

AP Literature and Composition Syllabus 2008-2009

Course Description:

The Advanced Placement Literature and Composition course is designed to teach beginning college writing and analysis. This class will be run as an open forum where you will debate and refine your ideas, both written and verbal, over time. You should come in with an open mind and the desire to hear the thoughts of others to broaden your own understanding of the literature and remember... there are no right answers, only those which you can back up. Because there is always room for improvement, you will draft and redraft writing assignments to incorporate the ideas of your classmates through peer editing and revising based on writing conferences with your teacher and self editing sheets.

In order to really strengthen your writing and quality of analysis you will be writing quite a bit. Hopefully, by the end of the year, you will come to understand yourself not only within the context of writers in the room, but also how your ideas fit into the larger forum of literary criticism. As a result you will learn to be conscious of the words that you use and the way that you use them. You will also refine your understanding of structure and style, incorporating different techniques into your own writing to strengthen your overall argument.

Furthermore, you will create a portfolio of your writing that will illustrate your growth as a writer and reader. You will also complete periodic self-assessments throughout the year to gauge your progress. This class is a team effort where I will expect you to help and seek to understand your peers' strengths and weaknesses to gain insight into your own.

Reading and Writing Assignments:

Reading Assignments:

You will need to complete all reading assignments on time. Your comprehension will be assessed through periodic reading checks in the form of short free-write assignments and more specific in-class essay topics. As you read, you should consider the work's structure, style, and themes as well as literary techniques such as figurative language, imagery, symbolism, and tone. Because of the level of difficulty of much of what we will read, you may need to read selections or books more than once. Plan your time wisely to ensure an in-depth analysis of what you read.

You will be required to annotate your book with post-its and keep a reader's notebook. Your reader's notebook is a place for you to record your responses to the literature and will be used as a basis for longer analytical work. It will take on the form of a double-entry notebook where you record important quotes and your responses to them, an extended free-write on specified topics or ones of your own, and as a forum for discussion about the literature between you and me.

Writing Assignments:

You will write several analytical pieces paired with creative writing assignments to deepen your understanding of the literature. Creative assignments will include sonnets; group

authored Shakespearean dramas; author style pieces mimicking Toni Morrison and Joseph Heller; myths; and others.

You will also work on several types of literary analysis including writing to explain, writing to evaluate, and writing to understand. These analytical assignments will come in many forms such as free-writes, timed writing prompts, and longer more formal essay assignments. You will be expected to write several drafts of assignments that will be workshopped in class. As a result of these workshops your writing should display a wide variety of rhetorical structures, transitions, and logical organization. Your essays will show clear use of inductive reasoning - moving from specific information to general information - and deductive reasoning - moving from general information to specifics. Quotes and evidence from the text to back up your assertions are also a must.

Writing Assignments - Critical:

Over the course of the year you will write several short critical papers focusing on your individual analysis and an interpretation of the literature using criticism as a lens for your argument. You should expect to write at least three short papers and one longer assignment per marking period. Specifically, these essays will examine the structure and style of the literature along with the social and cultural values of the work. Analytical papers should be typed, double-spaced, twelve point Times New Roman font, and approximately two-three pages long. Your longer assignment, which will generally include a research component or incorporation of literary criticism, will be approximately four-six pages. Your papers will go through various levels of workshops including peer editing, group writing, and teacher-student writing conferences. You will be assessed based on a nine point rubric.

Writing Assignments - Creative:

Because many of you are talented creative writers, we will also use this as a means for analysis. I will not grade you based on the aesthetic value of these pieces, which I expect to be impeccable, but rather on your ability to discern what makes a writer or genre unique in terms of style, diction, literary devices, and structure and use these techniques in your own writing. The largest demonstration of your understanding will be your ability to capture the flavor of the assigned work.

In Class Writing Quizzes and Exams:

You will have essay examinations throughout the year that are both from the AP exam and ones that will ask you to synthesize your ideas about the literature. In both cases these exams will be timed and require you to articulate your argument about the literature in a constructive and coherent way.

