

Advanced Placement English Literature and Composition

Course Description:

This course introduces students to the intellectual challenges and academic rigor of a college-level English literature and composition course. Specifically, this course guides students to appreciate and analyze complex literature while also preparing them for the Advanced Placement English Literature Examination. The AP English Literature and Composition Exam tests the student's understanding of literary concepts, their ability to interpret texts and support their interpretations with text evidence, and their ability to analyze how a literary concept or idea contributes to an interpretation of a literary work. Throughout the course and on the AP exam, students are asked to construct sound, evidence-based arguments to support their analyses.

Students are involved in an intensive study of literary works of recognized merit from various genres and periods, ranging from sixteenth century English poets and playwrights like John Donne and William Shakespeare, to the contemporary American fiction of Toni Morrison. In addition, students spend considerable time studying poetry from various time periods. They are expected to consider the social and historical values revealed in the literature while also reading for a deeper understanding of the work's structure, style, and themes. Moreover, students are encouraged to make connections between and among centuries, genres, authors, and cultural movements. Since the Advanced Placement Literature Examination privileges writing about literature, writing is a major component of this course. Thus, analytical essays about literature are stressed, although other types of writing, including response journals, reaction papers, and creative writing may also be assigned to promote thinking and varied learning opportunities. Students will also practice writing the essay under timed conditions.

As a hallmark of all Holy Cross English courses, lessons are guided by the underlying philosophy that more discerning, experienced readers will be better able to negotiate the narratives that they confront in life. In alignment with the school's *Portrait of the Crusader*, students share their ideas and perspectives with kindness, thoughtfulness, and mutual respect, particularly when learning about viewpoints that might differ from their own. Thus, students practice respecting the beliefs of others while appreciating diversity in life and art.

Essential Questions of the Course:

Literature:

- How are ideas presented differently across genres?
- How does literature reveal the social and historical values of the time period?
- How do characters in literature allow us to explore values, beliefs, assumptions, and norms?
- How does the structure of the text contribute to meaning and engagement?
- How does the narrator's perspective influence the author's message?
- How does the author reveal the theme?
- How do literary devices enhance meaning and engage the reader?

Language:

- How do writers craft their diction for audience and purpose?
- How does learning new vocabulary deepen comprehension of new ideas and perspectives?
- In what ways can conversation and feedback help to develop our thinking and writing?
- How do writers establish and communicate their interpretations of literature through literary analyses and arguments?
- How do writers establish a balance of generalization and specific illustrative detail?
- How do writers develop a logical organization by specific techniques of coherence such as [subtle] repetition, transitions, and emphasis?
- How do writers incorporate a variety of sentence structures, including appropriate use of subordinate and coordinate constructions?
- How do writers incorporate effective use of rhetorical strategies, including establishing a controlling tone, maintaining a consistent point of view, and achieving emphasis through parallelism and antithesis?

Life:

- How does a reader's interaction with literature help to navigate personal narrative and experiences?
- How do we develop personal and collective identities? How do these identities interact?
- How can literature enhance the ways we express ourselves and share our experiences?

Required Texts/Reading:

- *The Great Gatsby*, Fitzgerald. (summer reading)
- *Black Boy*, (Part One: Southern Night), Wright. (summer reading)
- *Perrine's Literature: Structure, Sound, and Sense*, 10th Ed., Arp and Johnson.
- *The Scarlet Letter*, Hawthorne.
- *King Lear*, Shakespeare.
- *Wuthering Heights*, Bronte.
- *Beloved*, Morrison.

Please note: Each unit lists reserved readings. Teachers will select specific readings from this list; students will not necessarily read all of the listed selections.

Course Curriculum:

Unit 1: Short Fiction (Note: This unit will re-occur at least twice throughout the course.)

This unit provides an extensive review of literary elements and devices through the critical analysis of short fiction. Students analyze and evaluate texts from varied authors and time periods, including their summer reading texts, and demonstrate critical analysis skills through written responses and seminar discussions. Throughout the unit, students hone reading comprehension, critical analysis, effective writing, and speaking skills.

