

# **AP English Literature and Composition Course Syllabus**

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The Advanced Placement English Literature and Composition course is designed to introduce students to college-level reading and writing and to provide them with the skills, strategies, and practice to understand, appreciate, and enjoy worthy literature while teaching them how to effectively express their thoughts and responses in writing. Since for some students, perhaps many, this course is the only academic contact they will have with English literature, this course will concentrate on that body of literature. Although the course will cover English literature from Anglo-Saxon times to Modern, emphasis will be placed on literature from the late sixteenth century on.

## **LITERATURE**

The literature covered in this class consists of a survey of English literature with a dual emphasis on cultural literacy and appreciation. Students will have some contact with every major English writer and most important works. At the same time, daily assignments and classroom discussions will require student analysis of many selected pieces from Anglo-Saxon through modern times.

Each period of English literature will be introduced with a lecture covering the historical and cultural events influencing the literature of that time, the development of English as a language, and, later, the development of the English novel. There will be lecture and discussion as well as a significant amount of student interpretation and contribution. Students are required to come to class prepared to intelligently interact. Discussions tend toward a Socratic model.

## **COMPOSITION**

### **The Essay**

The composition emphasis of this course is preparation for college writing as well as for the AP exam; therefore, this class focuses on the essay. Initially, writing process is emphasized: not by reiterating the process, but by using a model (The Six Steps) which begins and ends with actual writing. Later, in-class essay skills are developed toward the goal of insightful, coherent, well-reasoned, and logically organized forty-minute essays. While this type of essay-writing skill prepares the student for the AP exam, it equally prepares him or her for the college midterm and final exam.

## **The Research Paper**

There will also be a research report assigned toward the end of the term. The core of this paper will be the student's analysis of a novel, play, a collection of poems or short stories by a single author, or similar unified text. The student will then develop his or her own critical approach to the work followed by any research the text requires for better comprehension and interpretation. Finally, the student will consult critical sources to test, moderate, or support the developing thesis. The student will, over the course of the assignment, submit a worksheet or notebook showing analytical notes, an annotated bibliography, a review draft for peer response, and a final draft. The annotated bibliography and drafts must comply with current MLA style.

## **NOTEBOOK AND LITERARY ANALYSIS ASSIGNMENTS**

The student will keep a notebook. The notebook will be loose-leaf, clear front insert, with dividers. Besides keeping lecture notes, in this notebook the student will:

- 1) Keep a homework/reading assignment log
- 2) Keep a poetry journal, then a prose journal

Both assignment log and literary analysis journal must be kept up-to-date and may be checked at any time. Any assignment that is not current when checked will not receive credit on the final (substantial) six weeks notebook grade.

### **The Assignment Log**

At the beginning of each literature unit, students will be given a list of reading assignments, response prompts, and due dates. These assignments must be read, and the responses recorded in the notebook *before* coming to class the day that assignment is due. Class discussion will be predominantly of a shared inquiry nature; students ask and answer the necessary questions to interpret a piece of literature. The homework and the discussion are crucial elements of this class. The instructor will not be providing "right answers" for those who wait, but will only guide discussions toward (he hopes) fertile areas. Student analytical skills are only developed by student practice. These daily assignments are the chief source of that practice.

### **The Poetry Journal**

Because poetry often poses a greater challenge to students than does prose or drama, poetry analysis is practiced on a daily and weekly basis. The first nine weeks the student is given poems that reflect different time periods and styles. The poems are not exclusively British. Because good poetry must be read more than once to be best appreciated, each poem is read several times over the nine-week period. A response is recorded each time the poem is read, with all poems being read each week. The poems are discussed weekly in class.

### **The Prose Journal**

During the second nine weeks, short prose pieces will be read and analyzed. There will be both nonfiction essays and fiction short stories. These will be read and discussed on a weekly basis much as the poetry assignment.

## **OUTSIDE READING ASSIGNMENTS**

During the course, a book is assigned every three to four weeks. These tend to be paired to allow comparative discussion and an in-class essay. Toward the end of the semester outside reading will involve an individual analysis/research project wherein the student will select a work from a list of approved titles (see The Research Paper above).

## **VOCABULARY**

Vocabulary will focus on literary terms beginning with those frequently found on AP exams. These units will be followed by other groups of useful terms (metrical, grammatical, etc.). Toward the end of the semester, terms related to logical fallacies will be introduced. Ten or so related terms will be reviewed each Tuesday and a test will be given whenever that group of terms has been covered.

## **REQUIRED TEXTS**

*English Literature: Classics for Christians*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition. Pensacola, FL: A Beka Book, 2013.\*

*Everyman and Other Miracle & Morality Plays*. New York: Dover, 1995.\*

Geoffrey Chaucer, The General Prologue from *The Canterbury Tales*\*

William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*\*

Tom Stoppard, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*\*\*

George Orwell, *1984*\*\*

Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World*\*\*

\* These books are provided by the school.

\*\*These books are *not* provided by the school, although a very few copies might be found in the media center. The Orwell and Huxley are readily available used, the Stoppard is a little over \$10.00 new from Amazon and available used, and *all* are available free online in pdf form.