You will free-write about your response to the literature on a regular basis. These free-writes may form the foundation for larger more formal writing assignments or may just be meant to spark discussion about the literature. You should always carry a reader's notebook so you are prepared to explore your ideas about the literature.

You will also take numerous quizzes to test your knowledge of the material. Some will be announced and some will not. These are meant to check that you are reading and should reflect your level of understanding of the work.

Other Assignments:

Class Discussion and Oral Exams

Part of your grade will be based on your participation in class. I expect that you will all contribute to class discussions on a daily basis. We all have different interpretations of the literature that are all valid and need to be explored and flushed out.

In addition to informal everyday classroom deliberations, we will also be doing a number of assignments that are more formal to test your oratory skills including in-class debates; process dramas; hot seating; oral presentations; and others. You will learn to articulate your arguments, back up your ideas, and to stand up to constructive criticism in a thoughtful way.

Vocabulary

Developing your vocabulary will also be an extremely important part of the course. As you read, you will be expected to note unfamiliar vocabulary in your reader's notebook. We will compile class lists of important vocabulary based on these individual lists. I will also post an SAT word of the day on the board that we will attempt to use as much as possible throughout that class period.

Long Term Project: *Henry V*

You will be working with the Acting Company to further your understanding of Shakespeare, focusing on the play *Henry V*. The first part of the year will be spent deconstructing the way that Shakespeare writes, examining verse – iambic pentameter, trochaic rhythm, rhymed verse, and blank verse – and prose and the function of each. We will also examine the techniques that make Shakespeare unique amongst writers.

Because this will be a year-long project, we will examine the play more than once: first for analysis and later for performance. You will be expected to keep a reader's notebook detailing your responses to the literature, questions you have, and things you notice. This notebook will be your eventual touchstone for making decisions about the character you will play in our ensemble hour-long performance of *Henry V*. Don't worry... we do not expect you to be expert Elizabethan actors right away. You will work with members of the Acting Company, each other, and me to prepare. I promise, when you get there you will know the play inside and out.

Summer Assignment:

You will be expected to complete a summer assignment focusing on an in-depth analysis of the following works: *The Odyssey*, *American Gods*, *Song of Solomon*, and myths from various cultures. Annotations will provide the backdrop of your notes and you will supplement them

with a reader's notebook that will explore your ideas about the literature. You will also be responsible for an analytical essay that will explore the idea of myth as an indication of the fears and values of cultures. You will use mythology and religion as a focal point for a discussion about the contextual society of the author and his or her tale, paying careful attention to the journey of the protagonist in each work.

Grading:

You will be assessed on your understanding of the literature that will be exhibited in class discussions, periodic quizzes, free-writes, and formal analytical papers. I expect that you will turn in assignments on time and to the best of your ability. The more you put into the class, the more you will grow, and your grade will rise. You will be graded both on your progress within the class and on your numerical score. If you try you will succeed.

You will be expected to complete reading assignments nightly and annotate your book as you go. Annotations will be checked at random and comprise the bulk of your homework grade. You will also be required to complete out of class writing assignments for homework.

Grade Breakdown:

Coursework	Percentage of Grade
Homework:	20%
Quizzes, Tests, Projects, Papers:	40%
Classwork and Participation:	30%
Attendance:	10%

Numerical Average	Letter Grade
97-100%	A+
94-96%	A
90-93%	A-
87-89%	B+
84-86%	B
80-83%	B-
77-79%	C+
74-76%	C
70-73%	C-
67-69%	D+
64-66%	D
60-63%	D-
0-59%	F

Final Thoughts:

This class is not about grades or being better than your peers. It is about a collaborative effort to deepen our understanding of literature, society, and ourselves. I will help you in any

way that I can and I expect you to do the same for your fellow classmates. We will be much more successful if we stand together than if you choose to stand alone. Take what your classmates have to say to heart. We will learn new things from each other every day. Your positive participation will expedite this process and ensure the class' success.

