

## Advanced Placement Literature and Composition

Mr. David Sudak

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**NOTE: Due to the challenging nature of the reading and subsequent quizzes, it is strongly recommended that students purchase books listed as primary texts in the “materials” section toward the end of this syllabus – unless otherwise noted – for ease of annotation and review. All titles are available used or new and at a very low cost. Any edition will do.**

Controlling Questions (year-long):

1. What is the author attempting to convey, and why?
2. What is the value of literature?
3. Why am I writing, and for whom?
4. What strategies do effective writers use, and how can I embed them in my own writing practices?
5. How can I refine my writing?
6. How do I show vs. tell in my writing?

### Overview

Our focus this year will be on literary—and to a certain extent—rhetorical analysis. We’ll concentrate on British and American literature across genres and periods. Adopting specific strategies geared toward high-level thinking and writing—including heuristics, critical lenses, and dialectical logs—we will contextualize, analyze, discuss, and write about a variety of imaginative texts. Often, for further modeling of textual concepts and elements, we will look to other mediums as analysis subjects. More than anything, we will both analyze the strategic moves and stylistic choices made by effective writers and practice these in our own writing.

### Subjects for Analysis

The majority of our analysis will focus on literature in a variety of styles and across time periods, including poems, songs, short stories, novels, essays, criticism, memoirs, plays, and screenplays. Most units combine shorter and extended texts and require written response, and some include connections to analogous oral, aural, and visual “texts,” including speeches, presentations, films, paintings, photographs, advertisements, music, and dance. Extended texts are referred to in brief and generally chronological unit titles on the following page. Shorter works come from several sources (see partial list), but, because we will sometimes attempt to respond to especially current issues, not all of these can be predicted or planned for.

### Writing

The writing goals of this AP course reflect the expectations of college composition courses, the Common Core, and the College Board’s AP Literature & Composition exam.

**We will primarily write in the following 2 modes: expository and narrative.** Plan on instruction, practice, and writing fully drafted essays in both modes, in addition to routine self & peer critique.

In **expository** mode we will formally analyze complex texts and subjects, most often explaining how writers fulfill their purpose through the tools of their trade. Accordingly—as this is the only mode required by the AP Lit exam—much of our writing will fall here, in the form of multiple, formally drafted double-entry logs, AP practice timed-writes, and fully drafted “literary analysis” essays.

In **narrative** mode we will craft vivid stories based on personal experience, including a carefully drafted “exploratory” essay early on, which for many students will double for the college application essay. Routinely, we’ll imitate authors we read by practicing what they do as writers (including a challenging parody of William Faulkner), and the very last writing assignment of the year is a style-stretching, creative endeavor.

### **Major Units\***

**Semester 1** (poetry, shorter subjects, and AP exam practice are filtered throughout the semester)

- 1) Exploratory writing and the college application essay
- 2) Elizabethan Drama: *Titus Andronicus* (William Shakespeare)
- 3) Romantic Literature: *Wuthering Heights* (Emily Bronte)
- 4) Late Victorian Literature: *The Turn of the Screw* (Henry James)
- 5) Early Modernism (1): *Heart of Darkness* (Joseph Conrad) paired with *Apocalypse Now\*\** (FF Coppola)
- 6) S1 Final Exam: poetry devices

**Semester 2** (as above with respect to additional subjects)

- 7) Early Modernism (2) “The Dead” (James Joyce)
- 8) High Modernism: *The Sound & the Fury* (William Faulkner)
- 9) Existentialism Unit: *The Stranger* (Albert Camus), *Waiting for Godot* (Samuel Beckett), *Harold & Maude* (Hal Ashby)
- 10) The Contemporary Novel: *All the Pretty Horses* (Cormac McCarthy)
- 11) The Contemporary Short Story: Lit Circles (students groups select from a list that includes Junot Diaz, Joy Williams, Denis Johnson, Alice Munro, Lorrie Moore, and Richard Ford)
- 12) *Exercises in Style* (Raymond Queneau)
- 13) S2 Final Exam: literary and rhetorical devices

\*Please note – with respect to longer works, the instructor recognizes the need for more female voices. This is a sad reflection of our current book inventory. We will absolutely compensate for this yearlong as we analyze poems and short stories.

