



AP English Language and Composition

Course Syllabus

2021-2022

Course Overview

The course is designed around four distinct BIG IDEAS and related “enduring understandings” as determined by the College Board. These ideas and understandings are:

1. **RHETORICAL SITUATION:** Individuals write within a particular situation and make strategic writing choices based on that situation.
2. **CLAIMS AND EVIDENCE:** Writers make claims about subjects, rely on evidence that supports the reasoning that justifies the claim, and often acknowledge or respond to other, possibly opposing, arguments.
3. **REASONING AND ORGANIZATION:** Writers guide understanding of a text’s lines of reasoning and claims through that text’s organization and integration of evidence.
4. **STYLE:** The rhetorical situation informs the strategic stylistic choices that writers make.

In this way, the course goal is to further your appreciation, understanding, and employment of the English language, particularly language used to argue and persuade. Our goal is to make you a more thoughtful, critical and effective reader and writer.

To achieve this goal, the content and assignments in the course focus on understanding and clarifying your personal values and experiences, and weighing these against accepted societal values and norms, particularly in the areas of education, gender, race, and class. Frequent reading and writing assignments—including several essays—will be assigned each quarter.

Finally, Advanced Placement Language & Composition is designed to prepare you to succeed—i.e., score a 3 or higher—on the AP exam in May, hopefully making you eligible to receive Advanced Placement credit at the college of your choice.

Summer Reading

You read two texts over the summer, one you selected from the “BHS Summer Reading 2021 ” list and one we selected for you, *Heartland* by Sarah Smarsh. Please submit your completed “2021 Summer Reading Pledge” form to the teacher from whom you would like to receive quiz credit for the first quarter and turn in your “AP Language Summer Reading Organizer” to the Assignment in our Canvas **no later Thursday September 9th**. We will discuss Smarsh’s text as a means of introducing you to rhetorical analysis, mattering and the complexities of gender, education and economics in the 21st century, and your understanding of the text will be assessed through an in-class essay for which you can use your organizer.

Major Texts

The majority of the shorter texts you read this year will be drawn from past Advanced Placement exams, current periodicals or the classroom text, *The Language of Composition: Reading, Writing, Rhetoric* (2008). Additionally, you will read from among the following major works during the year:

- *How Does It Feel To Be A Problem?: Being Young and Arab in America*, Moustafa Bayoumi (2009)
- *Where You Go Is Not Who You Will Be: An Antidote to the College Admissions Mania*, Frank Bruni (2015)
- *Between The World And Me*, Ta-Nehisi Coates (2015)
- *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*, Matthew Desmond (2017)
- *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*, Annie Dillard (1974)
- *Snow Falling On Cedars*, David Guterson (1995)
- *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, Zora Neale Hurston (1937)
- *The Color of Water*, James McBride (1995)
- *Born A Crime: Stories From A South African Childhood*, Trevor Noah (2016)
- *Othello*, William Shakespeare (1603)
- *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption*, Bryan Stevenson (2015)
- *A Hope In The Unseen: An American Odyssey from the Inner City to the Ivy League*, Ron Suskind (1999)
- *Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis*, J.D. Vance (2016)
- *Educated: A Memoir*, Tara Westover (2018)
- *Fences*, August Wilson (1986)

1st Semester

Unit One: EDUCATION/Understanding a Writer's Choices and the Rhetorical Situation

Reading:	Writing:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Identify and describe components of the rhetorical situation: the exigence, audience, writer, purpose, context, and message.→ Identify and explain claims and evidence within an argument→ Explain how an argument demonstrates an understanding of an audience's beliefs, values, or needs→ Identify and describe the overarching thesis of an argument, and any indication it provides of the argument's structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Develop a paragraph that includes a claim and evidence supporting the claim.→ Demonstrate an understanding of an audience's beliefs, values, or needs.→ Identify and describe the overarching thesis of an argument, and any indication it provides of the argument's structure.→ Write a thesis statement that requires proof or defense and that may preview the structure of the argument.

