

Rationale: The AP Language and Composition course trains students to become skilled readers and writers in diverse genres and modes of composition. As stated in the *Advanced Placement Course Description* for the English exams, the purpose of the AP Language and Composition course 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”. As the course progresses, students will become aware of their own composition process through self-assessment and evaluations by peers and the instructor. These skills will allow students to read critically and write effectively in different modes in the classroom and beyond. Satisfactory performance on the AP English Language and Composition Exam may result in college credit.

Overview: Through the process of reading, writing, and discussing texts, students will become skilled in composing for different audiences and purposes, using different rhetorical techniques and strategies, focusing closely on tone, word choice, and sentence structure. Students will learn to understand and appreciate the diverse ways that authors make meaning in both oral and written texts.

The readings for this course will emphasize non-fiction writing such as editorials, columns, essays, letters, speeches and public documents; but we will also include short stories and two longer works of fiction. Central course textbooks include *The Riverside Reader; Making Sense: A New Rhetorical Reader;* and *Subjects/Strategies: A Writer’s Reader*. Novels include *Anthem* and *The Jungle*. For full publication data, see Instructional Materials.

Writing Experiences: Students will write seven major papers, using correct MLA style, to demonstrate understanding of the appropriate techniques of each of the learned modes of discourse: *Narration and Description, Process Analysis, Comparison and Contrast, Division and Classification, Definition, Cause and Effect and Persuasion and Argumentation*.

Each paper will require an outline, a peer and adult edit, and a self-assessment before being graded by the instructor. A nine point class created rubric will be used to evaluate. After initial teacher evaluation, students will have the opportunity to meet with the instructor to revise and rewrite for a second evaluation and increase in worth. Informal writing such as journal, free writes and written responses to readings will also be used both in and out of class.

Exam Readiness: Throughout the course, literary terms will be studied both in isolation and in connection with the selected readings. A total of two quizzes will be given for these terms. In addition, you will also be expected to periodically practice Multiple Choice (AP exam style) questions and writing prompts from past exams. The test will be given during the 1st or 2nd week in May and will cost approximately \$75. The cost may be reduced or eliminated for those who qualify.

Grading Policy: The following categories will determine your final grade:

Essays 50%

Daily 25%

Quizzes 25%

All work is expected to be completed and handed in on time. In the rare occurrence of an emergency, assignments will be accepted one day late at a 25% deduction. Anything handed in after that will be graded for the sole purpose of personal growth for the student.

Grading Scale:

90-100% A

80-89% B

70-79% C

60-69% D

59-below F

Instructional Materials

Emerson, Ralph W. "Self-Reliance." Ralph Waldo Emerson Texts. 23 Aug. 2004

<www.emersoncentral.com>.

Eschholz, Paul, and Alfred Rosa, eds. Subjects/Strategies: a Writer's Reader. 9th ed.

Boston: Bedford/St.Martin_ 2002. iii-689.

Fast Food Nation. Dir. Richard Lanklater. Perf. Greg Kinnear, Ethan Hawke, Patricia

Arquette. DVD. 20th Century Fox, 2006.

Glenn, Cheryl, ed. Making Sense: a New Rhetorical Reader. Boston: Bedford/St.Martin_

2002. v-683.

Murphy, Barbara L., and Estelle Rankin. 5 Steps to a 5 AP English Language. New York:

McGraw-Hill, 2002. v-242.

Schlosser, Eric. Fast Food Nation. New York: Harper Perennial, 2005.

Sinclair, Upton. The Jungle. New York: Signet, 1905. 7-352.

Trimmer, Joseph, and Maxine Hairston, eds. The Riverside Reader. 7th ed. Boston:

Houghton Mifflin, 2002. v-719.

Course Syllabus

Introduction to the Course

Discuss elements of *tone*, *diction* and *syntax* and how it relates to author's *purpose*, *strategy* and consideration of his/her *audience*.

After reading and annotating Ralph Waldo Emerson's "*Self-Reliance*", students will do the following writing activities:

1 page summation of *transcendentalism*

1 page summation of Emerson's essay

2-3 page analysis to show how the ideas of transcendentalism and self-reliance correlate

2-3 page expository essay to answer the question: According to Emerson's definition, are you self-reliant? Why or why not?

Use examples from the essay to support your answer.

