

AP ENGLISH LANGUAGE & COMPOSITION

Conestoga High School

2014-15

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Welcome to AP Language & Composition! This writing and reading intensive course will emphasize the expository, analytical, and argumentative writing that forms the basis of academic and professional communication, as well as the personal and reflective writing that fosters the development of writing facility in any context. Special attention will be given to content, audience and purpose as we analyze prose written in a variety of periods, disciplines, and rhetorical contexts.

Objectives

In this course, you will

- learn to analyze the use of diction and rhetorical devices in nonfiction and how they contribute to the writer's purpose.
- learn to identify audience and how the writer adapts diction and rhetorical strategies to specific audiences.
- learn to respond personally and reflectively to a range of literature.
- contribute to class discussion thoughtfully and will prepare a variety of oral formal presentations.
- publish essays of personal interest for a variety of audiences.
- develop the knowledge and strategies needed for editing their own and others' work in peer critiques.
- gain familiarity with the types of questions and expectations for answers on the AP Language and Composition Examination.

Expectations

- Reading and writing are inseparable. Research has consistently shown that to become a good writer, reading—critical, active reading—is essential. We will look specifically at how an author *crafts* his words to achieve his desired effect. Expect to do a fair amount of reading each night. In addition, you will be assigned several long-term reading and writing assignments, including at least four independent major works, an annotated reading portfolio, a synthesis research paper, weekly blogging, and other formal essays.

Students who are successful in this course have often been those who have (or make) a habit of reading on a consistent basis—magazines, newspapers, fiction, non-fiction, political articles, science articles, etc. We will often discuss current events and debate some of the pertinent issues facing our society, examining the logical fallacies in the arguments of both sides of the issues. And since this is also a writing course, you'll then be asked to write about these issues in a variety of modes and genres. Writing will often be *shared*, not just with your teacher, but also with your classmates, both in class and online.

- Any time you are reading an assigned text, you are expected to annotate, annotate, annotate! Keep detailed and thoughtful notes (include page references) for each article. This will be an invaluable resource for class discussions and all assignments associated with that work.
- At this level, active participation in class is *assumed*. The effectiveness of our discussions and activities will depend largely upon how much you invest yourselves in them. A component of your grade each quarter will be calculated based upon class performance.
- One of the aims of this course is to introduce you to a variety of different perspectives, to encourage you to think critically and independently about writing. With this goal in mind, it is important that we all respect the individual views presented in class. However, remember also that an acknowledgement of the “community of readers” is required before setting out on more original interpretations.
- The ability to think critically and thoughtfully, with your own internal editor, will be a key to your success at the college level. You will be expected to read critically, analyzing the text not only for content, but also for form, structure, grammar, punctuation, tone, diction, and other rhetorical devices. **You must be willing to go above and beyond; this class is the equivalent of a college-level English course.**

- This course will challenge and (hopefully) excite you. You'll be asked to read and analyze writing in a way that you may not have been asked to before by looking at author intent and discerning author craft as a tool to improve your own writing skills.

Assignments

All papers are to be in MLA format (typed, double-spaced, max 12pt font, Times New Roman, parenthetical citations for all quotes, etc.). Refer to a style guide (on my website) for more detailed information.

All assignments are expected to be handed in at the *beginning* of class on the day they are due or turned in online at turnitin.com (refer to individual assignment requirements). Points will be deducted for late assignments (10% for each day late).

Assignments throughout the year will vary; assignments may include (but are not limited to):

- Daily quickwrites in your notebooks.
- Weekly Annotated Reading. Each week, you will be asked to select, read, and annotate a news or magazine article (this will move to a Google-reader or other RSS sharing program online later in the year).
- Independent reading assignment: longer works, one per month from September through January.
- Research Anthology: A collection of at least a dozen critical sources about a self-selected topic or area.
- Narrative writing: snapshot narrative (1-2 pages), extended narrative (3-4 pages), and a "place" narrative (4-6 pages)
- Persuasive writing: commentary, editorial, extended argument, literary non-fiction
- In-class writes modeled after the AP exam
- Multi-media group project modeled after "This American Life"
- Classmate description essay
- Personal essay modeled after "This I Believe"
- Rhetorical analysis essays
- Pundit project
- Weekly blogging and commenting (beginning 2nd marking period)
- Grammar and usage instruction
- Synthesis Research Essay / Multigenre Project – the culminating work of the course. More details to follow.

AP Test Preparation

As an AP-designated course, this class is designed to prepare students for the AP English Language & Composition test. Whether or not you choose to take the test is personal decision, based on many factors, but the reading and writing skills necessary for success on the AP exam (and for college) will be emphasized throughout the year. Evaluation of in-class and out-of-class essays will be based on the AP model.

Materials

Things you need: a writer's notebook, several pens, a highlighter, a USB flash drive, a folder or binder (binder preferred).

Final Note

This course, while challenging, will stimulate your thinking and understanding of reading, writing, and the world in ways that you may have not considered before. The best thinking and writing develops within a community of engaged and curious learners. I invite you to take risks in your thinking, to ask questions often, and to put forth your best efforts. I look forward to working with and learning beside you.