

**Center for Talent Development Northwestern University**  
**Course Syllabus**  
**AP Online Gifted Learning Links**

**Course Title:** AP Literature and Composition

**Course Description:**

From the catalog: “By closely reading the finest examples of imaginative literature from several genres and historical periods—from Ancient Greece to the 21<sup>st</sup> century—students increase their awareness of how writers use language to provide meaning and evoke response from their readers. Students become attentive to a work’s structure, style, themes and the use of figurative language, symbolism and tone. This college-level course develops the student’s appreciation of literature, his/her understanding of the conventions of literary discourse and the ability to write accurately and insightfully about it. This course prepares students to take the AP English Literature and Composition exam.”

The goals of this course are to help students:

- Acquire the ability to read closely and critically
- Understand the conventions of literary discourse
- Develop an appreciation of literature
- Write analytically, accurately and insightfully about what they read

Students who take AP English will emerge from the course significantly more able to handle a broad spectrum of college-level coursework and writing. Many students will also choose to take the AP Literature and Composition Exam. A score of 3 or higher on this exam may satisfy prerequisites or act as credit hours at many post-secondary institutions.

**Outcomes:** Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

- Incorporate a strong new vocabulary into their reading, writing and discussion (essential knowledge for AP students).
- Generate, revise and rework pieces of writing that meet the demands of **both** college instructors and the Advanced Placement Exam in English Literature and Composition. These writing assignments will include classical argument, definition, explication/close analysis and narrative. At various points in the year, goals for these assignments will include using rhetorical strategies, improving voice, utilizing various patterns of logical organization, making shifts in diction or tone, balancing specific detail with broader generalizations and appropriating a variety of sentence structures.
- Begin to create a framework for talking about critical reading (based on the description of skills an process offered in essays/lectures of L. Perrine, V. Nabokov, M. McCarthy and R. Frost).
- Write informal essay and reflection pieces daily in critical reading journals as they’re responding to the texts they are reading.
- Read texts that represent both classical and contemporary literature in several genres: drama, fiction, essays and poetry.
- Develop their ability to interact thoughtfully over important ideas based upon their reading of challenging literature.
- Prepare **both** for their college studies and for the Advanced Placement Exam in English Literature and Composition.

**Resources and Materials:**

In order to simplify expenses, I specify here the books you will need to access and read as well as the specific books you should buy. When I suggest that you need to “access or purchase” a book, I’m suggesting that you could relatively easily use the public library or a local university library as going out to buy the books. Where that is inadvisable for annotative purposes, I advise you specifically to purchase the books. There are two books on the list that every student must purchase.

1. You must order and purchase the following two texts specifically:

Lunsford, Andrea A and John J. Ruszkiewicz. Everything's an Argument, Fourth Edition. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2007. ISBN #9780312447496.

Dostoyevsky, Fyodor. Crime and Punishment. Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, Inc. ISBN# 0486415872

