AP Language and Composition

Course Introduction: We have Three Courses in One: A Spiral Structure

**Advanced Composition** *(An Advanced course in writing)*  
**Advanced Placement: Language and Composition**  
**American Literature** *(AP/Honors reading pace)*

**Requirements:** three-ring notebook including section for journal and open response, ongoing folder, "AP frame of mind," (This is a college course.) Also, two mandatory conferences per semester, and willingness to constructively critique others’ work in established groups.

Mandatory Conferences: You may come and discuss at any point in the writing process: pre-write, after the rough, after the final draft. My after-school availability is posted. In-class conferences do not usually occur unless class numbers are small.

Rule on conferences and rewrites: You may attend more than two. After the first, you may rewrite or re-submit ANY paper for a new grade. (I am encouraging conferencing as much as I can.)

Group Work: Five permanent groups will be formed. These groups are responsible for three main tasks.

1- Guided peer editing, at various stages of the writing process.  
2- Reports on Analysis, Questions, and Annotations of shorter, non-fiction passages from texts. A principle of Advanced Placement courses is that you do the work, not the teacher.  
3- Also, one group per unit is assigned to compile a working glossary and vocabulary packet generated by the in-context meanings (or dictionary work) of unfamiliar and/or somewhat challenging words found in the readings or the short answer AP questions.

Grading:

1- A letter grade for every major paper  
2- A letter grade for every exam on a work in American Literature. Exams are largely essay in nature but not completely  
3- A letter grade each quarter for participation and preparedness. This represents all compiled homework, quizzes, questions, sentence exercises, class presentations, and discussion.

Grades are often given in the form of the AP format of 1-9, to familiarize each of us with AP system, rubric(s) and expectations. Letter grades are also given: AP scores convert easily.

Texts:

*Warriner’s Composition, Models and Exercises: Fifth Course* John Warriner, Harcourt Brace 1986

Our goals:

*For Advanced Composition and AP Language and Composition*
- We will learn how to discuss how all writers accomplish the various and multiple tasks of writing.
- We will write essays and do homework about the act(s) of writing.
- We will read a great deal of non-fiction, mostly American but not all
- We will write essays that imitate each mode and form of writing.

*For American Literature:*
- We will read some literature: all American.
- We will discuss many American issues: political, social, moral, personal.
From **Advanced Composition:**
The four modes of rhetoric: description, narration, exposition, and argumentation
Mechanics and style: cleaning up your errors, questions, and style problems

From **AP Language and Composition:**

**AP Language and Composition: Reading and Writing:** One examines the different forms, purposes, and methods of various types of writing: exposition and process essays, arguments, non-fiction narration, description, journalism, memoirs, and mixed versions of the above and then writes essays about non-fiction works, your analysis of those works, and your responses to the topics they raise. For the last, we use specific prompts to stimulate your own thinking and make your writing more developed, accurate, refined and mature.

See the more extensive **Goals of the AP Element of the Course** in the preview below.

From **American Literature:** This course contains great works you should not miss in a high school career. While the first purpose of the course is to examine writing, the ideas of “the American experience” and of “American values” will become a second theme and direction of the course. I believe this will be of great benefit to us, giving us an alternate way to expand, connect and develop ideas and experience as they emerge in the course.

This Boy’s Life  Wolff (summer reading)
The Awakening  Chopin
Stories: In Our Time  Hemingway
The Great Gatsby  Fitzgerald
Death of a Salesman  Miller
Huckleberry Finn  Twain

Also, we will read much non-fiction that is lasting American literature: Essays, memoirs, and speeches by Franklin, Edwards, Emerson, Thoreau and many contemporary American non-fiction writers.

NOTE: Exams on the literature will feature in-class essays. You should arrive to the exam with an outline, write a rough draft in class and then complete the essay within 48 hours. You will be your own editor for these essays. These may be rewritten yet again, but only after conferences.

