

## COURSE SYLLABUS

### **Advanced Placement Language and Composition through American Literature**

#### **Course Overview and Goals:**

The Advanced Placement Language and Composition through American Literature course explores a variety of American texts through which students learn close-reading and analysis skills. One purpose of the course, as stated by College Board's *AP Language and Composition Course Description*, is "to help students become skilled readers of prose written in a variety of rhetorical contexts and to become skilled writers who compose for a variety of purposes..." The other is for students examine both varied works by American authors, within historical contexts, in order to reach a deeper understanding the history of ideas in our country, as we critically examine our past and strive to define our future.

Through the completion of AP Language and Composition through American Literature and the achievement of a passing score on the AP exam in May, students have the opportunity to earn a college English credit while still in high school as well as develop skills related to the end-of-grades 11 and 12 standards outlined in the Common Core State Standards. Throughout this chronologically-organized, two-semester (2 credit) course, students will be instructed in the different forms and functions of rhetoric in order to analyze written as well as visual works and to write on various topics through argumentation, narration, exposition, and synthesis. The student's willingness to collaborate with other students and with the instructor throughout the writing process of drafting, revising, editing and proofreading is crucial to success in this course, as is use of past, graded work as a guide to improving composition skills.

We will read and respond to a variety of works from different eras and genres in American literature, including foundational political documents; religious and philosophical writing; historical, narrative and persuasive nonfiction; prose fiction; poetry; and drama. Because of the collegiate level of the course, some topics covered in the selected literature will be of a mature nature, requiring students to think and respond in a mature, independent manner. Units of study will include Early American Cultures; Philosophical Ideologies of the Eighteenth Century; Works of Edgar Allan Poe; Transcendental Optimism versus Pessimism; Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson; Realism and Naturalism; and The Modern Era. Each unit of study will be also incorporate a thematic thread of Contemporary Issues running throughout the curriculum. Emphasis will not be on discrete literary methods and devices, but rather on how pieces examined both reflected and helped shape American society. Primary emphasis will be given to analysis of themes, ideas, and rhetorical devices used to express meaning and viewpoint.

Focus will be given especially to the following skills included in the Common Core State Standards in Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking for grades 11-12:

- Close reading and use of textual evidence to support conclusions drawn from the text; writing informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey these conclusions clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
- Delineating and analyzing the structure, reasoning, use of evidence and rhetoric, purpose, and point-of-view of a variety of texts; writing arguments to support claims using valid reasoning sufficient relevant evidence.

- Coming to discussions prepared, having read or researched material under study; explicitly drawing on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion. Collaborating with peers through use of reasoning and organization, development, and style that are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- Gathering relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assessing the credibility and accuracy of each and integrating the information while avoiding plagiarism.
- Writing routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two).
- Preparing for and participating effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing one's views clearly and persuasively.
- Integrating, evaluating and synthesizing information presented in diverse media and formats.

**In addition, students will develop vocabulary through the use of a Vocabulary Notebook in which to complete the Perpetual Vocabulary Assignment. This notebook is to be used throughout most units of the course. The Perpetual Vocabulary Assignment is as follows:**

Every time a student encounters an unfamiliar word, it is to be looked up and its definition—appropriate to its context in the literature—is to be written after it. Any word from any piece of literature could show up on a test or quiz, during which students may use their notebooks.

**The following are the Units of Study for the course and their approximate time frames. All readings are from *Conversations in American Literature* unless otherwise noted.**

### **Aug – Sept**

Unit 1: Rhetoric, Close Reading, Argument, and Synthesis; Introduction to the Literature of the Americas

Weeks 1-4:

Ch. 1 – pp. 1-6; 8-14 on Rhetorical Appeals and Ethos; 11 on Logos and Conceding and Refuting; 13-17; 21-23; 25-28 (do Activity at bottom of p. 26)

Ch. 2 – pp. 41-42 on Analyzing Style; 44-45 on Establishing the Rhetorical Situation; 46-47 on Determining Tone (do Activity on p. 57); 48-49 on Asking Questions; 52 and 54-55 on Annotating; 58-67 on From Close Reading to Analysis

Ch. 3 – pp. 85-90 (do Activity on p. 90); 90 – 92 on Types of Claims, Claims of Fact, Claims of Value, Claims of Policy; 123-124 on Induction and Deduction; 126-129; 129-131 on From Reading to Writing; Activity on Analyzing Claims (worksheet/handout, not the one in the textbook)

Outline of American Literary and Philosophical Movements and Periods

*Notes on the State of Virginia* by Thomas Jefferson, Query XIV on universal education (Reprint Handout) and Study Guide questions

Ch. 4 – pp. 156-185 on **Education as the Civil Rights Issue of our Time Conversation**  
Goals: Keep an open mind while reading sources; delve deeply into subtle ideas; explore texts through the lens of multiple perspectives; develop questions while reading

Grammar as Rhetoric and Style: Parallel Structures (p. 1557)

Framing and Integrating Quotations, pp. 178-179

Synthesis Assignment

## October

Unit 2: Enlightenment to 1800 — The Tug-of-War between The Great Awakening and the Age of Reason

Weeks 5-6:

Grammar as Rhetoric and Style: Cumulative, Periodic, and Inverted Sentences  
Jonathan Edwards, excerpts from “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God”  
(Reprint Handout)

Ch. 6 – pp. 345-349, Intro to “A New Republic”

Ch. 6 – pp. 249-350, Intro to Benjamin Franklin

Ch. 6 – Benjamin Franklin: “The Speech of Miss Polly Baker” (p. 350) and Exploring the Text (p. 352); excerpts from *The Autobiography* starting from “I had been religiously educated as a Presbyterian...” (p. 354, bottom) and Study Guide (NOT questions in textbook)

