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Course Introduction and Overview

*What is AP Language and Composition…?*

AP Language and Composition provides students (i.e. you) with a college level education (prior to attending college).  The content, quality, and amount of work will thus be the similar to a college level Language and Composition course in which you will learn to read, understand, analyze, synthesize, interpret, evaluate, and respond to non-fiction prose and visual texts.

*Learning with the End in Sight…*

The three purposes of AP Language and Composition are:

* Improve and refine your ability to write comfortably, confidently, and competently in both formal and informal formats, using the full array of language resources: appropriate syntax, diction, tone, and other rhetorical devices.
* Improve and refine your ability to read, analyze, interpret, and evaluate non-fiction prose and visual texts.
* Demonstrate mastery of your reading and writing skills on the AP exam (and possibly earn college credit).

***The AP Language and Composition Resume of Goals*…** [The following is quoted from the AP Language and Composition Teacher’s Guide.]

You will be able to do the following after completion of the AP Language and Composition course:

* 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 [your] own writing
* create and sustain arguments based on readings, research, and/or personal experience
* write for a variety of purposes
* produce expository, analytical, and argumentative compositions that introduce a complex central idea and develop it with appropriate evidence drawn from primary and/or secondary sources, cogent explanations, and clear transitions
* demonstrate understanding and mastery of standard written English as well as stylistic maturity in [your] own writings
* 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 [your] own process of composition
* revise a work to make it suitable for a different audience
* analyze image as text
* evaluate and incorporate reference documents into researched papers

Specific Methods and Objectives

***The Process of Putting it in Print…***

People write in order to communicate, and the better a person writes, the more effective he or she is at conveying a message.  In an age of digital media, this is extremely important.  It is also important in a class where 55% of the test is predicated upon essay responses (i.e. the AP Exam).  The following methods and objectives are thus designed to insure that you succeed on the written portion of the AP Exam:

* use the different stages of the writing process and become adept at the entire process necessary for creating a quality essay
* learn to craft a strong thesis and to effectively organize ideas and paragraphs in order to support a thesis
* write in a variety of formats: formal papers, informal writing, imitation exercises, journal keeping, annotated notes, blogs, portfolios, wikis, etc.
* study style and grammar so that writing continues to develop in both its syntactical and communicative complexity
* write for different purposes: to explore, explain, or evaluate personal ideas and personal writing as well as the public ideas and writing of other authors
* write several drafts for an essay in order to appreciate the nuances of language and composition
* use rubrics and the feedback from both peers and the teacher in order to assess strengths, weaknesses, and skills that have improved
* research various publications of personal interest in order to submit a research paper that integrates several different domains of thought to challenge or support a central thesis

***What You See Determines What You Get…***

The focus of this class is on non-fiction prose.  Similar to imaginative literature, people read non-fiction prose in order to gain information and knowledge or to glean a greater glimpse of life.  That information or glimpse may only provide amusement, or it may result in a more provocative consideration of the human condition, or it may even shock people into social action by revealing a need or an injustice.  Non-fiction prose (and imaginative literature) liberates people from their chaotic routines by amplifying the themes of life, allowing them to embrace and enjoy their humanity.  To this end, how a person sees (pre)determines what that person may see, impacting that person’s reading (and life).  The following methods and objectives are thus designed so that you can navigate the ambiguity of language and read critically in order to excavate meaning from non-fiction prose, visual texts, and literature.

* learn and discuss various rhetorical theories, concepts, and strategies in order to accurately and precisely interpret non-fiction prose
* study the meta-language of rhetoric in order to understand its craft
* study the use of language in different contexts and forms in order to create a desired meaning or affect on the reader
* read from a wide range of authors and topics
* learn to scrutinize an author’s writing to discover its meaning and the message(s) behind the text

***Test Taking Time on AP Exam Day…***

The AP Exam is intense and is comprised of two sections.  Section I is multiple choice; it is 60 minutes long, and there are 55 questions.  Section II has three essays and is 2 hours long.  The test is graded on a scale of 1 to 5.  45% of that grade is based on Section I; the other 55% is based on Section II.  The following methods and objectives will prepare you for the test:

* timed in class essays (every three to four weeks) taken from past AP Exams
* revising essays through several drafts
* evaluating and critiquing past AP responses
* adapting the writing process in order to write an essay in the time requirements of the AP Exam
* practicing the multiple choice section of the AP Exam
* studying the specialized vocabulary of rhetoric
* taking several AP Practice Exams during the year

