

Advanced Placement English Literature and Composition

Course Syllabus

Mrs. Steppe

Texts:

The Bedford Reader, Sixth Edition

Includes critical case studies on Hawthorne, O'Connor, Joyce, Faulkner, Dickinson, Frost.

Includes short stories and poetry by Chopin, Van Der Zee, Godwin, Oates, DuBus, Dickens, Melville, Hemingway, Weldon, Chekhov, Walker, Colette, Ellison, Crane, Mansfield, Gilb, Carver, Minot, Updike, Bloom, Atwood, O'Brien, Lawrence, Russo, Steinbeck, Plath, Wordsworth, Donne, Wallace, Auden, Cummings, Espada, Pound, Keats, Browning, Blake, Jonson, Hiusman, Herrick, Brooks, Francis, Armour, Ciardi, and others as time permits.

Includes drama such as *The Glass Menagerie*, *A Doll's House* and *Death of a Salesman*. A minimum of two of these plays will be covered during the year. Students will also be encouraged to attend a live performance of a play.

Warriner's English Grammar and Composition, Complete Level

Novels: *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

The Life of Pi

Candide

Othello

Dubliners

Red Badge of Courage

The Great Gatsby

The Poisonwood Bible

The Grapes of Wrath

Pride and Prejudice

Amsco's AP Prep Manual: Preparing for the AP Exam

The Seagull Reader: Poems

Includes poetry by Agard, Allen, Arnold, Auden, Bishop, Bradstreet, Brooks, Coleridge, Donne, Dove, Eliot, Forche, Ginsberg, Heaney, Hughes, Jarrell, Millay, Pound, Ransom, Robinson, Roethke, Whitman, Williams, Yeats.

The Seagull Reader: Short Stories

Includes selections by Achebe, Cheever, Marquez, Gilman, O’Henry, Olsen, Silko, Welty, Wharton.

Summer Readings:

Catcher in the Rye—focus on character, style and theme

The Metamorphosis—focus on allegorical interpretation

Frankenstein—focus on theme, tone and elements of author style

Things Fall Apart—focus on cultural and historical significance

Of Mice and Men—focus on style, symbolism and social relevance

Students in this course are 11th graders and as such are required to take the PSSA. It is expected that all students enrolled in AP 11 will score at the proficient to advanced level on this test and coursework will be aimed at meeting this goal, using the standards listed below:

PENNSYLVANIA ACADEMIC STANDARDS

- 1.1.11 Learning to Read Independently
- 1.2.11 Reading Critically in All Content Areas
- 1.3.11 Reading, Analyzing, and Interpreting Literature
- 1.4.11 Types of Writing
- 1.5.11 Quality of Writing
- 1.6.11 Speaking and Listening
- 1.7.11 Characteristics and Function of the English Language
- 1.8.11 Research

Course Description and Introduction

In accordance with the most recent AP English Literature and Composition Course Description, this course requires students to engage in close reading and analysis of literature focusing on fiction. Students throughout the course will build on their foundation of analytical discussion that will lead to more intensive writing about literature.

In this class, students will write almost every day starting with annotation in the text, group brainstorming and discussion of themes and topics, rough drafting of first responses, progressing to workshop copies, more revision, and finally to polished pieces of analytical and

creative writing. An emphasis will be placed on producing analytically strong pieces that draw upon textual details and are mechanically sound as well.

In addition, from the first week of class, students will be introduced to writing timed responses. Students will learn to write not only to evaluate but also to understand and explain, as well as synthesize learning from various sources. All students will keep a progressive working portfolio of their writing made up of first responses, group discussion notes, rough drafts, revisions, timed pieces and final polished copies. These working portfolios will be evaluated at the end of the year. Students will become familiar with rubric-based teacher feedback modeled on the AP format of scoring that will allow them to focus their revisions based upon strengths and weaknesses; rubrics also provide a basis for student and teacher conferencing.

Students also work on extensive vocabulary building. This is accomplished by weekly vocabulary tests based on vocabulary from various sources including the main text, *The Bedford Reader, Sixth Edition* and *Amsco's AP Prep Manual*, as well as from released exams and online resources. Students are required to incorporate evidence of new vocabulary into weekly writing assignments.

