AP Language and Composition

Mrs. McDonald

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**Course Description:**

“The AP English Language and Composition course focuses on rhetorical analysis of nonfiction texts and the development and revision of well-reasoned, evidence-centered analytic and argumentative writing” (The College Board, *AP© English Language and Composition Course Description,* p. 8). The course is designed to be a writing-based course where students will engage in many types of writing for various purposes. The course is organized to give students ample opportunity to read critically, think analytically, and communicate clearly in both writing and speech. Students will also study the rhetoric of visual media such as monuments/memorials, photographs, films, advertisements, and music videos. Students will learn to read primary and secondary sources carefully to synthesize material from these texts for their compositions, and to form an argument for a given purpose and/or audience.

**Course Objectives as stated in the AP English Course Description:**

By the end of this 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 reading, research, and/or personal experience;
* Demonstrate understanding and mastery of standard written English as well as stylistic maturity in their own writings;
* 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 source material, cogent explanations, and clear transitions;
* Demonstrate understanding of the conventions of citing primary and secondary source material using both MLA and APA styles;
* 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.

**Ongoing Class Assignments and Activities**

**Writing Assignments**

There will be a significant amount of writing in this class. Students will be required to write papers in a variety of rhetorical modes (narrative, description, division, and classification, compare/contrast, process, cause/effect, and argumentative). Students will also be required to complete journal assignments, in-class timed writings, rhetorical analyses, and argumentative research papers. Students will be required to work on essays both in and out of class. In addition to writing their own essays, students will be required to share their work with other students for peer editing and should be prepared to read and respond to the work of others. Students will receive writing instruction, both generalized and in specific, illustrative detail, and will use this instruction to revise their work and improve their writing skills.

Students will complete many in-class timed writings on a variety of released and original prompts. These timed writings will be graded using the AP Language nine-point rubric. Students may re-write up to two timed writings each marking period to help them work through and understand the nine-point rubric. All re-writes must be completed before or after school.

Students will learn to cite sources in their writing using recognized editorial styles including MLA and APA.

Within the units, students will be required to write a variety of rhetorical analyses and synthesis essays. These will be graded using the nine-point AP Language rubric. Students will complete full process essays with many of these and will be required to participate in teacher conferences and peer revision workshops.

Additionally, students will be required to keep a class journal. This journal will be used to take notes on readings and class discussions, write in response to prompts, and reflect on learning.

**Grammar, Vocabulary, and Voice Activities**

Students will complete a variety of grammar activities using the “Grammar as rhetoric and style” sections in the textbook. Grammar will also be explored using Kollen and Gray’s *Rhetorical Grammar*.

Students will be required to keep a vocabulary list to keep track of vocabulary that is relevant to the course. These vocabulary words will be used in journals, essays, and other class assignments and will appear on quizzes.

**Quizzes**

Quizzes will be used to gauge the students’ understanding of grammar, vocabulary, rhetorical devices, and readings. Quizzes are meant to reinforce what students already know and should be easy as long as students complete the required reading and assignments.

**Exam Preparation**

Students enrolled in this course are expected to sit for the AP Language and Composition Exam in May 2016. Throughout the year, we will complete exam preparation activities from resources such as Applied Practice, the teacher’s guide for the primary text, and from numerous preparation books. This practice will include:

* Multiple Choice practice (45% of test score): Students will complete multiple practices of multiple-choice questions from either past exams or supplementary materials each quarter. After completing the questions, students will meet in small groups to confer and discuss possible answers, giving them the opportunity to explain their thinking process. Students are then given the correct answer and discuss how the correct answers are better choices.
* Essay practice (55% of test score): Students will complete multiple “Timed Writing Practice” essays each semester. These essays will mirror the three types of essays that appear on the AP exam – Rhetorical Analysis, Synthesis, and Open-Prompt Argumentation. Students will have multiple opportunities to peer score timed writes after scoring AP anchor papers for the same prompt. Teacher and peer feedback will be given for each essay.
* The Exam: One complete exam will be given over four class periods during second semester.