Ch. 6 – Thomas Paine: from *The Age of Reason* (p. 383) and Exploring the Text questions

Thomas Jefferson: *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Query XVII on religious freedom  
(reprint handout)

Ch. 3 – pp. 98-100 on thesis (do Activity on p. 100)

Ch. 6 – The Letters of Abigail and John Adams (p. 385) and Study Guide questions (NOT questions in the text)

Weeks 7-8:

Writing Workshops (page numbers indicate the *start* of the section):  
Grammar as Rhetoric and Style: Appositives (p. 535)  
Grammar as Rhetoric and Style: Direct, Precise, and Active Verbs (p. 1271)  
Grammar as Rhetoric and Style Modifiers (p. 1058)

MLA Documentation Style (p. 1567)

Ch. 3 – pp. 101-114 on Presenting Evidence

Ch. 4 – pp. 116-120 on Shaping Argument & Classical Oration

Ch. 4 – pp. 147-152 on Using Sources

## Persuasive Research Essay

### **October – November**

#### Unit 3: Literature of the Early United States

Weeks 9-10:

Ch. 7 – pp. 547-551, Introduction to “America in Conflict”

Ch. 7 – pp. 72-74, Close Reading Poetry

Grammar as Rhetoric and Style: Subordination in the Complex Sentence (p. 336)

Ch. 7 – Intro to Edgar Allan Poe (p. 576)

Ch. 7 – “The Raven” (Reprint Handout) and “The Fall of the House of Usher” (p. 576)

Poe in Film and Illustration

Ch. 2 – pp. 69-71, Close Reading and Literary Technique Analysis

### **November**

#### Unit 4: Transcendental Optimism

Weeks 11-13:

excerpt from “Self-Reliance” (text) and from “The American Scholar” (Reprint handout)

Chapter 7 –

Talkback: “The Foul Reign of Emerson’s ‘Self-Reliance’” by Benjamin Anastas (p. 602)

sections of Thoreau’s “Civil Disobedience” (book to be given to annotate) and historical illustrations on video

Talkback: “Declaration of Sentiments” by Elizabeth Cady Stanton (p. 393)

Conversation: The Legacy of Henry David Thoreau (p. 758)

“The Changing Roles of Women” and Susan B. Anthony’s Sentencing Statement (pp. 970-973)

Week 14:

Rhetorical Analysis Assignment

### **December-January**

Mid-term Exam (tentative)

## Unit 5: Transcendental Pessimism

Weeks 15-16: excerpts from and film of *The Scarlet Letter*  
“Bartleby” by Melville (close-reading fiction)

## January - February

### Unit 6: Mid-Late 19<sup>th</sup> Century Poets and Poetry

Week 17: Walt Whitman’s Life and Work (*WW: Complete poems*)  
Chapter 7 – Talkback: “A Supermarket in California” by Allen Ginsberg

Week 18: Emily Dickinson’s Life and Work (Text, Reprints, Handouts)  
Chapter 3 – pp. 134-136  
Chapter 7 – pp. 834-839

Revision of Prior Essay/Assignment

## February - March

### Unit 7: Reconstruction Era – Progressive Era; Realism and Naturalism (1865-1913)

Weeks 19-21:  
Chapter 8 – pp. 823-828, Introduction to “Reconstructing America”  
Chapter 2 – pp. 74-76 on Visual Texts  
Chapter 3 – pp. 136-138 on Visual Texts as Arguments

#### Chapter 8 –

Frank Leslie’s *Illustrated Newspaper*, “Does Not Such a Meeting Make Amends?”  
(cartoon, 1869; p. 841)

Red Cloud, “Speech on Indian Rights” (1870; p. 843)

Zitkala-Sa: from *The School Days of an Indian Girl* (c. 1900, p. 935)

Thomas Nast, “Worse than Slavery” (cartoon, 1874; p. 845)

Clips from *The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow* and/or *Reconstruction: The Second Civil War*

Ida B. Wells-Barnett, from “Southern Horrors: Lynch Law in All its Phases” (1892; p. 883)

Works of Booker T. Washington and W.E.B DuBois:

from “The Atlanta Exposition Address” pp. 891-894

from “The Talented Tenth” pp. 944-949

Jacob Riis: “The Mixed Crowd” (1890; p. 869) and photos from *How the other Half Lives*

Stephen Crane: “An Ominous Baby” (Reprint)

Weeks 22-23:

Chapter 8 – Kate Chopin, “The Story of an Hour” (p. 888)  
“Richard Cory” and “Miniver Cheevy” by Robinson (pp. 919-921)

Willa Cather, “Paul’s Case” (paperback)

Short Synthesis Paper on literary representations of the Post-Civil War Era / Gilded Age

## **March**

Unit 8: Post WWI America

Weeks 24-26:

Chapter 9 – pp. 1069-1074, Introduction to “America in the Modern World”

Era in Song mini-unit

*The Great Gatsby*

Chapter 3 – pp. 69-71 on Argument in Fiction

## **April- May/June**

Unit 9: Modern Drama

Chapter 10 – pp. 1279-1285, Introduction to “Redefining America”

*Inherit the Wind*

*Death of a Salesman*

*The Crucible*

Modern Drama Essay

Unit 10: Selected 20<sup>th</sup> C. poems (Tentative)

Final Projects

## Core Course Texts

Aufses, Robin Dissin et al. *Conversations in American Literature*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's. 2015

Hacker, Diana and Nancy Sommers. *A Writer's Reference with Resources for Multilingual Writers and ESL*. 7<sup>th</sup> ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's. 2011.

Strunk, William Jr. and E.B. White. *The Elements of Style*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Boston: Longman. 2000.

Various supplemental reprints

Full-length and excerpted texts from the Mascenic High School English Department collection