

Mr. Toulouse

dtoulouse@winthrop.k12.ma.us

AP Literature and Composition

AP English Literature and Composition Syllabus

The purpose of this class is to read, think about, talk about, and write about great literature. This course is designed to comply with the curricular requirements described in the *AP English Course Description*.

MAJOR GOALS:

- Break the crutch of the five-paragraph essay.
- React critically and authentically to literature.
- Read like a writer: think about the author's purpose, and look at the decisions the author makes in achieving this purpose.
- Write carefully crafted essays that show a unique perspective and a strong understanding of literature.
- Understand and develop voice.
- Develop vocabulary and context clue skills.
- Learn to discern between what is actually written on the page and what is truly being communicated.

General Grading Policies:

- 'A' work is truly outstanding. Insights are articulate, accurate, deep and thought-provoking. The 'A' student thinks critically and generates superior inferences. Essays demonstrate sophisticated style, near perfect grammar, and strong development. 'A' work is thoroughly complete.
- 'B' work is interesting and above average. Insight may not be as far-reaching or insightful as the top quality work, but critical thinking is demonstrated and explored. Essays may not be quite as sophisticated or as well developed as top scoring essays. Again, all work is complete.
- 'C' work is complete, but most ideas are obvious or barely insightful. Critical thinking is minimal. Essays attempt to prove those ideas that most readers already understand, and present ideas in a simplistic manner.
- 'D' work is incomplete. I may give no credit at all to work that is grossly incomplete. This work will be returned and a redo will be required to receive credit for the assignment.

The grade breakdown is as follows:

Grading Categories
Essay Writing =25%
Tests/Quizzes =25%
Projects =25%
Homework =25%

Materials Needed:

In addition to standard school supplies, you should have a binder dedicated to this course only, dividers, highlighters, and post-it notes. You may also wish to purchase the books we are studying in class so that they can take notes in their own copies.

Grading / Assessments:

- Students will be graded on a point system using the following assessments:
- Summer reading journals, vocabulary exercises, essays
- Daily reading and homework assignments
- Close reading exercises
- Timed writings
- Essays with multiple drafts, scoring essays
- Creative projects/oral presentations
- Literary analysis projects
- Literature Circles – Discussion logs
- Socratic Seminars

First Quarter**Unit One: Course Introduction and Review of Summer Reading Assignments: 2 weeks**

Focus: Understand how the author's purpose affects characterization.

- Review of Literary Terms Glossary assignment.

Assessment #1: AP Prompt Timed Essay for *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*.

Madness Essay (2001 AP Open-Ended Question):

One definition of madness is "mental delusion or the eccentric behavior arising from it." But Emily Dickenson wrote:

Much madness is divinest Sense—
To a discerning Eye—

Novelists and playwrights have often seen madness with a "discerning eye." Select a novel or play in which a character's apparent madness or irrational behavior plays an important role. Then write a well-organized essay in which you explain what this delusion or eccentric behavior consists of and how it might be judged reasonable. Explain the significance of the "madness" to the work as a whole. Do not merely summarize the plot.

Assessment #2: Cooperative Learning Activity (In-Class Group Work):

Group One: Find specific examples in the novel that portray McMurphy as a Christ-like character.

Group Two: Show how McMurphy's presence in the hospital represents a conflict between the needs of society and the needs of the individual.

Group Three: Discuss whether the Chief is a reliable narrator, and cite specific examples.

- Creative assessment: Write an evaluation of McMurphy from Nurse Ratchet's point-of-view. Think about what Nurse Ratchet symbolizes in the novel, and try writing

from this perspective. This should shape your tone.

Unit 2: College Essay Workshop – Two weeks

Major Focus: Developing personal narrative skills, such as appropriate language and structure.

Additional goals:

- General discussion of what makes “good writing”: topics include use of details, narrative voice, tone, purpose, and structure.
- Students will evaluate successful college essays and deconstruct their tone, subject and structure in order to understand how the writer achieved his or her goal.
- Exploration of the writing process through the personal college essay. Students will brainstorm and draft essays, which they will then workshop in small groups.

Unit 3: Short Story/Elements of Fiction: Three weeks

Focus: Learning to talk about literature through close reading of short fiction and analysis of literary devices.

- Characterization – “Tenth of December” By George Saunders
- Theme – “The Lottery” By Shirley Jackson
- Point of View – “Cathedral” By Raymond Carver
- Symbolism— “Janus” By Ann Beattie
- Tone and Style – “A Clean, Well-Lighted Place” By Ernest Hemingway

Assessment #1: For each short story, students will write a one-page reaction in preparation for our class discussion, based on how the literary element associated with each short story is central to the writer’s purpose in telling each story. Students will also be encouraged to evaluate the authors’ use of other literary terms in evaluating the success of the writer’s purpose.

