AP English Language and Composition

Course Overview
The AP Language and Composition course provides students with a comprehensive awareness of critical reading and the art of rhetoric. Nonfiction prose, print ads, cartoons, documentaries and fiction will be analyzed and discussed at length. Through careful analysis, students will gain an in-depth understanding of how an author crafts his or her piece. They will have ample opportunities to craft their own pieces while they examine and discover the many facets and inner workings of language. Writing projects will go through several stages of revision with feedback from peers as well as the instructor. Students can also expect to complete in-class, timed essays, self-reflection journals, and imitation exercises. Group discussions are pivotal to the AP classroom as well. Discussions will be evaluated, and individual students will be assessed according to their input and participation. Students, therefore, must come prepared to class with questions and comments from the assigned reading. The AP English Language and Composition course will be challenging, but students who are willing to manage their time wisely to keep up with analytical reading and meet deadlines will find success. Students will leave the class with a wealth of knowledge and skills that will transcend beyond the high school classroom and the AP exam into higher levels of academia and the world itself.

Texts
Shea, Scanlon, Aufses  
*The Language of Composition*  
Bedford/St. Martins  
2008

Buscemi, Smith  
*75 Readings: An Anthology 12th Edition*  
McGraw Hill  
2013

Shakespeare  
*The Tragedy of Othello*  
Washington Square Press  
1993

Rand  
*Anthem*  
Plume  
1999

Salinger  
*Catcher in the Rye*  
Back Bay Books  
2001

Assessment & Evaluation

**Writing Projects 50%**
Students will complete several writing projects on a variety of subjects throughout the year. These essays and larger projects will go through several drafts with feedback both from their peers and their instructor before they are evaluated and assessed for a grade. This will compel students to take risks with their writing and allow for mistakes. These assignments are designed to create effective writers and assist students in developing their own style.

**Tests & Quizzes 35%**
Tests and quizzes will assess the various skills students are learning in the course. Students will complete in-class timed essays taken from past AP Exams, vocabulary quizzes, grammar and style quizzes and skill based objective tests made up of multiple choice questions. These assessments are designed not only to evaluate skill and comprehension but also provide practice and feedback for the AP Exam.

**Daily Assignments 15%**
Daily assignments consist of homework and class work assignments as well as discussion. These assignments are designed for students to practice and reflect on the skills they are learning.
Course Objectives

Upon completing the AP English Language and Composition course, students should be able to:

• 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 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 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.

(AP English Course Description. College Board. Fall 2010. p. 9)

Course Organization

The course is organized thematically. Students will examine readings in a thematic unit as they develop different skills in each unit. The course will move from analysis to argument to synthesis. Students will write several essays throughout each unit to develop their own personal style, mastering sentence structure, diction and tone. The course will also be comprised of the following activities to assist students in developing analytical reading skills and effective writing skills.

Vocabulary

Vocabulary words are taken from the readings. Students will be responsible for keeping a vocabulary notebook, which explores several facets of each word: context, definition, word parts, origin, and part of speech. Students will have two weeks to learn 15 words and will be encouraged to use these words in their own writing. Quizzes will require students to use the word correctly and provide context that indicates the meaning of the word.
Style and Grammar
Elements of grammar and style will be taught through warm-up exercises as well as instruction and exercises in *The Language of Composition*. Quizzes will require students to create a sentence or paragraph using the grammatical element they learned and explain its effect in what they wrote. Quizzes will also require students to edit or rewrite a sentence or paragraph to achieve a specific effect or style.

Annotated Readings
Annotated readings are assigned readings that students will annotate using the margins or post-it notes. Students will annotate with comments and questions that identify rhetorical strategies and analyze syntax. Students should annotate all readings but some will be turned in and assessed for a daily assignment grade.

Critical Reading Questions
Critical reading questions will be assigned after some of the pieces found in *The Language of Composition*. The purpose of these questions is to compel students to think critically as they read and revisit the text to revise understandings and evaluate the effectiveness of rhetorical strategies.

