

# AP Lit & Comp WELCOME LETTER--Course Philosophy Statement (rev. 2019-2020)

Dear fellow AP Literature students:

This is a long--and it will probably seem to you--talky introduction to the A.P. course you are about to take. It represents my attempt to articulate some of the assumptions I have about the teaching of literature and writing and what it means to read and write about literature. I do not imagine I can write a statement that will eliminate all future misunderstanding or dissatisfaction, but I can be as straight as I know how about some things that I hope can grow in meaning for you as we grow together in this class with my understanding and abilities. This statement, in other words, is one written to be reread rather than just read and is something we may refer back to from time to time during the term.

## **\* \* \* \* AP Class Philosophy \* \* \* \***

Literature we know, because we have read it and because we continue to read it, provides us with vicarious experiences. There is not enough time on the clock, there is not universe enough physically, for any person to enter all the experiences and to meet all the people he/she must meet to be a reasonably "civilized" person. Some experiences we must get out of books. Literature helps us to make contact with history (with history made and in the making), to recognize that "old" emotions are still valid, and that the questions that count are the unanswerable ones, the ones we for which we live.

What this course will try to do is provide you with some of these experiences by having you read and respond to a selection of works representing classical English literature as well as a variety of other selections. Given the number of works that there are, and the time in which we have to read them, we will not be able to read all that is on the syllabus, but we will make something of a beginning. No doubt, the more you can read (above and beyond the "required" reading), the more you will come away with.

Like all art, literature gives pleasure. It has a certain magic that transports us from the "real" world to a seemingly more remote and enjoyable place. You can experience this quality without analyzing it. But literature also poses intellectual challenges that do demand analysis. For most readers, grappling with these challenges enhances the pleasure of literature. By studying literature, you "see" more of it to appreciate. You learn that, far from being remote from life, good literature pleases you by reflecting and giving order to life. And it is pleasure derived from reflection that much of this course will aim for; in short, this course, like so many others, is a course in reading, writing, and thinking.

I don't believe reading well can be taught all by itself; but then I don't believe writing well or thinking well can be taught each by itself. Moreover, I wonder if they can be "taught" at all. If any of them is basic and a little independent of the others, it is thinking, but thinking without the art of language is mechanical. To be fluent in thinking, reading, and writing, you must be fluent in all of them.

This course, then, will try to teach them all--or at least give you the opportunity to add to what you have already learned about them. Since selected literary texts are the basis of this course, there is no better way to learn from these texts than by reading and writing about them. But you cannot learn to read, write, and think well only by studying principles or only by doing exercises. If you are just told to practice, without learning the principles, you will not know what to practice; you may pick up one or two principles on the way, but you will be confirmed in many errors. So you can best learn these skills by doing them and learning the principles at the same time.

We assume that anyone in this course, using these texts will be able to read the words on the page, to know more or less what each word means, and to have a general idea what the page is about. This skill may be called mere literacy. Once you have acquired it, you can write laundry lists, follow simple printed directions, and vote

(if you are old enough). But "mere" literacy serves to enhance neither life nor civilization. The merely literate man or woman can enjoy at best only the prefabricated stories and articles of the slick magazines. Their intellectual fodder is pap, good enough to sustain life at the child's level. Their knowledge of life and the world is a homogenized mess of stereotypes and delusions. Their motto is: "I get by." And so they do when the machines of society grind smoothly, but in catastrophe and crisis, they become bewildered. For the world is more than they know, and they have never been prepared for disaster.

***Like a little knowledge, a little literacy is a dangerous thing.***

This course makes no claims to make a merely literate man or woman educated, but it offers some elementary tools necessary to education and much practice in their use. Since I am concerned with imparting to you the pleasures of reading literature, we will spend considerable time reading the literature, but I am concerned with thinking and writing, too: thinking about what we read, thinking about how you think about what you read, and thinking about how this thinking might pertain to your education. And I am concerned with how to move this thinking to a sheet of paper so that you will develop a fuller sense of the pleasure, power, and knowing that comes with using the written word.

Not only will the literature serve as a model for my proceedings, but so will our discussions. I will ask you to respond to questions that require thought, not just information; your speaking and writing will give you practice in formulating responses. We, like Edmund Burke, believe that

***method of teaching which approaches most nearly to the method of investigation is incomparably the best; since, not content with serving up a few barren and lifeless truths, it leads to the stock on which they grew; it tends to set the reader himself in the track of invention, and to direct him into those paths in which the author has made his own discoveries***

...

The literature of this course can and will be used to test my interpretations: anything said about a work should be supported by evidence from that work. Of course, much has to be brought to a work in order to understand what is in it. We must know the meaning of words and the structure of sentences, recognize allusions, and be able to follow arguments; above all, we must bring attention and thoughtfulness to our reading.

