

Advanced Placement English Literature & Composition at West Michigan Aviation Academy

The Overall Picture

Reading...

"Books are to be called for and supplied on the assumption that the process of reading is not a half-asleep; but in the highest sense an exercise, a gymnastic struggle; that the reader is to do something for himself." --Walt Whitman

"An AP English course in Literature and Composition should engage students in the careful reading and **critical analysis** of imaginative literature. Through the close reading of selected texts, students should deepen their understanding of the ways writers use language to provide both meaning and pleasure for their readers... They should read deliberately and thoroughly, taking time to understand a work's complexity, to absorb its richness of meaning, and to analyze how that meaning is embodied in literary form... As they read, students should consider a work's structure, style, and themes as well as such smaller-scale elements as the use of figurative language, imagery, symbolism, and tone."

--College Board, *Guide to AP English Literature and Composition*

Writing...

"There are only two ways, really, to become a writer. One is to write. The other is to read."
--Anna Quindlen, *How Reading Changed My Life*

"The goal for writing in AP English Literature and Composition is to increase students' ability to explain clearly, cogently, even elegantly, what they understand about literary works and why they interpret them as they do... with attention to developing and organizing ideas in clear, coherent and persuasive language... The course should include study of the elements of style... asking students to attend to matters of precision and correctness as necessary... helping students develop stylistic maturity."

--College Board, *Guide to AP English Literature and Composition*

Critical Analysis...

"[The exam] depends on a level of maturity... [to engage] in thoughtful analysis of literary texts. The best response to a controversial detail or idea in a literary work might well be a question about the larger meaning, purpose or overall effect of the detail or idea in context. AP students should have the maturity, the skill and the will to seek the larger meaning through thoughtful research."

--College Board, *Guide to AP English Literature and Composition*

Class Time...

To summarize simply... "Such reading should be accompanied by thoughtful discussion and writing about those books in the company of one's fellow students."

--College Board, *Guide to AP English Literature and Composition*

The Final Destination...

Our goal is to achieve success on the AP English Literature & Composition Exam on **Wednesday, May 6th**. In doing so, you will hopefully earn some college credits and thereby free up your schedule for other classes next year, not to mention saving you money. Even if you choose not to take the test, the skills you develop in this course will help you with future college classes.

The Path to Enlightenment...

Essential Question for the Course

“How does literature aid and inform your understanding of the human condition?”

Texts

"The course should include intensive study of representative works from various genres and periods...by both British and American authors from the sixteenth century to contemporary times...The works chosen should invite and gratify **re-reading**, and not yield all of their pleasures of thought and feeling the first time through."

--College Board, *Guide to AP English Literature and Composition*

In AP Literature, you are awarded the opportunity to read these texts:

- *Brave New World*, Aldous Huxley
- *Frankenstein*, Mary Shelley
- *How to Read Literature Like a Professor*, Thomas C. Foster
- *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, Zora Neale Hurston
- *Hamlet*, William Shakespeare
- *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, Ken Kesey
- *Invisible Man*, Ralph Ellison
- A choice novel
- From Perrine's *Literature: Structure, Sound, and Sense*, AP Edition:
 - *Death of a Salesman*, Arthur Miller
 - A wide variety of poems and short stories
 - Various novellas and/or epic poems (*The Death of Ivan Illych*—Leo Tolstoy, *Metamorphosis*—Franz Kafka, “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner”, Samuel Taylor Coleridge)

**Disclaimer: This is our path at this moment. Remember that we may deviate from this path at times. Be flexible and open to the adventures that we encounter.

A note on books: You may want to purchase your own copies of the books so that you can freely highlight and annotate in the text. Many of the books we will be reading have various editions, so please check with me first about which edition to buy. Some editions have extremely helpful footnotes, or for some texts it is best when we can all reference the same page as a class. **Purchasing texts is optional- all texts listed above will be provided for students.**

The note about the A.P. Exam: While it may not always seem as if we are doing “test-prep” strategies, all work in this class is designed to better prepare you for the test. Your Perrine textbook says this best: “Yet more important than any specific strategy or technique is intelligent analysis based on close reading...you need to be ‘lit smart’- intuitive, observant, sensitive, and skilled at reading and analyzing literature...No matter how naturally smart you are, you can develop your literacy I.Q. through careful and close reading and rereading and by learning to write well about literature.” Another saying you will hear throughout the year in regards to the test is “A.P. stands for ‘Answer the Prompt.’”

Forms of Assessment and Activities: A Brief Overview

Writing Portfolio

Writing in this course will be scored using the AP 9-point rubric. You will keep written work in a portfolio, and at the end of the semester you will write a metacognitive reflection on your writing growth and goals. Your individual writing scores will not go into the gradebook.

Instead, your grade will come from your portfolio, your growth as a writer, and your reflection.

Timed Writings

These will mimic the AP exam's essay setting and will use prompts from past exams.

Responses will be hand-written and timed. These will be completed in and out of class.

Reader Responses

A brief, approximately one page typed response detailing your reaction to a text. Sometimes these will be "open response" types and other times there will be a focus, such as a certain literary device. These will be used as your Ticket-in-the-Door for Coffee House Fridays.