Required Reading/Prose: Summer reading review/assessment: *The Great Gatsby*, Fitzgerald. *Black Boy*, Wright. Short Fiction: "The Interpreter of Maladies," Lahiri. "Everyday Use," Walker. "A Worn Path," Welty. "Once Upon a Time," Gordimer. "Hills Like White Elephants," Hemingway. "The Story of an Hour,"

Chopin. Excerpt from *Lucy*, Kincaid. "Eleven," Cisneros. Excerpt from *The Street*, Petry. "The Drunkard," O'Connor. "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas," LeGuin. "Where are You Going? Where Have You Been?," Oates.

Reserved Reading Options: "The Destroyers," Greene. "Hunters in the Snow," Tobias Wolff. "How I Met My Husband," Munro. "The Lesson," Bambara. "Miss Brill," Mansfield, "The Lottery," Jackson. "The Birthday Party," Brush. "Roman Fever," Wharton. "Young Goodman Brown," Hawthorne. "Civil Peace," Achebe. "Araby," Joyce. "The Yellow Wallpaper," Gilman.

Concepts and Reading Skills:

- Read closely and interpret literary elements.
- Cite specific details that reveal a narrator's perspective.
- Examine the concept of narrator reliability and how this might impact meaning.
- Trace how different authors sequence the events of the plot and analyze the purpose of particular sequences and parallel plots in assigned texts.
- Explain the function of setting and identify specific textual details that convey setting.
- Explain the function of dynamic, static, and contrasting characters and analyze how authors use textual details to reveal character, relationships between characters, and individual motives.
- Determine the relationship between setting, conflict and character development.
- Articulate the theme and determine how literary elements interact to reveal the theme.
- Interpret figurative language, such as imagery, symbolism, metaphor, simile, and personification.
- Recognize and interpret irony and other literary devices.
- Analyze the author's style and determine how style engages the reader.
- Cite relevant text evidence to support analysis of varied literary texts.
- Participate in discussions and seminars sharing and building upon the ideas of others, justifying interpretations, and revising interpretations based upon the questions and ideas of others.

Writing:

- Write a logically structured literary analysis that includes a defensible claim or thesis statement, relevant supporting evidence, and commentary that provides sound reasoning to connect the evidence to the claim.
- Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using well-structured event sequences, well-chosen details, and a consistent narrative voice.
- Use the conventions of Standard English; vary sentence structure for interest and use transitional devices to link ideas.

Assessment Options:

- Formative:
 - Seminar discussion of *Black Boy*
 - In-class essay based on *The Great Gatsby*
 - Constructed responses to short fiction
 - Multiple-choice practice AP questions, discussion of answers, and written analyses of correct responses.

- Summative:
 - **Written Assessment** elements of short fiction
 - **Literary Analysis Essay** based upon a released AP prompt
 - **Seminar Discussion** short fiction

Unit 2: Longer Fiction and Drama – Roots, Resilience, and Responsibility in *The Scarlet Letter*.

In this unit, students read the nineteenth-century romantic work, *The Scarlet Letter*, analyze meaning and evaluate the author's craft. They reflect on the ways in which the novel conveys a sense of identity and personal values and how those values are simultaneously challenged and refined by social expectations and conventions of the larger [Puritan] community. Students grapple with the notion of responsibility to self and others, specifically the ways in which responsibility may simultaneously liberate and restrict one's spiritual and emotional growth. In addition, students reflect on the challenges arising from the attempt to establish a sense of personal/spiritual integrity amidst cultural restrictions, and the ways in which flouting one's personal truth may render severe consequences for both an individual and a community.

Required Reading: *The Scarlet Letter*, Hawthorne.

Concepts and Reading Skills:

- Examine the author's purpose for selecting a specific historical time period and how this choice connects to the themes of the novel.
- Analyze how specific textual details reveal setting and determine how essential the setting is to the development of conflict, character, and theme.
- Analyze how specific textual details reveal character, including characters' perspectives, and motives.
- Discuss why Hawthorne chose the third person, omniscient point of view for this novel.
- Determine how the literary elements interact to reveal themes.
- Interpret figurative language and literary devices in the novel, such as symbolism, allegory, and allusion in context and analyze their role in the text.
- Analyze the author's style and how this style impacts mood and tone.
- Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
- Participate in discussions/seminars sharing and building upon the ideas of others, justifying interpretations, and revising interpretations based upon the questions and ideas of others.

