

AP Language and Composition

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Course Overview/ Argument

Explanation/Argument for the Course

Students entering Advanced Placement Language and Composition should expect to deal with a challenging array of reading, writing, and thinking skills. The course material will often be on par with early college level curriculum both in amount of time spent and in the level of assessment. Students will demonstrate higher level writing, reading, thinking, and discussion skills throughout the year with a focus on a deepening application and awareness of rhetoric and how language works. Through close reading and frequent writing activities and workshops, students develop their ability to work with language and text with a greater awareness of purpose and strategy, while strengthening their own composing skills. This course is designed to extend your existing abilities to interpret and analyze a wide range of texts, to write and revise sustained arguments, to carry out independent research, and to integrate multiple sources into your essays. Preparation for the Advanced Placement test is also a focusing element for the course, but it will not be the primary focus of the coursework (students should be learning much more than simply how to pass an AP test).

Major Assignments and Activities

Response Journals

Students will regularly be given short periods of time to write a response on a given topic. Students will be expected to respond thoughtfully and consistently to these topics. The journals are designed to encourage critical thinking and timed writing skills for the students.

Timed Writes (The 40 minute Write)

Within the timeline these are generally labeled as “in-class essays,” which will be used as a regular formative assessment of student progress. They will be created in the style of or taken from old A.P. Language tests and assessed on the one to nine point scale outlined for the A.P. Language essay assessment. Throughout the year the focus of these in-class essay will change from that of close prose analysis, to argumentative response, and finally to the document-based synthesis response. Many lessons during the year revolve around providing preparations and expectations for these valuable styles of on-demand writing.

For in-class essays, students will be timed to prepare for the pacing of the essay portion of the exam. Each in-class essay will be discussed with the class as a whole and specific comments will be provided for each student regarding their strengths and weaknesses in writing.

Major Writing Assignments

Students will progress through three major college writing techniques during the year: expository, analytical, and argumentative writing. They will be working with each in conjunction with various in-class activities as well as outside readings. Students will write at least two major outside of class essays for each of the essay types focusing on editing process

and fully developing content skills. The essays will typically be three to six pages in length and be assessed heavily on content, organization, and style.

Essay Writing

Students will follow, for all major writing assignments, the suggested process of: thesis/plan of attack generation, essay outline, rough draft, edited draft, and final draft. Students will collaborate with one another during the essay writing process to give feedback on different components of the essay as well as the overall whole.

For major writing assignments, students will work with multiple editing partners to gather feedback and assist each other with corrections. One of the partners for writing assignments is also the course instructor. Specific attention is paid to the thesis properly addressing all elements of the prompt, thesis accurately addressing the prompt, evidence and support are thorough, and effective use of rhetoric, diction, and syntax for emphasis and effect on the reader.

Discussions/Presentations

Many of the assessed activities in this course will have a formal presentation or discussion element. Students will be expected to come prepared with their reading assignments complete and ready for discussion. Many course activities will require students to present information (expertise) to each other which will also have a formalized assessment process.

Graphics and Visual Images

Students will be exposed to a variety of graphics and visual images. The first introduction to interpretation and analysis of images will be in the Logic unit. Students will be presented with a variety of graphs, charts, and statistics which students will assess what is the argument being made, within the context of the visual, and what are the elements of evidence and support given through the visual.

Students will also work with graphics and visual images in the Spring in preparation for the synthesis essay prompt. In the Spring, students will create their own synthesis question and provides graphics and visuals. Leading up to this project, students will use examples and projects from previous years as preparation. They will also use the past projects to discuss the argument presented in each of the projects and its visuals.

Grammar

Students will work with grammar as the building blocks to quality writing. Students will: 1) become proficient in using a variety of sentence structures, subordination, and coordination, 2) understand how manipulation of sentence structure and affect emphasis and voice, 3) use techniques to increase coherence, such as transitions, various strategies of repetition, and effective placement of modifiers, and 4) use grammar to support style development.

