

AP English Language and Composition

Course Overview (Objectives):

The major purpose of this course is to help students develop their personal writing styles to a level that will accommodate them collegiately and professionally. This goal can only come to fruition by stressing not only grammatical conventions and organizational strategies but also critical thinking and reading skills, analytical modalities, and the artful use of rhetorical devices. The end-product will be competent communicators who are clear, effective writers and speakers.

In order to accomplish this primary objective, students will first learn to become skillful readers and purposeful writers. Using what they have already learned as a starting point, they will now focus on a variety of subjects and resources, which will require them to become aware of how stylistic effects are achieved through carefully selected, but deliberate, linguistic choices.

Students will become acquainted with new terminology/vocabulary and will learn to use their old knowledge in new applications. They will be introduced to the elements of rhetoric, the terms which define logic, and an on-going list of new vocabulary, which will help them understand the structures of and the art of effective writing. They will also learn how to manipulate specific literary terms, syntactical terms, reading terms, and figurative language terms within their own writing styles as they learn to find them in the writing samples that they will be reading and analyzing inside and outside of class.

They will practice close reading and synthesizing of ideas within multiple sources. They will learn to analyze selected readings for tone, voice, parallelism, and emphasis through innovative use of diction and sentence structure. They will identify specific rhetorical devices, used for specific effects.

As students learn to identify these techniques of effective writing, they will then practice using them in their own writing – not for simple mimicry but for expansion of their own writing techniques. The hope is that they will learn about themselves and about their own writing as they learn from the writings of others.

Since this course is designed to engage students in activities that will give them many opportunities for writing assignments that are expository, analytical, or argumentative in nature, their primary reading materials will mostly be a variety of non-fiction selections from a wide range of world authors from many time periods. For this reason, units 2-5 are thematic in nature. The theme of one unit will lead directly into the theme of the next. These units will contain literary models from many historical eras used together to illustrate how time only gives relevance to universal themes.

Finally, the AP Exam is a major consideration. Because the exam consists of three specific essay models (synthesis essay, rhetorical analysis essay, and argumentative essay), students will repeatedly practice using these essay forms throughout the course. There will be a required timed-writing during each week. Moreover, since the second part of the exam is a series of multiple choice questions, based

on reader comprehension of selected readings, all of the tests and many of the quizzes in this course will be designed in a similar manner.

Two 30-minute tutorials will be offered weekly for review, re-enforcement, and/or extension of old/new information, concepts, or strategies covered in class.

Grading system:

Essays/Tests: 50%

All final draft essays and tests are of equal value.

Most student essays will be completed in class. Some will be graded only as rough drafts (used as daily grades). However, many of the rough drafts will be self-edited and peer-edited before they are then typed as final drafts. Students will submit all drafts with their final copies.

All tests will consist of non-fiction selections with multiple-choice questions based on reading comprehension/analysis and rhetorical analysis.

Quizzes: 30%

Quizzes will be given to measure knowledge and comprehension of assigned vocabulary, new terminology, understanding of outside reading assignments, and syntactical structures. These will be used to gauge student understanding/progress and to determine scheduled tests.

Daily: 20%

Daily grades will come from a number of areas: completion of daily warm-up exercises, grammatical practices, assigned group-work duties, exercises practicing new concepts, peer-editing, graded rough drafts of essays (weekly timed writings), and completion of parts of assigned projects (research). Almost every lesson will begin with a practical exercise which will utilize a grammatical or writing concept related to that day's reading assignment.

Course Organization:

The course is organized into five units (four with overlapping themes [See individual units.]) and a documented research paper (MLA format).

Each unit requires students to acquire and to use rich vocabulary, to utilize standard English grammar, and to understand the importance of diction and syntax in an author's style. Therefore, students are expected to develop the following through reading, discussion, and writing assignments:

1. a wide-ranging vocabulary used appropriately and effectively;
2. a variety of sentence structures, including appropriate use of subordination, coordination, and parallelism;
3. logical organization, enhanced by specific techniques to increase coherence, such as repetition, transitions, and emphasis;

4. a balance of generalization and specific illustrative detail; and
5. the effective use of rhetoric (controlling tone, establishing and maintaining voice, and achieving appropriate emphasis through diction and sentence structure).

