Mrs. Cirringione

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**Welcome to AP Language and Composition!** This year-long advanced course is designed to make you skilled readers of prose written in a variety of periods, disciplines, and rhetorical contexts, and skilled writers who compose for a variety of purposes‖ (The College Board, *AP® English Course Description*). A majority of the course is devoted to the study of argument and persuasion, or what is known as rhetoric. Our goal throughout the year will be to understand how messages are conveyed and how arguments are structured. Because most media is at some level rhetorical, it is important to recognize how our view of the world is being shaped by what we read, view, or hear. It is also important that as writers we understand how best to communicate our own point of view in a way that others will find reasonable, even if they do not agree. Our journey will take us through nonfiction and fictional works alike, but rest assured that no matter what the text, you will be challenged to examine language in a new and exciting way!

**Course Objectives:**

 The purpose of this course is to help students “write effectively and confidently in their college courses across the curriculum and in their professional and personal lives” (The College Board, *AP® English Course Description*). The course is organized according to the requirements and guidelines of the current *AP English Course Description,* and, therefore, students are expected to read critically, think analytically, and communicate clearly both in writing and speech.

Visit this link for the full course description from the College Board:

http://media.collegeboard.com/digitalServices/pdf/ap/ap-english-language-and-composition-course-description.pdf

**General Goals of the Course:**

1. At the end of the course, the student will have demonstrated a mastery of the skills which enable him/her to write competent, freshman level university essays. These skills include:
	1. PRE-WRITING (Finding a Thesis)
		1. Choosing a subject that reflects genuine interest and understanding
		2. Narrowing the subject so it can be adequately covered within the limits of the assignment
		3. Writing a thesis comprised of a subject, opinion/intent and controlling idea
	2. ORGANIZATION (Planning a Paper)
		1. Beginning and ending an essay thoughtfully
		2. Making relationships between ideas clear
		3. Moving smoothly from one paragraph to another
	3. SUPPORT (Supporting the Thesis)
		1. Proving the validity of ideas
		2. Supporting general statements with specific details
		3. Using evidence to develop ideas
			1. examples
			2. facts
			3. description
			4. experience
			5. attribution
	4. GRAMMAR, MECHANICS, STYLE (Syntax)
		1. Using language with precision
		2. Avoiding common grammatical errors
		3. Strengthening writing through revision
2. At the end of the course, the students will have demonstrated competency in writing college level essays using a variety of methods of development. These methods will include:
	1. Example
	2. Classification/Division
	3. Process
	4. Definition
	5. Cause and Effect
	6. Argumentation/Persuasion
	7. Description
	8. Synthesis
	9. Analysis of Literature
	10. Personal Writing
	11. Research
3. In May, the student will take the AP Language and Composition Examination.
4. As stated by the College Board, upon completing the AP English Language course, students should be able to:
* analyze and interpret samples of good writing, identifying and explaining an author’s use of rhetorical strategies and techniques;
* apply effective strategies and techniques in their own writing;
* create and sustain arguments based on readings, research, and/or personal experience;
* write for a variety of purposes;
* produce expository, analytical, argumentative, and synthesis compositions that introduce a complex central idea and develop it with appropriate evidence drawn from primary and/or secondary sources, personal experience, cogent explanations, and clear transitions;
* demonstrate understanding and mastery of standard written as well as stylistic maturity in their own writing:
	+ a wide-ranging vocabulary used appropriately and effectively
	+ a variety of sentence structures, including appropriate use of subordination
	+ logical organization, enhanced by specific techniques to increase coherence, such as repetition, transitions, and emphasis
	+ a balance of generalization and specific illustrative detail
	+ an effective use of rhetoric, including controlling tone, establishing and maintaining voice, and achieving appropriate emphasis through diction and sentence structure
* demonstrate understanding of the conventions of citing primary and secondary sources;
* move effectively through the stages of the writing process, with careful attention to inquiry and research, drafting, revising, editing, and review;
* write thoughtfully about their own process of composition;
* revise a work to make it suitable for a different audience;
* evaluate and incorporate reference documents into researched papers.

**MUST KNOWS FOR AP LANGUAGE**

1. Be knowledgeable about the purpose and structure of communication in non-fiction writing, speech, and visual representation. Be able to distinguish between what a text says and what it “does.”
2. Write any of these kinds of compositions: argument, analysis of argument or rhetoric, compare/contrast essays, synthesis of provided source texts, oration.
3. Do any from #2 as process multi-paragraph essays and as timed writings.
4. Write a well-focused thesis sentence that identifies the subject to be discussed and clarifies the direction of the essay; if an AP prompt, it does not repeat from the prompt.
5. Show mastery of concrete detail (examples, quotations, support, paraphrase, references, evidence) and commentary (analysis and interpretation), sentence variety, parallel structure, figurative language, integrating/embedding/incorporating quotations smoothly into their own sentences, varying subject openers, and noteworthy vocabulary.
6. Write mature and insightful commentary to complement concrete detail.
7. Analyze any element of argument or rhetoric, whether or not the devices are given in the prompt, including structural elements such as thesis, turning point, refutation, digression and such devices as analogy, syllogism, concession, hyperbole, euphemism, understatement, definition, sentence structures (periodic, loose, parallel rhetorical questions, etc.) appeals to logic, empathy, etc.
8. Analyze visual arguments in photos, paintings, sculpture, political cartoons, propaganda, ads, charts, diagrams, etc.
9. Read and understand prose from a range of periods and styles, so that archaic forms of expression (“want” meaning need, not desire, for example) are not stumbling blocks and so that cleverness, satire, wit, and subtext can be recognized, even under pressure.
10. Answer multiple-choice questions efficiently and quickly from AP sample, using the “eliminate and narrow” approach.
11. Have a working knowledge of the terms we will study, not just a “fling and sling” approach to using terminology in an essay.
12. Know how to detect and discuss tone, attitude, and bias.
13. Become aware and concerned about social issues facing the United States through reading and discussion of current events. Become a “Citizen Rhetor” who can analyze, synthesize, and make compelling, focused arguments about these issues.

