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| **SYLLABUS/**  **Course Handbook** | **Mascenic Regional High School** |
| **Course: Advanced Placement Language and Composition through American Literature** |
| **2016-17** |
| **Instructor: Ms. Culliton** |
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**Core Values Statement**

Mascenic Regional High School’s mission is to create a respectful, secure and engaging learning environment. Our goal is to motivate all students to become knowledgeable, independent, lifelong learners who will be ethical, effective 21st century citizens.

**Course Description**

The Advanced Placement Language and Composition through American Literature course explores a variety of American texts through which students develop 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 of 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 (cost is about $90, and students qualifying for free/reduced-price lunch get a discount) 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 and tested on the SAT and ACT.

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. 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.

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.

**Prerequisites:** Completion of required Grade 10 World and Modern Literature course (preferably at the Honors level)

**Required Resources**

Heath *Anthology of American Literature, Concise Edition* and various other literature books; *The Elements of Style*, and *A Writer’s Reference;* AP Test preparation materials(all provided by MRHS at various times throughout the course)

Supplemental handouts and Study Guides

Three-ring binder

Access to www.culliton.org and a printer outside of school (please see instructor if this is a problem)

USB Flash drive

MRHS Network account, G-mail and Google Docs (provided by MRHS); a way to access these outside of school

**Course Competencies**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will have demonstrated the ability to perform the following:

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.

**Essential Questions**

How can we achieve clarity in writing in order to best communicate our thoughts and findings?

What is meant by “close reading” and “textual evidence” and why is the use of these techniques important?

What has the term “American Dream” meant in various time periods and for various sub-cultures?

How have writers represented as well as influenced what it means to be American?

What roles have such factors as individual nature, gender, race, class, geography and education played in the creation of America’s literature?

In what ways do rhetorical method, genre, style, and voice create meaning and reveal universal themes?

How may reading America’s literature help us understand ourselves in relation to today’s America?

How does possessing an overarching understanding of how the country’s literature and an understanding of its chronology and themes illustrate how we as a people came to be who we are today?

**21st Century Learning Skills**

In this course, students will develop the following skills:

**Academic (Remove any skills that don’t apply to your course, but please keep #6.)**

1. Apply effective decision-making, problem solving, and critical thinking skills both independently and collaboratively.
2. Connect with others through written and oral communication.
3. Acquire a broad base of knowledge related to the readings.
4. Demonstrate responsibility for their academic endeavors through adherence to school policies and requirements by being committed, engaged, participating students in the classroom community.

**Civic (Please keep #2. Choose to include #1 if it applies to your course.)**

1. Develop an ability to make intelligent and informed decisions as involved citizens within our democratic system.
2. Honor commitments to groups, organizations, teams, and classes.

**Social (Please keep both of these skills in your syllabus.)**

1. Demonstrate respect for the individual.
2. Act with integrity.

**Course Content**

Course units are as follows:

Early American Cultures

The Great Awakening versus the Enlightenment/Age of Reason

Persuasive Writing, Internal Citations of Research Sources

The Romantic Era

Transcendental Optimism

Transcendental Pessimism

Poetry of Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson

Realism & Naturalism

The Modern Era

All units will be accompanied by studies in rhetorical analysis: how writers/artists, etc., achieved meaning.

**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.

**Instructional Methods**

Close-reading Study Guides

Supplemental handouts

Graphic Organizers

Independent and group readings

Modeling/demonstrations

Film/audio depictions

Presentations/slide show

Collaborative Process Writing

**Assessment Methods**

Grades will be assigned according to the following scale:

**A+ = 100 – 97**

**A = 96-93**

**A- = 92 – 90**

**B+ = 89 – 87B = 86 – 83**

**B- = 82 – 80**

**C+ = 79 – 77**

**C = 76 – 73C- = 72– 70**

**D+ = 69 – 67**

**D = 66 – 63D- = 62—60**

**F = 59 or Below**

**Students will be assessed on the course competencies, content, and skills via the following:**

**The MRHS School-Wide Rubrics will be used as appropriate, especially in the areas of Written, Oral and Visual Communications.**

There will be reading/note-taking and vocabulary homework almost daily. During class, we will have discussions of readings, individual and cooperative tasks. Voluntary participation by all students in oral discussions is crucial. There will be quizzes (some announced and some not) on readings due for the day, reading homework assessed by oral questioning, a major persuasive research essay, and tests. Proper sentence, paragraph and essay structure; and correct usage and mechanics will also be included.

All assignments (including tests, quizzes, etc.) are given various “weights”—that is, grades for some will count one-quarter, one-half, one or two times (unannounced quizzes, in-class exercises), and still others will count three, four, or five times (announced quizzes, major tests, papers, projects, etc.). If you see “3X” beside something on your Assignment Schedule, that means the grade for the assignment counts three times, for example.

Overall class participation in discussions and activities will be assessed periodically during the semester and will constitute approximately 20% of each quarter grade. The final examination for this class will, as per School Board policy count as 20 percent of the course grade.