Advanced Placement Standards and Expectations

***Going the Distance…***

This class is a college level curriculum with college level standards and expectations.  Therefore, it is standard to expect the following:

* Expect to write everyday – essays, drafts, blogs, journals, annotations, self-reflection, poetry responses, evaluations, arguments, interpretations, etc.
* Expect to write a minimum of 3 major, formal papers every quarter.
* Expect a minimum of two timed writings every quarter.
* Expect to write in different modes and for a variety of purposes.
* Expect to revise your writing through several drafts.
* Expect to read every night.
* Expect a longer piece of non-fiction (i.e. memoir, biography, etc.) to be read in parallel with other in class reading.
* Expect to discuss all outside reading during class.
* Expect to meet due dates and deadlines.
* Expect to eliminate digital distractions during class.
* Expect to have fun.  This is sure to be a rewarding experience.

***What is in a Grade…?***

The grading policy is as follows:

* Common formative tests, comprehensive writing assignments 50%
* Projects, quizzes 30%
* Warm-ups, notebook checks, daily assignments, in-class tasks, class participation. 20%

Grades will be scored as follows:

A     100 - 90

B     89 - 80

C    79 - 70

D     69 - 60

F     59 - 0

**Research Paper:  *It is not possible to pass the class without completing the research paper***.

**Zero Tolerance: *Plagiarism and/or cheating result in a zero (with zero makeup opportunity).***

***Grading the Essay…***

Essays will be graded via the following rubric and 6 point scale:

The A paper is a SUPERIOR paper in every way, marked by the following traits [6]

* Responds to the prompt with a defensible thesis that may establish a line of reasoning.
* Provides evidence from or references from sources
* Provides well-developed commentary that consistently and explicitly explains the relationship between the evidence and the thesis.
* Demonstrates sophistication of thought and/or a complex understanding of the rhetorical situation
* No major errors in grammar, spelling or punctuation

The B paper is an EXCELLENT paper, marked by the following traits [5]

* Responds to the prompt with a defensible thesis that may establish a line of reasoning.
* Provides evidence from or references at least three sources.
* Evidence must be relevant to thesis.
* Provides commentary that explains the relationship between evidence and the thesis; however, commentary is uneven, limited, or incomplete.
* No major errors in grammar, spelling, or punctuation

The C paper is an AVERAGE paper, marked by the following traits [4]

* Responds to the prompt with a defensible thesis that ay establish a line of reasoning.
* Provides evidence from or references at least three of the provided sources.
* Evidence must be relevant to the subject of the prompt.
* Provides commentary; however, it repeats, oversimplifies, or misinterprets the cited information or evidence.
* A couple major errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation and/or several minor errors

The D paper is a BELOW AVERAGE paper, marked by the following traits [3]

* Responds to the prompt with a defensible thesis that ay establish a line of reasoning.
* Provides evidence from or references at least two of the provided sources.
* Evidence provided must be relevant to the subject of the prompt.
* Provides little or no commentary.
* Various major errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation, mechanics and/or multiple minor errors

The F paper is a FAILURE, marked by the following traits [2 – 1]

* Simply restates thesis (if present)
* Fewer than 2 of the provided sources are referenced
* Provides examples that are generally irrelevant and/or incoherent.
* Multiple major/minor errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation, and mechanics.

***A Little Note about Work and Responsibility…***

It is not possible to learn and master the material if you are unwilling to meet requested due dates.  The following policy will therefore be enforced concerning late work:

* All work is due by the beginning of class.
* All late work will be penalized 10 points per school day (even if it’s late by “just” one period).
* In the rare occasion of an absence, you are responsible to follow up with me, a friend, or on-line in order to learn what important material was covered and what work was assigned.
* If you miss any quiz or bell work at the beginning of class due to being tardy, you will not be given time to make up that work and will receive a zero for that assignment.

Year at a Glance

***The Structure of A/B Day classes and Quarters***

Each quarter is designed to build upon the ideas, concepts, and skills developed within the previous quarter.  Of equal importance, each quarter will contain one primary nonfiction text that will be paired with various secondary texts: short essays, visual texts, articles, current events, political cartoons, speeches, or documentaries.

