ADVANCED PLACEMENT ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION COURSE SYLLABUS 2016-2017

COURSE DESCRIPTION

GENERAL OVERVIEW

Advanced Placement (AP) English Language and Composition provides eleventh-grade students with a college-level composition course whose expressed purpose, as stated in the AP Course Description, is "to enable students to read complex texts with understanding and to write prose of sufficient richness and complexity to communicate effectively with mature readers." To succeed on these fronts, students carefully read and rigorously analyze a wide variety of prose texts, and explore an author's use of style, argumentation, and rhetorical techniques. An author's purpose and sense of audience are emphasized to further exemplify effective and powerful communication. These same criteria and skills are used by students to recognize the aesthetic and rhetorical effects of visual texts. Students compose numerous written works which vary in scope and focus – ranging from informal class journals and in-class timed essays to structured, multi-draft compositions in a variety of modes.

In short, students in this course arm themselves with relevant critical thinking skills, the ability to read analytically and the means to articulate their insights on the page with confidence. In addition to writing, students will regularly engage in practice and analysis of AP released multiple-choice questions and essays prompts. The course consists of five units (three during the Fall, and two in the Spring), each focusing on a critical writing mode and incorporating associated concepts and readings. By the middle of the fourth quarter students are thoroughly prepared for success on the Advanced Placement Exam, which is developed and evaluated annually by The College Board and administered in May. After the exam, a series of readings and projects brings the course to a close and creates a bridge to twelfth-grade English Literature and Composition.

COURSE FUNDAMENTALS

READING

The majority of AP English Language and Composition readings are works of non-fiction (essays, op-ed pieces, speeches, articles, criticism, letters, memoirs, mission statements, etc.) drawn from a variety of sources which represent diverse political viewpoints, writing styles and historical eras. Additionally, the AP English Language Released Exams provide substantive prose passages (drawn from both multiple-choice and also free-response sections) for use in class discussions, activities and assessments.

Students review grammatical and syntactic concepts, further their understanding of how diction, syntax and imagery affect tone and style, and acquire a set of general tools (including SOAPSTONE and SIFT) used to break down and understand complex texts. Predominantly, they are expected to apply their critical reading skills to composing essays which exhibit coherence, clarity, control, and complexity. Students also demonstrate skill acquisition orally through class discussion, panel presentations, Socratic Seminars, debates, and other critical analysis and discussion techniques. Other assessments of student mastery include quizzes and tests on readings and on newly acquired concepts and skills (*e.g.* grammatical, analytical, rhetorical, and argumentative).

Independent reading is assigned each quarter to complement the course material. Students analyze elements of style and argumentation in relevant works of American fiction, drama, and verse. See Appendix B for representative titles and an overview.

WRITING

Students will compose expository, analytical and persuasive writings in numerous contexts, primarily in response to reading and analyzing materials provided in the AP recommended readings and outside sources. Student writing is categorized as structured, timed, and informal (as outlined below). The inclusion of a working thesis statement into each is a central focus of the student's writing development. Likewise, students practice the skill of balancing summary (the "what") with analysis (the "so what").

Teacher feedback helps guide revisions of thesis statements and subsequent essay drafts; likewise, students are grouped into rotating threes ("cohorts") for ongoing peer input, review, and presentation. This is followed by a class debriefing on skills *demonstrated* and skills *needing improvement* using student models that represent top- and bottom-half scores on the AP rubric.

Structured Writing – all structured writing includes:

- Multiple drafts
- Structured composition process, including:
 - o Inquiry and research (pre-writing)
 - Submission of Student Proposal with working thesis in a teacher conference
 - Drafting
 - Teacher Conference
 - Peer Review (student writing cohorts)
 - Revising
 - Editing
 - o Self-reviewing
 - Scored Final Product
 - Oral publication (presentation within student writing cohorts and/or to whole class)

Timed Writing (in-class Essays):

- Drawn mostly from AP English Language Released Exams (free-response, 40-min. – 55 min. for Synthesis)
- Teacher-generated prompts (with passages) modeled on AP essay questions

Informal Writing

- Quickwrite portfolios:
 - o students' personal observations and analyses on given topics
 - o critical reading responses to various material
- Double-entry Journal pages and "First-Impression Sessions" (quick responses to thought-provoking quotes and passages)
- Student-generated glossary of rhetorical techniques, strategies and vocabulary (indexed, with examples)

Students demonstrate writing-skill acquisition through structured essay assignments and also quickwrites, writing in critical reading journals and in-class timed writings utilizing text-related AP free response released prompts. Timed writings are scored using the AP rubric included with each prompt and appropriate feedback is given.

VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT

Vocabulary development occurs continuously throughout the course. Vocabulary for study will be drawn from assigned readings (context) as well as relevant literary glossaries. Vocabulary will also be routinely taught utilizing comprehensive exercises from Shostak and assignments related to word analogies, Greek/Latin roots, idioms and clichés, and diction basics (*i.e.* concrete vs. abstract words, denotation vs. connotation). Structured practice with student writing-and-revision activities will reinforce vocabulary learning.

COURSE MATERIALS

Readings and lessons are drawn from a diverse assortment of composition textbooks, non-fiction anthologies, and timely articles from such newspapers and periodicals as *The New Yorker, The New York Times, Washington Post, The Washington Times, Wall Street Journal, The Christian Science Monitor* and others.

GRADING POLICY

Grading Scale		Grading Percentages	
	90-100%	Writing Assignments	45%
В	80-89.9%	Tests & Quizzes	25%
C	70-79.9%	Homework & Classwork	15%
D	60-69.9%	Focused Participation	15%
F	0-59.9%	_	

See Appendix A for a list of representative works; see also Appendix B for a list of books assigned for outside reading and required course textbooks.

APPENDIX B: INDEPENDENT READING

In addition to the central course requirements, students independently read works from the canon of American Literature. A representative sampling includes: Hawthorne's The Scarlet Letter (focus on "The Custom-House" for syntax), Twain's Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (satire), Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby (description, diction), Steinbeck's The Grapes of Wrath (allegory, tone, theme), Hansbery's Raisin in the Sun (point-of-view), Miller's The Crucible (social commentary), Douglass' Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass (rhetorical devices and strategies), works from the Harlem Renaissance, poems by Whitman, Dickinson, Eliot, Soto, etc. These are complemented by accompanying criticisms, reviews, authors' interviews. Students will analyze such works for theme, tone, characterization and will also evaluate the success of the author methods in conveying his or her central idea(s).

SUMMER READING:

Students were given a summer reading assignment in June, 2016 to be completed during summer break and handed in on the first day of school in September of 2016. The summer assignment will be the subject of discussion during the first week of school followed by a composition assignment analyzing central issues the book addressed. See the Kennedy Website for the complete assignment.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS:

Holt Literature and Language Arts, 5th Course Holt Handbook, 5th Course (Grammar) Penfield, Elizabeth. Short Takes—Model Essays for Composition, 7th Edition

BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS, HOMEWORK POLICIES, TESTING AND GRADING POLICIES---- Please see "Classroom Policies and Procedures" on the Kennedy Website.

PARENT/TEACHER CONTACTS: If you would like to contact me any time during the school year, please leave a message for me to call you on my school phone (916-395-5090 Ext. 506808)) or email me at **Kathrynstork@scusd.edu** I am available for parent conferences during my prep period and after school. Please feel free to contact me if you have any concerns regarding your student's behavior, performance, assignments or attendance in my class.