Research Papers

You will do some research for a variety of texts, but there will be at least one larger research paper in which you research and evaluate literary criticism.

Journal Checks

These checks will be at random- sometimes with a day's notice or less. You are accountable for any work assigned as a journal entry (e.g. quick writes, grammar mini lesson notes, dialogue journals, assigned work, etc.).

Reading Checks

All reading check quizzes are formative. They are used to assess that you did the reading, whereas a test is used to check for comprehension and final understanding. Therefore, I will always try to make these simple checks- if you did the reading, they should be easy, but if you didn't (or used an online summary instead), it will show and result in a poor grade. I sometimes grade these on a scale of 100%-50%-0%. In other words, if you get 9 out of 10, it rounds up to 100% because you've demonstrated that you read. This will be explained in more detail later.

Tickets-in-the-Door

Assignments that you must have completed in order to participate in class for the day. For example, if we are having a scored discussion the next day, you may be asked to generate five questions for discussion. Without the Ticket, you will be assigned an alternative task.

Coffee House Fridays

Nearly every Friday, we will hold a discussion on short works (selected short stories and poetry) from the Perrine textbook. The weeks will rotate by two's: the first week we will all read the section introduction and the same piece, the second week you will get to choose between several texts. The discussions will be scored, and your Ticket-in-the-Door is a Reader Response along with notes and questions for discussion.

Scored Discussions

You will always be notified when there is to be a scored discussion and the type of rubric. Always come prepared to these discussions; there is typically a content grade and a discussion grade, so be sure to engage your peers, ask questions, and don't hog the floor from others.

Tests

These are summative assessments of your knowledge, occurring near the end of a unit. The most important keys to success on these are to keep good notes and actively attend class.

Projects

Over the course of the year, there are various projects ranging from small to large.

Vocabulary

There will be vocabulary quizzes over words identified as being crucial to the AP Exam.

Grading & Other Policies

WMAA Grading Scale		
Letter Grade	Percentage	Grade Point
A	95-100%	4.0
A-	90-94%	3.7
B+	87-89%	3.3
B	83-86%	3.0
B-	80-82%	2.7
C+	77-79%	2.3
C	73-76%	2.0
C-	70-72%	1.7
F	0-69%	0.0
INC	Incomplete Coursework	N/A

Students will earn a final grade each semester based on mastery of the course objectives. The cumulative semester course work will comprise 80% of the final semester grade. A cumulative semester exam will comprise 20% of the final semester grade. The final semester grade is used to determine a student's (GPA).

A point system is used to calculate your grade for AP Literature. Point values for tests, papers, and projects will be communicated prior to the due date. The gradebook is divided into clearly marked categories with point explanations for each.

No late work will be accepted. ALL coursework is to be turned on time, at the beginning of class. Otherwise a zero will be entered in the gradebook for the work.

Larger assignments (those students have known about for more than a week) need to be turned in on the due date, regardless of whether or not the student is in school. I will always accept

assignments submitted to me by email when you are absent. Students absent on the date of a test or a quiz must make them up within two days of return except in the case of long-term absences.

Additional Tidbits You Need to Know...

Materials: You must have a **journal** that is to be used for this class only. It should be durable, not too small, with your name on the cover and entries dated and titled. I also advise you have a **large 3-ring binder** in which to keep all of your handouts, assignments, and graded work for the entire year.

Assignment formatting: If not otherwise indicated- Times New Roman, 12-pt. font, 1" margins all around, and your name, the date of submission, and assignment title in the upper left-hand corner.

Paper lengths: I will notify you of the paper length I would typically expect for a particular assignment to be done satisfactorily, but I will say I have never deducted credit from a student for writing too much.

SparkNotes (and other reading guides that replace reading): Do not, under any circumstances, attempt to take this class under the notion that you can get by without reading the texts. The texts are central to what we are studying. You cannot come in to class simply knowing the plot- you have to be able to discuss the subtleties of language, how the author paints the setting, and the like. If you are struggling, ask for help. You never need to know all of the answers, but you do need to put in the effort. ***Also, the purpose of the class is to learn how to interpret literature for yourself. Using sources that do the interpretation for you will not help you improve your scores or your reading abilities.***

Please see the Class Contract and Expectations document for more information regarding classroom behavior, policies, and an explanation of literature selections.

AP Literature Class Expectations and Contract

The goal of this document is to give parents and students a clear understanding of class expectations in order to set the stage for a dynamic and productive year in AP Literature.

Give your best effort. Push yourself beyond comfortable limits; think critically and creatively. Challenge yourself to find creative solutions.

Be present. Each day of class is engineered to teach you something. It is crucial to be present in class to succeed. This includes being physically and mentally present; do not use your phone or other electronic devices in class. Take care of errands (bathroom breaks, getting your class materials, etc.) before or after class.

Be prepared. You'll need a journal and a binder in which to SAVE EVERYTHING from the entire year: handouts, in-class assignments, returned/graded assignments, etc.

Be punctual. Your punctuality is a necessary courtesy to your classmates, yourself, and to me. Being "on time" means you are in your seat, you have your materials, and you are prepared to learn when the bell rings.

