
PETERS TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL

COURSE SYLLABUS: AP ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION

Course Overview and Essential Skills

AP English is an accelerated, demanding course of study that is taught on the pace and level of a college seminar. We will read and closely analyze short stories, poems, speeches, plays and novels that are mainly British in origin, from Classical times through the twentieth century. When necessary, we will conduct research about authors and time periods in order to present literature within its proper historical context, and you should expect significant analytical writing. Students who take this course are expected to take the Advanced Placement Literature and Composition exam. Therefore, throughout the year, we will examine and practice various strategies which will help you to succeed on this exam as well as in your college courses.

Students should be able to:

1. Independently read and analyze essays, novels, plays, and poems, sometimes several concurrently
2. Lead discussion of the literary, cultural and historical significance of canonical and contemporary texts
3. Analyze critically and listen actively
4. Utilize the writing process to write effectively and accurately in a variety of styles and formats
5. Manage time effectively and plan for assignments accordingly
6. Develop an enriched vocabulary and a greater appreciation for exact diction
7. Express himself/herself orally with clarity and willingness

Course Textbook and Required Materials

Novels and Supplemental Texts

Foster, Thomas C. *How to Read Literature Like a Professor*. New York: Harper Collins, 2014 (selected chapters)

The Theban Plays. Trans. E. V. Rieu. London: Penguin Books, 1974 (Oedipus the King)

Shakespeare, William. *Hamlet*. New York: Signet Classics, 1998

Golding, William. *Lord of the Flies*. New York: Penguin Group (USA) Inc., 1954

Dostoevsky, Fyodor. *Crime and Punishment*. New York: Bantam Dell, 2003

Miller, Arthur. *Death of a Salesman*. New York: Penguin Group, 1976

O'Brien, Tim. *The Things They Carried*. New York: Broadway Books, 1990

Conrad, Joseph. *Heart of Darkness*. New York: Signet Classic, 1997

Kingsolver, Barbara. *The Poisonwood Bible*. New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 1998

Brooks, Cleanth and Robert Penn Warren. *Understanding Poetry*. 4th ed. New York: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1978

Selected short stories

Selected poems

The following texts are studied as extension materials to reinforce skill. Adjustments to the amount of time spent on each text may occur:

Chaucer, Geoffrey. *The Canterbury Tales*. New York: Penguin Books, 2003

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight. Trans. Burton Raffel. New York: New American Library, 1970

Beowulf. Trans. Burton Raffel. New York: Penguin Group, 1963

Malory, Sir Thomas. *Le Morte d'Arthur*

Required Material:

- a three-ring binder
- loose-leaf paper
- writing utensils

Course Outline of Material Covered:

Unit or Topic	Concepts/Skills/Resources	Timeframe
The Short Story	- primary characteristics in modern short stories - stream of consciousness - literary elements (themes, settings, symbol, characterization, author's purpose, diction, tone, mood, imagery)	2 weeks / interspersed throughout the year
Poetry <i>Understanding Poetry</i>	- Italian and Shakespearean sonnets - modern poetry - events in a poet's life reflected in her poetry - author's view of the world and his / her poetic style - poetic conventions / terminology - author's tone	2 weeks / interspersed throughout the year
Writing the College Essay	- college essays as opportunities - types of college essays - sample essays from College Board and College Board resources	2-3 days
AP Test Prep	- format and strategies for multiple choice - format and strategies for the open response portion - writing and organizational techniques - resources - AP test practice	Interspersed throughout the year
<i>Heart of Darkness</i>	- how Conrad changed the view of the European people toward the African people	4 weeks

	- symbols and point-of-view - “pairing” - allusions - the importance of secondary characters - motifs	
<i>Hamlet</i>	- characterization of Hamlet - how subplots affect major action - motivation and tragic flaws of major characters - the Shakespearean tragedy - soliloquies and their role in character development and development of theme Film: <i>Hamlet</i> – 210 minutes Clip: <i>The Simpsons: Hamlet</i> – 15 minutes	4 weeks
<i>The Things They Carried</i>	- war’s effect on the individual during and after war - characterization of the several characters in the novel - individual characters and their motivation - author’s unique style and how he uses style to emphasize theme - story truth v. happening truth	4 weeks
<i>Death of a Salesman</i>	- the modern tragic hero - universal themes of family, success, failure, dreams, etc. - elements of drama / stage play and how they affect theme Film: <i>Death of a Salesman</i> – 130 minutes	2 weeks
<i>Oedipus the King</i>	- Literature reflects the historical and cultural time in which it was written. - background to Greek theatre - dramatic irony - Aristotle’s definition of tragedy - Symbolic juxtaposition	1 week
<i>Lord of the Flies</i>	- author’s life experience reflected in his literature - double-sided symbols - darkness in man is revealed in the absence of law enforcement / rules	2 weeks

<i>Crime and Punishment</i>	- how an author's life and deeds may be reflected in his work - theories and philosophies of a time period / place - secondary plots and secondary characters and their effect on theme - an author using symbolic dreams to enhance themes - Christ figures in literature	6 weeks
<i>The Poisonwood Bible</i>	- author's use of an unique style to convey meaning and enhance themes - characterization - author's use of historical events to convey meaning and enhance themes	6 weeks
<i>The Canterbury Tales</i>	- characterization - satire - the frame narrator Film: <i>A Knight's Tale</i>	1-2 weeks
The Arthurian Romance <i>Le Morte D'Arthur</i> <i>Sir Gawain and the Green Knight</i>	- King Arthur legends / stories - historical figure v. legendary figure - revenge and greed - the role of national heroes - Christ figures in literature	If time permits
The Anglo-Saxons and <i>Beowulf</i>	- historical, cultural, and religious aspects of the time - origins of the English language - archaic literary devices - characteristics of an epic poem - point-of-view	If time permits

****Depending on the needs of the class or changes in the school year, the course outline is subject to change.***

****Please note that some units will overlap and that most pieces will require a degree of independent reading, some entirely.***