\*\*Parents please also note: The film *Apocalypse Now*, which adapts and allegorizes *Heart of Darkness*, is rated R for violent content. In my experience, the film genuinely enriches a reading of an often difficult and impenetrable work. Customarily I pause before the two or three more intensely violent segments and give fair warning. On the other hand, by today’s standards, the film isn’t any more violent than the standard fare. Still, if you have concerns, please let me know.

### Course Assessment

We'll use a points grading system categorized as follows, with bolded classifications weighted the most heavily:

- Bell work
- Class work/participation
- **Weekly reading quizzes**
- **Modular class scored seminars**
- Presentations
- **Written work**
- **Final Exam** (each semester)
- Participation/Conduct score (both semesters)

### AP Exam

Ironically, many students in this class will opt out of taking the AP Lit exam, as it is not a requirement, and/or because they took the AP Lang exam the previous year. Still, there is no escaping the test, as we use it as a framework throughout the year, guided by its emphasis on critical reading and writing, and eventually practice multiple-choice sets and timed-writes are scored. Luckily, the exam is skills-based, so practice sessions aren't a waste of time. On the contrary, they provide an opportunity for close reading and analysis, engendering better readers and writers.

### Policies & Expectations (read and re-read!)

#### **Deadlines/Attendance**

In general, assignments are docked ½ a letter grade per each day late (including weekends and days class doesn't meet). Be advised that you may be docked completion points during peer-review sessions if you come to class unprepared.

If you are unexpectedly absent on a day that something previously assigned is due, plan on turning the work in on the first day back at school (**note—even if class doesn't convene on that day**). Similarly, if you miss a quiz or exam due to an unexpected excused absence, make arrangements for a make up on the day you return (**again, even if class doesn't meet that day**). Make ups will not be permitted if the absence is unexcused, and late homework will be penalized accordingly. **PLEASE NOTE:** Should you miss class due to a sports/activity/expected absence, **you must consult with the instructor prior to the actual absence.**

Expect unannounced bell-work up to two times each week. Bell-work points cannot be made up if you are late to class without a valid reason. Similarly, if you are late in this manner and miss part of a quiz, test, or writing assessment, you will not be allotted additional time. Students legitimately absent or late will be excused from bell-work.

#### **Participation/Conduct**

Because of the interactive and collaborative nature of many of this course's learning activities, your participation is required (and not just during weekly scored discussions). Additionally, the manner in which you engage will figure into your final grade. Were you a respectful discussant? Were you generally on time to class? Were you proactive

and timely about absences and making up missed work? Each semester will include a significant culminating score reflecting these issues.

### **Presentation of Written Work**

With the exception of writing completed during class (bell-work, drills, journaling), written assignments, including drafts, must be typed (double-spaced, 12 pt. font, MLA format). Be advised that handwritten papers will never be accepted. **Do not** ask me to print essays for you or email assignments in lieu of turning in hard copy; my expectation is that you'll have essays printed and ready to turn in by the beginning of class on the due date. **Make provisions for printing ahead of time (and be aware of library closures if that is your only mode of printing).**

### **Personal electronics**

Cell phones must be turned off and out of sight during class, unless we are conducting research. I'm particularly sensitive to this issue and will confiscate phones if abuses are incurred, as the coursework is entirely dependent on focus and concentration, with minimal distractions. Tablets & laptops can sometimes be used, depending on the circumstances.

### **Classroom Climate**

Our classroom is a safe zone, which means that all people are equal, regardless of race, religion, sexual orientation, political views, economic status, or gender. It is important that we both foster open discourse and respect our differences and each other.

### **Ethics**

There is a great deal of reading in this class, and while some of you may feel the temptation to consult Cliffs Notes (or Sparks Notes, etc) as an *alternative* to the reading, it would be better to resist the urge. This course is geared toward helping you become better readers (and subsequently writers), and shortcuts will only defeat the purpose. Be aware that your instructor has a reputation for designing especially detailed quizzes and exams as a means of discouraging the use of supplements as a replacement for the readings! On the other hand, certainly feel free to consult legitimate critical resources *alongside* the reading, but please make sure to carefully read the plagiarism contract that follows this syllabus.

