

Course: Honors Literature and Composition **Instructor:** Jan Snyder-Hess

Academic Year: 2008-09

Course Description

This Honors 11 English course follows the requirements specified in the *AP English Course Description*. The major difference between this course and the AP course is that there will not be much emphasis placed on practice AP tests. However, it is important for students to be acquainted with the types of questions that they will encounter on that test. As a result of the extensive reading of novels, poetry, short stories, and dramas, students will see how literature reflects the human condition. Emphasis will be placed on the close reading and annotating of the text, considering how each work's structure, language, imagery, symbolism, and tone help to create the meaning of the work. Students will interpret and analyze a literary work through reaction papers, timed writings, and class discussions. Additionally, students are expected to take the SAT II literature test in the spring. Due to the small class size, it is imperative for each student to contribute regularly, thoughtfully, and respectfully. This is not a lecture class, but rather a place where we talk and learn together in an informal setting.

Reading and Writing Assignments

Reading Assignments

It is important to plan ahead and adhere to the long-range due dates for novels. It is imperative that you read "actively," using a pen or pencil to annotate or take notes in the margins of your books. This procedure will come in handy when writing in-class essays and/or analytical papers, which require plenty of textual support. The dramas are included in the *Bedford* text, and copies of the remaining novels can be purchased in the school book store. The short stories and poems to be studied are also in the *Bedford* text. The introduction to each new novel will include background information on the literary work's historical, cultural, and social context, as well as background on the author's life, writing style, and themes.

Writing Assignments

You will be writing extensively in many different formats. There will be timed writings on literature we have read and on past AP prompts. There will also be opportunities for some creative writing, including the personal narrative. Overall, students' writing will demonstrate an ability to understand, evaluate, and explain the effectiveness of a literary work.

- You are expected to use your best writing skills on all assignments. Proofread many times!
- Prior to each writing assignment, we will review the appropriate grading rubric. This rubric could be either the AP rubric for timed writings or my own detailed rubric for longer papers, which includes key categories for thesis, organization, development, quotation integration, structure, diction, style, and mechanics. My detailed comments on papers will address areas needed for improvement.
- Timed writings will present a scoring guide as used by the *AP English Literature and Composition Exam* for that particular question.

- Mini-lessons on grammar will be as needed, and there will be regular practice with SAT grammar and usage.
- There will be an emphasis on vocabulary development with a Word-of-the Day. Knowledge of literary terminology is essential.
- Chapters from *A Pocket Style Manual* will supplement composition instruction.

Critical Writing

1. Upon the completion of a novel, and prior to the discussion of that novel, there will be an **in-class essay** which will serve as a reading check and demonstration of your understanding of the work. You will respond to a prompt about theme, characterization, setting, style, or historical or social values. These reading checks will be worth 25 points.
2. After the class finishes reading a drama in class, there will also be an in-class essay on an important aspect of that work. This is in lieu of a test, and it is worth 40 points.
3. There will usually be three analytical **3-4 page papers** due each trimester, often following the completion of a novel. The purpose of these papers is for students to demonstrate their ability to evaluate or explain a work's quality or artistry, as well as its social and cultural values. Prompts will be offered for these papers, although a student is encouraged to create her own thesis. Class time will be given for writing workshop, as we will discuss the need for a strong thesis, organization, supporting details, integrating quotations, style, syntax, and usage. Rough drafts and conferences with me are encouraged. Papers are worth 100 points.
4. Before the second trimester, students will select and read an additional two novels or three dramas. These works may be by the same author or following a similar theme. Students will spend time in the library researching literary criticism and writing a **5-7 page research paper**.

The various stages of the writing process will be followed with sequential due dates. Class time will be given for researching, conferencing, and revising. As always, it is important to manage your time wisely, allowing ample time for proofreading and editing. (200+ points)

Creative Writing

The college application essay, or personal narrative, will allow you to focus on some interesting aspect of your own life. In a workshop environment, we will read sample essays, noticing tone, style, voice, audience, and use of details to create a one-of-a-kind narrative. Later in the year, you will be modeling a narrative in the style of Sandra Cisneros and Virginia Woolf, capturing each writer's unique style.

Final Exams

Prior to the exam period, the class will brainstorm the essential questions raised in each major literary work and determine the connecting thematic, historical, or social values that are represented. 60% of the exam will be a take-home, where the student is able to plan a thesis, find supporting details and quotations, and locate page references. These notes will be used to write an analytical essay during the allotted time. The remaining 40% of the exam will be the explication of a poem with a prompt requiring a close reading, analysis, and textual support.

Speeches

- Juniors will write, practice, and present either a personal narrative or persuasive speech for the All-School Assembly.
- Due dates will be drawn at the beginning of the year.

Homework/Classroom Policies

1. The reading assignments in this course are extensive and often demanding; therefore, it is necessary for you to budget your time wisely, in order to keep up with all assignments.
2. It is expected that you will participate in class discussions regularly. Your ideas and thoughts are important!
3. Due dates for papers are announced well in advance, and it is important to submit work on time. The penalty for late work is a grade reduction of 10% for each late day.
4. In case of an absence, it is the student's responsibility to find out about what work or information was missed during class. If a paper is due and you are absent and a boarding student, you are expected to have another student hand-deliver the paper to the teacher. If you are a day student, the paper is due upon your return to school.
5. On rare occasions, if there are extenuating circumstances regarding a paper's due date, the student must discuss the situation with me prior to the crisis!
6. You will be asked from time to time to present information on authors, their poems, time periods, or other literary works. As usual, you are expected to be prepared.
7. Please come to class with your textbook and/or current novel.

Grading Scale: The following scale is included in the Student Handbook:

1. to A+ 90-100 D- to D+ 60-69
2. to B+ 80-89 F 0-59
3. to C+ 70-79

Calendar

Trimester 1

Week Topics

- 1 Introduction; literary terms; critical approaches to literature
- 2 *Oedipus Rex*; introduce *Jude the Obscure*
- 3 *Oedipus* cont.; poetry
- 4 *Jude the Obscure*, parts 1-3; personal narrative
- 5 poetry
- 6 *Jude the Obscure* , parts 4-6
- 7 poetry
- 8 Introduce *Othello*
- 9 *Jude* paper due; *Othello*
- 10 *Othello* ; Emily Dickinson poetry
- 11 Emily Dickinson poetry cont.
- 12 Final Exams

Trimester 2

Week Topics

1. Introduce Gabriel Garcia Marquez and *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*; *Death of a Salesman*

Thanksgiving Vacation

2. *Death of a Salesman*; in-class on *Marquez*

3. *Death of a Salesman* video

4. Video of *Death of a Salesman*; paper due

Christmas Vacation

5. Library research for poetry project; introduce *The Color Purple*

6. poetry presentations

7. *The Color Purple*

8. *The Color Purple* ; introduce *Pride and Prejudice*

9. Poetry; short stories

10. *Pride and Prejudice*

11 *Pride and Prejudice*

Trimester 3

Date Topics

1. Library - Begin research paper; Virginia Woolf- introduce *Mrs. Dalloway*
2. Library research
3. *Hamlet*; research paper
4. *Hamlet*; research paper

Spring Break

5. *Hamlet* ; research paper
6. Video; research paper

Easter Break

7. Sonnets; *Mrs. Dalloway*

8. poetry

9. Mrs. Dalloway paper due; poetry

10. *Mrs. Dalloway* video; *The Stranger*

11. *Comprehensive Review/ Final Exams*