AP English Literature & Composition
Course Syllabus 2011-2012

Course Overview

- AP English Literature and Composition is designed to be a college/university-level course. This course will provide students with the intellectual challenges and workload consistent with a typical undergraduate university English literature/Humanities course. As a culmination of the course, students will take the AP English Literature Composition exam given in May. A grade of 4 or 5 on this exam is considered equivalent to a 3.3-4.0 for comparable courses at the college or university level. A student who earns a grade of 3 or above on the exam will be granted college credit at most colleges and universities throughout the United States.
- Our school year is divided into 4 nine-week terms. Students will study various units throughout the year and are expected to take the Advanced Placement Literature and Composition Exam.
- Students will be expected to read a variety of literature, analyze the literature through verbal and written communication, and develop composition skills through a writing program as required by Kentucky state law.

Course Goals

1. To read and analyze a variety of British and Western literature as recommended by the AP Board.
2. To study themes, style, and structure from a variety of prose and poetry.
3. To study various critical methods and use them to inform analysis.
4. To understand an author’s intention/purpose in a work.
5. To consider the social and historical values a work reflects and embodies.
6. To write focusing on critical analysis of literature through brief responses, full essays, and in-class timed-writings.
7. To write on-demand editorials, speeches, articles, or proposals as required by Kentucky state law.
8. To prepare for the AP Board exam through the previous goals, in addition to taking and studying previously released AP exams.
9. To complete SCALPT literary cards or Major Works Data Sheets of each work studied for use in reviewing major works.

Required Texts and Materials

- Selected short fiction, essays and poetry
- Poisonwood Bible by Barbara Kingsolver
- Things Fall Apart by Chinua Achebe
- Heart of Darkness by Joseph Conrad
- 2 British or World novels selected from approved list as per curriculum guidelines.
- Beowulf
- Canterbury Tales by Geoffrey Chaucer
- The Inferno by Dante
- Hamlet by William Shakespeare
- King Lear by William Shakespeare
- One major work of thematic connection to Hamlet or Lear
- One contemporary novel
**Performance Tasks**

- Reading and analyzing a variety of literature through discussion and written responses
- In-class timed writings using past AP prompts
- In-class multiple choice practice on poetry and prose passages using past AP prompts
- Teacher generated tests and quizzes over assigned material
- Literary analysis essays
- Weekly written poetry reflections/analysis
- Research based inquiry related to authors, periods and critiques covering a variety of reading materials.
- Group performance activities such as fishbowl discussions, panel discussions, debate, poetry explications and presentation.

**Summer Reading**

Students are to read *Poisonwood Bible* by Barbara Kingsolver.

**Unit 1 – Short Fiction (4-5 weeks)**

Students will study the following:

- Critical approaches to literary analysis
- Close reading and grammar skills (syntax, diction, tone, structure, theme, etc.)
- Writing effective thesis statements
- Essay structure

Texts included:

- Poetry included in summer assignment
- Selected excerpts of other works
- Critical analyses of short fiction from noted authors

Using the short fiction selections, students will learn to analyze fiction for meaning and style. Students will practice writing effective thesis statements in response to literature.

**Unit 2 – Expository/Persuasive Writing (1 ½ weeks)**

Students will study persuasive writing techniques and various forms of expository and persuasive writings, specifically as required by Kentucky State Standards Assessment. Forms such as editorials, articles, proposals, letters, and speeches will be studied through modeling and practice on-demand writing.

**Unit 3 – Thematic Unit - African Colonization (6 weeks)**

Students will discuss or research aspects of African Colonization for social and political background in order to better evaluate the themes and impact of these events on British and American thought - research may culminate in a choice of projects, either group or individual, requiring annotated bibliography and presentation or evaluations of short articles.

**Major Components**

1. *Poisonwood Bible *
   - Fishbowl Discussion (focus on cultural and historical context, character motivation, narrative voice, and theme)
   - In-class timed writing
   - Novel Exam
2. *Things Fall Apart*
   - Research on African culture
   - Comparison Essay (*Things Fall Apart* and “The Second Coming”)
3. *Heart of Darkness*  
   - Guided Reading (focus on narrative voice, symbolism, and theme)
   - In-class timed writing (comparison/contrast of *Heart of Darkness* and *Things Fall Apart*)
Unit 4 – Composition & Grammar (2 weeks throughout year)
Writing in accordance with the Kentucky Department of Education will be done. Mini-lessons will be conducted on idea development, structure, diction, tone, voice, thesis, effective paragraph writing, syntax, and grammar.

Unit 5 – Novel/Play Major Work Study (4 ½ weeks)
Students will read at least 2 major works during this unit. The focus will be on understanding the social and historical context of the works, as well as reading for major literary elements. Please note that while units 4 and 5 have designated time limits, they actually will be intertwined over the course of 7 ½ weeks as to allow sufficient time for portfolio conferencing and feedback. From this unit, students will select at least one Victorian novel, one dystopian novel, and two other choices from an approved list taken from the English department curriculum guidelines which also meet the standards of literary merit appropriate for Advanced Placement.

