English Literature and Composition

2007 - 2008

Brief Description of Course

AP English Literature and Composition Urbana High School Course Description Advanced Placement English Literature and Composition is designed to teach both reading and writing with standards reflective of those expected at the college level. All aspects of the course adhere to the curricular requirements contained in the AP English Course Description. Throughout the school year, students will explore and develop strong critical thinking and composition skills while examining and responding to a wide variety of challenging genres, styles and voices in literature. We will explore and critically analyze a variety of novels, plays, poetry and short stories as well as exploring literary criticism that will provide a lens for our analysis. In conjunction with examining the authors craft in their reading, students will also explore and develop their own writers voice and writers craft in a variety of situations: reader response writing, impromptu timed writings, essay writing, research writing and creative writing. Students will be part of a supportive writing workshop where all students support the writing efforts of their fellow classmates and depend on each other, and the guidance of the instructor, to provide positive critical evaluations of peer writing to enable each student to develop their unique voice in an atmosphere of effective evaluation. We will focus on the effect of writing, both that of the authors we read and of our own writing, focusing on stylistic and literary devices. We will, therefore, be asking not only the "what" of an authors intention but the "why" and "how" of it. Emphasis is placed on effective syntax, organization, clarity of thought, precision of language and effective, powerful commentary. The writing will be often and varied as students learn to think on their feet for timed class writings and to brainstorm, write, rewrite and publish longer pieces. The most effective growth in writing, however, often occurs when the instructor can work one-on-one with a student; therefore, personal writing conferences with the instructor are an integral part of this process and encouraged throughout the year. Students will be responsible for the research and presentations of a variety of literary critical approaches as a structure for our reading and discussions. Specifically, we will investigate Formalist Criticism, Sociological Criticism, Psychological Criticism, Mythological Criticism, Deconstructionist Criticism, Historical Criticism, Reader Response Criticism, Gender Criticism and Biographical Criticism. The basis of these criticisms, in addition to other catalysts, will provide the springboard for class discussions and a focus for our analysis. The responsibility for class discussions will often fall on the students, themselves, as they develop their analytical skills to become facilitators of Socratic discussions, and collaborate in small group forums. Students will need to be risk takers as they put forward their interpretations of literature and, more importantly, learn to ask the incisive questions that bring about important discussions and understandings of literature. Participation in class discussions is a vital part of creating the collaborative atmosphere offered in this type of course. While the expectations for the course are high, this is a course of mutual support and respect. If a student wants the challenge, there will be plenty of guidance and encouragement Other Thoughts: All writing assignments, other than in-class timed writings, should be typed if possible. There is an expectation of pride of workmanship that reflects thought and time. In-class writings will be based on AP tasks and will be graded according to AP standards using appropriate AP rubrics. We will, on occasion, have unannounced quizzes, and/or essay examinations that will require students to synthesize their understanding of the works at hand. Perhaps one of the most important aspects of this class is regular attendance. We cover a great deal of material during class time and there is no substitute for being present for explanations, discussions and presentations. Reading is done independently and class time focuses on our discussion of the material assigned. This implies a
purposeful planning and organization of time. The reading will most likely be more than what may have been expected in previous course work, and may be long and dense. Ideally these pieces should be read twice—once for content, and a closer reading for literary and stylistic techniques of the author. Again, all this requires planning and commitment. With these things in place we will learn from each other and grow in our view of life and literature. The spirit of the course is best defined by Socrates: But if we are to adopt this method, it must be on condition that we all regard ourselves as rivals in the attempt to distinguish truth from falsehood; we are all equally concerned in the truth being made clear. I will tell you my conclusions; but if any of you think that I am allowing myself to assume what is not true, he must interrupt and challenge me. I am not speaking dogmatically from the certainty of assured knowledge: I am simply your fellow-explorer in the search for truth, and if somebody who contradicts me is obviously right I shall be the first to give way.