However, “Major Papers”1-10 below will go through several drafts, using many methods of improving them: peer and group consultation, process writing, conferencing, and teacher feedback.

Note: This Preview below expands our mutual expectations regarding the **Advanced Placement Language and Composition** portion of the course:

Preview: How will we spend class-time and homework between papers? We will look at over 30 pieces of contemporary non-fiction, several works of “literary” non-fiction, four novels, several stories and a play. Each day, we will be moving toward the stated goals of the AP Language and Composition Course Guide, which are repeated here for your greater understanding. Our methods of achieving those goals appear in italics following the stated goal. Again, the goals, bulleted, are from the official AP Course Description for **Advanced Placement: English Language and Composition**.

• analyze and interpret samples of good writing, identifying and explaining an author’s use of rhetorical strategies and techniques:

We will be using models, journals, questions, analysis, class and group discussion to define, identify and apply the elements of “rhetorical strategies.” Note that acquiring and then being able to discuss and use the knowledge of rhetoric is one of our primary tasks of the course.

• apply effective strategies and techniques in their own writing.

With all 10 papers, we will have one or more skill focus reflected in pre-writing instruction and rubrics. The course aims to improve your writing in every way.

• create and sustain arguments based on readings, research, and/or personal experience;
We will write three argument papers, one personal, and shorter pieces of argumentation. We begin the course with argument, as it is the mode most suitable to identifying the nature and specifics of the rhetorical process.

- write for a variety of purposes: see assignments list

- produce expository, analytical, and argumentative compositions that introduce a complex central idea and develop it with appropriate evidence drawn from primary and/or secondary sources, cogent explanations and clear transitions

With class and teacher feedback, your writing will improve in depth and complexity. You will look for clear cues in the question or prompt to learn exactly what task you are being asked to perform. This is an extension of the nature of the “Four Modes of Rhetoric” approach.

We learn both the “Macro” element of looking at one’s own work as a whole (purpose, organization, thesis, audience) and the “Micro” level of controlling paragraphs, offering evidence, providing transitions, crafting sentences, and connecting paragraphs for lucidity.

We emphasize that writing and planning in paragraphs in the central skill of the course. Examining and creating richer and more unified paragraphs is the key to the improvement of writing.

- demonstrate understanding and mastery of standard written English as well as stylistic maturity in their own writings:

  Teacher feedback and *The Elements of Style* are used to correct any mechanical errors as well as to begin conversations on style. Essays are kept in a folder so the teacher can have “a conversation” with and about a student’s body of work. Sentence exercises are practiced with some regularity.

  Vocabulary: Students will compile weekly vocabulary lists from problematic or what we call “SAT” words: the lists should number between 30 and 75. One group will have this responsibility per unit, but will run off a Vocabulary Packet for the entire class on that unit.

  Packets should contain a clear and user-friendly definition of the word, then offer three words from a thesaurus that are related but not identical in meaning.

  Students are to expect a vocabulary quiz, unannounced, a few days after the packets are produced.

- demonstrate understanding of the conventions of citing primary and secondary sources;

  On a final research paper, we use Purdue’s *The Owl and The Big Six* (an approach to research generally, then applying the MLA method) provided by the school library,

- move effectively through the stages of the writing process, with careful attention to inquiry and research, drafting, revising, editing, and review

  Lessons, brainstorming devices, approaches to “getting it going,” peer-editing, conferencing, self-assessment, and teacher feedback are all designed to deepen your experience and expertise as a writer. You will see a paper as a finished product that emerges from an ongoing process to improve it.

- write thoughtfully about their own process of composition

  Journal and peer response ask you to comment on your own development

- revise a work to make it suitable for a different audience:

  We practice discourse activities that alter with an audience’s needs or knowledge base. The major paper in middle of the course addresses the issue of audience directly.

- analyze image as text
Photographs accompany each unit and are seen as “texts” to be brought to bear on the subject. Films and videos present numerous points of view in a confined amount of time. AP students are expected to listen to literary critics or other non-fiction oral or visual sources with accuracy and receptiveness.

