

AP English Literature

2008-2009

Teacher: Ms. Gritter

Room: F-11

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Websites: www.msgritter.com (handouts, schedule, general information)

apeonline.edublogs.org (daily lesson plans & assignment info)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This college-level course includes an examination of selected works of literature from the Classical era to contemporary texts, and follows the curricular requirements outlined in the *AP English Course Description*. Close reading and analysis will be applied to the study of drama, fiction, and poetry. Compositions will include interpretations of literary works as well as more informal writing. Preparation for the AP exam in May will also be a major part of this class. Students are not required to take the AP exam, but may earn college credit by passing it successfully. Note, however, that although taking this exam is not a requirement, it is a requirement that all students prepare for the exam through assigned and graded course work.

READING

As AP English Literature is a college-level course, students should be prepared to perform (read, write, and discuss) at college level. We will read and discuss a number of significant and challenging pieces of literature in this class, and some of the material may include mature content, including language and/or situations appropriate to a college audience. These works have been selected because they are representative of the literature that students must be familiar with to perform well on the AP exam or in equivalent college classes. Students must be willing to study and discuss the listed books or they should enroll in a different class; because this is not a required course, there will be no alternate assignments offered.

The following is a list of the bulk of the year's reading material. In addition to the titles listed below, additional short pieces will be added as time allows.

<i>Structure, Sound and Sense</i>	Perrine, ed.	textbook
	→ informative material, short stories, poetry	
Independent Reading	<i>(see separate assignment information)</i>	
<i>Canterbury Tales</i>	Geoffrey Chaucer	prose fiction
<i>Oedipus Rex</i>	Sophocles	drama
<i>Hamlet</i>	William Shakespeare	drama
<i>(Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead)</i>	Tom Stoppard	drama)
<i>Death of a Salesman</i>	Arthur Miller	drama
<i>Gulliver's Travels</i>	Jonathon Swift	prose fiction
<i>Jane Eyre</i>	Charlotte Bronte	prose fiction
<i>A Doll's House</i>	Henrik Ibsen	drama
<i>Things Fall Apart</i>	Chinua Achebe	prose fiction
<i>Frankenstein</i>	Mary Shelley	prose fiction

All texts, aside from independent reading and reference works, are supplied by the school. However, I strongly urge you to **purchase your own copies whenever possible** so that you can mark them as you read. If this is not possible, judicious use of sticky notes is the next best thing. Stock up.

I also recommend purchasing a college-level dictionary, thesaurus, and writing handbook (see recommendations on the class website); these will continue to be useful to you throughout your years of university study.

WRITING

Writing is a major part of this class; you will write to explore a subject (to understand), to analyze a text (to explain), to defend a position (to evaluate). E.M. Forster said, “How can I know what I think until I see what I say?” In that spirit, you will do a great deal of writing to discover what you think in addition to the writing you will do to explain what you have discovered. Several different types of assignments will be given throughout the year, including:

- **Literary Analysis:** You'll be asked to interpret a work of literature by using specific and relevant evidence to support an argument that you will articulate based on a close reading of the text. Particular attention will be paid to the writer's craft, or how the writer evokes a response from the reader through structure and style (imagery, symbolism, figurative language, tone), in addition to the social/historical values revealed by the narrative itself. Literary analysis will be the most common type of paper.
- **Informal Essays and Responses:** Less formal writing will sometimes be assigned that may not be directly based on literature, but connected in some way. The subject might be a facet of popular culture, a controversial issue, or something related to the author's personal experience. These will clarify your thinking, provoke discussion, and provide different insights for you to consider. These may or may not be turned in.
- **Creative Writing:** Occasionally you will be expected to take a creative approach to your interpretation of literature by identifying the structural and/or stylistic components (figurative language, symbolism, tone, diction, syntax) of a text and applying it to your own writing. More about this later.

