (Center for Learning activity packs).
- Grammar work & review using *McDougall Littell The Language of Literature, British Literature Year 12*, based on needs of the students.
- ***Romeo and Juliet*, approximately 4 weeks**
  - This is a good unit to begin the literature study for the year, because you have read it before. We will be annotating the text, reading it aloud, discussing and analyzing the text, answering practice multiple choice questions on the text, along with essay response questions, some of which will be completed in class in a timed manner and some of which will be edited, with input from me, and rewritten.
- ***Slaughterhouse Five*, approximately 4 weeks**
  - This anti-war American novel, written during the Vietnam War, about World War II, has a complex subject and a complex structure. Even though you read it this summer, you will reread it again, mostly in class, often out loud, so we have plenty of time to discuss and dissect this text. We will also take the time to do a short historical study of the bombings of Dresden and its place in the history of World War II. This text will require significant discussion, both to unravel the meaning and purpose of the text, but also to understand the textual structure and its relation to the author's purpose. You will have weekly vocabulary lists, answer AP style multiple choice questions, both on your own and with a partner, write essay responses based on AP style questions, some of which will be timed and some of which will be edited, improved, and rewritten.
  - You will also write a 3-4 page literary criticism of the *Slaughterhouse Five*, which will be the first paper we take through several drafts, including a number of conferences with me, beginning with your thesis statement and

critical approach, following through to the specific textual support and quality of writing.

- ***The Awakening*, approximately 4 weeks**
  - This American novel, from the Victorian era, focuses on a woman trying to discover who she is, in the midst of a time that has very strict ideas of who she should be, which obviously has strong parallels in the lives of young adults trying to assert their own independence. You will be reading the novel for homework, but we will be discussing it in class, both for meaning and structural analysis, several times a week. You will have weekly vocabulary lists from the novel, complete AP style multiple choice questions about the text, and write essays based off of AP style response questions, both timed essays and with revisions.
- **Poetry study, approximately 2 weeks after each of the previous units, for a total of 6 weeks in the first semester**
  - We will primarily use Perrine's *Sound and Sense*, but we will also use selections from McDougall Littell *The Language of Literature*, *British Literature Year 12*, CH. 11 in *A Short Guide to Writing about Literature*, and the Center for Learning's AP Poetry Unit, as well as assorted AP test practices. The objective of poetry study is to study poetic technique and form, as well as a glossary of poetic terms, in order to overcome poetry anxiety and write comprehensive analysis. We will be analyzing poetry within specific parameters, answer essay questions on the texts we study, and occasionally answer multiple choice questions.
- **General information**
  - There is a semester exam given, and vocabulary is a pull out section for EVERY selection taught. Quizzes and final test over vocabulary and literary devices emphasized are given with all units.
  - Students are sent on Winter Break with a complete AP Literature & Comp. test to be completed before they return.

## **Second Semester:**

- **Analysis of AP Literature and Composition Exam.**
  - Emphasis on multiple choice, essay writing, and test-taking strategies. Typical assignments will be for students to be grouped, compare their multiple choice answers and analyze differences and collectively come up with new answers for the group. Students also read peer's essays from practice exams throughout the year and assign a 1-9 grade based on the AP rubric, which enhances understanding and analysis of AP essay expectations.
- **Shakespeare: *Hamlet* and *Twelfth Night*, approximately 6 weeks**
  - You will be writing papers that demonstrate knowledge of narrative, rhetorical, and stylistic techniques in the writing of analysis. There will be a heavier focus on characterization in this unit, and how the writer achieves these ends. Again, you will be writing formal papers for each of these works, and your focus in each will be given as each work is completed. Focus for certain papers will include discussions of structure,

theme, style (diction, tone, syntax, figurative language, symbolism, etc.) and how they influence the works as a whole. Each formal paper in this unit will include graded revision and peer editing/review. We are going to workshop each other's papers and "grade" them according to the AP 9 point rubric scale. You will also receive a weekly vocabulary list.