In much the same way as we might regard the work of a microbiologist, who needs a special set of assumptions about what is real to examine what cannot be seen by the naked eye, we will be studying literature as a means of locating, examining, and coming to terms with the influence of certain forces in my lives--the operation of good and evil, the process of growth and decay, wishes, fears, and so on. Perhaps the best short way of putting it is to say that in this course we will be seeing literature itself as a particular way of seeing, a particular way of looking at and coming to terms with the world.

Just as important as my studying literature as a way of seeing will be my attempts to define and make distinctions between the different forms of literature we'll encounter. To do this you'll be making important distinctions in and through your writing; through composition I am determined to give you training in the various ways that writing can be a way of knowing--a way of making inferences, developing hypotheses, constructing sound generalizations, building workable models, conceptualizing, creating, and locating one's self in relation to what is outside one's self. my methodology, in other words, will be explicitly the methodology used in the disciplined investigation of any subject at a college.

**\*\*\*\* Ground Rules \*\*\*\***

I am offering this particular course because it is one I am interested in, know something about, and enjoy. The reading, similarly, has been chosen from a number of possible texts, and they represent not the ideal way of approaching the subject, but a way of getting us to the subject we are investigating given the time we have and where we are. Both the subject and the readings, of course, reflect my prejudices, liabilities, strengths, weaknesses, and so on as a teacher.

It is as a certain kind of teacher also that I have certain expectations of what it means for us to work together. You must complete all of the reading and writing assigned and be willing to engage in maintaining a classroom dialogue responsibly--both as part of the class as a whole and within smaller groups. I expect you to keep up--which means to complete your work on the dates due. Late work will be evaluated but deducted for its lateness and receive few comments.

We are convinced that there is very little any teacher of the humanities can say to students about how he or she grades without being misleading or sounding foolish. Just as different students can have different opinions of the same teacher, different teachers can have different opinions of the same student. Since most humanities teachers are interested in the development of their students as readers and writers, not only can the process of evaluation not be arithmetical, it cannot be other than subjective. I can say, however, that the most important determinant of your grade in this course will be the progress you make in the work you do.

If you ever have any questions, concerns, problems, criticisms, please express them; don't wait until the end of the term! Now, let's begin, shall we?

*Wally (Linda Wallenberg)*

**GRADING**

- A. Daily work, quizzes, tests, and journals are worth 40%.
- B. Papers/major projects are worth 60%. Papers are 70 points. Evaluation is based on content (40 points), style (10 points), and writing conventions (20 points).
- C. You will receive grade updates approximately every two weeks.
- D. **GRADING SCALE:**

A = 93 - 100	B+ = 87 - 89	C+ = 77 - 79
A- = 90 - 92	B = 83 - 86	C = 73 - 76
	B- = 80 - 82	C- = 70 - 71
		D+ = 67 - 69
		D = 63 - 66
		D- = 60 - 62

**EXPECTATIONS**

- A. AP Composition and Literature required a rigorous application procedure for enrollment. The Eden Prairie High School Registration Guide says this about the course:  
 . . . [it] is designed to challenge the highly-motivated college bound student who has been successful in prior writing and literature courses. Students should already have a mastery of writing conventions and research skills. The course emphasizes independent work, leadership, class participation, creativity, and English academic excellence. Preparation for college writing and literature classes is achieved through intensive practice of expository and creative writing styles, including literary analysis. Students will be required to do extensive reading and critical analyses as well as tests in the same format as the AP English exams offered each May.
- B. Designed like a college course, this class is discussion-oriented; participation is an expectation!
- B. No in-class reading or in-class research time should be expected.
- C. **"Keeping up" is crucial to understanding discussion.**

**ABSENCES**

- A. Attendance must be consistent. If you miss class, it's your responsibility to call your "study partner." Exchange phone numbers and perhaps e-mail addresses. Your study partner is expected to fill out **Study Partner Absence Sheet** and staple the day's handouts to it so you have all your missing work waiting for you when you return.
- B. Make-up policy
1. **Papers and major projects** must be turned in on time even if you are absent from class the day a major assignment is due. You must arrange to have someone else turn the major assignment in for you or it will be counted late. Late major assignments will be deducted 10% of the total point value for each day the paper is late. Generally, late papers will receive little, if any, comment. **They are due by 3:00 on the due date whether you are in school/class that day or not!**
  2. **Daily work** is worth 50% if turned in late on the day the assignment is due or on the following day. The day after that, it is worth zero. If you are in school but miss my class (example: field trip) the day an assignment is due, the assignment must be turned in directly to the teacher that day or else you will be assessed a late grade.
  3. Late deductions also apply to quizzes and exams not made up in the English Resource Center on the date prearranged by the teacher and student.

