



## AP Literature and Composition 2024-2025

**Instructor:** Brian Jay

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**Room:** 520

**Class Code:** Varies by class

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### The Course

This course will follow the curricular requirements outlined by the College Board in the *AP English Literature and Composition Course Description* which focuses on building skills necessary for college-level reading, writing and critical thinking. The texts include works from a variety of time periods and genres, and the writing assignments include in-class essays as well as formal process essays with several opportunities for revision. This is considered a college-level course; this means that you will be asked to read and analyze challenging, provocative, dense, and sometimes controversial material. You will be expected to come to class prepared to challenge yourself and others with interesting discussion points. Much of our work will be analyzing texts and AP prompts and materials in class.

The course design is based on the idea that the AP English Literature exam measures skills that you need in order to be successful in college. In other words, the focus of the course is NOT the exam; rather, it is the skill set that will lead to success on the exam and to success in college. The course will focus on improving skill sets related to confidence and facility with language; skill in critical reading, writing and thinking; and success in academic endeavors. **Students are encouraged to take the AP exam in May, however it is not required to receive the weighted credit.**

This course includes using approaches that develop skills to study and write about poetry, drama and fiction. This course will build on the vocabulary of rhetorical techniques as well as introduce additional terms of literary analysis for poetry and fiction. We will also look specifically at strategies to identify tone and how to apply critical theory to the texts we study.

### The Big Picture

Over the year you will produce, roughly:

- Weekly writing in your Reading Journal
- Daily note-taking and in-class writing when called for
- No less than 2 Formal take-home Essays (3-5 pages in length)
- In-class timed essays (roughly every other week)
- In-class timed mock-AP multiple choice exam (a few times)
- Group and Individual Projects
- One independent reading book per semester.

### What you'll need for this class

- #2 pencil and multiple blue or black pens
- At least 2 separate notebooks (spiral or otherwise is ok)
- Your book. **Always.** I encourage you to buy your own copies, but a school copy is fine too.
- Your keen insight into literature and a willingness to share it. Obviously.

**Books:** (this list is subject to change)

**Anthology**

The Norton Introduction to Literature – Portable Edition

**Novels**

*Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger (Little, Brown Books))

*All the Pretty Horses* by Cormac McCarthy (Vintage Books)

*Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley (Dover Thrift Edition)

*Hamlet* by William Shakespeare (Folger Library)

*One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* by Ken Kesey (Penguin Books, with Kesey's introduction and illustrations)

*Candide* by Voltaire (Bantam Classics Edition)

**I encourage buying your own copies, but make sure you are getting the correct edition. In addition, I would caution against purchasing the final two books until we're sure we are going to get to them.**

**Daily Assignments**

**In Class Writing**

You will be writing for a variety of purposes. Often, we will begin a class with a preparatory write. In addition, you will be expected to take notes during class (any format is fine). You will need a one to two subject notebook with sections divided for each of the two purposes. The notebooks will be given class credit.

**Critical Reading Journal**

In a spiral notebook you will keep a journal that reflects on the assigned reading. This journal will take on a specific format (see separate handout) and will be graded. In addition, your entries will be used for class discussion, analysis to be used on essays, even information you can use to study for the AP test.

**Homework and Preparation**

In order to be successful in this class you will come to class every day prepared to work with the text we are studying. Discussing various aspects of literature, including style and structure, will be a daily practice. In preparation for these discussions, you will be asked to complete concrete written assignments in the form of a reading journal. The reading journal is used for class discussion as well as a study guide for the test in May. Of course, it will also be graded. In this way I am, essentially, grading your reading. If at any point I begin to feel that these measures are not enough we will have daily quizzes to allow you to demonstrate your mastery of the material you've read.

**Formal Assessments and Writing Tasks**

In addition to the written response to your reading, you will complete a number of significant assessments in response to, or inspired by, what we read. These varied assignments are intended to help you comprehend, analyze, and evaluate the texts we read.