**At this time the students are given a refresher course in correct MLA style and research techniques, which they have been taught and used in their freshman and sophomore years. A review lesson will be given in the following areas:

How to distinguish between credible and non-credible sources

Weeding out irrelevant information

Note taking and note card writing

Paraphrasing and quoting

Parenthetical citation

Works cited page

Students will be expected to use the above techniques on every major writing assignment.

Unit One: Narration and Description

from **The Riverside Reader**

My Name is Margaret, Maya Angelou

Keeping the Scorebook, Doris Kearns Goodwin

Digging, Andre Dubus

Shooting an Elephant, George Orwell

Truth or Consequences, Alice Adams

For each selection students will answer, in writing, a variety of questions in the categories of *response*, *purpose*, *audience*, *strategies* and *discussion*.

from **Making Sense: A New Rhetorical Reader**

The Deer at Providencia, Annie Dillard

Prison Studies, Malcolm X

For each selection students will answer, in writing, questions under the categories of

Reading Closely and *Considering Larger Issues*.

from **Subjects/Strategies: A Writer's Reader**

Stranger Than True, Barry Winston

Salvation, Langston Hughes

Getting Caught, Annie Dillard

For each selection students will answer, in writing, questions under the categories of *Questioning the Text*, *Understanding the Writer's Craft* and *Exploring Language*.

CARTOON: *An Appropriate Punishment*, Barbara Smaller (After reading *Getting Caught*, how do you think Annie Dillard would respond to Smaller's cartoon?)

Culminating Writing Activity: Demonstrate the effects of perception on values, how "seeing is believing", using examples from the reading as well as any other applicable sources.

*Correct MLA style is required.

Unit Two: Process Analysis

from **The Riverside Reader**

My Daily Dives in the Dumpster, Lars Eighner

Campus Racism 101, Nikki Giovanni

Arranging a Marriage in India, Serena Nanda

Dolphin Courtship: Brutal, Cunning and Complex, Natalie Angier

The Golden Darters, Elizabeth Winthrop

For each selection, students will answer, in writing, a variety of questions in the categories of *response*, *purpose*, *audience*, *strategies* and *discussion*.

from **Making Sense: A New Rhetorical Reader**

How to Write a Personal Letter, Garrison Keillor

Getting Stupid, Bernice Wuethrich

For each selection students will answer, in writing, questions under the categories of *Reading Closely* and *Considering Larger Issues*.

from **Subjects/Strategies: A Writer's Reader**

How to Mark a Book, Mortimer Adler

How to Say Nothing in 500 Words, Paul Roberts

For each selection students will answer, in writing, questions under the categories of *Questioning the Text*, *Understanding the Writer's Craft* and *Exploring Language*.

PHOTO: *Dumpster Diving*, Christopher S. Johnson (After reading the essay *Dumpster Diving*, by Lars Eighner, use your observations about the photograph and the essay to examine how the overlapping themes and strategies work in each medium.)

Culminating Writing Activity: Analyze the various steps in a political process, an economic process, or a social process. You must incorporate research from at least 3 outside sources and be prepared to perform a 2-3 minute presentation to the class.

*Correct MLA style is required.

Unit Three: Comparison and Contrast

from **The Riverside Reader**

Two Views of the River, Mark Twain

A Tale of Two Divorces, Anne Roiphe

His First Ball, Witi Ihimaera

For each selection students will answer, in writing, a variety of questions in the categories of *response*, *purpose*, *audience*, *strategies* and *discussion*.

from **Subjects/Strategies: A Writer's Reader**

Neat People vs. Sloppy People, Suzanne Britt

Like Mexicans, Gary Soto

Sex, Lies, and Conversation, Deborah Tannen

Grant and Lee: A Study in Contrasts, Bruce Catton

For each selection students will answer, in writing, questions under the categories of *Questioning the Text*, *Understanding the Writer's Craft* and *Exploring Language*.

PHOTO: *Ulysses S. Grant*, Matthew Brady

PHOTO: *Robert E. Lee*, Minnis and Cowell (Discuss the appearance of each man—both dress and posture. What details are most telling for you? Explain why.)

from **Making Sense: A New Rhetorical Reader**

Smoothing Rough Edges, Robin Hatfield

Guys vs. Men, Dave Barry

How It Feels to Be Colored Me, Zora Neale Hurston

Sonnet 18, William Shakespeare

For each selection students will answer, in writing, questions under the categories of *Reading Closely* and *Considering Larger Issues*.