Be respectful and open-minded. We will be examining a variety of texts, some of which will differ from the way you see the world. Give these texts and your classmates a chance to voice differing opinions and explore those ideas. This classroom is a safe community where you will examine multiple perspectives without judgment or harassment.

Be resourceful. If you are absent, it is your responsibility to seek out missed assignments; there are no extensions, and **late work will not be accepted.** Larger assignments (papers, unit assessments, etc.) are due regardless of whether or not you are in school that day. Ask your peers what you missed and get notes from them. Check the Weebly site daily- I will update the Daily Schedule by 7th hour. When you are absent, you must check what was assigned that day and have the work done when you return.

Be a team player. I expect you to actively participate in this course, as your participation determines the success of you and your peers. Take charge of your learning by seeking answers instead of waiting for them to come to you, as they may never. **There is no late work accepted for the following reasons: this is a college-level course, and more importantly, when you don't complete your work the whole class suffers.**

Be flexible. You will be given an overview for each unit. As much information as possible will be provided at that time, including due dates. In an effort to be the most responsive teacher I can be, I reserve the right to change due dates based on the needs of the class. I will always do so within reason- you will be notified as soon as possible and never last minute. Changes such as this can result from snow days, school-wide schedule changes, time needed for re-teaching, etc.

Be a self-advocate. I am always available (before/after school, by email, during lunch) to discuss work and to offer assistance on class work. Do not hesitate to stop by and talk, especially if you are confused in class. As a high school student, you are responsible for communicating your needs and concerns. Keep me in the loop. Sometimes life happens, and when it does, be proactive and seek a solution. If you are genuinely concerned that you will not be able to complete something on time, seek me out **before, not after**, and together we can develop a way for you to successfully complete the work. Remember that it is easier to ask for these types of adjustments when your history proves your usual punctuality and hard work.

Be honest. Plagiarism of another person's work in any form will result in forfeiting the points for that assignment and a report to the office and parents. 1st offenses may result in an opportunity to regain some credit for the work (no more than 70%), but subsequent offenses result in more credit and further follow-up with the office, counselors, and parents. Plagiarism is a serious issue in high school because of the severity of consequences in the "real world." For example, some colleges have the policy to revoke credit for an entire class or semester due to a single incident of plagiarism. Do not copy from a friend. Do not share your work with another friend who may intend to copy from you. Protect your own work. Work copied from a classmate results in 0's for both students. Anytime you cut and paste without quoting and citing the source, that is plagiarism. Any 3 or more consecutive words from a single source must be given proper citation. Even ideas taken from another person's published works should be cited.

A Note about the Literature Selections:

As this is a college-level course, the texts selected represent the range, complexity, and maturity you would find in an entry-level college English course. The texts have been selected mindfully, based on literary merit and relevancy, by WMAA staff, with the intention of best preparing students for the AP Exam and life after high school.

A Note to Parents about Communication:

In working with upper-grade high school students, I have found it most beneficial for students to be responsible for advocating for themselves. This is a crucial component to succeeding after high school, and I want them to have a chance to practice. If an issue does arise, please speak first with your student and suggest that your student set up a time to talk with me about working on a solution. That said, I openly welcome parent involvement with the students, the class, and the content. I especially appreciate when parents give me a heads-up on information from home about their student that may be pertinent to their success in the classroom.

It is also greatly rewarding for a student to have the chance to discuss what we are learning outside of the classroom. Please engage your student in conversations about what we are studying. One of the best ways to master content is to become a teacher of the material- have your student teach you about what he/she is learning. You can also stay up to date by checking the class's website.

My Contact Information

Email: mhenning@westmichiganaviation.org

Phone: (616) 446-8886

This is the WMAA office phone. Please ask to be transferred to Mrs. Henning's room, Room 303.

Class Website: www.henninghomepage.weebly.com

My Availability: I will always be at the school from 7:30 until 4:00, Monday through Friday. Simply send me an email if you (a student, parent, or guardian) would like to set up a meeting outside of those times.

Please remove this page and return it by September 18, 2014 to Mrs. Henning.

Parent(s) and/or Guardian(s):

I have carefully read the syllabus and the course expectations for the West Michigan Aviation Academy AP Literature and Composition course. I understand that attendance and work completion are essential to my student learning the skills that will enable him/her to successfully complete graduation requirements. By signing this, I acknowledge the literary expectations of this college-level course. I authorize my student to read the text selections made by Mrs. Henning in the best interest of my student's learning and preparation for the AP Literature and Composition exam. If I have a question or concern about the course in general, I will contact Mrs. Henning by September 18th to set up a time in the near future to meet.

Signature(s): _____

Date Signed: _____

Best Method of Contact (email and/or phone): _____

Student:

I have read the syllabus and expectations carefully, so I understand what is expected of me in the West Michigan Aviation Academy AP Literature and Composition course. I understand that this class includes college-level coursework and that the work is designed to prepare me for life beyond high school. I pledge to put forth my best effort in this course, and I will ask for help and clarification when I need it.

Student Name (printed): _____

Student Signature: _____

Date Signed: _____