

Advanced Placement Literature and Composition

Veronica Riordan-Hunt
вриordan@scuc.txed.net

Room H207
Remind: Text @riordanap to 81010

Course Focus

An AP English Literature and Composition course engages students in the careful reading and critical analysis of imaginative literature. Through the close reading of selected texts, students deepen their understanding of the ways writers use language to provide both meaning and pleasure for their readers. As they read, students consider a work's structure, style and themes, as well as such smaller-scale elements as the use of figurative language, imagery, symbolism and tone.

Reading in an AP course is both wide and deep. This reading necessarily builds upon and complements the reading done in previous English courses so that by the time students complete their AP course, they will have read works from several genres and periods — from the 16th to the 21st century. In the course, they read deliberately and thoroughly, taking time to understand a work's complexity, to absorb its richness of meaning, and to analyze how that meaning is embodied in literary form. In addition to considering a work's literary artistry, students reflect on the social and historical values it reflects and embodies. Careful attention to both textual detail and historical context provides a foundation for interpretation, whatever critical perspectives are brought to bear on the literary works studied.

"English Literature and Composition Course Description".

<http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/apc/public/courses/descriptions/index.html>

Class Philosophy, Policies, and Expectations

Congratulations on your decision to take Advanced Placement Literature and Composition. This is a challenging course, but one that I am hopeful will prove to be rewarding for you as we work together in class and one that will prepare you for the rigors of your post-secondary pursuits.

There are some expectations and practices that go along with this college-level course, so this handout is designed to clarify what these are.

First, this is a reading-intensive course. You will read at least five full-length classic works, as well as dozens of poems and shorter works of prose. The majority of the reading will be done on your own time - you will be given due dates for your reading in advance, and you will be expected to keep up. Do not even think about reading summaries available online or in print instead of the original work. You cannot appreciate the craft of the writers if you are not studying the original work. Reading checks and other methods of assessment will be used to make sure that all students have read and are prepared to offer intelligent commentary on the works. Repeated failure to demonstrate that you are keeping up with the reading or other work may result in a parent-student-teacher conference to determine if you are in the best situation to be successful.

This is also a writing-intensive course, and you will be asked to explore your ideas and demonstrate your knowledge in a variety of ways – timed writings, formal essays, short answer responses, etc. **I will not grade everything you produce, but everything you write is important, even if only to flesh out ideas and explore issues that may help you to come to a fuller appreciation of what is being studied in class.** That being said, I will try to make every assignment meaningful. When I read your work for a grade or just to give you feedback, you can be sure that I will go through it slowly and deliberately in order to truly appreciate the ideas you are presenting and to help you improve the way you present those ideas.

As active learners, you will be expected to be fully engaged in the classroom instruction and activities. You should become used to "reading with pen in hand", and you should be using class time to record your ideas and jot notes while you are reading or others are speaking.

From time to time, components of your grade will involve your participation in class discussions and other activities based on the works we read as a class. If you are not prepared for these discussions, either because you did not demonstrate that you completed the independent reading or because you have not done your preparation work for the discussions, then you will not be able to participate. You will also not be able to sit idly by and listen to the ideas and commentary of your peers and receive the secondhand benefits of their hard work. Instead, you will be asked to present your ideas in a written form that will take place outside the discussion forum.

Class Environment

This class centers around the exchange of ideas, and respect must be shown to all members of the class and to the instructor. You are to follow directions and avoid disrupting the class; whether you understand a concept already or disagree with the views of another, you are not to create noise or speak until you have been given “the floor”. Furthermore, profanity and derogatory language will not be tolerated.

AP English IV is taught at the college level; decorum befitting a university class is therefore expected. If you need to be redirected on a regular basis, perhaps this is not the appropriate course for you.

General Rules

You are expected to:

- Follow District policies as outlined in the handbook, including dress code and ID policy.
- Be in the classroom and seated when the tardy bell rings; remain in your desk until dismissed.
- Refrain from bringing or consuming food and/or drinks in the classroom.
- Go to the restroom and take care of personal business before class; passes are only for emergencies. Per campus rules, students will be allowed out of the classroom during the first or last ten minutes of class.
- Keep all personal possessions (purses, backpacks, etc.) off the desk during class.