- evaluate and incorporate reference documents into researched work

Your last paper involves research and incorporation of that research into a final work of your own.

UNITs of the course:

Unit A: 2 weeks

Introduction to Rhetoric through Introduction to Argument; Introduction to Annotating Texts; Introduction to Analysis using Terminology of the Rhetorical Tool Kit

Opening Topics:

“Everything’s an Argument” What does that mean? Is it true? The Four Modes of Rhetoric: The Norton Sampler introduction

The Rhetoric Triangle and “SOAPSTONE” Brassil packet and notes

TRACE arguments “ ”

Aristotle, Cicero and the Classic Argument

Materials:

“Closing the Plant” Two speeches from the film “Other People’s Money”

Othello, Obama and the Lies that Kill: play review and column Joe Earls

Inaugural Address John F. Kennedy

Two Letters from AP “Special Focus on Writing Persuasively”

Analysis, annotation, and discourse activities:

- re-examine and establish “purpose” as the overriding issue in all pieces of rhetoric
- identify and discuss the basic three-step classic argument: introduction, refutation, proposition (with reasons building to the conclusion). Compare the two speeches, yet see their common “shape.”
- discuss and identify the psychological and emotional elements of argument
- watch Gregory Peck and Danny Devito deliver the speeches and comment on the effect of the added visual element of body language and voice
- Annotate completely the Othello/Obama review. Discuss the nature, purpose, and importance of annotation.
- identify the rhetorical strategies of Kennedy’s address: ethos, pathos, logos, and then his language devices: antithesis, parallel structure, metaphor, rhetorical questions, alliteration.
- Rewrite Kennedy’s speech with all language devices omitted, in order to notice and examine then. (“Pay any price, bear any burden” becomes “Pay anything, take on all responsibility.”)
- Diction and Tone: Students do objective questions and then discuss strategies from AP exam material: Seaver's and Herbert’s letters that dispute “It’s the Real Thing” slogan.

Sentences, Grammar, and Style:

- The Elements of Style Strunk and White: Rules 1-6
- Warriner’s practice exercises: Loose and Periodic Sentences, Parallel Structure
- Group 1: Vocabulary List from all texts of problematic vocabulary, presented as a packet

Major Paper 1: Write an Argument concerning the hypothetical choice between completely funding or eliminating either music or athletics in our high school.

The audience is an undecided school committee. Students need to use rhetorical strategies at the “macro” level (ethos, pathos, logos, the classic argument structure) and at the “micro” level, with language strategies and emphasis on tone and persuasion.
Unit B: The Nature of Voice and the Writer’s Duty: 2 weeks

This Boy’s Life Tobias Wolff (Assigned as Summer Reading)
On Keeping a Notebook Joan Didion
From “An American Childhood” Annie Dillard
Nobel Prize Address William Faulkner
“The Stranger in the Photo is Me” Donald M. Murray

Analysis, annotation, and discourse activities:
- Journal: Wolff read as “fiction” then when you realized it is not – what occurred? How is it not a diary? Not a history? The “crafted” aspects on non-fiction introduced and explored.
- Examine each sentence of pages 1-4 in This Boy’s Life and report on what the sentence “does.”
- Fill out SOAPSTONE worksheet on Faulkner’s speech. What is revealed? More than a “Thank you!”
- Says/Does Analysis: Identify each audience implied in Faulkner’s Address: What are Faulkner’s agenda(s) for each audience? How do the sentences achieve them?
- Bring in and show one personal photo. One partner writes impressions before any dialogue. Discuss impressions, photos, and then trade papers. Writer then amplifies on his photograph based on discussion as well as his own observances.

