

Newport News Public Schools

Warwick High School

Justin Giroux, Teacher

AP[®] English Language and Composition

COURSE OVERVIEW

The course design is adapted from the *AP[®] English Language and Composition Course Description* published by the College Board. The specific purpose stated therein is to “emphasize the expository, analytical, and argumentative writing that forms the basis of academic and professional communication.” It is therefore appropriate that the readings in this course present exemplars of such works.

There are no required readings specified by the College Board, however the works selected here are drawn from the list of representative authors provided in the Course Description. The primarily nonfiction works are drawn from a variety of historical periods, genres and styles. Featured authors may include M. Scott Momaday, Frederick Douglass, Kate Chopin, E. B. White, Maya Angelou, Virginia Woolf, Ralph Ellison, Martin Gansberg, Edith Wharton, George Orwell, Maxine Hong Kingston, Barbara Tuchman, Eudora Welty, and Tom Wolfe. Students enrolled in this class must also complete independent reading outside of class throughout the year, details of which are outlined below. Summer reading and writing is required. Students prepare for the AP[®] Exam in English Language and Composition and may be granted college credit as a result of satisfactory performance.

Principal Text: *Patterns for College Writing: A Rhetorical Reader and Guide*, Laurie G. Kirzner & Stephen R Mandell, ed.

Additional readings will be drawn from a variety of supplemental texts.

Performance expectations are in accordance with a college-level course and the workload is challenging. Students are expected to commit a minimum of four hours of course work per week outside of class. Effective time management is important. Students are expected to bring to the course sufficient command of mechanical conventions of language, rhetoric, and argument.

COURSE PLANNER

After successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- analyze and interpret samples of good writing, identifying and explaining an author’s use of rhetorical strategies and technique
- apply effective strategies and techniques to their 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 an understanding and mastery of standard written English as well as stylistic maturity in their 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 their own process of composition;
- revise a work to make it suitable for a different audience;
- analyze image as text; and
- evaluate and incorporate reference documents into researched papers.

FALL SEMESTER

The first weeks of the course are designed to develop fluency in key aspects of argumentation, to introduce critical thinking strategies and the canons of rhetoric, and to explore major themes in expository writing.

Assertion Journals

Students will maintain a separate notebook dedicated to weekly journal writings. These journal entries will vary from week to week in content, divided equally between free response and rhetorical analysis. Each entry should be 400 words in length, and will focus on one of three tasks: respond to a quotation, practice a key concept, or analyze a rhetorical strategy used in a work we will be studying. These informal writings will be assessed weekly, based on increasing degrees of stylistic maturity.

Writer's Notebook

Kept during the first quarter, and assessed weekly, the writer's notebook is a record of students'

observations. The topics will be assigned weekly with the topics very loosely structured to work in conjunction with the course readings. These entries should be differentiated from student assertion journals in that the notebook entries will be strictly observational. For example, one assignment is to record a personal exchange between two strangers including the dialogue; another is to describe in detail some element of nature (e.g., sunset, rainbow, thunderstorm, rosebud, hummingbird). There should be a minimum of 18 entries (two per week) by the end of the first quarter. The goal should be that each student will observe significant improvements in stylistic maturity from the early entries to those near the end of the unit. These entries should be a minimum of 50 words, but no more than 200 words.

Discussions

Based on the theory that comprehension is best facilitated when students have the opportunity to work collaboratively to clarify understanding and to explore positions different from their own. As such learning occurs best in an open forum, discussions will occur routinely as we complete course readings.

Essays

Students will write several extended essays (500-1000 words) across each semester. Multiple shorter compositions will be assigned in conjunction with course readings, which may include a letter, memory exercises, sense descriptions, analyses and argumentations. Additionally, students will be required to complete 4 synthesis essays (1 per quarter)

utilizing materials studied within each quarter. Like the research paper assigned in the 2nd quarter, these synthesis essays will require both direct and indirect quotations and references to be documented in accordance with the Modern Language Association's (MLA) guidelines.