You will experience a rigorous curriculum that will be at the college level. It is your responsibility to make sure that you keep up with assignments and stay on track. The more that you put into class the more you will get out of it.

Class Bibliography:

The Bible

Homer *The Odyssey*

Neil Gaiman *American Gods*

Toni Morrison *Song of Solomon*

Edith Hamilton *Mythology*

William Shakespeare *Henry V*

Euripides *The Medea*

Toni Morrison *Beloved*

William Shakespeare *Hamlet*

Mary Shelley *Frankenstein*

John Milton *Paradise Lost*

Norton Anthology of Poetry

Kaplan *AP Literature and Composition*

Nathaniel Hawthorne *The Scarlet Letter*

Tennessee Williams *A Streetcar Named Desire*

Henrik Ibsen *A Doll House*

Joseph Heller *Catch-22*

Homer *The Iliad*

George Orwell *Animal Farm*

Gregory Maguire *Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West*

X.J. Kennedy, Dorothy M. Kennedy, Jane E. Aaron *The Bedford Reader* Seventh Edition

Dawn Rodrigues and Myron C. Tuman *Writing Essentials: A Norton Pocket Guide*

In-class handouts

On-line resources

Reading and Writing Schedule:

Summer Assignment – Getting to the Heart of the Matter: Myth and the Journey

The Odyssey

American Gods

Song of Solomon

Mythology/ Religion: *The Bible*, Edith Hamilton's *Mythology*, on-line resources

On-Going Assignment:

Henry V

Semester 1 – Examining the Tragic Hero’s Fall

Weeks One-Two: Myth and the Journey: *American Gods*, *The Odyssey*, *Song of Solomon*, and Mythology

- Introduction to the course: How does the language of literature give the reader insight into the deeper meanings behind the words?
 - o Analyzing Literature, Writing, and the Writing Process: *Bedford Reader*.
 - Language (style); audience; etc.
 - Read Chapter Three of Kaplan *AP Literature and Composition* (Key Terminology).
 - o Examining the nature of the test.
 - Analyzing the nature of writing assignments on the AP exam.
 - Students will read Chapter Four of Kaplan *AP Literature and Composition* (Writing the Essays).
 - On-line materials.
 - o AP Diagnostic: Kaplan *AP English Literature and Composition*.
- Initial Self-Assessment: **Due Week One.**
- Students will examine *Song of Solomon*, *American Gods*, *The Odyssey*, and myths through the lens of the journey. They will explore how the supernatural informs the natural world and how each story is a reflection of the times.
 - o In-class timed AP-level question: 2000 Exam – the importance of journey over the outcome.
 - o Free-write: How are the journeys of each character informed or impacted by the supernatural?
 - o Comparative analysis of *Song of Solomon*, *American Gods*, *The Odyssey*, and myths.
 - o Examine the context of each work. Free-write: How is the mythology/religion in each work a mirror of the times?
 - o Students will write their own myths that are a reflection of our time.
 - Discuss connections between new myths and old myths.
 - How is your myth a reflection of yourself?
 - o Writing Assignment:
 - Critical/Analytical Essay: examine fate in the texts. How does fate affect the journey? **Due Week Three.**
 - Read Prewriting, Organizing the Main Ideas, and Framing the Main Ideas pages 4-28 in *Writing Essentials: A Norton Pocket Guide*.

Weeks Three-Four: A Descent into Madness - *The Medea*

- Drama: The Basics:
 - o Theme, structure, spectacle, song, character, plot, soliloquy, monologue, aside, chorus.
 - o Drama as text and as theater.
 - o Greek tragedy and the tragic hero.
- *The Medea*

- Students will examine Medea’s descent into madness. They will examine the nature of men, women, and relationships in the text.
 - Free-writes: fate in the text, sanity versus insanity, and others.
 - Character analyses of Medea and Jason.
 - “A Jury of Her Peers” (handout).
 - Students will examine the hidden language of women and the rationalization of murder.
 - Writing Assignment
 - In-class timed AP-level question Kaplan *AP Literature and Composition* page 243. This will become the basis for a longer analytical essay. **Due Week Five.**
 - Students will complete self-editing sheets after receiving their in-class drafts with corrections and suggestions.
 - Read the section on revising pages 22-26 in *Writing Essentials: A Norton Pocket Guide*.