Assessment #2: Students will *rewrite* the climax of each story in the style of one of the other authors. Example: Rewrite the stoning scene in “The Lottery” in the style of Ernest Hemingway. Students will read these pieces aloud and discuss how the change in style affects the story.

Unit 4: Poetry: Three weeks

Major Focus: Analyze how literary elements, form, and sound devices shape meaning in poetry.

Additional Goals:

- Recognize themes and support them with textual evidence.
- Understand the difference between the speaker and the writer of the poem.
- Explore elements of style within poetry.
- Identify how literary elements, sound devices, and diction enhance poetry.

You will submit a dialectical journal based on your reading of each poem (five entries per poem). Your focus in what you include in these journals should be the elements that are most important to the poem. Refer back to your summer reading glossary and make use of the language of literary elements. You will then use one of your entries as a jumping off point for a formal essay.

Poets: (Selected poems from each author. One each day, in successive chronological order)

- John Donne
- John Keats
- Walt Whitman
- Emily Dickinson
- Sylvia Plath
- Maya Angelou

For several of the assigned poems, you will complete prewriting activities addressing specific AP style prompts. This will include writing a thesis statement and creating an outline for body paragraphs which include textual support. For this, your dialectical journals will come in handy.

Assessment #1: At the end of this unit, you will write an in-class timed essay comparing and contrasting two poems.

Assessment #2: Writing Poetry. Based on the brainstorming activity we do in class, choose a subject to write a poem about in your style. Then take that poem and pick three of the poets we covered in class, and write three more poems in three different styles, all about the same subject.

Quarter 2: Unit Five: Tragedy: 7 Weeks

Shakespeare: *Macbeth* – 4 weeks

Major Focus: Trace Shakespeare's development of characters through the drama of the play.

Additional Goals:

- Discuss the dramatic development of the play through the major parts of plot.
- Discuss the use of symbols in the play, most frequently through references to children.
- Analyze Shakespeare's use of language (verse, prose, rhythm, rhyme) and its importance in establishing mood and character.

Assessment While Reading the Play: We will be reading a large portion of the play in class together. After every class period, you will review what we have read and pick a piece of a scene, about ten lines in length to analyze. You should answer the following two questions:

1) How does this portion of the play contribute to the larger play? (Does it contribute to plot, character, setting, or something else?). 2) What literary techniques does Shakespeare use in these lines (Figurative language? Poetic devices? Diction?) to achieve his purpose? Your goal is to prove, in as many ways as possible, that these lines are very significant—that they serve a *purpose*, and that without them, the play would be fundamentally different. You will be expected to share these with the class.

Post-Reading Assessment #1

In class timed essay: 1979 AP Prompt

Choose a complex and important character in a novel or play of recognized literary merit who might—on the basis of the character’s action alone—be considered evil or immoral. In a well-organized essay, explain both how and why the full presentation of the character in the work makes us react more sympathetically than we otherwise might. Avoid plot summary.

Post-Reading Assessment #2

The word “ambition” is a very interesting one, both in *Macbeth*, and in life. Macbeth’s yearn for power, coupled with his wife’s ambition, spurs Macbeth to commit immoral acts that he would not otherwise commit, which eventually lead to his downfall. Therefore, ambition, something we often talk about as a virtue, in this sense, seems to be the Macbeths’ tragic flaw. Similarly, while politicians are often criticized for being ambitious, others, including students like you, are encouraged using the very same word. Even more complicated, someone like Steve Jobs is both praised and criticized for being ambitious.

Your goal is to write a persuasive essay about the value of ambition. Is it a good thing, or a bad thing? What are the limits of ambition? What things are more important? What things are less important? What should be sacrificed for ambition? Should ambition lead to a goal, or is ambition for ambition’s sake enough. You will be given a specific rubric for this assignment, but many of the qualities that will make this essay strong will be similar to those we talked about during college essays.

Things Fall Apart (3 weeks)

Focus: Understand how the author uses traditional devices associated with tragedy to achieve his purposes and themes.

Additional goals:

- Explore the use of proverbs throughout the novel.
- Discuss the purpose and effect of point-of-view shifts.
- Discuss how setting relates to conflict and characterization.
- Define and investigate what makes a hero.

While reading the novel: Group work: Your group will have a specific question to look for while reading each section, which you will then discuss with your groups at the beginning of each period. Your groups will then present your findings to the class.

Post-Assessment: Compare and contrast Macbeth and Okonko as tragic characters.