Unit Information

Unit Name or Timeframe:
Semester 1/Unit 1: Literary Criticism
Essential Questions:
What is literary criticism?
What are the principal schools of literary criticism?
How does applying each of these analytical approaches to literature influence the way literature can be read and understood?

Content and/or Skills Taught:
Primary resource: Literature: An Introduction to Fiction, Poetry, and Drama by X. J. Kennedy and Dana Gioia
Secondary resources: Student-researched articles on literary criticism
Content:
Schools of criticism: Biographical; Psychological; Formalist; Reader Response; Gender; Deconstructionist; Mythological; Sociological; Historical
Skills:
Distinguish among the main characteristics of each school of criticism
Summarize information from the assigned readings
Prepare a presentation to explain one school of criticism
- Research a school of criticism
- Produce an outline of the presentation
- Provide a graphic representation that explains the school of criticism
- Interpret a poem as a critic
- Demonstrate to the class how the approach can be used to analyze a poem
- Write an analysis from the point of view of one school of criticism
Evaluate the benefits and pitfalls of a particular school of criticism

Major Assignments and/or Assessments:
Student presentation to the class that demonstrates listed skills
Analytical essay
Class discussion

Unit Name or Timeframe:
Semester 1/Unit 2: Short Fiction
Essential Questions:
What are the various literary elements and devices authors employ to create short fiction?
How do these elements work together to create meaning?
Content and/or Skills Taught:
Resource: Representative selection of short fiction from Literature: An Introduction to Fiction, Poetry, and Drama by X. J. Kennedy and Dana Gioia
Content/Key Terms:
Fable, tale, moral, short story
Plot (dramatic situation, exposition, complication, crisis, climax, resolution, in media res, protagonist, antagonist, foreshadowing, flashback, epiphany)
Point of view (participant, nonparticipant, omniscience, objective, naive narrator, unreliable narrator, stream of consciousness, interior monologue)
Character (motivation, stock characters, flat and round characters, static and dynamic characters, antihero)
Setting (regionalism, naturalism)
Tone and Style (diction, syntax, irony)
Theme
Symbol (allegory, symbolic act)
Skills:
Define key terms
Recognize the use of key terms in a specific work
Define the characteristics and structures of a variety of complex literary works
Interpret the effect of an author’s decisions regarding literary elements upon the text
Relate information from the text to self, world, and other texts
Defend an analysis of an author’s purpose and technique in an impromptu timed written response

Major Assignments and/or Assessments:
AP and AP-style impromptu timed written responses to prose passages
Short scene/story written from two different points of view
Class discussion
Group discussion
Group presentations

Unit Name or Timeframe:
Semester 1/Unit 3: Novel - Love Medicine by Louise Erdrich
Essential Questions:
What is the role of family in our lives?
How does culture affect our worldview?
What is the nature of love?

Content and/or Skills Taught:
Key Concepts:
Circular plot structure
Multiple narrator structure
Gossip as a narrative device
Imagery and symbolism
Native American literary motif
Literary postmodernism
Key Themes:
Traditional Native American vs European worldview
Wildness vs domesticity
Love vs passion
Duty vs desire
Individualism within a culture
The search for truth and identity
Skills:
Define key concepts
Recognize use of key concepts in a specific work
Interpret the effect of an author’s decisions regarding literary elements upon the text
Relate information from the text to self, world, and other texts
Defend an analysis of an author’s purpose and technique in an impromptu timed written response
Create a formal essay that analyzes how an author uses narrative techniques and/or other literary elements to create meaning in a work

Major Assignments and/or Assessments:
AP-style impromptu timed written responses to concepts, themes, or other elements of the novel
Class discussion
Group discussions
Group presentations
Peer editing
Writing conferences
Formal analytical essay

Unit Name or Timeframe:
Semester 1/Unit 4: Drama - King Lear by William Shakespeare
Essential Questions:
What is the difference between who we appear to be and who we are?
What is the relationship between material success and spiritual growth?
What is the connection between suffering and growth as a human being?
What does it mean to be a man (or a woman)?
Who is it that can tell us who we are?