Written work will include in-class, on-demand responses as well as longer, more formal essays. You will be expected to revise formal essays, often several times, after receiving feedback. Responses to formal written work will follow a rubric covering the following traits: ideas and content, sentence structure, organization (including effective emphasis and transitions), use of sufficient and specific detail to illustrate points, vocabulary/ diction, mechanics, and effective use of tone and voice. Some categories are weighted more heavily than others; we will go over the general rubric the first week of class, and then as we progress throughout the year you will create a personalized editing and revision checklist focusing on those areas you most need to strengthen.

We will occasionally workshop essays in class, meaning that you will work with a partner or a group to respond to and improve your essays. During these workshops, I will also be coming around to each group and answering questions, clarifying the rubric, etc. If you are unsure about an expectation or an aspect of your writing, this is the time to ask!

Vocabulary

As building a college-level literary vocabulary is an important part of this course, we will engage in a systematic study of vocabulary throughout the year. Words and approaches will be relevant to the work currently being studied.

Assignment Schedule

Dates will undoubtedly change as we work through the year. See the class website for current calendar information.

Due Dates

All assignments are due at the BEGINNING of the class on the assigned date. Assignments turned in late will be subject to a grade penalty, and any late assignments will be graded on a low-priority basis; this means that you may not have the assignment returned to you for many weeks, and the assignment may appear as missing in my gradebook until I have an opportunity to grade and return it. Note: **Late assignments will not be accepted after 48 hours.**

If you are scheduled to be gone on a due date because of a prearranged absence (field trip, family business, etc.), please turn the assignment in BEFORE you leave. If you are absent for any other reason on a due date (illness, emergency, etc.), please have someone deliver the assignment to me. WARNING: Do not simply place a paper in my mailbox or, worse yet, slide it under the classroom door. **I will not assume responsibility for any assignment not delivered to me in person.**

You may also email an assignment as an attachment if you are absent on the day it's due. HOWEVER, it must be in one of the following formats: Microsoft Word, RTF, or PDF; and I must receive it by class time on the due date. Also, if the attached file cannot be opened for any reason, it will not be considered turned in. I will send you a response indicating that I received the file and was able to open it, or not; if you do not get a response from me, do not assume that I have received the file. If you email an assignment, you must also turn in a paper copy when you return to class.

Tests

Discussions of literary works will sometimes end with a unit test on the material. These exams will test students' knowledge and understanding of both class notes (discussion and lecture) and the literary work itself. Some of these tests may be open book and/or open notes.

Quizzes based on class discussion, lecture material, and assigned reading will take place on both an announced and unannounced basis.

Grades

Grades are determined by the accumulation of points, with some assignments weighted more heavily than others. Grades are assigned according to a standard percentage scale (A = 90-100; B = 80-89; C = 70-79, etc.). The most heavily weighted assignments are the formal papers and the unit exams.

You should have access to your grades online by the middle of 1st semester. Until then, I will post grades periodically in the classroom. As soon as the gradebook is online, I will expect you to use it to check your grades. Be aware that AP Literature assignments require careful attention and take time to grade; please do not expect to see a grade for an assignment appear in the gradebook within a few days of the due date. Some assignments may take weeks to grade completely. If you are concerned, please ask.

Extra Credit

None. This is an advanced class; you are expected to put your best effort into each and every assignment and complete them when they are due. Please don't ask for extra credit to make up for poor or missing work.

Extra Help

If you need extra help while writing a paper or in preparing for an exam, please make an appointment to see me at a mutually convenient time. Before or after school are always good

options. Do not hesitate to come see me if you are having any kind of difficulty – that’s why I’m here! -- and please do not wait until the last minute for help.

Attendance Policy

Because we write, discuss, analyze, and brainstorm together in class, it is crucial that each person attend every day. As you will see, it is not easy to make up work that your classmates have already talked about, begun, or even completed. Moreover, this class is considered college level, and the expectation is that you attend conscientiously. Tardies are not acceptable. Coming to class on time generally becomes more and more difficult as students approach the end of their high school careers, but coming in late is disruptive and disrespectful to your fellow classmates as well as your teachers. Furthermore, reading quizzes and notebook entries are frequently given at the beginning of the period, and they will not be repeated or given more time for students who are late.