Unit Six: The Color Purple (3 weeks)

Major Focus: Understand how narrative structure (point-of-view, dialect, diction and tone) affect the story as a whole.

Additional Goals:

- Discuss the reliability of the narrator.
- Notice the irony in the story, and understand its effects.
- Understand the historical significance of the setting of the novel.
- Discuss the novel as feminist literature.
- Trace symbols and motifs in the novel.

Reading Journal: After each letter, write a journal entry (about a paragraph), that explains what we learn about Celie, not from what she tells us, but from the *way* she tells us. What do we learn from her dialect? From her tone? From her diction? What do we learn about her from what she chooses *not* to tell us? Be prepared to share these with the class. Also, how do these very same decisions change according to her audience?

Post-reading assessment: 2013 AP Lit Prompt: A bildungsroman, or coming-of-age novel, recounts the psychological or moral development of its protagonist from youth to maturity, when this character recognizes his or her place in the world. Select a single pivotal moment in the psychological or moral development of the protagonist of a bildungsroman. Then write a well-organized essay that analyzes how that single moment shapes the meaning of the work as a whole. Do not merely summarize the plot.

Quarter 3

Unit Seven: SATIRE UNIT: Seven Weeks

- Discussion of satire using *A Modest Proposal*

Candide

Major Focus: Analyze the purpose of using satire (tone, structure, and characters) to illustrate and express particular themes.

Additional Goals:

- Understand the philosophical arguments in the text.

- Understand how a work is shaped by the political and social constructs of the time period (Marxian Theory).
- Analyze symbols and motifs and understand how they contribute to the work as a whole.

While reading the work: Although *Candide* is full of philosophy, Voltaire seems to be making a larger commentary about philosophy itself. While reading the work, keep a dialectical journal (ten entries for each section of reading) that answers how, why, and to what effect *Candide* uses conventions of satire to achieve this purpose.

Post-Reading Assessment: After reading the text, we will hold debates. You will be assigned one of the philosophies in *Candide* for which to argue, even if you do not agree with the philosophy. You will work in debate teams, and should do some research for two purposes. 1) Fully understand your assigned position 2) Understand the others' positions well enough to anticipate their arguments and point out their weaknesses.

Huckleberry Finn

While reading the text:

Major Focus: Understand how the author mixes humor with pathos to achieve his purpose.
Additional Goals:

- Understand the effect of the first-person narration.
- Analyze the relationship between Huck and Jim in a historical context.
- Discuss how Twain creates and uses suspense.

While Reading the Text: Although we will be looking at the novel as a piece of satire, Twain is also handling the very real evils associated with slavery. Because of this, Twain appropriately mixes in very serious moments and details. As you read, take note of these shifts and explain in either paragraphs or dialectical journals (your choice), how the author uses shifts in tone, language, etc. to achieve these more serious moments. Also discuss the effect of these more serious moments: Do they affect the characters? Or the readers? Or both.

- Internal Events Essay (1988 AP Open-Ended Question):

Choose a distinguished novel or play in which some of the most significant events are mental or psychological; for example, awakenings, discoveries, changes in consciousness. In a well-organized essay, describe how the author manages to give these internal events the sense of excitement, suspense, and climax usually associated with external action. Do not merely summarize the plot.

The Importance of Being Ernest

Major Focus: Understand how the author uses irony and sarcasm to achieve his purpose.

Additional Goals:

- Describe the conventions regarding upper-class society in Victorian England that are being satirized in the play.
- Understand how the play represents the Aesthetic movement.
- Analyze the way in which the author uses word play and names to achieve his purpose.

While reading the play: We will be moving through the play pretty quickly. For this reason, you will be given an open response question at the beginning of each act, which you should answer in a full page, and be ready to share your reaction the following period.

(Almost) post-reading-assessment: Before we finish the play, you will be working in groups to write the last act. Your focus in doing this should be to employ the elements of satire that we have talked about so far in this play, and also to make sure that you are offering appropriate resolutions for each of the elements of plot and suspense that have arisen throughout the play. You will be given a specific rubric, and you will be expected to act these out in class.

AP REVIEW AND PREPARATION- 3 weeks

Students will spend this time reviewing, going over class and books notes in preparation to take the AP exam in May. It is during this time that you will take the multiple choice practice tests and write several essays. The answers will be reviewed in class, with corrective feedback focused on improving scores and speed to make you efficient test takers.

Quarter 4

After the test- 5 weeks

Students will work on a culminating project of a portfolio, consisting of the work generated this year in the AP class as well as reflections and plans for the future. It is something you can take with you at the end of the year and be able to present to various schools as a reference to the hard work and the successes you have accomplished this year.