A special note about the use of electronic devices:

All devices must be kept in a backpack or purse during class. A caddy is available (with charging accessories) in the room for any student who wishes to use it. Any device that is visible during class without permission, *whether or not it is being used*, is subject to confiscation and may be turned in to administration.

Assessment and Grading

Assessment will involve timed and un-timed writings, objective exams, essay assignments, and oral presentations. All assessments are designed to reflect the student’s grasp of the subtleties of thought and feeling expressed in the text, the originality and relevancy of their interpretation of the selection, and their appreciation of the literary features of the work.

All grades will be recorded in numerical form. The amount of time and effort required to complete an assignment determines its weight in relation to other assignments. Course grades are computed as follows:

Formative Assignments	50%
In-class assignments, homework, quizzes, etc.	

Summative Assignments	50%
Tests, Projects, Essays, etc.	

AP Score/Grade Equivalency:

Satisfactory Scores

6 = 100

5 = 90

4 = 80

Unsatisfactory Scores

3 = 75

2 = 60

1 = 50

0 = 0

Attached to these policies is an addendum that explains the grading policies that are in place for courses such as Advanced Placement English. Please take the time to familiarize yourself with these guidelines. If exceptions to this policy are warranted, you will be informed in advance.

Students whose averages are 75 or lower are encouraged to take advantage of study hall/tutorials before school. You must be in the classroom by 7:45 a.m. so that you can take full advantage of this opportunity. Students who are failing the course and who have not attended tutorials or made other attempts to raise their grades should not expect to receive last-minute assistance to pass the quarter or semester.

Finally, by enrolling in any Advanced Placement class, you are expected to sit for the AP examination at the end of the year. This will qualify you to exempt the final at the end of the year, provided you are passing the course and meet all other expectations; no other final exam exemption will be extended. If taking the AP test creates a financial burden, please discuss this with me.

Absences and Late Work

One of the most important skills you will take to college or the “real world” is the ability to manage your time effectively. You will be provided due dates for reading and major assignments. Plan ahead to avoid any conflicts between assignments for other classes. Do NOT wait until the last minute!

An assignment is considered late if it is not presented at the date and time specified by the instructor. If you are present during any part of the school day, the work is still due. If you must leave campus for school business or any other reason, it is your responsibility to make sure the work is turned in before you leave. All assignments are due at the beginning of class unless otherwise noted. Partial credit will not be awarded to students who fail to produce work when it is due, and students will not be allowed to leave class after the bell to retrieve work left elsewhere.

Formal assignments that are required to be typed are given with enough notice to work out issues involving computers, internet access, and printers. An issue with your equipment does not serve as an excuse for late work – printers are available before school if you need to print something out. You will not be able to print from the instructor’s computer.

If you are absent, it is your responsibility to learn what was missed and to make arrangements to make up the work; arrangements should be made after (not during) class or before or after school. If you are present when assignments and tests are announced, you will be expected to turn in the assignment the first day back at school and/or take the test on the announced date. Exceptions require prior parent contact. You are advised to check the class website on a regular basis.

All tests, or other assignments completed during class, are to be made up within three days during the announced tutorial session or at the teacher’s convenience. Alternate versions may be used for some make-up tests over literature units.

Please see the Advanced Academics Grading Guidelines Addendum for more detailed information.

Supplies

- A composition book which will be used for most of the formative assessment in class and will usually remain in the classroom.
- Pen with blue or black ink, pencils
- Highlighters – Yellow, Blue, Green, Pink
- Binder (encouraged, but not required) to keep all handouts and resource material. *This will not be stored in class.*

Advanced Academics Grading Addendum

Objective: Students enrolled in advanced courses have chosen an exciting, rigorous path designed to help the student achieve graduation with robust preparation for college and more: additionally, these courses can potentially earn the student actual college credits for successful course mastery. The grading practices presented here coincide with the collegiate-level expectations of the university courses for which students seek to earn credit and will help establish study skills and the work ethic necessary for their success. For a student to be successful in advanced academics, work must generally be completed in its entirety, to the best of a student's ability, and on time. Though there will always be exceptions based on extenuating circumstances, these exceptions should be limited, rather than habitual. If an element is not addressed here, the district guidelines that are posted on the district website will be in effect. The SCUC Secondary Grading Guidelines will be in effect, with exceptions that are communicated in this addendum. These will also be included throughout the course syllabus for IB and AP coursework.

