

Virtual AP English Literature and Composition – Outline



Unit 1 - Introduction to the Course

What is Literature?

This unit provides the framework for our course of study. We will explore fundamental questions regarding the study of Literature such as:

- How do you define Literature?
- What makes a work great?
- How do we distinguish between pleasure and academic process?

Students will be assigned the reading, “Reading and Writing about Literature” by Robert DiYanni in *Literature: Approaches to Fiction, Poetry and Drama* (1-17)

This article is meant to generate a preliminary discussion on the nature of this course.

Students will be given frequent opportunities to read and write in response to various forms of writing from the student text *The Act of Writing* edited by Ronald Conrad. Reading will be assigned in the areas of narration, writing to describe, cause and effect, writing to compare and contrast, analogy and related devices as well as argumentation and persuasion.

A number of essays (3-5) will be assigned in relation to short fiction and prose in this text, where students will analyze the writing of particular authors. Classes will consist of work shopping and discussion. I will also provide student feedback on these essays to help students understand the nature of writing with purpose.

Sample Works: *Where the World Began* Margaret Laurence

Encounters Carol Shields

Hidden Lessons David Suzuki

How to Live to Be 200 Stephen Leacock (C4)

Unit 2 - The Novel

Students choose 2 novels to read and study independently from a list of possible titles. One must be from the “classics” and one modern novel.

- *Pride and Prejudice, Frankenstein, Anna Karenina, The Scarlet Letter, Wuthering Heights, Don Quixote, Siddhartha, The Republic, Beowulf, The Canterbury Tales, Les Miserables, Great Expectations, A Passage to India, Tess of the D’Urbanvilles, Middlemarch, Ulysses*
- *Alias Grace, The Kite Runner, The Great Gatsby, Snow Falling on Cedars, The Bell Jar, Lord of the Flies, The Shipping News, Life of Pi, Brave New World, Invisible Man, The Fountainhead, Fifth*

Business, Grapes of Wrath, The Alchemist, Love in the Time of Cholera, The Color Purple, Heart of Darkness, Night, Cry the Beloved Country, A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, The Stone Angel, The Divine Ryans, Fall on Your Knees, The Republic of Nothing, The Mountain and the Valley, The Stone Diaries

Students must submit a paper on each work of literature near the end of each of the two terms. Conferencing and editing these papers will occur on selected days throughout the term as students will write and rewrite their extended analysis and show evidence of their ability to write for understanding and evaluation.

Unit 3 - Poetry

The Basics

Students will use *Sound and Sense* as their primary text. I will also supply individual photocopies of poems we read and discuss in class. Some of these poems are from past AP exams and others are pieces I have collected over the years. The poetry ranges from the “classics” to modern poetic examples.

I begin this unit with formal instruction on tone and voice, imagery and symbolism, rhythm and sound, as well as extensive study of figurative devices. (Sound and Sense) We explore various ways to read and explicate poems from the “Poetic Method” to “TP CASTT” to the “Five S Strategy” to explicating a poem which involves examining key sentences or phrases, the speaker, the situation, major shifts and syntax.

The Poets

Students choose individual poets and complete a research project on the history of that poet, their influences and achievements as well as exploring the nature of their poetry. They must provide a detailed analysis of individual poems (3-5). The analysis must include an awareness of poetic technique and patterns of language. This research must then be presented to the class in the form of a power point presentation where students demonstrate their ability to verbally and visually communicate their knowledge.

Unit 4 - Thematic Connections

The Individual in Society – Past, Present and Future

This unit focuses on the roles and responsibilities of the individual in society. Diverse works of literature are used to fully explore the central theme. These works may change from year to year depending on student interest and current issues. There are three anchor texts; William Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, Arthur Miller’s *The Crucible* and Margaret Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale*.

Part I *Hamlet*

Students read and study the play as an exploration of the individual’s presentation of choice. We will examine the creation of character, the structure and development of the five act play, the question of morality and individual responsibility. An extensive examination of the role of fate verses freedom of

choice is key in this study. Students will complete a variety of non evaluated, in class writing assignments.

Part II *The Crucible*

Arthur Miller's classic play has gained renewed importance in a post 911 world. The drama will be examined in historical perspectives of the Salem Witch Trials of 1692 and the separation of church and state; the McCarthy era and the role of government in the lives of the individual, as well as current issues of free speech and security. Students will explore the responsibility of the individual to and in their society. The function of social drama will be pivotal.

Part III *The Handmaid's Tale*

This dystopian novel allows readers to explore a future world where the role of the individual in society is threatened. An examination of dystopia verses utopia in literature is an essential component of this unit. I will include an assignment on writing to respond in this section of the unit where students reflect on the future of individualism.

Assignments in this unit will fall into two categories.

- a) Students will be required to read a minimum of three scholarly critiques on each work of literature and submit an evaluation of these critiques.
- b) Students will be given a list of past AP Open Essay Questions from which to select. They must select one essay topic for each work studied, workshop their topic in groups and complete a final draft.

Students must show an awareness of structure, style and theme, awareness of social and historical value and an appreciation of the use of literary elements.