

## **Advanced Placement English Literature and Composition**

Course Syllabus

Mr. Mahoney

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### **Brief Course Description:**

AP English Literature is a yearlong course that requires students to read great works of literature with attention to small details and big questions. You will discuss literature and your own writing every day. You will keep extensive notes and write a composition on average every two weeks. Discussions and analytical essays will focus on style, tone and theme of British and American literary works from the sixteenth to twenty-first centuries as well as the classical roots to these works and some translated works that relate to the core texts. The success of the course will depend largely on the questions that students bring and the willingness of the class to seek answers or more questions.

### **Assignments and Assessment:**

Students can expect an hour of homework in preparation for each class meeting. Students will receive reading and writing due dates well in advance, so they are responsible for completing these assignments regardless of absences. All assignments are due at the beginning of class unless noted otherwise. Back up all computer work. AP English is a college-credit course in high school, therefore AP students are expected to meet deadlines and tell me about any difficulties you may encounter—before the due date. Unless noted on the assignment, late work will be penalized one letter grade per day. Students must submit all essays to at least a D level proficiency to pass the semester.

Writing in AP English is primarily literary analysis. Writing prompts are based on close readings of poems or brief prose passages and thematic analysis of complete works. In addition to longer papers (4-5 pages) taken through a writing process, students will write frequent timed in-class essays, which prepare them for AP exams as well as college exams and real world situations that require quick thinking and concise expression. Creative writing assignments will allow students an opportunity to show that they can synthesize structure, style and themes of the works we study. These assignments include writing a sonnet, other poetry, a satire or a short story.

Most process essays and other writing may be revised if the writer has met all deadlines and all requirements of the writing process (i.e. bringing complete assignments for peer editing, participating in editing). Students must conference with the teacher outside of class at least once each semester.

Students can expect to read and take notes on 30 pages a night in challenging texts. Class discussion and occasional reading quizzes will be used to assess completeness and comprehension of reading. Additional assessments include poetry memorization, oral presentations, class notes.

To enhance our understanding of imaginative expression, students must attend and write about four cultural events each semester. Information and forms are available on my web site. To increase writing practice and emphasize writing for purpose and audience, students must write two pieces for outside audiences each semester. This includes entering essay contests or writing op-eds. See handout/website for detail.

### **State Standards and test preparation:**

Although this course demands college-level work, we will also meet California CCSS for 12<sup>th</sup>-grade language arts instruction, which can be read on the Calif. Dept. of Education web site. While this is not a test-prep course, AP English well prepares students for the AP English Literature and Composition exam. All students are encouraged to take the exam, which counts as part of the second semester final. Students who do not take the official exam will take an in-class version.

### **Academic Integrity/Cheating:**

Students are expected to meet the highest standards of academic integrity. Academic dishonesty includes such things as copying off another's test; allowing someone to copy off your test; using unauthorized notes on a test; having a cell phone out or appearing to look at a cell phone during an in-class essay or test, sharing information about a test with a student who has not taken it; using forbidden sources for essays, oral presentations, etc.; plagiarism, and interfering with another student's ability to complete an assignment. Any form of academic dishonesty or cheating will result in a zero for the assignment plus a 50-point penalty, a D or F grade in citizenship, detention, a meeting with your parent/guardian and referral to the vice principal for additional punishment. A second incident during the year or flagrant enough first offense (such as plagiarizing more than a paragraph on an essay) will result in an academic F grade for the semester and an F grade in citizenship, detention, another parent conference and referral to the vice principal. (Lying about the first offense is a second offense.) I will notify other teachers and counselors about breeches of integrity and this will hurt your letters of recommendation.

### **General Classroom Rules:**

1. Be ready to work when the bell rings. Three tardies = detention and lowered citizenship grade. Two more = Saturday school and lowered citizenship grade. Students will not be allowed to make up tests or get extra time on essays begun when they are late. Do not come late or leave early for any reason on an announced test or in-class essay day. Students who overuse passes from other teachers will lose that privilege. Do not pack up before the bell rings.

2. Bring all needed supplies every day. Clean up before you go. Failure to come prepared will result in detention and loss of academic grade points.

3. No eating without permission; no gum chewing ever. No hats. No electronic devices without teacher's permission. First offense for using a phone is detention. Second offense is a referral. Third offense is a referral and a citizenship grade no higher than D.

4. Be respectful and engaged always.

### **Grades**

98-100 = A+, 94-97 = A, 91-93 = A-

88-90 = B+, 84-87 = B, 81-83 = B-

71-80 = C

65-70 = D

64 and below = F

Grades will be based on a combination of essays, other writing, quizzes and tests, journals, class participation and homework. The biggest factor in your grade will be writing that is taken through revision, followed by on-demand in-class essays.



## Cultural Events

To enhance our understanding of imaginative expression, students must attend and write about *four cultural events* each semester. Two can be on campus and you can participate in two, if they are different in kind. For example, if you act in the school play, you can count that. Examples of things you can do: Attend a jazz, classical or world music concert, see a play, spend some time in a gallery looking at the art (one per day), read a good book outside of class (that you've cleared with me first—some books might count double or more), see a classic movie (OK'd by me) for one, go to a museum, attend a dance recital, etc. You may also watch a movie version of a Shakespeare play (beyond what you are assigned as homework). You can count two events from the summer, or, for second semester, winter break. Here's what for sure does not count, so don't ask: anything associated with touring a college, sporting events, pop music concerts.

Forms are available on my web site. Because this is an English class, your write up of the event matters. Fill out the event form completely and describe the event in detail.

First two events are due: Nov. 3

Final two are due: Dec. 12

## Outside Writing

You must write two pieces each semester for an audience outside this class. This assignment requires you to be write for different audiences and to get more meaningful practice than you can get just writing for your teacher. Each piece must be at least 500 words. You can write two shorter pieces to make up the word-count requirement for one piece. But you can only do that for one. For example, if you write a 150 word essay for one essay contest and a 150 words for scholarship application that can count as one piece. But the second piece has to exceed the 500 word minimum. You cannot count assignments for other classes.

I encourage you to enter scholarship competitions and essay contests. To count for this assignment, the contest must be open to a wide range of students and not particular to any race, religion, ethnicity or university. College admissions essays and university-based scholarship applications do not count. Personal statements for scholarship competitions that are based primarily on something other than the essay do not count. Scholarship Mentor is one of several good sites for contests lists.

You may write op-eds, reviews or personal essays for the Mirada student newspaper or other publication.

You may write copy for an organization you belong to or that you intern for.

You may write the copy for a spread in the yearbook. Some students have in the past enjoyed the opportunity to contribute to their senior yearbook or ensure that their sport/club/etc is well-covered, so I offer this as an opportunity. Yearbook staff will take care of photography and layout, you would do interviews, write the main article, write side bar articles (mini-profiles, timelines, question and answer, etc.). It's actually not difficult and doesn't take long, but because of the kind of work involved, this is the only outside writing option that you can do with a partner. Exceptional work in this category and some others (such entering a contest for a very long or extensively researched essay) *may* count double, at the teacher's discretion.

See me if you have other ideas for a writing project.

It's best to get approval first.

Due date: Dec. 11