**ESSAYS:** In the case of formal essays, you will be writing and submitting multiple drafts, getting feedback from myself and sometimes peers, and revising for your final draft. You will

also have the option of revising and resubmitting these writing assignments after conferencing with me. I typically allow students to resubmit any essay and especially encourage those scoring the equivalent of a C or below as long as the rules on resubmitting essays are followed (there will be an additional handout on this). Conferences will address issues in your writing, such as idea development and argumentation, organizational choices, sentence structure and variety, and appropriate word choice. **Please note that all formal writing assignments must be submitted online to turnitin.com.**

**PROJECTS:** There will be a few graded group and individual projects. Their weighted value will be consistent with formal essays. They will not have the same opportunity for revision and resubmission, however.

### **In-class Assessments**

Over the course of the year you will complete a number of timed in-class essays in which you will demonstrate both your ability to analyze a particular text as well as your ability to write well. These timed essays will reflect each of the three types of essays you will encounter during the AP exam: prose, poetry and the open prompt. They are part of your class grade and help you prepare to write similar essays on the exam. Each time, we will discuss and debrief the prompt and quality of responses. At times, we will examine anchor papers (student exemplars) from previous AP exams in order to identify elements of excellent writing as well as some shortcomings that are typical of emerging writers. Similarly, we will periodically practice answering multiple choice questions, followed by a discussion of the test items. Some of these practice will be informal, while others will be graded for credit. When graded they will be graded on the 9 point AP scoring rubric.

### **Projects**

#### **Year Long Glossary Project: Literary Devices**

Early during each semester you will complete a number of literary device entries. We will focus on a core of 25 literary devices and you will be creating posters for these words as part of a group project.

#### **Semester-Long Independent Book Project**

You will select a book of literary merit and read it over the course of the semester. You will read one book per semester with a different assignment each semester. The first assignment will be partially done on Schoology, with your entries entered roughly every two weeks. This will be explained further in a separate handout. The second will be a project due near the end of the school year.

### **Emailing Assignments**

In general, I do not mind getting work through email (except the essays that must be submitted to turnitin.com) as long as work is sent as an attachment to the email. No invites to share, edit or view google docs, please.

### **Grading Policies**

Weighted grades will be assigned for grades of 70% or higher.

### **Grading Scale**

**90%-100% = AH**

**> No late daily assignments will be accepted for credit**

**80%-89% = BH**

**70%-79% = CH**

**> Major assignments are penalized 10% for each day they are late**

**60% - 69% = D**

**<59% = F**

The weight of each grade is as follows:

**Summative: 80%**

Tests, Formal Essays, Timed Writes, Major Projects and Polished writing samples

**Formative: 20%**

Journals, In-class writing, Independent Novel entries, Participation in Class Discussion

### **Late Work**

In general, late work is not acceptable in a college-level course. If you have a legitimate need for an extension on a major project or essay, please make this request ahead of time. All assignments are due on the specified due dates unless prior arrangements have been made. If a student knows that he/she will be absent on the day an assignment is due, it is the student's responsibility to make prior arrangements with the instructor for submitting work on time for full credit. This includes absences for all school activities, outdoor school, personal appointments, seasonal affective disorders and existential malaise. If an emergency arises, it is the student's responsibility to discuss options with the instructor in a timely manner upon return to school. Work that is missed as a result of unexcused absences may not be made up for credit. Quizzes and tests that are missed as a result of absences must be made up before or after school by prearrangement. Students accustomed to dumping a semester's worth of work on their teachers' desks on the last day of the grading day will be disappointed with the results.

