**Syllabus: AP Language and Composition**

**Instructor:** Mr. Brian Skillman

**Room:** 436

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**Conference and Tutoring Availability:** 7:00 – 7:45am M – F, and 3:00 – 4:00pm M, T, Tr, F

**Course Objectives:**

The purpose of this course it to help students “write effectively and confidently in their college courses across the curriculum and in their professional and personal lives.” (The College Board, *AP English Course Description*, p. 6). The course is organized according to the requirements and guidelines of the current *AP English Course Description*, and, therefore, students are expected to read critically, think analytically, and communicate clearly in both writing and speech.

**Primary Learning Goals:**

AP English Language and Composition is a college-level course examining rhetoric as “the art of finding and analyzing all the choices involving language that a writer, speaker, reader, or listener might make in a situation so that the text becomes meaningful, purposeful, and effective for readers or listeners, and examining the specific features of texts, written or spoken, that cause them to be meaningful, purposeful, and effective for readers or listeners in a situation” (David Jolliffe, former AP exam creator). Therefore, students will become mature and sophisticated consumers and creators of a variety of texts. By the end of the course, students will understand:

* what they read: the main point or thesis, the occasion or context, the author’s motivation for writing, the tone and style
* how a text is created to develop meaning and purpose including genre, organization, paragraphing, syntax
* the relationship of the text’s creation to its accomplishment, the purpose of academic intellectual prose, its meaning and effect
* how to articulate their analysis of what they read; how the organizational structure, diction, syntax, imagery, figurative language flesh out the meaning of a text
* how to create, develop and support an argument, acknowledging the complexities and nuances of important issues that adults argue about in contemporary intellectual circles;
* how to become good citizens through awareness of public discourse issues
* how to enter into a conversation with sources and develop a thesis and argument or exposition by synthesizing these conversations into their own writing
* how to analyze and incorporate their analysis of visual texts into their writing;
* effective research skills and proper MLA citation
* how to read a question, so they know exactly what is asked and how to approach it;
* how to enhance their vocabulary as a means to effective writing
* how to grapple archaic prose
* strategies necessary for success on the AP English Language and Composition exam

Students should become aware of how writers’ linguistic choices create effective writing and achieve stylistic effects as well as how to effectively incorporate many of these techniques into their own writing.

**Assessment:**

Grades will be weighted by the following categories, in accordance with the FCHS grading policy

* 65% (Summative): Major papers, exams
* 25% (Formative/Predictive): In-class essays, quizzes
* 10%: Oral evaluations, daily assignments and activities (journals, shared inquiry, writer’s workshop activities, and written homework responses)
* *All essays will be evaluated on a 1 – 9 scale patterned after the AP exam writing rubric.*

**Attendance:**

In order to achieve success in AP English, students must be present on a daily basis. If at all possible, please avoid scheduling appointments, vacations, or other activities during class time. Absences will be handled according to school policy.

* If a student is present on the day an assignment is given, but absent on the assignment’s due date, the student must submit the assignment on the day he or she returns.
* Students will receive the number of days absent to take tests and quizzes or turn in assignments before or after school – never during class.
* In cases of pre-arranged absences, it is the student’s responsibility to collect work prior to the missed class period.

**Late Work Policy:**

* Failure to turn in assignments on time will result in a late credit penalty 30%.
* Missing assignments will be marked as ‘M’ in Infinite Campus until the one week time frame has ended, at which point they will be changed to a final grade of ‘0’.

**Required Materials:**

* Composition notebook for response journals, ‘bell ringers’, vocabulary and term work, and rhetorical practice assignments
* College-ruled loose-leaf or perforated paper
* Highlighter, pens (red, blue, and black) and pencils
* Sticky notes
* Access to a dictionary and thesaurus
* Flash drive

**Texts**

**NOTE: There is NO required summer reading for this course.**

Textbook, rental through the course enrollment:

* *Writing America: Language and Composition in Context*, AP Edition by David A. Jolliffe and Hephzibah Roskelly

Supplemental texts included with textbook fee:

* *On Writing*, by Stephen King
* *The Scarlet Letter*, by Nathaniel Hawthorne
* *The Great Gatsby*, by F. Scott Fitzgerald

**Writing Assignments**

**Major Writing Assignments: The following assignments are processed papers composed primarily outside of class:**

* **Analytical Essay:** Students compose a rhetorical analysis from a prompt focusing on one of the summer readings.
* **Personal Narrative:** Students compose an effective essay focusing on the significance of a single event in their lives.
* **Compare/Contrast Essay:** Students compose an essay from a prompt derived from class readings. Students will contrast the rhetorical strategies used.
* **Synthesis Essay:** Students synthesize materials from a number of sources (including visual), develop an argument and compose an argumentative essay.
* **Open Topic/Genre Essay:** Using the five canons of rhetoric – invention, arrangement, style, memory, delivery – students compose a meaningful essay on the topic of their choice. Students must submit a self-annotated copy of the essay highlighting the rhetorical strategies they incorporated. They will share their papers by presenting them to the class.
* **Research Paper:** Students experience the research process from discovering a topic and developing a research question to submitting the final product. This paper may be expository or argumentative and must include an annotated bibliography.

**Note:**

* Each essay composed outside of class must include a self-evaluation addressing the following questions:

1. Did you stick with your original topic or did you change it along the way? Why?
2. What problems did you encounter during the process of creating the essay?
3. List two of the most important changes you made. Why did you make them?
4. What part of your essay are you most proud of? Why?

* Rough drafts of essays composed outside of class are subject to in-class peer review.
* Students are encouraged to conference with me prior to submitting final drafts.

**In-class Timed Essays – Responding to AP or AP-like Prompts:** During the course of the year, students are regularly required to respond to a prompt under time constraints. During the first semester, students will share their responses in their groups prior to revising and resubmitting the paper for assessment. If dissatisfied with the grade earned on a paper, a student may revise and resubmit it for reassessment only after attending an individual writing conference. During the second semester, students have fewer opportunities for reassessment. However, even though the grade earned on the paper is final, students are highly encouraged to take advantage of writing conferences.

**Assessments:** The papers composed in and out of class are the primary assessments. They reveal students’ understanding of the concepts taught; therefore, many of them are summative assessments. These papers are assessed on the 0 – 9 AP scale, with a score of 5 equivalent to 70% and 9 to 100%. Additional assessments include vocabulary quizzes, multiple-choice tests and exercises, and the major exam for the course: a complete AP English Language test during finals week duplicating the testing conditions of the actual exam. Students are required to take this practice exam.