For each reading assignment, students must identify the following:

- Purpose (thesis, claim, or assertion)
- Style (tone, rhetorical mode/devices, diction, syntax)
- Context (occasion, time/place)
- Speaker (voice)
- Evidence or Data
- Audience appeal (*logos, ethos, pathos*)
- Assumptions or Warrants
- Arrangement
- Patterns of development
- Use of detail to develop general idea

Primary Course Textbook:

Shea, Renee, Lawrence Scanlon, and Robin Dissin Aufses. *The Language of Composition*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2008.

Course Syllabus:

Unit 1: Introduction to Rhetoric (Tools of the Writer)

Requirements: *AP English Course Description*, class rules and responsibilities, grading system

Key Elements of Rhetoric

- Terminology (specific literary terms, rhetorical terms, syntactical terms and conventional usage, logic terms, reading terms, figurative language terms, specialized vocabularies, terms used in previous AP exams)
- Techniques (use of specific rhetorical devices, author meaning/purpose, main idea, organization/structure, rhetorical modes, citations)
- Strategies (common sense, explication, analysis, parallelism and syntax, diction, imagery, details, the rhetorical triangle [subject, speaker, audience], the appeals [*logos, ethos, pathos*])
- Arrangement (intended purpose/effect, classical model, patterns of development [narration, description, process analysis, exemplification, comparison/contrast, classification/division, definition, cause-effect])

Prose Analysis (style, tone, syntax, diction, close reading, annotation, journals and graphic organizers)

Visual Rhetoric (pictures, cartoons, graphs, charts, etc.)

Essay Models

- Rhetorical analysis essay (purpose, persona, audience; assumptions; style [diction, syntax, details]; appeals; arrangement; patterns; devices; tone; figurative language)
- Synthesis essay (types of support, relationship of sources to audience, citing sources, visual sources, formulation of a position, incorporating selected sources)
- Argument essay (persuasion vs argumentation; thesis [assertion or proposition]; sub-claims and evidence; opposing arguments; clear, logical structure; methods of appeal; logical appeals)

Reading:

- A number of exemplary selections from the text will be utilized for practical means: introduction of concepts, understanding relationships, comprehension and application, analysis, general practice, group work, etc.
In addition:
- O’Neill, Jaime, “The Rime of the Ancient Geezer”
- Twain, Mark, “A Presidential Candidate”
- Barry, John M., from *The Great Influenza*
- Wilson, Edward O., “The People--First Critic Stereotypes the Environmentalists,” from *The Future of Life*
- Wilson, Edward O., “The Environmentalist Stereotypes the People—First Critics,” from *The Future of Life*
- Hazlitt, William, from “On the Want of Money”
- Twain, Mark, “Two Ways of Seeing a River”
- Swift, Jonathan, “A Meditation upon a Broomstick”
- Milloy, Courtland, “Pride to One Is Prejudice to Another”
- McKibben, Bill, “It’s Easy Being Green”
- Conniff, Richard, from *Counting Carbons* (with table)

Viewing: Satirical photos and cartoons from current periodicals as examples of “visual rhetoric”;
Twohy, Mike, *Rumors, Lies, Innuendo* (cartoon)

Assessments:

Quiz: definitions of rhetorical modes and devices

Quiz: vocabulary from readings

Quiz: figurative language/literary terms

Quizzes: grammatical structures (subordination and parallelism)

Quizzes on three readings

Test: Rhetorical modes and devices

Compositions:

- Rhetorical analysis essay
Prompt: Read the passage from William Hazlitt's essay, "On the Want of Money." Then, write an essay in which you analyze the rhetorical strategies Hazlitt uses to develop his position about money.
- Comparison/contrast essay
Prompt: Read Mark Twain's "Two Ways of Seeing a River." Reflect on his two ways of seeing the river and how he relies on a combination of subjective and objective description. Write an essay in which you explain how the inclusion of these descriptions enhances his overall comparison and contrast.
- Prose analysis essay
Prompt: Read the two passages from the book, *The Future of Life*, written by contemporary scientist Edward O. Wilson. In the passages, he satirizes the language of two groups that hold opposing attitudes about environmentalism. Read each passage carefully. Then, write an essay in which you analyze how Wilson's satire illustrates the unproductive nature of such discussions.
- Synthesis essay
Prompt: Perception is a double-edged sword that is sometimes skewed as much by individual observation as by time and personal experience. It is the basis of attitudes, stereotypes, and standards – both positive and negative.
Select five readings and two visuals from our unit that deal with perceptions. Synthesize information from at least three of the sources, and incorporate it into a well-developed essay that identifies key elements associated with the impact of group perceptions on a community or on a culture.
Make sure that your argument is central; use the sources to illustrate and support your reasoning. Do not summarize the sources. Indicate clearly which sources you are drawing from, whether through direct quotation or paraphrase (using direct or indirect citations).