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| **Quarter I** | **Learning Goals** | **Agenda** | **Unit I: Education** |
|  | 1. Reading – Identify and describe components of the rhetorical situation: the exigence, audience, writer, purpose, context, and message.   3.A – Reading – Identify and explain claims and evidence within an argument.  4.A – Writing – Develop a paragraph that includes a claim and evidence supporting the claim. | Introduction to exam  Journal response to quotes  Vocabulary: strong verbs  Tone: descriptive vocabulary  The Rhetorical Situation  Note-taking strategies  The Rhetorical Triangle  The Rhetorical Analysis essays  Determine and elaborate on purpose and audience  \*\*Personal progress check 1 | *\*The Graduates,* Louis Menand  \**America, Still on Top,* Vartan Gregorian  \* *Branches of the Same Tree*, Albert Einstein  \* *From Education,* Ralph Waldo Emerson  \**Education,* Maya Angelou  \**When Bright Girls Decide That Math is “a Waste of Time*,” Susan Jacoby  \* *How to Read a Book,*  by Mortimer J. Adler and Charles Van Doren    ▪ Viewing o Norman Rockwell, *The Spirit of Education*  *\*Images*  Physics Lab, Carlisle Indian School, 1915  Chemistry Lab, Contemporary high school  o Political cartoons from current periodicals related to education reform |
|  | **Learning Goals** | **Agenda** | **Unit II: Family Life** |
|  | 1A Identify and describe components of the rhetorical situation: the exigence, audience, writer, purpose, context, and message.  2A Write introductions and conclusions appropriate to the purpose and context of the rhetorical situation.  3B Identify and describe the overarching thesis of an argument, and any indication it provides of the argument’s structure.  4B Write a thesis statement that requires proof or defense and that may preview the structure of the argument.  5C Recognize and explain the use of methods of development to accomplish a purpose.  6C Use appropriate methods of development to advance an argument. | \*Writing a rhetorical analysis essay  \*Analyzing tone within the text.  \*Discover and elaborate in proper sequence tone and the effect on the audience  \*Explain how tone is used to move an audience  \*Explain how diction is used in text to move an audience  \*Writing conclusions in rhetorical analysis  \*Journal response to quotes  \*Vocabulary  \*\*Personal progress check 2 | \**Lost in the Kitchen*, Dave Barry  \**Two ways to Belong in America*, Bharati Mukherjee  \**Salvation*, Langston Hughes  \**Love, Internet Style,* David Brooks  \**An American Childhood,* Annie Dillard  *\*Once Upon a Quinceanera,* Julia Alvarez  ▪ Viewing o Advertisements from popular magazines and newspapers collected by students  \*Photograph  Peasant Wedding Dance, Pieter Brueghel the Younger  Modern Wedding |

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|  | **Learning Goals** | **Agenda** | **Unit III: History, Culture, and Civilization** |
|  | 3.A Identify and explain claims and evidence within the argument.  4.A Develop a paragraph that includes a claim and evidence supporting the claim.  5.A Describe the line of reasoning and explain whether it supports an argument’s overarching thesis.  6.A Develop a line of reasoning and commentary that explains it throughout an argument.  5. C Recognize and explain the use of methods of development to accomplish purpose.  6.C Use appropriate methods of development to advance and argument. | \*Identifying fallacies and elaborating on its use  \*Introduction to syntax and its purpose  \*Analyzing author’s bias  \*Developing a rhetorical analysis essay in 40 minutes.  \*Journal response to quotes  \*Vocabulary  \*\*Personal progress check 3 | \**The Gettysburg Address,* Abraham Lincoln,  \* *Marc Anthony’s Speech*  *\*The Morals of the Prince,* Niccolo Machiavelli,  \**A Modest Proposal,* Jonathan Swift  \**Second Inaugural Address*, Abraham Lincoln  \**Inaugural Address*, John F. Kennedy  \* *On the Duty of Civil Disobedience,* Henry David Thoreau  Current political cartoons  Video – “Typography” by Stephen Fry  Several commercial clips |
| **Quarter II** | **Learning Goals** | **Agenda** | **Unit IV: Business and Economics** |
|  | 1.B Explain how an argument demonstrates understanding of an audience’s beliefs, values, or needs.  2.B Demonstrate an understanding for an audience’s beliefs, values, or needs.  3.A Identify and explain claims and evidence within an argument.  4.A Develop a paragraph that includes a claim and evidence supporting the claim.  3.B Identify and describe the overarching thesis of an argument, and any indication it provides of the argument’s structure.  4.B Write a thesis statement that requires proof or defense and that may preview the structure of the argument. | \*Introduction to the synthesis essay  \*Writing a thesis statement that requires proof or defense.  \*Introduction to the Graduation Project: Research essay  \*Discussion on acceptable topics  \*Writing a thesis statement  \*Journal response to quotes  \*Vocabulary  \*Develop a research essay  \*\*Personal progress check 4 | \**Professions for Women*, Virginia Wolf  \**Globalization: The Super-Story*, Thomas L. Friedman  \**Nickel and Dimed*, Robert Reich  \*Synthesizing Sources:  Online Shopping: Has It Affected Our Lives for Better or Worse? (pg. 326-331)  \*Visual  *Portion of a Mural from the Detroit Institute of Arts*, Diego Rivera  Automobile Assembly Line |