Writer’s Notebook
In the Writer’s Notebook, students will practice a variety of writing skills: agree, disagree or qualify an assertion; reflect upon something you wrote and how you wrote it; imitate a writer; write a letter to an author; write a journal and create voice. Some of these entries will be turned in periodically for a grade, and students can choose to develop a few of their entries into a formal piece of writing for a writing project grade.

Strategies
Students will be taught the SOAPShelp and DIDLS strategy. These strategies can be applied to any piece of reading and assist students in actively engaging with what they read. They will move students from summarizing to analyzing a piece. Students will also use these strategies for visual text and apply them to their own writing as well.

- **Speaker:** individual, or collective voice of the text
- **Occasion:** cause for the piece of writing
- **Audience:** the group for whom the piece is written
- **Purpose:** the reason behind the text
- **Subject:** main idea, topic
- **Egos:** appeal to credibility
- **Logos:** appeal to logic
- **Pathos:** appeal to emotion
- **Diction:** the words the writer uses
- **Imagery:** the collective images a writer uses
- **Details:** evidence, examples, support the writer employs
- **Language:** the type of words and phrases a writer uses: figurative, jargon, verbs
- **Structure:** how the writer puts his words and ideas together: syntax, transitions, repetition
Students will also be taught the Toulmin Model to identify and analyze fallacies in rhetoric. The Toulmin Model is a method of analyzing argument from the book *The Uses of Argument* by British Philosopher Stephen Toulmin. This model will help readers determine the arguments presented by a writer or speaker, as well as the complexity of argument. This is a tool that one can use to evaluate arguments—both those read or seen and those one will write.

**Basic Toulmin Template:**

Because ____ (data as support) ____, therefore/so (claim), since (warrant).

- **Claim:** an assertion
- **Data/Support:** data used as evidence, reasons or grounds for the claim
- **Warrant:** expresses the assumption necessarily shared by the speaker and the audience.

Students will use a syntax analysis chart to break down the elements of syntax in some of their readings as well as their own writing. The purpose of the chart is to give students a thorough understanding of syntax and to help them develop style in their own writing as they analyze their own diction, sentence variety and use of verbs. It will also illuminate common problems found in student writing, such as repetitiveness, lack of transitions, weak verbs and lack of syntactical variety.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First 4 Words</th>
<th>Special Features (i.e. Gerund, Appositive, Subordination, Coordination)</th>
<th>Verbs</th>
<th>Sentence Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

SYLLABUS

MARKING PERIOD 1
Unit One: Introduction to Critical Reading and Rhetorical Awareness

Reading

- Martin Luther King, Jr., “I Have A Dream”
- Anna Quindlen, Commencement Speech at Mount Holyoke College
- Anne Fadiman, “Never Do That to a Book”
- The Language of Composition Chapter 2: Talking with the Text
- George Orwell, “Shooting an Elephant”
- Barack Obama, Dreams from My Father (Summer Reading Selection)
- Bill Ayers, from Fugitive Days
- Joan Didion, “On Keeping a Notebook” Slouching Towards Bethlehem
- The Language of Composition Chapter 2: Analyzing a Visual Text
- The Language of Composition Chapter 1: The Rhetorical Triangle

Viewing

- YOUTUBE, Bill Ayers: “I wrote Dreams from My Father.”
- Miscellaneous slides: road signs, photographs, advertisements
- Lou Gehrig Speech

Assessments

Quiz
Vocabulary (from readings)
Style and Grammar

Composition: Rhetorical Analysis
Reread Anna Quindlen’s “Commencement Speech at Mount Holyoke College.” Write an essay in which you analyze the rhetorical strategies she uses to convince the graduates to, “Give up the back pack.”

Composition: Compare and Contrast
Jack Cashill, claims in his book, Deconstructing Obama, that the author, Bill Ayers, penned Barack Obama’s book, Dreams from My Father. Closely examine the excerpt from Fugitive Days and an excerpt of your choosing from Dreams from My Father. Then write an essay in which you agree, disagree, or qualify Cashill’s claim. Support your central claim by comparing and contrasting the rhetorical strategies used in the two excerpts.