Practice Exam

Students will take the 2000 Released AP[®] English Language and Composition exam during the second week of classes. The scores from this exam will not be given until after a second practice exam is given in April. At that time students should see a substantial improvement from the fall test to the spring test. This improvement boosts students' confidence just before they sit for the actual exam in early May.

Warm-Ups

Students are expected to arrive at this course with a solid understanding of the usages of standard English grammar, but in accordance with the increasing sophistication of both the readings and writings the course, work will continue with grammar usage and mechanics throughout the course. Each class will begin with a short mini-lesson pulled from a variety of sources including SAT[®] Preparation books, PSAT[®] Preparation Practice tests, grammar handbooks and the course textbook.

Independent Reading

In addition to the summer reading, students are required to read 1 book per quarter outside of class. They should ultimately select two books each from the nonfiction column and the fiction column. While this is primarily a nonfiction course, vertical planning strongly indicates a desire that more fiction be included in the students' repertoire.

These books will be assessed as described in the first quarter. This should at no time be considered a 'chore,' but rather should remain light and entertaining for both the student/reviewer and the class/audience.

First Quarter: Introduction to English Language and Composition: Close Reading Analysis and Rhetorical Awareness.

Theme: Personal Journey and Discovery with Emphasis on Narrative and Descriptive Modes of Discourse.

(September – November)

The course opens with a follow-up on a summer assignment, which consists of reading three selections from the Independent Reading List (see below). In an effort to maximize student involvement, the selections are left to the individual. One selection must be from the fiction list, with two from the nonfiction list. The assessments of these readings will be spaced over the first quarter. As the selections will vary from student to student, the assessments will also vary. The first assessment requires the student to select a representative passage from the work, then to select an object that is symbolic of that passage. The student will then prepare a three-to-five minute talk which will be presented to the class. A short paper will accompany the presentation. The second reading will require a reader response paper, and the third will involve another oral presentation, this one with graphics. The two oral presentations provide non-presenting students

with a 'preview' of other reading possibilities. They further allow the presenters an opportunity to act as reviewers, thus enabling them to think more critically about the material as they read it.

Concurrent with the summer reading assignments, is an introduction to the textbook, *Patterns for College Writing*. The general course structure parallels the organization of the text, with units generally organized to incorporate a variety of styles, beginning with narration and description.

The writer's notebook is a key element of this unit, and from time to time students may share their entries with the class. Ideally, students will stretch a little outside their comfort zone as they explore the stylistic choices of professional writers.

Readings for this quarter will focus on narration and description. Selections include "Finishing School," by Maya Angelou, "Once More to the Lake," by E. B. White, "The Way to Rainy Mountain," by N. Scott Momaday, "Shooting an Elephant," by George Orwell, "The Storm," by Kate Chopin, and "Fishing Significance," by Virginia Woolf.

Emphasis will be on identifying subjective and objective points of view, tone, and rhetorical devices that contribute to the author's purpose.

The culminating activity for the first quarter will be a reflective essay. Using the readings from this quarter as models (Soto, Angelou, Kincaid, Woolf), students will write a narrative essay about a childhood experience which has impacted them in some way. The language of the essay should be in a mature voice reflecting the perspective of a child. The essays will be evaluated on their use of the

descriptive and narrative strategies introduced in this quarter.

Exam Prompt:

Eudora Welty's "One Writer's Beginnings," from 2000 AP[®] English Language & Composition Exam – Question 1

- OR -

Virginia Woolf memoir excerpt – from 2003 AP[®] English Language and Composition Exam – Question 2

Second Quarter: Accounting for Purpose, Deepening Appreciation of Rhetorical Strategies.

Theme: Role of the Individual with Emphasis on Analytical, Argumentative/Persuasive Modes of Discourse.

(November – January)

The second quarter introduces the structure of arguments and the varying styles of argumentative essays. Students will complete a researched argument essay, proceeding from the proposal stage through formative drafts to a final draft. Revision will be aided by teacher and/or peers.