Weeks Six-Nine: The Legacy of Slavery: *Beloved*

- Students will examine the structure of Toni Morrison’s writing. They will discover how the structure affects overall story and the reader’s understanding of the characters, plot, etc. Students will also examine the context of *Beloved* and how the story is a byproduct of the times.
- Free-writes: Why does Morrison object to *Beloved* being labeled in the genre of magical realism?
- Formal Writing Assignments:
 - Critical/Analytical Essay: Explore the theme legacy of slavery. How does Morrison both literally and figuratively use slavery as a motif throughout *Beloved*? **Due Week Nine.**
 - Creative Assignment: Students will write their own short story in Toni Morrison’s style. **Due Week Ten.**

Week Ten: Exploring Infanticide and the Mind of a Mother - *The Medea* and *Beloved*

- Students will examine motherhood and infanticide through a comparative analysis of *The Medea* and *Beloved*.
- Writing Assignment:
 - Critical/Analytical Essay: Students will explore *Beloved* and *The Medea* through the lens of infanticide. Students will explore the historical context as a possible justification for the fatal actions of each woman. **Final Drafts Due Week Eleven.**
 - Students will workshop their writing throughout the week in their writing groups.
 - Students will meet with the teacher for one-on-one conferences about their writing.
 - Students will identify areas that they feel they need the most work on. They will set goals with their teacher and think about realistic benchmarks to reach those goals. Each student will choose one thing in their writing to improve. They should refer to *Writing Essentials: A Norton Pocket*

Guide to improve their sentences and words (pages 104-109), grammar (pages 132-151), punctuation (page 154), and mechanics (pages 172-181). They will write about their progress in their self-assessments.

- *Bedford Reader* Comparison and Contrast.

Weeks Eleven–Sixteen: Intelligence and Madness: *Hamlet*, *Frankenstein*, and *Paradise Lost*

- The students will examine the nature of tragedy and the tragic man through an in-depth analysis of *Hamlet*, *Frankenstein*, and *Paradise Lost*. They will seek to understand the nature of good and evil and what happens when you rebel against the status quo.
- *Hamlet*
 - Aristotle's Definition of Shakespeare's tragic man.
 - The tragic man: examining *Hamlet*'s place in the context of Shakespearean tragedy.
 - Discussion of Shakespearean drama and its classic models.
 - Exploring Shakespearean Language: verse and prose.
 - Shakespeare's verse: iambic pentameter, trochaic rhythm, blank verse, etc.
 - Deconstructing sonnets.
 - Explanation of sonnet writing assignment. **Due Week Eleven.**
 - Characters and language: how does language give use clues about the character's status and state of mind?
 - Deconstructing *Hamlet*:
 - Students will examine *Hamlet* through various critical perspectives including feminist and psychoanalytical (contained in the book). They will examine *Hamlet* in terms of tragedy and the tragic man. Students will use Hamlet's language to assess his madness and evaluate his place in the annals of tragedy.
 - Free-writes: Hamlet's insanity; close-reading monologues and soliloquies; ghosts: real or imagined; madness: Ophelia and Medea; sacrifice and family; and others.
 - In-class timed AP-level question. Kaplan *AP Literature and Composition* page 302.
 - Writing Assignments:
 - Assignment One: Students will use the writing process to examine madness and revenge in *The Medea* and *Hamlet*. **Assignment Due Week Twelve.**
 - Assignment Two: Examine *Hamlet* from a psychoanalytic perspective. **Assignment Due Week Thirteen.**
 - Read the section on documentation in *Writing Essentials: A Norton Pocket Guide* pages 57-70.
 - Assignment Three: Examine Hamlet from a feminist perspective. **Assignment Due Week Fourteen.**
- *Frankenstein*:
 - Students will examine the fall of Dr. Frankenstein and his creature and connect their story to the ideals of tragedy and the tragic man. They will research the

context of the book and discuss how *Frankenstein* explores Shelley's fears about society.

