

AP ENGLISH – Mr. Bulgrien

Course Description:

This class is not about grades as much as it is about learning: learning how to be a responsible (college) student, how to be a critical reader, and how to be a clear writer. I intend for this class to be demanding of those who take it so that everyone enrolled improves in these areas.

AP English follows the curriculum requirements described in College Board's "AP English Literature and Composition Course Description." However, I may not follow the exact same sequence (nor even teach the same texts) each year. The class's genres and topics covered are diverse enough to allow for substitutions and additions. Still, students are never without a reading assignment or a writing assignment.

Throughout the course, we will constantly examine aspects of great writing, both in classic literature and in your own compositions. Often, your writing will be critical essays based on close textual analyses of structure, style (figurative language, imagery, symbolism, tone), and the social/historical values of the authors/poets and their societies. Additionally, you will also be asked to keep a reading journal to track what you are thinking in the process of reading.

Elements of the Course:

- Read and appreciate literature – novels, plays, poetry, short stories
- Periodic quizzes on reading
- Book presentations (PowerPoint) on AP literature questions for books read independently
- Compose original essays:
 - Students will submit drafts to the instructor for comments and will participate in peer review.
 - Some essays will be timed, in-class responses to poems or short fiction we haven't discussed.
 - Extended essays will be revised at least once, sometimes twice or more. Goals for these revisions include
 - vocabulary development (especially, but not limited to, literary terms)
 - instruction in sentence structure
 - improve organizational skills (including transitions and emphasis)
 - controlling a tone and a voice appropriate to the writer and for the intended audience
 - There will be at least 3 extended essays which require students to draw on textual details to
 - develop an extended interpretation of a literary text (e.g. a poem, a short story, *Brave New World*, *Grapes of Wrath*, etc.)
 - make and explain judgments about a work's artistry and quality (e.g. a poem, a short story, *Hamlet*, etc.)
 - make and explain judgments about a work's social, historical and/or cultural values (e.g. a poem, a short story, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Grapes of Wrath*, etc.)
- Preparation for the AP Literature and Composition exam

First Quarter:

Novel: *Pride and Prejudice*

Poetry: Metaphysical poets (Donne, Herbert, Marvell)
The Augustan poets (Dryden, Pope)

Short stories: Leo Tolstoy, John Cheever, James Thurber, Saki, Edgar Allan Poe

Writing assignments:

Swift: "A Modest Proposal" – write a modern "modest proposal"

Pride and Prejudice – AP open essay: 2008, 2011(b), or 2012

AP essays: metaphysical poem, prose

Second Quarter:

Novel: *Brave New World*

Drama: *Hamlet*

Poetry: The Romantics (Wordsworth, Whitman, Blake, Keats, Coleridge, Shelley)
The Symbolists (Yeats, Eliot, Wilde)

Short stories: Joyce Carol Oates, Ernest Hemingway, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings

Writing assignments:

Brave New World – AP open essay: 2005, 2009(b), or 2010

Hamlet – dealing with death, guilt, or injustice; inward action vs. inner psychological processes;
or discuss specific elements that make *Hamlet* canonical (or even “the gold standard” for
all drama)

AP essays: Romantic poem or prose, symbolist poem or prose

Individual novel presentations

Third Quarter:

Novel: *The Grapes of Wrath*

Poetry: Modernist poets (H.D., Cummings, Stevens, Williams)
Harlem Renaissance poets (Cullen, Hughes, McKay, Dunbar)
Beat poets (Ginsberg, Corso)

Short stories: William Carlos Williams, Flannery O'Connor, Ray Bradbury, Kurt Vonnegut

Writing assignments:

The Grapes of Wrath – AP open essay: 2003(b), 2006, 2009, 2010(b), 2011, 2012, or 2013

AP essays: modernist poem or prose, Harlem Renaissance poem or prose

Fourth Quarter (truncated due to AP test and graduation):

Novel: *Robinson Crusoe*

Drama: *The Taming of the Shrew*

Poetry: Dickinson, Frost, Auden, Bishop, Rich, Heaney

Short stories: James Joyce, Isaac Asimov, Katherine Brush, Katherine Mansfield, Edgar Allan Poe

Writing assignments:

Robinson Crusoe – AP open essay: 2010

AP essays: modern prose, and a Dickinson or Frost poem, which will involve a “close reading”
of the poem, focusing on how the individual components of the poem contribute to the
overall effect on the reader

Individual novel or play presentations