AP Literature and Composition Syllabus
Ms. Moorman
kim.moorman@riverhead.net
Class Blog Page: www.kmoormanblog.edublogs.org

Overview
The scope of this course will be a thematic survey of literature from various genres and periods studied through the lens of the human condition. Students will discover how literature, regardless of form, genre, language or translation, serves to inform and enlighten the reader regarding the inner workings of human beings.

The purpose of this course will be to provide students with an introduction to college-level reading and writing and to prepare them for future college study in which they will be required to actively read and explicate texts as well as write thorough literary analyses. Literature chosen will be of merit, and in the students’ Zone of Proximal Development. Writing tasks will focus on the higher levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy such as analysis, synthesis and evaluation, as these are the skills required of today’s collegians.

Key Objectives:
1. Students will conduct a meaningful study of literary works based on and historical, ethical, archetypal and rhetorical criticism.
2. Students will describe the relevance of various literary techniques and devices used in fiction, non-fiction, drama, and poetry.
3. Students will read literary works both critically and with reflection, taking time to understand a work’s complexity, and analyze how that meaning is embodied in literary form.
4. Students will formulate and defend a thesis statement about several literary works through explication.

Course Outline/Student Activities

Introductory Units:

Writing with Style

• Students will read several chapters of John Trimble’s *Writing with Style* 2nd Edition (Prentice Hall 2000). Students will complete individual and group activities to facilitate the mastery of skills outlined in each chapter. This unit will help to establish expectations for student writing throughout the course.
• Throughout the remainder of the course, students will be expected to utilize the skills acquired during this introductory unit in order to write several papers outside of class as well as several rhetorical or literary analysis essays in class. Feedback will be provided by the instructor and by peers on all assignments prior to final submission for a grade.

Critical Reading

• Students will read several chapters of Thomas Foster’s *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* (Harper, 2003) and complete writing assignments based on the literary analysis skills outlined in each chapter.
• Students will use the literary analysis skills acquired during this unit as a foundation for analyzing literature throughout the remainder of the course.
Writing Assignments

Students will receive both verbal and written feedback on all writing assignments and will be encouraged to use peer and instructor comments in order to write several drafts of assignments before submitting for a grade. Comments on writing assignments will focus on phrase construction, sentence length and structure, word choice, transition statements and the inclusion of illustrative details. In addition, comments will be made regarding writing style, ability to control tone and maintain voice as well as how aptly their chosen style achieves the purpose of their writing.

Analytical Essays:

Students will write in formal, critical style in order to develop and defend an original thesis statement. These essays will be judged on analysis and argumentation as well as writing mechanics. Students will be graded according to a rubric in the areas of ideas/content, voice, analysis and mechanics.

Students will also be required to write interpretations of literature based on observation and understanding of textual details and will consider structure, style, and theme. The social and historical values it reflected in the work will be considered as will elements such as the use of figurative language, imagery, symbolism and tone.

In-Class Timed Essays

These essays will help build students on-the-spot thinking and writing skills and will be graded on the 9-point AP scale.

Reading Response Journals

Students will keep dialectical journals on the novels, poems and plays studied in class as well as material read for an ongoing research project. Entries will include quotations and plot details, interpretation, literary elements, questions and connotations. Journals will be collected and feedback will be given by instructor and peers.

Creative Writing

Students will experiment with writing various forms of poetry, write a one act play, and create a memory project including memoirs and personal essays.
On-Going Assignments

**Poetry**

Individual copies of British and American poetry from the 16th century to contemporary times will be presented on a daily basis in order to facilitate analysis and discussion. In addition to daily discussion, each week students will be assigned one poem that relates thematically to the unit being studied. During the course of the poetry study students will learn to recognize poetic techniques, discuss themes, explicate poetry and read and understand criticism related to the poetry studied. Students will record their observations, questions and responses to the poems read in and outside of class in a poetry journal. They will be required to analyze each assigned poem and submit a one-page essay discussing their analysis.

**Vocabulary**

Each week literary techniques, critical theory and rhetorical strategies will be reviewed and applied to literature read in class in order to provide students with the necessary tools for college-level literary analysis.

**Research Project**

Students will be required to choose one author and perform a close examination of his/her work. They will read two books by the author and keep a journal that includes analysis, notes and ideas for a final thesis. They will then write an extended thesis-driven literary analysis paper. This project will receive ongoing feedback from the instructor in the form of comments on journal entries, drafts and conferences.

**AP Exam Preparation**

In addition to in-class and outside writing assignments, students will complete a full-length previously-released AP Exam in lieu of a midterm examination.