- Free-writes: Who is the hero in the text? What is Dr. Frankenstein's tragic flaw and how did it contribute to his eventual downfall?
- Practice multiple-choice and prose Kaplan *AP Literature and Composition* pages 164-168.
- Writing Assignments:
 - Reading *Frankenstein* is especially important in today's society where science is making advancements like cloning and designer babies possible. How do the issues that Shelley brings up in her story connect with conflicts in our culture? Why should Shelley's work be included in today's school curriculum? **Due Week Sixteen.**
 - Allusion assignment - *Paradise Lost*: Students will examine Satan's fall in relation to *Hamlet* and *Frankenstein*. They will examine the affect of Shelley's allusion to *Paradise Lost* in *Frankenstein*. **Due Week Seventeen.**

Weeks Seventeen – Eighteen: Deconstructing Poetry

- The Beauty of Poetic Language:
 - Tone and speaker, language, imagery, symbolism, style, rhythm, and sound:
 - T.S. Eliot "The Hollow Men" and "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," Shelley "Ozymandias," Edgar A. Poe "Annabel Lee," Matthew Arnold "Dover Beach."
 - Students will write poetry mimicking the style of one of the authors. They should pay careful attention to literary devices. **Due Week Eighteen.**
 - Students will read Chapter Five of Kaplan *AP Literature and Composition* (Poetry on the Exam).
 - In-class timed AP-Level question Kaplan *AP Literature and Composition* page 297.
 - Writing Assignment:
 - Critical/Analytical Essay: Students will choose one of the poems and examine how the literary language informs its theme. **Due Week Eighteen.**

Midpoint Self-Assessments Due Week Eighteen.

Semester 2 – Rebelling Against the Status Quo: The Downside of Catch-22

Weeks One-Four: "A" for Adultery: *The Scarlet Letter*

- Students will examine Puritan life and values through Hester Prynne's transgressions. They will seek to understand how Hester is a byproduct of her society and her place within her community.
- Free-write: symbolism and sin, the scarlet letter come to life in Pearl, sacrifice, and others.
- Practice multiple-choice Kaplan *AP Literature and Composition* pages 224-227.
- Writing Assignment:

- Critical/Analytical Essay: Write a comparative analysis of *The Scarlet Letter* and “Rappaccini’s Daughter” (handout) using Pearl and Beatrice as the focus of your essay. **Due Week Five.**

Weeks Five-Six: The Dangers of Desire *A Streetcar Named Desire*

- Students will examine madness, desire, illusion, and love in *A Streetcar Named Desire*. They will explore how Stanley, Stella, and Blanche come to life through stage directions, music, and words and discover how the play’s structure informs plot, characterization, theme, conflict, etc.
- Students will each find a piece of literary criticism.
<http://infotrac.galegroup.com/itweb/new94839>
- Free-writes: insanity, appearance versus reality, sex and violence, the nature of desire, music, and others.
- Writing Assignments:
 - Critical/Analytical Essay: Blanche’s world is often contrasted to the world of Stanley and Stella. Blanche firmly states, “I don’t want realism. I want – Magic!” In what ways is Blanche’s world an illusion? Is it any less real than Stanley or Stella’s world? What defines reality in the play? What defines illusion? **Due Week Six.**
 - Close-Reading Project: students will examine the importance of key quotes, motifs, and symbols in the text. **Due Week Seven.**