### **Supplies**

Binder or accordion folder for keeping notes & handouts, and including paper for journaling during class; pens, pencils, highlighters. Note: each student will keep a writing portfolio in a classroom filing cabinet.

## **Materials**

**Primary Texts** (With the exception of *Exercises in Style* and *Dubliners*, students are *strongly encouraged* to purchase these for ease of annotation and subsequent preparation for reading quizzes.)

*Titus Andronicus* (play)—William Shakespeare, approx 1590)

*Wuthering Heights* (novel)—Emily Bronte, 1847

*The Turn of the Screw* (novella)—Henry James, 1898

*Heart of Darkness* (novella)—Joseph Conrad, 1899

*Dubliners* (short stories)—James Joyce, 1914

*The Sound & the Fury* (novel)—William Faulkner, 1929

*The Stranger* (novella)—Albert Camus, 1942

*Exercises in Style* (creative writing handbook)—Raymond Queneau, 1947

*Waiting for Godot* (play)—Samuel Beckett, 1954

*All The Pretty Horses* (novel)—Cormac McCarthy, 1992

**Anthologies & Additional Sources** (most shorter works will be extracted from these)

*Bedford Introduction to Literature*—Bedford St. Martins

*The Norton Anthology of Modern and Contemporary Poetry*—Norton

*The Language of Composition*—Bedford St. Martins

*50 Essays, A Portable Anthology*—Bedford St. Martins

*They Say, I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing*—Charles Graf

*The New Yorker Magazine*

**1<sup>st</sup> assignment:** After both you and a parent/guardian have read the course outline, detach the last page, read the course contracts, sign as indicated, and return to Mr. Sudak on Friday, August 5<sup>th</sup>.

(scroll down for contracts)

**Contracts on next page. Please detach, and sign/return as indicated.**

## Plagiarism Contract

Plagiarism can be defined as submitting another person's ideas, words, images or data without giving that person credit or proper acknowledgement. Plagiarism, a form of academic dishonesty, is tantamount to stealing and will not be tolerated. You should be aware that you need to acknowledge sources when you:

- use phrases, quotes, or ideas not your own.
- paraphrase the work of another *even though you may have changed the wording or syntax*.
- use facts or data not considered common knowledge.
- submit a paper from an essay service or agency even though you may have paid for it.
- submit a paper by another person even though he or she may have given you permission to use it.
- work on assignments with another student if partner/group work has not been assigned.

You should also note that plagiarism not only encompasses written work, but also computer data, research, musical scores, video programs, and visual arts.

Plagiarism reflects on character; therefore, you should avoid inadvertent plagiarism. **You will also be held responsible for unintentional plagiarism.** Plagiarism is a serious issue, especially in an academic environment. Teachers must be able to rely on the integrity of a student's work in order to maintain a climate for successful learning. We will discuss methods for avoiding plagiarism as the school year progresses. When you are unsure if acknowledgement is needed, ask your teacher.

The penalties for plagiarism begin with an automatic failing grade for the assignment. This may significantly lower your final grade. Furthermore, plagiarism, a form of cheating, will automatically result in a referral to administration. Repeated plagiarism will result in more serious consequences, according to the University High School conduct code.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, am aware of the serious nature of plagiarism and will not use or submit someone else's work without acknowledgement. Furthermore, I will not misrepresent someone else's work as my own, or help anyone else to plagiarize my work or another's.

Student signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Course Outline & Policies Contract**

**Students & parents/guardians:** please sign below and return this document to class to let me know that you have read and understand the course outline and policies.

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Student (PRINT NAME)

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Student (SIGNATURE)

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Date

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Parent/guardian (PRINT NAME)

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Parent/guardian (SIGNATURE)

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Date

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Parent/guardian E-Mail Address (legible, please!)

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Parent/guardian daytime phone