Overview of Assignments

When school begins, students already will have read 5 novels over the summer. They will have annotated their copies and/or kept a reader's log and journal of responses and topics for discussion. They will have posted questions and comments on my wikispaces site. (Students will need to join at wikispaces.com using a name and email address and pull up the discussion page at steppea.wikispaces.com). The summer assignments will be the impetus for first week of class discussion and writing. Students will, in discussions and writings, be asked to make inferences from their readings, analyze theme and style and draw conclusions about each piece's meaning and value. Students' first drafts will be evaluated for their understanding of the author's style, intent, use of textual details and their understanding of a work's historical and social value. Writings will also be examined for the use of effective sentence structure, logical organization, and a balance of generalization with specific explanation as well as other best practices such as coherence, use of transitions and development of their own voice, tone and writing style. From rough draft conferencing with peers and the teacher, students will revise and edit their papers to complete final polished pieces. In addition, students will complete weekly lessons from the AP prep booklet that reinforces an understanding of key literary elements such as allusion, tone, style and theme to name only a few. Students will be expected to find studied elements in their readings as well as to incorporate them into their own writings.

General Timetable of Readings and Writings

Class begins with the discussion of the summer novels and the timed writings and development of longer pieces in the processes described above. A chapter from the Bedford anthology on critical strategies will be integrated to show the various ways that texts can be interpreted through the use of "critical lenses." This will lead to discussions and writings that examine a work's social and cultural value. Students will be asked to make connections between

texts read and those previously known to students. The course will be arranged in terms of thematic units and students will be expected to make such connections within and among many varied texts, including novels, nonfiction, poetry, plays, etc. Classic novels will be read in conjunction with more modern works to identify commonalities and differences. For example, after reading *Things Fall Apart* which employs the point of view of an African to missionary involvement, students will then read portions of *The Poisonwood Bible* to view the same topic from the missionaries' perspective. Another example would be the examination of the portrayal of male friendship versus female friendship in several novels, including *The Bean Trees* and *Of Mice and Men*.

Short stories make up the next body of reading and are assigned on a weekly calendar. Students will begin to choose their own topics for writing and analyzing a story. They will write to support an argument, drawing upon text substantially without retelling. An example of a paper topic at this point might be, "Explain why Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily" or Collette's "The Hand" can also be seen as love stories." Papers will be written weekly and will be examined for effective word choice, effective overall construction and organization and development of explanations and story interpretations through the use of textual details. Pieces will be peer-edited then teacher-conferenced. All will be added to the student's working portfolio of writings.

Another focus on student writing will center on interpretation and understanding of the deeper relationship among texts. As we read the selection of short stories, students will take notes in relation to shared motifs, themes or character traits to those identified in earlier and summer readings. Papers at this point will center on common themes and motifs as students explore connections. At this level a sample topic might be, "What do the protagonists of Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God* and Russo's "The Whore's Child" have in common?" Drawing upon textual details to explain their judgments and argue their points, students will also rely on class-designed rubrics to identify, evaluate and reinforce best composition skills.

As discussion, analysis and writing progress, poetry will then be incorporated into weekly readings. Poems, although shorter, are denser in meaning and will require careful and multiple readings. Poets studied will include, but not be limited to, Frost, Dickinson and Hughes as well as more modern poets such as Dove and Piercy. Other works will be paired with poetry to explore similar themes, motifs and symbols in different genres. James Joyce's *The Dubliners* as well as the works of Flannery O'Connor will be used in conjunction with the poetry studies. Writing about literature, conferencing, revising and editing will continue throughout the year. Using the Warriner's text and other sources, students will be assigned lessons and focus areas for improvement in terms of grammar and writing skills on an individual basis as needed. These focus areas may include, but are not limited to, sentence diversity, effective transitioning and making clear, concise and coherent language choices.

Creative writing will be incorporated through all units as students will model the style, tone, theme and mood of various authors and poets. In this manner, students will internalize what makes e.e.cummings works, for example, so identifiable. Students will need to identify elements of artists' styles in order to parallel them, thereby learning and growing to appreciate the works of different artists and genres. An open forum will be provided to workshop these and other writings as well as a means of peer publication.

Research will be a component of the course as well, with students doing author studies as well as analytical papers that use critical reviews of authors and works. Students will be expected to follow the MLA guidelines in all research and must use both online and reference books as resources.

AP Practice

Beginning in September and increasing in number after Christmas break students will practice essays and multiple choice questions to gain confidence for the AP exam administered in May. The AP Manual will be used to conduct these practice sessions as well as released exams and online sources. All students who enroll are required by Blackhawk School District to take the AP exams. The instructor will be available after school for practice sessions as needed.