Content and/or Skills Taught:
Key Concepts:
Tragedy
Tragic hero
Parallel plot
Representational vs symbolic drama
Shakespearean dramatic structure
Imagery used to characterize
Riddles used to extend theme
Wheel of fortune
Paradox
Key Themes:
Christian vs pagan morality
Despair vs redemption
Vision vs blindness
Madness vs reason
Appearance vs reality
Self-deception vs self-knowledge
Skills:
Analyze King Lear as a tragedy
Examine the use of nature in Lear
Evaluate Lear as a tragic hero
Recognize the subplot’s enrichment of the major plot and its themes
Identify Shakespeare’s use of imagery and its effects
Analyze the disguise and madness motifs as they interrelate as themes
Recognize Christian elements in a setting identified as pagan
Examine the elements of drama as found in Lear
Define key terms
Recognize the use of key terms in a specific work
Interpret the effect of the author’s use of literary elements upon the text
Relate information from the text to self, world, and other texts
Defend an analysis of an author’s purpose and technique in an impromptu timed written response
Create a formal essay that analyzes how an author uses dramatic techniques and/or other literary elements to create meaning in a work

Major Assignments and/or Assessments:
Ap-style impromptu timed written responses to concepts, themes, or other elements of the play
Class discussion
Group discussions
Group presentations
Peer editing
Writing conferences
Formal analytical essay

Unit Name or Timeframe:
Semester 1/Unit 5: Novel - White Noise by Don DeLillo

Essential Questions:
How does one craft a sense of identity in a postmodern world?
What does it mean to confront one’s mortality?
How does one maintain a sense of moral order in an immoral world?

Content and/or Skills Taught:
Key Concepts:
Literary postmodernism
Subverted plot structure
Satire as a means of social commentary

Key Themes:
Making sense of randomness
Contemporary responses to fear and death
Individual roles within a family structure
Postmodern issues of identity
Pervasiveness of consumerism
Pervasiveness of media and technology

Skills:
Define key concepts
Recognize the use of key concepts in a specific work
Interpret the effect of an author’s decisions regarding literary elements upon the text
Relate information from the text to self, world, and other texts
Defend an analysis of an author’s purpose and technique in an impromptu timed written response
Create a formal essay that analyzes how an author uses narrative techniques and/or other literary elements to create meaning in a work
Major Assignments and/or Assessments:
AP-style impromptu timed written responses to concepts, themes, or other elements of the novel
Class discussion
Group discussions
Group presentations
Peer editing
Writing conferences
Formal analytical essay

Unit Name or Timeframe:
Semester 1/Unit 6: Poetry
Essential Questions:
What is poetry?
How should one read a poem?
How does one evaluate a poem?
How can one identify excellence in poetry?

Content and/or Skills Taught:
Resource: Representative selection of poetry from Literature: An Introduction to Fiction, Poetry, and Drama by X. J. Kennedy and Dana Gioia
Key Concepts:
Reading a poem
Poetic voice
Literal language
Word choice and word order
Levels of language
Figures of speech
Closed form
Open form
Evaluating poetic techniques
Recognizing excellence
Key Terms:
Lyric, narrative, and dramatic poetry
Literary and poetic terms: i.e., rime, rhythm, meter, imagery, personification, allusion, symbol, figures of speech, alliteration, assonance, tone, irony
Word choice: denotation and connotation
Formal patterns
Open patterns
Skills:
Analyze and interpret specialized vocabulary/terminology
Infer and draw conclusions about text supported by textual evidence and experience
Analyze how structure contributes to the understanding of text
Use both implicit and explicit information to form an interpretation of text
Analyze and compare various poems for purpose, structure, content, detail, and effect
Evaluate imagery and figurative language
Analyze and evaluate the techniques and effects of writing choices
Use poetic terminology accurately
Defend an analysis of an author’s purpose and technique in an impromptu timed written response
Major Assignments and/or Assessments:
AP timed written responses to poetry
Class discussion
Group discussions
Group presentations

Unit Name or Timeframe:
Semester 2/Unit 7: Research Paper
Essential Questions:
What cultural, social, historical, psychological, biographical, philosophical, etc. imperatives does an author’s work represent?
What “world view” does it reflect?
How does it reflect 20th or 21st century thought and experience?
How do literary critics evaluate the author’s work?