On a weekly basis, students will answer sample multiple choice questions from previously-released AP Exams.
Required Course Materials

**Books/Novels**
Students must have the assigned novel/readings with them for each class. Extra copies may not be available.

**Writing Implements**
Students are required to submit all written work in black ink and on white paper. This includes hand-written work such as in-class essays and typed assignments.

**Journal Binder**
Students are required to have a separate binder of loose-leaf paper with six tabulated sections. Students should not include this in a rather large binder that holds materials for all of their other courses. It should also not be a notebook with a fixed number of blank pages. The journal needs to be easily accessible for collection as well as necessary additional pages. These are the guidelines for the journal:

*Section 1: Quotes*
Each week, students will informally respond to a selected quote from an author from the American Literature Canon, as well as quotes from current journals, magazines, newspapers, and any other form of media. This includes artwork, images, and the occasional video clip or television commercial. Notably, these will be used to generate class discussions.

*Section 2 Vocabulary*

*Section 3: Literary Elements*
This is where students will record any information that relates to the large quantity of literary elements that they will learn throughout this course.

*Section 4: Grammar*

*Section 5: Poetry*
Important information that is discussed in class should be recorded in this section of the journal binder.

*Section 6: AP Exam Review Materials*

**Departmental Grading Policy:** Quarterly grades will be determined by the following:

- Quizzes, short writing assignments 25%
- Tests, process essays, projects – 50%
- Participation - 25%

In order to receive full credit for participation, students must be engaged in all class activities during the period, including class discussions. Sleeping is reserved for home. Any student who is sleeping in class will receive a zero for participation for that class period.
Thematic

Literature Units

Unit 1: “I am a rock. I am an island”: Identity and Alienation
During the course of this unit students will examine the effect of isolation and the formation of identity on characters in novels, short stories, poetry and a play.

Novel/Drama
Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, James Joyce
Richard III, William Shakespeare
Crime and Punishment, Fyodor Dostoyevsky

Examples of short stories studied during the course of the unit
“Paul’s Case,” Willa Cather
“A Rose for Emily,” William Faulkner

Major Assessments:
Weekly poetry analysis
Short fiction analysis papers
Collaborative maze project
Crime and Punishment literary critique
Crime and Punishment staged trial
Scene analysis and performance for Richard III

Unit 2: “It’s all in the family”: Family Dynamic
During the course of this unit, students will examine the effects of familial relationships in a novel, two plays, short stories and poetry. A primary focus will be on techniques playwrights use in conveying their ideas to an audience.

Novel/Drama
East of Eden, John Steinbeck
Death of a Salesman, Arthur Miller
Twelfth Night, William Shakespeare

Examples of short stories studied in the unit
“A Good Man is Hard to Find,” Flannery O’Connor
“The Lottery,” Shirley Jackson

Major Assessments:
Weekly poetry analysis
Short fiction analysis papers
Family dynamic in literature synthesis paper
Small group creation of a one-act play
Scene analysis and performance for Twelfth Night
Unit 3: “I am what I am and that’s all that I am” Naturalism and Determinism
During the course of this unit, students will learn to recognize the characteristics of naturalistic literature and explore the idea of determinism in two novels, poetry and several short stories.
**Novels:**
*Germinal*, Emile Zola  
*McTeague*, Frank Norris

**Examples of short stories studied in the unit**
“The Open Boat,” Stephen Crane  
“The Sea Wolf,” Jack London  
“The Blue Hotel,” Stephen Crane

**Major Assessments:**  
Exam on material presented in a PowerPoint presentation on Naturalism  
Weekly poetry analysis  
Analytical synthesis paper on *Germinal* and *McTeague*  
Short story analysis paper  
Literary critique on one novel from the unit

Unit 4: “What a wonderful world this could be” Utopian/Dystopian Societies
During the course of this unit, students will examine characteristics of societies portrayed in utopian and dystopian literature. Students will end the unit with a final group project in which they will create their own utopian societies.

**Novels**
*Brave New World*, George Orwell  
Excerpts from *Utopia*, Thomas More  
*Walden Two*, B. F. Skinner  
*The Handmaid’s Tale*, Margaret Atwood

**Examples of short stories studied during the unit**  
“When it Changed,” Joanna Russ  
“The Veldt,” Ray Bradbury  
“Harrison Bergeron,” Kurt Vonnegut

**Major Assessments:**  
Weekly poetry analysis  
*Brave New World/Gattaca* group project  
Short story analysis paper  
Utopian literature synthesis paper  
Group final project: Create Your Own Utopia