2. You will need to choose and **RE READ one of the following you have ALREADY read prior to AP English**: 1984 (George Orwell), Brave New World (A. Huxley), Their Eyes Were Watching God (Zora Neal Hurston), The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (Mark Twain), Of Mice and Men (John Steinbeck), The Bluest Eye (Toni Morrison), Lord of the Flies (William Golding), The Scarlet Letter (Nathaniel Hawthorne). If none of these titles are re-reads for you, please select one of the shorter titles to read.
3. You will need to access or purchase five (5) separate collections of poetry—that is a volume of poems entirely by a single author—You may choose from among the following poets: Adrienne Rich, Li Young-Lee, Sharon Olds, Yusef Komunyakaa, Wallace Stevens, William Carlos Williams, Ted Kooser, Jorie Graham, Sylvia Plath, Pablo Neruda (sonnets), Elizabeth Bishop (various forms), Philip Larkin, Philip Levine, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Anne Sexton. If you have particular interests in other particular poets, feel free to email me and I will let you know whether or not they would work as substitutes for the above-named writers.
4. You will need to access or purchase the following novels—I recommend purchasing these, as we will focus on these texts at various points in the year and you may annotate them if you own them. However, you may find them used or borrowed far more inexpensively than you would be able to buy them new.
  - Oedipus Rex by Sophocles—Please obtain the Robert Fagles translation
  - Antigone by Sophocles—Please obtain the Robert Fagles translation
  - Hamlet by William Shakespeare—Folger library version if possible
  - Death of a Salesman by Arthur Miller
  - Invisible Man by Ralph Ellison
  - The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven by Sherman Alexie
  - The Grapes of Wrath by John Steinbeck
5. You will need access to one film—and it's a tough one to find outside of libraries: Kenneth Branagh's Hamlet. Until recently it has only been available on VHS. It is now available on DVD from some sources, including [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).
6. I will provide a series of coursepack readings—some PDF files and some Word documents. I suggest when you receive these that you print them out so that you can annotate them. They will include the following
  - “Good Readers, Good Writers” by Vladimir Nabokov
  - “The Nature of Proof in the Interpretation of Poetry” by Laurence Perrine
  - “Tragedy and the Common Man” by Arthur Miller
  - Notes from Poetics by Aristotle
  - “Education by Poetry” by Robert Frost
  - “Settling The Colonel's Hash” by Mary McCarthy
  - “In Defense of the Epilogue of Crime and Punishment” by David Matual

Lastly, you will need to obtain a notebook to use as a critical reading journal. I recommend a composition notebook, as they're less likely to fall apart with heavy use. Due to the nature of journal conferences, I strongly recommend **against** keeping your journal as a file on your

computer. However, if you prefer to do so, you may want to print it out regularly for your own reflection and use as you prepare for our conferences.

**Schedule:** Stay connected to Blackboard for specific assignments and in order to stay on top of updates and changes.

Week	Topic/Focus	Activities & Reading Assignments	Strategies & Written Assignments
Week 1	Classical Argument	Familiarize self with course content and writing procedures, Read banned book, and chapter of EAA, Read Excerpts of EAA, write proposal, read Nabokov essay and Perrine essay	Journal entries and discussion posts
Week 2	Critical Reading	Read "Hills Like White Elephants" and EAA chapter, choose literature circle books and groups	Write proposal, journal entries
Week 3	Rhetoric, Critical Reading		Writing drafts & conferencing, discussion posts, journals
Week 4	Literature	Read Oedipus Rex, EAA chapter	Writing drafts (introduce real paper) & conferencing, discussion posts, journals
Week 5	Literature	Read Antigone, EAA chapter	Writing drafts & conferencing, discussion posts, journals
Week 6	Literature	Read "Letter from a Birmingham Jail", EAA chapter	Writing drafts & conferencing, discussion posts, journals
Week 7	Literature, Critical Reading	Hamlet: Read Act I and II	Writing drafts (introduce critical ref paper) & conferencing, discussion posts, journals
Week 8	Metacognition	Read Act III and IV	Writing drafts & conferencing, discussion posts, journals
Week 9	Metacognition	Read Act V	Writing drafts & conferencing, discussion posts, journals
Week 10	Reading	View film	Last draft of Critical Reflection must be completed by the end of this week, journal entries, discussion posts
Week 11	Text, Literature, Critical Reading	Read tragedy Essays	Introduce 2 <sup>nd</sup> Writing task, writing drafts & conferencing, discussion posts, journals
Week 12	Reading	Read Part I of CP	Writing drafts & conferencing, discussion posts, journals
Week 13	Text, Literature, Critical Reading	Read Part II of CP	Writing drafts & conferencing, discussion posts, journals
Week 14	Reading	Read Part III of CP	Writing drafts & conferencing, discussion posts, journals
Week 15	Reading	Read Part IV & V of CP & Epilogue	JOURNAL CONFERENCES I, Writing drafts & conferencing, discussion posts, journals
<b>SEMESTER TWO</b>			
Week 16	Structural analysis	Read Matual Essay	Introduce vocabulary list, assign vocabulary test during final week of course
Week 17	Explication	Poetry--read assigned poems, "Education by Poetry"	Introduce explication, begin practice explications
Week 18	Explication	Poetry--read assigned poems	Writing drafts & conferencing, discussion posts, journals
Week 19	Explication	Poetry--read independent poems	Writing drafts & conferencing, discussion posts, journals
Week 20	Explication	Poetry--read independent poems	Final draft of Critical Reflection paper for Task 2 must be completed by the end of this week, conferencing, discussion posts, journals
Week 21	Critical Reading, Literature	Read IMAN--100 pages	Introduce Writing Task 3, Writing drafts & conferencing, discussion posts, journals
Week 22	Literature	Read IMAN--100 pages	Writing drafts & conferencing, discussion posts, journals
Week 23	Literature	Read IMAN--100 pages	Writing drafts & conferencing, discussion posts, journals