Content and/or Skills Taught:
Resource: Writing Research Papers: A Complete Guide by James D. Lester and teacher produced handouts on various technical aspects of writing a formal research paper
Content:
Student selected author and a minimum of two major works or collections of short stories or poetry
Student researched books and articles of literary criticism
Skills:
Relate reading to prior knowledge and experience
Analyze the defining characteristics of an author’s work
Analyze and defend an interpretation of an author’s work
Critically evaluate information from multiple sources
Summarize and make generalizations from content and relate them to the purpose of the material
Evaluate how authors use text to express their ideas
Evaluate literary techniques and their influence on the effectiveness of an author’s work
Synthesize information from a variety of sources
Produce a formal research paper using standard manuscript form that is grammatically correct, exhibits clarity and focus, logical organization, appropriate elaboration and support, overall coherence and fluency, a distinct voice, and credits primary and secondary sources using MLA format
Deliver a planned oral presentation of research to peers

Major Assignments and/or Assessments:
Class discussion
Group discussions
Research and writing conferences
Formal research paper
Oral presentation of research

Unit Name or Timeframe:
Semester 2/Unit 8: Novel - All the King’s Men by Robert Penn Warren
Essential Questions:
Is knowledge good or bad?
Is it better to be good or to do good? Is it possible to do both?
What is one’s responsibility to oneself and to others?
How does one achieve self-knowledge?
Content and/or Skills Taught:
Key Concepts:
Historical context in fiction
Use of time as an organizing principle
Point of view
Connection between style and meaning
"Initiate" motif
The "Spider Web" theory
The "Moral Neutrality of History"
The "Great Twitch" theory
Idealism
Key Themes:
The role of knowledge
Self-knowledge
Moral ambiguity and relativism
Responsibility
The "good man" vs the "pragmatic man"
Rebirth/regeneration
Skills:
Define key concepts
Recognize use of key concepts in a specific work
Interpret the effect of an author’s decisions regarding literary elements upon the text
Relate information from the text to self, world, and other texts
Defend an analysis of an author’s purpose and technique in an impromptu timed written response
Create a formal essay that analyzes how an author uses narrative techniques and/or other literary elements to create meaning in a work

Major Assignments and/or Assessments:
AP-style impromptu timed written responses to concepts, themes, or other elements of the novel
Class discussion
Group discussions
Group presentations
Peer editing
Writing conferences
Formal analytical essay

Unit Name or Timeframe:
Semester 2/Unit 9: Novel - Beloved by Toni Morrison
Essential Questions:
How does one’s past influence one’s present self?
How can one come to terms with the emotional and psychological ghosts from one’s past?
How can one claim and maintain one’s humanity in the face of dehumanizing circumstances?
Is the cost of being human worth the price?

Content and/or Skills Taught:
Key Concepts:
Psychological narrative
Magical realism
Time/space relationship
Style and meaning
Mythic structure
Rememory
Novel as history
Key Themes:
Community responsibility
Personal responsibility
Claiming ownership of oneself
The cost of truth
The influence of memory -- personal and collective
Reconciliation with the past
Skills:
Define key concepts
Recognize use of key concepts in a specific work
Interpret the effect of an author’s decisions regarding literary elements upon the text
Relate information from the text to self, world, and other texts
Respond to reading in a personal journal
Defend an analysis of an author’s purpose and technique in an impromptu timed written response
Create a formal essay that analyzes how an author uses narrative techniques and/or other literary elements to create meaning in a work

Major Assignments and/or Assessments:
AP-style impromptu timed written responses to concepts, themes, or other elements of the novel
Class discussion
Group discussions
Group presentations
Reader-response journal
Peer editing
Writing conferences
Formal analytical essay

Unit Name or Timeframe:
Semester 2/Unit 10: Poetry

Essential Questions:
What is poetry?
How should one read a poem?
How does one evaluate a poem?
How can one identify excellence in poetry?