Unit 2: Idealism vs Reality (Power of the Human Spirit)

Reading:

- King, Martin Luther, Jr., "Letter from Birmingham Jail"
- Talese, Gay, "The Silent Season of a Hero" (*Esquire*, 1966)
- Orwell, George, "Politics and the English Language"
- Hayakawa, S. I., "Bilingualism in America: English Should Be the Official Language"
- Excerpts from Plato's *The Republic* (independent reading)
- Prose, Francine, "I Know Why the Caged Bird Cannot Read"
- Talbot, Margaret, "Best in Class"

- Mann, Horace, from *Report of the Massachusetts Board of Education*
- Washington, Booker T., “The Atlanta Exposition Address”
- Selzer, Richard, “The Surgeon as Priest”
- Carlyle, Thomas, from *Labour*
- Ehrlich, Gretel, “About Men”
- Tannen, Deborah, “There is No Unmarked Woman”
- Roosevelt, Theodore, “The Proper Place for Sports”
- National Eating Disorders Association, “Enhancing Male Body Image”

Viewing: video samples of pop culture icons, popular stereotypes, advertising slogans, Presidential speeches; Teter, Lee, *Reflections* (painting); Koren, Edward, *Untitled* (cartoon)

Assessments:

Quiz: Vocabulary from readings

Quiz: Sentence variety (varying order for specific effects)

Quizzes: On most readings (to check for understanding of meaning and strategies)

Test: Timed writing (one argument essay); multiple choice (grammar as rhetoric)

Compositions:

- Personal narrative
 Prompt: Recall an event from your childhood that led to a shocking epiphany. Think about the time frame: your age, the circumstances of the event, and your personal feelings at that particular moment. Replay the event in your mind. Then, write an essay in which you use specific sensory details to re-create this moment in time that changed your life.
- Rhetorical analysis essay
 Prompt: In his autobiography, *Up From Slavery*, Booker T. Washington writes that as he began his speech (“The Atlanta Exposition Address”), “[T]he thing that was uppermost in my mind was the desire to say something that would cement the friendship of races and bring about hearty cooperation between them.” Write an essay in which you analyze the rhetorical strategies he uses to achieve this goal, and discuss how effective you believe he is.
- Argumentative/persuasive essay
 Prompt: In “I Know Why the Caged Bird Cannot Read,” Francine Prose is skeptical of the practice of using literary works to teach values. Write an essay in which you support or challenge her position. Be specific in your references to novels, plays, or poems.
- Synthesis essay

Prompt: Philosophically, idealism has always conflicted with realism because of the narrow-dimensional approach of idealism; however, idealism is necessary to society in order to balance cultural ideology.

Select five readings and two graphics from this unit that support the necessity of idealism in any culture.

Then, in a well-structured essay, argue the idea that idealism is still of paramount value in the 21st century. You must use at least three of your selected sources to support your argument. Remember to attribute both direct and indirect citations. Do not just paraphrase or summarize.

Unit 3: Individualism vs Collectivism (Society's Double Standards)

Reading:

- Thoreau, Henry David, "Where I Lived, and What I Lived For," from *Walden*
- Pinker, Steven, "The Blank Slate"
- Emerson, Ralph Waldo, from "Nature"
- Berry, Wendell, "An Entrance to the Woods"
- Oates, Joyce Carol, "Against Nature"
- Thoreau, Henry David, "On the Duty of Civil Disobedience"
- Rand, Ayn, from *The Fountainhead* (independent reading)
- Emerson, Ralph Waldo, from *Education*
- Baldwin, James, "A Talk to Teachers"
- Quindlen, Anna, "Commencement Speech at Mount Holyoke College"
- Russell, Bertrand, "The Happy Life"
- Singer, Peter, "The Singer Solution to World Poverty"
- Willard, Frances, from *How I Learned to Ride the Bicycle*
- Britt, Donna, "A Unique Take on Beauty"
- Angier, Natalie, "Drugs, Sports, Body Image and G.I. Joe"