**NOTE! We have a fully active, updated daily website. Check it often!**

**MATERIALS**

- A. **Highlighter** (for active reading/marking handouts, books, notes) and **red pen** for editing.
- B. **File folder** to log papers/essay progress
- C. Your own copy of the Signet Classic edition of *Hamlet* (available at my school store)
- D. **Three-ring binder** with dividers and loose-leaf paper for journals (not a spiral-bound notebook) SEE NEXT PAGE FOR HOW TO SET UP YOUR BINDER----->>>>>>>>

Having your dividers organized like this the first day of class is STRONGLY suggested:

A	AP Lit Exam Prep	F	AP. Lit. Intro & Misc.	K	Chaucer
B	SURVIVAL PAC. & Writing Conventions	G	Poetry	L	<i>Hamlet</i>
C	Journals (all labeled!) WA's	H	Literary Theory	M	<i>Frankenstein</i>
D	Papers (hand-outs, drafts)	I	Historical Background	N	Conrad & Achebe
E	Vocabulary	J	<i>Beowulf</i> and <i>Grendel</i>	O	Stoppard & Irving

**PAPERS**A. **TYPES OF PAPERS**

The papers will be analytical, research oriented, and creative. For some, strict standards of formal style will be expected. For others, there will be much room for your own personal style. Make sure you know when to use the style expected.

B. **FORMAT**

All requirements for formal typed papers must be followed. We will use the MLA (Modern Language Association) requirements. The *EPHS SURVIVAL Manual* (adopted from the latest *MLA Handbook*--8th edition) will be our official style manual.

## JOURNALS

As stated in the course description, this course is a course in reading, writing, sharing, and thinking. To help pull these activities together, you'll be asked to keep what's known as a journal, a place where you can begin to record your thinking and responses this term. As a keeper of a journal, you must be alive and aware of what is going on both inside and outside.

Your journal is your response to the work of the quarter: the readings, the discussions, the presentations, the things you find yourself learning, etc. Your writing may be in response to something from the readings or class you felt strongly about, hated, loved, or were shaken by. Each entry in your journal ought to be an entry expressing honestly what you think; this is an opportunity for you to address the work of the course, to confront the work of art with your own experience and within your mind in order to see both the work and how you respond and read a work more precisely and fully as well as to see why, how, what has influenced your responses and what has given shape to your thinking.

### KINDS OF JOURNALS

There will be **three basic kinds** of entries in the journal: **WA's, OJ's, CC's, and PR's.**

**WA** = *Writing Assignment—this is a prompt/topic the teacher has assigned to correspond with the literature or the upcoming discussion (assigned almost every day) (These are called WA's when written for Wally and OJ's when written for Rolf Olson)*

**CC** = *Class-Connected journal--topic determined by you but must have a clear class/course work connection (assigned every other week)*

**PR** = *Peer Response journal--a typed, anonymous peer-letter to which a peer will respond (assigned every other week)*

### MORE ABOUT THE CC's

The self-initiated writing or CC's (for Class Connected Ideas for topics) can be of any sort that seems appropriate, interesting, or possible to you as long as they are class-related: casual or formal, asking or answering, fact-finding, or speculating. You can rewrite endings or parts of works you think can be bettered. You can examine a writer's values in the light of your own or your own in the light of the writer's. You can comment on a writer's characters and settings by comparing them to your experience. You can record your own minute-by-minute joys and frustrations as you read or partake in this class. You can come back four weeks later to a story or poem and revise your initial response. There must be a clear, discernible connection between your CC entry and the readings, content of class discussion, or both.

### MORE ABOUT THE PR's

The peer response (or PR's) journals give you an opportunity to write on whatever topic you want. These must be typed. A peer in your class will respond anonymously to your journal.

### FORMAT OF THE JOURNALS

Each entry must **be a minimum of one full side of a page long (unless notified otherwise) to receive credit.** The full side of a page must be either in your own handwriting **with**

**every line filled**, margin to margin for full credit (5 pts.), or you may type your entry. I **strongly urge you to type your journals**. If typed, the entry must be double-spaced and at least one side of a page (2" top margin, 1" bottom). Don't play around with enlarging size and fonts just to get full credit.

NOTE: Although the one page minimum exists, a complete response to the WA's topic is expected! Some students criticize my requirement of at least a page. The page minimum "encourages" you to push your own ideas beyond a "surface" response.

The journals must be kept in your three-ring binder so that you can add and subtract pages and slip in the hand-outs which correspond to the journal. Later upon re-reading, this will make it easier for you to understand to what you were responding.