Sentences, Grammar, and Style:
- The Elements of Style Strunk and White: Rules 7-11
- Teacher designed “point of view” exercise(s)
- Warriner’s Sentences: Formal and Informal Styles
- Group 2: Vocabulary List from all texts of problematic vocabulary, presented as a packet

Major Paper 2: Write a Memoir of an episode in your life that “fulfills the writer’s duty.” Papers are expected to narrate the memory successful but provide a thematic element to your choice, as Dillard did.

Unit C: War 3 ½ weeks

10 Stories from In Our Time Ernest Hemingway
Opening speech of “Patton” George C. Scott as General Patton
Speech Before Battle Cataline
Message to Invasion Troops Dwight D. Eisenhower
Photograph of Invasion Troops Franklin D. Roosevelt Library: untitled photograph
Commencement Address General Douglas MacArthur
War is Not a Biological Necessity Margaret Mead
On War James Boswell
The Lion in Winter Sebastian Junger
Agincourt Speech… From Henry V
Grant and Lee at Appomattox Bruce Catton

Analysis, annotation, and discourse activities:
- Analytical and Rhetorical Strategy questions chosen from Brassil’s text continue to both deepen the need and hone the skills to read closely
- Groups develop expertise in presenting the text annotated and re-read, continuing to emphasize rhetorical strategies
- Brassil’s unit questions are comprehensive but all always about “the text” and require students to be able to discuss subtle differences and strategies of these similar pieces.
- Response: Why does Junger change his point of view halfway through the piece? What does it mean?
- Response: How does the film use the first presentation of Patton to begin an argument in favor of the notion of the heroic and for the necessity of cultivating a capacity to wage war.
- SOAPstone Henry V from his first line: note ethos, subtle changes in pathos, extended number of logos points made. Besides blank verse, what other language and oratorical devices does Shakespeare use to make this speech effective?
Sentences, Grammar, and Style

- *The Elements of Style Rules 9-14*
- *Warriner’s: Complex, Compound, and Simple Sentences*
- *Group 3: Vocabulary List from all texts of problematic vocabulary, presented as a packet*

Test essay: Exposition: Identify one Hemingway story as a “typical Hemingway story,” by defining what that is, then do a literary analysis on the same story showing its unique nature and compared to the other nine stories.

“Halftime”:  **Review and Clarification in preparation for Major Paper 3**

- “The Rhetorical Toolkit” What is in yours now? (Packet compiled from AP week-long workshop, Brassil handout material, further research and class notes.)
- “What do Students Need to Know about Rhetoric” Hepzibah Kelly

Major Paper 3: In class AP test preparation model (timed) as a culmination of Argument and Rhetorical Strategies Introduction Unit: Analyze the rhetorical strategies of Henry V’s Agincourt speech. Counts as a paper.

Major Paper 4: **Compare and Contrast** the purpose, content and rhetorical devices in two writers/speakers in the “War” unit.

Major Paper 5: First Synthesis Assignment. Using the prompt from Brassil’s Synthesis Workbook, argue whether war is part of the method of its eventual elimination or an unavoidable part of the human condition.

**Unit D: Gender and Identity  3 weeks**

*The Awakening*         Kate Chopin

“Romantic Imagery in *The Awakening*” Donald Ringe (critical essay)

**Test Essay: Process**: Discuss the process by which Edna Pontellier strives to define herself as a woman and “awaken.” Consider the realist and romantic elements detailed by Chopin. Discuss her suicide as a completion or a negation of the process.