Viewing: 1939 film, *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*; samples of the ambiguities of advertising campaigns; samples of the mixed messages in current TV commercials; Rockwell, Norman, *Spirit of Education* (painting); Hart, Frederick, *Three Servicemen* (sculpture); *Sports Illustrated*, "Little Sister, Big Hit" (cover)

Assessments:

Quiz: Vocabulary from readings

Quizzes: Parallel structure; modifying phrases/clauses

Quizzes: On most readings (to check for understanding/rhetorical strategies)

Test: Timed writing (rhetorical analysis essay); multiple choice (concise use of diction)

Compositions:

- Prose analysis essay
Prompt: Analyze the physical structure of Richard Selzer's essay, "The Surgeon as Priest." The essay is divided into five parts. How do they work together so that the whole is greater than the sum of its five parts? Pay particular attention to the short (two-paragraph) fourth section. What effect would eliminating it have? Write an essay in which you describe the overall effectiveness of the organization of this essay.
- Comparison/contrast essay
Prompt: Both Henry David Thoreau in his essay, "Where I Lived, and What I Lived For," and Wendell Berry in his essay, "An Entrance to the Woods," deal with theme of the relationship between the individual and nature. Each writer, in his own way, discusses the ever-changing relationship between society and nature. Analyze the similarities and the differences between these two essays. Then, develop your own essay that proves which writer is more realistic in his view on the eternal conflict between the man-made world and the natural world.
- Rhetorical analysis essay
Prompt: Review Thoreau's "On the Duty of Civil Disobedience" for rhetorical devices. Then, write a well-developed essay in which you analyze the effectiveness of Thoreau's rhetorical strategies used to develop his position on government.
- Synthesis essay
Prompt: What is the individual's duty to his government? What is the government's duty to the individual? In an essay that synthesizes and uses for support at least four of the readings from this unit, discuss the obligations of individuals within a society. Remember to attribute both direct and indirect citations. Refer to the sources by authors' last names or titles. Avoid mere paraphrase or summary.

Unit 4: Tradition vs Progress (Fear of Change)

Reading:

- Theroux, Paul, "Being a Man," from *Sunrise with Seamonsters*
- McMurtry, John, "Kill 'Em! Crush 'Em! Eat 'Em Raw!"
- Maathai, Wangari Muta, "2004 Nobel Peace Prize Speech"
- Miller, Arthur, *The Crucible* (independent reading)
- Edwards, Jonathan, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God"
- Goodman, Ellen, "Putting in a Good Word for Guilt"
- Botstein, Leon, "Let Teenagers Try Adulthood"
- Gitlin, Todd, from *The Liberal Arts in an Age of Info-Glut*"
- Broder, David S., "A Model for High Schools"

- Norris, Floyd, “U.S. Students Fare Badly in International Survey of Math Skills (with table)”
- Howard, Jane, “All Happy Clans Are Alike: In Search of the Good Family”
- Etzioni, Amitai, “The New Community”
- Adams, John and Abigail, “Letters”

Viewing: video samples of humorous early inventions, early social taboos, interviews (cloning, gene splicing, artificial life-support issues), discussions of the new morality, plus

- Miller, Arthur, *The Crucible*, starring Daniel Day-Lewis and Wynona Rider
- Senator Joseph McCarthy attacks Edward R. Murrow on CBS, video clip, AmericanRhetoric.com
- *Good Night and Good Luck*, video clip, AmericanRhetoric.com

Assessments:

Quiz: vocabulary from readings

Quizzes: Cumulative, periodic, and inverted sentences

Quizzes: On most readings (to check for understanding/rhetorical strategies)

Test: Timed writing (synthesis essay); multiple choice (visual rhetoric)

Compositions:

- Argumentation letter to the editor
Prompt: Using Jonathan Edward’s sermon as a model, write a letter to the editor of our school newspaper, using fear tactics to deter your audience from doing something.
- Process analysis essay
Prompt: All families have quirky little traditions that must be followed “to the letter,” or else there will be conflict! Usually, these traditions have been followed for several generations and involve specific, step-by-step procedures in order to be acceptable. Think of one of these traditions in your family. In a well-constructed essay, describe this tradition and the process involved. Your tone should be considered as carefully as your attention to details.
- Comparison/contrast essay
Prompt: Both Jonathan Edwards and Ellen Goodman deal with the idea of guilt in their writings. In an essay, define *guilt*. Then, compare and contrast the rhetorical strategies each author uses to deliver his or her message about guilt.
- Synthesis essay
Prompt: In modern times, traditional values have become equated to narrowed-minded fear of change. Select five readings from this unit and one or more visuals

which support the idea that tradition simply analyzes the new techno-advances in order to determine the validity of change.