Procedural Grades: Many assignments will require a certain procedure to be followed, either because it will be expected of college-level work or because that procedure ultimately helps the student understand the overall content better. Thus, following specific assignment-based directions provided by the instructor may be factored into student grades for these assignments.

Academic Integrity: Academic integrity is vitally important to ensure that a student is genuinely engaged in the learning process and working toward mastery of coursework. Authentic efforts and original work completed by a student allow the teacher to accurately assess that student's progress in the course, whereas if the student submits work that is not authentically his/her own, the teacher has no way to gauge the student's actual progress toward mastery.

Specifically, academic dishonesty includes forgery, cheating or copying the work of another student, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, unauthorized use of computer translator, or unauthorized use of outside resources or other means to gain an unfair or dishonest advantage. All use of the words, graphics or ideas of other persons, whether written or oral, must be clearly acknowledged.

Students found to have engaged in academic dishonesty shall be subject to grade penalties on assignments or tests and disciplinary penalties in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. Grades resulting from academic dishonesty may not be dropped or made up; further, student will receive an academic referral to his/her administrator, and parents will be notified.

IB: The IB coordinator will be informed and the student will be placed on academic probation. A second offense in any class may result in student losing qualification to participate in the IB Diploma program.

AP: A second offense in one class equals removal from that class. Third overall offense may result in removal from all AP classes for that academic calendar year (except for isolated classes where there is no grade-level version of the course, such as AP Calculus).

Re-testing: Successful academic growth comes in part from the student's keeping pace with the classroom instruction. Realizing this helps the student learn to be prepared and able to participate fully in the day's lesson and put forth his/her best efforts on summative assessments. District grading guidelines apply, with the exception of AP and IB. The student may have the opportunity to retest one summative assignment per nine-week/grading period. Teachers may, at their discretion, determine if extenuating circumstances warrant additional opportunities to retest on assignments, and have discretion to establish the time allotted for the student to retest.

IB Students: Re-testing provisions do not apply to IB-*required* assessments/components completed as part of the IB Diploma Program (for example, IAs, EEs, Orals, etc.).

Make-Up Work for Absences: Partial Day Absence: If a student is present on campus for any portion of the day when an assignment is due, the student is expected to turn in the work to the teacher that day, prior to leaving or upon return to campus. If an extenuating circumstance arises, the teacher should be notified as soon as possible.

Late Work

To work toward mastery, the student benefits greatly from keeping up with the instructional pace of the course. Turning work in on time allows the student to gain valuable and timely feedback on his/her efforts along with the rest of the class, and will enable the student to participate meaningfully in classroom activities built on the prior assignments. Simply put, late work can put a student at an academic disadvantage because he/she won't be able to progress with the rest of the class until caught up. It is best for the student to turn in all work on time. A student may turn work in **one day** late with 70% being the maximum grade possible on the late assignment. Teachers have the discretion to extend the number of days based on extenuating circumstances. It is the parent/guardian and/or student's responsibility to inform the teacher of any such circumstances. The teacher may grant exceptions based on these circumstances.

Academic Misconduct

*"Mine honor is my life; both grow in one;
Take honor from me, and my life is done."*

William Shakespeare (*Richard II* – I. ii)

Academic honesty is serious - perhaps the most serious issue in this or any class. Violations of this principle have been the downfall of writers, journalists, and politicians, not to mention students in my class.

Whether or not the infraction was intentional, the result is the same – you will not receive credit for any part of the assignment, you will not be able to make up the assignment, and you will have a referral sent to your administrator. Furthermore, I will not write any letter of recommendation for you, and I will retract any recommendation that has already been sent. Consequences may extend beyond the classroom, such as jeopardizing membership in the National Honor Society. This applies whether or not the act was intentional or not. There will also be no distinction made regardless of whether the work submitted was part of a formal or informal assignment and/or a draft that would later be revised and edited.