Weeks Seven-Eight: Breaking Free from Society: *A Doll House*

- Students will examine the relationship between men and women in *A Doll House*. They will explore how Nora both embodies and rejects the ideals of her time and her progression throughout the text.
- Free-writes: macaroons and rebellion, the balance of power in Nora and Torvald’s relationship, and others.
- In-class timed AP-level question Kaplan *AP Literature and Composition* page 129 “Story of an Hour.”
 - Students should read Chapter Six of Kaplan *AP Literature and Composition* (Prose on the Exam).
- Writing Assignments:
 - Creative Assignment **Due Week Seven:** Each of us is trapped in a “doll house” of our own creation. Society places certain demands upon us that we feel compelled to honor or reject. Create a “room” that shows what society wants you to be and a “room” that shows who you really are through words, colors, symbols, and drawings. Your project should be aesthetically pleasing and insightful and should be accompanied by a written explanation.
 - Critical/Analytical Essay: In *A Doll House*, very little is as it first seems. Each character is trapped by the conventions of society and this entrapment leads them to deceive others in various ways. Choose one relationship between two people and examine the nature of their dishonesty (what they have hidden, the reasons behind it, and if it was necessary). **Due Week Eight.**

- Is Torvald Helmer (Nora's husband in *A Doll House*) a controlling chauvinist who must keep his wife powerless at any cost or is he merely a man trying to live within the context of his society? **Due Week Nine.**

Weeks Nine-Twelve: Yossarian Lives: *Catch-22*

- Students will explore Heller's depiction of World War II, heroism, and bureaucracy in *Catch-22*.
- Free-writes: Yossarian's sanity. Heller's depiction of war, the nature of *Catch-22*, Yossarian as a hero, Yossarian's ability to escape, and others.
- Writing Assignments:
 - In-class timed AP-level question Kaplan *AP Literature and Composition* page 170.
 - Students will write a comparative analysis of "Between the World and Me" and *Catch-22* paying careful attention to how each author constructs the protagonist's relationship to death. **Due Week Ten.**
 - Allusion Project: Heller creates a comparison between Yossarian and Achilles (*The Iliad* and Edith Hamilton's *Mythology*). Examine the nature of that comparison and how each is characterized in his own text. Why does each fight and what does each value? **Due Week Eleven.**
 - Critical/Analytical Essay: Did Yossarian escape *Catch-22*? **Due Week Thirteen.**
 - Creative Assignment: Students will examine the structure of *Catch-22* and how it shapes their understanding of the plot and characters.
 - Students will write in role to gain a deeper understanding of the characters.
 - Students will write their own story in Joseph Heller's style. **Due Week Thirteen.**

Weeks Thirteen-Fifteen: Beasts of England: *Animal Farm*

- Students will explore *Animal Farm* as a satirical allegory through a close examination of the novel's context.
- Free-writes: analyze songs, class structures, animal parallels, and others.
- Writing Assignment:
 - Research Project: Students will research the context of the novel seeking to find parallels between animals and historic figures. They will choose one figure and his or her counterpart to be the focus of a critical/analytical essay. **Due Week Fifteen.**
 - Read the section on research in *Writing Essentials: A Norton Pocket Guide* pages 44-50.

Weeks Sixteen-Eighteen: Turning Evil Upside Down: *Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West*

- Students will examine *Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West* as an allegory focusing on the issues of animal rights, the class system, and good and evil. They will also explore at the book's relationship to Shakespearean and classical tragic models.

- Free-writes: perception and the nature of good and evil, isolation, animals and humans, love and friendship, politics, and others.
- In-class timed AP-level question Kaplan *AP Literature and Composition* page 180.
- Writing Assignments:
 - o Creative Assignment: Write your own twist on a fairy tale. Your story should reflect conflicts or important societal issues of our time in a creative way. **Due Week Seventeen**
 - o Critical/Analytical Essay: Discuss the nature of good and evil in *Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West*. How does Maguire characterize evil and is Elphaba a tragic hero ruled by fate or a just byproduct of her society? **Due Week Eighteen**

Final Portfolio and Self-Assessment Due Week Eighteen.