The formula, then, for the course grade is as follows:

2 (1st quarter grade) + 2 (2nd quarter grade) + Final Exam Grade

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**Remember to check your grades and regularly using Power School.**

**The portal is here: https://mascenic.powerschool.com/public/home.html**

**Instructor’s Office Hours: Block 3 (periods 5-6) and after school by appointment**

**Course Policies**

**Requirements**

If something is affecting your performance in my class, or you do not understand something you have to do at home, TALK TO ME. I have no way of knowing what is going on with you unless you tell me. You MUST take responsibility in this area! **See page 1 for contact information.**

**Set aside enough time to do homework assignments carefully. LOOK AHEAD ON YOUR ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE and plan your time.** Work for this class is made clear well in advance. Take all relevant books and handouts home every night, plan your time to allow for glitches, emergencies, etc., and have everything you need with you for each class at the beginning of the period.

**Use of technology is expected**. (See Common Core State Standards Initiative, http://www.corestandards.org/the-standards, pp. 7, 46, 63) Students will at times need to use web site I have set up to access study guides and other materials, print them outside of class, and bring them to class as required, and especially to access them during any absences.Students will need a network password for use here at school, means to word-process or type papers at home (within Google Docs), and access to the World Wide Web on a regular basis outside of class (our library, your town library, home, etc.).

Be prepared and willing to **participate spontaneously in class discussions**; it is only through these that we can go beyond superficial analysis of literature! Be thoughtful enough to make the leap and apply lessons, themes, ideals, values, etc., from literature readings to your own life, present and future.

**Do not do anything that makes it difficult for yourself or others in the class to learn or for me to teach.** (Always remember to LISTEN when someone else is speaking, SPEAK UP when it’s your turn, and do NOT start side conversations or create distractions.) Be respectful; a classroom should be a safe space for all regardless of personal characteristics; rude comments are not allowed!

Keep up-to-date notes both from your own reading and from class discussions / lectures. You will need to have a LOOSE-LEAF (not spiral-bound), **THREE-RING BINDER**. I hand out many information sheets, reprints, and Study Guides that need to be saved in an orderly fashion by adding them to your notebook. Bring it to class with you every day along with a writing utensil and the book(s) we are using. You will also need a **USB flash drive** (1 gigabyte is more than sufficient) and are **encouraged to bring your own laptop or tablet** to class if possible.

**Be in class every day.** **If you are absent**, contact your study partner (see below) or me before you return to school; **you will be expected to know, by the time you come back, what went on** regardless of how much class you miss. You can also call me with any questions.

**You must have a study partner** who will **bring things home** to you when you are absent and **discuss what went on in class**, and for whom you will do the same. This person **should not be involved in the same activities, teams, etc., as you are if these cause the activity members to miss class.**

**Attendance/Assignments/Late Work**

**Be where you should be in the curriculum at all times.** I expect you to do the work regardless of absences, during which **you are also responsible for getting the notes and/or any alterations in the schedule from your study partner and for doing all classwork/homework assignments before you come back to class.**

I keep a **Make-up Work folder**; any **tests or quizzes** you miss will be in there, with your last name on them. Check this folder as soon as you come into the room after you miss ANY part of any class. You will usually have to compete missed tests or quizzes during class time (unless you have a free period during the day, in which case you may make arrangements with me to use that). In the case of excused /authorized/legitimate absences, this work will be granted full credit. Work missed for unauthorized absences will be considered late or will not be able to be made up, depending on the circumstances. Assignments already in your possession or that your study partner should have brought home to you during absences should be completed before you return to class. **It is your responsibility to pass in work and arrange for make-up sessions if you want to do the work any other time than in class the day you return. After five calendar days, grades are likely to turn into zeroes for work not done.**

You may never hand in late an assignment whose answers we go over in class while you are present, of course. In some cases, you may be able to have an alternative assignment.

**Tests and quizzes must be taken and previously-assigned work turned in with the rest of the class regardless of previous absences** as well. **Absences on your part do not change your due dates!** You will need to contact me to ask for an exception if you were too ill to prepare for a test or quiz or complete an assignment. Do not wait until you are sitting in class to try to discuss this sort of thing; that’s much too late. You have my phone number—use it! **(Parent calls to the office do not come through to me; you need to contact me directly.)**

**If you are going to be dismissed before or during class, tell me earlier in the day or before class starts** so I can give you anything that I may be passing out. **If are going to be absent from class for a reason other than illness**, you MUST follow the procedure outlined in the Student Handbook for vacations during school time. This will entail that you tell me several days beforehand; I will see to it that you have all you need to keep up. You MUST complete the work I assigned you while you are out, passing it in upon your return. This will avoid your having to come in after school or miss class to make-up work during the period. In the case of dismissals for sports or other school-sponsored activities, the same policy applies.

S**pecial Rules for MAJOR Take-Home Assignments, Projects, etc.:**

I am very suspicious of people who do not show up for class the day a major projects, paper or take-home test is due. It has been my experience that most of these people are using the time to do the work they should have been doing since the work was assigned days ago. Therefore, the following rule applies to ALL ASSIGNMENTS—except strictly in-class tests— COUNTING 3 OR MORE TIMES: **If you are absent from my class but were here another part of the day** (for example, you were in school earlier in the day but were dismissed or left on a field trip or for a sports event, or you came in late to school and missed the entire class) and you have a MAJOR (counting 3 times or more) piece of work due for me that day, please **FIND ME and give me the paper/project before you leave.** (Never just come into my room and leave work on my desk.) OR, you could give it to a *trusted* classmate or to Mrs. Heywood in the office. Otherwise, it will be considered late and not be given full credit.

**Cancellations**

In case of snow days or other cancellations of school or class, **do the all reading assigned for that day anyway**, to the best of your ability.