Academic misconduct includes any of the following:

Plagiarism –

This is probably what most people think of when they hear the term “academic misconduct”. Representing the ideas of another person as your own, when you did not come up with those ideas, is plagiarism. It does not matter if it is a direct “cut and paste” or if you took the time to put it in your own words; if it is not followed by a clear citation that points to the source from which it came, then you have committed plagiarism, irrespective of whether or not that was your intention.

Why do people plagiarize? Some actually do it because they were never taught that they had to cite their original sources. In our increasingly technological world, with information readily available at the touch of a few keys, most people in the world do not take the time to provide a reference to the source of their information. But there is a difference between sharing the content of a movie review with a peer, and presenting the information in any format where you expect to receive credit (grade, paycheck, acknowledgment) for the idea.

Other people do it because they have not planned well. Their lives are busy with other demands or distractions – work, other classes, social media, etc. If you are overwhelmed and feel that you have to take shortcuts, then you should stop to consider how your time is managed. A dishonest action to temporarily save face may end up being much more costly in the long run.

One other excuse that is commonly used by students is that they did not trust their own ideas. While this may seem to be a sympathetic rationale, it is still a grave mistake, and you will receive the same consequences as someone who committed the same act for a “less noble” reason.

And here is something to consider – you do not get smarter or develop your own abilities if you cheat. Those who are doing their own thinking will get smarter, and you will fall behind. Then it becomes a vicious cycle. This doesn't just affect you in this class; it affects your abilities now and forever. Athletes do not get stronger watching others; they must go out there and push their bodies, continuously going beyond what they thought were their limitations. The same thing goes with your cognitive abilities. You will never know what you are capable of if you do not push yourself.

I do not want you to give me ideas that are not your own – whether they come from a book, an online source, or some college friend who is spouting wisdom from his or her professor. You may end up being wrong by being original, but you will end up smarter in the long run.

"This above all: to thine own self be true.

And it must follow, as the night the day,

Thou canst not then be false to any man."

William Shakespeare (*Hamlet* – I. iii)

Unauthorized Collaboration –

This is the most common form of malpractice, and though you may not consider it an egregious act, it will receive the same punishment as "big-time cheating". **If you have not been given specific instructions to work together on an assignment, then DO NOT collaborate or share material.**

There are several types of assessments on which I will instruct you to collaborate, but there are others that are designed to ask you to show me your original thought processes and insights. Sometimes you grow as a person when you work with others, but you will never fully develop as a critical thinker if you are not challenged to think on your own.

Also, you are guilty whether you are the "giver" or the "receiver". You may have done your own work, and probably spent a great deal of time doing it; however, if you share it with another student, then you have also been guilty of academic misconduct and all your work will be for naught. To avoid any possible penalties, you should not share your work with any other student. If you do so and your work or ideas appear to have been submitted, in whole or part, by another student, then you will also be penalized. Students who have questions about how to complete an assignment should contact the teacher.

Using unauthorized material or aids on assignments or tests-

There are times when you will be allowed to use notes or other materials, **including secondary sources**, when working on an assignment, but if you have not been told specifically that you may do so, then it is prohibited. This includes assignments that are completed in class, as well as those that are completed outside of the class setting.

Sharing information about assessments -

Students are not allowed to share information from tests, quizzes, essays or other assessments until the assessment has been graded and the class has discussed the information.

Forgery/Fabrication

If you present anything that has been fabricated or altered, or if you present information that you allege is from a teacher, administrator, or parent in order to gain an unfair advantage, then it is academic dishonesty. You will not receive credit on the assignment that is affected, and you will not be allowed to make it up.

Again, this list is just an overview of the most common forms of malpractice. If there are questions, then they should be asked before action is taken. Ignorance will not be an excuse to avoid consequences.

Some formal and informal assignments will be submitted to turnitin.com to ensure originality of the material. Both electronic submission and a hard copy turned in to the teacher are required at the same time. Point deductions will be assessed if both requirements are not met by the due date.