Writing:

- Write a logically structured literary analysis that includes a defensible claim or thesis statement, precise supporting evidence, commentary that provides sound reasoning to connect the evidence to the claim, and an insightful conclusion.
- Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using well-structured event sequences, well-chosen details, and a consistent narrative voice.

- Use the conventions of Standard English; vary sentence structure for interest and use transitional devices to link ideas.

Assessment Options:

- Formative:
 - Constructed responses based on literary elements and author's craft
 - Short seminar discussions based upon *The Scarlet Letter*
- Summative:
 - **Narrative Essay** "Exploring Your Roots"
 - **Literary Analysis Essay** *The Scarlet Letter*
 - **Seminar Discussion** *The Scarlet Letter*

Unit 3: Poetry (Note: This unit will re-occur at least twice during the course)

In this unit, students examine the genre of poetry, beginning with strategies for reading and analyzing poetry as described in Chapters One and Two of Perrine's textbook. They are introduced to various mnemonic devices for close reading and responding, such as TP-CASTT and SOAPStone. In addition, they read a variety of poetry from pre-twentieth to the twenty-first century and study the writers' use of speaker, imagery, diction, tone, and figurative language, including simile, metaphor, metonymy, apostrophe, personification, symbolism/allegory, irony, paradox, understatement, and overstatement. Students learn the purpose of sound devices such as alliteration, assonance, consonance, onomatopoeia, synesthesia, and rhyme and evaluate how these devices enhance meaning and impact. Various poetic forms, such as the sonnet and the villanelle are discussed, particularly in presenting an introduction to the ways in which poets use structural devices such as repetition, meter, and rhyme.

Required Reading: "Portrait of the Reader with Cereal," Collins. "The Red Wheelbarrow," Williams. "Dulce Et Decorum Est," Owen. "Terence, this is stupid stuff," Housman. "Mirror," Plath. "The world is too much with us," Wordsworth. "35/10," "Rite of Passage," Olds. "The Widow's Lament in Springtime," Williams. "Those Winter Sundays," Hayden. "To Autumn" and "Bright Star," Keats. "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning," "Hymn to God My God in My Sickness," "Death Be Not Proud," Donne. "To the Virgins, to Make Much of Time," Herrick. "Peace," Herbert. "The Author to Her Book," Bradstreet. "The Landlady," Page. "The Art of Losing," Bishop. "Much Madness is Divinest Sense," Dickinson. "Barbie Doll," Piercy. "The Unknown Citizen," Auden. "Siren Song," Atwood. "Journey of the Magi," Eliot. "Woman Work" and "Africa," Angelou. "Introduction to *Songs of Innocence*," "The Lamb," and "The Tiger," Blake. "We Wear the Mask," Dunbar. "America," McKay. "Dover Beach," Arnold. "Church Going," Larkin. "The Black Walnut Tree," Oliver.

Reserved Reading: "There is no Frigate Like a Book," "There's Been a Death in the Opposite House," "Because I Could not Stop for Death," and "There's a Certain Slant of Light," Dickinson. "The Sick Rose," Blake. "To a Daughter Leaving Home," Pastan. "To His Coy Mistress," Marvell. "My Last Duchess," Browning. "Metaphors," Plath. "Convergence of the Twain," Hardy. "Blackberry Picking," Heaney. "Ars Poetica," MacLeish. "Desert Places," "The Road Not Taken," "Design," and "Mending Wall," Frost. "Leda and the Swan," Yeats. "Introduction to Poetry" and "Sonnet," Collins. "The Waking," Roethke. "Ode on a

Grecian Urn,” and “On the Sonnet,” Keats. “My Mistress’ Eyes” and “That time of year,” Shakespeare. “Persephone, Falling,” Dove. “Theme for English B,” Hughes.