Permission to Use Student Work

Throughout the semester, I will share student work with the rest of the class so that we can all learn from the writer’s words. I will not use anyone’s paper in a way that would humiliate or embarrass the author. Names will never be mentioned. If you are uncomfortable with this policy, please come and talk to me about your concerns.

Final Items

Students who choose to take AP English Literature have often created a very busy senior year for themselves. You may be enrolled in other advanced courses, or taking part in time-consuming activities such as drama, speech, music, sports, newspaper, band, leadership, college visits to other states, and/or work.

I understand the pressure that students are faced with under these circumstances, but please note that such activities do not in any way excuse you from the assignments and/or deadlines that other students in the class must face. Due dates will be the same for everyone. You will know about the assignment (or test) well ahead of the due date so that you can budget your time accordingly.

Papers must, of course, be typed (word-processed). Please note that any computer or printer problems will **not** excuse you from missing a deadline; the grade will be reduced if the paper is late for any reason. Here are some suggestions:

1. Print the final copy of your paper at least two days before it's due. If the printer breaks down, you'll have the entire next day to find another printer.
2. Sometime during these first few days of school, familiarize yourself with the computer equipment available at WAHS (things have changed over the summer). Check what kinds of printers are available and what kinds of media (CDs, flash drives) are used in the computers connected to these printers. Check the times of day this equipment can be used by students. If your home printer breaks down, you may have to use WAHS equipment.
3. Save your computer-generated drafts periodically to both your home computer and a Google Documents account. You will then have a backup copy in a relatively safe place, and will be able to print it from any location.
4. Save all notes/outlines that you've written in preparing the essay.
5. Write at least one rough draft for every major paper — and print it — well before the essay is due. Sometimes I'll be checking these in class, and I'll usually want you to turn in the rough draft along with the final copy.

OUTLINE OF COURSE

Length of study indicated in parentheses is approximate – we may take more time in some cases, less in others.

Unit 1 – History of the English Language/Literature

A Brief History of the English Language

Chaucer: *Canterbury Tales* (3 weeks)

Unit 2 – Tragedy

Greek Theater, Aristotle on Tragedy

Sophocles, *Oedipus Rex* (2 weeks)

The Renaissance

Shakespeare: *Hamlet* (6 weeks)

(Stoppard: *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*)

20th Century American Dream

Miller: *Death of a Salesman* (3 weeks)

Unit 3 – Irony, Satire

Swift: “A Modest Proposal”

Twain: selected short works

Swift: *Gulliver’s Travels* (3 weeks)

Unit 4 – Social Commentary

Victorian England/Europe

Ibsen: *A Doll’s House* (3 weeks)

Bronte: *Jane Eyre* (3 weeks)

Unit 5 – Poetry

Poetry (3 weeks)

Unit 6 – Different Perspectives, Contemporary Issues

Achebe: *Things Fall Apart* (3 weeks)

Shelley: *Frankenstein* (3 weeks)

AP English Literature

acknowledgement of course details

Both the student named below and her/his parent or guardian should sign both sides of this form and return it to Ms. Gritter by the end of the first week of class.

Student's Name: _____

Class Period: _____ School Year: _____

I have read and I understand the course outline for AP English Literature at West Albany High School. I have paid particularly close attention to the sections titled Course Description, Reading, Due Dates, Grades, Attendance Policy, and Final Items. I have also read and understand the WAHS plagiarism policy. I understand the expectations and requirements of this course.

Student's signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent's signature: _____ Date: _____

Please print parent's name: _____

Permission to view R-rated movies:

Because of the level the reading material for this course, we may occasionally view and discuss related films or excerpts from films that have an R-rating. Films, if shown, are always chosen for their literary significance and value. Please indicate below whether you do or do not give permission for your student to view this material with the rest of the class:

- I give permission for my student to view and discuss R-rated films that relate to the AP English Literature curriculum while in class.
- I prefer that my student not view R-rated films that relate to the AP English Literature curriculum while in class. I understand that my student will have to leave class while the film is being shown and that s/he may not be able to participate in the class discussion relating the film to the literature being studied.

Parent signature: _____ Date: _____