**WRITING**

* In AP English Language, students will depend less on formulaic structure, and inject more insight, depth and original thinking into their writing. Additional emphases will be on expanding vocabulary, increasing clarity, honing a thesis, and making better use of rhetorical strategies to advance an argument. Students will write analysis essays, argument papers and synthesis papers using and citing a variety of sources.
* In addition to shorter writing assignments (journal responses, rhetorical précis, etc.), students will partake in full-process essays, especially in the first quarter.
* All essays will be graded using the AP Language Exam rubric.

**CLASSROOM POLICIES:**

* Late homework is not accepted. Because homework and process assignments (i.e. rough drafts, etc.) pertain to the lesson of the day, students earn no credit if they do not submit them on the due date. Athletics, extracurricular activities (field trips), and planned absences require submission of assignments prior to the scheduled absence for full credit. Therefore, students must contact me prior to a planned absence.
* Consistent attendance is essential for success in this course. In case of an absence, however, please consult a friend to check the homework for the night so that you can choose to stay current.
	+ When returning from an absence, check the absent folder to see if you missed any handouts.
* Be respectful to all.
* Cheating and plagiarism on schoolwork will result in a zero on the assignment and disciplinary action.

**LITERATURE**

* Although we will read a great deal of fiction in this class, the primary focus is on nonfiction works—essays, speeches, autobiographies, and other nonfiction works. Generally speaking, these works will be read outside of the classroom, assigned in chunks. On the days the assigned chapters are due, students should expect a quiz of some sort (a multiple choice AP style examination of a certain passage from the text, a Socratic Seminar discussion, or some other assignment). We will not be studying the works simply as pieces of fiction, but as masterpieces of language. For example, we will focus on questions like: what elements of language did the author use? What strategies were chosen with his reader and his purpose constantly in mind? We are ultimately studying the author’s style and the components that comprise it. Full length works may include:
* *The Scarlet Letter*, Nathaniel Hawthorne
* *The Crucible*, Arthur Miller
* *The Great Gatsby*, F. Scott Fitzgerald
* *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Mark Twain
* *The Things They Carried*, Tim O’Brien
* *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave*
* Nonfiction independent choice selections—this is especially important because a large part of this class requires you to have extensive background knowledge in order to successfully write your argumentative essays. Reading everything and anything will help build this!
* *Complications: A Surgeon’s Notes on an Imperfect Science*, Atul Gawande

Students will also read shorter essays, excerpts, and speeches by the likes of Abraham Lincoln, Thomas Jefferson, Virginia Woolf, George Bush, Martin Luther King, Jr., Henry David Thoreau, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Sandra Cisneros, David Sedaris, Amy Tan, George Orwell, Mark Twain, Marjane Satrapi, Chinua Achebe, and many others!

**MATERIALS**

* A binder with sections divided as follows: Do Now, Rhetoric, Composition, Literature, Current Events, Vocabulary, and Test Prep (get a decent sized binder—we will be filling it up nicely! ☺ )
* Taking notes on your iPad is up to you; however, it is essential to work on your penmanship in this course, so I’d advise sticking to old fashioned, handwritten note-taking. Therefore, be sure to have loose-leaf paper in your binder.
* Red or colored pens for annotating
* Highlighters
* Post-its
* Index cards
* You will need access to a credible newspaper or online source

**GRADING**

* Essays/Tests/Projects—40%
	+ all essays will be graded using the AP Language Exam essay rubric
	+ Homework counts as a test grade (also affects your participation grade)
		- Homework will be collected at random
* Quizzes and short writing pieces—30%
* Reading Checks/short quizzes—15%
* Participation—15%

\* The literary works that appear on the Advanced Placement Readings lists are *challenging, college-level reading for mature, discerning students.* The purpose of a literary work is not to please, but to make the reader think; not to affirm the reader’s beliefs, but, rather, to challenge them, so that they might be affirmed or rejected. Each work of art is an expression of the *human experience in all its richness—its diversity—its conflicting opinions.*  Some literary works at this level may be seen by some as dark and depressing; however, a mature reader knows that light and dark, pleasure and pain, joy and sadness are inextricably intertwined as part of the human experience, each defining and making possible the alternative. The themes of these diverse works attempt to question life’s important issues: *the nature of man, the purpose of life, the existence of a higher power, the acquisition of knowledge and wisdom, the moral dilemma of a good and evil and more.*

**I look forward to a wonderful year ahead! ☺**

**Please sign this page to acknowledge that you have read and understand the AP English Language and Composition course guidelines and expectations.**

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