Test
Objective Multiple Choice – Rhetorical Analysis
In-Class, Timed Essay – Rhetorical Analysis

Unit Two: Language, Politics, and Rhetorical Fallacy
Readings

- George Orwell, *Politics and the English Language*
- Naomi Shihab Nye, *For Mohammed Zeid of Gaza*
- Naomi Shihab Nye, *Why I Could Not Accept Your Invitation*
- Leonard Pitts, Jr., “Separating Fact from Prejudice”
- Joe Keohane, “When Facts Backfire”
- Jonathan Swift, *A Modest Proposal*
- Henry David Thoreau, *On the Duty of Civil Disobedience*
- Stephanie Ericsson, *The Ways We Lie*
- William Lutz *Double Speak*
- Daniel Okrent, “The War of Words: A Dispatch from the Front Lines”
- Letters to the Editor in response to “The War of Words”

Viewing

- Presidential Debates
- Political Ads
- *Persuaders* PBS
- *The Simpsons*

Assessments

**Quiz**
Vocabulary (from readings)
Style and Grammar

*Composition: Analyzing Voice*
“A Modest Proposal” is remarkably consistent in its ironic voice throughout. There are, however, some places where Swift’s own voice intrudes. Write an essay showing how these breaks in tone reveal Swift’s own attitude toward his subject.

*Composition: Fallacies in Argument*
For this assignment you will participate in an online discussion, in which you will analyze and examine techniques used in political ads from earlier decades as well as identify logical fallacies of the arguments, characterize the ads from the decade as a whole and compare/contrast the ads from one decade to the ones currently being played out on television. Consider “Politics and the English Language” and “The Ways We Lie.” You can find political ads from other decades at [www.livingroomcandidate.org](http://www.livingroomcandidate.org). The assignment is a discussion, so you will need four posts that respond and react to your classmates. The posts should be completed throughout the week and not all in one day.

*Composition: Rhetorical Language Project*
You are going create a project that has a purpose revolving around language and use various techniques to convey that purpose. You will also complete a chart to rhetorically analyze your
own project. Your specific task is to create a poem, video, commentary or op-ed piece in which you make a comment about some kind of word or phrase choice.

**Composition: Presidential Debates**
Take notes as you are viewing one of the Presidential Debates. Consider the assertions President Obama makes and the assertions GOP candidate Mitt Romney makes. Put them to the test. Do their assertions contain fallacies? How do they add up on the argument analysis template? Choose one of the arguments that one of the candidates makes, and write an essay in which defend, challenge, or qualify their argument.

**Tests**
In-Class, Timed Essay – Rhetorical Analysis
In-Class, Timed Essay – Argument

**MARKING PERIOD 2**
**Unit Three: Media, Popular Culture and Lies in a Cave**

**Readings**
- Plato, “The Myth of the Cave”
- Mark Twain, “Corn-Pone Opinions”
- Scott McCloud, “Show and Tell”
- Theresa Wiltz, “Popular Culture in the Aftermath of September 11 is a Chorus…”
- Judith Viorst “The Truth About Lying”
- Steven Johnson “Watching TV Makes You Smarter”
- Corbett Trubey, “The Argument against TV”
- Julia Scott, “He Doesn’t Like to Watch”

**Viewing**
- *The Innocent Eye Test* Mark Tansey
- *Poster TV Turnoff Week*
- Various commercial advertisements
- Facebook Pages
- *Mad Men* clip

**Assessments**
- Quiz
  - Vocabulary (from Readings)
  - Style and Grammar

**Composition: The Death of Real News Project**
Choose a current event or issue from the past two months. Examine how it is presented. Look at both the style and content in four different media outlets. This means you must watch two
shows and read objective material related to the issue. Create a final product that asserts your opinion in relation to Koppel’s argument and supports that argument with evidence and analysis – you may choose to write something or create a video.

**Composition: Entering the Conversation**
In groups, students will be responsible to carefully analyze one article or essay regarding television and intelligence. Each group will then take on the persona of the author of the article they analyzed, and groups will have a conversation with each other. Through the conversation students will make the assertions of their authors and answer any questions as the author would answer them. After the conversation, students will individually write an essay about how television affects intelligence. The essay will assert their own arguments and synthesize the arguments and ideas of at least two of the authors in the original conversation. The essay will cite the sources using the MLA format.