Culminating Writing Activity: Compare and contrast arguments on both sides of a controversial issue such as welfare reform or gun control. Maintain a neutral tone as you assess the motives, methods and reasons for each argument. Research should be a part of the process.

*Correct MLA style is required.

Unit Four: Division and Classification

from **The Riverside Reader**

The Extendable Fork, Calvin Trillin

Shades of Black, Mary Mebane

Revelation, Flannery O'Connor

For each selection students will answer, in writing, a variety of questions in the categories of *response*, *purpose*, *audience*, *strategies* and *discussion*.

from **Subjects/Strategies: A Writer's Reader**

The Plot Against People, Russell Baker

The Ways of Meeting Oppression, Martin Luther King, Jr.

Propaganda: How Not to Be Bamboozled, Donna Woolfolk Cross

For each selection students will answer, in writing, questions under the categories of *Questioning the Text*, *Understanding the Writer's Craft* and *Exploring Language*.

PHOTO: *Coal Miner in Liberty, Pennsylvania*, Pittsburgh Courier Archives (Examine the photo of the miner, paying particular attention to his expression, possessions, and surroundings. What does the photo communicate to you about both the mine and the man who works in it?)

from **Making Sense: A New Rhetorical Reader**

Laura Bush: Bitch or Victim? Timothy Noah

Mother Tongue, Amy Tan

College Pressures, William Zinsser

For each selection students will answer, in writing, questions under the categories of *Reading Closely* and *Considering Larger Issues*.

Culminating Writing Activity: Write an essay that classifies people by the various ways they empower or oppress others. You should research historical references to support your thesis.

*Correct MLA style is required.

Unit Five: Definition

from The Riverside Reader

The Hoax, John Berendt

Growing Up in Los Angeles, Richard Rodriguez

Bobos: The New Upper Class, David Brooks

Everyday Use, Alice Walker

For each selection students will answer, in writing, a variety of questions in the categories of *response, purpose, audience, strategies* and *discussion*.

from Subject/Strategies: A Writer's Reader

The Company Man, Ellen Goodman

What Is Poverty? Jo Goodwin Parker

Ain't I a Woman? Sojourner Truth

What's Natural about Our Natural Products? Sarah Federman

For each selection students will answer, in writing, questions under the categories of *Questioning the Text, Understanding the Writer's Craft* and *Exploring Language*.

PHOTO: *Supermarket*, Michael Newman (What, for you, are the connotations of the terms *Health Valley, organic, natural, fresher tasting, and stay fresh fruit pack*, which appear on the cereal boxes in the photo? Do you believe, as some have claimed, that these words are inherently deceptive? Write a response in which you argue for or against the regulation of these words in advertising.)

from Making Sense: A New Rhetorical Reader

I Want a Wife, Judy Brady

Being a Man, Paul Theroux

Mommy, What Does "Nigger" Mean? Gloria Naylor

For each selection students will answer, in writing, questions under the categories of *Reading Closely* and *Considering Larger Issues*.

Culminating Writing Activity: Define the term "heritage" in terms of what it means to you. Use examples that define it both positively and negatively.

*Correct MLA style is required

Unit Six: Cause and Effect

from The Riverside Reader

Uniforms, Robert Coles

Keeping Women Weak, Cathy Young

One Holy Night, Sandra Cisneros

For each selection students will answer, in writing, a variety of questions in the categories of *response, purpose, audience, strategies* and *discussion*.

from Subjects/Strategies: A Writer's Reader

How Boys Become Men, Jon Katz

The Face of Beauty, Diane Ackerman

Changing My Name after Sixty Years, Tom Rosenberg

For each selection students will answer, in writing, questions under the categories of *Questioning the Text, Understanding the Writer's Craft* and *Exploring Language*.

CARTOON: *It Isn't That I Don't Love You...* Ed Fisher (What gender stereotypes does the cartoon use in its humor? What does it say about male-female relations in general? Discuss with your group.)

from **Making Sense: A New Rhetorical Reader**

Leg Waxing and Life Everlasting, Anna Quindlen

The Disease is Adolescence, Douglas Foster

VISUAL: *Got Milk?* National Dairy Association

For each selection students will answer, in writing, questions under the categories of *Reading Closely* and *Considering Larger Issues*.