Then, in a well-developed essay, use at least four of these sources to prove that tradition is not an enemy of progress but an analytical force that validates itself by objectively seeking to determine the necessity of change or the ethical right to change. Remember to cite your sources both directly and indirectly. Do not simply summarize or paraphrase your sources.

Unit 5: Alienation vs Cultural Conformity (Personal Identity in an Impersonal World)

Reading:

- Alvord, Lori Arviso, "Walking the Path between Worlds," from *The Scalpel and the Silver Bear*
- Denby, David, "High-School Confidential: Notes on Teen Movies"
- Twain, Mark, "Corn-Pone Opinions"
- Deloria, Vine, Jr., "We Talk, You Listen," from *We Talk, You Listen: New Tribes, New Turf*
- Hawthorne, Nathaniel, *The Scarlet Letter* (independent reading)
- Chief Seattle, "Message to President Franklin Pierce"
- Csikszentmihalyi, Mihaly, "The Future of Happiness"
- Agosin, Marjorie, "Always Living in Spanish"
- Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, from *Decolonizing the Mind*
- Tan, Amy, "Mother Tongue"
- Rodriguez, Richard, "Aria: A Memoir of a Bilingual Childhood"

Viewing: video samples of social bias, cyber bullying, interviews with parents/friends of suicide victims

Assessments:

Quiz: Vocabulary/terminology (from readings)

Quizzes: Grammar (from warm-up exercises/discussions)

Quizzes: On selected readings (specific rhetorical strategies)

Test: Timed writings (one rhetorical analysis essay; one synthesis essay)

Compositions:

- Memoir
Prompt: Think about an event in your life during which you were part of a group of people (friends or strangers or a mix) and you were made to feel left out or isolated because of someone within the group. Recall how you felt and how you dealt with the

situation. Then, in a well-developed essay, re-create the experience and analyze the situation moment by moment as you suffered through it.

- Prose analysis essay
Prompt: Read Chapter 9, "The Leech," from *The Scarlet Letter*. Then, write an essay analyzing how Hawthorne uses setting, allusion, metaphor, irony, diction, and tone to reveal character.
- Letter to the editor
Prompt: Write a letter to the editor of our county's local newspaper expressing your views on the treatment of a minority group or outsider in your community. What suggestions or solutions do you have to offer?
- Synthesis essay
Prompt: Who are considered outsiders in our society? Why are they in this position? How does society treat them? Should society be more tolerant of them? Using at least five sources from this unit, including *The Scarlet Letter*, write an essay that discusses the position of the outsider in society. Remember to attribute both direct and indirect citations. Refer to the sources by authors' name or by titles. Avoid mere paraphrase or summary.

Research Paper (The Documented Essay)

Task and Prompt:

- Choose a current controversial topic that reflects one of the themes that we studied during this course.
- Research the topic through different types of sources (newspapers, magazines, news stories, interviews, online sources, visuals, etc.).
- Take careful notes, making sure that you cite your sources accurately, using MLA format.
- Develop an argument about this topic.
- Establish a claim.
- Then, integrate a variety of sources into a coherent, well-written essay.
- Use the sources to support your position; avoid mere paraphrase or summary.
- Your argument should be central.
- Remember to attribute both direct and indirect citations, using MLA format.
- Create a Works Cited page (MLA format).
- Plagiarism will result in a zero.

Semester Exams:

At the end of each semester, students will have 90 minutes to take an exam ; it is worth 20% of the semester average. (There are 18 weeks in a semester. Each 9-week grading period is worth 40%.)

Part 1: Multiple Choice

This section is interpretation of new material. Students read three passages and answer 45 questions. Reading selections and questions are similar to those on the AP Released Exam.

Part 2: Free Response

Students will have 45 minutes to write an in-class essay. The prompt asks for rhetorical analysis, comparison/contrast, or argumentation. This essay is graded on the AP rubric, or nine-point scale.