Readings for this quarter will focus on argumentation and persuasion. Selections will be from both classic writers such as Frederick Douglass – from *Narrative of the Life of Frederic Douglass, An American Slave*, Abraham Lincoln – *Gettysburg Address*, Thomas Jefferson – *The Declaration of Independence*, Thomas Paine –

The Crisis, Number 1, Patrick Henry – “Speech to the Virginia Convention,” Elizabeth Cady Stanton – *Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions, Seneca Falls Convention, 1848*. This unit will also include modern essayists’ works such as, Martin Gansberg – “Thirty-Eight Who Saw Murder Didn’t Call the Police,” Oliver Stone – “Memo to John Grisham: What’s Next, ‘A Movie Made Me Do It’?”, Martin Luther King, Jr. – “Letter From Birmingham Jail,” Gerard Jones – “Violent Media is Good for Kids,” and Michael Zimecki – “Violent Films Cry ‘Fire’ in Crowded Theaters.”

Areas of emphasis will include all persuasive strategies and techniques as students deepen their appreciation of context, audience, and purpose. They gather and consider a variety of accessible and diverse texts in order to ponder the question: Does every text pose an argument? Upon consideration of this question, students will determine the distinction between persuasion and argument. Students will carefully evaluate, employ, and properly cite primary and secondary sources, using MLA documentation. Focusing on argument – specifically those arguments based on character, values, or emotion, and those based on facts or reason – they will begin to develop a more integrated and organic understanding of words, images, rhetoric, argument, and persuasion.

The culminating activity for the second quarter will be a researched persuasive essay. Students will need to collect, verify, and integrate relevant secondary sources to synthesize their argument. The language of this essay should reflect the rhetorical techniques explored in this instructional unit. The essays will be evaluated based on their successful defense of their positions and their demonstration of appropriate MLA citation.

Exam Prompt:

Abraham Lincoln’s 2nd Inaugural Address – 2002 AP[®] English Language and Composition Exam – Question 1

-OR-

John Downe’s Letter to his Wife – 2003 AP[®] English Language and Composition Exam (Form B) – Question 1

Third Quarter: Application of Rhetorical Strategies

Theme: A Study of Justice and Punishment: Emancipation of Mind and Body with Emphasis on Classification, Process, and Synthesis.

(February – April)

The purpose of the third quarter is to prepare students to analyze information from a variety of sources in order to create a synthesis essay. Readings will be selected to broaden students’ perspectives on global issues of justice and punishment. The selections will demonstrate the process by which people are classified, alienated, disenfranchised, and/or marginalized.

Readings will be drawn from such works as Stephanie Ericsson’s “The Ways We Lie,” Malcolm X – “My First Conk,” Shirley Jackson – “The Lottery,” Louis Gates – “What’s In a Name?,” Brent Staples – “Just Walk on By: A Black Man Ponders His Power to Alter Public Space,” Sandra Cisneros – “Only Daughter,”

The culminating activity for the third quarter will be a synthesis essay in which students will be required to demonstrate an ability to incorporate quotations and supporting references from a variety of source materials, to include essays, articles, charts, diagrams, and photographs. Students will select a topic that addresses the issues of this unit – the classification, marginalization or disenfranchisement of any particular class/group of people. A successful synthesis essay will demonstrate a clear ability to select appropriate source material to support the student’s position, and appropriate documentation of source material.

Exam Prompt:

Television and Its Influence on Presidential Elections

-OR-

Non-Native Plant Species and Their Effects on Their New Environments

Fourth Quarter: Synthesis Essay, Focused Preparation for the AP® English Language and Composition Exam, and Understanding the Rhetoric of Drama.

Theme: Disillusionment, Alienation and Renewal utilizing All Modes of Discourse.

(April - June)

Students are expected to read and analyze the following novels outside of class while class work is focused on preparing for the AP® Exam: *The Great Gatsby*, by F. Scott Fitzgerald and *The Grapes of Wrath*, by John Steinbeck. When students are finished reading these assigned novels, the class

will analyze and discuss the pieces in Socratic seminars and/or small/whole group discussions before being tested on the works. As students are reading outside of class, the class time will be devoted to preparing for the AP® Exam prior to testing in mid-May. Students will prepare for the multiple choice portion of the exam by focused practice of multiple choice passages. After the exam in May, class time will be devoted to studying drama, specifically works by Tennessee Williams, such as *A Streetcar Named Desire* and *Cat of a Hot Tin Roof*.