- You will also write your second literary criticism paper on a chosen subject, covering one or all three of the Shakespeare tragedies covered in class. The paper will be 3-4 pages long, go through several drafts, and involve conferences with me, similar to the paper for *Slaughterhouse Five*.
- ***Beloved*, approximately 5 weeks**
  - While this unit will continue a close reading of the text through reading aloud, annotation, and class discussion, we will focus on the structure of the novel, author's choices for narrative and rhetorical devices, theme for a historical novel, and its relation to both our perception of the present and the past. We will complete AP style multiple choice questions, and write essays based on AP style questions.
  - In addition to our unit, we will be writing our third major paper, and it will proceed through several drafts and conferences with me, as have our major papers from before. The specific topic of the paper will be chosen by the student, as you have throughout the year, but it must be 3-4 pages long and involve an analysis of *The Awakening* and/or *Beloved*, two contemporary novels dealing with historical topics. Both of these novels are considered highly important works, in the top ten of most list of important American writings of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, both have significantly inappropriate moments, both are written beautifully, and both address a woman's role in society. Why they are great should be addressed, evaluated, and argued, within your chosen topic.
- **Spring Break**
  - Students are once again expected to complete an entire AP Lit exam over the course of Spring Break. During April much attention will be given to AP practice test, including essay models.
- **Poetry study, approximately 2 weeks after each of the previous units, for a total of 4 weeks in the second semester**
  - We will primarily use Perrine's *Sound and Sense*, but we will also use selections from McDougall Littell *The Language of Literature*, *British Literature Year 12*, CH. 11 in *A Short Guide to Writing about Literature*, and the Center for Learning's AP Poetry Unit, as well as assorted AP test practices. The objective of poetry study is to study poetic technique and form, as well as a glossary of poetic terms, in order to overcome poetry anxiety and write comprehensive analysis. We will be analyzing poetry within specific parameters, answer essay questions on the texts we study, and occasionally answer multiple choice questions.
- **General information**
  - The AP exam multiple choice requires annotation and vocabulary study. Consistently doing these things all year long will make this part of the year much easier. Also, I will be grading annotations and vocabulary assignments throughout, just in case you get lax in those areas. 😊

- The main objective of working on AP practice multiple choice exams is to become familiar with the format and vocabulary. We will do this by responding to questions individually, checking answers as a group, and then coming to a consensus grade. By collecting and marking the amount of missed questions, but not delineating which questions so we can go back and revise answers. By marking texts for proof of answer, and assigning vocabulary, and by generating our own AP level questions for given selections.
- The AP exam practice essays require annotation of models. You will write original responses without your names given, and we will evaluate and compare them against each other's and the AP rubric. We will also score them and discuss before checking against the AP score. We will highlight the strengths of our essays (diction, syntax, figurative language) as well as discussing the AP rubric and designing our own. We will also apply the AP exam open-ended question sheet and our "techniques" sheet to every major work we read!
- Vocabulary is a pull out section for EVERY selection taught. Quizzes and final test over vocabulary and literary devices emphasized are given with all units.
- **Final Exam:**
  - The final exam for the class is a paper assigned midway through the first semester. It is due on the last day of class for the year. Students are to study two works by the same author (novelist or playwright) from an approved list of modern literary writers, including a thorough analysis of the author's narrative, rhetorical, and stylistic techniques. To validate points to be made, they must cite from professional criticisms as well as primary sources. They are to document the author's background, especially noting literary connections, research primary sources; show how knowledge of biography enhances appreciation of the material, research secondary sources; and defend, challenge, or qualify professional techniques. One important aspect of this topic is for you to analyze the quality of the author's skill and justify the author's right to be among the great writers alive today, including both your own perspective on this question, with evidence, and that of other critics today. The paper must be between 10-12 pages, use present tense, and formal and literary diction. Emphasis placed on pronoun-antecedent agreement.