**Composition: Advertising Campaign Project**
In groups, students will create an ad campaign with the purpose of attracting more students to enroll in the school. Their campaign needs to include two of the following, a print ad, a mock facebook page, an online ad or a television commercial. All ads will be viewed in class. While students are viewing the ads, they will choose one on which to write a rhetorical analysis that determines the effectiveness of the ad created by their classmates.

**Tests**
- In-Class, Timed Essay – Argument
- In-Class, Timed Essay -- Synthesis

**Unit Four: Rhetoric, Performance and Stammered Speech**

**Readings**
- Shakespeare, *Othello*
- Alexander Niccholes *A Discourse of Marriage and Wiving*
- Various articles pertaining to Elizabethan theater and Shakespeare’s audience
- Mark Logue, Peter Conradi *The King’s Speech* (Summer Reading)

**Viewing**
- Kenneth Branagh’s *Othello* (clip)
- *O* (clip)
- *The King’s Speech* (clip)
- *Shakespeare in Love* (clips)

**Assessments**
- Quiz
- Vocabulary (from reading)
- Style and Grammar

**Composition: Early Modern English Rhetoric**
After reading *A Discourse on Marriage and Wiving*, write an essay explaining how effectively the author conveys his attitudes to an Elizabethan audience. Before writing, complete SOAPS and DIDLS with your groups to assist you in your analysis of the archaic piece.

*Composition: The King’s Speech*
Write an essay in which you analyze how Logue’s changes and pauses maintain or change the meaning of the original speech.

*Composition and Performance: The Shakespearean Soliloquy*
Choose one of the soliloquy’s from *Othello*, write an essay in which you rhetorically analyze the soliloquy you chose. Use the analysis to then prepare a performance of your soliloquy, filling out the performance analysis as you prepare. Finally, perform the soliloquy in front of the class.

*Composition and Performance: A Call to Action*
Write a speech in which you persuade your fellow classmates to action. This action can be anything of your choosing: environmental, moral responsibility, civic responsibility, or educational. Complete the public speaking analysis graphic organizer as you prepare to deliver your speech to the class.

Test
In-Class, Timed Essay – Argument
In-Class, Timed Essay – Synthesis
Objective Multiple Choice – Rhetorical Analysis, *Othello*

**MARKING PERIOD 3**
**Unit Five: Gender and the Unconscious Bias**

**Readings**
- Virginia Wolf, “Professions for Women”
- Gretel Ehrlich, “About Men”
- Paul Theroux, “Being a Man”
- Judy Brady, “Why I Want a Wife”
- Sandra Cisneros, “Only Daughter”
- Judith Ortiz Cofer, “The Myth of the Latin Woman”
- Marge Piercy, “Barbie Doll”
- Marilyn Marchionne and Lindsey Tanner, “More Couples Screening Embryos for Gender”

**Viewing**
- *Cathy* (Cartoon)
- First Barbie Commercial
- First Ken Commercial
- Mr. Mom (clip)

**Assessments**
Quiz
Vocabulary (from readings)
Style and Grammar

Composition: Gender Synthesis Paper
The purpose of this 4-6 page paper is to have students continue to think about gender issues, research outside sources, synthesize sources, and write about them in a way that includes a central claim or assertion that is well supported. This assignment must utilize at minimum two sources given in class and a minimum of two additional outside sources. Students will use rhetorical analysis to evaluate both primary and secondary sources and cite their sources using the MLA format.

Composition: Literary Elements in Rhetorical Analysis
Write an essay analyzing the rhetorical strategies Woolf uses in this speech to reach her specific audience. Pay attention to the way she uses the tools of the novelist, such as characterization, scene setting, highly textured and specific descriptive detail, and figurative language.

