**AP Language & Composition**

San Marin High School 2011-2012

**Brief Description:**

AP focuses on reading and writing a variety of rhetorical modes—exposition; narrative; argumentative; expository—on a variety of different subjects such as personal experience; political issues; public policies; popular culture. The course is designed to prepare students to be, according to the College Board, “skilled readers of prose written in a variety of periods, disciplines, and rhetorical contexts, and ... skilled writers who compose for a variety of purposes.”

Students will examine a variety of essays from *the Language of Composition*, *Walden* and *The Narrative of Frederick Douglass* as well as two non-fiction texts they choose. Students will read some fiction books such as *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, *The Great Gatsby*, and *Their Eyes We’re Watching God*, focusing on the author’s use of rhetorical strategies and techniques. In order to dedicate sufficient time to our primary focus—reading a wide variety of nonfiction texts and learning to write in a wide variety of rhetorical modes—we will read these works during our weeks off: Thanksgiving week; Winter break; Spring break; ski week. Students will recognize choices authors make when they communicate through written work or speeches, choices authors and speakers make to best suit their aims. Through our weekly analysis of newspaper articles beginning with the second quarter we will focus on argument specifically writers appeals based on logic(logos), emotion(pathos) and the writers character(ethos).

Students must have a strong understanding of literary vocabulary and students will develop the skills to write articulately about the choices authors and speakers make regarding their message. Students will develop their own skills making the best stylistic choices when writing to best suit their point, purpose and audience whether writing a narrative essay about their lives, a reflective composition about their research experience or whether they are trying to persuade the teacher or class why their suggestion about a policy issue is the best choice to make. Students will be able to recognize style in other works and to use their own and have the language to write about it. Students will write a variety of major and minor essays, which define, narrate, compare and contrast, persuade and analyze rhetorical structure.

One of our main aims as defined by the College Board is the stylistic development by emphasizing the following:

* A wide ranging vocabulary used appropriately and effectively
* A variety of sentence structures, including appropriate use of subordination and coordination
* A logical organization, enhanced by specific techniques to increase coherence, such as repetition, transitions and emphasis.
* A balance of generalizations and specific illustrative detail

This is a college level course; the workload is challenging and student should expect five hours per week of homework usually involving long-term reading and writing assignments.

**Course Texts:**

Aufses, Robin; Scanlon, Lawrence and Shea Renee *The Language of Composition* Boston: Bedford St. Martins 2008

Gibaldi, Joseph. MLA Handbook for Readers of Research Papers. 5th ed. New York: MLA 1999 ñ

Required Reading:

Douglass, Frederick *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*

Fitzgerald, F. Scott . *The Great Gatsby*

Hurston, Zora Neale *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

Miller, Arthur *The Crucible*

Thoreau, Henry David *Walden*

Twain, Mark *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*

*Class Reader*: a Compilation of historical documents, letters, stories, poems, plays as well as exercise

on syntax, diction, and composition that compliment all reading and writing units mentioned. Guidelines for core assignments such as the commonplace books and writer’s notebook are included. Sample AP essay prompts and multiple-choice questions are also included.

Teaching Strategies:

**Vocabulary Development**: Students will be given a list of literary terms to study, use in identifying features in writing as well as use in their won writing. Students will be quizzed on these words and we will revisit the majority of these words when we take our Ap multiple choice practice test. In addition to literary terms students will study vocabulary from essays in the Norton Reader and Class Reader for further study and students will add these words to their writer’s notebooks.

**Test and Quizzes**: Reading quizzes about the texts will be given periodically without prior notice to assess students comprehension, analysis and study skills. Students will know a week in advance when they will have an exam.

**Reading Notebooks**: Students will be required to keep notebooks where they will keep notes from class as well as take notes on the texts they are reading. Some common entries in the notebooks will be dialectical journals, plot/thought (Auer), SOAPS + Tone, TiPCASTT, Vocabulary

**Commonplace Books**: Students will be required once a week to turn in a commonplace book, essentially a précis of an article as well as a rhetorical analysis focusing on both sides of the argument that the article makes. Student will focus on identifying the character based(ethos), the emotional(pathos), and logical(logos) appeals on both sides of the issue. This will help students better understand and better employ the strategies used to persuade.

**Close Passage Analysis**: One exercise students will repeatedly do in order to prepare for both the multiple choice section as well as the Rhetorical Analysis essay of the AP Exam is close passage analysis for any given reading. This will serve to help students identify choices in diction, syntax and figurative devices in order to achieve a larger aim such as tone, mood, and theme. Another aim here will be to help students develop mastery over their literary terms vocabulary. Students underline identify syntax, diction, figurative devices

**Major Essays**: For each unit students will write one longer 4-5 page essay. Students will have an introduction review of the writing process at the beginning of the year focusing on the stages of writing. For any given paper students will submit their work for a cursory review by the teacher returned with feedback, which they will use to revise. Students then will collaborate in two separate phases of the writing process, first in the generative stages, the pre-writing stages as they discuss reading material and brainstorm together and second they will peer review each other’s work focusing on global errors (revising): the thesis, support, structure, clarity and local errors(editing): vocabulary, syntax, style. Students will record grammatical errors so they can make adjustments in future papers. Students will also record stylistic choices they make regarding syntax, diction and figurative devices and students will need to connect these to the larger aims of the assignment.

**Timed in-class essay**: Students will practice writing the in-class essays with students collaboratively brainstorming and planning in the beginning and collaboratively revising and editing in the end. The teacher will assess essays and provide feedback. Students will review essay examples to identify and discuss their merits and places for improvement.

**AP Multiple Choice Practice Questions**: Students will practice taking the multiple choice portion of the exam twice per quarter in preparation for the exam the following Spring. We will study literary terms, diction, syntax and figurative devices in preparation for the multiple choice but we will also look at question stems and other strategies specific to taking multiple choice exams.

**Assessment:**

The main form of assessment will be the essay, both essays for units and in-class timed essays in preparation for the AP exam. Students will need to participate in class discussions and Socratic seminars to earn points toward a participation grade. Grading scale will be the traditional with an A 100 and 90 percent, B between 80 and 89 percent, C between 70 and 79 percent.

Classwork/homework: 10 percent

Participation and preparation: 10 percent

Essays: 20 percent

In-class essays: 20 percent

Tests and Quizzes: 20 percent

Final: 20 percent