Culminating Writing Activity: For one of the cause and effect essays in this unit, refute all or part of an author's thesis. The following strategies can be used for your argument:

- Challenge the cause and effect relationships that the author claims.
- Citing information you have from different sources or from your experience, argue that the writer's conclusions are faulty.
- Challenge the accuracy of some of the writer's evidence, or show weak links in his or her reasoning.
- Show that the writer has failed to take certain things into account about his or her readers or their situation and has thus weakened the thesis of the essay.
- Demonstrate that the writer has let his or her biases distort the argument.
- Show that the writer claims too much, more than the evidence warrants.

*Correct MLA style is required.

Unit Seven: Persuasion and Argument

from **The Riverside Reader**

I Have a Dream, Martin Luther King, Jr.

Stone Soup, Barbara Kingsolver

Women and the Future of Fatherhood, Barbara Dafoe Whitehead

Soul of a Citizen, Paul Rogat Loeb

Confessions of a Nonpolitical Man, Sven Birkerts

The Bird in our Hand, Toni Morrison

In Defense of Prejudice, Jonathan Rauch

Harrison Bergeron, Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.

For each selection students will answer, in writing, a variety of questions in the categories of *response*, *purpose*, *audience*, *strategies* and *discussion*.

from **Subjects/Strategies: A Writer's Reader**

Violence Is Us, Robert Scheer

Cause and Violent Effect: Media and Our Youth, Barbara Hattemer

For each selection students will answer, in writing, questions under the categories of *Questioning the Text*, *Understanding the Writer's Craft* and *Exploring Language*.

PHOTO: *Movie Still from The Matrix* (1999) (What dominant impression do you get from this movie still? What have the directors done in this shot to make violence look aesthetically cool and beautiful? Draw an image that depicts violence for a movie or cartoon that generally is not considered violent.)

Culminating Writing Activity: Argue for or against political involvement and its usefulness. Support your argument with reasons and evidence, drawing especially from the selections by King, Loeb and Birkerts.

*Correct MLA style is required.

Unit Eight: Man vs. Society

Anthem, Ayn Rand

Students do an annotated reading of this novel and respond to chapter study questions that analyze such plot elements as characterization, setting, conflict, climax and resolution; the unit culminates in a final written test that asks the students to respond to the following in no less than one full page each:

1. What does Equality finally understand about his society when the Council threatens to destroy his invention?
2. Contrast Equality's view of morality at the beginning of the novel to his view of morality at the end, and his view at the end to the view held by his society.
3. *Anthem* is a heroic and inspiring story about the triumph of the individual's independent spirit. Even though at the end of the novel Equality is greatly outnumbered and modern society lies in ruins, it is a story of hope-not despair. Discuss.
4. *Anthem's* theme is, in Ayn Rand's own words, "the meaning of man's ego". Explain the ways in which the characters and plot in *Anthem* illustrate this theme.
5. To fully control a man, dictators must not only enslave his body, but also destroy his mind. Discuss how the leaders in *Anthem* seek to accomplish this tyrannical end. Pair this with evidence in history where this particular technique has been used with success.

Unit Nine: A "Meaty" Issue

Fast Food Nation, Eric Schlosser

The Jungle, Upton Sinclair

Students do an annotated reading of this novel and respond to chapter study questions that analyze such plot elements as characterization, setting, conflict, climax and resolution.

- Ch.1-2: Coming to America
- Ch.3-4: Human Destiny
- Ch.5-9: Corruption, Lies and Politics
- Ch.10-14: Despair
- Ch.15-16: An Anthem for Packingtown
- Ch.17-19: "Duffers and Dope"
- Ch.20-25: A Tramp's Life
- Ch.26-31: A Cry for Socialism

Viewing: Film, "Fast Food Nation" 2006

Writing Assignment: In his introduction to *Fast Food Nation*, Eric Schlosser claims that the fast food industry is responsible for many of America's social and economic problems. Such a claim is not radically different from that made by Upton Sinclair in *The Jungle*. Sinclair's book resulted in the passage of the 1907 Meat Inspection Act, but did it really solve those problems depicted (particularly) in Chapter 9 of *The Jungle*? Use the introduction of Schlosser's book, excerpts from *The Jungle*, observations from viewing "Fast Food Nation", and at least two other sources to argue your position as to

whether or not further changes are essential to the Meat Inspection Act. (Remember that an effective argument considers opposing viewpoints.)

*Correct MLA style is required.