The first two weeks of class will be devoted to discussing and writing about your summer reading. The next two weeks of class are devoted to exploring "The Power of Language" through a series of shorter

texts and talks in which writer/speaker’s consider and demonstrate the influence of words and language on the individual, an audience, or a people. These include:

- “Nobel Lecture in Literature,” Toni Morrison
- “The Death of a Moth,” Annie Dillard from *Holy The Firm*
- “Me Talk Pretty One Day,” David Sedaris
- “Politics and the English Language,” George Orwell
- “What Makes Things Funny,” Peter McGraw

Next, we begin our study of **rhetorical analysis and the rhetorical situation** by exploring the essential question **“To what extent do our schools serve the goals of a true education?”** As part of this unit, you will participate in an education conference designed to explore this question featuring guest speakers and panel discussions both real—local educators—and electronic—TEDTalks. The conference will conclude with you delivering **your own formal “EDTalk” to your classmates in response to a specific aspect of the essential question** of your choosing. Readings exploring the value, purpose, challenges and politics of education will complement our study:

- From *Education*,” Ralph Waldo Emerson
- “This is Water,” David Foster Wallace
- “Best in Class,” Margaret Talbot
- “A Talk to Teachers,” James Baldwin
- “School,” Kyoko Mori

Research Skills: The quarter concludes with a 650-word **research-based informational paper** requiring appropriate and credible research from a variety of sources in support of your response to a specific aspect of the essential question—“To what extent do our schools serve the goals of a true education?”—and presented in your EDTalk.

UNIT TWO: RACE & CLASS (economics) /Using Evidence to Develop and Refine a Claim

Reading:	Writing:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Describe the line of reasoning and explain whether it supports an argument’s overarching thesis. → Recognize and explain the use of methods of development to accomplish a purpose. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Write introductions and conclusions appropriate to the purpose and context of the rhetorical situation → Develop a line of reasoning and commentary that explains it throughout an argument → Use appropriate methods of development to advance an argument.

Our focus shifts to **argumentation** and the evidence writer’s provide to support their claims with our exploration of the essential question **“How do race and class drive who we are in the present and future in America?”** Our discussion will be guided by contemporary views on race relations and the politics of race and class, complemented by important historical voices like Douglass, King and other important figures in the history of race relations in the United States. Selections may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- “What to the Negro is the Fourth of July?” Frederick Douglass
- “Politics and the English Language,” George Orwell
- “Mother Tongue,” Amy Tan

- “Always Living in Spanish,” Marjorie Agosin
- “Studying Islam, Strengthening the Nation,” Peter Berkowitz and Michael McFaul
- “The Myth of the Latin Woman,” Judith Ortiz Cofer

The unit concludes with you considering the notion of “otherness” from a personal perspective and conceiving, writing and delivering a true **MOTH-style story told live that addresses an issue of “race, difference and/or otherness” from your life.**

The first semester culminates with a midterm exam, replicating one AP examination essay and approximately half of a 54-question multiple choice section.

Second Semester

Unit Three: GENDER/Reasoning, Organization & Development of Arguments

Reading:	Writing:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Explain how the organization of a text creates unity and coherence and reflects a line of reasoning → Explain how word choice, comparisons and syntax contribute to the specific tone or style of a text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → <i>Use transitional elements to guide the reader through the line of reasoning of an argument.</i> → <i>Strategically use words, comparisons, and syntax to convey a specific tone or style in an argument</i>

Synthesis essays will be the primary focus of your written work in this unit. Readings exploring gender issues from the textbook will complement our study of the essential question: “**What is the impact of the gender roles that society creates and enforces?**”

- “Women’s Brains,” Stephen Jay Gould
- “Professions for Women,” Virginia Woolf
- “I Want a Wife,” Judy Brady
- “Just Walk On By,” Brent Staples
- “About Men,” Gretel Ehrlich
- “Being a Man,” Paul Theroux

Throughout the semester you will extend your skills of rhetorical analysis and argumentation while writing to several prompts taken from past AP exams both in class and at home, timed and untimed. Periodic multiple choice sections from the exam will also be assigned both in class and at home, individual and in groups, graded and formative.