### **Academic Integrity**

Students are expected to do their own work. **No** credit will be awarded to work that is not the student's own. Loss of points may result in failure of the course and therefore may result in the loss of senior English credit, which is required for graduation. **Plagiarism, in any form, will not be tolerated.** Due to the points given on certain summative assessments, plagiarism could make the difference between whether you pass or fail the class. **Use of AI to do your work is considered plagiarism.**

### **Grades and Schoology**

You can check major assignments and handouts online at [schoolology.com](https://www.schoolology.com). This syllabus will be available there as well. Students should have received a code to join Schoology as part of receiving their summer reading assignment. Those who were not enrolled in time to receive the code will be given one at the beginning of the year. You can also check your grade using Parent Vue.

## **Annual Course Schedule Overview**

### ***Prologue***

#### **Summer Reading**

We will begin by attending to your summer reading assignment – *Catcher in the Rye*. We will have a brief reading comprehension test and three days of discussion, culminating in a timed writing assignment on the book. We will also refer back to *Catcher* during the first and second unit.

#### **Major Text**

*Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger

#### **Written Assignments**

Reading journal, timed writing assignment.

### ***Unit 1 – Intro to Literary Analysis***

#### **Essential Questions**

What does it mean to engage in a close reading of a text?

How does structure relate to meaning in literature?

How are literary devices used?

#### **Major Texts**

Short stories taken from the Norton Anthology

#### **Written Assessments**

Reading journal, Literary Device Log & Posters, Timed in class-essays

### ***Unit 2 –The American Bildungsroman***

#### **Essential Questions**

How do we define our individuality in the scope of a larger group?

What role does society play in shaping who we are?

What does it mean to come of age?

What does freedom mean to you?

How do you go about making important decisions?

#### **Major Texts**

*All the Pretty Horses* by Cormac McCarthy  
*Catcher in the Rye* by JD Salinger (Summer Reading)

**Minor Texts**

Short stories taken from the Norton Anthology

**Written Assessments**

Reading journal, In-class essay, Compare/Contrast Essay

***Unit 3 – Gothic Romanticism and Frankenstein***

**Essential Questions**

What consequence do we face if we do not take responsibility for our actions?  
How does lack of compassion and understanding lead to prejudice and stereotyping?  
How can failure be beneficial?  
What is the price of advancement?

**Major Texts:**

*Frankenstein* by Mary Shelly  
The story of Prometheus  
Various 19<sup>th</sup> Century poems

**Written Assessments**

Reading journal, In-class essay, Student-taught class lessons

***Unit 4 – Tragedy, History & Literary Theory***

**Essential Questions**

What relevance does Hamlet have in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?  
How is the concept of individual choice explored in Hamlet?  
How does critical theory influence or change the way we interact with a text?  
How does history function in text – both as context and as something beyond context?

In this unit you will examine the concept of critical theory, focusing on an array of critical schools using a selection of short stories as the unit of analysis.

**Major Texts**

*Hamlet* by Shakespeare  
16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century poetry

**Minor Texts**

Short stories from the Norton Anthology, assorted contemporary poems

**Written Assessments**

Reading journal, In-class essays, Formal Essay

***Unit 5 – Poetry*****Essential Questions**

In what ways does poetry capture feelings, emotions, experiences, in ways that prose can not?  
How does poetry present an intersection between written and spoken expression?

**Major Texts**

Poetry taken from the Norton Anthology  
Miscellaneous Poetry (Modern and Classic)

**Written Assessments**

In-class essay  
Poetry Analysis Project

***Unit 6 – Literature as Social Commentary (if time permits)*****Essential Questions**

In what ways can fiction function as social commentary?  
Why does the archetype of the antihero work within the works of social commentary?  
In the study of literature, how important is it to consider what is NOT present compared to what IS present?

In this unit we will examine the influence of narrative perspective on meaning and authorial style; specifically the use of an unreliable narrator and how it affects our reading of a novel. We will also view a film and compare the use of visual media and print to create an allegory.

**Major Texts**

*One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* by Ken Kesey  
*Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood  
*Candide* by Voltaire  
Contemporary poetry

**Minor Texts**

Short stories and poems from the Norton Anthology

**Writing Assessments**

Reading journal, In-class essays, Formal Essay