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|  | **Learning Goals** | **Agenda** | **Unit V: Media and Pop Culture** |
|  | 5A Describe the line of reasoning and explain whether it supports an argument’s overarching thesis.  6A Develop a line of reasoning and commentary that explains it throughout the argument.  5B Explain how the organization of a text creates unity and coherence and reflects a line of reasoning.  6B Use transitional elements to guide the reader through the line of reasoning of an argument.  7A Explain how word choice, comparisons, and syntax contribute to the specific tone or style of a text.  8A Strategically use words, comparisons, and syntax to convey a specific tone or style in an argument. | \*Develop a line of reasoning throughout the essay  \*Identifying author’s bias on materials.  \*Provide accurate and appropriate evidence for the claim  \*Provide accurate in-text and works cited page citations.  \*Developing a research based argumentative essay  \*Journal response to quotes  \*Vocabulary  \*\*Personal progress check 5 | \**Wonder Woman,* Gloria Steinem  *\*The Globalization of Eating Disorders,* Susan Bordo  *\*Escape from Wonderland: Disney and the Female Imagination,* Deborah Ross  \**Today’s Leading Man*, Daniel Barma  Photos: Hurricane Katrina photo  Video: *Other People’s Money*  *Matrix* |
| **Quarter III** | **Learning Goals** | **Agenda** | **Unit VI: Literature and the Arts** |
|  | 3A Identify and explain claims and evidence within an argument.  4A Develop a paragraph that includes a claim and evidence supporting the claim.  3B Identify and describe the overarching thesis of an argument, and any indication it provides of the argument’s structure.  4B Write a thesis statement that requires proof or defense and that may preview the structure of the argument.  7A Explain how word choice, comparisons, and syntax contribute to the specific tone or style of a text.  8A Strategically use words, comparisons, and syntax to convey a specific tone or style in an argument. | \*Introduction to the argumentative essay  \*Analyzing Arguments  \*Developing a thesis statement  \*Presenting evidence  First-Hand evidence  Anecdotes  Current events  \*Developing a research based argumentative  \*Journal response to quotes  \*Vocabulary  \*\*Personal progress check 6 | \**One Writer’s Beginnings*, Eudora Welty  *\*Finding Neverland,*  David Gates  *\*Theme for English B,* Langston Hughes  *\*Orwell and Me,* Margaret Atwood  *Visuals:*  *Auguste Rodin’s The Thinker*  *Jeff Koons’s Rabbit* |

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|  | **Learning Goals** | **Agenda** | **Unit VII: Nature and Environment** |
|  | 1A Identify and describe components of the rhetorical situation: the exigence, audience, writer, purpose, context, and message.  2A Write introductions ad conclusions appropriate to the purpose and context of the rhetorical situation.  3C Explain ways claims are qualified through modifiers, counterarguments, and alternative perspectives.  4C Qualify a claim using modifiers, counterarguments, or alternative perspectives.  7B Explain how writers create, combine, and place independent and dependent clauses to show relationships between and among ideas.  8B Write sentences that clearly convey ideas and arguments.  7C Explain how grammar and mechanics contribute to the clarity and effectiveness of an argument.  8C Use established conventions of grammar and mechanics to communicate clearly and effectively. | \*Shaping Argument  The classical oration  Induction and deduction  Toulmin model  \*Counterarguments  Writing an argumentative essay in 40 minutes.  \*Journal response to quotes  \*Vocabulary  \*\*Personal progress check 7 | \**Where I Lived and What I Lived For*, Henry David Thoreau  \**Cars and their Enemies,* James Q. Wilson  \**What’s Wrong with Animal Rights?* Vicki Hearne  \**Dwellings*, Linda Hogan  \**The Last Americans: Environmental Collapse and the End of Civilization*  Video:  *Human Parody*  *The Human Element*  *Photo:*  *Monty Python Argument* |
| **Quarter IV** | **Learning Goals** | **Agenda** | **Unit VIII: Women’s Rights** |
|  | 1B Explain how an argument demonstrates understanding of an audience’s beliefs, values, or needs.  2B Demonstrate an understanding of an audience’s beliefs, values, or needs.  7A Explain how word choice, comparisons, and syntax contribute to the specific tone or style of a text.  8A Strategically use words, comparisons, and syntax to convey a specific tone or style in an argument.  7B Explain how writers create, combine, and place independent and dependent clauses to show relationships between and among ideas.  8B Write sentences that clearly convey ideas and arguments. | \*Develop a text analysis essay  \*Organize analysis logically and efficiently  \*Develop a synthesis essay  \*Analyze provide text and determine appropriate sources  \*Journal response to quotes  \*Vocabulary  \*\*Personal progress check 8 | \* *Declaration of Sentiments and Resolution*, Elizabeth Cady Stanton  \* *Aren’t I a Woman?* Sojourner Truth  \* *Women’s Brains* Stephen Jay Gould  \* *Being a Man* Paul Theroux  \**There is no Unmarked Woman* Deborah Tannen |