Readings for this quarter will focus on combining the modes of discourse, targeting the synthesis essay. Selections will be from both classic writers such as Steinbeck, Fitzgerald and Tennessee Williams, Woolf, Swift and Rodriguez, as well as modern essayists Jonathan Kozol and Robin Lakoff and Smith-Yackel.

The emphasis in this final quarter is combining the modes of discourse, and creating a synthesized essay that demonstrates this combination.

Exam Prompt:

“The Common Life,” by Scott Russell Sanders – 2003 AP® English Language and Composition Exam (Form B) – Question 1

-OR-

Life the Movie: How Entertainment Conquered Reality, by Neal Gabler – 2003 AP® English Language and Composition Exam – Question 1

Grading System

Essays 30% - In-class essays are considered rough drafts and are graded as such. Occasionally these will extend into polished, type-written final drafts. Final drafts are graded as 30% of the overall grade, while rough drafts are considered part of daily work and are graded as such (see below).

Tests 20% - Most tests are objective, and based on rhetorical devices and their application to both familiar and 'blind' passages. Test will also be given on discrete units and their related terminology.

Quizzes 20% - Most quizzes are used to check for reading comprehension, vocabulary from works we read, and on grammatical and/or mechanical concepts discussed in each unit.

Daily Work 30% - Daily work consists of in-class timed writings, peer editing, vocabulary and grammar exercises, homework, and all individual components leading to a larger, finished product.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is using another person's ideas and/or words without proper documentation or acknowledgement. It is rarely unintentional, and as such is an unconscionable breach of honor. It is also an illegal act punishable beyond academic boundaries. If you are in doubt, then document!

AP[®] Language & Composition
Recommended Reading List

Please choose 1 selection each from the fiction and nonfiction lists *per semester* to read outside of class. Check syllabus for due dates and assignments.

Fiction

The Scarlet Letter – Nathaniel Hawthorne
Death of a Salesman – Arthur Miller
“Macbeth” – William Shakespeare
1984 – George Orwell
Bless Me, Ultima, Rudolfo Anaya
“The Crucible” – Arthur Miller
The Glass Menagerie – Tennessee Williams
Children of Men – James
Divine Secrets of the Ya Ya Sisterhood
– Rebecca Wells
Sometimes a Great Notion – Ken Kesey
Schindler’s List – Thomas Kineally
Sophie’s World – Jostein Gaarder
Jasmine – Bharati Mukherjee
Confessions of Nat Turner – William Styron
As I Lay Dying – Faulkner
The Great Gatsby – Fitzgerald

Nonfiction

84, Charing Cross Road – Helene Hanff
Gorillas in the Mist – Dian Fossey
One Writer’s Beginnings – Eudora Welty
The Right Stuff – Tom Wolfe
Branded: The Buying and Selling of Teenagers
– Alissa Quart
Girl Interrupted – Susanna Kaysen
Angela’s Ashes: A Memoir – Frank McCourt
On Writing – Stephen King
Guns of August – Barbara Tuchman
Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave – Frederick Douglass
Dust Tracks in the Road: An Autobiography
– Zora Neale Hurston
On Writing Well: The Classic Guide to Writing Nonfiction – William Zinsser
Undaunted Courage: Meriwether Lewis, Thomas Jefferson and the Opening of the American West
– Stephen E. Ambrose
Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts – Maxine Hong Kingston
The Way to Rainy Mountain – N. Scott Momaday
Lonesome Traveler – Jack Kerouac
Money and Class in America: Notes and

Observations on Our Civil Religion –

Lewis H. Lapham

The Basketball Diaries – Jim Carroll

Into Thin Air: A Personal Account of the Mount

Everest Disaster – Jon Krakauer

*The Perfect Storm: A True Story of Men Against
the Sea – Sebastian Junger*