Date entries and label and number them sequentially: WA1, WA2, WA3, OJ1, OJ2, CC1, CC2, PR 1, PR 2, etc.

Make entries as legible as you can. Mechanics will not factor into your grade. If an entry is unreadable, however, I may have to ask you to go back and type it. If necessary, you can go back and recopy. The evaluation of the journal for a grade will be at the midpoint collections, although I may collect them anytime periodically to see how you're doing with them. You are expected to keep the journal up-to-date. You will have horror stories to tell if you let it go and suddenly have 18 entries to do in one night!

Time will rarely be set aside during class sessions for some writing.

### **TIMELINESS OF THE JOURNALS**

Journals must be completed **on time**--prior to discussion of a given topic! In other words, for maximum benefit from the journals and how they fit in with class discussion, the WA's need to be completed by specific due dates. The purpose of the journal is to have you do some pre thinking on the literature or topics of the day's discussion. Often, we will begin class with partner, trio, small group or large group sharing of journals.

Your teacher may or may not collect every journal the day it is due. If a journal is collected on the day it's due, it's worth 5 points. You can receive 1/2 credit if it is turned in later that day or on the next day. After that, no points are given. It is important, however, to eventually do the missed journal for the recollection of the entire journal later in the term when the journal will be evaluated in its entirety.

### **SOME FINAL WORDS ON THESE JOURNALS**

We want you to have fun with your journal--that you see it as a way of learning something about yourself. Try different kinds of entries. Be sensible sometimes, but sometimes be crazy. Invent your own ways of responding to the stories, plays, poems. Do some additional reading about the authors or works if you wish. Respond to class discussions (small or large group) as part of your journal. Allow your intellect and imagination to go to work. **Remember:** my purpose is to enjoy, to feel, and to think more deeply as a result of my encounters with the literature.

**NOW IT'S YOUR TURN TO RESPOND TO ALL OF THIS!**

## **SYLLABUS—QUICK REFLECTIONS**

After reading my "welcome letter" and reading the syllabus/course overview, jot down any questions/comments you have now (which you might want to bring up in class):

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

*When the student is ready,  
the teacher appears!*

*Take what you like and leave the rest!*

*Stay hungry; stay foolish!*

**Instructor: Linda Wallenberg**

[lwallenberg@edenpr.org](mailto:lwallenberg@edenpr.org)

# Advanced Placement English Literature & Composition

## SYLLABUS

This course requires “summer reading.” You are required to read three novels and do extensive note-taking as you read. You will be given an AP exam on these three books the first week of class and write a paper at some time during the course based on some of them. You will also be graded on your active reading according to a rubric.

The novels are - *Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens  
 - *Pride & Prejudice* by Jane Austen  
 - *A Prayer for Owen Meany* by John Irving

### I. Course texts

- *A Norton Anthology of English Literature*, Volume 1, 6<sup>th</sup> edition, edited by M. H. Abrams, W. W. Norton and Company, 1993.
- *Literature: The British Tradition* (published by Prentice Hall)
- *English Writing and Skills* (Complete Course, Coronado edition)
- *Beowulf* (either translated by Burton Raffell or Seamus Heaney)
- *Grendel* by John Gardner
- Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales* (translated by R. M. Lumiansky) by Geoffrey Chaucer
- *Hamlet* (Signet Classic edition) by William Shakespeare
- *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* by Tom Stoppard
- *Things Fall Apart* (Fawcett Crest edition) by Chinua Achebe
- *Heart of Darkness* (A Case Study in Contemporary Criticism Series edition) by Joseph Conrad
- *Arcadia* (Samuel French, Inc. edition) by Tom Stoppard
- *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley
- *Pride & Prejudice* by Jane Austen



## II. Course content

The following is a **BANK** of material from which the AP English course content will be chosen.

- Course Introduction and Philosophy, Summer Reading, and Building a Class Foundation
- Familiarization with the AP exam
  - Phrases and clauses in composition
  - Rhetorical strategies
  - Practice exams
- **Cultural Literacy: *research paper***
- Poetry terminology and poems—including some classics (time permitting) from the 17<sup>th</sup> century (1625-1660) through the 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- **Evaluation paper: *Literary Theories paper***
- Anglo-Saxon and Medieval 450 AD – 1485)
  - Historical background
  - History of the English Language
  - Beowulf
  - John Gardner's *Grendel*
  - Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*
- **Narrative paper: *Twenty-first Century Prologue***
- English Renaissance (1485 – 1625) *Hamlet*
- Modern reaction to Hamlet: Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*
- Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* – analysis and criticism
- Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* – analysis and criticism
- **Literary Analysis paper**
- Tom Stoppard's *Arcadia*
- **Position paper**
- Course final: “Meeting of the Minds”