Vocabulary

Although rhetorical analysis requires close, critical reading, it also depends on vocabulary. Students will study rhetorical devices and terms, mostly those that revolve around repetition and emphasis. Through this, students will be able to identify specific methods and manipulate syntax based on their knowledge of rhetorical devices and terms.

Late Work Policy

All students are expected to complete all of their assignments on time. If you have an emergency request for an extension, please see me as soon as possible. Do not take this lightly- extensions

will only be given for extreme circumstances which do not include failed printers, lost flash drives, or having too much to do. Take time in your busy schedules to complete the homework for this course. Due dates will always remain the same for all students. If you have an excused absence on the deadline for an assignment it is your responsibility to make sure that the assignment arrives to class on time. All long-term assignments are due by the beginning of class on the date assigned. A typical homework load could be but is not limited to 45 minutes to one hour a night. In general, lack of success in this course is directly related to students failing to complete both their homework and in-class assignments.

Plagiarism (cheating) Policy

In this age of readily available information, it is easy for students to knowingly or unknowingly commit plagiarism. In order to help students avoid plagiarism, here is a clear definition of what is considered cheating.

1. Using or copying work that is not one's own and turning it in with one's name on it (this includes work from other students).
2. Using **ideas, sentences, or paragraphs** from another source without giving that source credit.
3. Using the ideas and organization of those ideas from another source for one's essay (even if you give this source credit).
4. Upon first offense, student will have an opportunity to redo assignment. All offenses thereafter will result in a failing grade for the assignment.

Course Sequence

While the order below represents the general direction of the first and second semesters, the study of rhetoric is discrete and the learning process of the course can merge or overlap. Therefore, the agendas for each day may be modified as needed. The course may proceed impulsively or instinctively as students progress through the skills and concepts of rhetoric, style development, rhetorical analysis, argument, and synthesis.

Course Overview (by Thematic Focus)

Structure of Language- Strategies for dealing with writing and language

- Developing a common language for describing and discussing language
 - The basic elements of structural grammar
 - generative grammar
 - a brief history of language development
- Developing language analysis skills
 - sentence structures and purposes

Critical Analysis- Strategies for the critical analysis of written works in a variety of forms

- Understanding and identifying modes, styles, and purposes in writing
 - Rhetorical, narrative, descriptive, procedural, and expository writing
 - Dealing with fiction and nonfiction
- Developing vocabulary for describing techniques in writing
 - Stylistic and rhetorical terms
 - Literary terms (as used in prose writing)
- Elements of the critical analysis essay

Argumentation- Strategies for Argumentation and the Analysis of Argument

- Techniques for making the argument
- Evaluating evidence
 - Viewing footnotes, bibliography, and sources
 - Evidence from charts, graphs, cartoons, songs, pictures and other multimedia sources
- Dealing with audience and tone
- Structuring the argumentative/persuasive essay

Synthesis - Strategies for the synthesis of multiple works into a cohesive argument

- Evaluating conflicting positions
- Using multiple texts to develop a single position
- Structuring the synthetic argument

About the Reading

Because this is a college level course, which students have elected to take, students must have an above average sense of intellectual maturity and responsibility. The reading in this course has been chosen using careful consideration and has been designed to best prepare students for college level reading and writing as well as the AP Literature test. Literature in this class may present ideas about sexuality, death, or use language of a more mature nature. If you, as a student, are concerned greatly by having to deal with these concepts on a mature and objective level you might consider a different English course. The works chosen for this class are designed to give the students a common experience in reading challenging literature, to provide alternative texts would undermine this common intellectual experience. Be assured that all texts are chosen so that they contain no gratuitous violence, language, or unnecessarily explicit themes.

Major Literary Support Materials

The following texts will be used to supplement students' abilities in analysis and critical reading. All of the texts provide excellent rhetorical and linguistic study and allow students to explore a variety of voices from different time periods.

Selection of Shakespeare Comedies

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (Twain)

A Streetcar Named Desire (Williams)

The Pearl (Steinbeck)

The Norton Reader (11th Edition) (Peterson & Brereton eds.)

The Old Man and the Sea (Hemingway)