Literature is NOT for Children

As a student in Advanced Placement Literature, you must understand that the study of literature is not for those who are weak of mind or faint of heart, especially in a course that asks you to study works in a manner that goes beyond the superficial. Like any art appreciation class, the study of literature is one that requires a great deal from its students. Delving into the depths of novels, poetry, and drama is a challenging, yet rewarding, experience – the deeper you go, the more you will discover.

You must also understand that literature was not written for children. It was written by men and women who expected much from their audience in terms of knowledge and experience. That being said, you should bear these things in mind before, during, and after we read some of the great masterpieces of English, American, and world literature.

Allusions

The Bible and Classical Mythology

Whether or not you practice a religion in the Judeo-Christian tradition or observe any religion at all, you must understand that the artists who composed the literature of the ages drew extensively on the Bible and the teachings of Christianity. It was, and still is for many, a source of common knowledge that taught how to behave and what to believe, but it was also the foundation of the style of writing for the development of the art form of literature. Pick up a copy of the King James Bible and appreciate the translation of the poetry of the Psalms and the fluidity of its prose in the parables of The New Testament.

As far as the content of the Bible, if you truly want to get the most out of literature, you should understand that the great writers of any age expect their audience to have a basic working knowledge of the text. The more educated the writer, the more likely they are to include allusions in their writing – some of which are caught by only a handful of readers.

With this in mind, the expectation is that understanding basic biblical allusions is your responsibility. You should know the basic stories of the Bible: Creation, The Fall of Man, The Great Flood, Exodus, and other major stories from The Old Testament, as well as the major events in the life of Christ and his teachings.

Some of the literature reinforces biblical teachings, while some works (or characters within works) challenge these beliefs and ideas in a head-on assault. Some writers just like to throw quotes or allusions in for the sake of the art.

We are **not** here to teach about religion, but it will be discussed as it directly relates to the work being studied. Sometimes you may feel enlightened, sometimes you may be angry and frustrated. However, we are not going to get bogged down in theology, and students are expected to keep their personal beliefs (or non-beliefs) to themselves and will not be allowed to attack others.

As far as allusions to classical mythology, it's probably a safe bet that there are few people who still practice the religions of the ancient Greeks, Romans, or Norse. It's probably easier, therefore, to avoid offending anyone when discussing classical mythology while studying literature.

Again, however, it is your responsibility to have a good working knowledge of the mythological gods and goddesses, their responsibilities and tendencies, and how things generally worked in the religions of the ancient world. If you don't recognize an allusion to "Niobe's tears" or the "Midas touch", you had better look it up.

Shakespeare

Paradoxically, we don't really know much about this guy, but he is everywhere. Shakespeare draws on the Bible and mythology and history; other writers draw on Shakespeare. The man (or woman) known as Shakespeare was a prolific writer and gave us some of our most resonant characters and enduring words and phrases. In fact, even if he takes artistic license and changes things around (Macbeth and Caesar, for example), he is widely seen as the paragon of English literature.

We will read some of his work in this class, but you will not really have a true understanding of his genius unless you go on to study him more in depth. Most allusions to his works that you need to know will be explained to you, but you are certainly encouraged to explore his other works. You will be amazed at how much more you will understand in the works of other authors, directors, and artists when you do.

Sex, Drugs, Violence and Other Touchy Subjects

So, you have been asked to do your homework and know the references to the Bible, Mythology, and Shakespeare. Now we will talk about some other issues that will come up in our reading.

Sex (good and bad), drugs and violence (pretty much always bad) often make their way into literature and they will be discussed insofar as they add to the study of the art of the craft. Sometimes the use of sex in literary works is bawdy and humorous, sometimes it is tender and emotional, but it is important to literature because it is a universal experience. The same goes for violence and the use of alcohol and other drugs.

It bears repeating – literature was intended for adults, not children. There are issues and situations presented by writers that presuppose some experience that young adults simply do not (and should not) have. We do not discuss sex and other issues for the shock value; we discuss it because it is important to the understanding of the work. If you want to giggle or act in an immature manner, then you can do so outside of class.

Final Word:

You are in an advanced class because you are expected to have the intelligence and maturity to handle the material. If, at any time, you have concerns or questions, please feel free to schedule a time to speak to me in private.