- What is Beauty and How Do We Know It         Nancy Ethoff
- Hope and History in a Jar               Kathy Peiss
- Various Photographs:
  - Marilyn Monroe, African Princess
- Professions for Women               Virginia Woolf
- Gender in the Classroom                Deborah Tannen
- Guys vs. Men                          Dave Barry
- How Boys Become Men                   Jon Katz
- Bill Moyers and Robert Bly           (interview)
- *from* Iron John                    Robert Bly

- **Analysis, annotation, and discourse activities:**
  - Explicate the descriptive elements and their character implications during Edna’s sensual awakening scene at Mme. Antoine’s
  - Do the discourse activities in Brassil’s text with Marilyn Monroe and the Swahili princess: group discussion follows
  - Journal and debate Tannen’s thesis and solution: what has been your own observation. Then, your own experience?
  - Journal Response (private); In what ways do Bly and Moyer reflect the problems and desires of your own fathers or stepfathers?
Free writing: Iron John, mentors and the “guys” you know
What serious points underlie Barry’s humor? What are his methods of humor? If “everything is an argument”, what is his?
Descriptive Writing: “An Attractive Person Enters a Room” Do two drafts: The second must be shorter than the first and you must explain to a partner how these changes improve the paper.

Sentences, Grammar, and Style:
- *The Elements of Style*: Rules 15-18
- *Warriner’s*: Varying Sentence Length; Varying Sentence Beginnings
- Group 4: Vocabulary List from all texts of problematic vocabulary, presented as a packet

**Major Paper : Course Culmination, first half: Gender Paper # 2.**

This is your first self-generated non-fiction work, asking that you apply all the rhetorical modes, rhetorical strategies, stylistic and the sentence skills in the curriculum so far. You must generate your own prompt. You may write on any one of the following topics/titles below. The challenge will be to find what your “take” on the topic will be. What angle will you explore, from what direction? Here are six possible “Titles.” Given the nature of your choices of prompt, the only criterion is that the prompt you write fits the given title, however you choose to interpret the title.

1. From ‘Tween to Teen....
2. The Process So far: Becoming a Man/Woman in America
3. What Do they Teach Teens: What Do We Learn?
4. An Argument against Gender: Closing the Great Divide
5. What They Don’t Know About Us
6. The Mentor

Before the planning and writing begins:

- First, what will be your audience? This will shape your entire piece.
- How will you make it interesting, compelling, and possibly original. Could this be a submission piece? To whom? Drawing on your own voice and experience.(You may assume a reader who is interested and not as knowledgeable as you are.)
- Voice: How much ethos will you use? How often will you use the first person? *(Is there a danger of too often?)* Will you use the editorial “we?” (That is, speak as a teenager? A girl? A female? ) Or will you be totally objective, a 3rd person point of view, so that we can’t tell the age or gender of who wrote the piece?
- Also, what mode of rhetoric will you take? That is, will you make an Argument, explore an Expository task (Do an Analysis or a Process or a Compare and Contrast) or even write a Narrative or Description that has sufficient weight?
- Will you use any sources, even briefly? (If so, do a Works Cited page.)

**Unit F: Nature and the Individual Soul: 2 weeks**

| Self Reliance, Address at Harvard Divinity | R.W. Emerson |
| Walden Selections: Economy, Where I Lived and What I Lived For, Brute Neighbors | Henry David Thoreau |
| Selection: *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* | Annie Dillard |
| The Death of a Moth | Annie Dillard |
| How I Wrote The Moth Essay---And Why | Annie Dillard |
Analysis, annotation, and discourse activities:
- "Honor" a single sentence of Emerson’s with an image or series of images, then present the sentence and the image to class.
- Explicate, word for word, the "I went to the woods..." paragraph in Chapter Two of *Walden*
- Brainstorm a presentation regarding every difference possible between the essays that begin with the deaths of two moths in two separate essays by the same writer
- Contrast Thoreau’s stated reasons for writing with Dillard’s. What attracts you to either of them? What specifically puts you off? In what ways?
- Journal: Why do YOU write? How has your relationship to your writing changed since the course began?

Sentences, Grammar, and Style
- *The Elements of Style*: “An Approach to Style”
- *Warriner’s*: The Clincher Sentence
- Group 5: Vocabulary List from all texts of problematic vocabulary, presented as a packet

Major Paper 7: Personal Essay: Discuss two ideas: Reflection and Conformity OR Reflection and Solitude. Establish a thesis in any mode (argument, analysis, narrative, descriptive) and develop the paper.