**Grading Policy**

*The following grading policy is tentative and may be changed. These changes will be clearly stated and reflected on the online grading system.*

* Quizzes and tests: 15%
* In-class assignments: 30%
* Homework: 10%
* Essays: 40%
* Participation: 5%

**Classroom Policies:** In this classroom we will…

* Be kind
* Be prepared with all class materials each day
* Be attentive and alert – side conversations and inappropriate use of electronic devices hurt your learning and our class atmosphere
* Be respectful to all people and property
* Be positive

**Classroom Procedures:**

1. **Entering the Classroom:** Once the tardy bell rings, students should have all materials and be in their seats, beginning to work on the warm-up while I take attendance.
2. **Organization:** Students are required to keep a neat and ordered binder for this class. All handouts and graded work should be kept in the rings of this binder. I recommend using tab dividers to keep materials organized. Students should also make use of a planner to keep track of assignments.
3. **School Property:** Students will be asked to respect all property in my classroom. This includes cleaning up paper or other messes, keeping papers and other items out of desks, and treating materials as if they are their own. Students may bring a bottle of water to class, but other eating and drinking is prohibited according to school rules.
4. **Absences and Tardies:** Students should make every attempt to be in school every day as attendance affects school performance. If a student must miss a day, upon return to class he or she should locate any missed assignments in the class folder. In accordance with school policy, students will have an equivalent number of days as they were absent to make up any missed work (this applies for excused absences only). In addition, students are expected to be in class on time. Tardies will be recorded and dealt with according to the process outlined in the student handbook.
5. **Bathroom Passes:** Students will be given fourhallway passes per marking period. These passes are to be used just once and only by the student they are written out to. Students will be given these passes on a small card that they will keep in their binder. The passes will be turned in for every bathroom, drinking fountain, or locker use and will be punched and returned. Students must also sign out and use a pass anytime they leave the classroom. Any unused passes will receive extra credit at the end of the marking period.
6. **Tutoring:** I am available from 3:30-4:30 several days a week. If a student needs to stay after school, he or she should make an attempt to let me know beforehand so that I can plan on being in my classroom. It is recommended that any student who is struggling should stay after school to receive extra help. Students can ask for a Twilight form and pass when necessary.
7. **Cell phone policy:** According to the school rules as written in the student handbook, students are to have cell phones turned off and out-of-sight during instructional time. There are times, however, when students will be able to use their phones for instructional purposes. These times will be clearly communicated and time limits will be given. Any student who is using a cell phone during an unspecified time will be given a verbal warning to put the cell phone away. If a student does not put the cell phone away after the 2nd warning, the student will be sent to the appropriate AP with a referral. *Lastly, students are not permitted to charge cell phones during class.*

**Consequences:**

The consequences for breaking classroom policies will depend on the severity of the offense, but are roughly as follows:

1st Infraction: Warning

2nd Infraction: Conference with teacher

3rd Infraction: After school detention and parent contact

4th Infraction: 3rd Party (Parent/Guardian) conference

5th Infraction: Referral

While this is the basic order of consequences, the given consequence can be more severe based on the severity of the offense. All school consequences for cell phone use and other offenses will be followed as well.

**Homework Policy**

Homework (including longer essays) MUST be turned in on time. Students will be deducted 10% for each day a paper is late. If the assignment is not turned in at the beginning of class when it is collected by the teacher, it is late. No assignments will be accepted more than one week past the due date. *For all late work: To get a grade, you must set up a time to meet with me and come to the conference with a written explanation of why the assignment was late.* If a student misses a class period for any reason (sports, meetings, early dismissal, tarty, etc.) he or she is still required to turn in the assignment on the due date. If a student misses a school day, the teacher must be presented with the excuse note and the assignment is due the first day the student comes back to class.

It is the student’s responsibility to collect and make up all missed work and notes. This can be done before or after class, but NOT during class.

**Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is a serious offense. Using another person’s words or concepts without properly acknowledging the source will result in a zero for the assignment and the student will be referred for disciplinary action. A copy of the plagiarized assignment will be submitted to the principal for the student’s record. These guidelines are in ordinance with the Washington County Public Schools Student Handbook.

**Required Materials**

* 3-ring binder with notebook paper(to be used only for this class)
* iPad
* Composition book or spiral notebook
* Pencils
* Red or green pen

**Texts**

**Primary Text:**

Shea, Renee H. *The Language of Composition: Reading, Writing, Rhetoric.* Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martins, 2013.

Douglass, Frederick. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass.*

**Supplementary Resource Texts:**

Cohen, Samuel. *50 Essays: A Portable Anthology*. Boston: Bedford St. Martins, 2004.

Peterson, Linda H., Brereton, John C., and Hartman, Joan E. *The Norton Reader: Tenth Edition.* New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2000.

Self-Selected Independent Reading books (non-fiction texts of literary merit)

**Course Outline**

*All listed texts and dates are tentative, and may be adjusted to best meet the needs of the students*.

**Unit One: Focused Study of Rhetoric**

Essential Question: What makes effective rhetoric?

Text: *Language and Composition* Chapters 1-3

Students will study Aristotle’s three rhetorical appeals (ethos, pathos, and logos) and the importance of identifying the occasion, speaker, audience, and purpose of every argument. The will also look closely at deductive and inductive reasoning for both analysis of their readings and logic in their writings. Finally, students will read and write using specific patterns of development.

**Unit Two: Social Progress and Politics**

Essential Question:

Texts: Chapter 13: Politics in *Language of Composition*

* Readings include:
  + Swift’s “A Modest Proposal”
  + Thoreau’s “Civil Disobedience”
  + Woolf’s “Thoughts on Peace in an Air Raid”
  + Orwell’s “Shooting an Elephant”
  + MLK Jr.’s “Letter from Birmingham Jail”
  + Malcolm X’s Ballot or the Bullet
  + Excerpts from O’Brien’s *The Things They Carried*

**Unit Three: The Environment**

Essential Questions: What is the relationship between nature and civilization?

Texts: Chapter 12: The Environment in *Language of Composition*

* Readings include:
  + Excerpts from Carson’s “Silent Spring”
  + Emerson’s “Nature”
  + Williams’ “The Clan of the One Breasted Woman”
  + Crumb’s ”A Short History of America”
  + Niman’s “The Carnivore’s Dilemna”

The primary focus of this unit will be a research project requiring students to investigate a current environmental issue impacting human society.

**Unit Four: Education**

Essential question: How does language and education inform us about individual and society?

Primary Text: *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*

Supplemental texts: Chapter 5: *Education* and Chapter 10: Language in *Language of Composition*

* Readings include:
  + Prose’s “I Know Why The Caged Bird Cannot Read”
  + Alexie;s “Superman and Me”
  + Sedaris’s “Me Talk Pretty One Day”
  + Foster Wallace’s “This is Water…”
  + Tan’s “Mother Tongue”
  + Orwell’s “Politics and the English Language”
  + Whitman’s “Slang in America”
  + Pinker’s “Words Don’t Mean What They Mean”

**Unit Five: Gender**

Essential Question:

Texts:

* + Virginia Woolf - Dinner parties
  + Brady’s “I Want a Wife”
  + Sojourner Truth’s “Ain’t I A Woman “

**Unit Six: Pop Culture**

Essential Question: To what extent does pop culture reflect our society’s values?

Primary Text: *Walden*

Supplemental Texts**:** Chapter 11, *Popular Culture, in Language of Composition*

* Reading include:
* McBride “Hip Hop Planet”
* McCloud from “Show and Tell”
* Klosterman “My Zombie, Myself: Why Modern Life Feels Rather Undead”
* Talese’s “The Silent Season of a Hero”
* Oates’ ”The Cruelest Sport”

By signing below I indicate that I have read and I understand the requirements of AP Language and Composition.

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Student Signature Date Parent Signature Date

Best form of parent contact: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_