Concepts and Reading Skills:

- Compare and contrast the purposes/strengths of prose and poetry.
- Recognize specific forms of poetry. Analyze how the structure of a poem contributes to meaning and impact.
- Describe the speaker of the poem and cite textual details that reveal the speaker’s perspective. Explain the difference between the terms speaker and narrator.
- Analyze and evaluate the poet’s use of figurative language, such as imagery, symbolism/allegory, metaphor/simile, metonymy/synecdoche, personification, apostrophe, allusion, irony, understatement, overstatement, etc.
- Analyze the form and function of sound devices, such as alliteration, assonance, consonance, repetition, rhyme, rhythm, and meter and evaluate how these contribute to meaning and impact.
- Evaluate how specific poems reflect the social and historical values of the time period and/or the poet.
- Participate in discussions and seminars sharing and building upon the ideas of others, justifying interpretations, and revising interpretations based upon the questions and ideas of others.

Writing:

- Write original poetry using a specific form, vivid words, figurative language, and sound devices to enhance meaning and convey themes.
- Continue to hone the skills of writing textually substantiated literary analyses about interpretations of part or all of a text.

Assessment Options:

- Formative:
 - Original poetry imitating the style and structure of another poem (Plath’s “Mirror”)
 - Prose or poetic description of a season. Use of different types of imagery studied in Perrine’s (visual, auditory, gustatory, kinesthetic, organic, olfactory, etc.).
 - Constructed responses/analyses of selected poetry
 - Small group and seminar discussions
 - Multiple choice practice AP questions, large and small group discussion of multiple choice responses, and written analyses of correct responses.
- Summative:
 - **Literary Analysis Essay** based upon a released AP prompt
 - **Literary Analysis Essay** figurative language in two poems studied

Unit 4: Longer Fiction/Drama - The Power and Limitations of Language, Loyalty to Self and Family, and the Consequences of Deception in Shakespeare's *King Lear*

In this unit, students study Aristotle's conception of tragedy in *Poetics* and then explore Shakespeare's tragedy *King Lear*. As they read the play, students analyze the elements of drama and author's craft, especially Shakespeare's mastery of language. They trace the development of plot, character, and theme in both the primary plot of King Lear's erroneous division of his kingdom between his three daughters as well as the subplot involving the tragic conflict between the Earl of Gloucester and his two sons, Edgar and Edmund. While reading, students trace and analyze a recurring motif and present their analysis in writing and through a seminar presentation. Motifs include references to "nothing," "the heart," speaking, silence, death, pregnancy/conception, old age versus youth, letters/writing, poverty/lack, division/dissection, disease/illness, and references to nature.

Required Reading: *King Lear*, Shakespeare; Chapter One, "The Nature of Drama," *Perrine's Literature*; Chapter Three, "Tragedy and Comedy," *Perrine's Literature*.

Reserved Reading: *A Doll House*, Ibsen; Chapter Two, "Realistic and Nonrealistic Drama," *Perrine's Literature*.

Concepts and Reading Skills:

- Recognize and analyze the literary elements of drama as used by Shakespeare.
- Analyze specific textual details that reveal character, characters' perspectives, and motives. Explain how a character's own choices, actions, and speech reveal complexities in that character, and explain the function of those complexities.
- Explain the function of contrasting characters, including the complicated system of foils where Gloucester's family reflects Lear's family.
- Analyze plot sequence and text structure. Explain the function of contrasts and/or parallels within a text. Determine how structure adds to a sense of mystery.
- Analyze how literary elements interact to reveal themes.
- Interpret figurative language and literary devices in the novel, such as symbolism, allegory, and allusion in context and analyze their role in the text.

Writing:

- Continue to hone the skills needed to write precise literary analyses.
- Understand the difference between a literary analysis and a literary argument as expected on the AP exam.
- Write a well-structured literary argument:
 - Develop a thesis statement that conveys a defensible claim about an interpretation of literature and that may establish a line of reasoning.
 - Select relevant and sufficient evidence to both develop and support a line of reasoning.
 - Develop commentary that establishes and explains relationships among textual evidence, the line of reasoning, and the thesis.
 - Incorporate effective use of rhetorical strategies.

- Create a purposeful structure and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of Standard English.

Assessment Options:

- Formative:
 - Constructed responses, short essay/paragraph quizzes,
 - Small group analyses and discussion
 - Seminar discussions on *King Lear*
- Summative:
 - **Motif Project** (written analyses and oral presentation of selected motif) *King Lear*
 - **Literary Argument Essay** *King Lear*

Unit 5: Longer Fiction/Drama - Love, Vengeance, and The Consequences of Repressing Nature/The Self in Bronte's *Wuthering Heights*

In this unit, students examine the Romantic and Gothic influences on literature of the nineteenth century English through the study of Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights*. In addition, they study the concept of the Byronic Hero and explore the ways in which both Heathcliff and Catherine function as heroic figures in the novel as they challenge the overarching social conventions of their time.