Test
In-Class, Timed Essay – Synthesis
In-Class, Timed Essay – Rhetorical Analysis

Unit Six: Science, Technology and the future of Humanity
Readings
- Marge Piercy, *He, She, and It*
- Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, “The Future of Happiness”
- Steven Pinker, “The Blank Slate”

Viewing
- John Watson – Little Albert (YouTube)
- Dan Gilbert – “Why We Make Bad Decisions” (TED Talks)
- Frontline – “Digital Nation” (PBS)

Assessments

Quiz
Vocabulary (taken from reading)
Style and Grammar

Composition: Argument and Personal Experience
Write an essay that defends, challenges or qualifies Huxley’s views based on what you do in your science class. Consider how accurately Huxley’s position describes your experience.
Composition: Nature or Nurture and the Researched Argument
For centuries, people have argued about whether human behavior is more the result of nature or nurture – that is, whether it is determined more by heredity or environment. Write an essay in which you discuss both sides of the question and argue for the primacy of one force over the other. Refer to at least three of the texts in this chapter as you discuss the issue.

Test
In-Class, Timed Essay – Synthesis

MARKING PERIOD 4
Unit 7: Work, Freedom, and Happiness

Readings
- Ayn Rand, Anthem
- Barbara, Ehrenreich, from Serving in Florida
- Richard Selzer, “The Surgeon as Priest”
- Thomas Carlyle, from Labour
- Kimberly Palmer, “My Mother, Myself, Her Career, My Questions”
- Bharati Mukherjee, “Two Ways to Belong in America”

Viewing
- The Unknown Citizen (YouTube)
- We Can Do It! (Poster)
- The Great Gatsby Society (cartoon)

Assessment
Quiz
Vocabulary (from reading)
Style and Grammar

Test
In-Class, Timed Essay – Synthesis
Objective Multiple Choice

Composition: The Researched Argument Paper
The purpose of this 4-6 page paper is to have students continue to think about the relationship between work, freedom and happiness as well as to perform research to formulate and support an argument. Their research should inform a new argument on the issue and lead to a new understanding of the information. Their sources can be a mix of what was read in class and outside sources and should be cited according to the MLA format.

Composition: Letter To the Editor
Write a letter to the editor of any newspaper of your choosing in which you respond to the following quote:

“Young people no longer have a work ethic”
Unit 8: Coming of Age and the Personal Catharsis

Readings

- Ishmael Beah, A Long Way Gone (Summer Reading)
- J.D. Salinger, The Catcher in the Rye
- Tim O’Brien, “On the Rainy River” The Things They Carried

Viewing

- 127 Hours (clip)
- 21 (clip)
- Jarhead (clip)

Assessments

Quiz
Vocabulary (from readings)
Style and Grammar

Test
In-Class, Timed Essay Synthesis
In-Class, Timed Essay Argument
Objective Multiple Choice Rhetorical Analysis

Composition: Personal Catharsis
The purpose of this 8-10 page paper is to examine yourself in the context of the world you live in and craft a voice that emphasizes the characteristics of who you are in light of a situation or choice that in some way shaped who you are at this moment. The subject of your piece should be narrow. It needs to be something that took place in a moment or over the course of a few hours. It should be something that lasted no more than one day.

Composition: The College Essay
Select a prompt from the list below and write a two page essay (500 words or fewer):

1. Evaluate a significant experience, achievement, risk you have taken, or ethical dilemma you have faced and its impact on you.
2. Discuss some issue of personal, local, national, or international concern and its importance to you.
3. Indicate a person who has had a significant influence on you, and describe that influence.
4. Describe a character in fiction, a historical figure, or a creative work (as in art, music, science, etc.) that has had an influence on you, and explain that influence.
5. A range of academic interests, personal perspectives, and life experiences adds much to the educational mix. Given your personal background, describe an experience that illustrates what you would bring to the diversity in a college or work community, or an encounter that demonstrated the importance of diversity to you.
6. Identify a time when you contributed to your community or country in some way and discuss what inspired you.
7. Describe the process of creating an original work (e.g. woodworking, poetry, song, landscaping) and what that experience reveals about you.

8. What qualities or unique characteristics do you possess that would allow you to contribute to your future school, your future career, endeavors, or your place in the world?

9. What is the best advice you ever received? Why? How will this affect your choices going into the future?

10. Identify a new or changed perspective that shows a shift in your thinking. What changed your views? Show how that changed perspective will influence your future and the choices you will make.