Unit G: American Dream(s), American Myths 3 weeks

*The Great Gatsby* F. Scott Fitzgerald

Video: Great Books: The Learning Channel: *The Great Gatsby*
Video: “This Side of Paradise” Biography of F. Scott Fitzgerald
Jazz Nat Henthoff
Video: *sections Jazz Ken Burns*

Test Essay: Title: “The Past in Fitzgerald and Gatsby”. Narrow your focus so that you can write your own thesis and complete the essay in the allotted time.

*Autobiography* (“selection”) Ben Franklin

The Rise of the Blended American Jeff Jacoby
What is an American? Michel-Guillaume-Saint-Jean de Crevecoeur
Speech at 2004 Democratic Convention Barack Obama

*Death of a Salesman* Arthur Miller
On Tragedy Arthur Miller

Analysis, annotation, and discourse activities:
- Respond to the use of the first person point of view in the opening chapter of *Gatsby*. Compare it to other uses of the “I” so far in the course.
- List the sources of insight and comment in both videos concerning Fitzgerald. Go on-line and find out more information about the speaker’s connection to Fitzgerald and his work.
- Note the amount of information and number of sources Burns uses in 25 minutes Evaluate any two of them. If Burns had to cut the source from the final print of the film, what do we lose?
- “To someone who knows nothing about jazz”….a 1 ½ page précis from Henthoff and Burns.
- Jacoby and Crevecoeur: 200 years, but then, how far apart? Compare thesis and backing points
- Comment on the subtext and intended audience of “On Tragedy” Why is Miller trying so hard?

Major Paper 8: Analysis into Synthesis. No idea in literature is so discussed as “The American Dream.” Using three sources, write a synthesis paper that explores your thesis regarding the American Dream as it currently exists (or exists in myth or memory) in our culture.
Unit H : Wit 2 weeks

_Huckleberry Finn (Chapters 1-19)_ Mark Twain

Two views of Huckleberry Finn: Jane Smiley and T.S. Eliot
Mark Twain: Documentary Ken Burns ... 20 minutes on the novel

James Fenimore Cooper’s Literary Offense Twain
Two Letters, Both Open: E.B. White
A Modest Proposal Jonathan Swift
Girl Moved To Tears By _Of Mice and Men_ Cliff Notes The Onion

Analysis, annotation, and discourse activities:

- Find 5 “funny things” in the first chapter of _Huckleberry Finn_. What effect does the laughter have? What information about Huck and his situation do they convey?
- Group work: Go beyond “funny.” Compile a list of terms to be used in discussing humor in writing. These may be sub-genres (satire), devices (incongruity), or effects (irony).
- With certainty, discuss the various purposes of each of the humorous pieces.

Sentences, Grammar, and Style

- _The Elements of Style: “Words and Expressions Easily Confused”_

Major Paper 9: Irony, Satire, Sarcasm, Parody, Disillusionment: Choose any contemporary issue or “sacred cow” in our society – including great works of literature or great events—and use various forms of wit to accomplish a specific goal, to be determined by you.

Unit I Heroes: A Synthesis and Research Unit 1 ½ weeks

- “Poem to Frederick Douglas” Robert Hayden
- “Mrs. Robinson” Simon and Garfunkel
- “Baseball” by Ken Burns...Jackie Robinson, Joe Dimaggio sections
- ESPN article on Larry Doby, 2nd black in majors

Major Paper 10: Final Assignment : 1 week

Research four sources, document them properly, and develop an AP Synthesis researched essay on a chosen hero and/or the notion of the “heroic” in American Life.

Analysis, annotation, and discourse activities:

- Review MLA methods with handouts from Freshman English and department
- Listen to librarian’s in-house lesson on research: “The Big Six” handout, and going beyond the Web.
- Visit, explore, master: Owl Website, Purdue University
  [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/675/01/](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/675/01/)