Research Skills: The quarter concludes with a 650-word **research-based position paper** requiring appropriate and credible information from a variety of sources in support of your group’s response to a specific aspect of the essential question—“What is the impact of the gender roles society creates and enforces?”—as reflected in your audiovisual gender production.

Unit Four: THE EXAM & BEYOND/Explaining a Writer’s Stylistic Choices & Purpose

Reading:	Writing:
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Explain ways claims are qualified through modifiers, counter arguments, and alternative responses → Explain how writers create, combine and place independent and dependent clauses to show relationships between and among ideas → Explain how grammar and mechanics contribute to the clarity and effectiveness of an argument 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → <i>Qualify a claim using modifiers, counter arguments, or alternative perspectives</i> → <i>Write sentences that clearly convey ideas and arguments</i> → <i>Use established conventions of grammar and mechanics to communicate effectively</i>
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The AP exam will be administered on **Tuesday May 10 , at 8 a.m.** Much of this month prior to the exam will be spent on practicing and honing your skills in the areas of rhetorical analysis, argumentation, and synthesis. We will analyze your writing as well as look critically at sample student essays written in response to past exam prompts. We will also complete and review an entire multiple choice section from a past exam.

Since the course is, in part, designed to prepare you to succeed on the exam, you are all encouraged to register for and take the exam. Those students who take the exam in May will be exempt from the final exam; those who do not, will not.

After the exam—yipee!—we will focus on **personal narrative writing** and a focus on the college essay. It is expected that you will conceive, write, and/or revise an actual college essay in response to a prompt of your choice. During these writing sessions, we will review the basic principles of drafting and revision along with various pre-writing activities as well as considering various examples of strong personal narratives.

- “Superman And Me,” Sherman Alexie
- “Mother Tongue,” Amy Tan
- “Together, You Can Redeem The Soul of Our Nation,” John Lewis

Finally, we will take a reader’s theater approach to William Shakespeare’s *Othello* to better prepare you for Advanced Placement Literature and Composition as seniors.

Grades

Below is a breakdown of each category with a *general* idea about the weight. The weights will vary slightly each quarter:

- **Writing** (35%): In-class and at-home essays written in response to AP free response questions, sometimes modified to fit instructional needs--e.g., education synthesis essay, etc.
- **Reading** (30%): Comprehension indicated by rubric, analysis, and quizzes for longer texts--e.g., reader response journals; and short question sets for essays, articles, etc. *See APLC Reading Rubric below.*
- **Speaking & Listening** (20%): Formal in-class discussions and presentations--e.g., ED Talks, round-table discussions, etc.
- **Homework/Classwork** (15%): Various short assignments and questions in Canvas, AP Classroom, and NoRedInk.

**See the attached rubric for more guidance on how most homework assignments will be graded.*

Finally, please note that “Class Participation” is not measured in this course. Your mature, active, and intelligent class participation is expected and appreciated.

Thank you, and good luck!

APLC Reading Scoring Rubric

Reading Standard	Effective (100)	Strong (85)	Proficient (70)	Approaching (60)	Does Not Meet (50)
Comprehension & Development of Key Ideas and Details <i>NOTE: The Type of textual evidence required is text and prompt specific.</i>	The written response:: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> reflects full understanding of the complex ideas expressed in the text(s); provides an accurate and insightful analysis of what the text says explicitly and inferentially; employs clear and convincing reasoning, details, text-based evidence and/or description with explanations to consistently support the analysis. 	The written response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> reflects good understanding of ideas expressed in the text(s); provides an accurate analysis of what the text says explicitly and inferentially; and employs clear reasoning, details, text-based evidence and/or description with explanations to largely support the analysis. 	The written response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> reflects a basic understanding of ideas expressed in the text(s); provides a generally accurate analysis of what the text says explicitly or inferentially; employs some reasoning, details, text-based evidence and/or description with explanations that somewhat support the analysis. 	The written response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> reflects limited understanding of ideas expressed in the text(s) provides a minimally accurate analysis of what the text says; employs few examples of reasoning, details, text based evidence and/or description with explanations that only support the analysis in a limited fashion. 	The written response is incomplete OR provides an inaccurate analysis or no analysis of the text, showing little/no understanding of ideas expressed in the text(s).