Rhetoric, Critical Reading, Week 24 Literature	Read IMAN--Remainder	Writing drafts & conferencing, discussion posts, journals
Rhetoric, Critical Reading, Week 25 Literature	Read DOS—1/2	Writing drafts & conferencing, discussion posts, journals
Rhetoric, Critical Reading, Week 26 Literature	Read DOS—1/2	Writing drafts & conferencing, discussion posts, journals
Rhetoric, Critical Reading, Week 27 Literature	Read Grapes--100 pages	Writing drafts & conferencing, discussion posts, journals
Rhetoric, Critical Reading, Week 28 Literature	Read Grapes--100 pages	Writing drafts & conferencing, discussion posts, journals
Rhetoric, Critical Reading, Week 29 Literature	Read Grapes--100 pages	Intro magical realism, drafting, conferencing, discussion posts and journals
Rhetoric, Critical Reading, Week 30 Literature	Read Grapes--finish	Writing drafts & conferencing, discussion posts, journals
Rhetoric, Critical Reading, Week 31 Literature	Read 1/2 Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven, exam practice	Writing drafts & conferencing, discussion posts, journals, exam practice
Rhetoric, Critical Reading, Week 32 Literature	Read 1/2 Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven, Exam practice	Writing drafts & conferencing, discussion posts, journals, last draft of critical reflection for task 3 must be completed by the end of this week, exam practice
Week 33 Critical reading	Exam practice	JOURNAL CONFERENCES II, exam practice, Vocabulary test, End-of-course survey

### Student Evaluation and Grading Policies for Credit Courses Only:

Grading Scale, based on CTD's scale

<b>A+</b> 100 (discretionary)	<b>C</b> 73-76
<b>A</b> 93-99	<b>C-</b> 70-72
<b>A-</b> 90-92	<b>D+</b> 67-69
<b>B+</b> 87-89	<b>D</b> 63-66
<b>B</b> 83-86	<b>D-</b> 60-62
<b>B-</b> 80-82	<b>F</b> Below 60
<b>C+</b> 77-79	

Quarter and Semester Grades computed as follows:

- 50% Composition Tasks (rubric available)
- 25 % Journal Conference (rubric available)
- 25% Participation (thematic discussions, minor assignments, etc.)

**Instructor Biography:** Alina Borger-Germann graduated from Grinnell College in 1999 with a BA in English. She spent four years working as a life coach and spiritual mentor for college students at Coe College and The University of Iowa, and has spent the last four years teaching high school English, including the AP Literature and Composition course. She has been certified as an AP Instructor via courses with the CTD as well as The Belin-Blank Center in Iowa City. She is the recipient of Iowa Council of Teachers of English (ICTE) Promising Teacher Award, Pi Lambda Theta, and is an active member of National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). She presented her work with online case studies at the 2000 NCTE Convention. This is her second year with CTD.

### Contact Information:

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