Required Reading: *Wuthering Heights*, Bronte.

Reserved Reading (Supplemental Poetry): "Wuthering Heights," Plath.

Concepts and Reading Skills:

- Analyze why the author chooses specific narrators in this novel.
- Identify the details and diction in the text that reveal narrator 's perspective.
- Determine the importance of setting to conflict and character.
- Analyze the methods that the author uses to reveal character. Explain the purpose of contrasting characters.
- Explain how a character's choices, actions, and speech reveal complexities in that character, and analyze how characters respond to conflict over the course of the text
- Evaluate how conflict, setting, character, and point of view interact to reveal themes.
- Analyze how text structure contributes to a sense of mystery and suspense.
- Evaluate the author's craft, including how the author uses imagery and figurative language to engage the reader.
- Evaluate how the author creates mood and tone throughout the work.

Writing:

- Write a logically structured literary argument (as detailed in the previous unit) that demonstrates original insight.
 - Incorporate effective use of rhetorical strategies and achieving emphasis through parallelism and antithesis.

- Establish a controlling tone and maintain a consistent point of view.
- Use sophisticated transitional devices to link ideas or to indicate when contrasting ideas will be introduced.

Assessment Options:

- Formative:
 - Constructed responses
 - Seminar discussion and literature circles
- Summative:
 - **Seminar Discussion** *Wuthering Heights*
 - **Literary Argument Essay** *Wuthering Heights*

Unit 6: Longer Fiction/Drama - Finding Freedom From and Within the Confines of the Past through Communal and Self-Love in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*

In this unit, students study contemporary American literature through Toni Morrison's Pulitzer Prize winning novel *Beloved*. As in other units, they examine literary elements, author's craft, and the connection between the novel and a particular historical period. In *Beloved*, students explore how individuals struggle to liberate themselves from the confines of the past, specifically the ways in which newly established Black communities persevered against racial violence and oppression to achieve a sense of individual and collective freedom during the Reconstruction Era of American history. The theme of fostering a sense of self and communal love and acceptance despite the violent, polarizing forces of the past is a focus topic for this unit. Students will also explore Morrison's blend of both realistic and surrealistic situations, as well as her use of Biblical allusion and underlying myth to communicate meaning in her work.

Required Reading:

Beloved, Morrison.

Concepts and Reading Skills:

- Examine the historical context of the novel.
- Determine how the setting of the novel impacts conflict, character, point of view, and theme.
- Examine the primary conflicts of the novel and how they impact character development.
- Examine Morrisons' use of varied narrators / monologues in the text and analyze the details and diction that reveal each narrator's perspective.
- Analyze Morrisons use of figurative language, symbolism, and Biblical allusion to create a sense of surrealism, mystery and myth.
- Examine allusions to Christian beliefs, including the epigraph and the interpolations of the Songs of Songs during the monologues.
- Trace a motif (e.g., milk, water) across the development of the novel; explain its meaning and significance to the work.
- Cite precise textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

- Evaluate the ambiguity in the novel - consider why plot and character are developed throughout the novel without clear-cut, definitive answers.
- Examine the significance of the novel within contemporary literature.

Writing:

- Write a logically structured literary argument that demonstrates original insight and the ability to make connections between texts or between the text and historical events.

Assessment Options:

- Formative:
 - Constructed responses, short essay quizzes,
 - Seminar discussion, and literature circles
 - Summative:
 - **Seminar Discussion** *Beloved* (ending of the novel)
 - **Literary Argument Essay** *Beloved* (at least one option is focused on the use of Biblical allusion in the novel)
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Grading Policy:

Mastery/Summative (revised and final drafts of essays and projects, final seminar assessments): 40%

Formative (various reading quizzes, short essay responses, literature circles and group work, creative responses, including original poetry): 40%

Class Participation and Engagement (active class participation; practice multiple choice tests; consistent preparation, etc.): 20%