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|  | **Learning Goals** | **Agenda** | **Unit IX:** |
|  | 3C explain ways claims are qualified through modifiers, counterarguments, and alternative perspectives.  4C Qualify a claim using modifiers, counterarguments, or alternative perspectives. | \*Develop an argumentative essay  \*Write a clear thesis statement in response to prompt  \*Present a variety of evidence from several sources.  \*Writing personal essay (college essay)  \*Creating a resume  \*Journal response to quotes  \*Vocabulary  \*\*Personal progress check 9 | \**Learning to Read and Write,* Frederick Douglas  \**Mother Tongue*, Amy Tan  \**Learning to Read*, Malcolm X  \**How to Tame a Wild Tongue*, Gloria Anzaldua |

***Pedagogical Notes…***

The AP Language and Composition course is a college level writing course designed to improve your reading and writing ability.  It cannot be overemphasized that this course is foundational in supporting your academic progress in all other college classes.

In order to increase the rigor and relevance of this class, I will use newspapers, books, magazines, and various articles, journals, handouts, and essays to augment your education, and I will remain aware of the current events and cultural phenomenon that are pertinent to our class discussion in order to enhance your learning experience.

As you’re studying, remember that the curriculum is designed to be rhetorical such that the themes naturally flow into each other, enabling you to more fully understand yourself in the larger context of the world, and because my desire is to engage your mind in the larger context of the world (a.k.a. keeping it real), be prepared to appropriately consider and maul over adult issues: ideas, concepts, struggles, and realities.

Primary Text

Language and Composition by Gilbert H. Muller and Melissa E. Whiting

Novels

Thank You for Arguing by Jay Heinrichs

Outliers by Malcolm Gladwell

The Glass Castle by Jeannette Walls

The Things They Carried by Tim O’Brien

Important Policies

***Time Plus Instruction Equals Learning…***

Tardies hinder the entire classroom (not just the late student) because a consistently late student interrupts everyone’s time, instruction, and learning.  The following policy will therefore be enforced with reference to tardies:

* The first time is a warning.
* The second time is a call home.
* The third and all subsequent times are referrals to administration.

Cell phones

Cell phones must be turned off/silenced and placed in the cell phone holders in front of class during 60 minute class period to avoid disruptions and distractions. The following policy will therefore be enforced with reference to cell phones:

* The first time is a warning.
* The second time is a call home.
* The third and all subsequent times are referrals to administration.

Final Thoughts

I found myself wondering many times in college “why didn’t I learn that in high school?”  Your experience in this class is sure to challenge you with new ways of reading texts, seeing life, and expressing yourself, and many times you may ask, “Why didn’t I learn that before?”  As you wrestle with this question, you will move through a process of adopt, adapt, and adept – adopting reliable writing practices and styles, adapting them to your personality and tastes, and becoming adept at new techniques and at creating excellent essays.

Please know that *the syllabus is not written in stone*.  I will be assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the class as the year progresses, and if any glitches or unforeseen problems arise, I will adjust accordingly without compromising the standards or expectations for this class.

And above all, I am one of your biggest fans.  I am fanatical about your success, and scoring high on the AP Exam is only one aspect of success.  Your growth as a person is also equally important, and education is a key to your growth.  Be prepared for the challenge and enjoy your learning amidst your full schedule.

I look forward to our year together.

Tiemi Halverson

AP Language and Composition Educator