Content and/or Skills Taught:
Resources: Representative selection of poetry from Literature: An Introduction to Fiction, Poetry, and Drama by X. J. Kennedy and Dana Gioia and from The Sounds of Poetry: A Brief Guide by Robert Pinsky
Key Concepts:
Reading a poem
Poetic voice
Literal language
Word choice and word order
Levels of language
Figures of speech
Closed form
Open form
Evaluating poetic techniques
Recognizing excellence
Key Terms:
Lyric, narrative, and dramatic poetry
Literary and poetic terms: i.e., rime, rhythm, meter, imagery, personification, allusion, symbol, figures of speech, alliteration, assonance, tone, irony
Word choice: denotation and connotation
Formal patterns
Open patterns
Skills:
Analyze and interpret specialized vocabulary/terminology
Infer and draw conclusions about text supported by textual evidence and experience
Analyze how structure contributes to the understanding of text
Use both implicit and explicit information to form an interpretation of text
Analyze and compare various poems for purpose, structure, content, detail, and effect
Evaluate imagery and figurative language
Analyze and evaluate the techniques and effects of writing choices
Use poetic terminology accurately
Defend an analysis of an author’s purpose and technique in an impromptu timed written response
Create a poem modeled after a closed form such as a villanelle or a sestina

Major Assignments and/or Assessments:
AP timed written responses to poetry
Class discussion
Group discussions
Group presentations
Closed form poem

Unit Name or Timeframe:
Semester 2/Unit 11: Novel - The Things They Carried by Tim O’Brien
Essential Questions:
When is a story "true"? Does it matter?
How does fiction relate to real life?
What purposes do stories serve in one’s life?

Content and/or Skills Taught:
Key Concepts:
Literary postmodernism
Point of view
Narrative structure
"Savior" motif
Key Themes:
Truth
Betrayal
Friendship
Trust
Contrition
Self-expectation
Courage
Natural justice
Skills:
Define key concepts
Recognize use of key concepts in a specific work
Interpret the effect of an author’s decisions regarding literary elements upon the text
Relate information from the text to self, world, and other texts
Defend an analysis of an author’s purpose and technique in an impromptu timed written response
Apply knowledge gained from literature as a means of understanding contemporary and historical economic, social, and political issues and perspectives
Write a story modeled on the author’s style and share it with peers

**Major Assignments and/or Assessments:**
- AP-style impromptu timed written responses to concepts, themes, or other elements of the novel
- Class discussion
- Group discussions
- Group presentations
- Writing conferences
- Personal “war story” written in Tim O’Brien’s style
- Individual presentation

**Textbooks**

**Title:** Literature: An Introduction to Fiction, Poetry, an

**Publisher:** HarperCollins College Publishers

**Published Date:** 1995

**Author:** X.J. Kennedy

**Second Author:** Dana Gioia

**Description:**
College level anthology of fiction, poetry, and drama with supplemental section on writing and critical approaches to literature.

**Other Course Materials**

**Material Type:** Primary Source

**Description:**
Novels: Love Medicine by Louise Erdrich; White Noise by Don DeLillo; All the King’s Men by Robert Penn Warren; Beloved by Toni Morrison; The Things They Carried by Tim O’Brien
Drama: King Lear by William Shakespeare

**Material Type:** Other

**Description:**
AP exams, including prose, poetry, and open response prompts
Teacher produced handouts for various assignments
Teacher produced AP-style impromptu response prompts
Additional Information

Requirement: Primary textbook

How Course Meets Requirement:
Title: Literature: An Introduction to Fiction, Poetry, and Drama
Explanation: Complete title would not record in syllabus wizard in space designated.