Dystopian Selections:

Brave New World
1984
Aldous Huxley
George Orwell

Approved Victorian Selections:

Wuthering Heights
Emily Bronte
Tess of the D’Urbervilles
Thomas Hardy
Great Expectations
Charles Dickens
Middlemarch
George Eliot
Mayor of Casterbridge
Thomas Hardy
Pride and Prejudice
Jane Austen
Picture of Dorian Gray
Oscar Wilde
The Moonstone
Wilkie Collins
Sense and Sensibility
Jane Austen
Emma
Jane Austen

Other Selections:

The Count of Monte Cristo
Alexandre Dumas
The Once and Future King
T.H. White
Les Miserables
Victor Hugo
Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man
James Joyce
Anna Karenina
Leo Tolstoy
War and Peace
Leo Tolstoy
Madam Bovary
Gustave Flaubert
Murder in the Cathedral
T.S. Eliot
Waiting for Godot
Samuel Beckett
Doctor Faustus
Christopher Marlow
The Importance of Being Earnest
Oscar Wilde

Assignments
The following assignments may accompany the major works unit. Some assignments will be completed with all 4 selections, while others will be only for selected works.

1. Research of historical and social context (for Victorian novel) – students will research the era in which the book was written and must cite a minimum of three sources. They must write two typed pages focusing on the daily life and class structure, the arts and culture, and the political issues of the time.

2. Author study (for each work) – students will research author’s background and search for connections between author’s life and the work (whether it be in personal experiences, setting, characterization, plot lines, themes, etc.)

3. Stylistic prose techniques – students will prepare a list of at least 10 powerful prose techniques from the work. Examples could be point of view, tone, diction, syntax, narrative pace, humor, satire, figurative language, imagery, structure, or irony. Students must define the term, cite the
example from the text, and provide a brief analysis of how the author uses the technique effectively.

4. Exams – students will take exams over two of the selections to assess detailed reading.

**Unit VI – Poetry (4-5 weeks)**
During this unit, the major emphasis will be on the following:

- Poet’s lives (so as to make connections to work)
- Historical and social context of poem through analysis of meaning, structure, and style
- Practice AP prompts – both multiple choice and timed writing essays

Poets studied will be:

Strategies used include:
TPCASST and DIDL sheets to break open a poem; class discussion of meaning, style and structure; research based analysis, review of critical approaches to poetry; personal response writing; whole class and group discussion.

**Unit VII – Survey of Anglo-Saxon & Medieval Literature (4 weeks)**
Students will study the historical, social, and political issues during the Anglo-Saxon and Medieval era. They will read major works of those periods, studying stylistic differences in the literature and the development of language over time.

Major Focus
- Historical study and research related to the culture and political events that impact literature of the periods.
- Poetic forms (epic, ballads, elegies)
- Poetic techniques (rhyming couplets, caesura, kennings, terza rima, allusion, alliteration, meter)
- Satire
- Old English language
- Middle English language

Major Works
- Beowulf
- Canterbury Tales
- The Inferno

Major Assignment Options
1. Students will reflect on heroic qualities with a culminating “hero speech” about someone they consider to have heroic traits.
2. Students will write and perform a parody of “modern society” emulating the style of Chaucer.
3. Students will create a visual model of “their own hell” modeled after Dante’s portrayal of hell.
4. Students will hold discussions (Fishbowl, inner-outer circle etc) in response to questions of theme, irony, symbolism, tragic elements, form as it reflects meaning, epic qualities etc.)
5. Students will read critical analyses and respond to the author’s perspective on a poem.
6. Students will write reader responses to a wide variety of works by the poets mentioned as well as others in order to become immersed in the genre throughout the year.

**Unit VIII – The Renaissance (6 weeks)**
During this unit, students will study the historical and cultural aspect of the Renaissance period, as well as literary techniques of sonnets and tragedies. One work of thematic connections (from another period) will also be included.
Major Works

- Hamlet
- King Lear
- Oedipus Rex

Major Assignments

1. Fishbowl discussion (requiring students to share insights, ask questions, and interpret themes rather than just discuss plot).
2. Hamlet sanity/insanity debate (requiring specific evidence gathering throughout play and culminating in a debate with guest judges)
3. In class essays adapted from previous AP exams, teacher generated tests and quizzes, brief personal responses, and soliloquy analysis.

Unit IX – AP Test Review (2 weeks)
During these two weeks, students will review style analysis techniques, examine testing skills, examine a few major works, take practice tests, and analyze results from past AP exams.

Unit X – Contemporary Literature
Students will read one novel by a contemporary author. The current selection is The Bean Trees by Barbara Kingsolver. Other possible works that could be used are In Country by Bobbie Ann Mason, The Coal Tattoo by Silas House, or Creeker by Linda Scott DeRosier or Ordinary People by Judith Guest. The major assessment for this will be class discussion (making connections between themes, characters, and setting). Students will also be required to keep a reading journal of insights (one page after each quarter of the book).

Unit XI – End of Year Project Options

Class Yearbook
At the end of the year, after the AP exam, students create and publish a class book. The students are responsible for the entire project and plan it themselves. The only requirements are these:

1. It must include an autobiographical page for each student with student information and a picture.
2. Each student selects 1 or 2 pieces of his/her writings to publish in the book and student must include an explanation of the piece(s) selected.
3. The book must have a title, cover, and table of contents.
4. Every student gets a copy to keep.
5. Students have a deadline and they begin their own planning and publishing.

This is one of the most rewarding projects all year because the students invest so much of themselves into it. Every year students become more creative with developing their books to make them unique memorable keepsakes.

Poetry Presentations
Students will be presenting analytical poetry projects.